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## International friendships: From individual well-being to an integrated worldwide community

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In recent psychological literature, friendship has been frequently associated with individual happiness and well-being. On the other hand, friendships with people from the host country have also served as an indication of social integration of immigrants, including international students and refugees. For these populations, friends grow in importance as they have less contact with their families. The composition of friendship networks and how friends affect social adaptation has been investigated mainly in North America, Europe and Oceania, while data from Latin America are scarce. The purpose of this study is to describe the friendships of Latin American International College students in Brazil, including the development of new friendships and the nature of their friendship networks. Data have been collected by questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Based on a systemic and positive social psychology framework, the relationships have been analyzed focusing on the nationalities of individuals and their social integration and adaptation. The findings show that international Latin American students made friends from different groups and nationalities, although the cultural identities made it easier to connect with people from the same country or speaking the same language. Friendships not only enhanced individual well-being, but they also enabled individuals to relate to new groups, affecting their social insertion and adaptation. Despite some difficulties in the first weeks in the host country, most Latin American students developed intercultural or international friendships in other Latin American countries. In sum, international friendships are important not only for individual well-being and happiness, but they also contribute to social integration leading to an integrated international community. Recommendations are made for fostering international friendships at universities.

### Biography

Aginaldo Garcia obtained his Doctorate in Psychology from the University of São Paulo, Brazil. Currently, he is working as a Professor at the Federal University of Espírito Santo, Brazil, Coordinator of International Cooperation and Collaborator of a UNESCO Chair on Ethics. He has already published 15 books in Brazil and in UK and more than 130 papers and book chapters. He is the Founder and current Editor-in-Chief of *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, published by PsychOpen, Germany. He coordinates the International Center for Interpersonal Relationship Research. His research interests are interpersonal relationships, specifically international friendships and international scientific cooperation. Based on a systemic approach, interpersonal relationships are investigated as affecting and being affected by social, cultural and environmental factors. The social tissue formed by interpersonal relationships is considered to provide the basis of society, provoking social changes and suffering the impact of social, technological and cultural advances

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