

The Contributions of Culture-Shock to Open-Mindedness for International Students in Engineering and Social Science College in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

This research purpose to figure out culture shock and recognize varied stressors that could affect culture shock between international scholars. The various coping strategies used by different cultures to cope with culture shock are also to be identified. A semi-structured interview pattern was used to interview six international scholars at the National Yunlin University of Science and Technology who have finally finished their second semester. They were interviewed to recognize the stressors that make them stress within the first month of their coming in the foreign nation. Their coping strategy to cope with stress is defined too. The same interview questions were repeated to determine the change in the stress levels and coping strategies in their current situation. Stages of culture shock were identified and analyzed from the interviews. The five factors, as identified by the researcher, were put forth to the interviewees to observe their views on these factors that would help them to moderate the effects of stress. The elements that could affect nervous tension are perceived differently, and it varies within the education level.

Keywords: Culture shock, Stress, Coping Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, Taiwan has become one of the International students' goals from various continents, Europe, America, Australia, Africa, and Asia. Taiwan is considered successful in developing science and technology, from the electric start, infrastructure, automotive, transportation, oceanography, and agriculture. This is evidenced by the number of Taiwan products worldwide. Taiwan's success in Education makes the number of Indonesian students studying in Taiwan from year to year increase. The progress from senior high school or Vocational high school to college/higher education is the right progress point where scholars broaden their horizons to improve their knowledge and skills. This transition from school to college/university considered excellent when they go to a different country in pursuit of knowledge and to enhance their capabilities [1].

The total of international scholars selecting to study in the Republic of China has constantly risen over the years, in accordance with new information reported by the Ministry of Education Taiwan (MOE). The total of international students 126,997 in 2018, calculated nearly ten percent of all higher education scholars studying in the Republic of China for the year. Exceeding a third of that quantity came from partner nations targeted by the New Southbound Policy, which has shown to be effectively growing connectivity and cooperation between the Republic of China, ASEAN members, and India. Table 1 shows that 4 countries provide the most international students to Taiwan. Figure 1 also shows the percentage of the four countries from China that contributed the most students, followed by Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

2018 Foreign enrolment in Taiwan Higher Ed. Institutions:

Table 1. International Students in Taiwan 2018

Country	Total	Degree	Non-Degree
China	29,960	9,006	20,954
Malaysia	16,171	13,091	3,626
Vietnam	12,983	7,854	5,129
Indonesia	11,812	7,347	4,465

Source: Ministry of Education Taiwan

■ China ■ Malaysia ■ Vietnam ■ Indonesia

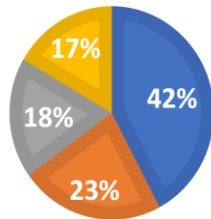


Figure 1. Percentage of Total International Students in Taiwan 2018

Indonesia and Taiwan have many cultural differences, one of which is religion. Where most of Indonesia's population is Muslim. There was a research on the Muslim male students in Taiwan. Two kinds of essential adaptation tactics were recognized for dealing for instance battles: spiritual coping through their Islamic beliefs and bicultural relations. Their substantial issues about spiritual practices (e.g., praying five times per day) found a solution by Interacting they are demands immediately with their friends and instructors; on the other hand, scholars guided the gender boundaries in the class both delicately and subjectively over their Islamic beliefs [2]. Study abroad; students encounter several substantial differences during their stay in the host country. It is because every country has its background and characteristics, which are different from one to another. Two of them are fundamental issues in social and cultural aspects as well as academic fields. To meet the demand for a successful study abroad, students need to gain language and cultural knowledge of the host country. It is crucial not only for students' educational purposes but also for their social life [3].

Hence this research would help Indonesian students and international students with cultural similarities with Indonesia to be informed of the cause and effect of culture shock and the various coping strategies that their previous generations have adopted to overcome stress. Theoretical models, frameworks, and concepts explained in the next section will be used to arrive at themes and conclusions from our sample. The research will identify new stressors as perceived by the students, new coping strategies,

modern coping methods, personality factors, and cultural perspectives. The Major Purpose of this study included:

To observe the degree of stress caused by culture shock among Indonesia students.

To observe their perception about the stressors and the various adaptation styles and methods and coping strategies that they applied to overcome these perceived stressors.

To identify which one helped them best to moderate stress. The five moderating factors to minimize stress namely, Personal finance, Part time job, acculturation, social support and academic achievement [4]

1.1 Culture Shock

Culture shock is part of the general events of international students [5]. Culture shock is a famous term utilized to identify the premier events of submersion in an unknown culture [6]. Firstly, applied in 1954 by the anthropologist Kalervo Oberg and was Identify as "the anxiety which outcome from missing all usual signs and symbols of social contact." Turning to a different culture, International scholars encounter a crowd of difficulties touching their connection ability [7]–[9]. [10] State that the dissimilarities in culture have a high intensity and probably not to be smoothly noticeable as a personal's value method differs. How much of the tacit knowledge can be underlined using cognitive training approaches? Even though there are many cases of cultural dissimilarities which unable to be transmitted easily across cognitive training approaches. Moreover, to what stage is cross cultural training adequate to set up students on global missions? In reality, can this outcome in cross-cultural hardness or cultural shock still an adequate question exploring?

2.2 Cultural Differences

Culture shock is derived from the word 'Culture'. What is Culture? Culture could be termed as a shared or common way of doing things by a set of people, which is different from the other set. The way the mind is tuned in a collective set of people which differentiates them from the other [11]. Also, culture is unique to the human mind. Is there a massive difference in culture from one country to another for anyone to get a shock? The answer could be 'Yes.' Cultural dissimilarities play an important part in producing this shock in a personal. This cultural distance is found to be the strongest predictor than any other predictors for culture shock [12].

1.3 Acculturation

The whole process of contact and adaptation from one culture to another culture is named acculturation [13]. International Students adapt to the new environment by adopting the new culture and carry on with the new culture. Some students adopt a new culture and retain their own. The change in the acculturation process in a person could be psychological, behavioural, and attitudinal [14].

1.4 Coping Strategies

International scholars who are trapped in this situation of shock are not stuck in this shock permanent. Every student is different, and each takes their period and adopts their approaches to cope with this condition. Some scholars can manage up more fastly than other scholars; some cannot cope at all. There exist many elements within the personal, making adaptation smooth or difficult in the new country. They could be personality factors, self-efficacy, individualism and collectivism, traits, Emotional intelligence (EQ), ethnicity, social and emotional assist, and many more. [15].

2. METHOD

To achieve this purpose, qualitative research and to analyse data used Grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is a famous methodology attached to various research studies, both qualitative and quantitative data generation techniques can be used in a grounded theory study. The grounded theory establishes to find or build up theory from data, systematically received and analysed using comparative analysis [16]. The questions on culture shock are framed based on past research and theoretical understanding. They would be put forth to the participants to observe stages of culture shock, measure stress levels, perception towards stressors, and identify cultural differences and coping strategies. The common questions are asked to all participants to rate their language proficiency, skill sets, social support, academic achievement, and status with personal money and a part-time job.

This interview data, along with the questionnaire data, will be analyzed using thematic data analysis. The research was conducted by interviewing six Indonesian students who are either master or doctoral at the National Yunlin University of Science and Technology. Students who are at least twelve months old in the new country are considered for the interview. In all the participants, three were male participants and three female participants. The interview process was recorded and later transcribed

word by word. The entire study took five months to complete.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 Representative Quotations Supporting Stages of Culture Shock: Euphoric Stage

P1/Male/Ph.D.” of course, feeling happy, I can study overseas”
P2/Male/Master.” I feel very happy because I am in one of the developed countries in the world”.
P3/Female/Ph.D.” I am very happy can live in Taiwan, ...”
P4/Female/Master.” If asked how happy I am here, it must be very happy and cannot be expressed in words....”.
P5/Male/Ph.D.” Just moderate happiness.... And realize that life in Taiwan is part of the process needed to advance in an academic career”.
P6/Female/Master” I was pleased. It was my first flight abroad. Taiwan also my first foreign country I ever landed....”.

Findings:

Table 2 shows almost all students, both Ph.D.’s and masters are happy to continue their studies abroad, such as Taiwan, which is known as a developed country. Except for participant 5/Male/Ph.D., the answers obtained indicate that there was an element of insincerity in continuing study in Taiwan. Study overseas affects scholars’ lives and their state of pleasure; there has been little research done on this subject to comprehend the benefits of studying overseas. [17]

Table 3. Crisis Stage

P1/Male/Ph.D.” ...sometimes I miss my family so badly”
P3/Female/Ph.D.” I never feel upset when study in Taiwan. I only feel disappointed with myself because too lazy”.
P4/Female/Master. “... missed family, missed Indonesian cuisine, longing for friends in Indonesia is also one factor”.
P5/Male/Ph.D.” ...if there was discomfort because it was far from my family”.

Finding:

Figure 3 states of three respondents (P1, P4, and P5) experienced the same crisis of longing for family, and the distance felt very far because this is the first time, they were far from husband/wife or parents. Simultaneously, the challenges of communication for lectures and daily life are felt by master students, both male and female P2 and P6). Leaving family members, friends, and mother culture to pursue an academic opportunity abroad, international scholars regularly explore themselves concurrently grieving for missed persons and places,

creating new social networks, and adjusting to new cultural and environmental demands [18]–[20].

Table 4. Adaptation Stage

<i>P1/Male/Ph.D.</i> ” like the previous semester I got high grades which made me even more excited to finish my studies”
<i>P3/Female/Ph.D.</i> ” My academic achievement is good, but I always learn and do everything that my advisor asks to me”.
<i>P5/Male/Ph.D.</i> ” I have passed 3 semesters and I am satisfied with my grades”.

Finding:

The adaptation stage in table 4 shows that three doctoral students both male and female (P1, P3, and P5) firmly answered their excellent academic grades, this proves they are able to adapt well in Education in Taiwan, while master students need more effort to get good grades. Scholars who were inspired to study by their curiosity to find and study new ideas, and those who found enjoyment in the process of producing and achieving tended to feel a powerful sense of welfare, better life satisfaction, and meaning, and also good performance in academic [21].

Table 5. Coping Strategies

<i>P1/Male/Ph.D.</i> ” my professors are very helpful in terms of Education; they are always open for discussion at any time”
<i>P5/Male/Ph.D.</i> ” university always provides a mechanism for us to be able to convey if there is something that may not be in accordance with our wishes or not in accordance with our expectations in carrying out lectures.”

Finding:

Most campuses in Taiwan are very experienced in managing foreign students studying on their campus; this helps students, mostly from Indonesia, adapt well. Based on table 5, P1 was discussing with professors in his department related to studies, research plans, and topics for the dissertation. While P5 can convey something that is not in accordance with the lecture system and is handled very responsively from the campus concerned. The active ability of students in the campus environment is emphasized by [22] which states the high level of motivation and involvement in continuous learning is associated with an increase in the level of student success

Table 6. Social Support, Affinity towards host culture, and Academic Achievement

Social Support	Affinity towards the host culture	Academic Achievement
<i>P1/Male (Ph.D.)</i> : I live in a dorm which is mostly a student from Indonesia.	<i>P1/Male (Ph.D.)</i> : a disciplined and clean culture that I like in Taiwan	<i>P1/Male (Ph.D.)</i> : previous semester I got high grades
<i>P2/Male (Master)</i> : Here I have many friends in my class learning they are very helpful in learning and I also joined the football club in the Taiwan campus	<i>P1/Male (Ph.D.)</i> : Yes, I really like the country of Taiwan because of the good culture and good governance system and the good Taiwanese people	<i>P1/Male (Ph.D.)</i> : Now I am doing good. I am happy with my grades
<i>P3/Female (Ph.D.)</i> : I have many Taiwanese friends, and this is giving me an opportunity to interact with others.	<i>P3/Female (Ph.D.)</i> : I always see every new culture positively. I like differences so it is very okay for me to live here with new culture.	<i>P3/Female (Ph.D.)</i> : My academic achievement is good, but I always learn and do everything that my advisor asks to me.
<i>P4/Female (Master)</i> : Here I also feel that I have no friends who are close	<i>P4/Female (Master)</i> : It is very straight forward. So, I like it.	<i>P4/Female (Master)</i> : I am very grateful
<i>P5/Male (Ph.D.)</i> : Many new friends. very much support is obtained from friends, and this is an important	<i>P5/Male (Ph.D.)</i> : studying in Taiwan is part of the process needed to advance in an academic career.	<i>P5/Male (Ph.D.)</i> : my grade is average
<i>P6/Female (Master)</i> : I got a lot of Taiwanese friends	<i>P6/Female (Master)</i> : I am an open-minded person.	<i>P6/Female (Master)</i> : I do hope to win a Master Thesis competition in Taiwan

Finding:

Table 6 shows that all students except P4 can get along with residents or local students quickly. There are some striking differences in host culture with Indonesian

student culture, but students can adopt that culture to themselves. Adaptation promotes the International scholars' rapid arrangement to regulations and learning that are new to them, creating positive relations with lecturers and fellow scholars, the actualization of self-realization reasons in creative work, sports, socially significant work, and the Students' Scientific Research Activity (SSRA); it becomes a fertile ground for Individual and professional personal growth. Many domestic and foreign scientists have studied various aspects of the process of international students' adaptation to university education [23]

Table 7. Personal Finance and Part-time Job

Participants	Personal Finance	Part time job
P1/Male (Ph.D.)	My personal finance is healthy right from day 1	I do not work part time
P2/Male (Master)	The first month to the third month I was still helped by my parents for financial problems.	I once worked as a farmer with residents, but not until one month I resigned.
P3/Female (Ph.D.)	I think finance department give full support for international student.	Yes, I have some part time job now.
P4/Female (Master)	Alhamdulillah, always healthy, the most important thing is to always think positive	No
P5/Male (Ph.D.)	Besides getting a scholarship, my campus in Indonesia also helps in terms of finance	No, I must focus
P6/Female (Master)	I was just quite worried about my financial support.... I think I am getting better. (Now)	I also got a part-time job with my professor.

Findings:

Personal Finance and a part-time job in table 7 indicate that students already in Taiwan are sufficient in finance; P2 and P6 students get financial assistance from their parents at the beginning of their arrival. Good financial abilities make them less dependent on part-time jobs unless they work as research assistants with their professors. The participants, who received various bursary amounts, generally regarded it as an excellent scheme to provide a financial buffer and focus on their studies. [24]

4. CONCLUSION

From the above findings, it can be concluded that the longing for the family in a certain period is the biggest factor in the crisis stage in culture shock among Indonesian students, while all Ph.D. students well passed the adaptation process, their academic ability proves this. Besides that, two other Ph. D. students were able to be active in their relationship with their study. The most influential factor in reducing their stress was a positive attitude towards the new culture so that the acculturation of Indonesian students happened smoothly.

Every student who studies abroad with a period of more than two years must have experienced a lot of obstacles, challenges, and experiences. Almost nothing distinguishes the adaptation process between Indonesian students according to gender, but it will be different when discussing the level of Education, the problems they face, and coping strategies that are used also vary. Doctoral-level students are better able to adapt well and do not experience significant difficulties when studying in Taiwan.

According to this study, engineering students at the master's level suffer the most when faced with culture shock. Most of their classes use Traditional Chinese, and the differences in teaching materials are not the same as their country of origin. Uniquely, all the difficulties that could make them give up halfway can make them open-minded. One of them is proven by their awareness of the importance of learning Traditional Chinese, and finally, they are fluent in using the language. English is an international language, but when we are in a country where English is not the primary language, we must master it. So, mastery of the local language will accelerate students through the culture shock process smoothly.

International students who come to foreign land should be made aware of possible culture shock and its cause and effect. Articles on culture shock should be published in the university website so that students, who apply for a course in a foreign land, would be made aware of the situations and that would help the students to plan their travel. Thus, international students who come to face the new year of education are better prepared and are no longer preoccupied with the shock of the adaptation process.

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