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# **The Effects of Continental Background, Language Proficiency and Length of Stay on Social Adjustment Experience of International Students in Northern China**

Ajibike Omolola LAWANI<sup>1</sup>, Xiaosong GAI<sup>2</sup>, Ayotunde TITILAYO<sup>3</sup>

## **Abstract**

This study examined the prevailing circumstances on the adjustment experience of migrant students in Northern China, as related to the effect of continental affiliation, Chinese language proficiency and length of stay on the social adjustment experience of international students. The Social Adjustment Scale of Taft and Johnston, 1965 and Language proficiency Descriptors of Brian North, 1994 were adapted to elicit information from 254 students from Europe, Americas, Africa and Asia. The respondents were chosen from two oldest and notable university from Changchun city, the provincial capital of Jilin, Northeast China; Jilin University and Northeast Normal University. The study revealed that there is a significant effect of Chinese language proficiency on social adjustment experience of international students ( $X^2 = 0.001$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Although the study showed that there is no significant effect of continental affiliation ( $X^2 = 0.64$ ,  $df=8$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) on the adjustment experience of international students, however, students from South America and Africa had the least adjustment experience when compared to students from other continents, this was revealed when the mean and standard deviations were compared. Finally the study also revealed that duration of stay had no significant effect on the adjustment experience of international students ( $X^2 = 0.34$ ,  $DF = 8$ ,  $p>0.05$ ).

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*Keywords:* adjustment; length of stay; continental affiliation; language proficiency; international students.

## **Introduction and Background to the Study**

The concept of adjustment originated from the term adaptation in biology which can be defined as a process whereby organisms become better able to survive in their habitat or environment and the adjustment of living matter to environmental conditions and to other living things. The ability to adapt is a fundamental requirement for existence. This means that it is normal that every living thing will at a time pass through an adjustment process. Adjustment in human beings is a process of change that takes place either physically or mentally which allows an individual to function better in his or her environment. Weiten, Lloyd, Dunn and Hammer (2009) describe adjustment as the psychological processes through which people manage or cope with demands and challenges of everyday life.

Jobin (2010) describes adjustment as the extent to which an individual's personality functions effectively in the world of people as well as the harmonious relationship between the person and the environment. This perspective of adjustment relates that adjustment involves a process of fitting a proper personality into relationships that equips him or her in fulfilling expected roles in the society. International students face certain challenges that cause adjustment problems. These challenges, in this study are termed as stress, while stress according to Evans and Kelly (2004), is a 20th century disease that has been viewed as a complex and dynamic transaction between individuals and their environments. According to Lin and Yi (1997) international students adjustment problems include misunderstandings, loneliness racial discrimination, language problems, accommodation difficulties, dietary restrictions, and financial stress. Researchers have found out that length of stay and cultural distance are significant determinant factors in the adaptation and adjustment of international students (Ward & Kennedy, 1992; Wilton & Constantine, 2003; Greenland & Brown, 2005). Psychological adjustment can be best understood in terms of a stress and coping framework, predicted and explained by personality and social support variables and life changes, whilst sociocultural adjustment is viewed from a social learning point of view, predicted by variables related to cognitive factors and social skills acquisitions (Ward & Kennedy 1993; Yusoff & Chelliah, 2010).

Migration of people in pursuit of better life, better education, better climate, environment and security among many others is a trend that has been since hundreds of centuries past. Interestingly, this trend has increasingly improved in recent times. According to the World Migration Report (2010), there have been far more international migrants in the world today than ever previously recorded,

and their number has increased rapidly in the last few decades. There were an estimated 214 million international migrants in the world in 2010, representing an increase of almost 40 million in the first decade of the 21st century, and over double the number of international migrants in 1980. Movement of people in the quest for better and higher education has especially increased. This can be explained by the fact that the issue of migration and education is significant in economic growth and sustainability. China has particularly increased in development in the last few decades. The development of China has necessitated the inflow of people from all over the world and thus invoked an expansion of her education system.

International students in a foreign country often have problems interacting with members of the host country and face challenges in adjusting to daily life. These problems could also be referred to as stress and stressors. While (Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006) believe that these stressors may be related to depressive symptoms, Savtchouk & Liu (2011) discovered in their study that a single exposure to acute stress affects information processing in the cerebellum — the area of the brain responsible for motor control and movement coordination and also involved in learning and memory formation. Depression however also does not provide a favourable emotional atmosphere to settle down for effective study. As stress builds up, an individual's ability to cope or readjust can be overtaxed, depleting their physical or psychological resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1994) ; Pearlman, 1999; Misra & Castillo, 2004). Consequently, there is an increased probability that physical illness or psychological distress will follow. This obviously therefore indicates that the complexity of adjusting to stressful events experienced by foreign students presents a risk to those who have no capacity to manage such stress.

Nevertheless, international studentship continues to gain popularity while the topic of international student adjustment attracts researchers from diverse disciplines including anthropology, education, sociology, psychology, and communications. In addition, research interests have increased to investigate the adjustment intricacies experienced by international students. Such attention has probably been necessitated consequence to the challenging experience of adjusting to a new culture. These challenges might be the result of psychological distress related to culture shock, and therefore may lead to high level of homesickness, social isolation and unhappiness (Dee & Henkin, 1999). Li and Grasser (2005) also believe that rigorous academic demands along with the challenges to adjust to a new culture may put international students at a greater risk than students in general. This suggests that the circumstances that confront foreign students require that a unique attention should be provided to enhance not just an effective learning environment but an all round fulfillment.

The issue of language barrier as a stress factor is particularly common to students from countries who do not officially speak English, or whose official language is unique to their country and whose host country has a different

language other than that which they are used to. Several studies have been carried out to show international students of Asian origin, falling into the category of language difficulty (Fritz, Chin & DeMarinis, 2008; Wang, 2011; Wong, 2004). In the same vein, it is projected that non-Asian international students studying in Asia might have the same difficulty in adjusting to the language of the host country. Communication is a very essential act in the process of adaptation and acculturation. The aspect of communication in international students' adaptation is rooted in various dimensions. One dimension is interaction with the host community which includes fellow international students, the domestic students who may be classmates, laboratory mates, roommates, as well as people in the community that they are in close contact with; another is the student-teacher communication and also communication with the home country. It would seem that the most important challenge in working with international students lies in the area of communication (Özturgut & Murphy, 2009).

Also, Hinchcliff-Pelias and Greer (2004) carried out a study on the importance of intercultural communication in international education and found out that every one of the 64 students interviewed articulated one or more negative experiences related to their past and present intercultural interactions. In view of this, they concluded that interactions between culturally different individuals involve complex understandings, dispositions, and abilities that must be learned if the intercultural communication is to be successful. Consequently, they suggest that international student educators should take responsibility to guide students to develop skills that would help them communicate more effectively. According to Eylul (2009), students who engage in international interactions improve their respect for different cultures. Ward (2001) also reviewed the impact of international students on domestic students and concluded despite the fact that interaction with domestic peers is generally associated with psychological, social and academic benefits for the international student, the amount of cross-national interaction among students is generally low, while international students expect and desire greater contact.

In another dimension, researches have been carried out on the impact of communication for adjustment process. Cemalcilar, Falbo and Stapleton (2005) noted two topics that researchers have mostly focused on comparing communication styles of foreigners with host nationals and describing the positive effects of acquiring the communication practices of the host culture, often through information oriented media (Kim, Lujan & Dee, 1998; Reece & Ralmgreen, 2000). However, Cemalcilar, Falbo and Stapleton (2005) also argued that continuous contact with people at home should also be considered to be important because it contributes immensely to maintenance of cultural values during the sojourn.

Poyrazli and Grahame (2007) in their study of the barriers to adjustment of international students discovered communication concerns in their interactions

with academic and social communities. They found out that students experienced difficulty in participating in class discussions which arises from their perceived inadequacy in English, fear of making language mistakes while approaching the professors to ask questions and fear of potential ridicule from their classmates and professor. While Anaya and Cole (2001) opine that interaction with faculty members facilitates greater academic achievement among minority and international students, Kim and Sax (2007) believe that “interacting with faculty—whether in the classroom, the laboratory, office hours, or other venues—is one of the key college experiences associated with student development”. In addition, other positive effects such as student persistence (Tinto, 1993); student satisfaction (Astin, 1977); cognitive and affective development (Astin, 1993); associated with interaction among students and faculty presents a link between language proficiency and student social adjustment. The case of learning a new culture and relating in the language of the new culture emphasizes a deeper attention, as international students in their interactive process also have to cope with interacting with other students from diverse cultures with different languages and accents. Several researches have been carried out to study adjustment variations between the Western cultures; however, little research has directly sampled variation in the level of adjustment among international students in China. In order to fill this gap in literature and in light of the reviewed literature and casual observations of the population under study, null hypothesis method was employed to test the hypotheses of whether there exist a significant relationship or effect of: (1) continental affiliation, (2) Chinese language proficiency and (3) Length of stay on social adjustment experience of international students in Northeast China.

## Method

China is currently the most populous country in the whole world with a total population of 1.321 billion as at 31 Dec 2007. China is a large country that is usually divided into the capital, north, south, east and west. Changchun, the provincial headquarter of Jilin Province is located in the North-eastern part of China. Although Changchun has been more than 200 years old, it is still a small city compared to other big cities in China, like Beijing and Shanghai. It is located in the central part of Songliao Plain, covering a total area of 20,571 square kilometers (about 8,012 square miles). Changchun is one of well-known cities of science and education in China. The city has 27 regular institutions of full-time tertiary education. For the purpose of this study, Changchun was purposefully selected. Since the major target of the study is international students in China, two universities; Jilin University and Northeast Normal University which are reputable for the admission of international students in Jilin Province were purposively chosen for the study.

The two universities selected for this study have a total foreign student's population of 2200. Jilin University has 1400 foreign students while Northeast Normal University has about 800 according to Information from their respective Office of International Students Exchange Department. Since assessing the total population of international students of the two universities selected for the study may be too cumbersome, then to be able to make statistical inferences, the sample size for this study was constructed by using the under listed formula as proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

$$S = X^2 NP(1-P) \div d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1-P).$$

where

S = required sample size.

$X^2$  = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size 2200.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

$$s = 327$$

Empirical studies have shown series of non-responses; either respondent is no more willing to continue or respondent is no more available when interviewer calls again. In order to meet the statistically estimated sample size there should be provision for the likely non-response respondent(s). Therefore, assuming a 4% non-response rate, the estimated 327 sample, as stated above will be increased to 340 respondents which will be shared among the two study areas accordingly. A total of 254 questionnaires (74.7% of 340) were returned and found good enough for computer statistical analysis. This response rate was adequate for the study.

### ***Validity and Reliability of Instrument***

To ensure content validity and face validity of the instrument, it was reviewed by test and measurement experts and some inappropriate items initially included were deleted. Respondents' "Personal Characteristics" was designed to elicit information on personal and demographic data of the students. Questions on sex, age, continent of origin, degree of study and length of stay were all asked. Social Adjustment Scale (SAS) which was derived from similar measures used in previous studies by Taft & Johnston, 1965; Lasry, 1988; Berry & Annis, 1988; Jancz, 2006) was adopted to cover significant aspects of social adjustment. 20 items were modified to suit the goal and objectives of this study. The items in the scale were derived as 5-point Likert-type questions and they ask about student



subjective satisfaction with living in China, clothing and food preferences, communication problems, contacts, living conditions and attitude to media (radio, television and newspaper). The scoring procedure is typical to the Likert-type scales: from 0 points for an answer indicating dissatisfaction to 4 points identifying full satisfaction (0-1-2-3-4). The total scores range from 0 to 80 points (the complete scale is included in the Appendix). After scoring each respondent based on the response to each item on the scale, The Social Adjustment Scale (SAS) scores were obtained by adding individual item scores from 5-point Likert-style questions (0-1-2-3-4 points). Thus, the SAS results ranged between 0 and 80 points the result was later categorized into three levels based on the individual score. The categories are 'highly adjusted', 'fairly adjusted' and 'not adjusted'. The Cronbach's alpha reported for SAS was 0.89. The Cronbach's alpha for this present sample was 0.74 which was quite satisfactory for this study.

Chinese Language Proficiency Scale (CLPS) is a 4 items scale that was adapted from Language Proficiency Descriptors by Brian North of Eurocentres Foundation, Zürich (1994). The scale was used to elicit information that described the Chinese language proficiency as related to the interaction level of the respondents. The questions of 'I can engage in extended conversation in a clearly participatory fashion on most general topics', 'I can pass on detailed information reliably', 'I can account for and sustain my opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments', and 'I can communicate with reasonable accuracy and can correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings. These questions were asked to know the extent a respondent can express himself in Chinese language, when relating to member of the host community or fellows students from other backgrounds who speak different language. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.78.



## Results

*Table 1: Demographic characteristics of Respondents*

Characteristics	Type	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Sex	Male	152	59.8	
	Female	102	40.2	59.8
	Total	254	100.0	100.0
Age	≤ 19 years	6	2.4	
	20-29 years	203	79.9	2.4
	30 -39 years	41	16.1	82.3
	≥ 40 years	4	1.6	98.4
	Total	254	100.0	100.0
Continent	African	90	35.4	
	Asian	103	40.6	35.4
	European	38	15.0	76.0
	North American	18	7.1	90.9
	South American	5	2.0	98.0
	Total	254	100.0	100.0
Degree of Study	Diploma	33	13.0	
	Bachelor	93	36.6	13.0
	Master	95	37.4	49.6
	PhD	33	13.0	87.0
	Total	254	100.0	100.0
Duration of stay in China	less than 1 year	24	9.4	
	1-2years	86	33.9	9.4
	2-3years	58	22.8	43.3
	3-4years	58	22.8	66.1
	4years and above	28	11.0	89.0
	Total	254	100.0	100.0

Table 1 shows that more males participated in the study than females. The table also shows that the age variation of respondents ranged between 19 years and 40 years, while the mean age of the study is 25.9. However, those who were between the ages of 20 to 29 years participated more than the other age groups while the least age group of respondents in the study were those above 40years. Furthermore, out of all the respondents from the five continents that participated in the study, 5 were South Americans, 18 were North Americans, 38 were Europeans, 90 were Africans, while 103 were Asians which constituted the highest number of respondents in terms of the continent of origin. The number of bachelor and master degree students who participated in the study was very close at 93 and 95 respectively, while the same numbers of respondents were diploma and PhD students. The instrument also elicited responses on their length of stay in China; the highest numbers of respondents in this category are those who have spent 1 to

2 years in China while the least number of respondents are those who have spent less than 1 year in China. Equal numbers of respondents have spent between 2 and 4 years in China.

*Hypothesis 1*

There is no significant effect of continental affiliation on social adjustment experience of international students.

*Table 2: Social Adjustment by Continent of Origin*

Continent	Level of Social adjustment			Total	$\chi^2$	P
	Highly adjusted	Fairly adjusted	Not adjusted			
African	5(5.6%)	84(93.3%)	1(1.1%)	90	0.647	p>0.05
Asian	13(12.7%)	90(87.3%)	0(0.0%)	103		
European	5(13.2%)	33(86.8%)	0(0.0%)	38		
North American	1(5.6%)	17(94.4%)	0(0.0%)	18		
South American	0(0.0%)	5(100%)	0(0.0%)	5		
Total	24	229	1	254		

Table 2 presents the social adjustment of international students. Adjustment levels were divided into 3 categories of highly adjusted, fairly adjusted and not adjusted. The table shows that almost all the international students had to socially adjust to their new life in China and only one person (1.1%) from Africa did not adjust to life in China. Those who had the highest level of adjustment were European students who were highly adjusted at 13.2% and fairly adjusted at 86.8%. Also, very closely, Asian students highly adjusted to Chinese life by 12.7% while they fairly adjusted by 87.3%. Furthermore, respondents from Africa reported that they highly adjusted by 5.6% while they fairly adjusted by 93.3%. Finally, every respondent from South America adjusted moderately, (100%) while 94.4% of the respondents from North America fairly adjusted and 5.6% of the respondents highly adjusted to life in China.

Table 3: Comparison of Mean and Standard Deviation of Social adjustment of students according to continent of origin

Continent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
African	1.96	90	.25577
Asian	1.87	103	.33371
European	1.87	38	.34257
North American	1.94	18	.23570
South American	2.00	5	.00000
Total	1.91	254	.30097

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation to compare the social adjustment levels of students according to their continents in agreement with the earlier stated results in table 2. The table at a glance shows the mean distribution of the continents according to their social adjustment. The higher the mean score, the less adjusted the respondents are in the group of continents. In this view, South American international students account for the least adjustment with the mean of 2.00. Second in ranking are African students with a mean of 1.96, while North American students account for a mean of 1.94. The table also presents that Asian and European international students adjust equally to life in China. However, despite the two tables showing some relationships between continent of origin and social adjustment, the difference was not sufficient enough to reject the stated null hypothesis. Table 2 shows that ( $X^2 = 0.64$ ,  $df=8$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) which implies that there is no significant effect of continental affiliation on social adjustment experience of international students. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

### *Hypothesis 2*

There is no significant effect of Chinese language proficiency on social adjustment experience of international students.

Table 4: Social Adjustment by Language Proficiency

Language Proficiency	Level of Social adjustment			Total	$X^2$	P
	Highly adjusted	Fairly adjusted	Not adjusted			
Highly proficient	17(70.8%)	5(20.8%)	2(8.4%)	24(100%)	0.001	$p<0.05$
Fairly proficient	100(43.7%)	118(51.5%)	11(4.8%)	229(100%)		
Not proficient	0	0	1(100.0%)	1(100%)		
Total	117	123	14	254		

Table 4 shows that 17(70.8%) out of 24 students with the highest level of Chinese proficiency also have the most adjustment compare to 5(20.8%) who are fairly adjusted while only 2(8.4%) fail to adjust. 100(43.7%) students who reported to be fairly proficient in Chinese language adjusted better than 118(51.5%) who were fairly adjusted. 11(4.8%) of the students in fairly proficient group did not adjust at all the their social life in China. Only 1 person reported not to have any level of Chinese proficiency and no level of social adjustment. Finally, the table shows that ( $X^2 = 0.001$ ,  $DF = 4$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) which implies that there is a significant effect of Chinese language proficiency on social adjustment experience of international student. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

### *Hypothesis 3*

Length of stay of international students does not significantly affect their social adjustment experience

*Table 5: Social Adjustment by Length of Stay*

Length of Stay	Level of Social adjustment			Total	$X^2$	P
	Highly adjusted	Fairly adjusted	Not adjusted			
<1 year	2(8.3%)	22(91.7%)	0	24(100%)	0.001	$p > 0.34$
1-2 year	3(3.5%)	82(95.3%)	1(1.2%)	86(100%)		
2-3 year	8(13.8%)	50(86.2%)	0(100.0%)	58(100%)		
3-4 year	6(10.3%)	52(89.7)	0	58(100%)		
>4 year	5(17.9)	23(82.1%)	0	28(100%)		
Total	24	229	1	254		

Table 5 shows the level of adjustment of students by the duration of stay. In the category of those who have spent less than a year no student reported in 'not adjusted' category. Out of the 24 students who have spent less than a year, only 2(8.3%) reported to be highly adjusted while the remaining 22(91.7%) fairly adjusted. Among those who have spent between a year and two, only a student reported not to adjust at all while 82(95.3%) fairly adjusted, 3(3.5%) students belong to the highly adjusted category. In the 2-3years category, 50(86.2%) students fairly adjusted while 8(13.8%) students have the most adjustment. No student reported in the 'not adjusted' category. 58 students reported to have spent between 3 and 4 years among the respondents, out of these, 52(89.7) fairly adjusted while 6(10.3%) were highly adjusted. No student reported under the 'not adjusted' category. Finally, out of the 254 respondents, only 28 have stayed in China more than 4 years. Out of these, 5(17.9%) reported to be highly adjusted while the rest students 23(82.1%) fairly adjusted. Finally, the difference shown in

the data was not sufficient and significant enough to reject the stated null hypothesis ( $X^2 = 0.34$ ,  $DF = 8$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) which implies that there is no significant effect of duration of stay on social adjustment experience of international students. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

## Discussion

This section discusses the major findings of the study in respect to the three hypotheses on social adjustment experience of international students. The first hypothesis states that there is no significant effect of continental affiliation on social adjustment experience of international students. The study compared the social adjustment levels of international students based on continent of origin. These continents were Africans, Asians, Europeans South Americans and North Americans. Findings of the study reveal that South Americans are mostly stressed, while Asians are least stressed. Several studies have shown that Asians, of all international students, have the most difficulty in adjusting to other culture (Kitao & Kitao, 1989; Pedersen, 1991; Zhang, 2000), this was not the case in this study because the studied is carried out within Asia. This finding can be related to the findings of Furnham and Bochner's (1982) "cultural distance" theory that says the greater the distance between the home culture and the host culture, the more cultural difficulty the international students would experience. From the studied sample, more than 50% of the Asian students are from East Asia. Historically, many countries in East Asia have been part of the Chinese cultural sphere, and East Asian vocabulary and scripts are often derived from Classical Chinese and Chinese script (From Wikipedia). This proximity both in terms of cultural connection and distance explain why Asian students feel more at home in China, than other migrant students.

Results from a comparison of means and standard deviation revealed that Asian and European international students similarly adjusted socially to life in China, while Africans and South Americans showed lesser adjustments respectively. The high adjustment of Europeans could be probably due to the inclusion of Russians as part of the Europeans, whereas Russia is in close proximity with location of the study area. This may mean a better understanding of the culture. It is therefore not totally strange to find out from this study that continental affiliation plays a role in the social adjustment experience of international students.

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant effect of Chinese language proficiency on social adjustment experience of international students. The result of the test shows an implication that there is a significant relationship between Chinese language proficiency and social adjustment experience of international student. This corroborated Vygotsky's social-development theory that says learners construct the new language through socially mediated interaction.

This theory proves that language acquisition is determined by how well an immigrant interacts with members of the host community and not necessarily where he or she comes from. Similarly, empirical research has documented that language ability is positively related to sociocultural adaptation and those fluent in the host language experience fewer social difficulties (Sano, 1990; Ward, 1994). Lewthwaite (1997) found that language ability determines the success of international students in the new culture. Also, Steve Stoyneff (1997) also found in a research study that a significant relationship exists between language proficiency and academic achievement. Kagan and Cohen (1990) also posited that language is a dominant factor in sociocultural adjustment especially when the language is perceived as useful in identifying with the culture. This suggests that social adjustment is linked with being able to communicate in the new language, which is based on the acceptance and understanding of the culture. In China, the language is so linked with the system and culture that without it, there cannot be any meaningful living for an immigrant. This is because very little percentage of the Chinese can fluently speak English or other common languages like French, Arabic etc.

Finally, there was no enough statistical proofs to reject the third hypothesis which stated that the length of stay of international student does not have effect on their social adjustment experience was rejected. This contradicted the findings of Ward and Kennedy (1992) that says the longer individuals reside in the foreign country, the better the adjustment process to the new environment will be. In the same view, Polek et al. (2008) also proved that length of residence is positively related to identification and contact with the host culture. This contradiction could be as a result of the small samples involved or some peculiarities attached to the studied area.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the study acknowledges China as a country with unique features such as size, language, culture and tradition. These unique features cannot be isolated from research carried out within her boundaries. For example, china being the largest country in Asia has a variety of climatic composition. The northeast is distinctive of its long and cold weather which is barely favourable for human comfort. Chinese as a major language in China is also another unique feature, as no other country all over the world speaks Chinese other than China. In addition the language is a necessary obligation for easy settlement in china. Therefore, it is necessary to determine if students from a particular continent were more disposed to learning and speaking better Chinese. Universities administrator should endeavour to assist international students especially those from a distant country to adjust to their new life by giving all the necessary support to them.

Universities should offer compulsory courses on culture as part of the initial courses to be registered for upon arrival. Firstly, this would give the students a firsthand knowledge of the history, culture and values of the host community and therefore provide a basis for understanding the necessity to adjust. Although this study did not investigate the relationship between culture classes and adjustment, however, based on the definition of culture shock, as the process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment (Pedersen, 1995), and the anxiety resulting from not knowing what to do in a new culture (Oberg, 1960), this study suggests that culture classes should be offered as part of initial courses as it may help to alleviate culture shock of international students.

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