



## Cultural Adjustment of Somalian and Chinese Students at IIUI Pakistan: A Comparative Study

Vol. IV, No. IV (Fall 2019) | Page: 44 – 51 | DOI: 10.31703/grr.2019(IV-IV).06

p- ISSN: 2616-955X | e-ISSN: 2663-7030 | ISSN-L: 2616-955X

Saadia Dilshad\*

Samina malik†

### Abstract

*Studying at a higher education institution can be stressful, particularly for international students, who leave their homes to study in another country. Some students adjust more rapidly than others. This study explored the difference between the cultural adaptation of Chinese and Somalian students at IIUI Pakistan. The key objective of the study was to explore the pace of cultural adaptation of two foreign students from two different regions at IIUI. It was a purposeful qualitative study. The population was all the Chinese and Somalian students studying in IIUI BS program in faculty of social sciences. A universal sampling technique was used to select 55 Chinese and 55 Somalian students for the study. The self-developed questionnaire used to collect the data. The analysis showed that there is significant difference between the pace of cultural adaptation of Chinese and Somali students at International Islamic University.*

**Key Words:** Cultural adaptation, Somalian students, Chinese students

### Introduction

Social Adaptation is the modification of individual and group behavior to be expected along with the current organization of ethics and qualities in a foreigner society, class or social congregation. Social adjustment turns out to be progressively substantial when social change influences significant parts of life over similarly brief timeframes. Such changes incorporate movement, changes in age, fast mechanical advancement, and significant movements of the populace from the homeland to the city. The atmosphere of home sometimes isn't well-coordinated with the environment of educational grounds. This appear differently in relation to nature of instructive framework is one of the impediments students face in their process for academic execution

(Bourdieu, 1986). This is called cultural capital and can be seen as an asset of a person which he can use for social mobility and adjustment other than economic resources. Examples can include education, intellect, and style of speech, dress, or physical appearance.

This assumption was proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, a French humanist' conceived in 1930 in the town of Denguin. He gave the manifestation, of the "Social capital" for social Adjustment. As indicated by him, somebody needs to move from the place where he grew up to different spots for better education or remuneration or for both he needs to gain proficiency with the social standards, values, traditions and language of new culture . This is classified "Social adjustment" or cultural adaptation. He said that it is obvious that the person can't drop down or shut down his/her own contemplations, accepts emotions and practices so he/she turns into a multicultural individual.

The main purpose behind this study is not only to locate the problem area for cultural adjustment of the foreign students but to sensitize the administration about the situation just to make the foreign students more comfortable and help them in their learning at a better speed. This paper focuses on the difference between the cultural adjustment and the academic achievements of the foreigner students at IIUI who came from two different socio-cultural backgrounds. The objective of the study is to explore the pace of cultural adaptation of foreign students from China and Somalia at university level(IIUI) and the hypothesis is that there is no significant difference of cultural adjustment between the foreigner students from two different socio-cultural backgrounds

\*PhD Scholar, Department of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: [sadia.phdedu99@iiu.edu.pk](mailto:sadia.phdedu99@iiu.edu.pk)

†Professor, Department of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

while they are on the alien institution. The findings may have significance for teaching and learning environment in other international universities with same cross-cultural adjustment problems of the foreigner students.

### **Statement of the problems**

This research explored the difference between the pace of cultural adaptation of foreign students, from different corners of the world at the same institution at higher education level in Pakistan. As it has been observed that foreign students are facing various problems regarding academic achievements and cultural assimilations due to non-native circumstances such as language barriers, adjustment with local students, inability to discuss their concerns with teachers and administrators, etc. The present study was conducted to explore the factors distressing or helping the foreign students for Acculturation in Pakistan generally and specifically the difference in pace of cultural adjustment among the students from diversified socio-cultural backgrounds at International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).

### **Objectives of the Study**

Objectives of this study were to: Compare the pace of cultural adaptation of Chinese and Somalian students at International Islamic University.

### **Research Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>**, There is no significant difference between the pace of cultural adaptation of Chinese and Somalian students at International Islamic University.

### **Significance of the Study**

The research is significant for teachers and administrators of international universities on the whole as it will assist them to understand the problems of foreign students with a variety of cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, findings of the study will enable them to take necessary measures for making foreign students feel at home and perform better, which will ultimately bring more foreign students. This study will also be helpful for local and foreign students as it will help them in Acculturation and creating a globalized environment of study on the whole. Finally this study will prove helpful in creation of effective multicultural environment at higher education institutions that are key demands of 21st century.

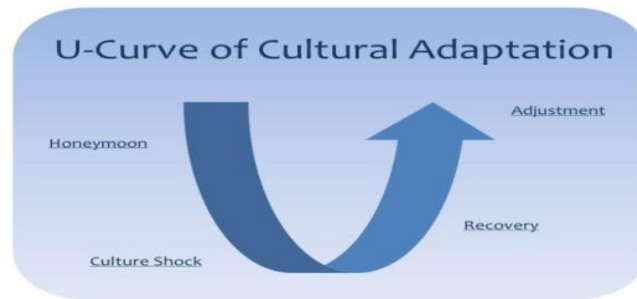
### **Literature Review**

#### **Cultural Adaptation Ability (Cultural Capital)**

Bourdieu used the term “cultural capital” to increase the meaning of the capital (ability to use in the future) as compared to simple meanings such as Economic capital, Social and educational capital, etc. Established on this basic level. He described capital as the ability to use its outcomes in their own near future. In other words, people must move through social stairs, it is considered as a form of power. Further broadcasting of the two types of capital is financial or economical. Social capitals are the footsteps of the staircase and Cultural Adaptation Ability (cultural capital) is the railing, which is not only helpful for going up but also supports the journey. Common stages of Cultural adaptation in different sociological models are as follows:

1. Initial Euphoria/Excitement
2. Irritation/Hostility
3. Gradual Adjustment, Humor, and Perspective
4. “Feeling at Home” Adaptation and Biculturalism

Although these four stages of cultural adaptation were first mentioned by Kalvero Oberg in 1954 but was first time explained by him and the U-Curve model developed by Kalvero Oberg (1960), utilizes the form of letter “U” to describe the emotional ups and downs that occur during intercultural sojourns Oberg defines that people become more comfortable with the host culture and re-adapting their home culture also becomes a problem once you are segregated in a foreign community.



**Figure1:** U-Curve model of cultural adaptation (Oberg, 1960)

In 2006, Mingsheng Li and Jacqui Campbell from Massey University New Zealand conducted a case study about, Asian Student' Learning Experiences in New Zealand. The study revealed the importance of professional and appropriate behavior of the academic and administrative staff to equip the Asian students specifically because they are too slow to maintain the pace with the local or other foreign students. The researcher found that it's the responsibility of the local staff of the institution to provide the Asian students with adequate knowledge of specific subjects in each discipline and help them to surpass the cultural barriers and partialities. The researcher suggested to review the pedagogical strategies and make them align with the needs of rapidly growing globalization.

Expressive and objective foundations have a remarkable effect on fulfilling the adjustment of students from the non- native environment. Among abstract ones are "social foundation" ("ethnically shaped demeanors" – a lot of good and moral principles of society and socially established, in some cases sensibly unfathomable intuitive convictions in all signs of the country's way of life) and individual qualities (versatile potential), socio-mental attributes of understudies

Intending in an advanced education organization can be demanding, especially for international apprentices, who leave their homes to deliberate migration to another country. In comparison to local students, foreign students need to create bicultural ability, as they keep up their own potentials while adjusting to the beneficial, interpersonal, and zealous complications experienced in the host nation.

Most foreign students are young grown-ups who are creating individual attributes and personalities so as to work with more protruding mental and financial freedom.

Keeping in view this theory and the related researches this study aimed to understand the cultural adaptation of foreign students for academic achievements from a different perspective. That is education attainment is directly related to cultural adaptation in any multicultural institution like International Islamic University Islamabad Pakistan.

The self-determining issue is level of degree or course and dependent factors are scholastic execution and social adjustment at advanced education level. The research analyzed the foreign students, adjustment with the proximate culture and their scholastic accomplishment. The investigation has concentrated on foreign student's learning at International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) Pakistan. In spite of the fact that there are a few public and private colleges which are providing education to foreign students all over Pakistan yet IIUI is stimulating in such manner as it is a part of a chain of International Islamic universities throughout the Muslim world and still it is distinctive as it offers some space for non-Muslim students additionally .These students need to adjust the way of life of this university which is a mix of Muslim culture and a blended Pakistani culture. So the social adaption of foreign students in this university is very captivating and somewhat it might influence the scholastic accomplishment of foreign students.

Former investigations have concentrated a great deal on the money related and fanatical issues of the foreign students need to challenge. The budgetary issue is probably the greatest worry in the advanced education industry (Zhao, 2011). students who can't bear the cost of the university dues, do need to work after university to meet their budgetary needs. This raises another trial for these students. Furthermore, to embrace the remote culture to perform well in scholarly profession, the students additionally need to obtain the way of life to meet their budgetary needs.

Similarly, emotional stress is also one of the major challenges international students have to face. This emotional stress can lead to unwanted consequences hence decreasing the academic performance of the students (Yan & Berliner, 2011). But the main concern that is addressed in this research is the cultural barriers that international students have to cross. Cultural adaptation becomes necessary to compete in the increasing competition. Cultural unfamiliarity and cross-cultural adjustment is the biggest barrier to the international student's success. The idea of cultural adaptation and bi-cultural adjustment is not only limited to students but to teachers as well. Several students find it difficult to get along with certain teachers. It determines how students can cope with their academics if they are able to adjust with their teachers and professors easily (Anderman, 2013). Janjua, Malik & Rahman (2011) conducted a study on "Learning Experiences and Academic Adjustment of International Students: A Case Study from Pakistan". The main objective of their study was to explore the classroom issues being faced by foreign students on the basis of their learning experiences in a Pakistani University. The case study methodology was used in the study. Findings of the study revealed that large number of students found it easy to accommodate in the culture of Host University as they found major cultural similarities between home and host environment (Fouzia Janjua, 2011).

Pyrkova, Kseniya (2016) conducted a study on "Features of International Students' Adaptation (on the Basis of a Russian Higher Education Institution)". The major objective of the study was to reveal features of international students' adaptation to a higher school of Russia in comparison with Russian students (from other regions and living in this region). A quantitative method was applied in the study. The findings of study asserted that state of mental and physical health is directly connected with cultural adjustment of the foreign students (Pyrkova, 2016).

Sheng-He Chen (2009) conducted a study on "A study of international students' life situation - a case study of the international students at the University of Twente. The main purpose of study was to understand the life situation of the international student at University of Twente. Findings of the study revealed that majority of the students were facing language and communications related problems (Chen, 2009).

Li Zhao (2010) conducted a study on "Socio-Cultural Adjustment of International Students as Expatriates in America". The main objective of the study was to examine the relationships between international students' ethnic identity, self-efficacy, uncertainty avoidance, and socio-cultural adjustment. The findings of the study identify a positive relationship between the ethnic identity of international students and their socio-cultural adjustment (Zhao, 2010).

## **Methods and Procedures of the Study**

### **Research Design**

It was a quantitative study in nature with a descriptive narration style. The survey method was used.

### **The population of the Study**

All Chinese and Somalian students (110) who were enrolled in the faculty of social sciences at International Islamic University of Islamabad (IIUI) during the secession 2016-18 constituted the population for the study.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

For descriptive research, a universal sampling technique was used. The reason is that the sample was approachable and easy to handle. So for the accuracy and authenticity in the results the researcher used the universal sampling technique.

### **Research Instrument**

For the survey method, self-developed questionnaire was used which was built on five-point Likert scale, as a research instrument. Major areas which were pointed out in questionnaire were as follows:

- Demographic Information (a. Semester, b. CGPA)
- Adoption with teachers

- Adoption with fellow students
- Adoption with the administrators
- Adaption with University Environment
- Cultural differences
- Teaching Methods

### Data Collection

The data were gathered through personal visits of the respondents and in the event that students were not able to comprehend the language, at that point all things considered friend help (local people and class individual) was taken for making the comprehension of the questionnaire to make survey simple for the respondent.

### Data Analysis

On the basis of quantitative data it was explored that, following were the categories and number of students' adaption for both nationals:

**Table 1.** Students' Level of adaption

Level of Adaption of Students				
Nationality	Highly Adapted	Moderately adapted	Less adapted	Total Students
Chinese	12	11	32	55
Percentage	21%	20%	59%	100%
Somalian	30	18	07	55
Percentage	55%	33%	12%	100%

It is clear from the table that: the responses from foreign students from China depicted the following results: Well adapted or exceedingly adapted 21%

1. Moderately or Soberly adapted 20%
2. Less adapted students 59%

Whereas the respondents from Somalia showed a big contrast in the results which was:

1. Well adapted 55%
2. Moderately adapted 33 %. And
3. Less adapted 12% only

**Table 2.** Mean of Students scores

Level of adaption	Highly Adapted students	Moderately adapted students	Less adapted students
Mean Score of Chinese Students	0.21	0.2	0.58
Mean Score of Somalian Students	0.5	0.32	0.12

It is clear from the table that the mean scores (0.5) of Somalian students' are high that were highly adapted as compare to those Chinese students' scores (0.21) who were facing the same problems in the same scenario of coping with the alien environment of education.

## **Findings**

The major findings of the research shows that 21% of Chinese students were highly adapted on the contrary 55% of Somalian students were highly adapted in the same environment. And 20% of Chinese students were moderately adapted whereas 33% of Somalian students were moderately adapted. The astonishingly 59% Chinese students were less adapted while only 12% Somalian students showed that they were less adapted.

The analysis of mean scores showed that Somalian students are highly adapted as compare to Chinese students. There is a significant difference between the mean scores showed the difference between the pace of cultural adaptation of Chinese and Somali students at International Islamic University. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

## **Discussion**

Many studies were conducted to find the causes of relations and effects of social adjustments to that of educational attainments of the foreign students. But most of the studies were conducted in western world like UK, USA, etc. and the impact or relationship was studied. This study was unique in the sense that it was a case study of students at IIUI and was conducted to find out the pace of academic adjustment of the foreign students along with the relationship of academic adjustment with that of educational achievements. The main focus was on the comparison of pace of cultural adjustment of foreign students belonging two different parts of the world, i.e. Chinese and Somalian. The behavior of teachers, non-cooperative administration staff, and ambiguous teaching strategies were major problems of foreign students faced by all students. As far as behavior of Pakistani students and overall university environment was seemingly supportive for both students for cultural adaptation in the same educational institution IIUI. Results of mean scores show that pace of cultural adaptation of foreign students from both countries was not the same.

As the finding of this research has revealed that the teaching strategies and administration related issues have increased the adjustment problems of the foreign students but the intensity of problems is not the same for all due to some other factors like similarity or dissimilarity of language or cultural inheritance etc. Findings of the study aligned with findings of a study conducted by, Mustaffa and Ilias (2013) distinguished a few components that fundamentally add to social change. These components incorporate degree of instruction, language aptitudes, and travel involvement. In an investigation of social alteration experience of Asian understudies in United States, Constantine, Alazzai, and Chiodo (2006) distinguished language issues, stress and absence of social help as serious issues of universal understudies in making social change.

Ryan (2011) stated that for ensuring cultural adaptation of foreign students, teachers must practice innovative strategies and administrative staff must adopt a new approach towards the foreign students.

Lee (2014) documented social alteration, language boundaries and creating social connections as three classifications of the concerns observed by international students.

Findings of study are also supported by study conducted by Nasir (2010) and Limjuci et al. (2016) as it was found by their studies that cultural adjustment is a significant predictor of academic achievement of international students and that the difference between the pace of cultural adjustment may influence the academic achievement of the foreign students.

## **Conclusions**

Due to the globalization process all institutions at higher education levels generally and IIUI specifically have to work on the main objective of globalization that how to help the foreign students to feel at home in their institution. Findings showed that pace of cultural adaptation of foreign students from China is particularly slow that is getting better gradually. Chinese students are facing problems due to diverse learning environment, non-cooperative behavior of teacher, ambiguous teaching strategies, above all language (both English and Arabic are core medium of instruction in IIUI but very difficult for Chinese) and inattentiveness of administrative staff are creating a dilemma of cultural adaptation for them to cope with. Whereas in the case of Somalian students Arabic is their native language And due to similarities in cultural inheritance related to the religion they feel secure and

functional in the same educational institution where the Chinese are struggling for adaptation. So according to the result of the study the pace of cultural adaptation of Somalian students is much higher than those of Chinese.

## Recommendations

On the basis of findings and conclusions followings recommendations were made:

1. As only 21% of Chinese students were highly adapted and satisfied with the behavior of teachers, so the higher authorities may take this situation seriously and teachers may be trained in order to provide adequate guidance and special attention to Chinese foreign students.
2. Students of the higher education institutions may be made aware complimentary of the idea and importance of cross-cultural adaptation and globalization along with the significance of the international students so that they can prepare themselves to help the foreigners and make a gateway to attract more foreign students along with economic benefits for the institution.
3. The behavior of administrative staff has been found very despondent with foreign students especially relating to language used for verbal communication so administrative staff may be trained to be supportive, respectable and facilitating for them related to communication.
4. In order to make the foreign students attracted for the choice of an institution out of their motherland, the admission section may upload a documentary or some slide show for sharing a glimpse of the institutional culture with the students who have already joined the university from abroad for their academic progress for future success in life.
5. As it has been reported by foreign students Environment of host institutions is quite different from foreign students home institutions so attention may be paid towards organizing extracurricular and cross-cultural activities for making them familiarize with culture of host environment as well as offering them an opportunity to provide a foretaste of their own culture.
6. Although Somalian students were more adapted then Chinese students' overall situation is that most of the foreign students were not too much satisfied with teaching strategies that are being adopted by teachers. so the institute may arrange training sessions for the teachers of IIUI to make them acquainted with the demands of expediting the foreign students in future.
7. Keeping in view the strong political and economic importance of China for Pakistan and the strong feeling of friendship between the two brotherly countries it is highly recommended that the high officials of IIUI specifically and the Higher education Commission, in general, may take urgent managerial adjustments to make the students from China more comfortable in Pakistani educational institutions at higher level.

## References

- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.
- Cresswell, J. (2009). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. United States of America: Sage Publications.Inc. DOI:10.1348/000712604773952395
- Finger, P. (2005). "Finger-tip" cryoprobe assisted enucleation. *American Journal Of Ophthalmology*, 139(3),559-561.doi: 10.1016/j.ajo.2004.09.015v
- Freeman, N., & Mathews. (2017). International students' challenges and academic adjustment in higher education in Malaysia. *Special Issue*,29(1), 131-134.
- Furnham, A., & Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2004). Estimating one's own personality and intelligence scores. *British Journal Of Psychology*, 95(2), 149-160.
- Gay, L.R. and Diehl, P.L. (1992). *Research Methods for Business and Management*. Mc. Millan Publishing Company, New York.
- Glass, C. R., Gómez, E., and Urzua, A. (2014). Recreation, intercultural friendship, and international students' adaptation to college by region of origin. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 42, 104-117
- Lee, M., & Sheared, V. (2002). Socialization and immigrant students' learning in adult education programs. *New Directions For Adult And Continuing Education*, 2002(96), 27-36. doi: 10.1002/ace.76
- Lee, K. C. (2014) Tips for International Students' Success and Adjustment, *International Student Experience Journal*, 2 (1), Retrieved from [www.uwest.edu/%2Fsite%2Ffile%2Fdocs%2Fpubs%2Ffaculty%2FDr\\_George\\_Lee\\_Tips%2520for%2520International%2520Students%25E2%2580%2599%2520Success%2520and%2520Adjustment.pdf](http://www.uwest.edu/%2Fsite%2Ffile%2Fdocs%2Fpubs%2Ffaculty%2FDr_George_Lee_Tips%2520for%2520International%2520Students%25E2%2580%2599%2520Success%2520and%2520Adjustment.pdf)
- Li, M., & Campbell, J. (2006) Cultural Adaptation: A Case Study of Asian Students' Learning Experiences at a New Zealand University
- Limjuco, Solomon, Ampatuan, Cosiñero, Jasmin, & Chavez. (2016). Cross-Cultural Adaptation Efforts of International Students in Relation to their Academic Achievement. *International Journal of Education Research for Higher Learning*, 22(1), 85-106.
- Mustaffa, C. & Ilias, M. (2013). Relationship between Students Adjustment Factors and Cross Cultural Adjustment: A Survey at the Northern University of Malaysia, *Intercultural Communication Studies* 1 (22), 279-300.
- Nailevna, T. (2017). Acculturation and Psychological Adjustment of Foreign Students (the Experience of Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University). *Procedia - Social And Behavioral Sciences*, 237, 1173-1178. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.175.
- Nasir, R. M. (2010). An Exploration of Emotional Intelligence of the Students of IIUI in Relation to Gender, Age and Academic Achievement. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 32(1),37-51 .
- Oberg, K. (1960). Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments. *Practical Anthropology*, os-7(4), 177-182. DOI: 10.1177/009182966000700405
- Ryan, J. (2011). Teaching and learning for international students: towards a transcultural approach. *Teachers and teaching: theory and practice*, 17(6), 631-648.