

ABSTRACT

JANG, HYEMI. "Do I Belong Here?": A Mixed Methods Study About Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination Among International Counseling Students (Under the direction of Dr. Marc A. Grimmert).

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of discrimination and marginalization among international students in CACREP-accredited counseling master's and doctoral programs in the U.S. This study employs a convergent mixed methods design in that the quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed simultaneously to understand a more complete picture of discriminatory experiences encountered by international counseling students and the potential strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of discrimination. Critical Race Theory was also utilized as a theoretical framework underpinning this study.

For the quantitative strand, first of all, the Qualtrics survey data was used to examine the group differences in the degrees of perceived discrimination among international counseling students based on their race/ethnicity, gender, level of English proficiency, level of education, and lengths of stay in the U.S. Additionally, the quantitative data was used to investigate the relationships between perceived discrimination and mental health distress as well as their program satisfaction. For the qualitative strand, one-on-one, 60-minute, semi-structured Zoom interviews were conducted to explore the perceptions and experiences of discrimination and marginalization among international counseling students. A total of 33 participants completed the quantitative survey, and 10 completed the qualitative in-depth interviews. Both forms of data were integrated as a narrative discussion and a joint display for the mixed methods interpretation. As this study employs a qualitative-focused mixed methods approach, the integrated mixed

methods narrative is woven into the qualitative themes to examine how the quantitative findings assisted in explaining the qualitative findings.

The overall findings from this study indicated the five themes that demonstrate perceptions and experiences of discrimination among international counseling students: (a) unintentional and subtle discrimination, (b) cultural discrimination, (c) inattentive to international identity, (d) racism and intertwined systems of oppression, and (e) support. First of all, the findings from this study suggest the prevalence of unintentional and subtle discrimination confirmed by both forms of data. Secondly, the results demonstrate different types of discrimination faced by international counseling students based on their cultural differences (e.g., stereotyping, lack of cultural competence, and exclusion and avoidance) and their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses towards cultural discrimination. Furthermore, the findings underscored a lack of sufficient faculty and systemic awareness and support for international counseling students' unique challenges including adjusting to new environments, visa requirements, career plans, and financial issues. The fourth theme was racism and intertwined systems of oppression, which reveals how racism, linguistic discrimination, Americentrism, power dynamics in academia, and other interlocking systems of oppression serve as sources of discrimination faced by international counseling students. Lastly, the current study identified the internal and external support systems that helped international counseling students navigate adverse experiences. The support system includes faculty support, support from peers and social circle, cultural humility, and internal support systems such as figuring out on their own, being task-oriented or career-focused, and developing self-advocacy. A discussion of findings is presented along with the implications for theory, counselor education, and CACREP standards as well as recommendations for future research.

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"Do I Belong Here?": A Mixed Methods Study About Perceptions and Experiences of
Discrimination Among International Counseling Students

by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, whose unweaving support has enabled me to follow my dreams.

BIOGRAPHY

Hyemi Jang was born and raised in South Korea. She received a bachelor's degree in English Language Education from Seoul National University. Following a year of working as a high school English teacher, she received her Master's degree in Educational Counseling from Seoul National University. After completing the Master's program, Hyemi worked for four years as a youth counselor at the Korea Youth Counseling and Welfare Institute, a government-affiliated institute in South Korea, where she engaged in a nationwide community-engaging counseling system for at-risk adolescents and their families. During her doctoral program, Hyemi worked as a graduate assistant counselor at the NC State University Counseling Center and was recognized as an emerging leader at the American College Counseling Association. Her current research interests include enhancing youth mental health, advancing multicultural and social justice counseling, and promoting culturally responsive counselor education.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Internationalization in education has received attention for several decades as interdependence in the global economy and politics has emerged as a trend (Heng, 2017; Ramos et al., 2016). With the increase in educational mobility, the United States has emerged as a popular destination for students seeking opportunities to study abroad (Quinton, 2019). This trend of educational globalization has also been observed in counseling and related educational programs (Joshi et al., 2021). According to the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) Vital Statistics, the number of international counseling students (ICSs) has increased from 0.9 % in 2015 (CACREP, 2016) to 1.29 % in 2022 (CACREP, 2023a). Although this percentage is still relatively small, the significance of ICSs' presence is underscored in the research finding that 32% of 25 CACREP-accredited programs that participated in the survey in Behl et al. (2017) had at least one ICS enrolled in their programs.

International students who venture across borders between nations have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a different culture, learn different ways of thinking and behaviors, and develop their professional capacities (Sherry et al., 2010). The advantage, however, is not one-sided, as the presence of international students has proven to be beneficial for U.S. higher education institutions in academic, economic, and cultural aspects (Lee & Rice, 2008). One of the key advantages is the enhancement of academic excellence on college campuses by recruiting academically high-achieving students from around the world (Wu et al., 2015). Moreover, international students provide financial benefits and increased revenue to universities. The National Association of Foreign Students Advisors (NAFSA, 2021) estimates that

international students contributed \$28.4 billion to the economy and supported 306,308 university jobs during the 2020-2021 academic year. Finally, international students make a significant contribution to multicultural awareness on campus. They can promote the development of culturally inclusive curricula and foster cross-cultural communications among diverse student populations (Kim et al., 2019; Li et al. 2010).

The benefit of promoting diversity and multiculturalism offers a prominent rationale for retaining international students in counseling programs as the U.S. demographic landscape rapidly diversifies. In order to effectively serve a diverse clientele, it is crucial to diversify the counseling profession (Baker & Moore III, 2015). ICSs provide unique strengths by offering diverse perspectives from around the world, especially shaped by their personal and professional experiences before pursuing education in the U.S. (Lau & Ng, 2012). Additionally, ICSs play a pivotal role in bridging counseling professionals in the U.S. with their counterparts in other parts of the world, thereby helping to expand the counseling profession globally (Goodrich et al., 2011).

Statement of the Problem

The increasing number of international students and their contribution to higher education institutions have inspired researchers to investigate various issues related to international students (Li et al., 2010). One of the frequently investigated topics is culture-related variables, along with their academic outcomes and psychosocial adjustment (Brunsting et al., 2018; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). A concept often discussed in this context is acculturation, which refers to the “cultural and psychological change” that individuals undergo when confronted with the intersection of two different cultures (Berry, 2005, p. 698). Researchers have accumulated knowledge about acculturative stress and coping strategies among international students (Smith

& Khawaja, 2011). Among the various stressors experienced by international students, the most frequently documented acculturative stressors are language, educational stressors, sociocultural stressors, and discrimination, as well as practical stressors (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). In response to the demands of acculturation, international students employ different coping strategies, which researchers have sought to identify as either positive or dysfunctional coping strategies (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). For instance, acceptance and positive reinterpretation are recognized as effective to manage acculturative stress (Ward et al., 1998); whereas emotion-oriented coping leads to the escalation of acculturative stress (Ra & Trusty, 2015).

Within the counseling fields, researchers have chosen similar topics to investigate the experiences of ICSs in counseling and counselor education programs. Common research topics include ICSs' challenges in sociocultural and academic adjustment (Behl et al., 2017; Jang et al., 2014; Lertora & Croffie, 2020; Smith & Ng, 2009) and their coping strategies in different educational environments (Woo et al., 2015). Focusing solely on adjustment and coping, however, may leave the responsibility to change only to individual international students (Sherry et al., 2010). The discussion should include the significance of systemic and institutional efforts to support international students to thrive in the new academic environments (Sherry et al., 2010).

In an effort to establish inclusive university environments, a number of researchers have attempted to investigate interpersonal, systemic, and institutional barriers leading to marginalization and alienation among international students (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011; George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Ramos et al., 2016; Sherry et al., 2010). International students' experiences of discrimination and marginalization range from racial and cultural stereotyping, to limited access to resources and opportunities, to overt verbal

harassment (Lee & Rice, 2007; Sherry et al., 2010). Racism, nativism, linguicism, and other forms of oppression contribute to shaping different within-group experiences among international students. For instance, international students who are people of color and non-native English speakers can be more vulnerable compared to White, native-English-speaking international students (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007).

Although marginalization and discrimination against ICSs have not been the primary focus of examination in counselor education empirical research, several studies indicate the presence of oppression and othering experiences against ICSs within counselor education programs (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Jang et al., 2014; Lau & Ng, 2012). ICSs encounter American-centrism in the classroom and supervision, which alienates and excludes their perspectives and experiences, due to differences in language, culture, and educational backgrounds (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Jang et al., 2014; Lau & Ng, 2012). Given the emphasis on a complicated understanding of language and culture in the counseling profession, the white, Eurocentric, and English-centric hegemony in counselor education programs can further marginalize international students and diminish their access to power (Joshi et al., 2021).

Although the negative impact of discrimination on ICSs has not been examined, research on perceived discrimination among the broader international student population has shown adverse effects on students' adjustment and education. In terms of adjustment, perceived discrimination has significant associations with adjustment difficulties (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011) and homesickness (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007) among international students. In addition, perceived discrimination increases the occurrence of mental health distress such as depression and anxiety (Wei et al., 2008; Xiong et al., 2022). Furthermore, international students report reduced

academic outcomes such as decreased educational satisfaction (Wadsworth et al., 2008) and cumulative GPA (Karuppan & Barari, 2010) when experiencing perceived discrimination.

Rationale for the Study

The 2024 CACREP Standards have set forth a mandate for its accredited programs to make “continuous and systematic efforts to attract, enroll, and retain a diverse group of students (Section 2. E.)” and “intentionally create and effectively maintain an inclusive and equitable learning community (CACREP, 2023b, Section 1. I.)” Combined with a growing trend of internationalization in CACREP-accredited programs, this mission of culturally inclusive counselor education has motivated researchers and counselor educators to understand the educational experiences of ICSs during their enrollment in counselor education programs. Consequently, this impetus has led researchers to investigate the challenges and unique experiences of ICSs in the course of adjusting to new academic, clinical, and cultural environments (Behl et al., 2017; Interiano & Lim, 2018; Jang et al., 2014; Ng & Smith, 2009; Woo et al., 2015).

Despite the accumulated research studies, culturally inclusive education in counseling and counselor education often tends to prioritize Americentric perspectives, thereby overlooking the systemic barriers that can disproportionately impact ICSs (Joshi et al., 2021). ICSs may face various forms of marginalization and discrimination based on factors such as race/ethnicity, nationality, and English proficiency, to name a few (Joshi et al., 2021). While ICSs have reported marginalization and alienation in Americentric educational settings in previous studies (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Jang et al., 2014; Lau & Ng, 2012; Smith & Ng, 2009), a direct investigation into oppression and power dynamics experienced by ICSs has not yet been thoroughly explored (Joshi et al., 2021). Thus, the present study aims to delve into the marginalization and discrimination

encountered by ICSs in their educational journeys within the CACREP-accredited counseling programs in the U.S. This exploration is expected to offer a more nuanced understanding of ICSs' unique experiences and shed light on the systemic barriers that might be encountered by ICSs. Particularly, the study intends to utilize a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses to capture both generalizable and distinctive experiences of ICSs considering the intersection of identities including their race/ethnicity, nationality, English proficiency, length of stay in the U.S., and other pertinent factors.

Exploring ICSs' perceptions and experiences of discrimination can assist counselor educators in recognizing the barriers that need to be addressed. Understanding the unique intersections of marginalization experienced by ICSs can enable faculty and staff in the CACREP-accredited counseling programs to take action to dismantle these barriers and establish systemic support that mitigates the adverse impact of discrimination. Given that this study aims to discuss power and inequality embedded in the CACREP-accredited counseling programs that give rise to barriers against ICSs, it adopts a change-oriented, transformative mixed methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Mertens, 2007). A mixed methods design with a transformative worldview is suitable for this study, as it captures the voices of individuals who experienced the issues of power and discrimination as well as providing statistical outcomes that are generalizable (Mertens, 2007). The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings can illuminate the complex reality of those who are marginalized and offer insights that foster more equitable transformation (Mertens, 2007).

Purpose Statement

This study aims to center ICSs' experiences of discrimination and marginalization using Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021) as a theoretical

framework to better understand systemic barriers and oppression that hinder ICSs from optimal learning. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine ICSs' perceived discrimination while they attend the CACREP-accredited counseling program and explore potential strategies to mitigate the negative impact of discrimination. A convergent mixed methods design was employed to examine international counseling students' perceived discrimination and its impact while they attend the CACREP-accredited counseling program by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative strand utilized descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the levels of perceived discrimination among international students, along with potential group differences and associations with other variables.

Simultaneously, the qualitative strand involves an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2009; Spiers & Smith, 2019) through semi-structured interviews of ICSs who have experienced perceived discrimination while attending graduate programs. These interviews explored their experiences of discrimination and also identified potential factors that may help mitigate the negative impacts of such discrimination. A convergent mixed methods design was chosen to obtain a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of discrimination experienced by ICSs and the ways to address its impact. By combining both qualitative and quantitative data, this study aims to offer a more complete picture of discriminatory experiences and the ways to dismantle the barriers that cannot be fully captured by employing either type of analysis separately (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Research Questions

Qualitative Research Questions

1. How do international counseling students experience discrimination within the context of CACREP-accredited counseling programs? (QUAL)

2. How does perceived discrimination impact international counseling students enrolled in CACREP-accredited programs? (QUAL)
3. What is considered helpful by international counseling students in navigating instances of marginalization and discrimination? (QUAL)

Quantitative Research Questions

1. Is there a variation in the levels of perceived discrimination among international counseling students based on different characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, levels of English proficiency, level of education, and length of stay in the U.S.? (quan)
2. What is the relationship between international counseling students' perceived discrimination and mental health distress? (quan)
3. What is the relationship between international counseling students' perceived discrimination and their satisfaction with the counseling and counselor education program? (quan)

Mixed Methods Research Question

1. To what extent do the quantitative results on perceived discrimination align with the interview findings on perceived discrimination for international counseling students in CACREP-accredited programs? (Mixed Methods)

Definition of Terms

International Counseling Students (ICSs)

ICSs are defined as international students who are enrolled in CACREP-accredited counseling and counselor education programs. These international students include those who hold academic student visas (F-1) or educational exchange visitor visas (J-1) while attending the

program (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [USCIS], 2023). ICSs encompass both master's and doctoral-level students in CACREP-accredited programs.

Perceived discrimination

Perceived discrimination is conceptualized as an individual's judgment that they are being treated unfavorably or discriminated against by dominant groups based on their racial/ethnic membership or other marginalized aspects of their identity (Harrell, 2000; Major et al., 2002; Wadsworth et al., 2008). Rather than examining the objectivity of discriminatory incidents, perceived discrimination focuses on an individual's subjective understanding of the treatment they encounter (Schmitt et al., 2014).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 presented an introduction to the problem of exploring ICSs' perceptions and experiences of discrimination and marginalization that they encounter in counseling and counselor education programs. The statement of the problem, the rationale, and the purpose of study are provided, followed by the definition of the terms and research questions. Chapter 2 provides the literature review that is relevant to studying ICSs educational experiences and perceived discrimination as well as the theoretical framework of this study, Critical Race Theory. Chapter 3 will describe the methods and procedures.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

International Counseling Students

The growing trends of globalization in higher education and the growing number of international students in CACREP-accredited counseling and counselor education programs accordingly have drawn attention among scholars to study international counseling students (ICSs) (Behl et al., 2017; Interiano & Lim, 2018; Jang et al., 2014; Kuo et al., 2021; Ng, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009; Woo et al., 2015). According to the CACREP Vital Statistics, the number of ICSs has increased from 0.9 % in 2015 (CACREP, 2016) to 1.29 % in 2022 (CACREP, 2023a). In addition, 32% of 25 CACREP-accredited programs that participated in the survey in Behl et al. (2017) had at least one ICS enrolled in their programs. Despite the increasing presence of ICSs, the research on ICSs remains in its infancy, which results in a limited number of studies specifically targeting this population. Thus, this literature review encompasses research in related fields including counseling psychology, and couples and family therapy programs.

The most frequent topic on ICSs is about challenges they face (Behl et al., 2017; Jang et al., 2014; Kuo et al., 2021; Ng, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009). According to Ng and Smith (2009), challenges for ICDSs included the following issues: (a) academic difficulties; (b) language barriers; (c) emotional distress; (d) acculturation; (e) interpersonal issues with peers, faculty, or clients; (f) discrimination; (g) western approaches to mental health; and (h) academic performance self-efficacy. Among other challenges, acculturation was one of the most frequently mentioned stressors for ICDSs (Behl et al., 2017; Interiano & Lim, 2018; Ng, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009). ICSs face challenges related to adjusting to new academic, sociocultural, and linguistic environments, which have significant relationships to acculturative stress (Behl et al., 2017). First of all, differences in academic culture and systems may trigger difficulties in adjusting to

the U.S. classroom cultures such as open discussion, self-disclosure, and confrontation (Consoli et al., 2022). Additionally, a lack of knowledge about the university system and career opportunities can limit ICSs' satisfactory educational experiences and potential professional development (Consoli et al., 2022).

Secondly, challenges in sociocultural aspects can be derived from differences in cultural backgrounds. Cultural differences and unfamiliarity to U.S. sociocultural contexts can lead to disconnection and alienation from social relationships with faculty and domestic peers (McDowell et al., 2012). Furthermore, counseling is a profession that requires sophisticated skills in cultural understanding, which puts additional pressure on ICSs to adjust to U.S. culture as quickly as possible (Kuo et al., 2021). For instance, ICSs are required to understand the counseling system that encompasses various elements, such as licensure, insurance policies, and school counseling structure, to name a few (Woo et al., 2015). In addition to that, counseling theories and interventions that often imply Eurocentric assumptions including individualism and independence may lead to challenges in clinical trainings for ICSs who priorities harmonious relationships and avoiding conflicts (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Lau & Ng, 2012).

Lastly, language barriers are a frequent topic in studies about ICSs. Lack of English proficiency is critical because it can lead to potential difficulties and disadvantages in learning, clinical training, and networking because counseling is a profession that highly emphasizes verbal communication skills (Consoli et al., 2022). Limited vocabulary and oral language competencies can prevent ICSs from authentic communication in counseling and supervision processes (Jang et al., 2014). In addition, insufficient writing proficiency can cause difficulties in academic writing combined with difficulties in adapting to U.S. academic writing styles (Mittal & Wieling, 2006).

In addition to the types of challenges for ICDSs, some researchers delved into other variables related to ICDSs' educational experiences such as: (a) types of needs (Behl et al., 2017), (b) professional identity development (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Kuo et al., 2021), and (c) coping strategies (Woo et al., 2015). Behl et al. (2017) found that the challenges derived from acculturative stress were significantly related to the academic, social, cultural, and language needs of international students in CACREP programs. This acculturation process was also reported to affect their professional identity development, especially related to raising their consciousness about multiculturalism and advocacy work (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Kuo et al., 2021). Hui-Spears and Park-Saltzman (2022) proposed a conceptual model that international counseling psychology students raise self-awareness of privilege and oppression based on their personal and vicarious experiences, which led to the development of cross-cultural applications regarding social justice identity. The phases in this conceptual model align with the result of Interiano & Lim (2018), which recognize a "chameleonic" professional identity among ICSs that embraces biculturalism in their identity, values, and practices as they negotiate between their heritage culture and the mainstream culture. With regard to coping strategies, Woo et al. (2015) were particularly interested in their coping strategies during supervision training and found that ICDSs were using the following strategies to deal with challenges in supervision training: (a) utilizing personal/professional self-help strategies, (b) receiving support and care from mentors, and (c) networking among international doctoral students and graduates.

A recent survey shows that 658 (1.09%) master's students and 156 (5.64%) doctoral students attended CACREP-accredited counseling programs in 2022 (CACREP, 2023a). Although the curriculum and training may differ according to program levels, there were no significant differences reported in the degrees of challenges faced by master's and doctoral-level

ICSs (Ng & Smith, 2009). Instead of the program levels, the status as international students may have a more pronounced impact on their educational experiences (Ng & Smith, 2009). Thus, for this study, ICSs are defined as international students enrolled in both master's and doctoral-level CACREP-accredited counseling programs, holding F-1 or J-1 visas.

Perceived Discrimination

Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination

Perceived discrimination is an individual's perception that they are being discriminated against based on their salient identities such as race, ethnicity, and nationality (Harrell, 2000; Major et al., 2002; Wadsworth et al., 2008). Instead of examining the objectivity of discriminatory incidents, perceived discrimination brings attention to an individual's subjective judgment about how they are treated in a certain situation (Schmitt et al., 2014). Discrimination against marginalized individuals and communities is pervasive in society, which ranges from purposeful attacks or other overt forms of discrimination to unconscious rudeness and avoidance (Ogunyemi et al., 2020). According to a qualitative study about perceived discrimination among people of color in the U.S., five different themes emerged from the participants' reports on perceived racism. The most frequent reports were related to 'stereotyping and racial profiling,' followed by 'exclusion and denigration,' 'denial of institutional power and privilege,' 'insults regarding physical appearance and language,' and 'internalized racism' (Evans et al., 2021). While overt and covert exclusion and discrimination were also reported within the research on immigrant populations, the participants in these studies also reported the impacts of media and political agenda accelerating the prejudices and unfair treatment against immigrants (Barajas-Gonzalez et al., 2022; Khanlou et al., 2008).

Perceived Discrimination in Higher Education

Research on perceived discrimination among racially marginalized students in higher education settings has been well-documented (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015; Hussain & Jones, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2018; Ogunyemi et al., 2020; Solórzano et al., 2000). Racially marginalized students have reported perception of discrimination and hostile cultural climates since classroom settings, languages, and interpersonal exchanges on college campuses reflect White middle-class norms and alienate their heritage cultures (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Ogunyemi et al., 2020). During classroom discussions, particularly, marginalized students are often subjected to bias and exclusion in settings where they experience cultural and intellectual aggression, colorblindness, or avoidance of topics related to oppressive systems (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). When it comes to interacting with peers from other racial and ethnic communities, students of color experience feelings of being unappreciated, unwanted, and treated with stereotypes (Nguyen et al., 2018; Solórzano et al., 2000).

Specific to graduate students of color, Torres et al. (2010) reveal that African American doctoral students and recent graduates experience underestimation of their academic and other personal abilities as well as other negative racialized events. Similar themes were identified in the qualitative study conducted by Gomez et al. (2011), which focuses on the experiences of graduate teaching assistants of color in a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). Participants in this study report feeling discouraged by their interactions with students who undermine and disrespect their expertise and authority as teachers. Furthermore, graduate students of color can struggle with establishing a supportive mentoring relationship with faculty as the “White Water” of academia does not provide an adequate guide for the needs of students of color (Brunsma et al., 2017).

Perceived Discrimination Among International Students

Scholarly investigation into the discrimination faced by marginalized student populations in higher education settings has also encompassed the experiences of international students (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Gomez et al., 2011; Lee & Rice, 2007; Xiong et al., 2022; Yao, 2018). In the classroom, international students find it difficult to adjust to new linguistic and academic environments because of a lack of understanding and accommodations for non-traditional English speakers (Lee & Rice, 2007; Lin & Scherz, 2014). International students, in addition, feel excluded from U.S.-centric classroom discussions, where professors are reluctant to embrace different perspectives from various countries or worldviews (George Mwangi et al., 2019). A lack of cultural understanding from faculty can lead to additional difficulties in finding adequate mentoring and advising opportunities (Lee & Rice, 2007). Additionally, international graduate students working as teaching assistants encounter complaints, questions, and silence from their students, which can be perceived as signs of invalidation of their professional knowledge (Gomez et al., 2011).

Moreover, international students experience discrimination and marginalization in interactions with peers (Ee, 2013; Lee & Rice, 2007; Sherry et al., 2010; Yao, 2018). Some students encounter explicit discrimination and harassment such as negative comments about their countries of origin or English accents, and sexual jokes (Ee, 2013; Lee & Rice, 2007; Sherry et al., 2010; Yao, 2018). Others experience more subtle forms of discrimination including being excluded from social events and treated unfriendly by their domestic peers (Lee & Rice, 2007; Sherry et al., 2010; Yao, 2018). Cultural misunderstandings and stereotypes are also reported by international students, while they also encounter unwillingness and rejection to understand different cultures from domestic peers (Lee & Rice, 2007; Yao, 2018). Additionally, besides

interaction with peers and faculty, the lack of systemic support creates challenges for international students, constraining their capacity to secure employment opportunities that meet their financial needs (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007). Compounded by legal restrictions that confine their off-campus work options, limited access to fellowship and research opportunities may hinder certain international students from identifying suitable sources to finance their education (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007).

Scholars on this topic claim that the interplay of nativism and racism has impacted international students' experiences of marginalization and discrimination (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007; Yao et al., 2019). International students of color encounter higher chances of hostility in interactions with peers and faculty, compared to White international students (Lee & Rice, 2007). Particularly, international students from societies where race is a less prominent social issue are compelled to acknowledge their racial identity and develop coping strategies against those racist encounters in the U.S. (Gomez et al., 2011; Lee & Rice, 2007). In addition, this hostility is also related to biased assumptions about hierarchies between countries, leading to negative experiences that undermine international students' social positioning (George Mwangi et al., 2019). In a quantitative study, only 5% of European international students experienced discrimination in interactions with professors, while 21% of Southeast Asian and 17% of African international students experienced discrimination from professors (Hanassab, 2006). Similarly, only 8% of European international students experienced discrimination in interactions with peers, while 22% of Middle Eastern international students reported discrimination from classmates (Hanassab, 2006).

Linguicism is also accountable for discrimination against international students (Ee, 2013; George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Yao et al., 2019).

Limited English proficiency or a non-American accent English can make international students more vulnerable to perceived discrimination (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). Non-native English-speaking international students may encounter negative comments and attitudes toward their abilities, exclusion from classroom discussions, and isolation from social interactions (Ee, 2013; George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007). Additionally, other interlocking systems of oppression may impact the discriminatory experiences of international students creating within-group differences according to their intersecting identities including gender, religion, immigration status, and socioeconomic status, to name a few. (Yao et al., 2019).

Perceived Discrimination Among International Counseling Students

As multiculturalism and social justice have become important in the counseling profession, researchers placed an emphasis on centering marginalized counseling students' voices and interpreted their experiences critically in relation to how privileges and power created marginalization for underprivileged students (Baker & Moore III, 2015; Chan et al., 2018; Thacker & Barrio Minton, 2021). For instance, Baker and Moore III (2015) conducted a qualitative thematic analysis based on the interview data from the participants who identified as doctoral students of color in CACREP-accredited programs. The participants in the study described the tokenism and stereotyping experienced in the program as well as the pressure to conform to the dominant cultural norms (Baker & Moore III, 2015). Similarly, Thacker and Barrio Minton (2021) identified eight common types of oppression in CACREP-accredited programs as the results of the systemic review, which included stereotyping, tokenism, erasure, intersecting marginalization, underrepresentation, disconnection, and mentoring difficulties.

While critical analysis of oppression and discrimination has not been the primary focus in scholarly research on ICSs, discrimination and unfair treatment have been recurring themes in the previous research findings (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Jang et al., 2014; Ng & Smith, 2009). Counseling training often emphasizes American-centric values such as individualism and assertiveness (Interiano & Lim, 2018). This lack of cross-cultural understanding in counseling curriculum and training has led to feelings isolated and excluded among ICSs (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Jang et al., 2014; Ng & Smith, 2009). Doctoral ICSs who are not familiar with the U.S. counseling and supervision format face additional challenges in supervision training due to the lack of information and systemic support (Jang et al., 2014). ICSs who returned to their home countries after graduation also report insensitivity and the inability of training programs to respond to ICSs' unique needs (Lau & Ng, 2012).

In the literature on other helping professions such as counseling psychology and family therapy, international students report similar difficulties in education and training (Garrison et al., 2022; McDowell et al., 2012; Mittal & Wieling, 2006). They experience alienation from peers (McDowell et al., 2012), belittled by faculty and supervisors (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Garrison et al., 2022), and disrespect from clients (Garrison et al., 2022; Mittal & Wieling, 2006). Cultural differences can lead to discrimination such as faculty and peers speaking about stereotypes and presenting a lack of knowledge about their cultural heritage (McDowell et al., 2012). In a predominantly Caucasian environment of the counseling field, tokenism, where international students are expected to be the spokesperson for their entire ethnic group, race, or country of origin, is also frequently reported as a form of discrimination (McDowell et al., 2012; Mittal & Wieling, 2006).

Joshi et al. (2021) referred to the nature of discrimination faced by ICSs as racist nativism, which describes a phenomenon in which ICSs are being forced to be assimilated into the White, Eurocentric, and English-speaking culture. As a profession that emphasizes cultural and language proficiency, ICSs may struggle with this imposed value system. At the same time, this forced value system can lead to internalized systems of oppression. For example, international students in marriage and family therapy reported feelings of inferiority related to the hierarchy of nations by thinking that the U.S. holds a superior position to their home country (Mittal & Wieling, 2006). Mixed feelings toward White international students were also reported by international students of color because the former have the privilege and advantage due to their similarity in appearance with the dominant group (Mittal & Wieling, 2006). In sum, combined with the research findings about perceived discrimination among general international students, ICSs' reports on perceived discrimination speak to the need for paying central attention to this issue as a research topic.

Impacts of Perceived Discrimination

Although the negative impact of discrimination on ICSs has not been examined, research about perceived discrimination and its negative impacts on student and general populations has been accumulated. With regard to health-related variables, perceived discrimination has been associated with negative impacts on both physical and mental health. Negative impacts on physical health may include increased risks of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and higher mortality rates (French et al., 2020). Mental health risks associated with discrimination include a greater chance for anxiety (Blume et al., 2012; Lee & Ahn, 2011, 2012, 2013) and depression (Lee & Ahn, 2011, 2012, 2013) as well as trauma symptoms (Pieterse et al., 2012). Discrimination and marginalization can also contribute to binge drinking (Blume et al., 2012),

eating concerns, and negative body image (Jones & Sam, 2018). Moreover, higher levels of perceived discrimination are also associated with reduced levels of psychological well-being (Kim et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2014). The definition of psychological well-being encompasses various constructs from lack of psychological distress such as anxiety and depression to measuring positive mental health status including self-esteem, perception of control, and life satisfaction (Schmitt et al., 2014). Regardless of the specific operationalizations, perceived discrimination had a significant negative impact on psychological well-being (Schmitt et al., 2014).

In the context of higher education, perceived discrimination has been found to have negative effects on academic outcomes (Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015; Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Peterson et al., 2004; Yosso et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2018). According to the literature on racial discrimination, students of color show lower academic performance (Yosso et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2018), reduced career satisfaction (Peterson et al., 2004), and increased drop-out rates (Nora & Cabrera, 1996) when experiencing racial discrimination. Furthermore, racial discrimination has been negatively associated with a sense of belonging to the campus community (Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015). Similar results can be found in the literature focusing on the effects of perceived discrimination among international students (Karuppan & Barari, 2011; Poyrazli & Lopes, 2007; Wadsworth et al., 2008). Perceived discrimination among international students has been found to predict higher levels of homesickness (Poyrazli & Lopes, 2007), increased adjustment difficulties (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011), reduced student engagement (Karuppan & Barari, 2011), and lower educational satisfaction (Wadsworth et al., 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Inquiry Worldview

Research worldview is a philosophical assumption that guides a researcher's perspectives on reality (ontology), knowledge acquisition (epistemology), the role of values (axiology), the process of research (methodology), and the language (rhetoric) related to their research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Mixed methods researchers should be aware of these philosophical assumptions that fit into their design and clearly state what inquiry worldviews inform their research plan, design, and practice (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study, both constructivist and transformative worldviews will be utilized. Specifically, constructivism allows for exploring lived experiences of diverse participants and constructing a broader understanding of the phenomenon based on those reported multiple realities. Transformative worldview helps to create a comprehensive understanding by recognizing the role of social and cultural backgrounds as significant determinants of unique lived experiences. During the process, both constructivist and transformative worldviews inform to closely collaborate with participants and acknowledge their perspectives. Furthermore, a transformative worldview will inform the rhetorical strategies so that the findings of this study can contribute to understanding the phenomenon focusing on power differentials in educational systems and promoting changes to build a more equitable educational environment.

Critical Race Theory

This study adopts a theoretical framework grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is a theoretical framework used to understand and transform the societal rules perpetuating racism and White hegemony (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT not only provides intellectual tools to understand White supremacy in the legal system and US society in general

but also urges to utilize those understandings to change the structure that is perpetuating racism and subordination of people of color (Brown & Jackson, 2022). The theory had been conceptualized in the mid-1970s based on the civil rights movement, critical legal studies, and radical feminism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The civil rights movement in the 1960s inspired CRT scholars to understand social structures from the perspective of the underrepresented and redress the oppressive system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). From critical legal studies, CRT scholars learned that the legal system is neither neutral nor value-free, and the interpretation and application of legal cases had served to perpetuate and legitimize systems of oppression (Brown & Jackson, 2022; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Furthermore, feminist thoughts provide perspectives on CRT scholars that the social system including patriarchy has been built on and reinforced the power and privilege of certain groups of people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Key Tenets of CRT

The primary tenet of CRT is that racism is normal in the U.S. and deeply ingrained in a range of aspects of society from macro perspectives such as politics and economy to daily communication between individuals (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021). Racism can have various forms; it can be presented as outright racism or as more subtle forms of discrimination such as microaggressions or implicit bias that treat people of color unfavorably (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Since racism has been accepted and practiced ordinarily as the usual way from the beginning of US history, it is hard to discern and eradicate the system that subjugates certain individuals and groups based on their skin color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

CRT scholars posit that White privilege is intricately linked to the mechanism that perpetuates racism in the U.S. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Whiteness, which encompasses

language and culture as well as skin color, is widely regarded as normative, valuable, and possessing positive attributes (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Conversely, non-White cultural traits and dark skin tones often carry connotations of inferiority, threat, or negative qualities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Whiteness is considered as a form of property and the privilege is reinforced by a variety of societal factors, including laws, policies, and popular culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). As members of the dominant White race, White Americans enjoy numerous social advantages over people of color such as greater access to education and jobs, greater chances for accumulating wealth, and greater safety and security (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Harris, 1993).

Another key tenet of CRT is that *race is a social construct*, not an objective and fixed biological reality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021). While human beings share similar biological traits as the same species, random or arbitrary characteristics are ascribed to specific groups based on their skin color and other physical traits (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021). Furthermore, this notion of race as a social construct is closely linked to the concept of differential racialization, which has been proposed more recently by CRT scholars (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Differential racialization refers to a process by which certain groups of individuals are represented and treated within mainstream society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Dominant groups attribute certain characteristics to different racial and ethnic minority groups and utilize those stereotypes and biased images to reinforce their hegemonic position in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Because the process of racialization is a means to serve the needs and interests of dominant groups, the characteristics attributed to a certain minority group can change at various times (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

The notion of *interest convergence* is another key concept of CRT, which was introduced by Derrick Bell who was one of the early writers and founding figures of CRT (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). He wrote a number of journal articles and books which claimed that US jurisprudence legitimized racism and other systems of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In one of his famous articles about the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, Bell (1980) argued that school desegregation was accomplished due to the converging interests between Whites and people of color. In the midst of the Cold War era in the mid-1950s, American politicians were motivated to promote their nation's economic and political superiority over communism to other countries around the world (Bell, 1980). Concurrently, they faced the need for affirming the national ideals of equality and freedom to African American veterans who fought for these values during World War II and were unwilling to return to serve subjugation in the racist social order (Bell, 1980). Under these circumstances, the self-interest of White elites in abolishing school segregation converged with the demands of Black individuals (Bell, 1980). There are similar moments in history that progressed towards equality and justice for marginalized groups, however, the "breakthrough" occurred only when dominant groups could leverage them to serve their own interests (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Thus, it is hard to eradicate racism unless the consequences can benefit dominant groups and people who have privilege (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Intersectionality is also an analytic tool to understand social inequity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Although intersectionality has now formed a different intellectual discipline, Kimberly Crenshaw and other fellow scholars first introduced the concept of intersectionality to explain and challenge the systems of oppression that were not solely rooted in racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021). In the civil rights

movement paradigm, Black women experienced unique marginalization that was not the same as Black men, White women, or a combination of both (Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Hence, Crenshaw(1991) introduced the concept of intersectionality and explained that the oppression and violence experienced by Black women could not be fully explained by looking through the lenses of race or gender separately. Intersectionality allows CRT scholars to recognize the multiple layers of systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism, to name a few (Ladson-Billings, 2021). The interlocking systems of oppression create unique experiences of marginalization and discrimination for individuals with multiple intersecting identities (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

The concept of intersectionality is inextricably linked to the discussion about *essentialism* and *antiessentialism* (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021). Essentialism refers to the belief that a certain group of people shares common and universal characteristics (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021). For example, all marginalized individuals are considered to have oppressive experiences in common (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). While essentialism can cause stereotyping and bias, it can also lead to promoting solidarity for political and social movements among marginalized individuals (Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Antiessentialism, on the other hand, is more closely aligned with the notion of intersectionality. Although a certain group may share common traits, each individual has a different history, backgrounds, and unique lived experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This is referred to as antiessentialism and it allows us to center on the within-group differences as well as the between-group differences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021). Delgado & Stefancic (2017) suggest that AsianCrit and LatCrit are examples of antiessentialism. Scholars of these two different branches of CRT move beyond the generic discourse of racial discrimination

and broaden the understanding of unique realities experienced by Asian or Latinx individuals in the U.S. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Finally, *counterstorytelling* is an important means used in CRT to challenge the mainstream narratives and ultimately dismantle the systems that perpetuate racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Counterstories describe the perspectives and lived experiences of people of color, provide conflicting evidence to the dominant narrative, and allow for a different interpretation of racialized experiences of marginalized individuals (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). For example, Derrick Bell, as a legal storyteller, utilized counterstories to help understand how social institutions criminalize Black individuals and perpetuate the exploitation of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2021). According to Ladson-Billings (2021), the purpose of counterstorytelling is not just to recount stories of personal difficulties as a person of color, but to challenge the systems that give rise to such experiences.

Counterstorytelling is closely related to the concept of revisionist history (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT scholars have highlighted that the mainstream or official history has been constructed from the perspectives of the dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Since the dominant group presents their historical perspectives as “real” and “truthful,” the voices of marginalized individuals and communities who have less power to convey their own stories are often silenced and invalidated (Ladson-Billings, 2021). In order to dismantle the mainstream discourse in history that perpetuates the hegemony of a certain group, CRT scholars argued the necessity to reexamine history from the perspectives of marginalized groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Thus, counterstorytelling is a method to challenge the official history written by the privileged and centering the voices of people whose story was often neglected and less told.

CRT and International Students' Experiences

CRT has been a valuable framework for scholars to understand racialized experiences among students of color in higher education settings (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano et al., 2000). For instance, Solórzano et al. (2000) used the CRT framework to examine the racialized experiences of African American college students. They conducted a focus group interview and found that African American college students were deprived of equal opportunities to have satisfactory educational experiences due to hostile college systems and negative interactions with faculty and peers, which embedded White dominant values as a norm.

Recently, a few scholars have attempted to apply CRT as a framework for understanding international students' experiences in the U.S. (Yao et al., 2019). In a conceptual article by Yao et al. (2019), the key concepts of CRT such as whiteness as property, interest convergence, and intersectionality are utilized to analyze adverse experiences that international students may encounter in U.S. higher education settings. For example, White privilege can be evidenced in the literature where White international students reported fewer incidents of discrimination than international students of color (Lee & Rice, 2007; Yao et al., 2019). In addition, Yao et al. (2019) argue that international students can earn legitimacy to stay when they can provide economic benefits or meet the political and diverse demands of higher education institutions. They illustrate that the interests of international students to attend US higher education institutions can meet only when it converges with the interests of the dominant group (the higher education institutions). Rodriguez et al. (2022) conducted qualitative research on microaggression against international graduate students in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. They also confirmed the ordinary practice of racism, interest

convergence, and intersectionality when it comes to interpreting discriminatory experiences among international graduate students.

In sum, the application of CRT provides a valuable framework for comprehending the underlying mechanisms that hinder the creation of a culturally inclusive learning environment for international students. In addition to that, CRT also provides an important means to dismantle racist and other dominant discourses (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The use of counterstorytelling elucidates the perspectives and lived experiences of people of color, which can offer conflicting evidence to the dominant narrative and enable an alternative interpretation of the racialized experiences of marginalized individuals (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Thus, this study is expected to make a valuable contribution to challenging the oppressive system and fostering culturally inclusive learning environments by prioritizing the personal voices and narratives of ICSs.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 provided an overview of research pertinent to understanding perceived discrimination among international counseling students (ICSs). This chapter reviewed the literature on ICSs' educational experiences as well as perceived discrimination among broader international student populations. Critical Race Theory (CRT) was also introduced as a theoretical framework underpinning this study.

At the current time of this study, perceived discrimination among ICSs has not been a primary focus of an empirical study, while the literature review offers the evidence of prevalence and significance of this topic. Thus, the next chapter will discuss the methods that will be used to collect and analyze ICSs' perceptions and experiences of discrimination based on the CRT framework.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a convergent mixed methods design in that the quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed simultaneously to provide a more complete picture of international counseling students' perceived discrimination and the ways to mitigate the adverse effects of discrimination (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Given that statistical research on perceived discrimination among ICSs is scant, the current study examines ICSs' perceived discrimination quantitatively so that it can contribute to providing a more generalizable understanding of this population. First, the quantitative analysis examines the levels of perceived discrimination among ICSs, focusing on the disparities within the group according to different demographic attributes. Demographic variables such as race/ethnicity (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Hannassab, 2006; Lee & Rice, 2007), nationality (George Mwangi et al., 2019), and English proficiency (Ee, 2013) have been associated with perceived discrimination in the literature on international student populations, broadly speaking. Thus, this study investigates the variations in perceived discrimination according to these demographic factors. In addition, perceived discrimination is known to have a detrimental impact on international students' mental health (Wei et al., 2008; Xiong et al., 2022) and educational satisfaction (Wadsworth et al., 2008). Thus, the second quantitative analysis examines the relationships between perceived discrimination and mental health distress as well as program satisfaction among ICSs.

Concurrently, the qualitative analysis is conducted to provide detailed experiences and perspectives of ICSs regarding this topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Particularly, an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is employed to grasp the common experiences of perceived discrimination among ICSs within their CACREP-accredited programs (Smith et al.,

2021). IPA also focuses on how individuals make sense of their experiences, allowing for the examination of the idiographic and contextual details of each participant's perception and experience with discrimination (Smith et al., 2021). Finally, it is worth mentioning that the focus of the study is on the in-depth qualitative exploration of perceived discrimination among ICSs with the quantitative results playing a secondary role in complementing the findings from the qualitative strand (QUAL + quan).

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:

Qualitative:

1. How do international counseling students experience discrimination within the context of CACREP-accredited counseling programs? (QUAL)
2. How does perceived discrimination impact international counseling students enrolled in CACREP-accredited programs? (QUAL)
3. What is considered helpful by international counseling students in navigating instances of marginalization and discrimination? (QUAL)

Quantitative:

1. Is there variation in the levels of perceived discrimination among international counseling students based on different characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, level of English proficiency, level of education, and length of stay in the U.S.? (quan)
2. What is the relationship between international counseling students' perceived discrimination and mental health distress? (quan)
4. What is the relationship between international counseling students' perceived discrimination and their satisfaction with CACREP-accredited programs? (quan)

Mixed Methods Research Question:

1. To what extent do the quantitative results on perceived discrimination align with the interview findings on perceived discrimination for international counseling students in CACREP-accredited programs? (Mixed Methods)

Positionality and Subjectivity Statement

The researcher's positionality can impact their choice of research topics, data collection and analysis process, and interpretation of the findings (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). To address this issue, the subjectivity statement is utilized to disclose the researcher's positionality and biases affecting their interest in the research topic and design (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). As a researcher of the study, I recognize that my personal experiences and values have shaped my interest and propelled me to conduct the study on this topic of international students' discrimination and marginalization.

Born and raised in a relatively homogenous society in South Korea, the metaphors of the "melting pot" or "salad bowl" regarding the U.S. fascinated me to observe the equitable acceptance and appreciation of diverse cultures. Moreover, as a counselor who is interested in multicultural and social justice issues, I was eager to be engaged in more inclusive and pluralistic environments when I decided to pursue my doctoral studies in the U.S. However, the reality of being an international student in a foreign country thousands of miles away was starkly different from my naive idealistic expectations. I grappled with the realization that my skin is being seen as "colored" and my appearance was subjected to stereotyping and racialization as an Asian woman. The different linguistic and cultural backgrounds that I have from the mainstream U.S. culture led me to feelings of alienation and exclusion. At the same time, when seeking validation

and support, I found myself isolated and being unable to access resources and networks, particularly during the initial two years as the only international student in my program.

Thus, this study was motivated by my personal experiences, leading to an awareness that international students may perceive discrimination and marginalization within their stay in CACREP-accredited programs. Nevertheless, I remain cognizant of the potential bias and subjectivity that my experiences and perspectives may introduce into this research process. As an Asian, second-language English-speaking, able-bodied, cisgender, heterosexual woman from a relatively homogeneous and collectivist Korean culture, my limited personal experiences can create barriers to understanding the diverse and complex aspects of this phenomenon. Although the researcher's experiences and worldview are expected to affect the interpretation of the study in IPA (Smith et al., 2021), I tried to keep track of my beliefs and judgments throughout the phenomenological process by writing subjectivity statements and journaling so that it may not disturb the richer understanding of the participants' experiences. Additionally, member checking and audit processes were employed to make sure of the trustworthiness of the research findings.

Participants

Participants include international students who are currently enrolled or have recently graduated from a master's or doctoral program in CACREP-accredited counseling programs. Survey participants were recruited online through social media and professional listservs in counseling fields such as Counselor Education and Supervision Network (CESNET-L), Association of Counselor Education Supervision International Students and Faculty (ACESISFIN), and Counseling, Social Work & Psychology Graduate Student Support Network Facebook group. Participation criteria include the following: participants who (a) are currently in or have graduated within a year from CACREP-accredited counseling master's or doctoral

programs across the U.S. and (b) hold a student visa or who had a student visa while enrolled in the program. The number of participants for the quantitative phase is 33 participants, which exceeds the minimum of 30 participants to run correlation analyses (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2000).

At the end of the demographic questionnaire, survey participants were asked about their willingness to participate in the interview process if they encountered discrimination and marginalization in CACREP-accredited programs. Recruiting qualitative participants from the same individuals or a subset of individuals who participate in the quantitative strand is a recommended strategy to examine the corroboration and comparison of two types of data without the risk of extraneous information (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). At the same time, since simultaneous and independent data collection is a distinctive feature of convergent mixed methods design contrary to other sequential mixed methods designs, I made sure to prevent relying on the quantitative results in the selection of qualitative participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). First, eight interview participants were selected through convenience sampling utilizing a first-come-first-serve approach. Then, additional two participants were later invited from the initial pool of participants to maintain the variability in the countries of origin amongst participants. Despite variation in participants' demographic details, the sampling process adhered to the purposive homogeneous sampling of ICSs who had experienced discrimination within their CACREP-accredited programs. Purposive homogeneous sampling strategy is recommended for IPA research studies to understand the phenomenon in depth (Smith et al., 2021). The number of interview participants was 10 ICSs, aligning with the recommendation of 5-16 individuals by Spiers and Smith (2019) for IPA studies. This number effectively adheres to the suggested participant range of 5-25 individuals, for a phenomenological study, more broadly speaking (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Data Collection

Instrumentation

Quantitative Instruments

A Qualtrics online survey was developed to measure different variables for quantitative analyses. There were two parts in the survey: the first part included a demographic questionnaire, perceived English proficiency, and the willingness to participate in the interview. The second part of the survey included scales such as the Perceived Discrimination scale, the Mental Health Distress scale, and the Satisfaction with Graduate Program scale.

Demographic Questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire was created by the researcher. The items ask for participants' demographic information (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, country of origin, length of stay in the U.S.) and information about education (e.g., levels of study, enrollment status, and the location of their institution).

Perceived English Proficiency. The level of participants' self-reported English proficiency was measured via the questionnaire developed by Duru and Poyrazli (2011). Perceived English proficiency was measured because international students in previous research studies reported increased levels of perceived discrimination when they indicated they have limited English language proficiency (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011; George Mwangi et al., 2019; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). Duru and Poyrazli (2011) used the four-item self-reported English proficiency questions that measures four areas of language proficiency including understanding, speaking, reading, and writing. This instrument is on a four-point Likert scale, from 1 (very poor) to 4 (very good). The internal consistency coefficient in Duru and Poyrazli (2011) was .79. For the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .87.

Willingness to Participate in Interview. Participants of the survey were asked if they were willing to participate in a one-time interview via Zoom. Participants were asked a yes/no question if they had encountered any forms of discrimination in the program and if they were willing to participate in a Zoom interview.

The Perceived Discrimination Scale. The Perceived Discrimination Scale was employed to gather numerical data on the level of perceived discrimination among ICSs. The scale is composed of eight items from *the perceived discrimination* subscales of Sanhu and Asrabadi's (1994) *acculturative stress* scale for international students. Responses for each item range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) on a five-point Likert scale. The higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived discrimination. An example item is, "I feel that I receive unequal treatment." The internal consistency coefficients in previous research studies were .92 (Karuppan & Barari, 2010; Wei et al., 2008). Evidence for construct validity was provided by a factor analysis confirming the single construct of this subscale (Karuppan & Barari, 2010). For the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Perceived Discrimination Scale was calculated as .89.

Mental Health Distress Scale. The study used the 6-item Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6; Kessler et al., 2002) to measure the mental health distress of participants. The K6 has 6 items that measure mental health status on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (None of the time) to 5 (All of the time). The scores are summed up to yield a minimum score of 6 and a maximum of 30. A higher total score indicates higher levels of mental health distress. Sample items include, "How often did you feel nervous?" and "How often did you feel hopeless?" The K6 consists of one primary factor, measuring non-specific psychological distress (Kessler et al., 2002). Studies have identified the K6 as a useful tool for culturally diverse populations including

diverse racial (Mitchell & Beals, 2011), age (Cotton et al., 2021), gender (Clark et al., 2023), and nationality (Vissocki et al., 2018) groups. It has demonstrated robust psychometric properties, with a range of internal consistency coefficients from .78 to .90 reported in previous literature (Mewton et al., 2016). The current study calculated Cronbach's alpha of K6 as .82.

Satisfaction with the Graduate Program. This study assessed participants' satisfaction with their graduate program with a five-item questionnaire evaluating satisfaction in academic training, clinical training, research training, professional development, and overall satisfaction (Tompkins et al., 2016). Veilleux et al. (2012) created the scale to validate the Graduate Program Climate Scale for clinical psychology programs. Tompkins et al. (2016) modified the items in the study examining the relationship between social support and program satisfaction among students in clinical, counseling, and other related professional psychology programs. Each item is scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Completely dissatisfied) to 7 (Completely satisfied). The summed-up total score ranges from 5 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction. The internal consistency was reported as .84 by Tompkins et al. (2016). For the current investigation, Cronbach's alpha was calculated as .85.

Qualitative Interview Questions

Semi-structured interviews ask a few open-ended questions followed by probing questions, which have advantages in eliciting new, unforeseen ideas while maintaining the structure of the interview (Adams, 2015). The semi-structured one-on-one interview is a recommended data collection method for IPA studies since it allows participants to speak and be heard about their personal experiences in-depth (Smith et al., 2021). Thus, this study used semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data for an in-depth exploration of ICSs who had encountered discrimination and marginalization within CACREP-accredited programs. The pre-

prepared interview questions were developed based on the research questions, theories, and previous research. A copy of the interview protocol including pre-prepared interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

Data Collection Procedures

Purposive and criterion-based sampling were employed in this study. Participants were restricted to individuals who (a) were currently enrolled in or had graduated within a year from CACREP-accredited counseling master's or doctoral programs across the U.S. and (b) held a student visa (F-1 or J-1), or who had held a student visa while enrolled in the program. After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, a link to an online survey was distributed using recruitment emails to professional listservs and the directory of CACREP-accredited program directors. The recruitment was also posted on a Facebook Group. The participants who wanted to participate in the survey could directly access the online survey using Qualtrics. Informed consent was provided at the onset of the survey and individuals could engage in the survey data collection only after the consent to the form. The anticipated time required to complete the survey was between 15 to 20 minutes.

For the qualitative interview phase, participants were selected from those who expressed an interest in participating in an interview at the beginning of the quantitative survey. Following the demographic questionnaire, participants from the quantitative strand were invited to a one-time 60-minute interview. To prevent the survey responses from affecting their decision to participate in the interview, this question about their willingness to participate in the interview was asked at the beginning of survey questions before the participants responded to the perceived discrimination scale. A total of 10 interviewees were chosen for semi-structured Zoom

interviews according to convenience sampling, whereby the researcher prioritized reaching out to the participants who expressed their interest in participating in the interview at an earlier stage.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analyses were performed utilizing SPSS v. 22. Initially, basic descriptive statistics were conducted to present the demographic characteristics of the data. Subsequently, the independent-samples t-tests were employed to assess potential group differences among ICSs concerning their degrees of perceived discrimination. The comparison was conducted based on their race, gender, level of education, level of English proficiency, and length of stay in the U.S. Before conducting the independent t-tests, Shapiro-Wilk tests and Levene's tests were conducted to check the basic assumptions of the independent t-tests (i.e. normality and homogeneity in variance) (Laerd Statistics, 2018a, 2018c).

In addition, Spearman's rank-order correlation was utilized to examine research questions two and three. Spearman's correlation is a nonparametric alternative to Pearson product-moment correlation that enables assessing the association between two variables when their relationship is non-linear (Laerd Statistics, 2018b). After inspecting the linearity using scatterplots, the associations of perceived discrimination with mental health distress and program satisfaction were evaluated using Spearman's correlation coefficients.

Qualitative Analysis

The interviews were analyzed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). While it focuses on the universal experiences of the participants who have experienced the same phenomenon, IPA also highlights individuals' unique meaning-making process of their personal and social world (Smith et al., 2021). IPA appeared to be an appropriate analytic approach for

this study since it aims not only to report the common perceptions and experiences of marginalization and discrimination among ICSs but also to capture the complex and unique experiences of individuals (Spiers & Smith, 2019).

The qualitative data analysis adhered to the process proposed by Smith et al. (2021), which is composed of the following seven steps. Initially, the analysis began with reading and re-reading the first interview transcript to gain a richer understanding of the participant's experiences. The next step was to write initial exploratory notes that capture the participant's language usage, contents of discourse, or initial interpretation as they come to mind. Moving forward, the third step involved constructing experiential statements by reducing initial exploratory notes and summarizing salient aspects extracted from the transcript. I employed open and descriptive coding process that utilized both in vivo and affective/emotion coding to identify and highlight experiential statements. Moving on to the fourth step, I made an initial effort to find connections between the experiential statements and cluster them. Following this, the fifth step is to consolidate the grouping process and create the overarching themes for the first transcript. I repeated the above process from steps one to five to conduct the individual case-level analyses for the other nine interview transcripts. Finally, the analysis culminated in constructing group experiential themes or master themes that were applicable across the entire participants. This cross-case analysis process included producing master themes and subthemes that reflected the convergence and divergence of the participants' experiences.

Mixed Methods Analysis

Data integration in this study occurred at different levels. First of all, the integration of design occurred by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine perceived discrimination and its impacts on international counseling students (Fetters et al., 2013). After

conducting separate quantitative and qualitative analyses, the results were integrated to assess whether the two data sets indicated convergent or divergent stories (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). When it comes to integrating the results, a narrative discussion approach was used to show whether quantitative statistical results confirmed the qualitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Fetters et al., 2013). The results were reported in a narrative that weaved together findings according to the qualitative themes (Fetters et al., 2013). In addition, a joint display was employed to report the integrated interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Fetters et al., 2013). The integrated results in a narrative discussion were converted into a table so that the reader could easily visualize how the qualitative results explain the results found by the quantitative analysis. The overall convergent mixed methods research process diagram is presented in Appendix A.

Reliability and Validity

In order to ensure reliability and validity in the quantitative phase, the instruments were selected from the scales that reported strong psychometric properties in previous studies. Also, Cronbach's alphas of the collected data were calculated to confirm the internal consistency of the data collected for each variable.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis, three strategies were incorporated. Firstly, I continuously reflected on my positionality and its influence on data analysis by journaling (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Journaling was done right after conducting each interview to reflect on my expectations and initial feelings about participant narratives, as well as for comparison with my personal experiences. This reflective journaling assisted in acknowledging my assumptions about discrimination faced by ICSs and embracing unexpected findings recounted by participants. Additionally, I provided a subjectivity statement when

reporting the results so that the reader could understand my position in conducting this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Secondly, participants were invited for member checking on two occasions after transcribing the raw data and conducting the preliminary analyses (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). During the initial round of member checking, participants received verbatim interview transcripts to check the clarity of their responses, make additional comments, and remove the responses that were irrelevant to their intentions. In the second round, the preliminary analyses were sent to each participant and checked whether they thought the identified themes accurately represented their experiences. Participants confirmed the themes, statements, and corresponding quotations. In addition, modifications to the quotations were made as one participant expressed concerns about identifiable information.

Finally, audits were conducted to confirm the appropriateness of both the analysis process and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The descriptions of the qualitative analysis process and the preliminary findings were sent to two external auditors who were professors in CACREP-accredited programs with expertise in qualitative research methods and the research topic. The auditors suggested providing more detailed descriptions of the researcher's positionality and research process and modifying participant profiles to reduce the risk of reidentification. They also offered feedback regarding the findings, confirming the appropriateness of the categorization and representativeness of the examples utilized to describe each theme.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the research design and process of collecting and analyzing the data. A convergent mixed methods design was introduced with information about the researcher's

positionality, participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and data integration strategies.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Participant Demographics

Survey Participants

From October 5, 2023 to November 28, 2023, 56 participants attempted to complete the Qualtrics survey. Of those 56 participants, seven did not meet the screening criteria and 16 did not complete the survey questionnaire. The total number of participants included in quantitative analysis were 33.

As noted in Table 1, more than two thirds of the participants identified as Asian (79%), followed by Black/African (9%), White (6%), multiracial (3%), and self-identify as Turkish (3%). In terms of gender, the majority of participants were cisgender women (76%), while others identified as cisgender men (21%) and non-binary (3%). More than half of the participants were originally from East Asian countries (55%), followed by Southeast Asia (12%), South Asia (9%), Africa (9%), Europe (9%), and North America (6%). Regarding the age group, 73% of the participants were in the age from 25 to 34, followed by 18 to 24 (15%) and 35 to 44 (12%). With regard to the length of staying in the U.S., the group from “1 to 2 years” was the largest (27%), while the other participants belonged to “less than a year” (24%), “2-3 years” (18%), and the other year groups including “3-4 years”, “4-5 years”, “5-6 years”, “6-7 years”, and “more than 7 years” with the same percentage (6%).

Information about the characteristics of their program was also provided. In terms of their level of education, master’s level students were 46% and doctoral students were 55%. Regarding the discipline of their program, more than half of the participants (52%) were in Counselor Education programs, followed by Clinical Mental Health Counseling (39%) and School Counseling (9%) programs. Concerning the participants’ current year in the program, the second

year was the largest group (39%), followed by the first year (36%), the third year (12%), the fourth year (6%), the fifth year (3%), and graduated (3%)

Table 1

Survey Participants Demographics

Characteristics	Number	Percentage (%)
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	26	79
Black/African	3	9
White	2	6
Multiracial	1	3
Self-identify	1	3
Gender		
Cisgender Woman	25	76
Cisgender Man	7	21
Non-binary	1	3
World region of home country		
East Asia	18	55
Southeast Asia	4	12
South Asia	3	9
Africa	3	9
Europe	3	9
North America	2	6
Age		
18 - 24	5	15
25 - 34	24	73
35 - 44	4	12
Level of education		
Master's level	15	46
Doctoral level	18	55
Discipline of their counseling program		
Counselor Education	17	52
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	13	39
School Counseling	3	9
Current year in the program		
1 st year	12	36
2 nd year	13	39

Table 1 (*Continued*)

3 rd year	4	12
4 th year	2	6
5 th year	1	3
Graduated	1	3
Length of Staying in the U.S.		
Less than a year	8	24
1-2 years	9	27
2-3 years	6	18
3-4 years	2	6
4-5 years	2	6
5-6 years	2	6
6-7 years	2	6
More than 7 years	2	6

Note. N = 33

Interview Participants

Among 33 survey participants, 29 participants indicated the willingness to participate in the interview process. Among 29 of them, ten participants were selected and participated in the interview. Eight out of ten participants were then selected based on convenience sampling of participants who submitted their willingness responses earlier. At the later stage, I recruited two more interview participants considering the variability in demographic characteristics among interview participants such as race/ethnicity, country of origin, and level of study. The demographics of the ten interview participants are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Interview Participants Profiles

#	Race/ethnicity	Gender	Region	Level	Year	Stay
1	Asian	Female	Southeast Asia	Doctoral	4 th year	6-7 years
2	Turkish	Female	Europe	Doctoral	2 nd year	1-2 years
3	Asian	Female	East Asia	Master	1 st year	0-1 year

Table 2 (Continued)

4	Asian	Male	Southeast Asia	Doctoral	5 th year	4-5 years
5	Black/African	Female	Africa	Doctoral	2 nd year	1-2 years
6	Asian	Male	East Asia	Master	Graduated	2-3 years
7	White	Female	Europe	Doctoral	2 nd year	7+ years
8	Asian	Male	East Asia	Doctoral	2 nd year	7+ years
9	Asian	Female	South Asia	Doctoral	2 nd year	1-2 years
10	Asian	Female	North America	Master	2 nd year	1-2 years

Note. Region = World region of their home country, Level = Level of study, Year = Year in the program, Stay = Length of staying in the U.S.

Quantitative Results

Variations in Levels of Perceived Discrimination

Initially, descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the degrees of perceived discrimination among ICSs. The overall mean score and itemized mean scores for the Perceived Discrimination scale were calculated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total mean score of the Perceived Discrimination scale was 2.87, indicating moderate levels of perceived discrimination experienced by ICSs. The results revealed two items surpassing a moderate level of perceived discrimination ($M > 3$), including item 2, “I am treated differently in social situations” ($M = 3.06$) and item 6 “I feel that my people are discriminated against.” ($M = 3.30$). The items with the lowest mean scores were item 4, “I feel that I receive unequal treatment.” ($M = 2.73$) and item 5, “I am denied what I deserve.” ($M = 2.48$).

Table 3*Mean and SD for Perceived Discrimination Scale (n=33)*

#	Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
1	Many opportunities are denied to me.	2.88	1.14	1	5
2	I am treated differently in social situations.	3.06	1.12	1	5
3	Others are biased toward me.	2.94	1.00	1	4
4	I feel that I receive unequal treatment.	2.73	1.07	1	4
5	I am denied what I deserve.	2.48	1.12	1	5
6	I feel that my people are discriminated against.	3.30	1.07	1	5
7	I am treated differently because of my race.	2.79	1.24	1	5
8	I am treated differently because of my color	2.79	1.24	1	5
Total		2.87	.85	1	4.63

Independent-samples t-tests were employed to answer the first quantitative research question, examining group differences in the levels of Perceived Discrimination scores based on ICSs' race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, length of stay in the U.S., and English proficiency level. To conduct the statistical analyses of comparing two independent groups, the demographics groups were reconfigured. Five different racial/ethnic groups were regrouped into either White or People of Color groups. The gender category focused on cisgender men and women groups without including the binary gender identity of one participant. This decision was made because of the binary comparison nature of the independent t-test and the low response rate represented in the binary gender identity group ($n = 1$). Eight different groups in the length of stay in the U.S. category were combined into two groups, evenly dividing the total participants at the midpoint of two years. In addition, survey participants were divided into two groups based on whether their perceived English proficiency score was above or below the mean score ($M =$

3.29): high levels of perceived English proficiency ($M > 3.29$) and low levels of perceived English proficiency ($M < 3.29$). The level of education groups stayed the same since it originally consisted of two groups. Table 4 demonstrates the descriptive statistics for perceived discrimination in each group.

Given the relatively small sample size and the imbalance in sample size within certain categories, the normality and the equal variance assumptions of t -test were examined before conducting the t -tests (Laerd Statistics, 2018a). First, the normal distribution of the perceived discrimination variable for each group was examined using the Shapiro-Wilk tests. As presented in Table 4, the Shapiro-Wilk tests produced p -values exceeding .05, thereby did not show evidence of non-normality. In addition, the Levene's tests were utilized to examine the homogeneity of variances between the two groups compared. The outcomes of the Levene's tests, as shown in Table 4, indicated no significant differences in the variances between the groups under comparison.

Table 4

The Assumptions Testing for the t -tests

		Shapiro-Wilk test			Levene's test		
		Statistic	df	p	F	df	p
Race	White	-	-	-	.29	31	.596
	People of Color	.97	30	.438			
Gender	Cisgender Man	.91	7	.388	.06	30	.802
	Cisgender Woman	.94	25	.177			
Level of Education	Master's level	.96	14	.751	1.40	31	.247
	Doctoral level	.95	18	.415			
Length of Stay in the U.S.	0-2 Years	.92	17	.123	.94	31	.340
	2+ Years	.93	15	.245			
Perceived English Proficiency	High	.96	19	.614	.01	31	.931
	Low	.90	13	.114			

As the Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's tests yielded satisfactory outcomes in meeting the assumptions for the *t*-tests, independent *t*-tests were subsequently conducted to compare the perceived discrimination mean scores among the groups in various demographic categories. The results of independent *t*-tests as shown in Table 5 revealed no significant differences based on race, gender, level of education, and perceived English proficiency. On the other hand, the independent *t*-test demonstrated a statistically significant group difference in length of stay in the U.S. at the alpha level of .05, indicating ICSs staying in the U.S. more than two years ($M = 3.24$, $SD = .59$) reported higher levels of perceived discrimination than ICSs staying in the U.S. less than two years ($M = 2.52$, $SD = .92$).

Table 4

Independent t-tests for Group Differences in the Levels of Perceived Discrimination

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>
Race	White	2	1.81	1.15	1	2.63	-1.90	31	.067
	People of Color	31	2.94	.80	1	4.63			
Gender	Cisgender Man	7	3.12	.98	1.25	4.25	.91	30	.370
	Cisgender Woman	25	2.79	.83	1	4.63			
Level of Education	Master's level	15	2.73	1.00	1	4.63	-.85	31	.401
	Doctoral level	18	2.99	.70	1.25	4.25			
Length of Stay in the U.S.	0-2 Years	17	2.52	.92	1	4.63	-2.67	31	.012*
	2+ Years	16	3.24	.59	2.25	4.25			
Perceived English Proficiency	High	14	2.65	.89	1	3.88	1.30	31	.206
	Low	19	3.03	.80	1	4.63			

Note. * $p < .05$

Perceived Discrimination and Associated Variables

Quantitative research questions two and three were to investigate the relationship between ICSs' perceived discrimination and mental health, and the relationship between perceived discrimination and program satisfaction. To answer these two questions, Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients are calculated. As demonstrated in Table 6, the level of perceived discrimination did not have statistically significant relationships with either mental health distress ($r_s = 1.59, p = .376$) or program satisfaction ($r_s = -.08, p = .661$).

Table 6

Spearman's Correlation with Perceived Discrimination

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	r_s	p value
Mental Health Distress	2.24	.64	1	3.50	1.59	.376
Program Satisfaction	5.06	1.18	2	7	-.08	.661

Note. r_s = Spearman's rho with perceived discrimination

Qualitative Results

Five group experiential themes and 22 subthemes emerged from 75 experiential statements derived from the seven-step IPA procedure recommended by Smith et al. (2021). Identified group experiential themes and subthemes are visualized in Table 7 and Figure 1.

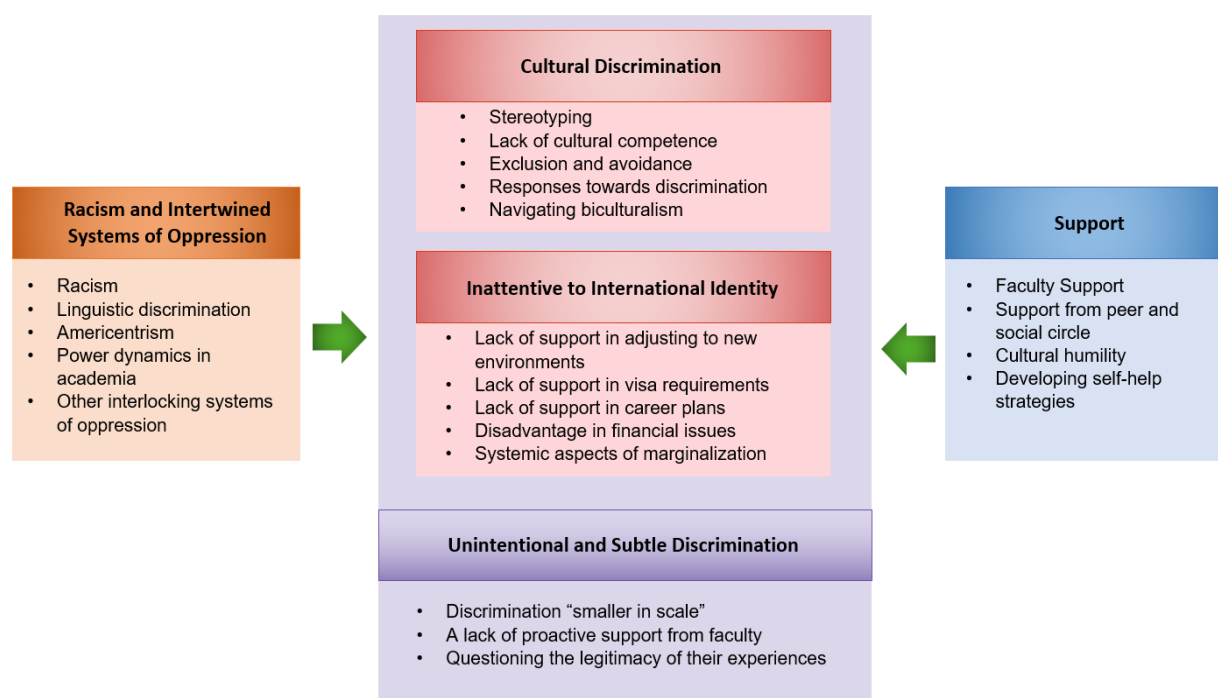
Table 7

Group Experiential Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme
Unintentional and subtle discrimination	Discrimination "smaller in scale"
	A lack of proactive support from faculty
	Questioning the legitimacy of their experiences
Cultural Discrimination	Stereotyping
	Lack of cultural competence

Table 7 (Continued)

	Exclusion and avoidance
	ICSs' Responses to Marginalization
	Navigating biculturalism
Inattentive to International Identity	Lack of support in adjusting to new environments
	Lack of support in visa requirements
	Lack of support in career plans
	Disadvantages in financial issues
	Systemic aspects of marginalization
Racism and intertwined systems of oppression	Racism as a primary source of adverse experiences
	Linguistic discrimination
	Americentrism
	Power dynamics in academia
	Other interlocking systems of oppression
Support	Faculty support
	Support from peer and social circle
	Cultural humility
	Developing self-help strategies

Figure 1*Diagram for Group Experiential Themes and Subthemes*

Unintentional and Subtle Discrimination

When reflecting on perceived discrimination, the majority of participants discussed the subtle and unintentional aspects of discrimination and marginalization they encountered. They shared discrimination they encountered was indirect, subtle, and “smaller in scale (said participant 8),” which made them believe that those instances occurred unconsciously and without malicious intent. While faculty did not intend to harm ICSs, many participants reported a lack of proactive support to create inclusive environments as a form of subtle and unintentional discrimination. Since discrimination usually happens in nuanced and unintentional forms, participants reported having difficulty discerning the existence of discrimination or filing complaints about it.

Discrimination “Smaller in Scale”

Regarding their experiences of discrimination and marginalization, a majority of participants reported that their experiences were subtle and indirect discrimination, rather than overt or blatant forms of discrimination. Participant 7 shared, “I never had anybody directly say anything derogatory to me. I never had anybody directly do those overt, discriminatory acts. ... People just forget that I have different needs.” Similarly, participant 8 described that his experiences had more to do with microaggressions based on the lack of understanding about his background.

I think my experiences of discrimination might be smaller in scale with things like you experience more of microaggressions than straight-up, straight-up behaviors that are done to hurt me, to discriminate me. I think it's more of a lack of understanding, a lack of consideration of my race. It's usually felt in that way. I think discrimination is usually felt in a way that is micro-scale.

In addition to the subtle and nuanced aspects of discrimination, some participants emphasized the unintentionality of discrimination. Participant 4 stated,

I think the hard part is sometimes some of these things didn't come from bad intention. But I guess it was more of like how the classes was catered and into like the, let's say, American context or American people.

In a similar vein, participant 1 pointed out the general good intentions of people in the program despite a lack of multicultural competencies. She described, "But they're all like very nice and kind. Just that I still think that lack of knowledge and lack of multiculturalism. In terms of... I mean, they're, they're all good intention. But the impact sometimes it's a bit different."

While most participants reported their experiences with subtle and unintentional discrimination or marginalization, some also reported overt and blatant forms of discrimination they encountered within the program. For instance, participant 2 disclosed a direct discriminatory comment from a faculty member in the program who explicitly refused to accept additional international students from her country.

In my department, we don't have much international students. And the only international students are from Turkey... Our department doesn't take, I mean, international students from other countries... So I realize that some people started discriminate us like. "Oh, no more Turkish students," like as a joke. But it cannot be joke. This is, this is a faculty who's doing that. When he met with the new incoming doctoral students, Turkish doctoral student. But this cannot be joke, you know. Oh, no more Turkish. Are you Turkish? No more Turkish like this is not funny. This is not joke, this is discriminating

us, and this is not our fault. The Department can hire more Ph.D. students from other countries.

Participant 6 also shared experiencing overt verbal abuse from his internship site supervisor, who demonstrated a lack of understanding about participant 6's non-native English status. Facing challenges in fulfilling internship requirements due to language barriers, the participant endured harassment and lack of understanding from the site supervisor:

My site supervisors do just kind of, you know, yelled at me, raise their voice at me for not turning my notes in on time or based on their deadline, which is like 3 days, in 3 days. Yeah, I think that's I would say can kind of constitute as discrimination.

A Lack of Proactive Support from Faculty

A lack of proactive support from faculty was identified as a form of subtle and unintentional discrimination, exacerbating the marginalization of ICSs. Participant 8 recollected a support group for Asian international students within the program when the heightened anti-Asian sentiment during COVID-19 negatively impacted Asian communities. While grateful for faculty efforts, he also questioned why such an effort had not been implemented earlier even before any harmful incidents happened.

In terms of like support for discrimination. I think it was... It's usually more reactive from the program, cause I remember in my Master's, when there was the anti-Asian hate movement going on, our program did create a sort of support group for Asian international students at that time. I can't say I'm proud that they have that support because I think of like, why didn't they have this before the pandemic? Why didn't they do this before everything had happened? You know this should be something that was

built into a program rather than Oh, there's something that's going on. So now we're gonna have a support group. It seemed like, it seemed like they're they're checking. They're checking something off their list like, Oh, there's something that really harmful that happened to this group of students. So we're now we're gonna do this thing. So then, we can prove to others that we're doing things to address this problem.

If faculty responds passively to the actual instances of discrimination that ICSs encounter, the resulting harm is more significant and perpetuating. Participant 10 recalled the faculty's response to students' negative feedback regarding an internship site. Despite students filing claims about racist incidents that occurred at the internship site, the program responded with passive, dismissive, and rather quick-fix solutions.

It seems kind of dismissive. It seems like they tried their best to try to change to alleviate the harm. But then, like situationally, the next semester, all the students were white passing so, and the site was obviously on their best behavior. So they were like, so obviously they passed the tests right? But it's just didn't consider the circumstances were so different. Like, you have 3 Chinese students in that first semester where they experience so much racism. And then the next semester, all the students were White or White passing like, how can you judge the quality of the site based on these differentiating factors.

Regarding the lack of proactive support, some participants pointed out the discrepancy between the diversity statements and the actual support provided within CACREP-accredited programs. Participant 2 said, "Big, huge statements of diversity doesn't solve everything. It's not that. We are giving emphasis on DEI. It's so important. But they're not genuine." Likewise, participant 3 shared,

I read some papers like to create a more inclusive environment, or to provide equitable educational opportunities like... they should reach out to us and then like, ask what we want, what we still need to kind of advance our degree. But I don't feel like (they do).

Questioning the Legitimacy of Their Experiences

Due to its subtle nature compared to overt discrimination, more than half of the participants found it difficult to recognize the existence of discrimination. They questioned themselves about the legitimacy of arguing that they had undergone adverse instances. For example, participant 9 recounted instances where she perceived a lack of sufficient support from her advisor and reflected:

It could be discrimination. It could be bad mentorship. It's very. It was very subtle.

Basically, if I have to put it that way. It wasn't like a very overt like... They will not give you this opportunity, because you are a darker skin tone person, or a brown student, or something like that. It is, there was just no communication at all. Right?

Participant 8 expressed a similar reflection when he confronted with delayed responses from the state licensure board.

Yeah, that's the part that I hesitate to say. Because that's the thing with discrimination.

Right? You never really know if you're being treated differently because of your identities. ... Is it because, like my name is not American enough that you're not treating my concerns as importantly and as urgently? Is it because, you know, I hold a out-of-state degrees. So that was kind of a core part of what my problem was encountering was I got my degree in State 1, and now I'm trying to get license in State 2, and they were having some difficulty confirming the validity of my degree. ... So, so yeah, throughout the

whole process, I felt like I had to constantly prove myself and prove the legitimacy of my degree which is frustrating, and I wonder if I had been an American local student, would I have encountered the same set of problems? So I think it's always that doubt.

While many participants talked about the uncertainty of the presence of discrimination and the burden to question their own experiences, participant 5 showed her concerns that she was not discriminated against enough to contribute to the research. At the end of the interview, she provided the following comment:

I'm not helping you like, I feel like I'm not answering your questions. I because... I feel like I'm not maybe I don't have real examples of marginalization. Cause I can't tell you that maybe someone has insulted me or told me I can't be a part of something.

In addition to the indirect and subtle nature of the discrimination, the status of being international students led some of the participants to feel ineligible to speak up for themselves. Participant 5 shared,

Exactly no one told you to. No, you know you are not invited here. You applied for a visa you applied to the program. You did the interview prepared for it. Now you're here. So get on with it.

Participant 3 presented a similar sentiment when she talked about the subtle exclusion from classroom discussion in the multicultural course. She explained that,

I'm not sure cause it's a United States program, of course, it should be tailored to, you know, people here who share the common history. Maybe it's a destiny that we as international students will always be aliens.

The perceived lack of legitimacy to voice may also derive from their standing within the hierarchical structure of academia. Participant 3 recalled her experience of being excluded from a leadership activity with senior peers in the program, saying, “But, on the other hand, I know that I just started. Maybe I don't have that enough knowledge for me to make any contribution.”

Cultural Discrimination

ICSs encounter unfair treatment or alienation stemming from their cultural differences. This cultural discrimination can be manifested through stereotyping, exclusion and avoidance, and a lack of cultural competencies within their counseling programs. As a result, ICSs may experience negative emotional and cognitive responses such as a lack of sense of belonging, homesickness, and becoming more reserved in peer relationships, while simultaneously learning to navigate biculturalism.

Stereotyping

Stereotyping related to ICSs' race and ethnicity, their home country, and international student status was the most common form of cultural discrimination reported by the participants. Several participants shared instances where others held specific beliefs about them solely based on their cultural identity and delivered those assumptions without hesitation or questioning. Participant 7, for example, talked about bearing the burden of correcting the bias when she had a conversation with a faculty member who had assumptions about the career trajectories of international students:

I also often get this like, “well, what are you gonna do with your degree when you go back?” Of this like, okay, well, you must go back. Or are you thinking about staying? like, “yeah, I'd like to be a faculty member here.” “Oh!” You know this like weird... I don't know. Nobody else has to listen to like, “Well, are you gonna move back to another

state when you're done?" like people just expect you to do your job. People just expect you to be good at what you do no matter where you're at, versus here, it's always this expectation of like either 'how dare you go back,' or 'How? How? Why would you stay?' So you always have to justify everything.

Participant 5 also experienced her clients stereotyping her home country. She interpreted it not as offensive but rather as a lack of knowledge about her cultural background, influenced by media representation:

Most of it was based on their lack of knowledge about, you know. Some of them will ask me if I had fast food. you know, and also in yes, yes, we're in the city. We have KFC in *Country 5*. You know, they have very interesting questions. The one asked me how I got here, you know, and I said I took a plane. Oh, you have planes in *Country 5*, so it's more a lack of knowledge. And also, I guess what they see on television about Africa.

In addition to overt stereotyping of their cultural identity, some participants reported more hidden and subtle forms of stereotypes. They described instances where they were complimented for being exceptional or conforming to stereotypical traits associated with international students or their racial and ethnic groups. For instance, two participants mentioned experiences of being complimented regarding their English proficiency. Participant 10 shared,

So first day of class, we sit down and we're supposed to go in a circle and explain, and like, say our names, say where we're from, and like what we're interested in about the subject. Get to my friend, and she's like, "Hi, my name is so and so I'm from *Country 10*. And like, I'm excited about this course because XYZ." And then the professor in front of the entire class goes, "Wow! Your English is so good. In front of everyone."

Additionally, participant 2 illustrated an example of unintentional discrimination committed by a faculty member. While it was masked as a compliment on the surface, the underlying assumption was a stereotype directed toward her entire ethnic group. She said,

People are trying to compliment you with your ethnic background with your race, with your nationality, but it's not compliment. Let me explain it. One of my professors asked me. It was the first class of the semester, and she asked me, "where are you from?" I said, "I'm from *Country 2*," and she said, "Oh, I have been in *Country 2*, you look more prettier than the other *Country 2* people I have met.

Furthermore, some participants shared experiences that they felt tokenized and recognized solely for a specific identity, either based on their racial identity or their status as international students. For example, participant 7 disclosed her experience at conferences, particularly when being introduced to new people there:

The idea of like people introducing me as like. This is Participant 7, and she's from *Country 7*. Well, but I'm also a second-year doc student, and I'm also a researcher, and I'm also an LPC associate. So this idea of being kind of reduced to the novelty is also prominent, and it doesn't happen often. It really doesn't. It happens more from peers. Faculty is usually pretty good about not letting that define me, which is again, they forget often. But from peers it usually happens. "Yeah, this is Participant 7, and she's *a person from Country 7*." And then "I hear why I don't hear an accent. How long have you been here? You must have grown up here." So it's always... those are the small moments where I'm like, okay, I know exactly what you're gonna ask. I know exactly that that's the only thing you're gonna remember about me. I know exactly that all of a sudden you could be careless about my research interest or what I'm, what kind of clients I see, or

whatever, like all of a sudden, like being *a person from Country 7* is the only thing that matters.

A Lack of Cultural Competence

Lack of cultural competence among peers and faculty contributes to unfair or marginalized experiences among ICSs. Two participants mentioned the alienation caused by limited knowledge about their cultural background. Participant 1 recalled an “awkwardness” coming from people confused about where she was from. She said, “For example, like asking ‘where from?’ And I say ‘I’m from *Country 1*’, and they will still say, ‘Oh, *Country 11* [*country starts with the same first alphabet with country 1*], I love *Country 11*’ so you know that that’s kind of awkwardness.” Participant 5 also highlighted her experiences of being alienated from her peers mainly due to their limited knowledge of her culture. She explained that the alienation happened based on their reluctance to potentially offend her with their limited knowledge of her culture. She stated, “Sometimes I think they don’t know what to do with me because I’m an international student, and they’re trying to be nice, and that they don’t. Maybe they don’t want to be offensive, and so some of them will hold back.”

While some participants reported limited cultural knowledge as a factor contributing to marginalization, more participants indicated faculty and peer attitudes toward different cultures as a manifestation of insufficient cultural competence. Four participants noted a lack of interest or curiosity regarding the topics related to international individuals. Participant 1 expressed that her perspectives as a person from a different country often go unrecognized in classroom discussions.

But before it was more like, whenever I talk about something “Oh, in *Country 1* we, our, for example, social cultural structure look like blah blah blah.” And then feels like

nobody wants to respond to that, you know. Just in the classroom discussion, they were just like, “Oh, okay.” and then nothing else. But when they talk about, for example, like this person come from New York. This person come from California. This person come from Louisiana, different states, and they said about all... my hometown back in Louisiana. It's look like what blah blah blah, and then they will respond to them.

Participant 4 echoed a similar lack of acknowledgment about his contribution to classroom discussion. He particularly emphasized how his perspectives are minimized as specific and unique, not applicable to the common context.

When I shared sometimes, it felt that I shared very, very specific experiences and might not actually be something that the professor, or even the class discussion, was looking for. Because this was more of like, “Oh. your very specific context, or you are from international background. Oh, this is from your like local country, or from your specific like culture.” And might not be relevant at all about what they were talking about... it is kind of reaction that there's nothing much that's built on.

Sometimes, a lack of cultural competencies leads to the minimization of differences and the erasure of unique experiences. Participant 1 recounted her experience of having to advocate for herself to receive enough breaks from the internship site to return home. She described how the significance of her challenges related to being away from home was dismissed and minimized.

And also, I would say it's just overall homesickness. I think it's very easy to be generalized in terms of homesickness. People would just say, oh, yeah, I miss my hometown as well. But their home town is like, maybe like 3 hours away, just driving. You can actually go back home through a weekend, and we're 1,000 miles away. It's not

something that we can just say, Hey, I wanna go back home, and then you just immediately go because we have extra. You know you have to pay for tickets. You have to do extra work to advocate (for) yourself to go back home.

Combined with her racial identity as a White individual, participant 7 articulated the experience of engaging in the discussion about marginalization within the counseling field. She recounted the erasure and dismissal of her challenges as an international student, while acknowledging the burdens and systemic marginalization faced by students of color.

But I often get passed over as an international student. People don't realize that I have the challenges I do have... And there was a couple of people at the table that were offended, that were really, really offended, that I brought up my experience because I am from a majority culture as European American. But I am not European American.

Exclusion and Avoidance

The majority of participants recollected that exclusion happened in classroom conversations. Although faculty and peers might not be intentional, when the conversation topic is inconsiderate towards ICSs' identity and cultural background, it can make ICSs feel invisible and neglected in the classroom discussion. Participant 1 explained an instance of her identity as a second-language English speaker being neglected:

There was a class that a faculty asked them to reflect on which client or what, what group of clients that you feel least comfortable working with. And then we divided it into small groups. And I was the only one who's English is not my native language in that group. So when one of the senior students talked about not feeling comfortable working with someone whose English is not their first language, I was like, 'Okay, so even though I know you're talking about client. But I'm also English is not my first language. So I was a

bit like, what does that mean?’ And the others are all like, “Oh, yeah, it's really difficult, it is.” And I kind of feel like neglected in that group. I felt like I was invisible and feel like nobody cares about my feelings.

Moreover, some participants spend a considerable amount of time discussing exclusion happening in multicultural counseling courses or topics related to multiculturalism in a broader context. Participant 3 described challenges in a lack of attention to her limited knowledge of U.S. history, which resulted in experiences of being excluded from classroom conversations and difficulty in finding relevance for herself:

What I cannot like that much resonant with its like multicultural counselling, because it basically tells us, like from the white people's angle, like they're talking about black people's oppression for the past hundreds of years. And I feel like I, we were required to read a lot of readings from this. But cause I'm from *Country 3*, I don't know little history about that, and I know little history about America. So this course is particularly very hard for me to understand.

Participant 4 also discussed the knowledge gaps in understanding the context of multicultural counseling courses, specifically about racism and oppression in the U.S., and how this knowledge gap prevented him from being a part of classroom discussions. He delineated,

I think when there are classes that require more of the specific knowledge in terms of the knowledge about the U.S. The, let's say, Critical Race Theory, or maybe Black history, all of those things. I felt, especially in the beginning, as very stressful, because I wasn't sure how to really participate or get in that space. Because one part of it is a lot of things that was going on. There was more about the knowledge that's relevant or that's like

about the U.S. specifically. So, I think it was really hard for me to kinda like, you know, really be a part of that.

Additionally, participant 4 conveyed the difficulty of personally connecting with the topic, saying, “It was almost like I had to try to understand someone else's through the third-person lens, but not how I can, as a First-person, interact with many of the content or the discussion.”

Furthermore, participant 9 expressed dissatisfaction with the erasure or invisibility of international students and global perspectives from the discussion about multiculturalism.

In my first, in the first and second year, there's only two international students. There is not a conversation about, how are we adjusting here. There's no conversation about multiculturalism and stuff like that in coursework, right? Like, we all talk about oh we are willing to talk about international students, global perspective, multiculturalism. But I'm not learning anything about international psychology or international students in my coursework. Like I, I'm taking multiculturalism right now. I learned about native Americans. I learned about African, Black Americans. I'm like, I learned nothing about Asian Americans. I learned nothing about my identity. There was nothing about other identities who are international. And I was like, why is that missing?

Then, participant 9 further claimed,

And faculties, programs, they need to be aware of how much knowledge they have for international students. A lot of times, they just bring in. But then there's nothing. Right? So are you celebrating us? Right? There's no dialogue around international students like, are you in, are you in, for example, are you including global perspectives or international perspectives in multiculturalism classes.

Thus, the invisibility of their unique identity creates this inadvertent exclusion from classroom discussions about multicultural topics. Moreover, at the same time, ICSs may also face a double marginalization, as they become suddenly visible due to their lack of understanding of the U.S. cultural standards. Participant 4 recounted his experiences of being misunderstood and facing outward conflict from domestic peers:

So that there was another part where I engage in a conversation where I was confronted with something that I said out that I didn't think would be interpreted as a racist or discriminatory. triggered a conversation that led to me being confronted as of like, "what did it mean?" As of the things I said, and I have to be the one to explain to them that I'm international, I'm new. I didn't refer to a specific race. and so that one as well was something that I felt pretty... I don't want to say again, like discriminatory, but maybe more in terms of like very narrow in terms of like, because I feel like the intention of the program is more of like, "Hey, let us protect the minority people. Let us protect those who are underserved." And so that was why I felt like that conversation happened. I, looking back, could see why that was the case. But then, again, it was also really hard for me to understand from a personal perspective back, then of what was going on there, or why I was confronted. And so I had to be the one to explain to them when I figured after a while that they misunderstood me.

Beyond the exclusion within the classroom, participants reported exclusion from relationships in the program. Participant 5 elucidated how cultural differences could result in subtle exclusion from the friend circle among peers:

You know they won't have the same jokes that you don't share this the same joke. So you're going to make them uncomfortable, so they won't include you. But you can't really

prove it, because no one said anything. There isn't, "Oh, *Participant 5*, you can't come."
But you find out that everyone is somewhere, and you are not.

Participant 3 also shared exclusion from relationships, but hers was more related to professional relationships rather than personal ones. She recently quit a leadership position within the program because peers who shared the leadership positions created subtle exclusion, supposedly due to her nationality:

What happened in the *Leadership* Co-Chair stuff, where I also my voice is not being heard, cause it's totally like their ideas. Yeah, I think overall like, maybe students from *Country 3* are... invisible. Let's put it this way.

In addition, the ascription of intelligence and competencies was reported by some participants. Participant 7 described, "This hasn't necessarily happened from professors as much as it happens from peers, or like master students. When I do tell them I'm from *Country 7*. There's this shift in perception of like, okay, you're not as capable." Participant 2 provided a more specific example about how her intelligence or skills were underestimated and her success was attributed only to her specific minoritized identity. She shared,

Graduate program director is faculty from *Country 2*. She's a very good Academician in *Country 2*, too. ... I heard this department because she's working here. So I applied this program, anyway, some people are like, "Oh, *Dr. FACULTY* brought all of you [students from *Country 2*] here." ... I am shocked. Each time I heard that, I think they are questioning, sometimes questioning how fair we are [admitted] here. Because, you know, our program director is from *Country 2* and the only international students are from *Country 2*. I don't know. I don't feel sometimes when I hear something like this, it sounds

so discriminating to me. Because I am not different than you. I am as smart as you, I earned being here.

ICSs' Responses to Marginalization

Negative emotional and cognitive experiences are commonly reported due to cultural discrimination. A lack of sense of belonging was what participant 2 reported as a response to cultural discrimination. "Loneliness here. Because each time you interact with people, you realize you are not belonging here. You are a outlier... Yeah, I think it's very hard to feel attached to here. It feels isolated sometimes." Since she did not have enough support systems here in the U.S., she explained that the impact of isolation within the program was more significant. She explained,

It hurts me a lot like because I'm relying on that people. Those people are my everything here because I don't have anybody other than that. My faculty and my peers, that's all. I don't have anybody in this country.

Participant 10 also shared a similar sentiment and how this lack of belongingness led her to feel homesickness. She said,

I guess it made me feel like I regretted my decision of coming to the United States. It made me feel because I felt so marginalized. I felt so othered. I felt so. I felt like a minority. It made me want to go home. It made me homesick to go back to a place where it was more multicultural, and where I never experienced these experiences before.

Becoming reserved in peer relationships was another consequence that resulted from the discrimination participants experienced. Following the experience of exclusion and being unheard in the leadership experience, participant 3 decided to "just quit." She explained, "I just

quit. I don't want to take that. I don't wanna like this is crazy. If it's using, it's your job, then you can go do it. Don't include me." Participant 2 also reported changes in her attitude toward her peers after experiencing subtle avoidance and exclusion in relationships.

I feel a little bit less motivated than I came here first time to build relationship. I just okay. I don't want relationship. I'm good. If you want me, I'm okay. I can go out with you. But I'm not trying. I was trying so hard to build relationship with people. Now, I'm just in the position of okay, we are professional. We are sharing professional settings. So if you want social setting. You can let me know. But I'm not trying hard.

Navigating Biculturalism

As a breakthrough from marginalization, half of the ten participants explained that they utilized assimilation. Participant 1 stated, "I feel like I have to act like Americans so that people would accept, so that I actually don't receive so much discrimination." Similarly, participant 4 shared that he had to choose conversation topics that he believed would be accepted: "Over the years that I could see more of how I could cater or share the aspect that seems to be more relevant to them or what they're talking about. But initially very difficult." Participant 4 added that his prolonged stay in the U.S. had helped him to find a breakthrough:

As I stayed longer in the program in the U.S., many of the cultural pieces that I struggled initially were the information or pieces that I think in a way, help me to understand more where people are coming from. So the more that's the case, the less I feel irrelevant or marginalized. I still do have that sense that, like me, being Asian or me like this like appear with my identities, with all that I am, will remain to be a big part of how people perceive me, but at the very least, all the years, I think, like many of these new found

languages, vocabularies, and relevance, and connecting the dots help for me to know better of how I can navigate or relate to what's going on here.

Participant 2 also detailed her use of assimilation as a means to avoid marginalized: “Now I'm turning to more individualistic like culture because of that discrimination, that outlier. I don't want to be outlier. I don't want to be marginalized.” However, she also expressed that her plan to stay in the U.S. had motivated her to be assimilated into U.S. culture. She said, “Because if I was planning to go back to *Country 2*. I wouldn't care actually. Just take my Ph. D. and go back like, it's just 3 years program. I wouldn't care so much. But now I'm trying. I'm trying to feel belong. I'm belonging here.”

While sharing a similar experience of assimilating to avoid marginalization, participant 8 still experienced feelings of being othered. He specified the conversation about Halloween:

And sometimes it's like, you can kind of play along and say, “Oh, yeah, I'm going to this party, or whatever I'm dressing up as this, that.” But then I feel like the connection, the emotional distant is still there of... oh, this isn't really my holiday that I didn't grow up celebrating, and I have to say something fun just to feel like I'm assimilating into your culture just to feel like I'm more in this group.

Along the same line, participant 1 also shared feelings of “losing a piece” of herself while assimilating to American culture:

I also feel like I'm losing a piece of myself being in my own culture. ... once I'm more Americanized, people accept me here. But ... there's a piece of me feel like they also don't know what my culture really looks like. So I've been thinking about this, and there's a phrase in my mind I keep thinking about is that I really want to tell people that you will never know how interesting, how funny I am when I speak Chinese. You'll never know

my personality when I speak Chinese. ... you never know who I truly am because when I'm speaking Chinese, that's who I truly am.

Despite the unique response from participant 9, she highlighted the potential association between acculturation process and recognition of discrimination by sharing the difficulty in noticing the existence of discrimination due to adjusting to a new environment. She added how she was able to identify discrimination committed by her advisor gradually. She explained,

I told you I came here last year in August. ... There was still a lot of moments of questions and doubts, and like, am I doing this properly and just like very minor cultural differences, and so on. So I think in my program first year, who seemed lot more like I am adjusting. And I didn't focus a lot more on the discrimination or anything like that. Like that was not something I paid attention to very consciously, because I had other priorities to deal with, like adjusting, figuring out my life here and things like that. But then, as I started talking to people, and so on, and now that I feel more settled here. I think now my brain is moving towards like oh, I wonder why this person said something like this? I wonder why I did not get the support from this faculty? So I think those were things. I started noticing a bit more because of my conversations with people, or seeing that different students have had different experiences.

Inattentive to International Identity

Participants perceive discrimination and marginalization when faculty fails to acknowledge or provide adequate support for the unique challenges and needs of ICSs including adjustment to new environment, visa requirements, difficulties in job search, and disadvantages in financial issues. The inattentiveness to distinctive challenges faced by ICSs may further be

perpetuated by the system that is not supportive and inconsiderate of international students in counseling programs.

Lack of Support in Adjusting to New Environments

The majority of participants highlighted the challenges they face in adjusting to new living and academic environments. Difficulties in adjusting to new living environments include tasks such as “to find your own housing, your own transportation, your own health insurance,” just as participant 5 articulated. When it comes to adjusting new academic environments, participant 3 shared difficulties “in writing in like academic paper and English. But a lot of assignments are required APA style,” which was not familiar to her. Participant 4 described his unfamiliarity with classroom structures:

I struggle again in that sense because I didn't know how to interact in the class where there's also another part where I didn't know, too, how to really express my thoughts on my experiences, especially in the beginning.

The challenges in adjustment also came from language barriers. For instance, participant 5 explained how her academic challenges derived from language barriers: “When I'm working on an assignment. I feel like I spend more time on an assignment because of the language barrier compared to the people in my cohort, because it's not my mother's tongue.” Since counseling is a profession that requires advanced language skills, language barriers can be more pronounced in clinical settings. Participant 6 described his experience in the internship:

Of course, we are offering counseling in a second language. We won't be able to display as much counseling skills as a native speaker can. Sometimes it's even hard to understand some jargons, although I think my English is good enough in the sense that I can

understand 99% of what my clients are saying. But takes us longer, maybe to process the information to find, pinpoint emotions.

And he explained how this language barrier made it harder for him to fulfill the internship requirements:

They ask us to turn in, for example, case notes like in 3 days or something like that. And but writing in the second language, facing a lot of new jargon in the field of counseling, or even medicine, you know, because sometimes didn't come up... they may name new drugs or diseases that we've never heard of in the intake process. But so sometimes I had to Google like, try to spell, name the drugs and diseases. And just after the session, so that I can try to understand what the client just said. And so it takes me much more time, I would say, compared to a native speaker, of course, to finish my notes.

Despite ICSs' challenges in adjusting to new environments, more than half of the participants discussed faculty unawareness or inadequate support for these adjustment challenges. For example, participant 4 recalled being "ill-advised" by a faculty member when experiencing challenges engaging in classroom discussion due to unfamiliarity with the classroom format and discussion topics. He stated,

I reached out to my professor. And that professor talked about, "Hey, you know. In the discussion, you just have to be the one to talk from your perspective and contribute. And then that's the way to go. Just keep on going. Keep on talking!" And that was that felt pretty ill-advised, because I felt that the purpose came more from their perspective or from their answer. But not, not even, you know, kinda like hear or listen more in terms of like the struggle that I had, so on and so forth. And that one didn't, didn't sit for me too well.

Furthermore, participant 6 explained how inconsideration and unawareness from the faculty could exacerbate the situation. He talked about language barriers during the internship and highlighted the lack of faculty and supervisor support created difficulties in meeting the internship requirements and overcoming language barriers:

The internship provider held a very high and strict standard and does not show any empathy or any support ... I think I also got a performance review email from the training director that like, if I don't improve my performance, my internship will be terminated... They really gave me hard time about all these without actually recognizing that I'm using my second language to, to all that.

Similarly, a lack of attentiveness and accommodation to their adjustment difficulties can place ICSs in a more difficult position. Participant 1 talked about an incident in her program where a first-year ICS did not receive any support or accommodation concerning difficulties in transportation to commute to a distanced internship site:

I know one of my one of the international doc students in our program. they study master in their home country. So they arrived. They once arrived here, they were assigned to an internship sites that need to drive almost an hour to get there. So for her, it was particularly difficult because she didn't know how to get a car. She didn't know how to, you know, drive to the sites that she need to go to twice a week or once a week.... But that's not aware in the program, because, I feel like if possible, she could have been assigned into a different site if understanding how difficult that could be for her because she didn't drive in her home country. Now she had to learn how to drive, now to buy a car, to drive almost an hour, sometime more than an hour to the site, and that extra challenges for her... Driving is a culture here, like the rules and everything. I would

probably anticipate someone who's already lives in the States would be easier for them to drive 1 hour to the site to do internship ... relatively easier, because they don't need to figure out, you know, a whole new thing to them.

Lack of Support in Visa Requirements

Another aspect of perceived discrimination frequently reported by the participants was a lack of support for visa requirements. ICSs experience challenges in complying with complicated visa requirements, and the absence of guidance regarding the visa requirements can result in their concerns being neglected and unheard. For example, participant 6 shared how the visa requirement complicated his internship process when he thought about changing his internship site:

The possibility of having to find another internship site in the middle of the semester is also very scary, especially for international students because we need the CPT visa in order to have internship. I kind of assumed that I shouldn't change in the middle of the semester probably because of the CPT visa.

Even though Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a mandatory component for ICSs holding F-1 visas to engage in practicum or internship, the lack of faculty awareness about this requirement can pose additional challenges for ICSs. Participant 6 shared an instance of an ICS when both the faculty and herself were not familiar with the CPT requirement:

Another international students who find a site and wanted and, plan to start and actually already started. And then suddenly she told me that, she just realized that she does not have a CPT visa yet. So clearly nobody in the program, she said, nobody in the program ever told her that she has to do that. Of course, it's not completely on the school or on the program, because she could have learned that information from our International Student

Office. However, if she did not attend the all the workshops offered by our International student office, she just don't know. Then the professor did not remind her of that.

Professor probably is not familiar, right? ... So that kind of make her, you know, out of compliance when it comes to her visa status, which is not great, of course.

In addition to CPT for practical training enrolling in the program, Participant 1 also shared difficulties related to 12-month Optional Practical Training (OPT), which is what international students need to apply to be employed in the U.S. after graduation. She said, "We only have OPT for one year after graduation. And then, within a year, we all know that it's really hard to get a job and really hard to get license." Participant 6 also added information regarding OPT and highlighted how the system was unfairly designed, making it nearly impossible for ICSs to get licensure:

But many professors, they don't really understand why it's so important. But they don't understand that if you only have one year of OPT, it's impossible almost to get license in Mental Health Counseling License in the U.S. Because most States will require at least 2 to 3 years to get the clinical hours. So that makes it really challenging for international students who want to stay in the U.S. get their license.

Furthermore, Participant 7 also pointed out F-1 visa requirements that restricted international students from being employed outside of their school, which posed an additional difficulty in getting licensure for ICSs. Although she chose to work as a volunteer to accumulate her hours, she faced the additional challenge of persuading her supervisor to help her collect clinical hours in this alternative way:

When I tried to find a supervisor for my LPC Associate. That was, it was really really hard, because I tried to do the whole like, I work for you for this many hours, and then I

get free supervision deal, because that's legal, right? And that came with a lot of uncertainty, sort of distrust. Maybe I did sign a contract, but it still was this like, “well, that's weird. Why would you do that?”

Besides the difficulties in clinical and other professional training, participant 9 indicated the difficulties in obtaining approval for a reduced course load without faculty collaboration. International graduate students holding F-1 visas are required to maintain 9 credit hours per semester, and reducing the course load requires authorization from the Office of International Services. Participant 9 shared her experience of navigating this process on her own, emphasizing the absence of any prior information or proper response provided by the academic advisor. She said,

I had to take that initiative to go reach out to her [advisor] like, hey, I have to apply for underload. Can you sign this? Can you talk to the international office? All of that. So I had to do all of those things. And again back then I didn't think of it. But now, when I'm talking to you, or when I was thinking about all my experiences before changing my advisor. I was thinking that why did I have to do all of that? I mean it was her job to do those things upon me. I mean she signed up as an advisor for me. That was her job, not me to run after her all the time.

Lack of Support in Career Plans

Most participants in this study expressed their concerns related to job search after graduation, mainly attributed to the need for visa sponsorship from an employer for them to remain in the U.S. after graduating. Participant 8 illustrated the struggles of ICSs with securing employment as a counselor:

If you want to be just a counselor in the U.S. as an international student, you'd have to go through the same work visa process as everyone else. So the OPT. And then the, what is it called? H1B, which I think involves a lottery system. So just hearing about stories of people going through that. It is extremely discouraging, because there are stories where people apply to. This is coming out from the masters. Apply to counseling positions, you know, everywhere. I've heard of people, you know, submitting applications to over 50 or or 70 places, and only have gotten a handful of responses simply because they need sponsorship. And so that to me is extremely discouraging.

Challenges in finding a counselor position that sponsors a work visa can lead to limitations in career options. Participant 2 explained her choice for academia after completing the doctoral program, as it provided more chances to find employers willing to sponsor her work visa:

I wasn't planning to be a faculty, or you know, full-time faculty. To be honest when I came here. But I have started considering that because of my visa situation because most of the places doesn't give sponsorship. But some universities give that sponsorship.

Furthermore, due to the necessity of visa sponsorship, the participants experienced heightened pressure to demonstrate their skills and prove worthiness for employment. Participant 8 elaborated on this aspect,

I feel like a lot of international students have that chip on their shoulder because they know that they have to work maybe twice or even harder than local students in order for an employer to see that. Okay, this employee is worth me sponsoring and worth the effort and going through the legal process. And so that is like a very tangible and practical experience of discrimination, by witnessing that experience. So oh, so that means when it

comes time for me to find an employer. It means I also have to prove myself twice as hard, work twice as hard, so that the employer feels that their sponsorship is justified.

Therefore, when the program fails to provide tailored support for their specific needs in career preparation, it can result in frustration and heightened difficulties. Participant 6 advocated for program support in providing information about job opportunities.

I wish the program can provide more information because, for American students it's probably very easy to find a job in this time. you know, put in, in this time of day, in this market. However, for international students, it's very different. There's not a lot of employer who are waiting to sponsor H1B for international students in the counseling realm.

Participant 9 also expressed frustration about not receiving adequate professional support from her advisor, particularly as an international student. She described:

It's been 1.5 years, I've heard nothing. Which kind of then it started making me upset and little mad as well that why wasn't I given this when I'm a second-year doc student, and I'm going to apply for jobs and everything soon. I need things for my professional development. And I'm an international student, which means I have to work 10 times more to secure a job which she should understand because she went through similar experiences. So there was no support for that.

The missed opportunities for her professional development in academia were as follows:

I have never written a grant. So I would have liked that experience. And this professor, the previous faculty has been involved in a lot of research and grant work. So I never got that opportunity from her like. She never shared, also that she's doing those work. It was just very much within her, like she would just work with other faculty or other students,

that she would not tell us there was no transparency. So I think that's one thing about professional development. She would not share anything that hey, Participant 9, you can go present here, or this is a good opportunity, like. I mean as a faculty, you have connections with people. So you know where there is some webinar happening, or a guest lecture happening, or where I can present, or conferences like.

In a similar vein, Participant 6 pointed out missed opportunities for his clinical development due to the lack of consideration about strength areas that he had:

So the site I went to was the university counseling center. So the reason why I chose. This is because I think there is a significant, significant number of international students that the university counseling center serves. I think it would be a good fit because I really want to work with international students as well. However, it does not turn out as I thought. Because they don't really just send international students to you. They send you kind of, kind of randomly what kind of clients you get. So that your, like strength does not necessarily will translate. So that's something that I did not really understand.

Participant 1 argued about the need for providing tailored support for ICSs who plan to return to their country, which is also missing in some programs:

CACREP program could consider how to support international students who want to go back to their country to get a license and things like that, too. I know it's kind of hard for everyone to figure out how it works in different country. But at least brought up to the international students that aware of this, our licensure process, would that work in your country? And let's figure it all together. If you want to go back to your country. I think that's important, because we spend a lot of money and time and energy study in the U.S.

And it would be a tragedy if we found out at all that you cannot be licensed in your home country.

Participant 6 thinks that transparent information is also key to providing tailored information for ICSs, which enables ICSs to make informed decisions about their commitment to this degree:

Whatever you saw when it comes to employment data, because, you know, most program would say, oh, we have 99% or 100% job placement rate. But does that apply to international students? If that actually is not, because I do know in the history of our program, we have international students who cannot find a job and have to go back to China. And I can say that because of that, that number is false. The job placement rate is false, right? So like the transparency, I would say, is important. If the plan... if the program does not want to support international students, they probably should laid out there in that whole website like we don't offer STEM OPT and the job placement for internationally student graduates from our program is actually maybe 50%, not 100% for American students. ... So probably we need a separate data displayed on their website. So that's international students can make a more informed decision when it comes to choosing programs.

Disadvantages in Financial Issues

Financial challenges were also reported in the four interviews. As participants 5, 7, and 10 explained, the amount of tuition and fees often way exceed the amount that local students pay as they have to pay out-of-state tuition. Combined with legal restrictions for international students' employment, ICSs may experience exacerbated financial issues coming from limited sources of funding. Participant 5 explained,

I can only work as a graduate assistant. I can't get any other work apart from that. So during the summer, I can't work. The university is closed. So I have to wait till the end of summer. What happens during that time?

In addition to that, participants reported the limited financial resources for ICSs. Participant 5 said,

The resources that we have compared to what the local students have. ... you have to pay all of these extra fees. ... So it's like Federal student aid. Yes, there's a student aid. ...

And I was so excited when I had about it. And then work, study. ... And then I found out international students can't apply for it.

Besides financial aid, participants reported limited scholarship and fellowship opportunities for ICSs. Participant 1 said, "I looked up NBCC stipends, like they have the fellowship, Minority Fellowship program. And I understand it's only allow citizenship. Only allow people who have citizenship to apply." Participant 7 underscored the systemic inequality in this circumstance: "It's a systemic, discriminatory thing is that the amount of grants I can apply to or fellowships I can apply to is ridiculously low. Because it's government-funded money, and we had don't have access to that." While highlighting the financial disadvantages faced by ICSs, participant 5 additionally argued the importance of having equitable resources:

I wish they could do more to sort of put international students at equal footing with, with their native it. Obviously, it won't be equal, but put us in a place where we can at least compete at the same level, because we can all contribute to the Counselor Education field.

When disadvantages in financial issues are identified as one of the primary struggles for ICSs, a lack of attention from faculty regarding these difficulties or how to support ICSs creates

perceptions of discrimination and marginalization. Participant 1 described her experience with this as follows:

When I'm asking for resources, or asking for any like financial assistance, or anything like that. So my advisor used to be... she identify herself as white female. And when I reach out to her and asking this type of question, ... I think she threw some website of NBCC and ACES and things like that. So when I looked up NBCC stipends, like they have the Fellowship, Minority fellowship program. And I understand it's only allow citizenship. Only allow people who have citizenship to apply. I just feel like she knew that I'm not citizen, but then not having to do extra work or extra homework digging into that and then just throw that website to me. I, at that time, I feel very dismissive. So, it's like, "Hey, there you go, and then you figure it out all by yourself." So at that point I feel like, that's something that hmm... I think maybe she should have done more homework about what qualification they need, and just throw them out and let me explore.

Systemic Aspects of Marginalization

The last subtheme for inattentiveness to international identity is associated with systemic factors. The majority of participants asserted a lack of representation and emphasized the need for it, which could contribute to increased awareness for ICSs. Participant 4 described the challenges of being the only ICS in the program.

I guess people were trying to communicate. But there's still a lot, I think, of barriers in terms of not being too sure how to really relate or connect with me on a deeper personal level, especially with the fact that I am the only international student in my cohort.

Participant 2 also argued how lack of representation exacerbates the marginalization of ICSs and also pointed out the lack of effort within the program to improve the diversity in student populations.

Just 1, 2 international students. Creating bigger discrimination environment. Because, you know you are outlier... And in my department they're recruiting Ph. D. Students, all of the Ph. D. Students were from master's program. Not even different states, not even different schools. This is something questionable, like. I don't know. This is not diverse creating more diverse faculty, more diverse students, environment helps a lot.

Other distinct opinions, each expressed by a single participant, revolved around the lack of organic connection with other stakeholders and the lack of global perspectives on CACREP standards. In terms of a lack of organic connection, participant 7 claimed, "Hardly anybody's ever been in touch with our international office. We had like an international parade thing, and I... that didn't have anybody attend." Regarding the lack of global perspectives in CACREP standards, participant 5 shared how CACREP standards disregard international students' experiences and neglect the need to consider those experiences. She described,

I feel like their (CACREP) standards do not have a global reach that they are more for the locals, for the, for the home folks who have gone to school in America all of their lives, who are American. ... I have 15 years counseling experience. 15. I have worked in school. I have worked. I have mental health counseling, school counseling. I think maybe because I, maybe because I didn't have signed logs. Maybe that's why. But I told, I told them that you know I can ask my supervisor to write something. They were like, No sorry CACREP standards. So I have to pay for 3 credits and do 300 additional hours and do supervision and teaching under 10 classes in the spring.

Racism and Intertwined Systems of Oppression

When considering the sociocultural factors affecting ICSs' experiences, racism, linguistic discrimination, Americentrism, power dynamics in academia, and other interlocking systems of oppression play a role in perceived discrimination and marginalization among international students.

Racism as a Primary Source of Discrimination

Racism plays a major role in ICSs' experiences of discrimination and marginalization. Many participants indicated White privilege in the counseling field, describing how Whiteness is perceived as common, normative, and valuable in society whereas non-White cultures are considered unfamiliar and deviating from the norm. For example, participant 4 recounted his challenge in working with clients of color, stemming from Whiteness in counselor education and limited training opportunities regarding culturally sensitive approaches for clients of color:

The less complicated part, at least for me, was when I had to see White clients. ... because we pretty much know how the media portrayed the let's say, mainstream or White narrative pretty clearly. But I think that the more difficult part was more about many aspect of diversity, like for the LGBTIQ people, for the Black people, for the Latino Latina people, and all of those diversity, because it was more difficult for sure, especially than maintaining how you even identify or figure what it means for you to be a counselor for that person in front of you, and to think about many of these aspects that ask of us to be culturally sensitive approach about like the differences and all of those things. I think that was quite a challenge in the first semester when I started with the practice or the practicum.

Similarly, participant 7 recognized her privilege as a White person in the White-dominant counseling and social environments:

Luckily, I am very privileged, because I'm very American passing, and I'm White, blond blood. So already a very privileged kind of from the get-go. So that's, that's kind of my big thing which then leads into I'm not being discriminated against overtly because of my skin color and my race.

Contrary to participant 7's experience, participant 10 demonstrated how White supremacy can lead to stereotyping Asian women and utilizing the stereotype to blame her for not conforming to the rules. There were racist incidents in her program where faculty members mixed up the faces and names of Asian women in class, or showed videos with stereotypical Asian images. After those incidents, she spoke out, filed complaints, and faced backlash accusing her of unprofessionalism. She described this situation as follows:

I was told by my advisor that people have said that I am very... I take up a lot of space in class, because I have quite strong reactions. Maybe implicitly there is some kind of grouping going on that like, okay, this is like an Asian woman, but she is not. She is not as quiet as the other Asian woman in the class. So there's a little bit of a difference of expectation. So when and although I'm not saying that my opinions haven't, aren't validated, or my opinions have never matter. I just think that when my contributions or opinions kind of go against the social grain of what is acceptable when I'm pushing back against those power structured, it's kind of like labeled as unprofessionalism like, you know, because there's like that greater gap in expectation....

She added an explanation of why labeling her as unprofessional could be racially targeted and served to sustain White privilege:

I do think that traditionally, like White structures do use the word “professionalism” to kind of keep minoritize people or people of color like within this box, right to keep them like complacent in, like the racist-like structures that exist, right? And like someone, a person of color goes outside of that, It's like, Oh, that's unprofessional. Go back into your box, right? Like, it's kind of like an excuse. Because professionalism really doesn't mean anything at the end of the day. It's just a, it's like a culturally, it's a cultural expectation to for people to act more White, right? Because there's so many intersecting factors on what is considered professional, and most of that is modeled after corporate America, which is primarily made of White people.

Two Asian participants raised another aspect related to racism, which is feelings of being displaced in the Black and White binary of racism. Participant 3 expressed her challenges in finding relevance in multicultural courses and stated:

Talking about a lot of White privileges, but I am not White, and I'm not Black, so I feel like I'm pretty confused with my identity here as the counselor in training. And then, it just feels very far away from me. That course really got me confused. I don't know as a Chinese student, as an international student, how am I gonna learn from those oppression history of African American? And how can I interpret it, the White privileged? What does mean to me as a Chinese? What can I gain from the history? And apply to my practice.

Participant 4 also shared similar feelings as an Asian student in a multicultural classroom by saying:

If I were to jump to the multicultural class. I felt that that was where I felt more marginalized, because again, the course was mainly directed to the majority of the people

in the program, who, of course, for the most part were White or Black. ... They (Asians)'re still that sense of like being othered in the context of American education that ... usually as Asian, are more of like an extra.

Linguistic Discrimination

Half of the participants indicated that language could be a source of marginalization, especially when English is not their first language. Linguistic discrimination may be more pronounced in the counseling field, given that it is a profession that requires a higher proficiency in language use. ICSs whose first language is not English can become easily subjected to this linguistic discrimination. Participant 6 shared a lack of accommodation for non-native English speakers was perceived as discrimination. During the internship, participant 6 was accused of lacking counseling micro-skills and failing to meet deadlines for case notes. He explained,

The internships provider held a very high and strict standard and does not show any no empathy or any support ... I also got a performance review email from the training director that like, if I don't improve my performance, my internship will be terminated. So basically, that's what they meant like if I don't, for example, turning my notes on time or that, mine would be terminated, which is very, you know, scary thing to think about. ... They really gave me hard time about all these without actually recognizing that I'm using my second language to, to all that.

Even if they have a good command of English and speak English as the official language in their home countries, it still can be a source of discrimination if their accent is not American enough. Participant 5 described her three-month-long journey to find a practicum site and how accent bias put her in a difficult position:

When I was looking for a practicum site. I think I emailed over 50 places. And when you go to the (web)site, they say they have places, right? When you call and they hear your voice, you have an African accent. They say sorry, cause they think you can't speak the language because for some people an accent is a barrier. So that they wouldn't give me a chance to practice my skill, they just hear my accent and think I can't speak English, and so I don't get a spot. So that I mean, that was turning in the way of my professional development.

Americentrism

Americentrism was identified as another factor contributing to marginalization and discrimination encountered by the participants. Participants shared how the U.S. worldviews and perspectives were considered normative and valuable, leading to limited knowledge and a lack of consideration about different cultures. Participant 1 highlighted her exchanges with domestic peers, indicating “They have very limited knowledge about all other country outside of America.” Participant 9 also emphasized a lack of international discourse within counseling fields, indicating the Americentric assumptions prevailing in the field. She said, “There was no address of, again, international facts, like relations of international students or how do we adjust into a Counselor Education field, which is such an American, Western thing as well.”

This U.S.-centric discourse often leads to othering and disregard towards perspectives and cultural experiences outside of American culture. Participant 7 described,

When I tried to share stories from my school in Germany, or like, especially when we're in pedagogy class. And we talk about like, “Oh, yeah, like we do exams very differently than y'all do.” It's always this idea that the American standard is the best thing ever, and everything else is just dismissed. So those things have been hard, just kind of wanting to

share some things that I enjoy. I often get this like well, “If you like it there so much, why are you here? Why did you come here?”

Combined with linguistic discrimination, the Americentric standards of English proficiency may alienate and discriminate against English speakers who do not adhere to the U.S. English standards. For example, participant 5’s challenges in finding an internship site demonstrate an example of the interlocking discrimination between Americentrism and linguistic discrimination. Participant 5 received education in English, from a country where English is one of their official languages. Upon calling potential practicum sites, she received responses like, “Sorry we don’t have anything available,” because of the way that she spoke English. Her accent, different from the American accent, became the source of judgment that people assumed her poor command of English due to her accent.

Power Dynamics in Academia

Participants also recognized power dynamics in academia and experienced it as an additional source of discrimination and marginalization. Participant 3 recognized the hierarchy in graduate school, the lack of power in her position, and how it contributed to her invisibility and exclusion within the program. She said, “And we’re just started, we don’t know a lot of we’re not expert yet. So nobody values our voice.” Participant 9 shared her stress about speaking up or advocating for herself due to the power differential between her advisor and herself. She said,

I don’t have the strength to ask her what happened like, why did I not get those opportunities, but a White student is getting there. So I feel scared to ask that. To be honest, I feel scared. I feel like I’m going to. I will create a ripple in that water like you want water like a lake, is there? It’s very quiet. It’s still. But you throw a rock or

something and create those ripples. I feel like that's what will happen if I ask her directly, like what happened? Why didn't I get those opportunity, but that White student is? I feel like I'll create that tension. And I don't feel strong enough to have that dialogue with her because she is in a powerful position right now, and I am just an international student. I don't have that kind of power. I don't know who will back me up. I don't know if I'll create unnecessary politics and drama in the department.

Participant 10 also shared similar feelings when it comes to participating in this research:

I'm scared that if this gets published before I graduate, like, what would happen right? Would my program faculty be like. Why would you talk about this experience and like damage the reputation of our program, like, you know, like, because I am again like this is me questioning this system that exists right? I'm questioning how they process it, how the system works, and it's not working for Asian students. And like, I'm worried of being penalized for that in some way. I don't know what way. But you know.

Other Interlocking Systems of Oppression

Some participants also discussed other layers in the systems of oppression that impacted their experiences of discrimination and marginalization. For example, participant 6 pointed out the role of gender stereotypes when his site supervisor was verbally abusive towards him:

Because of the gender, probably. Because I'm a male so that could also be. My supervisor might think, "You are male. You can take this. You can handle this. If you feel hurt, then you are not strong enough as a man." I mean, that could also be a factor.

However, even within the same cisgender man group, an individual's gender identity can be perceived differently as both privileged or marginalized depending on the context where the

individual is located. Contrary to participant 6, participant 8 reported that male identity put him in a privileged position that alleviated the negative impacts of discrimination.

I'm a male, I'm a heterosexual. I'm cisgender. I'm relatively young in the Academy. I'm middle class, and so I all these privileges, I think, can help buffer some of the experiences that I have.

Participant 9 highlighted colorism and discrimination against a darker skin tone as a factor influencing unfair treatment from her advisor, particularly when comparing it to a White student who is a year below her:

I found out like that first year is getting replies in 2 days. and I was like, why am I not getting any reply? ... I had no one to compare last year. It didn't come to my mind that she is ignoring me. But now that I see that first year is getting everything, and me and my other cohort members were very like neglected by her in different capacity. ... My second-year cohort is just 3 of us including me. And we are all women of color. 2 of them are from America, and I'm the only international student. And they both have shared some negative experience with the faculty member and in different capacities as well ... We're all women of color. We're all darker skin tone, relatively as compared to even the faculty. Even though that faculty is a person of color, they're more on the lighter skin tone... There is a very implicit racial discrimination that usually happens. Even though they are people of color, they still end up discriminating other people of color who are darker skin, tone, and stuff.

Support

Despite the different forms of discrimination, international counseling students recognize faculty, university, and peer support in navigating adverse experiences. Additionally, international students develop an internal support system, which includes strategies for being self-taught, being more task-oriented, and advocating for themselves.

Faculty Support

Although the participants reported adverse experiences in faculty relationships, they also shared positive experiences when faculty assisted them in navigating those adversities. Two participants specifically mentioned positive support from faculty with marginalized backgrounds, including faculty members with international backgrounds. Participant 1 showed how their shared identity as minority individuals helped her to be understood:

So for some faculty there, they know international students' difficulty, and they understand it, and I would say most of the faculty are coming from minority background. So that I think they have maybe knowledge or experience being marginalized as well. In that sense they understand how international students being marginalized in the program. So they wanted to support.

Participant 9 also shared positive support from international faculty:

I think I've had individual conversations with faculty who are international and I'm getting lot more support from them. I have my research assistant supervisor. She is international faculty, and she's able to provide me a lot more support. She shares her experiences with me. She's able to really advocate for me.

The types of support they remember as positive include tailored resources, accommodation, professional assistance, and personal support. First, regarding tailored

resources, participants 5 and 7 mentioned it was helpful that the faculty provided them with information about travel grants, scholarships, and other financial resources that are accessible to international students. Participant 5 also talked about personalized resources for her when she had difficulties finding a practicum site, saying, “So my head of departments give me a list of places to apply to. I didn't get in, of course. But she helped cause she gave me a list of places I wrote to them.”

Offering flexibility and accommodation for specific challenges was also appreciated by the participants. For instance, when facing difficulties participating in classroom discussions mainly due to language barriers, participant 3 received support from faculty by being invited to share her perspectives within the small-sized classroom setting:

But during the small class, I feel less overwhelmed because there's less people, and they are not that aggressive type. I'm not sure if the word could grasp the right, but they're not like, not giving you a chance to speak. So I have more chance to speak.

Participant 5 also shared a positive memory of when her professor made adjustments for her workplace to be one of the closer campus locations so that she did not need to travel at night to a more distant campus without a car. She described:

For my graduate assistantship, I do, I work with a professor. We have to teach a night class. And so they made sure that the professor is best at my campus because I don't have a car. So I can't go an hour, so my professors were very helpful, you know, very thoughtful and considerate. So I don't have to go out of my way. I go to a place that's more accessible. So I thought that was really nice.

Moreover, assistance for professional development was also reported as positive support by three of the participants. Participant 5 appreciated the chance to do presentations together

with faculty, and participant 7 remembered student support when she attended conferences and workshops. Participant 9, then, expressed appreciation when a faculty member distributed professional opportunities equally and transparently to the entire students in the program. She described,

There has been one faculty who is very prominent, like he's very good. He's very equitable. He's also international faculty, and if he has an opportunity, he sends an email to all of us. He sends an email. There's a recruitment process, and then only he gets a student, which I think is fair, that all of us know about the research, and he shares it.

Besides support for professional opportunities, participants also appreciated personal and emotional support. Participant 4 shared, "Chair of the program, who's also my committee chair is very... She is always a big advocate in terms of like, 'oh, *Participant 4!* What's going on here? How are you doing?' Participant 9 also expressed gratitude for her new advisor about checking in with her or discussing personal matters:

We have, like scheduled like meetings like, okay, let's meet biweekly. We'll just chat. Even if you don't have anything. We'll just chat quick check-ins if we need to, or if you have things to discuss, we will do that like. She has told me those things, and I was like perfect, that's all I need. Just like half an hour of your time, just to check in with me how I'm doing if I need something.

Support from Peer and Social Circle

First of all, support from other international students in the counseling field appears to help the participants address the issues of marginalization. For example, participant 1 recalled the positive bonding with other ICSs within the same master's program, saying,

I think our cohort has been wonderful cohort. I. We have 3 international students, one from China, and one is me, and one from India. Yeah. And 3 of us has bound together, and we share resources together.

As having more international student representation, she also reported improvement in the sense of belonging in her doctoral program, saying,

In our doc program. Now, I think we have 6 international students out of 10. So it's actually a very huge number of international students. Right? So in terms of our doc program, I feel very... like honored. And I feel just very like welcome. because most of the most of students are international people. So I feel like, naturally, they kind of default that have to talk about it, because we all are from, most of us are from international background. But before it wasn't like that. I feel like it's not that talked about. And it's less being curious about what our experience look like when they when we're different country. So I think that cultural humility was not there when I was in master program compared to now, I think only because we have more international students. So we will ask "how does that look like in South Korea? How does that look like in China?"

In addition, participants 4 and 8 explained that they found a breakthrough by networking with ICSs in different programs. Participant 8 particularly shared the necessity to build connections with fellow ICSs to navigate their unique challenges collaboratively:

I kind of have to rely on more informal support. So people like the international community within the Counselor Ed circle, you know. I form good relationships with these people because I know that it's going to be a resource. And I'm going to need. And we're gonna need each other to like navigate some of the concerns that we have because in the program is just gonna get disregarded, because that's not the priority.

Furthermore, participants reported support from other international students within their university or in the local community. Participant 1 mentioned the support from other international students:

I have a lot of friends that's also international students. So I feel like that. A lot of information has already shared amongst friends so that I don't have to rely on the program. So when I say that I feel support.

She also mentioned the support from students and local residents who were from the same home country, particularly when it comes to her living and personal needs:

When I first arrived in the U.S., I think cars, living, or, everything are really relies on *Country 1* student organization. So the students and the immigrant from *Country 1* who live in *City 1* really helped the student groups a lot rather than the university itself. ... They have provided a lot of resources, providing, like they even willing to drive us around to show us the city, even willing to invite us to their house for dinner and things like that. So I think that really support me through study overall like master or doctoral program, support me surviving in *City 1*.

Participant 1 and participant 4 mentioned the support from the office of international services as a venue to build connections with other international students. Participant 4 said,

The international office in my university. I guess they they sometimes too like try to incorporate different kind of cultural events that when I went it's, I had opportunity for me to connect to other international student or an opportunity for me to like be more immersive, immersive in terms of like the cultural, like events and stuff.

The majority of participants mentioned receiving emotional, academic, and practical support from peers in the program in general. Participant 5 reported how domestic peers helped

her navigate practical challenges such as finding transportation and resolving financial issues. Participant 3 and participant 5 also described how domestic peers supported them when facing academic challenges. In addition to peers, participant 3 talked about the benefit of having a mentor to address challenges in the program, stating, “Whenever I have some doubt and question, I will ask her, and she will provide me an answer, and, you know, guide me to do some self-reflection.” Additionally, participant 8 discussed the advantage of cohort program and how his peers provided emotional support to him:

I think the master's program ... they were actively building a community where people were hanging out after classes. ... I totally see the value and how that could. And it has helped me in building lifelong friendships from the master's program, because of the emphasis in like the cohort model and people coming together and celebrate success. And building, maintaining meaningful relationships.

In addition to general support from peers, some participants mentioned emotional support from peers when navigating adverse experiences together. Participant 10 had to deal with racist incidents in the program, and when recalling the support she received at that time, she said, “It was mostly my classmates and peers. Because, say, we were, we were all collectively going through it together.” Similarly, participant 6 talked about difficulties in the internship site and described how peer support helped him:

I really appreciate that I got a lot of support with my peers. ... They also kind of, they can help validate that. Okay, this is how the supervisor is like. They really helped me cope with all the strong emotions that I felt during that period.

Participant 9 also shared,

All 3 of us, my cohort members, are all women of color. So I found a lot more support and power in that. Because I felt like I had people who can understand me, or even though we have had different experiences and whatnot. They know they understand the struggles. I felt that with my peers. I had that backing up.

Lastly, support from family and other support systems was also reported by two participants. Participant 8 explained the support from his family and friends in the following way:

More personally, I go to like my friends, my family, you know. Maybe I don't discuss specifically those experiences of discrimination with them, because sometimes I feel like they might not understand, especially if they don't live in the U.S. It's a little harder for me to go into detail and for them to be able... for me to be able to feel that they understand the true, the full magnitude of those discriminations, instances of discrimination. So their support is more of I get to connect with them, I get to maintain that positive relationship with these people, to know that these people care about me and that I can go to them when I'm perhaps down emotionally. That's really important.

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility, including being open and aware of ICSs' experiences and actively including them in conversations, was reported as a helpful attitude of faculty and peers. Firstly, participants found it beneficial when faculty and peers expressed openness and awareness about their home culture. For instance, when a natural disaster occurred in her home country, participant 2 experienced support from her supervisor:

My supervisors? I am so lucky about them. They're both so understanding. ... Especially when the earthquakes were happening in *Country 2*, I was in a very bad psychological

condition. And then it's a very far away country from United States, and time differences. And your family, your loved ones, are going through big crisis. The country, all country and people are dying every day. It was very challenging time to me. So but I am graduate assistant as well. I have lots of responsibilities. So it was so nice seeing support of my supervisors.

Participant 4 also expressed positive experiences working with faculty who have an awareness about Asian culture:

And also talking to my faculties, talking to my professors that I trusted that also help. Because even though some of them were not Asian, I mean, even though none of them were Asian, but at least there were some that was exposed enough to Asian culture or could have guessed a little more on, like what I am going through, even though again, not completely. But that helped.

Participant 7 also emphasized the positive feelings of connecting with peers who are interested in her culture:

But from peers. Now I get a little more. I have a couple peers now that are a little more interested in culture of *Country 7* after we had that conversation of like, “Hey, I have nobody to share this with.”

Inclusion of international identity in classroom discussions and other conversations can be another manifestation of cultural humility from faculty and peers. Participant 2 shared a positive experience with a faculty member who said hello in her language. “At the beginning of the semester, many faculty sends a welcoming email to the class. So he used a Hi in *Language of Country 2*, I was like, well, this so nice of him and this kind of thing.” Participant 5 also

expressed her gratitude when a professor invited her to share her perspectives in classroom discussions:

There's a professor. They're very kind. And so one of the professors. I think she saw something in me. So she very told me. "Participant 5, I want to hear what you think. I want to hear you speak." And I would, you know, recoil cause as worried. And she, you know, she just keep saying, "Participant 5, what do you think, Participant 5?" And so slowly I started to, to express myself. I started to speak, but even then not to my full ability. And so I spoke with her about my fears of doing, of going to, to do practicum at that place. And she told me, you know I just go and be yourself, and they'll love you.

Developing Self-Help Strategies

When asked about the support they received, all participants indicated that they often had to figure things out on their own. Participant 1 said, "Most of the time it's really me figuring out how to solve the problem by myself." Participant 9 also recalled navigating things only with her cohort members, saying "So it was just 3 of us navigating everything on our own." Participant 6 also shared that he had to pass down evaluations about his internship site to the cohort below him because the information was not shared by professors:

When my peers and I share our experience with the next cohort, who is one year below us, and many of them know what we've gone through. And I think in the end, none of them apply to our internship site. So we kind of have to do it ourselves, and so the faculty, I don't think they do a good enough job to collect feedback and pass it on to the students. So the students have a kind of to do it themselves.

When it comes to figuring out on their own, participants also shared their personal and cultural reasons that inhibited them from asking for help. Participant 3 explained it as being new to graduate school:

Because I don't have any previous experience in graduate study, let alone in America. So I'm not sure. Maybe that's the way graduate study in United States look like. So I just on our own to figure out what to do.

Similarly, Participant 8 also shared the hesitation to ask for help to the program due to the unclear expectations of the program:

I wasn't really, I wasn't really comfortable going to my program for support because I didn't know if it was relevant question for the for the program, like, I didn't know if this was like under the purview of the program.

Furthermore, some participants attributed cultural barriers to difficulties in asking for help. For example, participant 5 explained cultural barriers in asking for help in the following way:

You have to think about the culture factors, right? In my culture, you don't go around asking people to help you. you know. That's not something that I'm used to, you know. Putting my hand out and asking. So that in itself is a challenge, asking for help, asking people to help you.

Participant 1 also shared why it was difficult for her to speak up about her needs in the beginning due to cultural barriers:

In my master program, it's more like, I still more align with what my culture have taught me like the cohesiveness among the group, or the peacefulness among the group, is more important than speak up for self. So I think you're totally right that I was more reserved in terms of encounter this type of thing.

In addition to figuring things out on their own, some participants discussed becoming more career-focused or task-oriented as coping strategies for navigating adverse experiences within the program. Participant 3 articulated,

I am here still for a reason. So yeah, we're just just trying to focus on what I'm good at. And then that I just want to help people in my future career. If I can do that, I can overcome all the adversity for now. It's just, just a degree. Get over with it. Just it's not the end point of my life.

Participant 5 shared the similar goal-oriented strategies:

Be grateful. Forget. Don't focus too much on negativity. Just be grateful and keep moving. Keep moving, you know. So then, yeah. you're like, No, keep moving. Don't complain. No one asked you to come, you came here. So focus. And remember why you came here.

Participant 10 also shared the thoughts of “just get my degree and get out” and said,

I use like the end goal as a means to justify and cope with the idea that I had to stay in this environment for another year before I graduate, like at the end of day I wasn't gonna quit my program. So I needed some way to cope and exist within this structure and within this program that has discriminated against Asians. So I'm just like, Okay, I'm just gonna keep my head low.

More than half of participants also shared that they had developed self-advocacy skills while encountering discrimination and marginalization within the program. For example, when it comes to unique challenges in career plans, participant 1 and participant 6 took the initiative to advocate for themselves. Participant 1 explained,

So me and the other international student, we went up to the faculty and talked about the possibility how we can help a career plan for international students. So I feel like from there, our faculty has more awareness of international students' identity and their career development.

Participant 6 also described how he was able to make a change from regular OPT to STEM OPT. Contrary to regular OPT, STEM OPT provides three-year practical training periods after graduation. He explained, "I advocated to change our program into a STEM program, so I know there's only 6 programs that have successfully done that."

Some participant endeavored to speak up about their experiences to raise consciousness within their program. For example, participant 7 shared that she learned to voice her experiences to enhance understanding within the program, particularly for those who will have similar experiences to her. She said,

I tried to bring it up a little more again, like I said earlier, I still don't feel comfortable. I still get a lot of anxiety when I talk about me being discriminated against or treated differently. But I'm forcing myself to talk about it because nobody else is gonna do it for me. And this culture is not gonna change. And I want to advocate for those who might come after me. And it's still hard, so I think I talk a little bit more with some of my friends that I had that open conversation with, and that now are understanding and seeing me for really more of my cultural identity.

Participant 10 also spoke up with courage against the discriminatory incidents. She took the initiative to correct the harm within the classroom and stood up against the racist stereotypes and misinformation:

That was just so problematic. So instantly I wrote an email to faculty. So I wrote like email like 2 incidents of racism in the class. ... I also email the fact that that video is straight up misinformation, because, like the Chinese opium war was fought over like British colonial rule over the ports of China, not over the actual resource of opium itself. ... It was like from a colonialist like perspective that is inaccurate. ... when you're ostracizing, particularly Asian countries, for, like their years of history of colonialism, it just something so simplified then like, it's just like really inaccurate and just really terrible. So I responded on that thread.

Mixed Methods Results

The integration of the qualitative and quantitative findings occurred to compare two different data sets and address whether they are convergent, divergent, or expanding each other. The comparison was made and ordered according to the emerging qualitative themes. A joint display table, presented in Table 9, was developed to visualize a side-by-side comparison of corresponding qualitative and quantitative findings and their mixed methods inferences. In addition to the joint display, a narrative discussion approach is employed to explain the mixed methods findings in depth. This integrated narrative merges both qualitative and quantitative findings and is presented in Chapter 5.

Table 8

Joint Display Table

Theme	Qualitative Finding	Quantitative Finding	Mixed Methods Inference
Unintentional and Subtle Discrimination	Unintentional and subtle discrimination - "It's more of a lack of understanding, a lack of consideration of my	Perceived Discrimination Scale Itemized Scores that surpassed a moderate level ($M > 3$) are item 2, "I am treated differently in social situations." ($M = 3.06$) and	Convergent - Perceived Discrimination Scale items indicating subtle discrimination had higher scores than items

Table 8 (Continued)

	<p>race. It's usually felt in that way. I think discrimination is usually felt in a way that is micro-scale." (Participant 8)</p>	<p>item 6, "I feel that my people are discriminated against." (M = 3.3). The lowest scores were item 4, "I feel that I receive unequal treatment." (M = 2.73) and item 5, "I am denied what I deserve." (M = 2.48).</p>	<p>about overt differential treatment. It aligns with the qualitative findings that a majority of participants reported subtle and indirect discrimination, rather than overt or blatant forms.</p>
Cultural Discrimination	<p>ICSs' response to discrimination - Interview participants shared negative emotional experiences such as a lack of sense of belonging and homesickness.</p>	<p>Spearman's rho between perceived discrimination and mental health distress ($r_s = 1.59$) indicated a positive but not statistically significant relationship.</p>	<p>Divergent - Statistical analysis indicated no significant relationship between mental health distress and discrimination, which is divergent from interview findings about negative emotional responses towards discrimination.</p>
Cultural Discrimination	<p>Navigating biculturalism - "I came here last year in August. ... I am adjusting. And I didn't focus a lot more on the discrimination or anything like that. ... I had other priorities to deal with, like adjusting, figuring out my life here and things like that." (Participant 9)</p>	<p>Independent <i>t</i>-test result indicated that ICSs staying in the U.S. for more than 2 years had significantly greater Perceived Discrimination than ICSs staying in the U.S. for less than 2 years, $t = -2.67$, $p = .012$.</p>	<p>Convergent Interview findings suggest the recognition of discrimination develops as they acculturate more in new environments. The Mann-Whitney U test result confirmed the qualitative findings.</p>
Racism and intertwined systems of oppression	<p>Racism as a primary source of adverse experiences - "Luckily, I am very privileged, because I'm very American passing, and I'm white, blond blood." (Participant 7) - "White structures do use the word 'professionalism' to kind</p>	<p>Independent <i>t</i>-test result did not reveal significant difference in Perceived Discrimination between White and People of Color groups, $t = -1.90$, $p = .067$.</p>	<p>Divergent Many interview participants reported racism playing the major role in their marginalized experiences, whereas the quantitative finding did not reveal statistically significant differences in perceived discrimination between White and People of Color</p>

Table 8 (Continued)

	of keep minoritize people or people of color like within this box” (Participant 10)		groups.
Racism and intertwined systems of oppression	Linguistic Discrimination - “They really gave me hard time about all these without actually recognizing that I’m using my second language.” (Participant 6)	Independent <i>t</i> -test result indicated insignificant group difference in Perceived Discrimination between higher English proficiency and lower English proficiency groups, $t = 1.30, p = .206$.	Divergent Half of interview participants reported linguistic discrimination, whereas the relationship between English proficiency and perceived discrimination was not statistically significant.
Racism and intertwined systems of oppression	Power dynamics in academia - “We’re just started, we don’t know a lot of we’re not expert yet. So nobody values our voice.” (Participant 3)	Independent <i>t</i> -test result indicated insignificant group difference in Perceived Discrimination between master’s students and doctoral students, $t = -.85, p = .401$.	Divergent Participants described the impact of hierarchy in academia on their experiences of discrimination and marginalization, which is incongruent from the insignificant group difference between level of study and Perceived Discrimination scores.
Racism and intertwined systems of oppression	Other interlocking systems of oppression (gender identity) Participant 6 reported stereotypes about men as a source of discrimination, whereas participant 8 described male identity as a privilege.	Independent <i>t</i> -test results indicated that cisgender men did not have a significant difference in Perceived Discrimination than cisgender women, $t = .91, p = .370$.	Convergent - Incongruent reports from interview participants regarding the role of gender aligns with statistical insignificance in perceived discrimination between men and women.
Support	Faculty support Theme 3, Inattentive to international identity, emerged to show lack of faculty support. On the	Spearman’s rho between perceived discrimination and program satisfaction ($r_s = -.08$) indicated a negative but not statistically significant relationship.	Convergent Interview participants shared two different aspects of faculty support, which expands the explanation

Table 8 (*Continued*)

other hand, participants also shared positive faculty support in mitigating discriminatory incidents.	about why the relationship between perceived discrimination and program satisfaction is not statistically significant.
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Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of the current study, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods findings. Mann-Whitney U tests and Spearman's rank-order correlation analyses were conducted to answer the quantitative research questions. Utilizing IPA, the qualitative analysis identified five emerging themes and 22 subthemes. After conducting independent analyses, both qualitative and quantitative results were merged to examine whether they align with or contradict each other. Further discussion, implications, and limitations of this study are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine ICSs' perceived discrimination while they attend CACREP-accredited programs and explore potential strategies to mitigate negative impact. This chapter provides a summary and in-depth discussion of the findings of this study, particularly focusing on how the both data sets create a more complete picture to understand the phenomenon and extend on the existing literature. Following the discussion of the findings, implications for theory, counselor educators, and CACREP standards are discussed. Finally, limitations and recommendations for future research are presented in this chapter. The research questions guided this study were:

Qualitative:

1. How do international counseling students experience discrimination within the context of CACREP-accredited counseling programs? (QUAL)
2. How does perceived discrimination impact international counseling students enrolled in CACREP-accredited programs? (QUAL)
3. What is considered helpful by international counseling students in navigating instances of marginalization and discrimination? (QUAL)

Quantitative:

1. Is there variation in the levels of perceived discrimination among international counseling students based on different characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, level of English proficiency, level of education, and length of stay in the U.S.? (quan)
2. What is the relationship between international counseling students' perceived discrimination and mental health distress? (quan)

3. What is the relationship between international counseling students' perceived discrimination and their satisfaction with CACREP-accredited programs? (quan)

Mixed Methods Research Question:

1. To what extent do the quantitative results on perceived discrimination align with the interview findings on perceived discrimination for international counseling students in CACREP-accredited programs? (Mixed Methods)

Research Findings

Quantitative findings

In terms of the first quantitative research question, the analyses indicated that there were no significant differences in Perceived Discrimination scores among different racial/ethnic, gender, education level, and English proficiency groups (i.e. White and People of Color, men and women, master's and doctoral, and higher English proficiency and lower English proficiency groups). The insignificant difference in perceived discrimination between master's and doctoral-level ICSs may be supported by the literature indicating the insignificant differences in the levels of challenges they faced in the program (Ng & Smith, 2009). In addition, the insignificant gender differences in perceived discrimination align with the previous research findings among international students in a broader perspective (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Ramos et al., 2016). However, the insignificant result in racial/ethnic differences is unusual, especially considering the existing literature indicating the more hostile educational environments for international students of color (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Hannassab, 2006; Lee & Rice, 2007). Furthermore, the insignificant group difference between higher English proficiency and lower English proficiency groups is unexpected as the past research on international students in broader perspectives in both qualitative and quantitative forms revealed English proficiency level was

closely related to international students' perceptions and experiences of discrimination (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011; Ee, 2013; George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Yao et al., 2019). Lastly, it is noteworthy that the only significant group difference was found in the ICSs' length of stay in the U.S. because the existing literature showed conflicting findings related to this variable among broader international student populations (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). This finding is meaningful since it contributes to the existing literature by confirming the relationship between the length of stay in the U.S. and their perceived discrimination.

Regarding the second and third quantitative research questions, both mental health distress and program satisfaction were found to have insignificant relationships with perceived discrimination. These findings are contrary to the literature that indicates the negative impact of perceived discrimination on mental health among marginalized student populations (Jones & Sam, 2018; Ogunyemi et al., 2020) and international students' educational satisfaction (Wadsworth et al., 2008). Overall, the current study did not reveal statistically significant findings, except for the group difference in perceived discrimination according to the length of stay in the U.S. as indicated in the first quantitative research question. There exist several potential explanations for the insignificant statistical outcomes observed: first, the sample size might have not been enough to provide the statistically significant findings. A limited number of samples could have resulted in the reduced statistical power to reject the null hypotheses (Faber & Fonseca, 2014). Secondly, some instruments may not be relevant for international student populations. For instance, despite its utility to culturally diverse populations (Clark et al., 2023; Cotton et al., 2021; Mitchell & Beals, 2011; Vissoci et al., 2018), K6 has not yet been validated its applicability to assess mental health distress among international students. Considering the

culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds among international student populations, the interpretations of K6 items might have varied for certain participants in the survey. Finally, the heterogeneity within ICS populations may have contributed to the insignificance of statistical findings. Including the interpretation about the insignificance of the quantitative findings, the subsequent section offers further discussion regarding the quantitative findings in relation to its integration with qualitative findings.

Qualitative Findings and Mixed Methods Inferences

The qualitative research questions sought to understand the perceptions and experiences of discrimination and marginalization among ICSs. In addition, the qualitative exploration was expected to investigate the impact of discrimination, while exploring the support that helped them address any repercussions of those instances. The five themes emerged through the qualitative analyses: (a) unintentional and subtle discrimination, (b) cultural discrimination, (c) inattentive to international identity, (d) racism and intertwined systems of oppression, and (e) support. Moreover, the mixed methods interpretations are integrated into the discussion about qualitative findings. As this study employs a qualitative-focused mixed methods approach, it prioritizes qualitative cases and utilizes quantitative variables to elucidate the qualitative findings. Thus, the integrated mixed methods narrative is woven into the qualitative themes to examine how the quantitative findings assisted in explaining the qualitative findings by corroborating, contradicting, and expanding upon them.

Unintentional and Subtle Discrimination

The first theme, unintentional and subtle discrimination, distinguishes this study from existing literature. While previous research on perceived discrimination among international students reported both overt and subtle discrimination without distinguishing their prevalence,

this study focuses on unconscious and indirect discrimination as a more frequently reported form of discrimination ICSs encounter. The prevalence of subtle discrimination is supported by both qualitative and quantitative findings: unintentional and subtle discrimination emerged as the theme of the qualitative analysis. In addition, analysis of the scores in the Perceived Discrimination scale revealed that the higher-scored items were associated more with biased treatment (e.g., “I am treated differently in social situations,” “I feel that my people are discriminated against.”) rather than more obvious forms of discrimination (e.g., “I feel that I received unequal treatment,” “I am denied what I deserve.”).

The prevalence of subtle discrimination over explicit forms, as evidenced by both qualitative and quantitative data, can be attributed to the emphasis on multiculturalism and social justice in CACREP counseling programs (Baker & Moore III, 2015; CACREP, 2023; Chan et al., 2018; Thacker & Barrio Minton, 2021). The growing awareness among counselor educators and counseling students regarding diversity and anti-oppression principles and strategies may explain the relatively fewer instances of blatant discrimination reported by ICSs, such as the commonly identified experiences of physical attacks and verbal abuse in the previous studies about international students (Ee, 2013; Lee & Rice, 2007). Nevertheless, the embedded structural barrier and unconscious bias remain unaddressed in the field. As a result, racism, linguistic discrimination, Americentrism, power dynamics in academia, and other intertwined systems of oppression create cultural insensitivity and subtle forms of oppression. In other words, the emphasis on diversity and social justice has not effectively dismantled the hostile and inequitable learning environment, leaving ICSs to continue to encounter indirect, subtle, and often invisible forms of discrimination.

Furthermore, while subtle and unconscious discrimination may be more prevalent, ICSs still experience blatant forms of discrimination and the impact is not negligible. In fact, two interview participants in the current study reported instances of explicit discrimination based on their racial identity or being second-language English speakers. Additionally, as the majority of instances of discrimination happen unconsciously and indirectly, ICSs encounter challenges in speaking up about their adverse experiences and sometimes find it difficult to recognize the existence of discrimination. This is the reason why certain interview participants in the study expressed doubt about their own experiences. The challenge becomes more complex when combined with concerns about their international status, making it harder for them to assert fair and equitable treatment compared to their domestic peers and to establish the legitimacy to advocate for their rights. Participant 5's statement, "You are not invited here," speaks to the depth of this experience.

Cultural Discrimination

One of the prominent forms of discrimination identified in this study is cultural discrimination, which is unfair treatment or marginalization stemming from ICSs' different cultural backgrounds from the mainstream culture in the U.S. The types of cultural discrimination listed as subthemes include stereotyping, lack of cultural competence such as minimizing differences and lack of interest in their cultural backgrounds, as well as exclusion and avoidance. Similar types of cultural discrimination have been consistently reported in the body of literature on minority student populations in higher education (Baker & Moore III, 2015; Gomez et al., 2011; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Ogunyemi et al., 2020) and specifically on ICSs (Garrison et al., 2022; Jang et al., 2014; Kuo et al., 2022; Lau & Ng, 2012; Mittal & Wieling, 2006).

In response to these experiences of marginalization, interview participants reported a reduced sense of belonging and homesickness, which is in line with findings from existing literature on perceived discrimination among international students (Karuppan & Barari, 2011; Poyrazli & Lopes, 2007; Wadsworth et al., 2008). These discriminatory experiences also impacted ICSs' behaviors, as they became more reserved in peer relationships, potentially negatively impacting their professional development by hindering networking activities and leadership experiences. However, ICSs' negative emotional responses towards discrimination were not confirmed by the quantitative analysis, as the correlation between perceived discrimination and mental health distress was not statistically significant.

The incongruence between the qualitative and quantitative findings may be explained by the small sample size in quantitative data. While the correlation between perceived discrimination and mental health demonstrated a positive direction aligning with qualitative findings, the small sample size may cause constraints in producing statistical significance (Faber & Fonseca, 2014). Another explanation for the incongruence may be attributed to the discordance between the properties measured in the Mental Health Distress Scale (K6) and the types of responses identified in the qualitative findings. The six items in K6 aim to assess the dimensions of non-specific psychological distress such as nervousness, hopelessness, and worthlessness (Kessler et al., 2010). On the other hand, the responses reported in the qualitative interviews include a lack of sense of belonging and homesickness, which are more involved with cognitive appraisals of their environments that potentially lead to a variety of emotional (e.g., loneliness, demotivation), cognitive (e.g., lack of self-esteem), and behavioral responses (e.g., withdrawal from social connections) (Strayhorn, 2019; Stroebe et al., 2015). Lastly, K6 may

have limited utility to international student populations as it has not yet been validated its applicability to international students who are from culturally and linguistic backgrounds.

Notably, the subtheme of navigating biculturalism demonstrates the process through which ICSs assimilate into American culture as a means of minimizing discriminatory experiences. While existing literature has explored the ICSs' experiences of navigating their professional identity in cross-cultural contexts (Interiano & Lim, 2018; Kuo et al., 2021; Lau & Ng, 2012), the current study highlights the involuntary nature of adopting American cultural values and customs. These findings correspond with the phenomenon that immigrants perceived as less adaptable to mainstream culture become more targeted to discrimination and hostile treatment (Schwartz et al., 2010). Consequently, ICSs may find themselves forced to choose dominant cultural behaviors while rejecting their heritage cultures, rather than being able to achieve integration of both heritage and U.S. cultural streams.

Another prominent aspect of navigating biculturalism is the potential association between the acculturation process and the acknowledgment of discrimination. The qualitative finding suggests the recognition of discrimination develops gradually as ICSs become adjusted to new environments. This association is corroborated by the independent t-test comparing the Perceived Discrimination scores between ICSs staying in the U.S. for less than two years and ICSs staying in the U.S. for more than 2 years. Aligning with the qualitative interview report, the quantitative result suggested that ICSs who stayed more than 2 years were found to experience higher levels of perceived discrimination than those who stayed in the U.S. for less than 2 years.

Inattentive to International Identity

While 92% of counselor educators believed that they created an inclusive learning environment for ICSs (Ng, 2006), the majority of participants in this study perceived

discrimination and marginalization stemming from a lack of attentiveness and support from faculty in addressing their needs as international individuals. For instance, the first subtheme is regarding a lack of support in adjusting to new environments. The accumulated literature on ICSs has consistently underscored their challenges in adjusting to new environments as one of the major hurdles (Behl et al., 2017; Consoli et al., 2022; Kuo et al., 2021). Similar to these findings, the present study also reveals the significant challenge of adjusting to new sociocultural, linguistic, and academic environments for ICSs. Although both current and previous research addresses the common experiences of ICSs in navigating new cultural contexts, many participants in this study demonstrated a lack of sufficient awareness and support from faculty in mitigating their adjustment issues. This insufficient attention and assistance from faculty further exacerbate the challenges and feelings of marginalization experienced by ICSs, leaving their adjustment needs unheard and unmet.

Interestingly, it is a unique aspect of the current study that delves into a lack of faculty support for visa requirements, which emerged as a subtheme for discrimination based on international identity. While Lertora and Croffie (2020) mentioned the legal restrictions in course enrollment and licensure, this study scrutinizes the complications of visa requirements in greater detail. In terms of course enrollment, ICSs have to deal with extra paperwork and processes in academic course reduction, practicum, and internship training. However, limited faculty knowledge and adequate support produces frustration and fear of noncompliance with the legal requirements. Furthermore, the findings highlight the systemic loophole restricting ICSs' licensure process. While certain state licensure boards require a minimum of two to three years of postgraduate training to fulfill licensure requirements, the majority of ICSs have a year of OPT period. This discrepancy makes it practically impossible for them to attain counseling

licensure. Even if they pursue a doctoral program and extend their stay in the U.S. to meet their licensure requirements, they may face significant challenges in securing clinical training sites as their visa status only permits volunteer positions.

Since a majority of interview participants in this study plan to remain in the U.S. after graduation, the visa regulations compound their concerns about their future careers, a topic discussed in the third subtheme, lack of support in career plans. Many expressed feelings pressure to prove their competencies to their future employers, showing their eligibility and worthiness to secure visa sponsorship. This is in line with previous research findings on the experiences of marginalized students in CACREP programs, which indicated students of color receive messages urging them to outperform to succeed in the field (Baker & Moore III, 2015; Henfield et al., 2013). However, this pressure may be more pronounced for ICSs given the importance of employer's visa sponsorship for their continued residency in the country and the limited career options willing to provide such sponsorship. Despite these concerns, the findings indicate the lack of faculty support and missed opportunities for their professional development in preparing for their future career. The desired but missed opportunities include professional development to prepare for entering into academia, strength-based clinical development, and career guidance for ICSs planning to return to their home countries.

Additionally, financial disadvantage is another challenge for ICSs, echoing with previous research on international students in broader perspectives (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007) and ICSs (Lau & Ng, 2012). Presumably, financial needs among ICSs can be heightened because of higher out-of-state tuition fees and legally restricted employment opportunities for international students. However, interview participants in the study not only expressed their financial concerns but also emphasized the scarcity of resources available to

ICSs. Furthermore, ICSs experience further marginalization when faculty fails to recognize the disparity in financial challenges and resources. Lack of tailored support and generic guidance can result in feelings of dismissal and invalidation among ICSs who are facing dire financial needs.

Systemic aspects were also reported by interview participants contributing to their perceived discrimination and marginalization. Similar to the experiences of other marginalized students in CACREP-accredited programs (Baker & Moore III, 2015; Henfield et al., 2013), lack of representation played a significant role in shaping their experiences of marginalization and discrimination. Furthermore, the lack of organic connections with stakeholders such as international offices is pointed as leading to a lack of awareness and knowledge about international students' backgrounds and unique needs. Moreover, another systemic aspect of ICSs' marginalized experience is related to the lack of global perspectives in CACREP standards. For example, the absence of standards regarding the transferability of previous experiences that ICSs accumulated in their home countries can serve as an additional barrier for ICSs.

Racism and Intertwined Systems of Oppression

The qualitative findings reveal that racism, linguistic discrimination, Americentrism, power dynamics in academia, and other interlocking systems of oppression can serve as sources of discrimination and marginalization faced by ICSs. Specifically, the findings about racism, linguistic discrimination, and Americentrism align with the existing literature that has been documented discrimination and marginalization among international students (George Mwangi et al., 2019; Gomez et al., 2011; Hanassab, 2006; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Yao et al., 2019). This interplay of racism, linguistic discrimination, and Americentrism can also be interpreted as the manifestation of key tenets of CRT, particularly White privilege and racial

essentialism. Yao et al. (2019) depicted this interplay as racist nativism, indicating Whiteness such as White racial identity, dominant English language, and White American culture are deemed as normative and superior. Within these racist nativist sociocultural contexts, ICSs are often marginalized and discriminated against, particularly those who are non-White, non-native English speakers, and unfamiliar with White American culture. At the same time, racial essentialism explains how this racist nativism plays a key role in shaping the racial positioning of the interview participants in this research, forcing them to re-identify themselves in racist social categorizations and conform to the dominant stereotypes associated with their racial groups.

The quantitative analyses were conducted to confirm the influence of racism and linguistic discrimination by investigating group differences among different racial and English proficiency groups. However, these analyses did not indicate statistically significant group differences between White and People of Color groups, as well as high and low English proficiency groups. Small sample sizes can be attributable to insignificant group differences, which limits the statistical power to reject the null hypotheses (Faber & Fonseca, 2014). Still, differences in perceived discrimination mean scores were observed: the White group reported lower levels of perceived discrimination than the People of Color group, and the lower perceived English proficiency group reported higher scores on the perceived discrimination scale compared to the higher English proficiency group. These mean score differences, despite their statistical insignificance, may reaffirm the prevalence of racism and linguistic discrimination in the qualitative findings.

Power dynamics in academia emerged as another subtheme contributing to perceived discrimination against ICSs. Some interview participants expressed fear of speaking up for themselves due to power differentials in graduate school. However, when examining group

differences in perceived discrimination based on different program levels, no statistical significance was found between master's and doctoral students. This statistical result aligns with previous research that indicates no group difference in the degrees of perceived challenges faced by both master's and doctoral-level ICSs (Ng & Smith, 2009). Although certain participants mentioned that their relative level of expertise could be the source of exclusion, this quantitative finding combined with the qualitative findings suggests that the inherent hierarchy in faculty-student relationships is a more prominent reason for making ICSs vulnerable to unfair treatment (Bloom et al., 2021).

Finally, other interlocking systems of oppression, such as gender and colorism, were reported by interview participants as factors contributing to discrimination and marginalization. However, the quantitative analysis of gender differences did not demonstrate a statistically significant group difference between cisgender men and women. Moreover, although two male interview participants identified gender as a factor impacting their experiences, one reported it as a cause of marginalization, while another perceived it as a privilege. These divergent responses may reflect the unique characteristics of the counseling field, where a higher representation of female professionals compared to their male counterparts leads to feelings of isolation and inappropriateness among male professionals (Ray et al., 2016). Simultaneously, these mixed results can be attributed to the intersectionality within the same gender groups. Even though the participants share the same gender identity, their perceptions and experiences may differ based on their unique intersecting identities, such as their race/ethnicity, level of study, length of stay in the U.S., or level of English proficiency. Therefore, the insignificant statistical differences in gender groups and the mixed interview responses regarding the influence of gender may suggest

the diverse experiences within subpopulations and emphasize the importance of considering intersectionality.

Support

In terms of the support system that helped ICSs navigate adverse experiences, the interview participants highlighted a range of forms of internal and external social support. Most of all, more than half of the interview participants reported the role of faculty support. It is interesting because it is seemingly inconsistent with the findings in the third theme, which indicates a lack of faculty awareness and adequate support. Although ICSs experience marginalization and discrimination due to limited faculty support regarding their unique needs, it is noteworthy that faculty members are also identified as sources of personal and professional support. These mixed findings may contribute to the statistically insignificant relationship between perceived discrimination and program satisfaction in the quantitative analysis. Furthermore, the qualitative findings suggest that ICSs particularly feel supported by faculty members with marginalized backgrounds, including those who have international backgrounds. This finding is in line with previous research that underscores the importance of diverse faculty representation in providing culturally competent learning environments for marginalized students in CACREP programs (Baker & Moore III, 2015; Spellman et al., 2022).

Support from peer and social circles emerged as another crucial support system reported by all interview participants. Networking with fellow international students both within and beyond their program helped ICSs to feel emotionally connected, as well as providing resources and practical support. The findings also indicated the emotional, academic, and practical support from domestic peers in the program, particularly when they navigate adverse experiences together. Moreover, the qualitative findings highlighted the importance of cultural humility in

relationships with both faculty and peers. Cultural humility refers to a lifelong commitment and engagement in self-reflection and openness towards other cultures (Hook et al., 2013).

Interestingly, many participants introduced this concept during the interview. They suggested that the faculty and peers' attitudes of openness and curiosity about their cultural backgrounds significantly contributed to their feelings of connection and sense of being welcomed.

The last subtheme within the support theme is the development of self-help strategies. The majority of interview participants disclosed utilization of internal support systems such as figuring out on their own, being task-oriented or career-focused, and developing self-advocacy. Similarly, the prior study about ICSs identified self-directed strategies as coping strategies for navigating challenges in biculturalism (Interiano & Lim, 2018) and in supervision training (Woo et al., 2015). Although active coping strategies may enhance their adaptability and resilience (Gloria & Steinhardt, 2014), these results can also be associated with sociocultural barriers that inhibit ICSs' help-seeking behaviors as indicated by some participants. According to them, they struggled with asking for help due to their unfamiliarity with the U.S. academic system as well as their cultural upbringings which taught them not to speak up about their needs.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

As a theoretical framework, the current study utilizes CRT as a conceptual tool to understand discrimination and marginalization faced by ICSs during their stay in CACREP-accredited counseling programs. Most of all, counterstorytelling serves as the pivotal device in this research to capture the counter-narratives and lived experiences of ICSs whose voices have been underrepresented and neglected. While mainstream discourses about international students impose the responsibility solely onto students themselves to adjust and be accustomed to existing

social and academic structures (Sherry et al., 2010), the present study aims to challenge and reevaluate these dominant narratives by conveying and amplifying ICSs' voices. In this regard, the narratives from ICSs in this study shed light on the insufficient program, institutional, and CACREP systemic support that exacerbates marginalized experiences encountered by ICSs. Thus, the counterstorytelling from ICSs in this study contributes to the existing literature by advocating for shared responsibilities at institutional and systemic levels to facilitate better educational experiences for ICSs.

In addition to counterstorytelling, key concepts of CRT play significant roles in interpreting the lived experience of the research participants. It is particularly compelling that racism remains as the primary sociocultural factor shaping their marginalization, despite the research participants' international backgrounds. As Whiteness is taken for granted as normative and valuable in U.S. society, this governing rule of White privilege also pervasively influences the counseling curriculum, training structure, and professional relationships within the CACREP-accredited counseling programs. Consequently, ICSs are involuntarily subjected to racialization, positioning them within either privileged or marginalized positions. Then, in the case of ICSs of color, they may encounter heightened levels of discrimination such as stereotyping, othering, and exclusion.

This study also demonstrates the potential for expanding the scope of CRT to a more global context. Intersectionality, one of the key concepts in CRT, is a particularly useful concept to explain this phenomenon. This study identified the theme, racism and intertwined systems of oppression, which explains the phenomenon of how racism, linguistic discrimination, Americentrism, power dynamics in academia, and other oppressive systems can create inequitable and non-inclusive learning environments for counseling students from diverse

international backgrounds. This is the empirical exploration that aligns with the previous conceptual discussions by scholars, who articulated the White-dominant, Eurocentric, English-language-centric U.S. education systems encountered by international students (Joshi et al., 2021; Yao et al., 2019). This study adds to the existing literature by delivering the firsthand narrative from ICSs, reflecting on the reality of unwelcoming racist nativist educational environments in CACREP programs.

Implications for Counselor Educators

The findings of this study provide several implications for how faculty can create culturally inclusive environments for ICSs. First of all, increasing faculty knowledge and awareness of the unique experiences of ICSs is the first step in creating inclusive programs. Networking with on-campus or professional organizations dedicated to international students can provide valuable insights into international students' experiences and challenges. Examples of the organizations include the office of international services within their institution or the ACES International Students and Faculty Interest Network (ISFIN). Faculty members can participate in workshops and other educational opportunities offered by these organizations to gain a basic understanding of the daily, legal, and structural issues faced by ICSs.

Moreover, faculty can restructure their classroom and clinical training curriculum to better accommodate ICSs. They may involve actively inviting ICSs to participate in the classroom discussion and share their perspectives. They can also include counseling theories, readings, and discussion topics from people of color, international, and multicultural perspectives that can facilitate culturally diverse classroom conversations (McDowell et al., 2012). In addition, it is important to recognize that ICSs may require additional processing time due to language and cultural differences. To accommodate this unique challenge, faculty members can

consider providing proactive support such as supplementary readings and video aids to facilitate contextual understanding, extended deadlines upon request, additional mentoring, and individual guidance about classroom materials. These pedagogical considerations appear to be more crucial in multicultural counseling courses considering the exclusion and alienation reported by participants in those courses. Counselor educators should be aware of the existence of students who are not familiar with sociocultural contexts in the U.S. and mindful to provide instructions that can be understandable and relevant to them. As participant 4 said, ICSs may desire to engage in course content, not from “someone else's through the third-person lens, but how I can, as a First-person, interact with many of the content or the discussion.”

In terms of advising and mentoring, it is necessary for faculty to provide proactive and preventive support rather than reactive and perfunctory manners. It is worthy of attention that ICSs may experience barriers in seeking help due to unfamiliarity with academic systems in the U.S. or cultural inhibition from asking for help. Regardless of the results that come after, commitment to taking the initiative in helping students, such as actively engaging in conversation to learn their needs, providing resources, and collaboratively seeking solutions, was reported as grateful and helpful. Thus, faculty members should take the initiative to connect and communicate with ICSs to provide tailored resources and support. Moreover, embracing cultural humility is expected to help foster supportive and trusting relationships in this process, as highlighted by the study participants. For example, counselor educators can demonstrate their openness and curiosity about learning ICSs' cultural heritage and lived experiences as international students in the U.S.

In addition, one of the important aspects of advising ICSs is related to providing adequate support for visa requirements and career planning. Because ICSs encounter unique challenges in

complying with legal restrictions, counselor educators are recommended to take proactive actions to learn the basic information, share those understanding with ICSs, provide timely responses for any documentation requests, and refer to the appropriate department when necessary. Furthermore, counselor educators should be aware that ICSs may experience heightened career preparation needs, such as due to visa sponsorship or plans for returning to their home countries. Subsequently, counselor educators can engage in consistent conversation with their international advisees, collaboratively planning for their careers and developing their professional competencies in areas where they need to prepare.

Encouraging peer networking is another important aspect of faculty support for ICSs. Faculty can encourage ICSs to connect with other students by participating in different networking opportunities such as cohort meetings, leadership organizations within the program, campus events hosted by the international office or other organizations, as well as conferences and professional workshops. In particular, the participants in this study revealed that networking with other international students, both within and beyond their academic program, was beneficial for ICSs as sources of emotional support, practical living assistance, and professional information. Thus, faculty should be attentive to encouraging ICSs to seek out opportunities for engaging with other international students within the counseling field and the local community so that they can develop networks for emotional, personal, and professional support.

Finally, the study findings indicate that ICSs may feel forced to be assimilated into American culture as they perceive maintaining their heritage culture can lead to discrimination and marginalization. To mitigate the negative impact of alienation and hostile treatment, thus, faculty should provide deliberate efforts to celebrate the multicultural perspectives and experiences that ICSs bring to the program and the counseling profession. While helping ICSs in

navigating the challenges of adjusting to new educational and cultural environments in the U.S., faculty can also intentionally encourage ICSs to utilize their strengths as professionals with international backgrounds. For instance, faculty can promote multicultural and inclusive conversation by facilitating ICSs' participation in discussions to share heritage culture and their unique experiences as persons who navigate between different cultures. Also, faculty can assist ICSs' clinical development by helping them leverage their multicultural experiences in working with clients from diverse backgrounds.

Implications for CACREP Standards and Systemic Levels

In addition to changes at faculty and program levels, systemic changes in CACREP standards are also imperative. Firstly, there is a dire need to address the challenges of licensure for ICSs due to visa constraints. There is a systemic barrier for ICSs in obtaining licensure that typically requires several years of postgraduate clinical training because of the one-year OPT timeframe. Therefore, it is imperative to begin the discussion to support ICSs to obtain licensure under the visa restrictions. Stakeholders including counselor educators, CACREP representatives, and state licensure boards should be able to participate in this conversation to identify feasible strategies for ICSs to attain licensure within the visa regulations.

Furthermore, career support for ICSs should be tackled collaboratively across programs at systemic levels. For example, an information database about H1B-sponsored job opportunities can be created and distributed across CACREP programs, which can particularly be beneficial for ICSs seeking clinical positions in the U.S. At the same time, for those ICSs planning to return to their home countries, counselor educators across programs can establish networks with counseling boards globally in order to connect students with appropriate resources for their potential careers at home in line with their education in the U.S. Additionally, as suggested by

participant 6, transparent disclosure of job placement data for different student demographic groups is crucial so that ICSs make informed decisions of attending counseling programs and planning for their future careers.

Systemic efforts to recruit and retain more ICSs are encouraged. While CACREP vital statistics provide some information about the ratio of ICSs in its accredited programs, the data lacks detailed information such as their nationality or retention rates which can help organize effective strategies for recruiting and retaining students globally. Additionally, enhancing accessibility to resources including scholarships and financial assistance can promote more equitable experiences for ICSs. Finally, considerations about ICSs' previous clinical experiences should be incorporated as clear guidelines across CACREP programs. The guideline can include the universal standards within the CACREP curriculum and licensure requirements regarding how to interpret and transfer ICSs' prior experiences from their home countries.

Limitations

A major limitation of the current study is related to the small sample size in quantitative data. Small sample size explains the reason for statistically insignificant outcomes in a majority of quantitative analyses regarding group differences and correlations (Faber & Fonseca, 2014). The primary causes of the small sample size can be attributed to the relatively small overall population of ICSs and the limited routes for promoting the research. The 2022 CACREP vital statistics suggest that approximately 748 master's students and 186 doctoral students are currently enrolled in CACREP programs (CACREP, 2023a). Additionally, participation recruitments predominantly relied on online methods including professional listservs that mainly targeted doctoral students and those at higher academic levels. This recruitment approach limited the exposure of the study to potential participants, particularly those who were master's students.

As a result, the limited sample size and insufficient statistical power present challenges to the generalizability of the quantitative findings in this study.

In addition, the transferability of the qualitative findings may also be questioned since the present study collected data from a small subset of ICSs. Despite their international backgrounds in common, ICSs encompass a large group of counseling students who have various demographic backgrounds and identities including their race, gender, age, and country of origin, to name a few. While this study aimed to identify universal experiences among ICSs who experienced discrimination and marginalization, the limited representation from different subgroups of ICSs may produce caution to apply the current findings to different subgroups of ICSs.

Finally, the format for qualitative data collection may restrict the trustworthiness of the findings in this research. Given the sensitive nature of the topic of this study, establishing a trustful relationship between the researcher and the participants is indispensable. Because the current study employed a one-time 60-minute interview via Zoom, it may not be enough to build rapport and elicit in-depth, genuine responses from participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several future research recommendations regarding the quantitative exploration of this topic. Most of all, future research is recommended to engage with an expanded sample size to enhance the statistical power of quantitative analyses. The utilization of a larger sample size is expected to produce more robust and meaningful statistical results, particularly enabling a thorough examination of within-group differences among ICSs. Additionally, there is a suggestion for further investigation into the relationships between perceived discrimination and related variables identified in qualitative findings. Variables such as sense of belonging,

homesickness, and social connectedness should be considered in future research, given that participants in this research demonstrated negative emotional and behavioral responses towards discrimination, including reduced sense of belonging, heightened homesickness, and reservedness from peer relationships. Simultaneously, since interview participants identified social support and internal coping strategies as mitigating factors for adverse outcomes of discrimination, researchers are encouraged to investigate the moderating effects of these variables in the relationships between perceived discrimination and its adverse outcomes. This investigation of the relationships between perceived discrimination and its potential outcomes can be extended by employing a longitudinal format since it would help verify the potential negative impact of perceived discrimination over an extended period of time.

In terms of the qualitative exploration regarding this topic, focusing on certain subgroups of ICSs can be beneficial to capture the idiosyncratic experiences within ICSs. This approach would be particularly beneficial if it included the lived experiences of individuals who are relatively underrepresented in research on ICSs. Such subgroups include ICSs of color (Joshi et al., 2021), ICSs from South Asia (Daniel, 2021), and ICSs planning to return to their home country (Lau & Ng, 2012). Furthermore, improvements in data collection methods are recommended for future research. The data collection process should involve more frequent interactions with a small number of participants in order to establish greater trustworthiness between the researcher and participants and to facilitate a deeper exploration of each individual's experiences.

Finally, with regard to mixed methods design, a sequential mixed methods study is recommended for future research. In the current study, the misalignment in constructs between the quantitative and qualitative strands may have contributed to the limited statistical

insignificance in quantitative findings. Therefore, a sequential mixed methods design that conduct either qualitative or quantitative phase prior to another one can improve the coherence of constructs across both strands and thus, produce more comprehensive findings.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to explore discrimination and marginalization of ICSs during their stay in CACREP-accredited counseling programs, utilizing CRT as a theoretical framework to interpret their lived experiences. The results of this study depict the nature and reality of discrimination encountered by ICSs and highlights the interplay of intertwined oppressive systems that produce adverse experiences among ICSs. Nonetheless, this study also underscores the support mechanism helping ICSs to navigate discriminatory and marginalized experiences. Implications for theory, counselor educators, and CACREP standards were outlined based on these findings. Future research is needed to verify the potential impacts of perceived discrimination and within-group differences.

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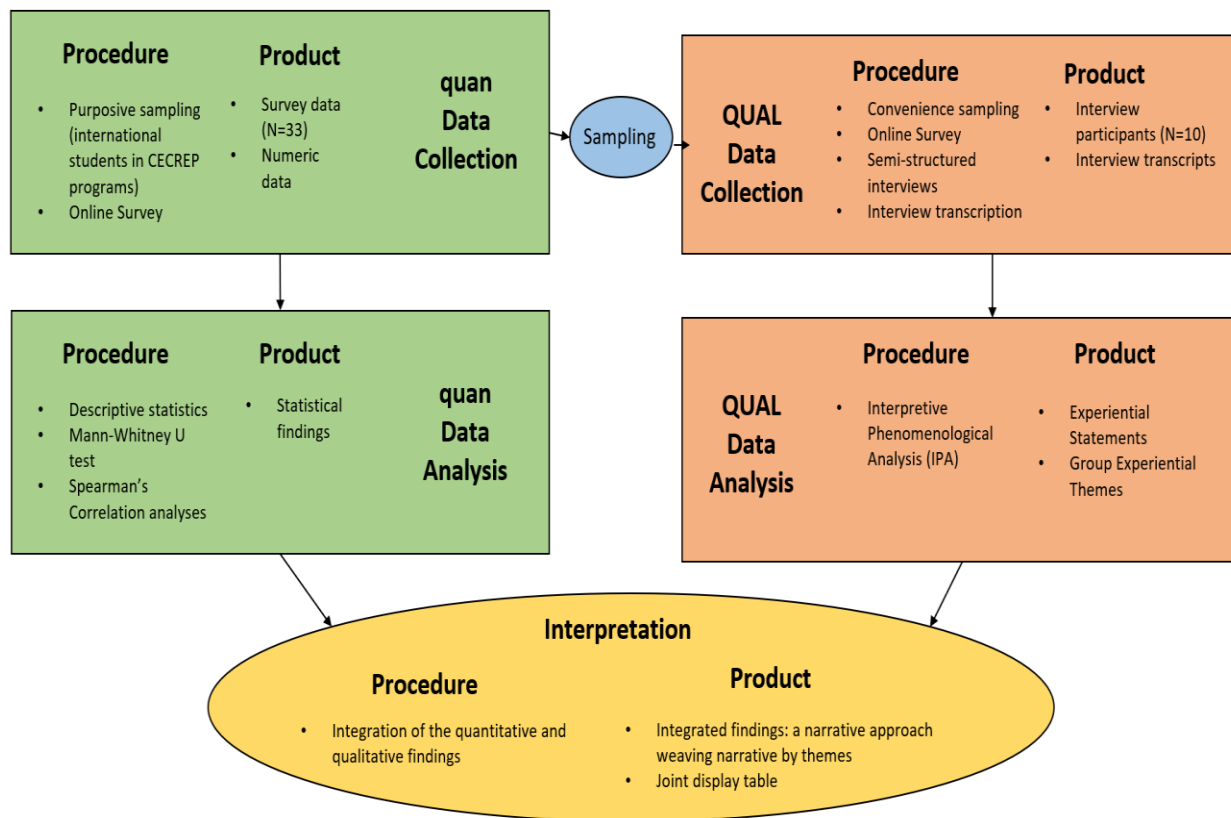
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Convergent Mixed Method Research Process Diagram



Appendix B

Survey Questionnaire

[Demographic Questionnaire]

1. Are you a graduate student in a CACREP-accredited counseling program?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No, but I graduated from a CACREP-accredited program less than a year ago.

2. Are you an international student?

*If you are a recent graduate, you can answer according to the most recent time enrolled in the CACREP-accredited program.

 - a. Yes (F-1 visa)
 - b. Yes (J-1 visa)
 - c. No

3. Which education level are you currently enrolled in?
 - a. Master's degree
 - b. Doctoral degree

4. Are you a full-time student?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

5. Current year in the program:
 - a. 1st year
 - b. 2nd year
 - c. 3rd year

- d. 4th year
 - e. Other _____
6. Please identify your program platform.
- a. Face-to-face
 - b. Online
 - c. Hybrid
7. What counseling discipline are you currently enrolled in?
- a. Addictions Counseling
 - b. Clinical Mental Health
 - c. College Counseling
 - d. Counselor Education
 - e. Counseling Psychology
 - f. Marriage and Family Therapy
 - g. Rehabilitation Counseling
 - h. School Counseling
 - i. Other (please specify) _____
8. Which region of the United States is your institution located in?
- a. North Atlantic
 - b. North Central
 - c. South
 - d. Rocky Mountain
 - e. West
9. Which of these options best describes your current gender identity?

- a. Cisgender Man
 - b. Cisgender Woman
 - c. Transgender Man
 - d. Transgender Woman
 - e. Non-binary
 - f. Not-listed (Please indicate in the text box below.)
10. Which of these options best describes your current sexual orientation?
- a. Heterosexual
 - b. Gay
 - c. Lesbian
 - d. Bisexual
 - e. Queer
 - f. Not listed (Please indicate in the text box below.)
11. Please indicate your racial and/or ethnic identity. Please select all that apply.
- a. White
 - b. Black/African
 - c. Hispanic/Latinx
 - d. Asian
 - e. Native American
 - f. Arab
 - g. Pacific Islanders
 - h. Multiracial
 - i. Self-identify (Please describe in the text box below)

12. Which region your country of origin is located?

- a. North America
- b. South America
- c. Africa
- d. East Asia
- e. Southeast Asia
- f. South Asia
- g. Middle East
- h. Oceania
- i. Europe
- j. Other (Please describe in the text box below)

13. Please write your country of origin in the text box below. _____

14. How long have you been staying in the U.S.?

- a. Less than a year
- b. 1-2 years
- c. 2-5 years
- d. 5-7 years
- e. more than 7 years

15. Please evaluate your perceived levels of English in the following areas.

1 (Very poor), 2 (Poor), 3(Good), 4(Very good)

- a. "I feel that my understanding of spoken English is _____"
- b. "I feel my English writing is _____"
- c. "I feel that when reading in English my understanding of the text is _____"

- d. “I feel that my level of spoken English is _____”
16. This study aims to investigate the in-depth exploration of discrimination that international students in CACREP-accredited programs would encounter. In case you have encountered any forms of marginalization and discrimination in the program, we would like to invite you for a one-time 60-minute interview session. Would you agree to be contacted by the primary researcher for a possible Zoom interview? If yes, please write an email address in the text box for the follow-up communication. If you choose no, your responses to this survey remain anonymous. *Please note that you are not required to participate in the interview and should you select yes now, you retain the option to decline if contacted.
- a. Yes (Text box: email address)
 - b. No

[Perceived Discrimination Scale]

Next to each item below, please indicate the number that best applies to your experiences in your counseling and counselor education academic program.

1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree

1. Many opportunities are denied to me.
2. I am treated differently in social situations.
3. Others are biased toward me.
4. I feel that I receive unequal treatment.
5. I am denied what I deserve.
6. I feel that my people are discriminated against.

7. I am treated differently because of my race.
8. I am treated differently because of my color.

[Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6)]

The next questions are about how you feel, and how things have been for you during the past 30 days. Please mark the answer that is correct for you (1, 2, ...). Please answer every question. If you are not sure which answer to select, please choose the answer that comes closest to describing you.

1 (None of the time), 2 (A little of the time), 3 (Some of the time), 4 (Most of the time), 5 (All of the time)

1. During the past 30 days, about how did you feel nervous?
2. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel hopeless?
3. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel restless or fidgety?
4. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?
5. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel that everything was an effort?
6. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel worthless?

[Satisfaction with Graduate Programs]

Next to each item below, please indicate the number that best represents your level of satisfaction with your counseling and counselor education academic program.

1=Very dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Somewhat dissatisfied, 4=Neutral, 5=Somewhat Satisfied, 6=Satisfied, 7=Very satisfied

1. Academic Training
2. Clinical Training
3. Research Training
4. Professional Development
5. Overall Satisfaction

Appendix C

Interview Questions Protocol Form

Hi, thank you for participating in the interview. This study aims to explore international counseling students' perceptions and experiences regarding discrimination and marginalization. Before we begin the interview, I ask that you read and sign the Informed Consent Form. The findings from this study will be used to fulfill the requirements for my doctoral degree. Our discussion will last about 45-60 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and you may pause or stop at any time, for any reason.

Background Information

1. Is there any background information that has changed after you completed the survey?

Research Question 1: Discriminatory Experiences

2. Can you tell me about the discriminatory incidents that you have encountered in the graduate program?
 - a. Of those, what has been the most prominent?
 - b. How did you respond to the discrimination?

Research Question 2: Impact of Perceived Discrimination

3. When encountered those incidents, how have those experiences affected you in general?
 - c. How have those experiences affected you adjusting to new environments?
 - d. How have those experiences affected your feelings?
 - e. How have those experiences affected your relationship with others in the program?
 - f. How have those experiences impacted you academically and professionally?

Research Question 1: Discriminatory Experiences

4. Could you elaborate on what sociocultural factors (e.g., race/ethnicity, nationality, native language, etc.) may be attributed as the cause of discrimination you have experienced as an international counseling student?

Research Question 2: Mitigating Factors

5. Reflecting on those incidents, what specific factors helped you to navigate the adverse experiences?
 - a. Did you perceive any forms of support from faculty and program that you found helpful during those periods?
 - b. What additional forms of support do you believe could have been more helpful in dealing with those incidents?
6. What recommendations would you give to CACREP-accredited programs to create culturally inclusive environments for international students?

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form for Participation in Research

Title of Study: "Do I Belong Here?": A Convergent Mixed Methods Study About Perceived Discrimination Among International Counseling Students [Tentative Title]

IRB Protocol #26437

Principal Investigator(s): Hyemi Jang, hjang3@ncsu.edu, 919-800-1935

Funding Source: None

NC State Faculty Point of Contact: Dr. Marc Grimmett, magrimme@ncsu.edu, 919-515-6358

You are invited to take part in a research study. Here are some important things to know:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate and change your mind, you can stop participating at any time without penalty.
- The purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of discrimination and marginalization among international students in CACREP-accredited counseling programs.
- You will be asked to complete a Qualtrics online survey about your perceptions and experiences related to discrimination in the program. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. At the end of the demographic questionnaire, you will be asked whether you want to participate in a 60-minute in-depth interview session via Zoom. If you decide to participate in the interview, we would like to collect your email address for scheduling the interview. Individual interviews will be video-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.
- You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. Research studies may pose risks to those who participate.
- You may want to participate in this research because the information you provide will help reduce barriers and establish an inclusive learning environment for international students in CACREP-accredited programs. You may not want to participate in this research because it will involve disclosing personal experiences related to discrimination, which may cause some emotional discomfort.
- If you have questions about your participation in this research at any time, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above or the NC State IRB office via email at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu or via phone at 1-919-515-8754

Please read the rest of this consent form for more specific details of this research. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher for clarification or more information.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of discrimination and marginalization among international students in CACREP-accredited counseling programs.

How many people will be in the study?

There will be approximately 40-50 participants in the survey phase of this study. There will be approximately 5-10 participants in the interview phase of this study.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?

In order to be a participant in this study, you must agree to be in the study and (a) be in, or have graduated within a year from CACREP-accredited counseling master's or doctoral programs across the U.S., and (b) hold a student visa (F-1 or J-1), or had a student visa while enrolled in the program.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. You will be asked to complete a Qualtrics online survey about perceived discrimination in the program. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. We suggest that you take this survey using a private device, in a private location, using a web browser set to private/incognito mode.
2. At the end of the demographic questionnaire in the survey, you will be asked whether you want to participate in an in-depth interview session via Zoom. If you decide to participate in the interview, we would like to collect your email address for scheduling the interview.
3. Once the interview participants are randomly selected from those who express interest in the interview, the principal investigator will contact you via email to schedule an individual Zoom interview. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked questions related to your experiences of discrimination in the program. Individual interviews will be video-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.
4. After the initial coding, interview participants will be invited to a member-checking process. You will be provided the interview transcript and initial codes so that you can confirm the accuracy of the information collected. You can indicate if there's any information or identifiers you want us to delete or not share.

The total amount of time that you will be participating in this study is approximately 20 minutes for survey participants, and two hours for participants contributing to both the survey and interview process.

Recording in research

Interview participants will be video-recorded during the interview session via Zoom. If you do not want this information collected, you cannot participate in this research.

We would like to use these recordings only for transcription. We will keep these recordings until transcriptions have been verified.

Benefits of participating in this research

There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. The indirect benefits may include your contribution to the scholarly understanding of international counseling students'

experiences. The information you provide may help foster inclusive and equitable learning experiences within CACREP-accredited programs.

Risks to participating in this research

There is minimal risk associated with your participation in this research. The risks to you, as a result of participating in this research, include emotional discomfort in disclosing your personal experiences related to discrimination. If you experience any discomfort or concern, you can stop participating in the study at any time. If you need any mental health services due to emotional distress that may be triggered by this research, you can contact the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or the Crisis Text Line at 741741.

What data will be collected about me and are there risks associated with that?

The survey data that are collected about you include demographic information without a name and other direct identifiers, and responses on perceived discrimination and related scales in the survey phase. The interview data are your email address and the transcript related to your experiences in the CACREP-accredited program. The email address is collected for scheduling the interview, sending the Zoom link, inviting the member-checking, and providing compensation. Except for the email address for the interview, this study does not require any directly identifiable information. However, the risks to you as a result of collecting this information include the likely possibility that others may indirectly identify you with specific personal information reported in your responses. The researcher will mitigate this risk by carefully removing or replacing any specific information that can identify you directly. You will also have a chance to eliminate any indirectly identifiable information in the member-checking process. However, there is no way I can guarantee that the data will not indirectly identify you.

How will my identity and the data about me be stored and protected?

After all data is collected, the researchers will go through the data, remove all direct and indirect identifiers from the dataset, and create a coded list that connects your real identity to the dataset. This list will be stored separately from the data. After the study is over, we will permanently delete the master list.

We will go through the interview transcripts, and do our best to remove or replace any information that can identify you directly. An example of the information we will remove is your email address. If you participate in the interview process, you will also be invited to the member-checking process to eliminate any indirectly identifiable information you do not want to be shared. After we do this, it may still be possible for someone to recognize you from your responses.

Who can access my data and how will my data be shared and used in the future?

Your data, with direct identifiers removed, will be stored, used, and shared with others for future research studies without additional consent from you. This may include sharing your individual de-identified data with other researchers, journals, data repositories, and/or funding sources.

How will the data about me be reported to the public and are there risks associated with that?

Even though we will not directly identify you when we share the results of our study, it's still possible someone could figure out who you are from the information we will include. This is

because we will report the data about personal stories in relation to your demographic information such as race, gender, country of origin, and other potential indirect identifiers. Because of that, someone may be able to re-identify you from the project because of the details of the stories including potential indirect identifiers. As a result of possible re-identification, the risks to you or others you know include a breach of privacy.

Right to withdraw your participation

Your participation is voluntary. Even if you agree initially, consent is an ongoing process. You can stop participating at any time for any reason. To do so, you can close the internet browser in the survey process. If you are participating in the interview process, tell the researcher interviewing you. You can also contact the researcher, Hyemi Jang, at hjang3@ncsu.edu and 919-800-1935. Or you can contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Marc A. Grimmert, at magrimme@ncsu.edu and 919-515-6358.

If you withdraw, we will stop any procedures or data collection that may be happening. We will also delete any data that's already been collected from you whenever possible. We will not be able to delete your data if we cannot identify which responses are yours or if the data has already been published.

Compensation

For your participation in all research activities including the survey and interview, you will receive an eGift card of \$20 sent to an email address of your choice. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you will not receive compensation.

What if you are a student?

Your participation in this study is not a course requirement. Your participation or lack thereof will not affect your class standing, grades, or relationship with your instructors or advisors.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the researcher, Hyemi Jang, at hjang3@ncsu.edu and 919-800-1935. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Marc A. Grimmert, at magrimme@ncsu.edu and 919-515-6358.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) office. An IRB office helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. You can contact the NC State University IRB office at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8754, or [fill out a confidential form online](https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/) at <https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/>

Consent to participate

By selecting “Yes, I want to participate in this research” and electronically signing this consent form, I am affirming that I have read the above information. All of the questions that I had about this research have been answered. If I consent to participate, I understand that I can stop

participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I am aware that I may revoke my consent at any time.

Yes, I want to be in this research study <Qualtrics button>

No, I do not want to be in this research study. <Qualtrics button>

Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix E

Recruitment Email for International Students in CACREP-accredited Programs

Dear Colleagues,

My name is Hyemi Jang, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Counseling and Counselor Education Program at North Carolina State University. I am writing to invite you to a research study on perceived discrimination among international master's and doctoral students in CACREP-accredited programs. The purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of discrimination and marginalization that international students have in CACREP-accredited programs.

To participate in this study, you must agree to be in the study and:

1. be in, or have graduated within a year from CACREP-accredited counseling master's or doctoral programs across the U.S.
2. hold a student visa (F-1 or J-1), or have held a student visa while enrolled in the program.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. You will be asked to complete a Qualtrics online survey about demographic information and perceived discrimination in the program. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the survey.
2. During the survey, you will be asked whether you want to participate in an in-depth interview session via Zoom.
3. Once the interview participants are randomly selected from those who express interest in the interview, the principal investigator will contact you via email to schedule an individual Zoom interview. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be video-recorded upon your consent.

Your participation is voluntary and confidential. Even if you agree initially, you can stop participating at any time for any reason. If you complete all study activities including the survey and interview process, you will receive a \$20 eGift Card via email.

To review the details of the study, you can review the following link is the informed consent document:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jJaRD5DfqwgZAZroCwZyShyXpgGgHnyh/view?usp=sharing>

If you are interested in participating, please complete the online survey at the link below:

https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1TYn1z3CuWyouG

If you have any questions about this research, please contact Hyemi Jang, at hjang3@ncsu.edu and 919-800-1935. Or you can contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Marc A. Grimmert, at magrimme@ncsu.edu and 919-515-6358.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hyemi Jang, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling and Counselor Education
North Carolina State University

Appendix F

Member Checking Email

Hello,

I hope this e-mail finds you well. I am contacting you to request that you review the interview transcript and initial codes identified using your interview transcript. This process is referred to as “member checking” and will involve the following steps:

1. I will share your interview transcript and initial codes via my private North Carolina State University Google Drive folder.
2. You are asked to gain access to the document(s) using your personal computer and a secure network. Both of us will be the only ones to be able to access this private folder. I suggest completing this activity in a private location, on a private internet connection, and accessing this folder using a web browser that is in private/incognito mode.
3. You will read through the document(s) in the private folder and comment in the document if you agree, disagree, or would like to clarify or change the content in each document and how you would like to do so. I expect this will take about 20-30 minutes of your time.
4. You will e-mail me to inform me that you have completed reading through your document(s) and commenting on them as appropriate. I am requesting that you do this within two weeks of this email. Please do not provide information or feedback in the email you send to us regarding your completion of the task.
5. Once the verification process by you is completed, I will remove your access to the private NC State University Google Drive folder with your document(s) in it.

I expect that the member-checking activities will take about 20-30 minutes of your time. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Hyemi Jang
hjang3@ncsu.edu
919-800-1935