



2018

West meets East: An exploration of the ways American university development officers can build guanxi with Chinese parents

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WEST MEETS EAST: AN EXPLORATION OF THE WAYS AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS CAN BUILD *GUANXI* WITH CHINESE PARENTS

by

Jinrui Zhang Mone

A Dissertation Submitted to the

Graduate School

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Benerd School of Education
Educational Administration and Leadership

University of the Pacific
Stockton, California

2018

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DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS CAN BUILD *GUANXI* WITH CHINESE PARENTS

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Jinrui Zhang Mone

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family- my husband Trevor, my parents Ms. Xu and Professor Zhang, my parents-in-law Gloria and Tom, my American Friendship Family Kerry and Keith, as well as my church Auntie Bee and Uncle Eddie.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At the age of twenty-eight, an age full of opportunities and challenges, I thank God for guiding me through all the transitions and temptations. My special shout-out goes to Dr. Delores McNair who has been an exemplary dissertation chair. As my graduate work supervisor, academic advisor and mentor, Dr. McNair has been indefatigably encouraging and supporting me. I am also very blessed to have superbly supportive and patient dissertation committee members, Dr. Jaci Griffen and Dr. Christina Rusk, who have provided constructive feedback and comments for my writing. I would also like to express my deep gratitude towards my family in both China and America for their unconditional love and care, for their trust in my capability and determination to complete this dissertation, as well as for their stimulating me to finish writing by every means. Last but not least, I sincerely appreciate participants who were willing to help and who have helped me with this research study, university faculty and staff for their motivation, as well as my friends, colleagues and students for their emotional and psychological support. Without all of them, I could not have enjoyed this journey.

West Meets East: An Exploration of the Ways American University Development Officers Can Build *Guanxi* With Chinese Parents

Abstract

by Jinrui Zhang Mone

University of the Pacific
2018

Because philanthropic support from alumni and their families is an important source of revenue for American colleges and universities, identifying ways to connect with Chinese students and cultivate philanthropic support from their parents is an essential component of fundraising efforts. In this study, I explored how American university advancement officers could employ *guanxi* to cultivate relationships with Chinese parent donors in order to increase U.S. higher education philanthropy efforts. The concept of *guanxi*, an important aspect of building and sustaining relationships in China, served as the focus for understanding Chinese parents' connections with their children's American universities. I employed a qualitative collective case study design using purposeful criterion sampling and conducted research with seven participants. The research findings inform the practice of American university fundraising. The researcher generated specific strategies for American university development officers to build and cultivate *guanxi* with Chinese parents in order to receive more donations from them. Recommendations for further research are also provided.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the Institute of International Education (2016a), “The continued growth in international students coming to the United States for higher education had a significant positive economic impact on the United States” (para. 1). The NAFSA: Association of International Educators’ (2018) “latest analysis finds that the 1,078,822 international students studying at American colleges and universities contributed \$36.9 billion and supported more than 450,000 jobs to the American economy during the 2016-2017 academic year” (para. 1). The Institute of International Education’s *Open Doors Report* (2016b) found that from 2015 to 2016, of the 427,313 international undergraduate students enrolled in the United States, 81.2% relied primarily on personal and family funds to pay for their studies. Of the 383,935 international graduate students enrolled in the United States, 57.6% relied mainly on personal and family funds to pay for their graduate education. The Institute of International Education (2016c) also found that from 2015 to 2016, China ranked first among 25 leading places of origin of international students in the United States; 31.5% of international students in the United States are from China. According to the United States Department of Homeland Security, “the number of Chinese students studying in the United States continues to increase” (2014, p. 1). Due to the booming economy in China, many second-generation children of wealthy families, known as *fu’erdai*, study in the United States and pay full tuition to their American universities for their studies (Liu, 2015). Consequently, Chinese families have the capacity to donate to American higher education. According to the Council for Aid to Education (2017), American higher education raised a total of \$41 billion from voluntary support in 2016. “Foundations (including family foundations) are the largest source of support” (Council for Aid to Education, 2017, p. 2) with \$12.45 billion in donations, making up 30.4% of total donations in 2016. Second to foundations’ giving, alumni donated \$9.93 billion to U.S. higher education, “providing 24.2

percent of the total [\$41 billion]” (Council for Aid to Education, 2017, p. 2). The third largest source of support to American higher education institutions were non-alumni individuals (Council for Aid to Education, 2017), which includes alumni’s or current students’ parents, grandparents, and spouses.

The philanthropic cause in the People’s Republic of China (P.R.C.; the term China will be used going forward as the nation is commonly referred to in American English) is not as feverish as it is in the United States. With the world’s second largest economy, China has a gap between its economic output and annual giving; China still falls behind other countries in total philanthropic giving and is continuously ranked near the bottom (Harsha, 2016). “Despite China’s massive population and growing wealth, it is one of the few places where philanthropists are still finding it hard to build, promote, and sustain charitable organizations” (Miller, 2012, para. 1). It is a challenge for the Chinese government to encourage philanthropic work due to Chinese culture, history, and politics, such as a lack of awareness of philanthropy and absence of a philanthropic system in Chinese higher education. In China, parents do not typically give financial gifts to their children’s universities. Chinese universities do not fundraise among Chinese parents. Few universities have development offices, but they do emphasize building alumni relations.

Fortunately, beginning in March 2012, China has been open to private, corporate, and institutional giving. It is now more commonly seen in Chinese colleges and universities that private entrepreneurs have established scholarship programs to reward excellent student achievement, support poverty-stricken students’ learning and living, and construction of institutional infrastructure and amenities. Xin Zhang (2014), co-founder and chief executive of SOHO China, the largest prime office real estate developer in China, and world-famous Chinese philanthropist, believed that 2014 would be a turning point in Chinese philanthropy. She

described a rising group of responsible Chinese entrepreneurs that are “socially conscious, globally engaged and hoping to make a positive and lasting impact on China and the world” (Zhang, 2014, para. 19). Zhang foresees these entrepreneurs’ aspirations to stimulate China’s philanthropic calling in the long run.

Because philanthropic support from alumni and their families is an important source of revenue for American colleges and universities, identifying ways to connect with Chinese students and alumni and cultivate philanthropic support from their parents could be a worthwhile component of fundraising efforts. In this study, I explored how American university advancement officers could employ *guanxi* to cultivate relationships with Chinese parent donors in order to increase fundraising results. The concept of *guanxi*, an important aspect of building and sustaining relationships in China, served as the focus for understanding Chinese parents’ connections with their children’s American universities. Due to *guanxi*’s importance in China and the increasing number of Chinese college and university students in the United States, it is necessary for both Chinese and Americans to know about *guanxi* in current Chinese society (Chen & Chen, 2004).

This chapter provides the background for the topic of inquiry. In the following sections, I describe the research problem and my purpose for conducting this study; present the research questions explored and the study’s significance, conceptual framework, and research design; and offer my perspective as the researcher.

Background

This study was situated within the broader topic of higher education and philanthropy. In particular, I focused on Chinese parents who, although they lived and worked in China, decided to send their children to study in the United States. I focused on this group of Chinese parents because many of them had a strong financial capacity to support their children throughout the

entire length of their academic program in the United States. Therefore, they had great potential to donate to American higher education through their children's colleges and universities.

In American higher education, advancement officers have historically relied on wealthy, White, heterosexual men to achieve fundraising goals (Drezner, 2011). However, it is increasingly important to engage all populations in advancement strategies (Drezner, 2010). There is also a need to expand the donor base in higher education (Drezner, 2013). Even though there is research on Asian and Chinese American philanthropy in American higher education (Tsunoda, 2010, 2011, 2013), it is limited and there appears to be no research that specifically focuses on international Chinese students' parents' donations to American colleges and universities. "There is a need for more research on philanthropic giving patterns as institutions expand their focus to new donor communities" (Drezner, 2013, p. 3).

As American higher education continues to experience ever-growing diversity in the student population, development officers need to understand and incorporate unique cultural perspectives into their fundraising practices to tap into other cultural understandings and ways of giving (Tsunoda, 2011). American higher education development officers in particular need to be educated about Chinese parents' perceptions, psychology, and culture as related to giving. "Although existing research [on philanthropy] offers some guidance for practitioners, the implications are limited by the failure to ground the research in any theoretical or conceptual framework" (Drezner, 2013, p. 4). Therefore, American universities need to understand and build a subtle relationship, known as *guanxi*, a ubiquitous concept in the Chinese community. Although there are studies of *guanxi* in the business field (Farh, Tsui, Xin, & Cheng, 1998; Hwang, 2012; Lee & Dawes, 2005; Luo, 2007; So & Walker, 2006; Tsang, 1998; Yeung & Tung, 1996), a review of current literature yielded no research on applying *guanxi* to fundraising in American higher education. Since Chinese parents are not contributing at levels American

universities might expect, and due to the uniqueness of *guanxi* in the Chinese context, American advancement officers need to approach Chinese parents differently than they might approach other parents. American universities have begun to reach out to Chinese parent donors; thus, I foresee the necessity of research on this topic. Findings from this study can help American higher education development officers develop an understanding of and establish an important connection with Chinese parents as potential institutional donors.

Description of the Research Problem

Guanxi, a core idea in Chinese culture, is synonymous with relationships, connections, or networks. It can be defined as human or organizational capital that helps one gain competitive business advantages (Tsang, 1998; Yeung & Tung, 1996). Other scholars view *guanxi* as multidimensional and having both positive and negative ramifications (Chen, 1995). “*Guanxi* is extremely important for business executives’ trust in their connections” (Farh et al., 1998, p. 471). Explicitly recognized by Chinese people as a powerful aid to business, *guanxi* is “widely acknowledged by non-Chinese businessmen and investors as something they must understand and deal with when handling Chinese businesses” (So & Walker, 2006, p. ix). Thus, when American development officers reach out to Chinese parents as potential institutional donors, it is also important for them to understand *guanxi* and how it works.

The increasing number of Chinese students attending college in the United States combined with the growing need to expand the donor base using a unique Chinese cultural perspective to tap into the potential donorship of Chinese parents, make it all the more important to apply the construct of *guanxi* to college and university advancement fundraising. Yet Tsunoda (2010) has found that neither American development officers nor the universities they work for have generated specific strategies or policies to solicit gifts from Chinese donors. American development offices have not effectively applied previous research findings on general

fundraising into practical philanthropic activities that can bridge the Sino-American cultural divide.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways that American university advancement officers could employ *guanxi* to cultivate relationships with potential Chinese parent donors.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study and helped illuminate the nuances of *guanxi* in relation to philanthropic endeavors in American higher education:

1. In what ways do Chinese parent donors consider the importance of *guanxi* in their commitment to the philanthropic cause of their children's universities?
2. What strategies do Chinese parent donors believe are necessary when their children's American universities try to build a philanthropic *guanxi* with them?
3. What role, if any, does *guanxi* play in the Chinese parent donors' decision to donate to their children's universities in the United States?

Significance of the Study

China ranks eighth in the list of top 10 sources of donations to U.S. colleges and universities from January 2007 to November 2013 at \$60.4 million (Hu, 2014). While Chinese parents have begun to realize and understand the importance of private donations to American college and universities, advancement officers in the United States have also begun to explore the potential for fundraising with this large group of prospective donors. Due to a lack of research focusing on Chinese parents' donations to American college and universities combined with the importance of cultivating relationships with potential donors, this study fills a gap in the literature by exploring how university advancement officers could apply the conceptual perspective of *guanxi* to cultivate relationships with potential Chinese parent donors. The

findings of this study have implications on American higher education fundraising revenue development. The findings can, therefore, inform the practice of American higher education advancement officers as they seek to increase university fundraising by building a philanthropic *guanxi* with Chinese parents.

Conceptual Framework

Guanxi is a Confucian concept in contemporary Chinese society. The word “*guanxi*” consists of two Chinese characters: *guan* and *xi*. *Guan* means “a door” (noun) and “to close” (verb). *Xi* means “a system” (noun) and “to tie” (verb). To help one understand the concept of *guanxi* metaphorically, an example is: I close a door and you are in the same room with me, where we form our own system and we are tied to each other. Commonly translated as relationships, connections, or networks, *guanxi* has heavily influenced Chinese political landscapes, social behavior, and business practices (Luo, 2007). It shapes “an intricate, pervasive relational network;” embraces “implicit mutual obligations, assurances, and understanding;” and controls “Chinese attitudes toward long-term social and business relationships” (Luo, 2007, p. 2). The special aspect of *guanxi* is that it is ubiquitous in and fundamental to Chinese people’s daily lives; Chinese people have a preoccupation with establishing and sustaining *guanxi* (Luo, 2007). Although the word *guanxi* was unknown to non-Chinese speakers in the 1990s, “it has gained in popularity” and “is absolutely essential to successfully complete any task in virtually all spheres of social life” in China, even among foreigners (Gold, Guthrie, & Wank, 2002, p. 3). *Guanxi* serves as the conceptual framework of this study and is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Description of the Study

In order to gain rich and complex textual descriptions of how Chinese parent donors experience their philanthropic *guanxi* with their children’s American universities and to gain

information about the human side of the topic, I employed a qualitative approach. In this way, I was able to capture Chinese parent donors' perceptions of *guanxi* through extensive interviews. Since the focus of this study was to answer how and why questions, I used a collective case study design (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2009). I explored cultural cases through detailed and in-depth data collection to better understand the nuanced perceptions of Chinese parent donors of *guanxi* with their children's American universities. In this detailed collective case analysis, emerging themes were compared across cases guided by the research questions and emphasizing the complexity and subtlety of the cases. The unit of analysis was each Chinese parent donor (father or mother) from a family. I present the research design in more detail in Chapter 3.

Researcher Perspective

My role as a researcher was in conducting this research and remaining as objective as possible during the research process with “sensitivity and skepticism” (Stake, 1995, p. 50). Epistemologically, I positioned myself in the interpretive or constructivist paradigm. I brought “a construction of reality to the research situation, which interacts with other people's constructions or interpretations of the phenomenon being studied,” (Merriam, 1998, p. 22) and the findings were my interpretation of others' perspectives. I collected data and served as the data analyst. I presented findings and discussed the findings from the data collected and analyzed, drew implications for American college and university fundraising practice based on participants' perceptions and experiences, and provided American higher education development officers with recommendations and insights on how to fundraise using *guanxi*.

Using my own *guanxi*, I was able to recruit seven participants for this study. I was explicitly aware of the possible effects of perceived bias and respected the ethical issues related to the anonymity of the participants and the universities their children attend(ed). My prior knowledge about Chinese parents building *guanxi* with American universities served as a

scaffold for this study, but all of the findings emerged from the data collected and analyzed for this study only. In addition, as a Chinese citizen, I inevitably included my thoughts and understanding when analyzing the data, which added value to the study. With my personal experience of studying and living in the United States, I also included my bi-cultural (Chinese and American) perspectives during data analysis. The participants felt more comfortable and psychologically safer expressing their true voices to me because we shared the same cultural background; meanwhile, I captured their connotations more deeply than non-Chinese researchers might have. I saw the data in a comprehensive and bi-cultural way through my Chinese and American experiences, so my Chinese identity did not interfere with my analysis and conclusions and became a bridge between the two cultures in the interpretation of the data.

On the other hand, since we shared the same Chinese culture, some conversations might have caused embarrassment to the participants and thus they might have been reluctant to respond or not fully express themselves. Given this limitation, I reminded them that their true and complete responses were very important to the study and that I kept their identities anonymous by using pseudonyms throughout the research process, so that they would feel encouraged to speak freely. In addition, since the Chinese parents who participated in this study were older than me, I showed my respect for them as a member of a younger generation, which is a traditional Chinese virtue. Therefore, I was careful about my diction and used formal language in my communication with them.

I assumed that at least six Chinese parent donors would be willing to participate in this study. It turned out that there were seven participants with one parent from each family. I also assumed that the participants' responses were truthful; as a researcher receiving advanced education in both China and America, I possessed the skill and had the responsibility to understand the responses provided by the participants.

Chapter Summary

Given the increasing number of Chinese students attending American universities and the lack of research on establishing connections between Chinese parents and the American universities that their children attend(ed), I explored the ways that American college and university advancement officers could use the concept of *guanxi* in developing relationships with Chinese parents. The research questions focused on identifying Chinese parent donors' *guanxi* with their children's American universities, strategies for the American universities to build a philanthropic *guanxi* with Chinese parents, and *guanxi*'s role in Chinese parent donors' decisions to give. Studying the philanthropic *guanxi* between Chinese parent donors and American universities helps to inform practice related to university fundraising. In Chapter Two, I present a comprehensive review of the literature with distinct foci on American philanthropy, Chinese philanthropy, Chinese parent giving, in particular, and the concept of *guanxi*.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The “Chinese are now among the world’s biggest donors to U.S. universities, but they still punch below their weight given Chinese students’ large presence on U.S. campuses” (Gu, 2014, para. 1). Since China allowing its students to go abroad is a relatively new phenomenon taking place in only the past 30 years or so, international philanthropy is new among the Chinese people as well (Gu, 2014). “More Chinese parents are giving to the world’s top universities in the hope of boosting their children’s odds of acceptance when they apply a few years later” (Gu, 2014, para. 14), but they are less inclined to donate once their children get in. “Wealthy Chinese people who donate to American universities may be seen as unpatriotic” and receive public criticism (Hu, 2014, para. 9). “Donations from Asia to U.S. colleges aren’t free of controversy. They are often criticized as benefiting an institution far away rather than a school at home” (Chow, 2014, para. 18).

Although it seems challenging for American higher education advancement officers to solicit donations from Chinese people, “college fundraisers are now setting their sights on today’s largest source of international students to the U.S.” (Chow, 2014, para. 20). In addition, there is an increasing number of Chinese philanthropists, and the progress of philanthropy in China may lead to a more welcoming attitude towards overseas higher education fundraising. The Global Chinese Philanthropy Initiative, a unique bilateral research project that examines the contributions of Chinese and Chinese American philanthropists in the United States and China, has found that China’s wealth has increased significantly over the last four decades, and that Chinese philanthropists and private foundations in China are on the rise despite the President’s policy (Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles, 2017). Another regulation, The Charity Law passed by China’s National People’s Congress in 2016, enables the development of the philanthropic sector and has also promoted philanthropy in China (The Charity Law of the

People's Republic of China, 2016). Most philanthropic donations in China are directed to education. Chinese philanthropists have given to higher education in both China and the United States. For example, Harvard University, Yale University, the University of Tennessee system are all recipients of Chinese philanthropic donations (Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles, 2017).

For the purpose of examining how *guanxi* could be effectively built between Chinese parent donors and their children's universities in the United States, I reviewed the literature in several related areas. I first reviewed how higher education philanthropy functions in the United States. I then reviewed Chinese philanthropic giving in the context of Confucian culture, including its characteristics. This is followed by a review of Chinese parent giving, as there is a lack of research on this population's philanthropic practices, in comparison to Asian- and Chinese-American giving, which also implies fundraising in Asia. Lastly, I reviewed the Chinese concept of *guanxi*. The literature review is thus organized by these areas in this chapter.

Philanthropy and Fundraising in American Higher Education

The philanthropy of individuals, rather than that of foundations and corporations, to all nonprofits, including higher education, is significantly and consistently higher than other sources (Drezner, 2011). The cultural phenomenon of philanthropy is a significant force that helps shape postsecondary education in the United States. Funding is one of the key issues affecting the development of higher education (Li, 2014). The day-to-day operations of advancement practitioners are continuous and different strategies are employed to seek voluntary funds for American higher education (Drezner, 2011).

Private giving is central to shaping the development and diversity of American higher education. We can understand how past giving has shaped postsecondary education by looking at the last 375 years of philanthropic giving to American higher education, which includes

British support to the colonies, colonial support, individual donor influence including the creation of new colleges, and the consequent arising issues of donor control (Drezner, 2011). Fundraising has been part of American higher education since the founding of Harvard in 1636, but much more recently it has evolved to become an organized venture. Today, most American universities manage all of their fundraising in-house. “These in-house fundraising offices are often called ‘development offices’ but more recently have been named ‘institutional advancement offices’” (Drezner, 2011, p. 5).

Understanding donor motivation and successful fundraising strategies from a theoretical standpoint is of vital importance to increasing advancement endowments. An understanding of specific principles within the disciplines of economics, psychology, and sociology are needed to guide the solicitation of funds (Drezner, 2011). More importantly, nonprofit organizations must build their capacity to attract and serve prospective donors of diverse backgrounds if they are to survive and thrive (Newman, 2002). “As the United States becomes more diverse, understanding the myriad ways in which institutions must develop relationships with various donor publics will play an ever more important role in fund raising strategies” (Caboni, 2010, para. 2). Higher education institutions should engage all possible donors. Nontraditional donor communities, including African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians engage and participate in philanthropy (Drezner, 2011). There is a need to embrace diversity within all sectors of the nonprofit community and to continue to increase the number of minorities in the fundraising profession (Wagner & Ryan, 2004). Therefore, by engaging in culturally sensitive fundraising, embracing inclusiveness; building trust; and understanding diverse cultures and their giving patterns, sensibilities; and customs; American higher education institutions could be more successful in fundraising.

Drezner (2011) emphasized the importance of American colleges and universities having a strong prospect research program for their fundraising efforts. For instance, educational experience has an effect on philanthropic giving because college attendance and experiences affect alumni's likelihood to give back to their alma mater; thus, colleges and universities might combine this knowledge with alumni data already in their databases (Drezner, 2011). Beyond prospect research, it is important for fundraising programs to have strategies that are dynamic and respond to the specific aspects of different segments of alumni, as suggested by Drezner (2011). By establishing an efficient public relations agency and creating extensive linkages with alumni, the government, and the community, American colleges and universities can better attract large amounts of funding (Li, 2014). That stated, "philanthropy is not yet well developed in China" and "donations for the development of higher education in China have been very slow due to economic, cultural, and other factors" (Li, 2014, p. 65). There is no doubt that most Chinese parents need to be more informed of the importance of fundraising to higher education in the United States.

The substantial power of philanthropy is rarely disputed; however, it has the potential harm to contradict the capitalist free market by those who donate for selfish or political gain, so it is necessary to critique the actions, motives, and outcomes of philanthropy of individuals, foundations, and corporations (Drezner, 2011). For example, personal self-interest cannot be removed from understanding philanthropic motivations, "in particular about large gifts from venture philanthropists who give gifts with many benchmarks and requirements of the university receiving the gift" (Drezner, 2011, p. 81). Thus, American higher education leaders must critically evaluate the potential impact of decisions to accept such restricted gifts and be mindful of the complexity of the motives with which donations are made. Politically motivated gifts are no exception.

“Generally speaking, it is universal for businesses to pursue success by establishing *guanxi*. However, because some specific cultural factors may result in different concepts and expectations, the nature of *guanxi* is different in various cultures” (Hwang, 2012, p. 303). Mann (2007) suggested six theoretical foundations that should be considered to help guide the fundraising philosophy of educational institutions, namely, charitable giving, organizational identification, social identification, economic, services-philanthropic giving, and relationship-marketing theory. He acknowledged that American higher education institutions need to use an interdisciplinary theoretical perspective to understand donor motives when fundraising, including “organizational behavior, sociology, economics, consumer behavior, and marketing and sales” (Mann, 2007, p. 36). Mann also explained his relationship-marketing theory that emphasizes cultivating and sustaining positive relationships between donors and an organization. Mann does not clearly position his theory in any particular cultural context, such as Chinese or American, and how that may motivate philanthropic activity.

In addition, Wastyn (2009) concluded that there are four major factors that lead people away from donating to higher education: perceiving higher education as a commodity rather than as a charity, believing that a college or university is not needy, misperceiving and uncertainty about how a college or university uses donations, and that giving decisions are simply not logical. “Higher education shares a distinctive position among charities in that individuals come to it first as a consumer and then as a donor” (Wastyn, 2009, p. 101). Wastyn explained that “non-donors draw distinctions between the first-level needs to feed, clothe, and house people and the fifth-level need of providing a college education to what they perceived as privileged students” and that non-donors perceive that “they could not make gifts in smaller amounts and that ‘small’ gifts would not make a meaningful difference at the university” (p. 102). Lastly, Wastyn (2009) found that “married couples do not always mediate giving decisions, but

frequently abdicate decision making to one spouse, pointing to a very informal decision-making process” which can be a challenge for college and university fundraising officers to identify, track, and follow-up on (p. 103).

Both Mann (2007) and Wastyn (2009) conveyed that it is challenging for American higher education to increase donations and that there is a need to consider donors’ perceptions based on their cultural context. Meanwhile, reviewing Mann’s six theoretical foundations for giving and Wastyn’s four factors that inhibit donation helped deepen my understanding of Chinese parent donors’ perceptions of philanthropic *guanxi* in this study. For example, many Chinese parents consider colleges and universities to not be needy and not a charity that helps people meet basic needs, as Wastyn (2009) asserted regarding non-donors. Chinese parents see the expensive tuition fees they fund for their children as their special gifts to a college or university.

Philanthropy in China

Confucianism is the cornerstone of traditional Chinese culture. The pivotal themes of Confucianism are *ren* (benevolence), *li* (propriety), *yi* (righteousness), *zhong* (loyalty), and *xiao* (filial piety), which are revealed in the classic text, *The Analects of Confucius* (2007/500). Confucius’ social, political, ideological, ethical, and philosophical teachings still influence Chinese government policy making and typical Chinese-born citizens’ morality and ethics. “A total of 516 Confucius Institutes and 1,076 Confucius Classrooms have been established in 142 countries and regions” to offer classes and resources about Chinese language and culture (Xinhua, 2017, para. 1). “Traditions of benevolent societies, clan-based giving, temple association support, and voluntarism have long been present in Chinese society, and coexisted alongside state-affiliated social welfare institutions throughout [China’s] dynastic, Republican, and Communist periods” (Cunningham, 2015, p. 1). To understand Chinese people’s

philanthropic mind, it is important for development officers in American higher education to understand Confucianism and build *guanxi*, an extremely important Confucian idea, with Chinese parents. The concept of *guanxi* is further explained later in this chapter.

According to the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School's China Philanthropy Project 2015 Report, Chinese philanthropists made very few donations outside of China; "Of the top 100 donors we identified for 2015, only three individuals chose to make major donations overseas (to Nepalese disaster relief efforts and to U.S. higher education), while the rest focused domestically" (Cunningham, 2015, p. 4). With China's wealth only having developed within the last few decades due to central government economic planning prior to 1979, philanthropy is not the first thing that China's emerging industrial and business elites consider (Harsha, 2016). Bill Gates and Warren Buffett visited China in 2010 to encourage philanthropy among the nation's wealthy. However, "many of these Chinese super rich turned down their invitations to meet with Gates and Buffett, because of their unwillingness to give away part of their wealth and participate in philanthropy" (Lee, 2010, para. 1).

However, in recent years, wealthy Chinese individuals have started to increase their charitable giving. Although China politically pressures the wealthy to donate domestically, Chinese philanthropists may give more internationally in coming years (Cunningham, 2015). "The China Philanthropy Research Institute estimates that fully 80% of donations by the wealthiest Chinese go to overseas charities" ("Panda Power," 2015, para. 10). China's wealthy elites are chasing recognition and status, as well as less controversial ways to show off their wealth by investing in museums and education due to a wide-ranging government crackdown on corruption (Graham-Harrison, 2015). The government has acknowledged the positive impact of charities. According to the Charity Law passed on March 16, 2016 and enacted on September 1,

2016, as non-profit organizations, charities in China no longer need to have a government partner; in addition, donors may receive some tax benefits (The Charity Law of the People's Republic of China, 2016). Chinese philanthropy is largely found in the wealthier and more industrialized provinces on the east coast while “the wealthy in China are creating foundations and beginning to think more strategically about how they will give in the future” (Harsha, 2016, para. 13).

Chinese Parents and Chinese Giving Through the Larger Scope of Asian-American Giving

China is a trust-based and achievement-oriented society (Hu & Hagedorn, 2014). Chinese parents use their privileged *guanxi* to send their children to joint-partnership private universities in China as a stepping stone for their children's overseas study in order to secure a generational reproduction of their families' class status and mobility (Tsang, 2013). Such universities are joint partnerships between Chinese universities and overseas universities and offer 3+1 program and 2+2 year programs at each partner institution. 3+1 means that Chinese university students can finish their first three years of undergraduate studies in China and go to the university's partner university outside of China to continue their final year of study. 2+2 Chinese university students can finish their first two years of undergraduate studies in China and go to the university's partner university outside of China to continue their final two years of study. Chinese universities also partner with overseas universities to send Chinese students abroad for graduate studies. Chinese parents write checks to pay for their children's tuition; thus, they have the greatest impact on deciding where and what their children will study in America (Fischer, 2013). Chinese parental involvement in education is associated with positive outcomes for Chinese students; however, in Chinese families, the role of the parent may be especially strong in areas involving academic accomplishments and success (Hu & Hagedorn, 2014). “As a cultural legacy, in today's China, parents always go to great lengths to help their

children make progress in key schools and, particularly, to ensure that they are well prepared for the state-run competitive entrance examinations” (Tsang, 2013, p. 661). Additionally, many Chinese parents are willing to make a significant investment in order to get their children into an American college (Fischer, 2013). Many Chinese parents want the best for their only child and believe that American education is the best in the world because it emphasizes “students’ problem solving capabilities, rather than concentrating only on the memorization of specific facts” (Hu & Hagedorn, 2014, p. 41) and American society highly values the ideals of freedom and justice (Hu & Hagedorn, 2014). In addition, Chinese parents care about campus safety and academic majors.

Regarding majors, Chinese parents are practical and career-oriented (Fischer, 2013). The Institute of International Education’s *Open Doors Report (2017)* also found that among 350,755 Chinese students studying in American universities, there were three main choices of study: business/management (23.1%), engineering (18.7%), math/computer science (15.5%). Further, among Chinese middle-class parents “only one-third...would be satisfied with their children’s acquiring undergraduate degrees and three-quarters of them would expect their children to earn postgraduate qualifications” (Tsang, 2013, p. 655). Chinese parents’ expectations of the American university system were investigated in order to see what the system could provide for their dreams for the future of their only child. “If education is an investment, expect Chinese parents to be scrutinizing the returns” (Fischer, 2013, p. A23).

Given the lack of research focused on Chinese parent philanthropy, I examined characteristics of Asian-American giving, which provided indications of Chinese giving. In Asian-American giving, personal connection is considered all-important: “This people-to-people interaction develops the trust and respect between the organization and donors as well as the recipients” (Tsunoda, 2010, p. 7). Asian-American giving often follows a “quid pro quo”

practice. That is, reciprocity is expected between recipients and donors (Chao, 1999). For example, the scholarships that some students receive means that they need study hard, which can be considered reciprocity as donors hold high expectations for their academic excellence. In addition, the university is expected to give benefits to those who donate to the institution.

Asian-American giving tends to be private, personal, and small as opposed to Western charitable giving practices, which are often public, professional, large, and independent (Deeney, 2002; Ho, 2004; Linebaugh, 2007). Independent means that Westerners donate because of their own goals and self-interests. Asian-American giving may be influenced by the opinions and expectations of others, and is, therefore, not as independent as Western charitable giving. Chinese American donors, specifically, prefer to keep their generosity private and their patterns of giving are typically done so in a personal or familial manner (Deeney, 2002). Chinese Americans will donate to an institution that has a personal or familial relation with them, such as their alma mater or the university in which they want their children to enroll. “Chinese Americans take their philanthropy personally and often are emotionally engaged as well as willing to volunteer their own time for special causes” (Deeney, 2002, p. 167). Chinese Americans’ giving also reflects their strong belief in education (Lee, 1990). “Higher education became an escalator to bourgeoisie status, as parents urged their children to major in the ‘hard’ sciences, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, engineering, business, medicine, dentistry, optometry, and veterinary studies” (Lee, 1990, p. 42).

“Understanding cultural sensitiveness and awareness is a central competency for development officers working with Asian-American donors” (Tsunoda, 2010, p. 14). It is also necessary for development officers to employ multiple strategies to identify the specific interests of Asian-American donors. Working with key Asian-American faculty, staff, and alumni is a

functional way of doing so (Tsunoda, 2010). In addition, it is challenging for the university advancement office to involve Asian Americans.

In fact, many Asian American alumni form reunions solely within their own ethnic communities.... Another challenge is soliciting monetary support from Asian American donors. This is in addition to traditional donations of time and personal efforts to support voluntary causes. (Tsunoda, 2010, p. 15)

The biggest challenge would be working with donors in international settings. In this case, time differences, distance, and communication cause inconveniences to fundraising activities. “In order to overcome these difficulties, development officers employ meaningful e-mail and telephone communications, and frequently travel to Asian countries to meet with the prospective donors” (Tsunoda, 2010, p. 16). Therefore, it requires “universities’ efforts for encouraging diaspora philanthropy between the United States and Asia...providing opportunities for prospects to unite under specific cultural causes will further stimulate Asian American giving to US higher education” (Tsunoda, 2010, pp. 18-19).

Furthermore, since China is rooted in its Confucian culture, it is necessary for American higher education fundraising officers to understand the Chinese’ Confucian mentality. “Because Confucians believe that the Way of Humanity corresponds to the Way of Heaven, every person is obligated to practice ethics for ordinary people through self-cultivation” (Hwang, 2012, p. 100). Specifically, “The mind of benevolence moderates the expressive component and acts as the individual’s moral conscience. It is exercised during one’s interactions in various relationships” (Hwang, 2012, p. 108). One way that benevolence is expressed is through a concept in China known as *guanxi*.

Guanxi

As is commonly understood, *guanxi* refers to personal connections or to special bonds in interpersonal networks. In China, personal relationships and connections tend to carry more weight than formal, institutional, contractual, or legal relationships (Geithner, Johnson, & Chen,

2004). “*Guanxi* network building and rebuilding may well have become an internalised habitus for the Chinese” (Tsang, 2013, p. 660).

In terms of wealth building, “It is hard to get rich in China without having strong connections to local authorities, and those are rarely built on goodwill alone” (Graham-Harrison, 2015, para. 20). Something more is needed. Lin (2001) summarized the properties of *guanxi* as “enduring, sentimentally based instrumental relations that invoke private transactions of favors and public recognition of asymmetric exchanges” (p. 159). Sometimes, *guanxi* is approached from seemingly different and even contradictory angles. Luo (1997) specified *guanxi* as transferable, reciprocal, intangible, and personal; it operates on the individual level and it is utilitarian rather than emotional. Be that as it may, *guanxi* also refers to social relations outside the family, which is based on emotions of trust and particular care and is used for both emotional well-being and utilitarian purposes, such as facilitating business transactions (Hsiung, 2013).

Guanxi assumes a significant role in Confucian societies (Yeung & Tung, 1996). “Its popularity has earned *guanxi* a status that leads foreign scholars and laypeople to utilize the untranslated Chinese word when discussing and explaining China” (Hwang, 2012, p. 298). Hwang (1987, 1999) explored the related concepts of face and favor, filial piety and loyalty, and so on, in Chinese society and identified Confucian thought as the origin of the term. It is generally agreed that five cardinal virtues constitute the core ingredients of Confucian thought in traditional Chinese society, which are five bilateral relations: emperor-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother, and friend-friend. In this case, it is obvious that “there is a senior-junior, leader-follower, and upper status-lower status structure beneath the relationship,” which reveals that “interpersonal relations are not equal for the individuals involved” and that “there is also an ordering, with the emperor-subject being obviously of the highest rank and the other four in descending order” (Hsiung, 2013, p. 21). Hwang (2012)

explained that “Especially for scholars, who are endowed with more social and cultural obligations, Confucians thought the practice of the Way of Humanity should start within the family and then extend to other relationships along the differential structure of intimacy” (p. 114). Here is a sentence from *The Works of Mencius*: “Beginning with what they care for, proceed to what they do not care for,” which “has an important implication for the understanding of Confucian thinking” (Hwang, 2012, p. 114) and would be worthy noticing when American higher education tries to build *guanxi* with Chinese parents.

Simply, there are two types of interpersonal relations in Chinese society. Those within the family are familial relations, and those outside are *guanxi*, which is an extension and simulation of familial relations. As “an indigenous Chinese construct” and “an informal, particularistic personal connection between two individuals” (Chen & Chen, 2004, p. 306), *guanxi* plays a very important role in China and the United States. *Guanxi*, a core idea in Chinese community is becoming widely used in Western society, and is synonymous with relationships, connections, or networks. It is viewed as human or organizational capital that helps one gain competitive business advantages (Tsang, 1998; Yeung & Tung, 1996). *Guanxi* is a latent or second-order factor that is behind three subfactors: affect, face preserving, and reciprocal favor (Lee & Dawes, 2005).

Due to decades of unprecedented economic, cultural, and educational exchanges between China and the outside world, *guanxi* between Chinese and foreign universities has been built (Chen & Chen, 2004). “Socioeconomic background is one important factor in interpersonal relations” (Farh et al., 1998, p. 471). *Guanxi* maintains “a long-term relationship, mutual commitment, loyalty, and obligation” (Chen & Chen, 2004, p. 306). Others view *guanxi* as multidimensional and having both positive and negative ramifications (Chen, 1995). Similarly, Qi (2013) identified the dual ramifications of *guanxi*, which are notoriety and nobility. From

this, it is obvious that *guanxi* is a very complicated Chinese concept. It is “characterized by the mutual trust and feeling developed between the two parties through numerous interactions following the self-disclosure, dynamic reciprocity, and long-term equity principles” (Chen & Chen, 2004, p. 306). *Guanxi* has a “tendency to treat people differentially on the basis of one’s relationship with them” (Farh et al., 1998, p. 473), and “all bases of *guanxi* are sources of Chinese people’s social identity” (Farh et al., 1998, p. 474).

“*Guanxi* is extremely important for business executives’ trust in their connections” (Farh et al., 1998, p. 471). *Guanxi*, trust, and long-term orientation are necessary in Chinese business markets (Lee & Dawes, 2005). “*Guanxi* may provide dynamics for business in the Chinese market, and reciprocity is the dynamic for *guanxi* practices” (Hwang, 2012, p. 316). In addition, social scientists ought to know the importance of the concept of *guanxi* in their own disciplines (Qi, 2013). “No matter which exchange rule resource allocators use during social interactions, Confucians maintained that they should always heed the principle of propriety when choosing an appropriate response following the evaluation of loss and gain” (Hwang, 2012, p. 114). Hwang (2012) indicated that:

A continuous dialectical process exists between the impulses of the biological self and the social demands on the active self during interpersonal interaction. This dialectical process enables the entity to adopt the most appropriate rule for social exchange and act in accordance with propriety. (p. 107)

Hwang (2012) also considered *guanxi* (interpersonal relationships) in three parts: expressive ties, mixed ties, and instrumental ties. Expressive ties within the family and mixed ties outside the family are separated to show “a relatively impenetrable psychological boundary between family members and people outside the family” (Hwang, 2012, p. 112), while instrumental ties are in opposition to the expressive ties based on “personal desires such as the love of beauty, sound, flavors, and gain” that reflect “the impulse that the subjective self tends to follow” (Hwang, 2012, p. 107). “With a view to attaining his material goals, an individual must

establish instrumental ties with people outside his family” (Hwang, 2012, p. 90) where “interpersonal relationships are characterized by universality and impersonality” (p. 91). The differences among these three parts “lie in their applications to different domains of interpersonal ties, in their different ways of repayment, and in the varying time periods permitted between giving and repaying” (Hwang, 2012, p. 93).

Due to *guanxi*'s importance in China and the increasing number of Chinese college and university students in the United States, it is necessary for both Chinese and Westerners to know about *guanxi* (Chen & Chen, 2004). In particular, building trust between Chinese parents and American universities is of importance. As a positive emotion, trust exists in good social interactions (Yang, 1995). American higher education should aim “to identify and create *guanxi* bases for the purpose of further development” (Chen & Chen, 2004, p. 315). *Guanxi*, the conceptual framework of this study, served as a vehicle through which I elucidated Chinese parent giving to American universities.

Chapter Summary

Rooted in Confucianism, Chinese people's mindset regarding philanthropy features personal connections where trust, respect, and mutual benefits are strongly pursued. *Guanxi*, an essential Confucian thought, has become a cultural concept that needs both Easterners' and Westerners' attention and comprehension in the field of philanthropic giving. In the United States, philanthropy in higher education has been feverish; while in China, emerging entrepreneurs are devoted to the philanthropy as well. American universities have put much effort in working with all possible donors including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external corporations. They have also delved into more solicitation from diverse, nontraditional populations ranging from African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, to American Indians; however, it is especially challenging to conduct international fundraising. Therefore,

understanding *guanxi*'s important role directly from Chinese parents is a powerful tool in seeking effective ways that American universities can build strong philanthropic connections with these parents.

Chapter 3: Methodology

“A basic qualitative study is the most common form and has as its goal understanding how people make sense of their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 37). This study examined the ways in which American college and university advancement officers could use the concept of *guanxi* to develop relationships with Chinese parents, through uncovering the perceptions of Chinese parent donors about their *guanxi* with their children’s American universities. Qualitative inquiry provides a way to “understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). As mentioned in the previous two chapters, there is a lack of research about Chinese parents’ donations to American higher education. There has also been no study of fundraising using *guanxi* as a conceptual framework. In this study, I investigated the emerging social phenomenon of Chinese parents’ donations to American higher education through Chinese parent donors’ voices. *Guanxi*, the conceptual framework of this study, served as a vehicle through which I analytically expounded on Chinese parent giving to American universities. I relied on emails, phone calls, messages, and face-to-face video call interviews through WeChat, the most popular mobile application in China, as well as notes taken on paper during phone calls and interviews to collect data. Data collection also included a review of publicly available documents, such as college and university websites. I then analyzed the data through the use of coding, allowed themes to appear, and “interpret[ed] the deeper meaning from the findings” (Creswell, 2013, p. 16).

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study and helped illuminate the nuances of *guanxi* in relation to philanthropic endeavors in American higher education:

1. In what ways do Chinese parent donors consider the importance of *guanxi* in their commitment to the philanthropic cause of their children’s universities?

2. What strategies do Chinese parent donors believe are necessary when their children's American universities try to build a philanthropic *guanxi* with them?
3. What role, if any, does *guanxi* play in the Chinese parent donors' decision to donate to their children's universities in the United States?

Research Design

I was interested in “understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences,” which “call[s] for a qualitative design” (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). Qualitative research attempts to deeply understand the nature of a particular context and the interactions in that setting from the participants' perspective (Patton, 2002). In qualitative research, which was coined “naturalistic inquiry” by Egon Guba in 1978, “the investigator does not control or manipulate what is being studied. It is also discovery-oriented research where the findings are not predetermined,” (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 7). Epistemologically, I took an interpretive, also called constructivist, orientation, which assumes that “reality is socially constructed” and “there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event” (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). As such, I constructed knowledge. People seek understanding of the world where they live and work, and they develop subjective, varied, and multiple meanings of their experiences through their interaction with others (social constructivism) as well as with historical and cultural norms (Creswell, 2013). In qualitative research, “the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive” (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). Therefore, the subjective meanings led me to seek the complexity of people's perspectives.

I used qualitative inquiry to understand human behaviors in a “holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing” reality (Merriam, 1998, p. 202). “Reality is not an objective entity; rather,

there are multiple interpretations of reality” (Merriam, 1998, p. 22). Specifically, I used questions regarding “in what ways” and “for what reasons” to look at “the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” in a case study (Yin, 2009, p. 4). A case is “a specific, a complex, functioning thing,” and a purposive “integrated system” (Stake, 1995, p. 2). It is “a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). “There are multiple perspectives or views of the case that need to be represented, but there is no way to establish, beyond contention, the best view” (Stake, 1995, p. 108). As a legitimate research strategy (Yin, 2002), a qualitative case study is holistic, empirical, interpretive, and emphatic (Stake, 1995), and “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (Merriam, 1998, p. xiii). Case study is defined as a qualitative approach “in which the investigator explores a real-life case or cases over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). A case study aims to lead to a comprehensive understanding of the group(s) under study; it also serves the purpose of shaping general theories about social rules (Merriam, 1998). A case study uses “prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (Yin, 2002, pp. 13-14).

Because the participants for this study were to be examined in a specific context, namely, the Eastern versus Western contextual dynamic, I employed a case study design that allowed me to explore these contexts (Yin, 2009) and the ways Chinese parents developed *guanxi* with university representatives. Employing a collective case study design provided an opportunity to develop a comprehensive understanding of the intricate perceptions of Chinese parent donors of *guanxi* and to identify common, as well as disparate, themes among the cases. The unit of analysis in this study was each Chinese parent donor (father or mother) from a family. It was my responsibility as the researcher to draw data from multiple sources to capture the complexity and

entirety of the cases (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2002). “The overall interpretation will be the researcher’s understanding of the participants’ understanding of the phenomenon of interest” (Merriam, 2009, pp. 23-24).

Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases to make the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). I employed purposeful sampling in the selection of participants for this study using a specific method, criterion sampling, which is common for collective case studies (Creswell, 2013). Criterion sampling involves reviewing and studying “all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” (Patton, 2002, p. 238). Criteria for inclusion in the study included Chinese parents who currently live and work in China whose children studied or are studying at universities in the United States and who have donated to those universities. Parents who were asked to donate by their children’s universities, but did not, were not included in this study because the two groups would change the focus of the study; those who are non-donors would be interesting to study at a later date.

The focus of the study was to understand the donors’ perspectives so that the universities that had reached out to these Chinese parents could improve their fundraising efforts; meanwhile, other universities that had not yet launched a campaign to Chinese parents could learn from the findings of this study and be prepared for their prospective fundraising activities. “Sample selection in qualitative research is usually (but not always) nonrandom, purposeful, and small...” (Merriam, 2009, p. 16). In such a close examination of a relatively small number of cases through comparison and contrast, a researcher captures important characteristics of the phenomenon and how it differs under varied situations (Yin, 2009).

Since I personally knew a small number of six people that met the criteria, I used my personal contacts to reach out to them through my personal email. In other words, I relied on *guanxi* to reach out to these parents. I emailed each potential participant a recruitment letter written in Mandarin with the Subject “Cordial Invitation to Participate in a Chinese Student’s Doctoral Dissertation Research Study” (see Appendix A). In the email, I briefly introduced myself and described this study, and told them its purpose. I also informed them of what the interview questions covered. Then I invited them to be my participants in this study, asked them to e-sign an attached Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B), asked them to suggest the best date and time for a 60-minute interview to take place in the following two weeks, and asked them to tell me the best communication tool for their interview.

I thought that the potential participants might choose to provide me with their WeChat ID, Skype username, or other technology, for the face-to-face online interviews or phone call interviews. I initially anticipated that once the potential participants replied to me email that I would reply in turn and schedule and confirm the first interview, later on sending a reminder. Unfortunately, I did not receive any replies to my initial email. I then resent the emails and made follow-up phone calls, but still none of the initial potential participants were willing to participate. Thus, I had to amend my recruitment strategy. After my Protocol Revision Form was approved by Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of the Pacific, I contacted university development officers and asked them to send the recruitment email to potential participants on my behalf (see Appendix C). I also reached out to potential participants’ children and informed them of my research and then let the children remind their parents to look for the above mentioned recruitment email. Finally, I was able to recruit a total of seven participants (four fathers and three mothers from seven different families) who are described in detail in Chapter Four.

Data Collection

Stake (1995) suggested the use of observation, interview, and document review in qualitative case study research. In this study, data collection involved in-depth face-to-face video call interviews through WeChat, the most popular mobile application in China, with Chinese parent donors in order to explore their experiences and voices regarding *guanxi* in American college and university fundraising efforts. Data collection also included emails, phone calls, WeChat messages, and notes about participants' reactions, appearances, and impressions on me taken on paper during phone calls and interviews. I also reviewed publicly available documents, such as university websites and annual donor reports; however, I did not find any relevant Chinese donor reports for my research on the university websites I searched.

Since the potential participants lived and worked in China, and the Chinese parent donors and I were not on an American campus, I could not observe their interactions with university development officers. In the event that a Chinese parent donor and I happened to be on the same American campus while the parent donor visited the United States, I planned to include in-person observations and interviews; however, that did not occur. The interviews took place via face-to-face video calls on WeChat. I planned to conduct a series of two or three interviews with each participant, but only one interview with each participant was conducted as all responses I needed for my research study were covered in one interview. Each video call interview lasted less than 60 minutes. I estimated the interview process to last four to six months, but it took less than one month to complete the interviews with all of the participants.

The interview questions included main questions to address the research questions of this study, follow-up questions to encourage elaboration of participants' responses, and probes between questions to allow for the natural flow of conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interviews were semi-structured which allowed me to ask a set of questions to each participant

with the opportunity to follow up on issues raised during the interviews. As shown in Appendix D, the interviews addressed three research questions: Questions 1 to 5 were designed to address the first research question, Chinese parent donors' *guanxi* with their children's American universities; Questions 6 to 8 were designed to address the second research question, strategies for American universities to build a philanthropic *guanxi* with Chinese parents; Questions 9 and 10 were designed to address the third research question, *guanxi*'s role in Chinese parent donors' giving decisions. The interviews began with introductory questions related to the participants' personal background and their children's background, then explored their general perceptions on *guanxi* in China and the United States and proceeded to address the other questions related to the research questions.

With the participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded using a Sony digital voice recorder. Notes regarding participants' reactions, appearances, and impressions on me were maintained on paper during the video call interviews. Since the participants spoke Mandarin, and did not speak English, the interviews were conducted in Mandarin. Given that Mandarin was the common language between the participants and myself, conducting the interviews in Mandarin increased the likelihood of data accuracy by increasing participants' comfort level and their ability to explain specific nuances in their primary language. I transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews verbatim into Mandarin text. Data in the form of participant quotes were translated into English. To ensure accuracy of the translation, I invited a Chinese friend who was proficient in both Mandarin and English to check my translation work.

At the beginning of the interviews, I asked for the participants' permission to audio-record the interviews. There were some possible risks involved for the participants. There was a potential risk of loss of confidentiality of their identities and the associated sociological risk if

others became aware of their donation. In addition, there was a psychological risk if discussion of the topic created emotional discomfort for them. I informed them that their participation was voluntary and that they could feel free to opt out of participating in the study at any time and for any reason. I thanked them for their time and participation.

During the interviews, I asked for their insights and thoughts about their philanthropic *guanxi* with their children's universities using my interview questions (see Appendix D). I listened carefully to their responses and provided additional information when they were confused with any of the interview questions. At the same time, I followed up on their responses when I was unsure and double-checked if my understanding of what they were conveying was accurate. As I had planned to schedule another one or two interviews with each participant that were not necessary, other questions that I planned to ask in subsequent interviews were mentioned and probed into naturally during the interviews. These included how their children's university informed them of opportunities for philanthropy, how they responded to the donation invitation, what questions they had for the university, how they agreed to become donors, and how they transferred money to the university. If and when their children's university's development team traveled to China and had a face-to-face meeting with them, I asked how it was conducive to their final determination to philanthropically support the institution.

After audio-recording our interviews, I told participants that I would keep all data in a secure location. In addition, I used a pseudonym for each parent and did not include their children's and the universities' names in the transcriptions or data reporting documents; any identifiable information was not included in this study in order to protect their confidentiality. At the end of the interviews, consistent with Chinese cultural practice, I expressed my sincere gratitude for their participation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is “the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning” (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). “The analysis of the data involves identifying recurring patterns that characterize the data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Data were analyzed “inductively to address the research question posed” (Merriam, 2009, p. 37). I conducted data collection and analysis simultaneously (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995), and reported “a case description and case themes” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). “Analysis becomes more intensive as the study progresses, and once all the data are in” (Merriam, 1998, p. 155). I analyzed data by reading the interview transcripts in their entirety. I then re-read the transcripts to identify themes that emerged. There were two stages of data analysis in this collective case study, namely the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998). Cross-case analysis helps a collective case study form data through identifying themes that are common across cases (Creswell, 2013). In this effort, I used the “constant comparative method of data analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 31).

Participants’ interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded, categorized, and translated into English as needed. For example, although the entire transcript was not translated into English, those portions that were used in Chapter Four were translated. The study focused on answering the three research questions described in Chapter One. Then I identified and synthesized common themes that emerged from all of the cases in order to fully address the research questions as “Findings are these recurring patterns or themes supported by the data from which they were derived” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23).

Confidentiality. Confidentiality was maintained during and after the study and in reporting of findings. I created a pseudonym for each participant and avoided use of any

identified names in the audio-recorded interviews to protect their confidentiality. I transferred the interview recording files from my Sony digital voice recorder to my password-protected personal laptop and then removed the interview audio files from the digital voice recorder. The identifying documentation containing the parents' actual names were in the informed consent forms and all contact information in my email communication with them, as well as my printed interview transcripts with the matching pseudonym for each parent. I downloaded the signed informed consent forms and all contact information on my email account including all email messages, saved them as PDF files to a password-protected file on my password-secured laptop, and then permanently deleted all of them from my email account immediately. All physical documents were secured in a locked drawer in my home office. All electronic materials were stored on my personal laptop in password-protected files. All documents will be destroyed after five years of completing the study: all physical documents will be shredded, and all electronic materials will be deleted permanently from all of my electronic devices.

Trustworthiness of data. Due to ethical considerations, qualitative researchers need “to minimize the misrepresentation and misunderstanding” (Stake, 1995, p. 109) of data, which requires discipline and protocols “for both accuracy and alternative explanations” (Stake, 1995, p. 107). “The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author’s conclusion ‘makes sense’” (Merriam, 1998, p. 199), and authors “gain the needed confirmation, to increase credence in the interpretation, to demonstrate commonality of an assertion” (Stake, 1995, p. 112). I included the use of multiple sources of evidence, which established the trustworthiness of the data (Yin, 2002). Verbatim translation also allowed me to accurately and directly quote the participants’ words to support my assertions (Creswell, 2013). In addition, to verify data and preliminary findings with research participants, I employed member checking (Merriam, 1998). Member checking took place in three stages with each

participant in Mandarin. First, during the interviews, when in doubt, I checked with the participants to ensure my accurate understanding of their words. Second, upon finishing the draft of a case description, I contacted the participants through WeChat voice messages and confirmed with them if my description of their profiles was complete. Third, after analyzing the interview transcripts of each case and identifying themes, I checked with participants through voice messages on WeChat to confirm the themes.

Chapter Summary

I conducted a qualitative collective case study to explore Chinese parent donors' understanding of *guanxi* to learn why the concept of *guanxi* is important to them and how *guanxi* could be applied to American higher education fundraising efforts. To do so I employed purposeful criterion sampling. Given the time and location differences, I relied on email, phone calls, WeChat messages, face-to-face video call interviews through WeChat, notes, and member checking. I also reviewed university websites to no avail. I explored seven cases through in-depth data analysis. The case study unit of analysis was each Chinese parent donor (father or mother) per family.

Chapter 4: Findings

The recruitment procedure began with excitement and disappointment. The interview process was filled with unexpectedness and flexibility. Without students' help, I could not have recruited a total of seven participants for my research. My participants all worked in a business-related field in China, and their children all studied business at universities in the United States.

Emails and Phone Calls Failed

My proposal was approved by the University of the Pacific's IRB on November 2, 2017. On November 3, 2017, I used my personal Hotmail email account to reach out to six Chinese parent donors who were known to me, inviting them to participate in my research study (see Appendices A and C). I included the Mandarin version of the IRB-approved recruitment letter in my email and attached both Mandarin and English informed consent forms. To help the Chinese parents easily understand the two forms, I edited their file names in Chinese. The IRB-approved and stamped form was named "English-version Informed Consent Form (please sign and date here)" and the Chinese form was named "Mandarin-version Informed Consent Form (for reading only, no need to sign or date here)."

However, after waiting for one week, my instinct told me that the parents would not check their email. Then I decided to try again, so I resent the same emails to the same parents on November 11, 2017 when it was around lunch time in China on a Saturday as I assumed that the potential participants would be available. I also decided to use my cell phone to reach the potential parent participants in China. I was a little nervous about which number to call first and what I should say to make my interview invitation intriguing so that parents would immediately agree to be interviewed. I also had paper and pen so that I could take notes if parents accepted my invitation and wanted to schedule interviews. Finally, being determined and excited, I made my first call to a father. I briefly introduced myself and informed him that I was doing my

doctoral research and that I was inviting him to be interviewed for this study. To my disappointment, the father declined my invitation. I could even “see” his unwilling facial expression when he replied, “It is not convenient for me to discuss this topic on the phone.”

Then I called a second parent, also a father. After I introduced my research, he told me that he was not interested in it and he rejected my invitation in a cold tone that I could feel. My left hand holding the cell phone began to shake and I became very nervous about whether I could get any participants; however, I told myself that I had to do this, so I adjusted my mood and called a third father. The first time I called no one answered, so I gave him another call. He picked up the call and I started to introduce myself and research. The communication signal was weak, and I had to repeat myself. He told me that he was in a meeting and was very busy and that he could not hear me speaking clearly so he hung up.

I became extremely worried and felt that I needed to break for a few minutes, so I did. I considered that perhaps calling fathers at this time was not a good approach, so I called a mother. Sadly, while I was introducing myself, she interrupted me and said, “I am busy now, sorry,” and hung up on me. At that very moment I wanted to cry, but I held back my tears and dialed the next number I had, feeling hopeless, because I knew that even if this parent accepted my interview invitation, I would still need to recruit more participants. Not surprisingly, the father answered my phone call saying that he was having lunch with a friend and that he had no idea about what to say for my research, so he asked me to call him back later. I knew that was a polite way for him to say, “do not call back,” so I did not. The last number I dialed turned out to be incorrect. These initial setbacks were very discouraging, and I began to doubt whether or not I could complete this study. After receiving suggestions and encouragement from my dissertation Committee Chair and my family, I decided to give myself a few days to recover, recharge, and rethink.

Since my initial recruitment strategy did not yield a sufficient number of participants, I submitted a protocol revision form to my institution's IRB on November 21, 2017. After receiving IRB approval on December 13, 2017, I began to reach out to university development officers and asked them to send the recruitment email to potential participants on my behalf. After carefully and thoughtfully reviewing the steps and working through details with university development officers regarding protecting participant confidentiality, the development officers decided to send out the Mandarin-version recruitment email I drafted to all Chinese parents of currently enrolled students and alumni regardless of donor status (see Appendix C). The Chinese parents' emails were blind carbon copied and my university email address was carbon copied. Unfortunately, I did not hear from any of the parents.

WeChat Succeeded

While still crossing my fingers hoping that some parents would reply, I reached out to the six potential participants' children who were my friends on WeChat. I explained my research purpose briefly to the children and asked them to remind their parents to look for the above mentioned recruitment email and to invite their parents to participate in Chinese. All of the six students replied to me instantly, saying, "OK. I will let my parents know" or "No problem, I will ask my parents to participate." Per the children's request, I sent my recruitment emails to their email addresses. They checked the emails first and then informed their parents. However, two out of the six students who originally agreed that their parents would participate declined my invitation after discussing it with their parents. One student texted me on WeChat, saying, "I am so sorry. My parents said they [would] not like to participate in this type of research. Sorry!" The other student sent me a WeChat text message, "Sorry! I asked my parents and tried to persuade them, but still they said it was not that convenient for them to participate. Very sorry!"

Once those students informed me that their parents would not participate, it meant that they really could not and would not participate, no matter how long I spent trying to persuade them. Chinese children are the apple of their parents' eyes or are "little emperors" or "little princesses," as they are commonly referred to in Chinese, but they do not reign over their parents' decisions. The final decision to participate came from the parents.

I still needed more participants for my research, so I used my own *guanxi* through WeChat to contact more Chinese students who might introduce me to other Chinese students whose parents had donated to their children's universities. Eventually, I was fortunate to recruit a total of seven participants for my research, although there were some snags in the process before I could collect all of the responses that I needed from them.

Case Description

I used pseudonyms for the seven participants. The following is a narrative description of the participants. Table 1 includes their demographic information.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Parent	Occupation (Field)	Region	Child (Major)
Liang	Father	Businessman (Fabric Wholesale Industry)	Taiwan	Son (Business)
Wei	Father	Board Member of an Investment Company (Mining Industry, Medical Treatment, Education, and Real Estate)	Hong Kong	Daughter (Business)
Cheng	Father	Small Business Owner (Electrical Engineering Consulting)	Jiangsu	Son (Business)
Meng	Mother	Leader (Banking)	Jiangsu	Daughter (Business)
Guo	Father	Finance Officer (Accounting)	Jiangsu	Daughter (Business)
Hua	Mother	Small Business Owner (Construction Materials)	Anhui	Son (Business)
Yu	Mother	Investor (Real Estate)	Shanghai	Daughter (Business)

Liang. After his son confirmed “yes” for his father, Liang, to my interview on WeChat, Liang took the first step to add me as his WeChat friend and sent a greeting message to me. I greeted him back and thanked him in advance for participating in my research. Then we scheduled to have a WeChat video call interview on Sunday, December 24, 2017 at 11 am (Beijing Time), which was Saturday, December 23, 2017 at 7 pm (Pacific Standard Time).

On the interview day, Liang was wearing a golf cap and a golf suit. He looked happy and it was a sunny morning as seen through the video. I thanked him for participating and reminded him to not mention any real names in our interview. Then we began. Liang is a businessman in the fabric wholesale industry in Taiwan. His business is widely spread throughout mainland China. When mentioning his son, who earned a bachelor’s degree in business from one university and just graduated with a master’s in business from another university, and who had been living in America for almost nine years since high school, he seemed to be a strict father.

He said, “My son is very honest, but his affinity is not good. He is too conservative, like living in an ‘ivory tower.’ He is not in touch with the outside world. He is extremely introverted.”

During the interview, we paused a few seconds for a couple of times since he was playing golf while talking with me. Our interview went well and there was a relaxed atmosphere. It lasted for just over 25 minutes rather than the scheduled 60 minutes allotted.

Wei. His daughter originally confirmed with me that her father, Wei, would take part in my research. Then she told me through WeChat text messages that “It was somewhat inconvenient for my dad to have the video interview. I will ask my mom to participate.” It turned out that her mother did not get in touch with me. Instead, Wei asked his daughter to ask me if I could send him the interview questions and he would directly type his answers and send them back to me. I decided that it might be the only way that I could obtain responses from Wei, so I agreed and sent the interview questions to his daughter’s email address. Five days later, which was on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 (Beijing Time), which was Monday, January 1, 2018 (Pacific Standard Time), Wei’s daughter sent two screenshots of Wei’s responses which had been typed in iPhone Notes through WeChat. She said that Wei was very busy, and that these responses might be short, but that it was all he could do. I immediately sent a thank you message to his daughter and asked her to send my sincere appreciation and 2018 New Year holiday wishes to Wei and his wife.

Wei is a board member of an investment company in Hong Kong. His business invests in mining, medicine, education, and real estate. He described his daughter, a business major, in a positive way, “My child has a serious and active attitude towards studying abroad.”

Cheng. After his son asked Cheng about scheduling an interview with me, his son told me on WeChat that his father seemed not that willing to be interviewed after all. The son then sent a second text message, “Let’s do this. You send me the interview questions, and I will ask him for

you. I will take down whatever he answers.” At first, I was a bit reluctant, but then I agreed to this method as I really needed participant responses, thus I sent the interview questions over to his son’s email. After six days, which was on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 (Beijing Time), which was Monday, January 1, 2018 (Pacific Standard Time), Cheng’s son sent his answers back to me in a Word document to my email address. I expressed my gratitude on WeChat to his son and asked him to send my sincere thanks and 2018 New Year holiday wishes for Cheng.

Cheng runs a small-sized electrical engineering consulting company in Jiangsu Province. He described his son who graduated from a university with a business degree: “After graduation, he worked for half a year, but felt that there was still no development opportunity with a bachelor’s degree. Now he is pursuing his master’s in finance in another university.”

Meng. Meng’s daughter replied “yes” to my invitation for her mother to be interviewed. She then shared Meng’s contact information with me and I added her to WeChat. I sent greeting messages first and then we scheduled our WeChat video call interview to be on Saturday, December 30, 2017 at 1:30 pm (Beijing Time), which was Friday, December 29, 2017 at 9:30 pm (Pacific Standard Time). Meng asked me if she needed to dress up formally for the interview, and I told her to dress comfortably.

On the day of the interview Meng was at home in her thick pink pajamas. First, we chatted about casually the weather and she told me that it was very cold in her city. She looked happy and cozy. We had a smooth 30-minute interview. Meng has held a leadership role for over 20 years in a bank in Jiangsu Province. She has a daughter who is a business major in a university. When mentioning her daughter Meng seemed very proud: “My daughter is excellent. I am very happy for her because she is doing what she likes and pursuing her dreams in America.” At the end of the interview I expressed my sincere gratitude to Meng and follow-up through We Chat with my thanks and 2018 New Year holiday wishes.

Guo. After his daughter replied “yes” to my invitation for her father, Guo, she shared his contact information with me and I added him to WeChat. As with Meng, I sent greeting messages first and then we scheduled our WeChat video call interview to be on Saturday, December 30, 2017 at 2:30 pm (Beijing Time), which was Friday, December 29, 2017 at 10:30 pm (Pacific Standard Time).

On the day of the interview Guo was at home in his study. He was dressed semi-formally. He wore a fierce face, but was very friendly and talkative. Our interview lasted for 50 minutes. He is a finance officer in an accounting firm in Jiangsu Province. He has been working in business for over 30 years. He has a daughter who studies business at a university. When speaking of his daughter, he still maintained the fierce face: “My daughter works really hard. She will pursue her MBA degree after graduation.” At the end of the interview I expressed my gratitude to Guo and then followed up with my thanks and 2018 New Year holiday wishes through WeChat.

Hua. Hua’s son shared my WeChat ID with his mother and she added me as a WeChat friend. I sent her greeting messages and she sent me a message asking if she could see the interview questions first because she was nervous and worried that she would not be fluent enough during the interview. I tried comforting her and told her that the interview was just like a chat so that there was no need to worry. However, she sent another message to me insisting that she needed to preview the interview questions, so I sent them to her on WeChat. Afterwards, we scheduled our video call interview to be on Wednesday, January 3, 2018 at 12 pm (Beijing Time), which was Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at 8 pm (Pacific Standard Time), which was during her lunch break.

On the day of the interview, Hua was sitting in her office wearing a suit. She was holding a piece of paper during the interview, and she told me that there were notes and talking

points she would refer to. She seemed a bit nervous, but as we proceeded, she became more relaxed, talkative, and referred to her notes less. The interview lasted for 35 minutes. Hua is a small-sized business owner who sells construction materials in Anhui Province. Her business has prospered so she had enough savings to send her son away to study in the United States. Hua's son was raised by his grandparents and she described him as a little spoiled. She hoped that "he could improve his self-care ability when studying and living in America." Her son is a business major in a university. At the end of the interview I expressed my gratitude to Hua and then followed up with my thanks and 2018 New Year holiday wishes through WeChat.

Yu. After Yu's daughter replied "yes" to my invitation to be interviewed, she shared Yu's contact information with me and I added her to WeChat. I sent a greeting message first and then we scheduled our WeChat video call interview to be on Sunday, January 7, 2018 at 12 pm (Beijing Time), which was Saturday, January 6, 2018 at 8 pm (Pacific Standard Time).

On the day of the interview, Yu was at home dressed up nicely. She told me that she would dine out after the interview. She was enthusiastic about meeting me and before starting the interview formally, we chatted for about 10 minutes; I shared with her my personal story in China and in the United States. Our interview lasted 40 minutes.

Yu invests in real estate in Shanghai. Her husband also works in finance. Her daughter chose business as her major in a university because "she was influenced by the work my husband and I have been doing," as Yu stated. "And we support her. She really enjoys American life." At the end of the interview, I expressed my gratitude to Yu and then followed up with my thanks and 2018 New Year holiday wishes through WeChat.

Findings

After transcribing the five audio recordings of the interviews verbatim into Mandarin, I used my home printer to print out the transcripts along with Wei's screenshots and Cheng's

Word document. I read parents' responses one by one and themes emerged from each case. Then I re-read the responses and common themes appeared from among all of the cases collectively. I used six highlighters: blue, yellow, red, green, gray, and brown, to code the common themes identified and synthesized below.

Theme 1. The United States is a valued nation within which to study. The United States is viewed as a great and powerful nation, where children can broaden their horizons. Liang mentioned, "America is a melting pot. I sent my son to America because I wanted him to make lots of friends and do business together. He can widen his field of vision, which is beneficial to his future life." Wei shared the same opinion that "studying in America broaden[s] my daughter's horizon." Cheng stated that, "America has a high quality education system. My son will be more competitive in the job-hunting market if he comes back to China with a degree from an American university." Meng also mentioned:

When my daughter was a little kid, I wanted her to get in touch with the outside world and to broaden her horizon[s]. America has advanced science and technology, so I had been wishing that I could send my daughter to the most powerful nation in the world to experience the Western education. Therefore, I chose America for my daughter to study in. Most importantly, my daughter herself likes America. I support her, and I like guiding my daughter in an encouraging way. When she experiences the differences between Chinese education and American education and masters the two types of education, it would be conducive to her own children's education in the future.

Guo said, "My daughter wanted to study in America. My wife and I also think America is great, so we let our daughter pursue her American dream." Hua held similar views that she wanted her son to experience a new Western education system. Her son was curious about the outside world, so she thought that her son studying in what she perceived as the most powerful nation, the United States, was an optimal choice. Yu said, "My daughter likes America. She says America is a great country, where top talents gather together. She has more opportunities to get in touch with excellent people, which makes herself better and expands her horizon[s]."

Theme 2. Chinese parents treasure harmonious relations. Chinese parents believe that “harmony is priceless.” Establishing friendly and harmonious *guanxi* is significantly important. Liang mentioned, “Taiwan and America have many trade and business relations. If we don’t maintain friendly *guanxi* with the big brother, America, our business will fail.” Wei stated, “*Guanxi* is extremely important in China; it involves employment, and every single aspect in our society.” Cheng also mentioned, “I believe *guanxi* is very important in both China and America. Especially in China, *guanxi* is a platform. It will be difficult for people to move a single step without *guanxi*.” Meng expressed her opinion as follows:

In China, *guanxi* is exceedingly important. People from all walks of life cannot do their work smoothly without *guanxi*. We take *guanxi* very seriously. I work in a bank, and all my performances need *guanxi* to lubricate and uphold. *Guanxi* is so important that everyone must foster good *guanxi* with everyone else. Human beings have emotions. When we foster good *guanxi*, our study, life and every single facet will be pleasant, which is much better than standing alone. I believe America is similar, but fairer in regard to the hiring process as a country of meritocracy.

Guo pointed out:

Guanxi has both commendatory and derogatory meanings. Its derogatory meaning refers to abnormal and uncivil relations, such as “scraping up an acquaintance with people who have power” and “getting in by the back door”. Its commendatory meaning refers to positive relations built among people. Talking about both meanings is normal in China, but we advocate good *guanxi*, which is very important in China. In America, a more modernized country, *guanxi* may not be as important as that in China, but still exists, such as the *guanxi* between [the] American President and ordinary people during the general election.

Hua and Yu shared the same viewpoint of the important role *guanxi* plays in China. As a businesswoman, Hua said that it would be difficult for her company to run smoothly without *guanxi*. “If I maintain harmonious *guanxi* with customers, with people who may introduce me customers and others who may help in my business, I will have a successful business. *Guanxi* reflects my ability to run a business.” Besides *guanxi*’s influence on Yu’s investment, she spoke of unfair employment through *guanxi*. “In America, employers hire job seekers who have real ability, true skills, and genuine talent. However, it is not the case in China because *guanxi*

reigns.” There were three tiers of *guanxi* that emerged under this finding based on parents’ responses. These are described in Figure 1 and in the narrative below.

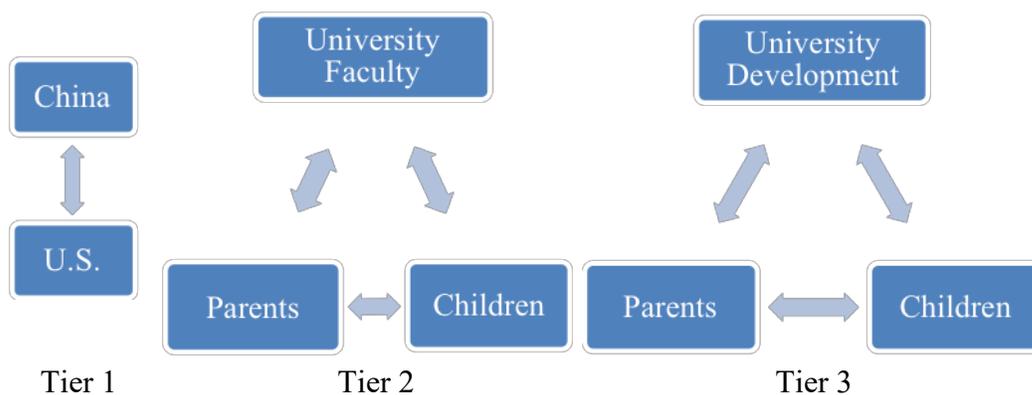


Figure 1. Three tiers of *Guanxi*.

Tier 1. China and the United States. Meng hoped that China-U.S. *guanxi* could be in a peaceful and friendly state forever: “Such a state will assure us as parents that our children will enjoy their time studying in the U.S.” Hua held the same view: “When China and the U.S. have good *guanxi*, my child can focus on studying and graduate successfully. Likewise, I want to build good *guanxi* with the university, which will benefit my child’s study and life in the U.S.” Yu thought that *guanxi* was very important in any country. “When there is peace and friendliness in countries around the world, ordinary people’s life and work can be peaceful and steady, and thus our children’s education will be smooth.” She further stated that:

As a parent, I hope to maintain positive *guanxi* in every aspect. There exist cultural differences between the East and the West. America values personal ability, while China mostly depends on interpersonal connections. Because China maintains peaceful *guanxi* with America, my daughter has the opportunity to come to America, receive a Western education, and experience fairer competition.

Tier 2. University faculty, children, and parents. Meng met her daughter’s advisors who were “approachable, rigorous, and responsible,” as she described. “They left a great impression

on me, and I am willing to make a contribution to the university and support the university's further development." Guo expressed his opinion:

China is a land of courtesy. Students respecting teachers is Chinese virtue. Faculty and students form *guanxi* through respect. I think the university professors will feel more delighted and more willing to help with my daughter's study and life when my daughter shows great respect for them. Once this positive *guanxi* is built between faculty and my daughter, it can be passed on to parents and the university.

Yu described the interwoven role *guanxi* plays among her daughter, the university faculty, and herself:

Since my daughter began her studies in the university, she has been telling me how great her professors are when we video chat on WeChat. My daughter is an only child and I always miss her. Every time I see her happy face and know that she enjoys her life at the university, I feel relieved. The university faculty members are excellent, so I know that my daughter's educational quality is top-notch. I sincerely hope that the university develops better and better with my and other people's donations, so that my daughter and other students will have more and more growth potential, such as further study, internship[s], and employment in America.

Tier 3. University development, children, and parents. Liang stated that he did not have any special communications or interactions with the university originally except that his son was studying there. Later he considered the university development officers his friends. "Since the university development officers and I met for the first time, we have established a bond. They came to Taiwan and we had dinner together. I did the honors since we Chinese people like to show hospitality." Liang hoped that this positive *guanxi* would be carried forward and made use of. Similarly, Wei said that university development officers met with him every year and asked for opinions and suggestions regarding philanthropy. His daughter also had opportunities to interact with the university development officers. Cheng mentioned that he was so busy that he did not have time to know more about his son's university. When development officers invited him to attend a parents' meeting in China hosted specially for Chinese students' parents, he attended and subsequently donated mainly because the university development officers promised him to offer some help to his son. They treated his son to dinner and provided him with career

development guidance for his future. Hua also believed that her *guanxi* with university development came from the *guanxi* between her child and the university. Hua further stated that *guanxi* played an important role between parents and universities:

When the university maintains friendly *guanxi* with me, as a parent, I'm willing to support the university's development more or less, such as making a donation. What is more, maintaining such *guanxi* also benefits my daughter. She will feel delighted and valued, so she can consider staying in the same university and pursuing advanced studies. I am willing to sponsor her and will consider continuing contributing to the university. Reciprocity and mutual benefit exist in this *guanxi*.

Theme 3. Children as a bridge between universities and parents. All of the participants expressed that it was the American university that established *guanxi* first with them. "I wouldn't have had the opportunity [to donate to the university] without the university's outreach to me," Liang said. Wei mentioned that he hoped the university could provide a better environment for his daughter and other students. Cheng and Meng both stated that if their children had not studied in the university, they would never have considered donating. Their donation was a reflection of love and support for their children. Guo said:

I want to educate my daughter that philanthropy is very important through setting an example by personally taking part. I want to let her know that philanthropy does not simply mean asking and giving money. No matter how much we donate, as long as we have the heart to donate, it is a great way to give back to our community and make our society better. In particular, I hope that with my donation, my daughter's university could develop better, and thus my daughter would enjoy a better future.

Hua stated her reason of donating to her son's university, "I donate because my child studies in the university. My donation is a form of support to my child. I hope that my support could bring my child more learning opportunities and career guidance." Yu also took her daughter's benefits into consideration. She wanted to help achieve her daughter's dream of living and working in the United States through donation to her daughter's university.

Theme 4. Chinese parents who have money can contribute money. Liang was perfectly happy to donate after the university reached out to him. "Philanthropy is very common

in Taiwan,” Liang said, “and I am always involved in activities to convey my love and benevolence. It is not a big deal. We have a Chinese saying, ‘Those with money can give money and those with strength can give strength.’” Liang also mentioned that face-to-face communication with university development staff made him more motivated to make his donation decision. He hoped to see his son’s university develop.

Hua also quoted the Chinese saying, “Those with money can give money and those with strength can give strength,” and she is happy to donate to her son’s university without hesitation. Wei stated that investing in education and being involved in philanthropy are his family’s traditions. Cheng expressed that he would feel a trace of embarrassment if he chose not to donate to his son’s university during his face-to-face meeting with the university development officers, who knew that he had wealth. Meng actively cooperated with her daughter’s university development officers when they reached out to her. She said:

I felt honored when the university called me and informed me of their purpose for the first time. I believe that this [donation] activity is very meaningful and is an inexorable trend. Since I have the economic capability, I am willing to contribute. I want to show my benevolence that would enlighten my daughter. I want her to know that we need to show love and care to society. We need to increase our [philanthropic] ideology as China’s economy is rising.

Similar to Liang, Meng also mentioned that her face-to-face communication with the university development officers helped with her final decision to donate. Guo pointed out that the university took the initiative to reach out to him with sincerity, asking him to donate. Given that he was capable of making one, he was committed to doing so without any doubt. Speaking of the necessity of face-to-face communication with development officers, Guo said:

Since I intended to make a donation the second I knew about this campaign, it actually did not affect my decision of donating or not. However, communicating in person was the icing on the cake. When the officers and I were both happy, and we drank more wine, I was even willing to make more donations.

Yu donated mostly because her daughter persuaded her to do so. She stated:

To be honest, I was not that willing to make a donation originally when the university reached out to me. I had the wealth, but I felt that it was not my business, somehow. Later, I talked about this matter with my daughter, and she strongly asked me to support her university. She told me that as American culture, her American schoolmates' parents often donated to the university, and that it was time for Chinese parents to show support, so I needed to grasp the opportunity and show some Chinese power. My daughter's words made a lot of sense to me, so I made the donation eventually.

Theme 5. Chinese parents do not donate due to extenuating circumstances. There were five reasons why Chinese parents made the decision not to donate to their children's American universities.

Reason 1. Economic limitations. Some Chinese parents were willing, but unable, to donate to their children's university because they did not have the financial means to do so. Liang, Hua, and Yu all stated as such. Meng shared that some parents have economic limitations and that:

Not all Chinese parents sending children to America are businessmen living a well-off and carefree life. Most are simply middle-class ordinary people. Like most parents, we also need to work hard and save money to pay for children's tuition fees and living expenses. You know, we even need to sponsor our children's wedding receptions and make a down payment on their marriage apartments. When our children have babies, we tend to reduce their burdens by partially sponsoring our grandchildren.

Ordinary Chinese people passing down wealth to the next generation seems to be a tradition. After that, these Chinese parents would use their remaining savings to enjoy their retirement. It appears that most of these Chinese parents would have no extra money to give to the university. Guo also pointed out that the main reason parents do not donate is their limited financial means:

Comparatively speaking, ordinary Chinese people are not as well-off as ordinary American people. For instance, a Chinese person may make ¥3000 RMB per month while an American person may make \$3,000. The number is the same while the currency units are different. When an American university asks an ordinary Chinese parent to donate \$3,000, it means that the parent has to give away more than half-a-year of salary. Once we do the math, we will know why ordinary Chinese parents cannot donate.

Reason 2. Cultural differences. Some Chinese parents do not intend to donate; they do not value, care about, or understand the importance of donating to their children's universities. Liang mentioned, "If an American university did not state clearly the intention of asking Chinese parents to make a donation, then the parents would not understand it." It is not a part of Chinese culture to donate to their children's university. Cheng mentioned, "Some parents may think that donation is none of their business, but the alumni's business when these students become successful and economically capable one day." Hua thought that some parents might not value university philanthropy and development and simply focus on their children's academic performance and personal safety issues. "Chinese parents are not actively involved in American university philanthropy. Some believe that expensive tuition fees can be considered part of their contributions to an American university," Guo mentioned. Guo further stated:

To put it this way, if I have wealth, but my parents or siblings are poor, then I will definitely give donation priority to them; if my family members are all well-off, then it will be easy for me to consider donating to an organization. Which organization will I donate to? Of course, not to a random one, but to the one that I have *guanxi* with. Personal donation is usually made with certain purposes and private benefits. If Chinese parents feel that making such a donation will not benefit their children, I think, usually they will not donate.

Yu mentioned that donation is a rich person's business in China and their philanthropic behavior receives heavy coverage in mass media: "In ordinary people's opinion, the rich donate for fame and gain." Chinese parents are not aware that donations are the backbone of an American university's operations and development. They are not familiar with the philanthropic spirit and culture in American higher education.

Reason 3. The desire to save face. Chinese parents care about saving face. Face can be understood as dignity. Liang said, "If parents are asked to donate, they may care about the amount of donation. The more money they donate, the more face they save. However, sometimes, they may not intend to donate a certain amount the university has suggested." It is

not always about the whether or not to donate, but about how much to donate. In order not avoid further communication regarding how much to donate, they decline to meet with university development officers. Guo explained that “Some parents are not willing to meet and build further *guanxi* with the university because once it is built, the parents will feel obligated to donate due to face-saving, but they actually do not want to donate.” They tend to use words and phrases, such as “busy,” “next time,” or “not convenient,” as Guo noted, signal words for not planning on donating. They often say: “Sorry. I am very busy with work, hope I will meet you next time;” “It is not convenient for me to talk about this right now;” “Let me know when you are in China next time, and I will try to make it;” “It is not convenient for me to discuss it over the phone;” or “I will be out of town, hope to meet you next time.” Guo also shared key sentences that Chinese parents tend to use to show their face or dignity, their willingness to meet, and likelihood of making a donation: “Let me treat you when you come to China;” “Let me arrange for your meals and rooms in China;” “Feel free to let me know if you need anything during your stay in China.” Recognizing signal words and key sentences and reading between the lines are very important for American higher education development officers to be able to do.

Reason 4. Defense mechanisms. Psychologically speaking, Chinese parents have a strong awareness and need for self-protection, as Guo noted; they are concerned about phone scams and phishing, for example. Meng mentioned, “I think almost all Chinese parents are afraid of and alert to scams. The first time my daughter’s university called me, I was skeptical as well. It is normal for parents to react in this way.” Meng further stated:

These criminal activities happen frequently in China, especially to Chinese families with children studying abroad. Criminals often trick Chinese parents by calling them and saying that their children were kidnapped or got into an accident, or that an organization is in urgent need of a parents’ donation to save their children. Several parents are so worried about their children’s safety that they take the bait.

After watching news reports of such incidents as described above, and hearing people talk about it, Chinese parents have become very cautious. Given the time difference between China and America, there is a lack of timely communication between parents and children to confirm if an American university asking for donation is a real campaign or a fraud. “Once bitten, twice shy” is an accurate explanation for why Chinese might refuse to donate via phone or email. Parents are not willing to take the risk of losing wealth, so a safer way of addressing their fear is to immediately refuse. They lost nothing by refusing.

Reason 5. Political influences. Under President Xi’s leadership, transferring money from China to America is strictly controlled because former officials engaged in corrupt practices and money laundering. As Meng mentioned, each person can only transfer \$50,000 abroad from China each year. The transfer process is also monitored by a bank that requires individuals to provide an employment verification letter and state the purposes for transferring the funds. Guo stated that:

Chinese government officials and state-owned enterprises have wealth, but they usually avoid transferring money abroad; owners of private enterprises tend to be generous, and transferring money abroad is not a big problem [for] them as long as it is not an excessive amount; however, it is almost impossible for ordinary middle-class families to donate.

The Chinese government’s policy regarding transferring money abroad affected Chinese parents who wanted to donate, but did not want to be monitored or go through a cumbersome procedure.

Theme 6. Various strategies could promote university philanthropy. Chinese parent donors proposed their strategies for American university development officers to establish *guanxi* with Chinese parents so that more parents could become donors and make a philanthropic contribution to universities abroad. They suggested various strategies, and I categorized them as follows.

Strategy 1. Focus on children and provide mutual benefits. All participants mentioned that when American universities offered to look after their children and provide more individual guidance and help for their children, they found a strong motivation to donate. Cheng said, “In order to build *guanxi* with us, American universities should pay attention to our children first because they are the key and bridge.” He emphasized that American university development officers should start with building close *guanxi* with Chinese students. Meng stated that Chinese families centered on children, so “American universities should put more efforts on their children and provide some benefits.” She proposed that children be awarded scholarships and honors and be provided with privileged career opportunities. Once Chinese parents saw their “favor to the university returned to their children,” as Meng described, Chinese parents would be delighted, and philanthropic activities could proceed. Guo, Hua, and Yu all mentioned that focusing on assisting children’s academic and career development in America would motivate Chinese parents to donate. As Yu said, “If the university treats my child well, I will treat the university well. When the university needs my support, I will do all I can.” It appears that university philanthropy would need to involve reciprocity to Chinese parents through benefits to their children studying abroad.

Strategy 2. Popularize American philanthropy and meet parents’ practical needs. “Publicity work is very important. Chinese parents would like to know the significance of American philanthropy,” Guo stated. He stressed that Chinese parents have the basic idea that they donated to make a difference to universities’ development, but expect American universities to inform them of the specific use and direction of their donation in advance. “For example,” Guo suggested, “to explore more career pathways for international students. As far as I know, a majority of students hope to stay in America after graduation or at least gain some work experience before returning to their home countries.” He pointed out that this group of

international students needs more attention and support than American students because of their identity or visa issues; these students need to work harder in order to stay in America. “Through joint efforts of parents, children, and universities, policies and actions towards international students’ internships or employment could be improved,” Guo continued. Hua mentioned that American universities could invite Chinese students to seminars or meetings on campus regularly, discuss university philanthropy, and ask the students to share philanthropy information with their parents. Meanwhile, the students could listen to their parents’ needs and feedback on university philanthropy, and then share with their universities’ development offices.

Strategy 3. Speak indirectly and diplomatically about donating and make full use of WeChat. Speaking indirectly about certain topics is a part of Chinese culture; “Talking about money hurts feelings” is a Chinese saying. “American university development officers cannot start a conversation with asking Chinese parents for money. They need to build harmonious *guanxi* and trust with Chinese parents through talking about, caring about, and praising their children first,” Guo said. He further stated that Chinese parents seldom check emails, so the step of reaching out to Chinese parents via email could be skipped. Phone calls could work, but Chinese parents would “freak out” he stated. “Even in China, if a university calls parents via phone, the parents will get upset, and their first reaction will be that something bad has happened to their child.” Guo suggested that children notifying their parents of philanthropic activities first would be more appropriate than American universities doing so. Guo continued, “Nowadays, Chinese parents, like me and my wife, use WeChat every day, and we look at our child’s WeChat Moments very frequently.” He believed that WeChat would be a better way for American university development officers to keep in touch with Chinese parents.

Yu also emphasized that the Chinese way of discussing a topic was through indirect means. “We do not ‘enter with a single sword’ or come straight to the point. Being straightforward is

unpleasant and impolite. We tend to beat around the bush.” Hence, if Chinese parents are capable of making donations to children’s universities, but university development officers do not pay special attention to this Chinese way of communicating, it could cause parents’ unwillingness to donate.

Strategy 4. Communicate sincerely and host interactive events. Communication between an American universities and Chinese parents is very important,” Liang said. He mentioned that Chinese people have loving hearts, and they would donate as long as their financial means permitted. Liang said, “The university development officers came all the way from America to Taiwan to meet with me and stated their visiting purpose clearly. I felt their sincerity and I wanted to build *guanxi* and make friends with them.” On the other hand, Liang hoped that his son’s American university would still keep in touch with him even though his son had graduated. He said, “When the university development officers come to Taiwan again, I hope that they could let me know, and I would love to catch up.” He felt that he had lost contact with his “old friends” because his son was not enrolled as a current student in the university anymore. Maintaining friendly *guanxi* after building it with these parent donors was also a proof of American universities’ sincerity. For Liang, he would not like to see “once donation, contact lost.” American university development officers need to strengthen *guanxi* with and show sincerity to Chinese parent donors even though their students graduated and became alumni, since the *guanxi* among American universities, children, and Chinese parents still existed.

Meng stated that when university development officers met with her in person, she could confirm that the request for the donation was real. She felt “valued, respected, honored, grateful, and closer to the university” because of their sincere and approachable attitudes and the souvenirs that they brought. Meng expressed her hope that this *guanxi* could be sustained through more communication and interaction. She suggested that the university could send out

invitation letters to Chinese parents who would visit the university and communicate with university faculty, staff, and leadership teams face-to-face on campus, and the university could get to know more about Chinese parents' needs and opinions. The university could also host social events for prospective Chinese parent donors who could meet and exchange ideas about university development. "The feeling for us to see familiar faces in a foreign country is quite different, and the cohesion as a group of Chinese parents would arise spontaneously. We would feel more motivated to make a donation," Hua explained. Yu also suggested that universities could host receptions in big cities in China for parents to meet and mingle. These receptions "would expand Chinese parents' *guanxi*, which could benefit their own careers and business; and the driving and appealing atmosphere would change the mind of those parents who did not plan to or hesitate to donate." In addition, Yu offered that these receptions could also expand a university's popularity and that Chinese parents care about their children's universities' popularity and reputation: "I hope that my daughter will feel very proud to be an alumna from this university, and that the university's reputation will make her easily employed." Thus, Chinese parents visiting American campuses and American universities traveling to China would be conducive to university development and philanthropy.

Chapter Summary

Since Chinese parents seldom check emails and phone calls might cause fear, using WeChat to contact with parents may be a better option for American university development officers. I was able to recruit seven cases for my research. In this chapter I described each case and identified six themes: 1) America is a great nation within which to study, 2) the Chinese treasure harmonious relations, 3) Children are a bridge between universities and parents, 4) Chinese parents who have money can contribute money, 5) Chinese parents choose not to donate due to extenuating circumstances, and 6) various strategies could promote university

philanthropy. The strategies include focusing on Chinese students enrolled in their universities and providing mutual benefit, popularizing American philanthropy and meeting parents' practical needs, speaking indirectly and diplomatically about donating and using WeChat, and communicating sincerely and hosting interactive events.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I summarize the study, answer the study's guiding research questions, provide implications for American university development officers, show why Chinese parents do and do not donate, and offer recommendations for further research. Lastly, I explain the limitations of this study.

Study Summary

Since there are a record number of Chinese students attending American universities and little research on building relationships between Chinese parents and the American universities those children attend, I studied how university advancement officers could implement the concept of *guanxi* in forming relationships with Chinese parents. The research questions were designed to identify Chinese parent donors' *guanxi* with their children's American universities, ways for the universities to create a philanthropic *guanxi* with Chinese parents, and the role *guanxi* plays in parents' decision to donate. American universities can implement *guanxi* as a tool for fundraising.

The Chinese view philanthropy through a Confucian perspective, which focuses on relationships and reciprocity. *Guanxi* is a concept that should be understood by both the East and the West in order for them to share the benefits of philanthropy. While Americans have historically been willing to donate to universities, philanthropy to universities is an emerging practice among Chinese. American universities reach out to faculty, staff, students, alumni, and companies. They also use diversity to their advantage by reaching out to minority populations. While American universities have been successful in these endeavors, soliciting to international populations has been challenging. American universities can use *guanxi* to combat these challenges among the Chinese population.

I used a qualitative collective case study research design to explore Chinese parent donors' understanding of *guanxi* to learn how the concept is significant to them and how it could be used in American university fundraising. I employed purposeful criterion sampling to eliminate time and location barriers to obtaining data. WeChat was the best means for contacting Chinese parents. Other methods such as email and telephone ended with no response or an immediate denial.

The case study unit of analysis was each Chinese parent donor (father or mother) from a family. Seven parents agreed to participate. I used emails, phone calls, WeChat messages, face-to-face video call interviews through WeChat, and notes taken during phone calls and interviews to collect data and employed member checking for accuracy. Ultimately, I explored seven cases through in-depth data analysis. I described each case using pseudonyms.

I identified six similarities during the interviews, which I labeled as themes. The themes included: 1) America is a great nation within which to study, 2) the Chinese treasure harmonious relations, 3) Children are a bridge between universities and parents, 4) Chinese parents who have money can contribute money, 5) Chinese parents choose not to donate due to extenuating circumstances, and 6) various strategies could promote university philanthropy.

Answers to the Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study and helped illuminate the nuances of *guanxi* in relation to philanthropic endeavors in American higher education:

1. In what ways do Chinese parent donors consider the importance of *guanxi* in their commitment to the philanthropic cause of their children's universities?
2. What strategies do Chinese parent donors believe are necessary when their children's American universities try to build a philanthropic *guanxi* with them?

3. What role, if any, does *guanxi* play in the Chinese parent donors' decision to donate to their children's universities in the United States?

Due to *guanxi*'s importance in China and among Chinese parents, American universities need to understand the Chinese cultural concepts of reciprocity, respect, face, benevolence, indirect communication, and reliance on WeChat, as well as *guanxi*'s meaning and taking the initiative to establish and sustain harmonious, positive, peaceful, friendly, and sincere *guanxi* with Chinese parents. The *guanxi* between China and the United States, and among Chinese parents, children, university faculty, and development officers, all influence American higher education philanthropy. American university development officers need to meet Chinese parents' real needs, care about Chinese students who are the bridge between universities and parents, and consider how they might provide more academic and career opportunities in America for these Chinese children. Further, they need to understand that some Chinese parents chose not to donate because of a lack of financial means, cultural differences, the need to save face, defense mechanisms, and political influence. American development officers could apply various strategies to promote university philanthropy. These include focusing on Chinese students enrolled in their universities and providing mutual benefit, popularizing American philanthropy and meeting parents' practical needs, speaking indirectly and diplomatically about donating and using WeChat, and communicating sincerely and hosting interactive events.

Implications for American University Development Officers

All seven Chinese parent donors spoke highly of America as "a great nation to study in" and provided love and support for their children to study in the United States. Because Chinese parents cherish harmonious relationships and expect their children to be able to serve as the bridge, American university development officers could build and sustain positive *guanxi* with both Chinese students and their parents in fundraising efforts in order to receive more donations

from Chinese parents, both large and small. If Chinese parents have money, then they can contribute money. Thus, it would be necessary for American university development officers to take measures to identify those Chinese parents with the financial means to be potential donors. Development officers could also develop strategies to persuade non-donor Chinese parents to donate smaller amounts in the future, as the financial gifts to the universities need not always be large. For Chinese parents without potential wealth and for whom it may not be convenient to transfer large funds abroad, American higher education development officers could still keep long-term *guanxi* with them since they and their children may still make small donations.

In addition, helping Chinese students and parents realize the importance of university philanthropy and employing more strategies to cater to Chinese parents' practical needs, namely, providing privileged treatment to their children, notifying children of university philanthropic events first, and using WeChat to connect with Chinese parents, would deepen the relationship between parents and universities. What is more, American university advancement officers could work with other departments on campus to achieve these goals. "It is desirable for institutional advancement and student affairs to work together on involving parents for the benefit of higher education" (McInnis, 2001, p. 70). The three departments of "development, marketing, and alumni relations [are] responsible for identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding donors" and work to achieve university fundraising goals (Stevick, 2010, p. 59). It would also be necessary for American university development officers to work with Chinese parent donors "who have exiting *guanxi* or relevant skills for building new *guanxi*" (Chen & Chen, 2004, p. 321). It would be conducive to extending Chinese parent donors' *guanxi* when development officers host interactive events for them.

The initial recruitment strategies were challenging and discouraging. As a result, I had to reconsider my approach and develop new strategies. In terms of using emails and phone calls to

recruit potential participants, I was surprised that neither of those strategies was successful. This suggests that using American methods for outreach to Chinese parents may not be effective. Knowing the Chinese way of communicating with parents is key and is an important consideration for American university development officers when reaching out to Chinese parents. I spent a substantial amount of time preparing the bilingual recruitment letter and email, but potential participants did not check their email, which was disappointing. Chinese parents generally will not check their email accounts, regardless of who sent them, without receiving prior notice.

Chinese parents are alert to phone scams and phishing, which risk their sense of privacy and wealth. As such crimes are rampant in China, Chinese parents whose children are studying abroad can become targets. Chinese parents often will not answer the phone when seeing strange phone numbers and if they answer a stranger's call, they may talk very little in defense of their privacy and in protection of their wealth. Parents cannot easily identify whether or not an American university development officer requesting a donation by phone is genuine, so they tend to be precautionous and refuse to donate. The strategy of calling or emailing Chinese parents for donations, therefore, is not effective.

When Chinese parents who did not initially plan to participate in my research finally agreed to do so, a Saturday became somewhat of a work day for them, the interview caused them some stress, and several felt the need to prepare ahead of time. Even when I tried to reassure participants it did not always assuage their fears. It was effective when I started the interviews by making the Chinese parents feel more comfortable by getting to know them and talk with them about their children. Building personal *guanxi* with participants was essential to the success of this study. Discussing their children made them less nervous and more willing to

share their perspectives on making donations. This approach is recommended for American university development officers' when starting fundraising conversations with Chinese parents.

All of the participants and their children use WeChat, noted earlier as China's most popular social networking app. I used my *guanxi* to recruit Chinese parents for my research through WeChat in order for them to trust that I was not going to ask them for a donation. I have also seen that some of my American peers use WeChat to do business with Chinese people and communicate with their Chinese friends and partners. It seems that WeChat has become part of many American people's lives, so using the app might not be inconvenient for American university development officers who would like to establish *guanxi* with Chinese parents.

If American university development officers want to build *guanxi* with Chinese parents, they might begin by connecting with their children first on WeChat as Chinese children's opinions matter to their parents. The difficult participant recruiting process left me the impression that Chinese parents may consider U.S. efforts to solicit donations to be aggressive and bothersome. Using WeChat may help mitigate this potential inhibitor to opening relationships with potential Chinese parent donors.

All the seven participants are in the business field from economically open and developed regions in China. Their children all study business in the United States. It seems that these parents are open-minded given that their children are living and studying in the United States. They reported that they are happy to invest in their children's international education, and perhaps more importantly, they are financially capable of paying for their children's tuition and living expenses.

The parents have great love for and high expectations of their children. They believe in business as a practical major and that their children could earn a good living and work in business like themselves. I saw the possibility of the participants' children continuing their

parents' legacy in the business field. When these parents have made a gift to their children's American universities, it seems plausible that their children might also donate to their American universities when they are financially able to do so. Therefore, it would be important for American university development officers to know the ways of building *guanxi* with both Chinese parents and their children.

Based on what I learned from my participants, it really took my investment of time, effort, and energy to build a relationship with the Chinese parents before they would talk about their experiences in donating to their children's American universities. Thus, it is recommended that American university development officers also invest time, effort, and energy to build *guanxi* with Chinese parents before soliciting donations. Parents in China may feel conflicted about sending their money to the United States, so American development officers may need to work with them to explain why such an investment would be valuable and valued.

The Chinese parents who participated in this study believe that studying in the United States broadens their children's horizons and benefits their children's future careers and lifestyles, as well as improves the future for their potential grandchildren. Thus, they have high expectations for American higher education. The parents believe that the United States is a land of great opportunity and their children need to pursue their American dreams. The American Dream, mentioned by the Chinese parents, might mean that their children want to pursue a happier higher-quality Western lifestyle and receive a better education different from what the children may have in China. Chinese parents provide as much basic financial, material, and emotional support as they can for their children to be ready to survive, compete, and prosper in American society and to pursue an eye-opening, adventurous, and promising life continued through the children's intelligence and diligence. The American Dream could also be the Chinese parents' dream: living an American life full of opportunities, freedom, fairness,

diversity, and happiness that the parents may aspire to have, but cannot; which the parents could achieve through witnessing their children's and even grandchildren's success in America.

American higher education would need to live up to Chinese parents' expectations and create more opportunities for their children's future. The recommendation for development officers is to clearly demonstrate the high quality of the American educational experience, followed by career opportunities and student success, in their solicitation efforts for donations.

Chinese society advocates for harmony and takes *guanxi* seriously; thus, people should build harmonious *guanxi* with all others. *Guanxi* between the two nations, China and the United States, is important, as is *guanxi* among Chinese parents, children, and American university faculty, staff, and development officers. Chinese parents hope that China and the United States can maintain peaceful and friendly *guanxi*. In China, it is believed that positive *guanxi* produces joyful emotion, smooth workflow, and job opportunities. It also contributes to Chinese parents' assurance of their children's happiness and academic success in the United States. In addition, approachable faculty and respectful children help influence parents to donate to the universities. Faculty members or academic advisors might use *guanxi* to help introduce the development officers to the Chinese parents. Since the Chinese participants mentioned that the university faculty and advisors influenced their donations to the university, it is possible that the development officers might not be the best people to solicit donations from Chinese parents. Because relationships matter to the parents, the development officers may need to identify people, such as faculty members and advisors at the university who know the students and can build a relationship with parents based on these people's relationship with the students.

More specifically, the development officer does not make the first contact with the parent; the academic advisor or the faculty member then becomes the person who makes the introduction and the connection. The implication for development officers is that they need to

use *guanxi* to reach the parents through someone else. The development officers could contact faculty members or advisors first, whom then would connect the development officers to students' parents. Therefore, the faculty members or the advisors become the connecting relationship between the parents and the development officers. It would be the faculty members and the advisors who make the introduction, so the development officers would need to work with them to facilitate that introduction with the parents.

American university development officers establishing and maintaining friendly and sincere *guanxi* with Chinese parents would improve university fundraising efforts. This might include face-to-face individual meetings, regional group receptions, and tours in China and America, even after students graduate. The benefits of making these efforts include consolidating Chinese parents' trust in and connections with development officers, demonstrating development officers' friendliness and sincerity, and making Chinese parents feel valued.

When sending out invitations to all Chinese students and parents, it might be necessary for development officers to study students' profiles and research their parents' backgrounds to identify key prospective Chinese parent donors. They might want to pay special attention to parents who are owners of private enterprises in economically-developed regions, such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Anhui. In addition, development officers might need to recognize signal words and phrases and learn to "read between the lines" when communicating with Chinese parents. If parents agree to attend meetings or receptions, development officers could have a face-to-face preparatory meeting with those parents' children first, either on campus or via video call on WeChat, to get to know the students and their parents.

Reasons Why Chinese Parents Donate

The Chinese parents in this study donated to their children's universities because American universities took the initiative to reach out to these parents and establish *guanxi* with them first. Children serve as the bridge between universities and parents; without their children's influence, it is unlikely that parents would donate. Their donations reflect their love and support for their children. These donations are an integral part of the universities' development, which in turn, could bring more career benefits to their children in the future. Since children are a bridge between universities and parents, American university development officers may want to consider notifying students of university philanthropic events, meetings, and receptions before reaching out to students' parents. Development officers could let Chinese students communicate with their parents about these activities first and follow up with Chinese parents second.

"Those with money can give money and those with strength can give strength" is a popular Chinese saying. Chinese parents with money may donate to their children's American universities; however, not all Chinese parents have the financial means to do so. Instead, they can still contribute "strength," which could mean offering suggestions and feedback for university development. To motivate Chinese parents to donate, American university development officers may find that face-to-face communication is often necessary; their children's persuasion helps as well. Thus, soliciting for Chinese parents input and feedback is another recommendation that came out of this study.

From the Chinese parent donors' perspective, American university development officers could take measures to build *guanxi* with and solicit donations from Chinese parents, such as focusing on Chinese students enrolled in their universities and providing mutual benefits, popularizing American philanthropy and meeting parents' practical needs, speaking indirectly

and diplomatically about donating, making full use of WeChat, communicating sincerely, and hosting interactive events. These strategies could help convince Chinese parents to donate to American universities.

It is important for American university development officers to emphasize the benefits to Chinese parents' children. The parents in this study expressed that they would like their children to receive special treatment, such as individual guidance and help in academics, receiving honors, and beginning their careers. These parents expect reciprocity when donating to their children's universities. Participants indicated that it was very important for American university development officers to talk about their children, and then the officers would be able to talk to Chinese parents about donations. This is important if they plan to research Chinese parents and American higher education development officers. Each development officer can approach that differently, identifying a strategy for getting to know the children of Chinese parents when wanting to ask for donations.

There are a variety of strategies that American university development officers could employ in order to get to know the children. The strategies will vary from development officer to development officer, but could include spending time with prospective Chinese parent donors' children, meeting with Chinese children, and looking up Chinese students' academic records and finding out what classes they take. The development officers might not have time to sit down and talk with each child, but they might host students as a group. The strategies may also vary depending on a university's culture.

Chinese parents want to know how their donations will be used before they donate. Of particular interest is support for international students who need specific types of support as compared with domestic students, so Chinese parents could make donations that fund more services for international students. Also, having seminars and meetings regarding American

philanthropy with children, parents, and American university schools or departments might help motivate Chinese parents to donate. In order to popularize American philanthropy, American university development officers could consider working with student affairs offices and Chinese student organizations on campus to promote philanthropic awareness, popularize American philanthropic culture and university philanthropy, let Chinese students share philanthropy information with their parents, and ask Chinese students to bring their parents' feedback to campus. In addition, development officers could co-host lectures on China-United States relations and philanthropy with university communications and media departments, among others.

American universities may not get as many donations as they seek from Chinese parents if they start the conversation by asking for money. Development officers need to understand the Chinese cultural aspect of "beating around the bush" when communicating prior to asking for donations. First, they need to ask about the Chinese parents' children in order to open the relationship. Given that Chinese parents do not check email frequently, American university development officers do not need to email them. Instead, using students as a bridge to their parents via WeChat is a more effective way to reach out to Chinese parents.

Since Chinese parents are used to indirect discussion and expect reciprocity, American university development officers could think about working with admissions offices, international student services offices, marketing, and other departments to recruit international students' parents to create an international parent council of annual donors with membership dues collected in lieu of a donation. Development officers could provide different membership packages with different levels of benefits. Chinese student organization events could be used to recruit Chinese students' parents to join, appreciate members' contributions to the university, and honor VIP parent donors and their children at events. Since all of this study's participants and

their children use WeChat, American university development officers could consider working with admissions offices, registrars, and alumni relations offices to add Chinese students' and parents' WeChat accounts on students' profiles. Development officers could also create a WeChat group for Chinese parent donors and their children, send invitations and notices of university events and holiday greetings, share the latest news and articles about philanthropy, and post photos and videos of university philanthropic events.

Based on comments offered by this study's participants, Chinese parents may be concerned that when they build philanthropic *guanxi* with their children's universities, the universities will stop caring about their children after they graduate, and they will lose *guanxi*. Thus, American university development officers need to sustain *guanxi* with Chinese parents in order to show sincerity. Chinese parents value face-to-face communication and can give direct feedback to universities, so hosting events for them to meet and talk would help attract them to donate to their children's American universities even after their children have graduated.

Furthermore, since Chinese parents care about a university's popularity and reputation, as Yu mentioned, American university development officers could consider how they might help to expand the university's popularity. The reputation of a university matters to Chinese parents, which might matter in their decision to send their children to a university in the first place. More Chinese students on campus would increase the likelihood of more donations from Chinese parents to the university. In addition to hosting receptions for Chinese parents, the development officers could work with the university admissions offices to recruit more Chinese students to attend the university, which might lead to more donations from existing Chinese parents.

Reasons Why Chinese Parents Do Not Donate

Financial limitations, cultural differences, the need to save face, defense mechanisms, and political influence are five reasons why Chinese parents do not donate to their children's

American universities. Middle-class parents have limited financial means with little disposable income with which to donate. This is the primary reason for not donating that came out of the perspectives of this study's participants. Middle class parents needing to consider saving money for future generations is a tradition in Chinese families. Also, these families' incomes are not comparable to American families' incomes. It is recommended that American university development officers identify whether or not a Chinese family has enough net worth to donate. Alternatively, they could ask for smaller donations.

Donation is a rich person's business in China; it is perceived that the rich donate for fame and gain. Chinese parents donating to their children's universities is not common in Chinese culture. American university development officers would need to state clearly why and how Chinese parents play an important role in university development when donating, and more importantly, what the Chinese families will receive in reciprocity for their donation as reciprocity is highly valued in Chinese culture. Reciprocity and mutual benefit can be embedded in fundraising with Chinese parents. Reciprocity is a challenge in American culture and not ethically valued, but the reciprocity need not be material. Efforts at reciprocity can include personalized communications, continuing relations on by holding fundraising receptions Chinese soil, and offering roles to provide feedback and voluntary leadership positions on parent/alumni fundraising organizations.

When it comes to donating, the size of the donation is important to Chinese parents because they care about saving face, that is, maintaining their dignity. When Chinese parents do not intend to donate a certain amount to their children's universities, instead of directly saying "no," they may avoid meeting with American university development officers through excuses such as being busy, seeing them next time, and claiming the meeting is not convenient for them at the time. When Chinese parents intend to donate, they often extend an invitation to

development officers for meals. Their hospitality and warmth convey their willingness to donate and build philanthropic *guanxi*. China is a high context culture, so reading between the lines is an important skill for American higher education development officers to learn. Meanwhile, it would be necessary to leave the choice to Chinese parents regarding how much to donate.

Initially, I contacted potential participants using the “cold call” technique. The Chinese parents’ immediate denial to participate in my research over the phone and not respond to my email indicated that they were suspicious and that they might think that I wanted to solicit money from them. They were not confident initially in sharing with me, so I learned that I had to use my own *guanxi* to connect to them. I had to use their children here in the United States to connect to them before they agreed to participate. This is an important consideration for other researchers who plan to recruit Chinese participants. It is recommended that researchers use existing Chinese contacts as potential participants, recruiting from within their personal or professional network, or get a third person’s introduction from within their network. Similarly, asking Chinese parents to donate via email or phone would fail.

The Chinese government working on combating corruption makes it difficult for Chinese people to transfer money abroad. The remittance procedure to America is cumbersome, which demotivates Chinese parents who planned on donating to their children’s universities. However, American higher education development officers could still conduct fundraising with Chinese parents and focus on those who are owners of private enterprise. They tend to be generous, and it is often easier for them to transfer their donations to their children’s American universities as compared to middle class parents and those who might be Chinese government officials. Since it is not convenient for some Chinese parents to donate large sums of money to their children’s American universities, American university development officers could offer Chinese children the option to donate to the universities on behalf of their parents. Development officers could

also remind Chinese students that any amount of donation is appreciated. What is more, development officers might provide an option for Chinese families to establish a “Chinese family holiday giving account.” Parents, children, and other family members could then donate to the account in any amount at the holidays to support their children’s universities.

Since there are non-donor Chinese parents, and relationships really matter, American university development officers have to develop relationships with Chinese parents in ways that may be different from Western parents. Development officers have to be sincerely interested in the children of Chinese parent donors, so they can solicit donations from their parents.

Another concern that arose from this research was a concern by the parents about their money leaving China. They may think that they should keep their wealth in China and invest their money in China, so an implication for development officers is that they have to find a way to show the parents how their investment in the American universities pays off for them.

Non-donor parents feel that they pay tuition to their children’s universities and that is enough, so an implication for development officers is that they will need to be aware of this, and that they will want to think about ways to show the parents how their donation can support their students’ education beyond what they are paying in tuition. To make non-donors become donors, development officers have to show them why their donation matters, and how it will be used, and in particular for the Chinese parents, how the money will benefit students from China specifically. They have to show the parents how that donation can help. The relationship has to be more than just the gift. Not only do development officers have to spend time building the relationship before the gift, they also have to maintain the relationship after the gift to demonstrate that the relationship is sincere, and that they are not just trying to get money from Chinese parents.

Recommendations for Further Research

Given that the Chinese parents did not know who I was, they were not only reluctant to participate in my research, but they were somewhat suspicious of my motives. They were not willing to talk to me, initially, because they did not know me. There are challenges to reaching out to people who scholars do not know because people are skeptical, suspicious, and not sure if they can trust that relationship. Thus, future researchers who plan to do research with China will want to consider ways they connect with potential participants in China if they are not able to meet with them face-to-face.

One of the ways is that researchers use their own *guanxi* or social networks to identify and connect with people who might be good participants in the study. It is a really important implication that scholars cannot just call people “out of the blue” and that scholars need to develop strategies that work for their study. Therefore, if it is a distance study, one possibility is that scholars would use *guanxi* to reach out to people that they know who can then connect them to other people. Giving myself a short break to reassess my recruitment strategy was needed. Having mentorship and encouragement from among my committee was helpful in my research process. Other researchers may find this “improvement” process necessary as well.

For the purpose of developing a deeper understanding of Chinese parents, their relationship to their children’s college or university, and strategies for cultivating *guanxi*, scholars interested in this topic could conduct an additional case study with Chinese parents who are not donors. Such a study would help advancement officers understand why some parents choose not to give to their children’s American universities. Studies could further be conducted by interviewing development officers in American higher education to comprehend their perceptions of *guanxi* with Chinese parents.

Since I began this study and as of this current writing, here is something that has emerged that merits further investigation. There is tension between China and the U.S., resulting from trade disputes and tariffs. It is unclear what impact this tension might have, not only on the philanthropic giving of Chinese parents, but also on the enrollment of Chinese students in the U.S. Future scholars may want to examine this time period to determine if enrollment and giving have been impacted.

Limitations

As with most research studies, there were some limitations that merit discussion. First, although the participants were selected with intention, their views might not necessarily reflect the views of all Chinese parents. Consistent with qualitative research, the data gathered were not intended to be generalized to all Chinese parents. This limitation did not negatively impact this study. I followed established procedures for case study research; thus, the findings could be applied to different contexts. The nuanced stories illuminated the ways in which the development of *guanxi* helped some Chinese parents donate and can inform the practice of American university development officers.

Second, the long-distance nature of the interviews was a limitation. Because the participants and I were not in the same geographical region, I was not able to observe them or meet with them in person. Using WeChat video calls helped mitigate this limitation and allowed me to interact face-to-face and more personally with the participants.

Third, since the participants could not write or speak in English, I communicated with them in Chinese throughout the research study. I then translated the quoted portions into English. This limitation includes my translation skills, so to counter this limitation I invited a bilingual friend to review the English translations. This helped increase the likelihood of accurate translation of the transcripts.

Fourth, although I planned to use more than one method, such as interviews, documents, and observations to collect data for methodological triangulation, the research was conducted primarily through interviews due to the limitations of distance between the participants and myself. Future studies on this topic including different participants using different research designs, such as narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography, could help address these limitations.

Final Thought

Guanxi is “mixed” and “involves exchanges of both feelings and material benefits” (Chen & Chen, 2004, p. 309). American higher education development officers should understand Chinese culture, make use of WeChat, actively and sincerely establish close and lifelong *guanxi* with Chinese students and their parents, inform Chinese families of the significance of private donations to American universities, recognize Chinese parents’ needs, and work collaboratively with different departments to help meet those needs in an effort to fulfill Chinese parents’ expectation of reciprocity. All of these strategies could help to ensure that Chinese parents will be enthusiastically involved in university philanthropy. Further research is required to develop and test strategies for building philanthropic *guanxi* between American universities and Chinese parents to sustain and increase university endowments.

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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT LETTER (ENGLISH AND MANDARIN)

Recruitment Letter (English Version)

Email Subject: Cordial Invitation to Participate in a Chinese Student's Doctoral Dissertation Research Study

Dear Mr./Ms. XX,

My name is Jinrui Zhang Mone, and I am a student from China and Ed.D. Candidate at the University of the Pacific, Benerd School of Education. I am emailing to cordially invite you to participate in a research study for my dissertation. I would like to know your experiences and insights as a Chinese parent donor to your child's American university and your philanthropic *guanxi* with the university. The purpose of my study is to explore the ways that university advancement officers could employ *guanxi* to cultivate relationships with Chinese parent donors.

I will conduct interviews with you in Mandarin. The interview questions will cover your *guanxi* with your child's American university, strategies for the American university to build a philanthropic *guanxi* with the Chinese parents, and *guanxi*'s role in your giving decision. Please see attached Informed Consent Form. If you are willing to participate, please e-sign it, email it back to me by November 11, 2017. Please also suggest the best date, time and the best communication tool for our first 60-minute interview taking place in the following two weeks. You can choose to provide me with your WeChat ID, Skype account, etc. for the face-to-face online interviews or phone call interviews.

Thank you for your willingness in advance. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Jinrui Zhang Mone, Ed.D. Candidate
Cell: (BLINDED)
Email: (BLINDED)
Benerd School of Education
University of the Pacific

Recruitment Letter (Mandarin Version)

《招募信》

电邮主题：诚邀您参与一名中国学生的博士论文研究课题

尊敬的 XX 先生/女士：

我叫张津瑞，是一名中国学生，教育学博士候选人，就读于太平洋大学伯纳德教育学院。我给您发此电邮，诚邀您参与我的博士论文研究课题。我想了解您身为中国捐款家长为您孩子的美国大学捐款的经历和见解，以及您和该所大学的慈善“关系”。我的研究目的在于探究大学发展部官员可采用何种方式将“关系”这一概念运用于同中国捐款家长建立联系。

我将使用普通话采访您。采访问题涉及：您和您孩子美国大学之间的“关系”，美国大学与中国家长建立慈善“关系”的策略，以及“关系”在您做出捐款决定时的作用。请参阅附件的《知情同意书》。如您愿意参与，请在《同意书》上电子签名，在 2017 年 11 月 11 日之前以电邮方式发回给我。在接下来的两周内，我将对您首次进行 60 分钟的采访，请在回复电邮时一并告知最佳采访日期、时间和通信方式。您可告知我微信号、Skype 网络电话帐号等进行视频在线采访或电话采访。

提前感谢您愿意参与我的研究课题。如您有任何问题或疑虑，请随时与我联系。

此致

敬礼！

张津瑞，教育学博士候选人

手机：(BLINDED)

电邮：(BLINDED)

太平洋大学伯纳德教育学院

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH AND MANDARIN)

Informed Consent Form (English Version)**INFORMED CONSENT***West Meets East: An Exploration of the Ways American University Development Officers Can Build Guanxi with Chinese Parents*

You are invited to participate in a research study which will involve gathering information regarding your perceptions of *guanxi* between you and your child's American university.

My name is Jinrui Zhang Mone, and I am a student from China and Ed.D. Candidate at the University of the Pacific, Benerd School of Education. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have donated to your child's university in the United States and promoted the university's development.

The purpose of this research is to explore the ways that university advancement officers could employ *guanxi* to cultivate relationships with Chinese parent donors. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to e-sign this form, email it back to me, and schedule a date and time with me for a 60-minute interview. One or two more interviews may be needed after the first interview. The second and third interviews may last 60 minutes respectively. The interviews will be audio-recorded. Your participation in this study will last four to six months.

There are some possible risks involved for participants. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality of your identity, and the associated sociological risk may occur if others become aware of your association with the donation. In addition, there is a psychological risk if discussion of the topic creates emotional discomfort for you. There are some benefits to this research, particularly that your participation will advance American university development officers' understanding of *guanxi* cultivation in Chinese parent giving.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me at (BLINDED), or Dr. Delores McNair, my advisor, at (209) 946-2674. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Research & Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific (209) 946-7716. In the event of a research-related injury, please contact your regular medical provider and bill through your normal insurance carrier, then contact the Office of Research & Graduate Studies.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Measures to insure your confidentiality are creating a pseudonym for you in my dissertation and not mentioning any names in the audio-recorded interview. The data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed after a period of five years after the study is completed.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

You will be offered a copy of this signed form to keep.

Signature

Date

Informed Consent Form (Mandarin Version)

《知情同意书》

研究课题：《西方遇见东方：探究美国大学发展部官员如何与中国家长建立“关系”》

您受邀参与一项研究课题，此课题需要您对于您和您孩子美国大学之间的“关系”发表见解，我会对此信息进行收集。

我叫张津瑞，是一名中国学生，教育学博士候选人，就读于太平洋大学伯纳德教育学院。您之所以被选为此课题的受试者，是由于您已捐款给您孩子的美国大学并促进了该大学的发展。

此项研究目的在于探究大学发展部官员可采用何种方式将“关系”这一概念运用于同中国捐款家长建立联系。如您决定参与，您需要电子签名此份《同意书》，以电邮方式发回给我，并和我计划日期、时间以进行 60 分钟的采访。第一次采访之后，我可能需要对您再进行一至两次的采访。第二次和第三次的采访可能会分别持续 60 分钟。所有采访将被录音。您参与此项课题时长为四至六个月。

此项研究可能会给受试者带来风险。潜在风险包括个人身份隐私泄露，若他人获悉您的捐款情况也会对您造成相关社会风险。此外，若讨论此话题给您带来情绪不适，心理风险也将产生。此项研究会有一些利益，特别是您的参与将促进美国大学发展部官员在中国家长捐款方面培养“关系”的理解。

一旦您对此项研究有任何问题，请随时与我联系：手机号 (Blinded)，或致电我的导师——多乐博士：手机号(209) 946-2674。如您对作为研究项目受试者的权利方面有任何疑问，请致电太平洋大学——研究与研究生院办：(209) 946-7716。万一因参与研究而负伤，请与您的医疗服务提供方取得联系，经由您正规的医保机构进行补偿，再联系研究与研究生院办。

通过此项课题而获取的信息以及可识别您身份的任何信息均属保密，只在获得您允许的情况下才会披露。为确保您的隐私，现采取以下措施：您的名字会以匿名形式出现在本人论文中，录音的采访中也不会提及任何名字。获得的数据将存放在安全、上锁的地方，并且在此课题完成后的第五年给予销毁。

您参与此项研究纯属自愿，您决定是否参与的行为不涉及任何处罚，您在其他方面有权主张的利益也不会受到任何损失。如您决定成为受试者，您可随时终止参与，不涉及任何处罚，您在其他方面有权主张的利益也不会受到任何损失。

您的以下署名表示您已阅读并理解上述提供的信息，您愿意参与此项研究，您可随时撤回同意，随时终止参与，不涉及任何处罚，您在其他方面有权主张的利益也不会受到任何损失，您将收到一份此《同意书》副本，您也不放弃法定求偿权或享有的其他权利和赔偿方法。

您将保留一份署名后的《同意书》副本。

署名_____ 日期_____

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT EMAILS (ENGLISH AND MANDARIN)

Recruitment Emails (English Versions)

Email Subject: Greetings from xx University - Cordial Invitation to a 60-Minute Interview with a Chinese Doctoral Student

Dear Chinese Parents,

Happy Holidays! We are grateful for you and your children choosing xx University! We are doing our best to provide a safe environment and high-quality education to your children.

We care about your experiences and thoughts on being part of xx University's family. Currently, one Chinese doctoral student at xx University is doing her doctoral research, and she would like to conduct a 60-minute interview with you in Mandarin Chinese.

Please see her research details and contact information below. xx University would greatly appreciate it if you could join her interview. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Best regards,

xx Name

xx E-signature

xx Title

xx University

xx Address, Zip Code

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Jinrui Zhang Mone, and I am a student from China and Ed.D. Candidate at the University of the Pacific, Benerd School of Education. I am emailing to cordially invite you to participate in a research study for my dissertation. I would like to know your experiences and insights as a Chinese parent donor to your child's American university and your philanthropic *guanxi* with the university. The purpose of my study is to explore the ways that university advancement officers could employ *guanxi* to cultivate relationships with Chinese parent donors.

I will conduct interviews with you in Mandarin. The interview questions will cover your *guanxi* with your child's American university, strategies for the American university to build a philanthropic *guanxi* with the Chinese parents, and *guanxi*'s role in your giving decision. Please see attached Informed Consent Form. If you are willing to participate, please e-sign it, email it back to me at jzhang1@pacific.edu by December 25, 2017. Please also suggest the best date, time and the best communication tool for our first 60-minute interview taking place in the following two weeks. You can choose to provide me with your WeChat ID, Skype account, etc. for the face-to-face online interviews or phone call interviews.

Thank you for your willingness in advance. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. My WeChat ID is (BLINDED), and QQ ID is (BLINDED).

Yours sincerely,

Jinrui Zhang Mone, Ed.D. Candidate
Benerd School of Education
University of the Pacific

Recruitment Emails (Mandarin Versions)

《招募邮件》

电邮主题：xx 大学向您问好——诚邀您参与一名中国博士学生的60分钟采访

尊敬的中国家长们：

节日快乐！非常感谢您和您的孩子选择 xx 大学，我们竭力为您的孩子提供安全的环境与优质的教育。

作为 xx 大学大家庭的一员，您的经历和想法对我们至关重要。目前，xx 大学有一名中国博士学生正在进行她的论文研究，她准备用普通话对您进行 60 分钟的采访。

她的具体研究内容和联系方式如下。若您能参与她的采访，xx 大学将不胜感激！如您有任何疑问，请随时与我联系！

此致，

敬礼！

xx 姓名

xx 电子签名

xx 头衔

xx 大学

xx 地址，邮编

尊敬的先生/女士：

我叫张津瑞，是一名中国学生，教育学博士候选人，就读于太平洋大学伯纳德教育学院。我给您发此电邮，诚邀您参与我的博士论文研究课题。我想了解您身为中国捐款家长为您孩子的美国大学捐款的经历和见解，以及您和该所大学的慈善“关系”。我的研究目的在于探究大学发展部官员可采用何种方式将“关系”这一概念运用于同中国捐款家长建立联系。

我将使用普通话采访您。采访问题涉及：您和您孩子美国大学之间的“关系”，美国大学与中国家长建立慈善“关系”的策略，以及“关系”在您做出捐款决定时的作用。请参阅附件的《知情同意书》。如您愿意参与，请在《同意书》上电子签名，在 2017 年 12 月 25 日之前以电邮方式发回给我 jzhang1@pacific.edu。在接下来的两周内，我将对您首次进行

60 分钟的采访，请在回复电邮时一并告知最佳采访日期、时间和通信方式。您可告知我微信号、Skype 网络电话帐号等进行视频在线采访或电话采访。

提前感谢您愿意参与我的研究课题。如您有任何问题或疑虑，请随时与我联系。我的微信号是 (BLINDED)，QQ 号是 (BLINDED)。

此致

敬礼！

张津瑞，教育学博士候选人
太平洋大学伯纳德教育学院

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ENGLISH AND MANDARIN)

Interview Questions (English Version)

1. Briefly tell me about yourself.
2. Briefly describe your child.
3. Tell me about your decision to help your child choose an American university to attend?
Why this university?
4. What do you think of the importance of *guanxi* in China and in the United States?
5. What role do you think *guanxi* plays between you and your child's American university officials?
6. How do you cultivate *guanxi* with the American university development officers? Who, you or the development officers, do you think are the ones to initiate *guanxi*?
7. What are some reasons you think that other Chinese parents whose children attend the university are not willing to build a philanthropic *guanxi* with the university?
8. What strategies do you think the university development officers should use to establish *guanxi* with Chinese parents?
9. Describe what your *guanxi* looks like with university officials. Tell me about a time when you felt that your *guanxi* with the university officials was evident.
10. What made you decide to make a donation to the university?
11. Anything you would like to add that we haven't talked about?

Interview Questions (Mandarin Version)

采访问题

1. 请简单自我介绍一下。
2. 请简单描述一下您孩子的情况。
3. 您为何选择将孩子送到美国念书？为何选择该所大学？
4. 您如何看待“关系”在中国和美国的重要性？
5. 您认为“关系”在您和您孩子的美国大学官员之间起到何种作用？
6. 您如何与美国大学发展部官员培养“关系”？您认为是您还是发展部官员先开始建立“关系”？
7. 您觉得为何其他中国家长不愿意和该所大学建立慈善“关系”？
8. 您觉得该所大学的发展部官员应该采取何种策略与中国家长建立“关系”？
9. 请描述一下您和该所大学官员的“关系”。请举一个例子说明您和该所大学官员建立了“关系”。
10. 何种原因促使您为该所大学捐款？
11. 您还有任何问题想要补充说明的吗？