THE ACCULTURATION NEEDS OF

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT U.S. UNIVERSITIES:

A CALL FOR ONLINE ANTICIPATORY ORIENTATION

By

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Submitted to the graduate degree program in Curriculum and Instruction and the Graduate

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ABSTRACT

Over 800,000 international college students come to the U.S. each year adding billions of dollars to our economy and diversity to our campuses (Institute of International Education, 2014). Too often U.S. tertiary institutions leave these students to fend for themselves as far as adjusting to a new culture. Although it is believed that orientation programs are beneficial, there is a dearth of scholarship into what needs to be covered in an orientation program for international students.

The focus of this study is to determine what international students in the tertiary system would have benefited from knowing before they came to the U.S. What would help their adaptation to a new culture and a new university/academic system? Furthermore, if students do prepare themselves for their sojourn to the U.S. prior to departure, what resources do they draw from? How effective are those resources? What role does technology, especially social networking, play in their "anticipatory adjustment"?

A review of literature covers various theories and models of acculturation, social networks, student retention, orientation programs, and computer-mediated orientation. While acculturation and the social networks of international students have been studied for several decades, the study of the retention of international students and specially designed orientation programs for them is sorely lacking.

This study of international students studying in Kansas City and surrounding areas combined web-based questionnaires that have been in use in cross-cultural studies for several decades with original questions geared toward the specific purpose of the study. The data were both numerical and descriptive. After the initial data analysis, several international students were interviewed in order to gain further insight into the experience of acculturating to the U.S. The

findings and assertions from these data made from the data analysis in this mixed methods study lead to recommendations that will hopefully have the potential to positively facilitate the anticipatory adjustment of international students as they begin to acculturate to the U.S.

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THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

During the 2013/2014 academic year, 886,052 international students attended universities

and colleges in two- and four-year programs across the United States, an increase of over 30% in

the past decade (Institute of International Education, 2014). According to the Institute of

International Education, these students brought almost $27 billion to the U.S. economy last year,

$238.3 million to the state of Kansas alone. Higher education is one of the country's largest

service sector exports (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 140). In these days of state and federal

budget cuts, colleges and universities look to outside sources to make up their financial shortfall.

One of these sources is international students (Andrade & Evans, 2009; Peterson, Briggs,

Dreasher, Horner, & Nelson, 1999).

In addition to the economic benefits, international students bring diversity to our nation's

campuses and communities. It is this diversity that introduces our domestic students to other

worldviews and helps them gain an understanding of the global economy we now live in while

helping the international students learn about the American culture and worldview (Andrade,

2011; Andrade & Evans, 2009; Montgomery, 2010; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Moreover, we

can hope that these international students will form positive opinions of the U.S. and of

Americans and will return home to share these feelings with others in their countries, thereby

promoting international relations.

Competition for international students is intense throughout the world. Indeed, Great

Britain launched a national initiative in 1999 to attract more international students to its tertiary

institutions (Merrick, 2004; Webster, 2011). France and Germany have similar programs in

place as well (Andrade, 2011; Andrade & Evans, 2009). The students' contributions of money

and diversity are recognized around the world. That said, over half of all the international

students who study beyond their own country come to the U.S., accounting for 4.2% of the total enrollment at U.S. tertiary institutions (International Institute of Education, 2014).

Universities and colleges are vitally interested in improving their retention and graduation rates. While the terms "retention" and "persistence" have been used interchangeably by many to indicate remaining in college until degree completion, The National Center for Education Statistics discriminates between the terms by saying that "institutions retain" and "students persist" (Hagedorn, 2005, p. 93). First year persistence rates for international students are comparable to those for U.S. domestic students: 80.2% of international students return after their freshman year compared to 80.1 percent of American students who return after their freshman year. The Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange tracks persistence and graduation rates for nonresident aliens (international students) as well as domestic students. For the cohort that began as freshmen in 1999, 59% of those who were international students had graduated within six years. For the domestic students in that same cohort, 57% had graduated within six years (Hayes, 2007). With the amount of time and resources spent on recruiting international students, our institutions are obligated to make their adjustment to the United States as successful as possible in order to retain them through graduation.

All students, whether U.S. domestic or international, go through some kind of adjustment process, be it from high school to college or college to graduate school. The adjustment can be fairly easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult depending on a number of individual factors. Nonetheless, this adjustment process is frequently much more difficult for international students, who must often learn a new language along with a new culture and a new academic system. The process of adjusting to a new culture, or *acculturation,* has been studied for decades by anthropologists and psychologists. One of the major findings is that sojourners lose familiar

cues and cannot predict host nationals' behaviors, thereby causing them embarrassment, frustration, and feelings of inadequacy (Berry, 2005; Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960).

When an international student has difficulty adapting to a new culture, s/he is said to suffer from *acculturative stress*. Berry's 40 years of research positions him as one of acculturation's leading experts. He defines acculturative stress as "a stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experience of acculturation" (Berry, 2004, p. 32). Symptoms of acculturative stress include sleep problems, digestive problems, loneliness, homesickness, and depression. If the symptoms are severe enough and persist over time, the student gives up and returns home. Not only does this hurt the institution in the loss of revenue and the decrease in its retention rate, but it is the student who must grapple with failing to achieve his/her dream of a degree from an American university. The student's family is faced not only with the loss of several thousand dollars but also potential disgrace from the community.

As an instructor of international students at Park University for over nine years, I heard my students say over and over, "If only I had known about _____, getting used to American culture would have been so much easier." The idea of providing students with information about the United States, even before they arrive, began to take hold in my mind. Would understanding certain aspects, such as expected behavior in social situations or expectations of students in American universities, as well as having information about local accommodations and activities, help students begin their acculturation even before they leave their countries? Would this anticipatory adjustment, so to speak, ease their transition and reduce acculturative stress, thereby allowing them to pursue their academic and personal goals? And if it could, what specifically do international students find most problematic?

Many schools offer some kind of orientation for their new students, but these are usually held after the students have arrived on campus. For a tertiary institution to send delegates to every country their international students come from in order to conduct an orientation is not practical. Mailing materials to all corners of the globe is expensive, and delivery is not always reliable. How then can colleges and universities provide information to these students in a timely and efficient way? The answer could lie in today's technology. With current technological capabilities, institutions could creatively deliver information that students themselves say is relevant to them and that could aid in international students' anticipatory adjustment. One question remains though: would international students avail themselves of such information if provided electronically?

Research Questions and Subsidiary Questions

As someone who has worked with international students at the college level (both two-year and four-year) for many years, I am interested in discovering what colleges can do for their international students in order to make their transition to life in the United States as smooth as possible, particularly *prior* to these students coming to the United States, in order to ease this transition. "Literature on support programming designed to meet the specific needs of international students is not extensive" (Andrade, 2006, p. 141). I have, therefore, formulated the first research question.:

Research Question 1. What do college-age international students in Kansas City and the surrounding areas wish they had known before they came to the United States in order to aid their academic and sociocultural acculturation and psychological acculturation?

Subsidiary questions:

In order to answer this question, I looked at the following subsidiary questions:

1. What do students consider to be the most important features of an effective orientation program?

2. What are the needs of college-age international students in Kansas City and the surrounding areas as far as acculturating to the United States?

3. How does what happens at these schools meet or not meet student expectations?

In addition, determining the most effective—in terms of outcomes and cost—pre-arrival orientation should be of interest to colleges and universities. A recent study (Wilson, 2011) of international graduate students at a northeastern U.S. university found that the students felt they would have adapted "better and sooner" (p. 24) if they had had more information about local resources, such as finding inexpensive academic books and finding stores and restaurants that sell food they like. They also suggested using Facebook, Twitter, regular e-mails, and online chats for the delivery of pre-arrival information. An Australian study (Chang et al., 2012) of graduate and undergraduate students found that international students used social media to get information about the host school and host culture pre-arrival. If, as the research indicated, "anticipatory adjustment" *prior* to students' arrival in the United States is critical to their overall acculturation, how is that best achieved? With advances in technology and the computer skills of most U.S.-bound international students, the possibilities that online orientation offers are endless. But how effective could they be, and what are international students' perceptions of this mode of delivery? Because there is little research to date on the phenomenon of online orientation, I formulated the second research question:

Research Question 2. What resources did college-age international students in the Kansas City metro access prior to their departure for the United States?

Subsidiary questions:

1. What role does the Internet play in students' "anticipatory adjustment" to living and studying in the U.S.?

2. What are students' perceptions of face-to-face versus online cultural learning?

3. How effective were these resources, both mediated and "traditional" (e.g. print material, talking to others) in preparing them for what they later encountered?

Throughout the dissertation, key concepts will be operationalized according to the following definitions:

Acculturation: what happens when two cultures come into contact with each other

Acculturative stress: a stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experience of acculturation

Social networks: involves people or units, such as families or organizations, called actors in social network theory, and the relations that connect them. These actors exchange resources, which could be data, goods and services, financial support, social support, or information.

Sojourner: an individual who temporarily resides in a foreign place for activities such as work and education; used interchangeably in this paper with "international students."

Organization of the Dissertation

A review of the relevant literature is presented in the second section and summarizes the relevant theories underpinning acculturation, social networks, student retention, and orientation programs. The next section discusses the methods used. This is a mixed methods study, which

used quantitative as well as qualitative data. The quantitative data consisted of a survey; the

qualitative data was provided in comments made on the survey and in interviews of 12

international students. The survey is provided in Appendix A. The fourth section presents the

findings. The tables are inserted within the text. The final section consists of the discussion of

the findings, implications for future research, and the conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to determine how we might help international students adjust to life in the United States, we need to understand the concept of acculturation and the theories that underpin its scholarship. Acculturation has been studied since the 1930s and has undergone changes in how it is conceptualized. A very important area of the scholarship of acculturation is that of social networks and how vital they are to the adjustment and acculturation of international students. A brief look at the theory of social capital and the models of social networks for international students is provided. A third area of scholarship concerns theories of student retention in higher education since the institutions that have recruited these students should be vitally interested in how to retain these students to matriculation. The fourth and final area of scholarship to be covered in this literature review concerns the nature and effects of orientation programs for students, domestic and international students alike. Little research has actually been done on either the retention of international students or on effective orientation programs for international students. It is hoped that this study will fill help to fill that gap. It is these four areas that will be addressed in the following literature review.

Acculturation

The scholarship on acculturation processes refers to international students as "sojourners." A sojourner is defined as an "individual who temporarily resides in a foreign place for activities such as work and education" (Gullekson & Vancouver, 2010, p. 315). A sojourner, then, does not intend to stay but plans to return home eventually. In this dissertation, the terms "sojourner" and "international student" are used interchangeably although, technically, international students are a subset of sojourners.

When sojourners go to another country for an extended stay, they come into contact with another culture. Acculturation is what happens when two cultures come into contact with each other.

Acculturation has been taking place for as long as there has been human contact. The concept was originally proposed by anthropologists in the 1930s (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 473). It was seen as a *group-level* phenomenon, or how groups who came into contact with each other changed over time. Psychologists became interested in acculturation as an *individual level* phenomenon in the 1960s (Graves, 1967) and, in particular, how acculturation affected the individuals within the acculturating groups.

There are two theories of acculturation that have been widely used for a half-century: Lysgaard's U-Curve theory and Oberg's culture shock theory. The two propose very similar stages of acculturation.

U-Curve theory. The most well known theory of cross-cultural adaptation was originally proposed by Lysgaard (1955) in his study of Norwegian Fulbright scholars in the United States. Lysgaard noted that those who had resided in the United States from six to twelve months faced more adjustment difficulties than those who had been in the United States less than six months, or more than 18 months. He stated:

> Adjustment as a process over time seems to follow a U-shaped curve: adjustment is felt to be easy and successful to begin with, then follows a "crisis" in which one feels less well-adjusted, somewhat lonely and unhappy, finally one begins to feel better adjusted again, becoming more integrated into the foreign community. (p. 50)

Even though Lysgaard never diagrammed his U-curve theory, it could be drawn as in Figure 1.

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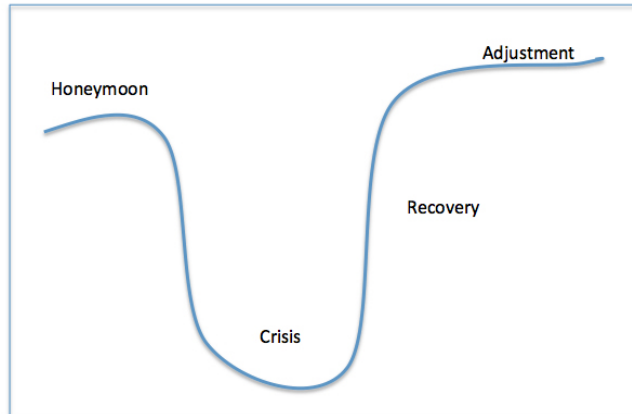
Figure 1: Lysgaard's U-curve theory of cross-cultural adaptation (Foley, 2012)

This figure is a visual illustration of the stages that Lysgaard proposed in cross-cultural adaptation.

Culture shock. Kalervo Oberg (1960) provided an anthropological description of "culture shock" in which he described it as an "occupational disease" for those who have been suddenly moved to another country. This disease has symptoms, which include feelings of helplessness, fits of anger, and homesickness. Oberg proposed four stages to culture shock. Muecke, Lenthail, and Lindeman (2011) provided a good summary of these stages in their study on culture shock and healthcare workers in remote communities of Australia:

1. The honeymoon stage during which the individual is excited and fascinated by all s/he sees. Problems that arise because of missed cultural cues and misunderstandings are seen as amusing.

2. The rejection stage, which is characterized by a hostile and aggressive attitude toward the host country, growing out of an inability to negotiate daily life. Stereotyping typically occurs at this stage. The sojourner is likely to find the experience confusing, humiliating, depressing, and stressful.

3. The <u>beginning resolution stage</u>, during which the individual is beginning to be able to solve some of his/her minor problems but takes a superior attitude to host nationals. Although the sojourner still has problems, s/he is beginning to take a more balanced view and can begin to handle day-to-day situations.

4. The <u>acculturation stage</u>, where the individual has adjusted. This is the goal for a sojourner. S/he can function effectively in the new culture.

Oberg's stages of culture shock follow Lysgaard's U-curve. These two theories have been the basis for many cross-cultural training programs during the last 50 years and, indeed, have achieved almost iconic status. They both focus on the acculturating individual and that individual's sociocultural adjustment, or learning to function in the day-to-day activities of the new culture. According to the U-curve theory and the theory of culture shock, acculturation is conceptualized as uni-dimensional and focuses entirely on the individual who has moved to a new country. The acculturating individual moves along a continuum of leaving behind his/her heritage culture and adopting more and more of the values, traits, and attitudes of the host culture. The underlying assumption in these theories is that the acculturating individual desires to relinquish his/her heritage culture and assume the traits and attitudes of the new culture.

Although Lysgaard's U-curve theory and Oberg's culture shock theory have been used for 50 years, research has shown that a sojourner's greatest problems do not occur several months after arrival in the host country but, instead, occur at the <u>time of entry</u> and then decrease over time (Selby & Woods, 1966; Suanet & Van De Vuver, 2009; Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998; Yang, 2009). Comprehensive reviews have concluded that support for these two theories is limited at best (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002). Much of the criticism has been directed to the lack of rigor in

methodology. Oberg developed his theory on the basis of anecdotal evidence, while Lysgaard's research was only cross-sectional and not followed up by a longitudinal study. Because acculturation occurs over time, then a longitudinal study of the same individuals over many months would be the preferred design (Ward et al., 1998, p. 279). Evidence for the U-curve, according to Church's comprehensive literature review is "weak, inconclusive, and overgeneralized" (1982, p. 542). Ward, Okura, Kennedy, and Kojima (1998) stated that the time to retire the U-curve theory is past (p. 290).

There are two researchers in the field of acculturation who today are recognized as experts in acculturation theory and research: Berry and Ward. The two have researched acculturation for over four decades and have built on each other's work. Indeed, Ward has consistently praised Berry as evidenced in the following quotation:

> Berry's contribution to the development of acculturation theory and research has been distinguished by a sound conceptual base and a systematic and comparative analysis of empirical data … Overall, Berry's model of acculturation and adaptation is highly regarded and widely recognized as exerting a prominent influence on theory and research in the field. (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999, p. 423)

While not as effusive in his praise of Ward, Berry does pay tribute to her work: "In this article, we use the distinction between psychological and sociocultural adaptation proposed by Ward and her colleagues" (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 478). Between the two and their colleagues, they have developed a sound conceptual base of acculturation that has been empirically tested.

Berry defined acculturation as "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members (2005, p. 698). According to this definition, changes co-occur at the individual level

(psychological acculturation) and on a group level as well (cultural acculturation) in both cultures (Smith & Khawaja, 2011, p. 701). "No cultural group remains unchanged following culture contact; acculturation is a two-way interaction, resulting in actions and reactions in the contact situation" (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 473). In other words, not only is the sojourner undergoing changes, but the host culture and host nationals are undergoing changes as well, albeit not as dramatic as those of the sojourner. The changes seen in individual host nationals are in their attitudes and behaviors towards the sojourners; the changes seen in host cultures are reflected in their policies and programs for sojourners, among other things.

Not all groups and individuals undergo acculturation in the same way (Fritz, Chin, & DeMarinis, 2008; Russell, Rosenthal, & Thomson, 2010). Berry (1997) has proposed what he called four strategies that have been derived from the two basic questions facing all acculturating peoples:

1. Do you wish to maintain your heritage culture? (cultural maintenance)

2. Do you wish to have daily contact with the host culture? (cultural contact)

The possible strategies, or attitudes as Ward (2008, p. 196) called them, individuals use are described below and illustrated in Table 1.

1. Integration: maintain heritage culture and seek daily interaction with host culture

2. Assimilation: reject heritage culture and seek daily interaction with host culture

3. Separation: maintain heritage culture and avoid interaction with host culture

4. Marginalization: reject heritage culture and avoid interaction with host culture

Table 1

Berry's acculturation strategies

Participation with host nationals	Maintenance of cultural heritage	
	Yes	No
Yes	Integration	Assimilation
No	Separation	Marginalization

It is important to note that these strategies apply to the nondominant culture and that the acculturating individual(s) have the freedom to choose which strategy to follow. Examples of individuals/groups who have the freedom to choose are tourists, voluntary immigrants, international students, and business people posted to an extended overseas assignment; examples of those who do not have the freedom to choose are refugees, victims of military invasion, and those who have been colonized.

Studies have confirmed Berry's strategies and have also shown that the strategy of integration, or maintaining one's heritage culture while also seeking daily interaction with host nationals, leads to fewer adaptation problems than the other three strategies (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Pederson, Neighbors, Larimer, & Lee, 2011; Poyrazli, Thukral, & Duru, 2010; Suanet & Van De Vuver, 2009; Ward, 2008; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Zheng & Berry, 1991).

Berry et al. first postulated that acculturation was bidimensional; that is, acculturation involves whether or not the sojourner desires to maintain his/her heritage culture as well as whether or not to internalize the host culture. Ward et al. (1998) postulated that the process of acculturation also consists of two constructs:

1.

1. Psychological adjustment, or emotional well-being.

   a. Affected by the sojourner's personality, social support, life change variables, and coping styles

   b. Best understood from a stress and coping framework in which acculturation is seen as one of life's many stresses and something which can be coped with.

2. Sociocultural adaptation, or the ability to fit in the host society and perform one's daily activities.

   a. Affected by length of residence in the host country, language proficiency, cultural knowledge, cultural distance, and the amount of contact with host nationals (Searle & Ward, 1990; Yang, Noels, & Saumure, 2006).

   b. Best understood from a culture-learning perspective.

These two constructs, or adjustment outcomes, are interrelated but not the same. They are distinct for three reasons. First, they are predicted by different variables. Psychological adjustment is generally operationalized as depression. As stated earlier, psychological adjustment is predicted by personality, life changes, and social support (Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Ward & Searle, 1991). Sociocultural adaptation, on the other hand, is measured by the amount of difficulty the sojourner has in the performance of daily tasks and is dependent on variables such as language proficiency, length of sojourn, cultural distance, and amount of contact with host nationals (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a, 1993b). Second, psychological and sociocultural adjustments fluctuate differently over time. The greatest adjustment difficulties occur at the point of entry for both; however, sociocultural problems steadily decrease and eventually level off, while psychological problems are much more variable (Ward & Kennedy, 1996a, 1996b; Ward et al., 1998). Third, although the two are

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interrelated, research findings show the magnitude of the correlation increases with greater

integration and cultural proximity, which means that the more the sojourner is in contact with

host nationals and the more s/he learns about the host culture, the greater his/her emotional well-

being (Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Kennedy, 1996b; Ward et al., 1998; Ward & Rana-

Deuba, 1999).

The sociocultural dimension involves how the sojourner handles daily life in the new

culture. The psychological acculturation dimension is concerned with an individual's

satisfaction and overall emotional or psychological well-being. According to Berry, we need to

consider the psychological changes that individuals undergo when faced with a new culture

(Berry, 2004, p. 28). These could be behavioral shifts, such as changes in the way one speaks,

dresses, eats, and so forth, or attitudinal shifts, such as how they view these differences as

compared to their heritage cultures. Even though there are vast differences in individual

responses, there are commonalities to the acculturation process (Barry, 2004).

Psychological adjustment: Personality variables. Various personality factors to

acculturation processes have been studied, including extraversion[1], neuroticism, openness,

conscientiousness, and agreeableness (Ward et al., 2004). Researchers have tried to determine

which personality traits might predict a more successful acculturation. Results, however, have

been mixed. As Church (1982) pointed out in his extensive literature review, most of these

studies have been either anecdotal and/or cross-sectional in design, which will not give us the

results we need. Because acculturation occurs over time, we need longitudinal designs with a

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[1] Extraversion is the preferred spelling in psychological research.

control group to ascertain that the changes are not just the result of normal maturation itself. The scholarship in this area is scant at this time.

Psychological adjustment: stress and coping framework. Berry first developed the stress and coping framework in 1997. The long-term goal, according to this framework, is adaptation, which he defined as "the relatively stable changes that take place in an individual or group in response to external demands" (2006, p. 52).

The psychological changes an acculturating individual undergoes can be viewed as either opportunities or problems. If a stress and coping theoretical framework is used, acculturation can be compared to other major life events that pose challenges to the individual (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 474). If the individual is not equipped to handle these challenges, they can provoke stress reactions, or acculturative stress, which can be operationalized as depression at the individual level (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999, p. 434; Zheng & Berry, 1991, p. 452).

Berry preferred the term "acculturative stress" to "culture shock" for two reasons:

1. The concept "shock" carries negative connotations, while the concept "stress" connotes a negative experience but can vary from positive to negative. Because acculturation can be viewed as positive (i.e., new experiences) to negative (i.e., discrimination), stress is the better conceptualization, Berry argued. Further, according to Berry, there have been no empirical studies of shock, whereas stress has been well researched.

2. The term "culture" in culture shock implies that only one culture is involved, whereas "acculturative" implies that two cultures are interacting.

As Berry stated, acculturation involves the interaction of two cultures. This study, however, was focused on the acculturation of international students in an attempt to make the process of acculturation a smoother one and the degree of acculturative stress much less.

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Although acculturative stress is a universal phenomenon, not all acculturating individuals experience acculturative stress in the same way. There are mediating factors, such as age, gender, language proficiency, and personality that can influence the amount and the length of acculturative stress (Mori, 2000).

Sojourners who report higher levels of stress and symptoms of depression (such as loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, loss of interest in favorite activities or in socializing, and loneliness) are said not to be adapting well to the host culture (Rice, Choi, Zhang, Morero, & Anderson, 2012; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Indeed, one of the major causes of acculturative stress is the gap between students' expectations and assumptions and actual reality (Mori, 2000, p. 142). Those who can reframe the stressors of acculturation as growth opportunities, as opposed to barriers, adapt more readily to the new culture (Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac, & Elsayed, 2013). Research continues into predictor variables and coping strategies.

Sociocultural adjustment: Cultural distance. Cultural distance is defined as "the degree of cultural dissimilarity between two groups, measured by ethnographic indicators, or by an individual's perception of such difference" (Berry, 2004, p. 27). The hypothesis is that the greater the cultural distance, the more difficult the sociocultural adaptation (Furnham & Bochner, 1986, p. 122; Ye, 2005).

Geert Hofstede, a Dutch psychologist, has studied cultural distance for 50 years, first analyzing data compiled by IBM about its 117,000 international employees in 40 countries between 1967 and 1973. The results of this analysis yielded four statistically independent dimensions, which he labeled: (a) power distance, (b) individualism vs. collectivism, (c) masculinity vs. femininity, and (d) uncertainty avoidance. In 1992, Hofstede added a fifth dimension based on the work of Michael Bond, who had Chinese social scientists rank values

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associated with Confucian dynamism. Hofstede called this dimension long-term orientation. The Hofstede Centre has now analyzed culture dimensions for 76 countries. The Centre has assigned scores along a continuum ranging from 1-120 for each of the 76 countries studied in order to compare countries to each other. The definitions, descriptions, and examples below are taken from Hofstede's (2005) book. The United States, Germany, and China are used as examples.

- *Power distance:* "The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally." For a country scoring high on this dimension, a society's level of inequality is accepted by its followers as well as its leaders. This can apply not only to society as a whole but to organizations and families. For example, the United States and Germany score low on this dimension, while China scores high. Germany is highly decentralized and supported by a strong middle class, while the United States was founded on the premise of "liberty and justice for all." China, on the other hand, scores near the top; the Chinese accept inequality among people and believe people should not have aspirations beyond their rank.

- *Individualism vs. collectivism:* This dimension refers to "the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members." Does a member of this culture view him/herself as "I" or "we"? With a score of 91, the United States is highly individualistic; mainstream Americans form a loose-knit society where people look after themselves and their immediate families. There is a high degree of mobility in the United States, and Americans are used to interacting with strangers. At 67, Germany is also individualistic with a focus on a sense of duty and responsibility. With a score of 20, China is highly

collectivistic, and acting in the best interests of the group is paramount. From birth on, the Chinese are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which protect them in exchange for unwavering loyalty.

- *Masculinity/femininity:* This dimension deals with the distribution of roles of men and women in society. Analysis of the IBM data showed that the values women hold (nurturing, caring for others, having a good quality of life) vary less among countries than do the values men hold (assertiveness, competitiveness, and achievement). The basic premise is that if the society as a whole is motivated by wanting to be the best and is driven by competition, achievement, and success, it is considered to be masculine. If the society is motivated by liking what one does and values quality of life and caring for others, then it is considered to be feminine. The United States, Germany, and China are all considered masculine societies where people live to work, sacrificing quality time with family. Examples of feminine countries are Korea, Costa Rica, or the Nordic countries.

- *Uncertainty avoidance:* This dimension has to do with how a society deals with the fact that the future cannot be known. This can bring about anxiety when individuals who avoid uncertainty feel they have no control. Countries who score high in uncertainty avoidance try to minimize this anxiety by adhering to strict laws and procedures. Individuals in these countries are more emotional than those in uncertainty-accepting countries. Those in uncertainty-accepting countries are more tolerant of those whose beliefs and opinions are different from their own; they try to have fewer rules and regulations. The United States scores in the middle of this continuum and can be said to be accepting of uncertainty. Americans tend to accept new ideas to some degree and do

not require an extensive number of rules. Germany scores near the top. Germans prefer to act from a detailed plan and compensate for their higher uncertainty by relying on proven expertise. China scores low on this scale; the Chinese are comfortable with ambiguity. Adherence to laws and rules depends on the situation and context.

- *Long-term orientation:* This dimension, although loosely based on the ideals of dynamic Confucianism, deals with "the extent to which a society shows a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historical short-term point of view." This dimension was added after Michael Bond's 1991 study of Chinese social scientists, which showed that the Chinese place a great deal of value on persistence, thrift, having a sense of shame, and ordering relationships by status. Personal steadiness and, surprisingly, respect for tradition ranked at the bottom. China has a highly long-term-oriented society, where they show a propensity to save and invest and to persevere to achieve their desired results. Persistence and thriftiness are highly valued in China, whereas quick results are not. By contrast, the United States and Germany are short-term-orientation cultures with a respect for traditions and a desire for quick results.

The degree of cultural distance between a sojourner's home country and the host country has been shown to be a factor in his/her adaptation (Pederson et al., 2011). Based on Hofstede's (2005) dimensions and the examples given above, a German student would find it easier to acculturate to the United States than would a Chinese student. In fact, numerous studies have shown that Asians have a more difficult time adjusting to the United States than do Europeans (Merrick, 2004; Ye, 2005; Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Sociocultural adjustment: Cultural learning. Acculturation researchers feel the sociocultural dimension of acculturation is best understood from a cultural learning perspective,

in which sociocultural adaptation is best defined in terms of behavior, or how the sojourner

interacts with host nationals in daily life. Sociocultural adaptation is influenced by cultural

learning and the acquisition of social skills (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2009;

Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

Culture learning begins with learning about oneself as a cultural being. Once we become

aware of what culture is and how our own culture affects our individual identities, we can

compare and contrast our culture with others, which allows us to predict potential problem areas.

Culture learning can be culture-general or culture-specific. Culture-general learning

refers to the experiences that are common to anyone visiting another culture, as well as the ways

cultures can differ (Paige et al., 2009, p. 40). Important ideas to keep in mind are

communication styles and core values, as well as understanding what happens to a sojourner

during acculturation, including what can bring on or add to acculturative stress. Culture-specific

learning refers to behaviors and social skills specific to that particular setting. For example, using

Hofstede's dimensions, if the sojourner is from a highly collectivistic society, moving to a highly

individualistic society will involve some major adjustment on the part of the sojourner.

Anxiety/Uncertainty avoidance. One of Hofstede's dimensions concerns uncertainty

avoidance, or how comfortable we are with ambiguity and uncertainty. Gudykunst (1998), a

professor of human communication studies at Cal State Fullerton and a nationally known expert

on multicultural communication, developed and tested his Anxiety/Uncertainty Management

Theory in regards to acculturation from the 1980s until his death in 2005. According to this

theory, managing anxiety and uncertainty is necessary for effective communication and

intercultural adaptation. If a sojourner has high anxiety, s/he will have difficulty communicating

with host nationals and predicting a host national's behavior (Gudykunst, 1998). Research by

Gudykunst and his colleagues shows that prior knowledge of the host culture can aid in reducing anxiety, enabling the sojourner's adaptation.

All individuals moving into a new culture face challenges as they negotiate unfamiliar surroundings and attempt to function effectively (Y. Y. Kim, 2001, p. 4). Because the new culture is unfamiliar, it upsets the sojourner's familiar routines and can create anxiety and psychological uncertainty (Black & Oddou, 1991, p. 301). As the sojourner learns more about the new culture through the process of acculturation, *deculturation* (or unlearning) some of the old cultural elements has to occur according to Y. Y. Kim, whose area of scholarship is the role of communication in cross-cultural adaptation (2001, p. 51). This need for acculturation while resisting deculturation can lead to stress, which begins a cycle of stress, adaptation, and growth that continues over time. The largest and most significant changes occur at the beginning of the sojourn and gradually diminish in intensity over time. Y. Y. Kim's model below illustrates this graphically (p. 59):
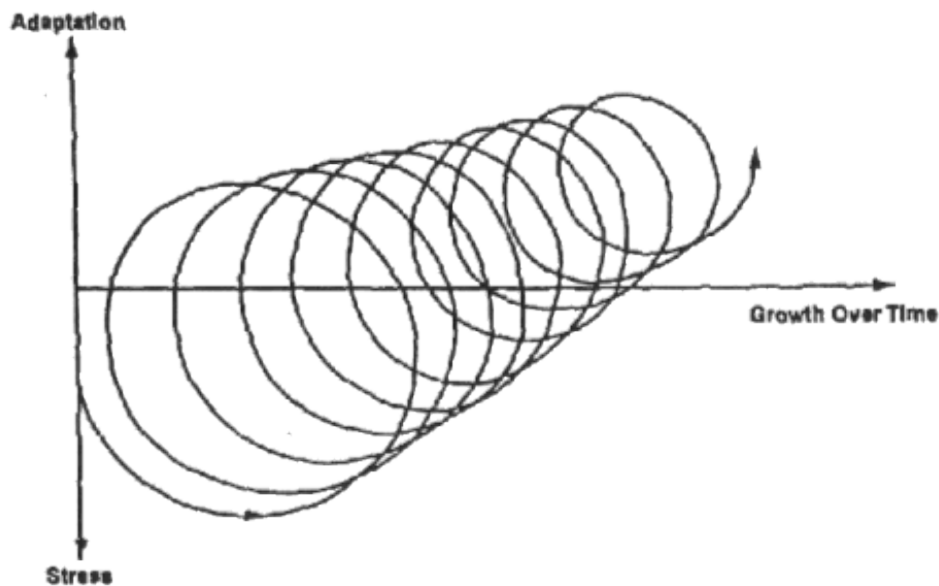
Figure 2: Y. Y. Kim's process model (2001, p. 59)

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This figure illustrates how the periods of stress lessen, while the level of adaptation increases over time.

According to Y. Y. Kim's model (2001), as the sojourner learns more about the host society, s/he will experience periods of acculturative stress, which will vary in length and intensity depending on the individual. This stress is mediated by communication competence, which allows the sojourner to relieve his/her anxiety by being better able to predict the host national's behavior and his/her own correct response to this behavior, thereby having a better understanding of the host culture. The length and frequency of the periods of acculturative stress should diminish the longer the sojourner remains in the host culture until s/he has fully integrated the host culture with his/her heritage culture.

To reiterate, acculturation is the process of adapting to a new culture, of integrating aspects of the new culture with one's heritage culture. Overall, research suggests that a sojourner's psychological adjustment depends on the number and intensity of stressors and on the sojourner's coping resources, while sociocultural adjustment depends more on culture learning (Kashima & Loh, 2006). Research is ongoing as to which variables might predict a successful acculturation with a minimum of acculturative stress. We now turn to social networks and their importance to the successful acculturation of the sojourner.

Social Networks

While sojourners are adapting to their new environments, they will turn to their social networks for support (Coleman, 1988; Y. Y. Kim, 2001; Ye, 2006). These networks usually consist of:

- close, personal friends and family in their home countries,

- new friendships with co-nationals (sojourners from the same country) and other
  international sojourners in the host countries, and

- new friendships with host nationals in the host countries.

Sojourners use these networks for emotional support as well as for sources of information (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002, p. 15; Williams & Johnson, 2011, p. 41).

Ye (2006) explained that "Social network theory is concerned with the properties of social support networks and social support and resource exchanges among network members" (p. 7). In other words, a social network involves people or units, such as families or organizations, called actors in social network theory, and the relations that connect them. These actors exchange resources, which could be data, goods and services, financial support, social support, or information.

The underlying construct in social network theory is that of *social capital*. The idea of social capital has its origins in sociology and economics, particularly Marx's theories of capital. There are many kinds of capital. For example, physical capital consists of buildings and equipment used for production of goods and services. Human capital consists of an investment in skills and knowledge with certain expected returns in the form of earnings. Social capital is about an investment in relationships among people with expected returns (Coleman, 1988, p. S98; N. Lin, 1999, p. 30). If A does something for B, then B owes A something in return, and A trusts that B will honor this obligation in the future. For sojourners, the returns could be emotional support or needed information.

Social network theorists speak of *strong ties* and *weak ties*, or the strength of the relationship we have with individuals in our networks. In Granovetter's (1973) view, "The

strength of a tie is a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" (p. 1361).

Strong ties are those we have with people with whom we have a bond, such as family or close friends. These strong ties are the ones we trust and who we feel are trustworthy. We share our intimate thoughts with our strong ties and generally have similar beliefs, attitudes and background. We use our strong ties for emotional support because we trust they have our best interests at heart. Strong ties are called bonding social capital because we form an emotional bond with these individuals.

Weak ties, on the other hand, are acquaintances, usually people with whom we share an interest. Weak ties offer a certain amount of anonymity and objectivity not found with our strong ties (Ye, 2006, p. 7). We turn to weak ties when we need information. While this appears to be a paradox, it can be explained. When we need information, we already know the kind of information our strong ties have access to; it is often the same information we already have. We do not know our weak ties as well, however, and turn to them in the hope that they will have access to the new information that we need. This information is an important form of social capital (Coleman, 1988, p. S104). Weak ties are thus known as "bridging social capital" because they bridge us to other social networks to which we might not otherwise have access.

Social capital researchers have found that the various forms of social capital are related to psychological well-being, particularly with self-esteem and satisfaction with life (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). Studies have been conducted in which participants were asked to rank their satisfaction with life and also to list the number of close friends they had as well as the quality of the friendship. Correlations between life satisfaction and the quality of their friendships were statistically significant.

As one way to reduce acculturative stress, sojourners turn to their social networks. Bochner, McLeod, and Lin (1977) proposed a model of the friendship patterns of sojourners. This model predicts that international students will belong to three social networks:

1. A primary, mono-cultural network of co-nationals (students from the same country as the international student) whose function is to affirm and express the culture of origin.

2. A secondary, bicultural network with host nationals (e.g., professors, students, advisors) whose function is to assist the international student with his/her academic goals.

3. A third, multicultural network with other international students whose function is to provide companionship for recreational activities.

Bochner et al.'s (1977) study tested this model with six American students and 30 international students from Asia at the University of Hawaii; the goal of their study was twofold: (a) to test their model of international students' friendship networks and (b) to determine the function of each group, that is, the purpose of each group for international students. Their findings showed that international students' friendship networks could be divided into three groups: conationals, host nationals, and other-culture nationals, thus supporting their model. The second part of their study, determining the function of each of these groups, found that the conational network provided a setting wherein the international student could express his/her cultural values (i.e., by cooking ethnic foods together). The secondary network of friendships with host nationals instrumentally facilitated academic and language issues of the international student. The function of the third, least salient, network of friendships (with other-culture nationals) was to provide companionship for recreational purposes.

Furnham and Alibhai (1985) replicated Bochner et al.'s (1977) study but with 140 international students from six continents studying at a university in London. Their findings

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broadly supported Bochner et al.'s (1977) model in that host nationals were preferred for academic and language help; conationals were chosen for emotional support, shopping, and party attendance. Not many in the study chose to spend time in the company of other international students (other-culture nationals), but when they did, it was for recreational purposes such as sightseeing.

There has been a great deal of empirical research on the friendship patterns of international students and their social networks and how these networks impact their acculturation and level of acculturative stress (Gareis, 2000; Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011; Kashima & Loh, 2006; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Essentially, the scholarship has shown that it is important for sojourners to make friends with host nationals, especially as weak ties, in order to learn about the new culture and assist with the sojourner's sociocultural adaptation (K.-H. Kim, Yun, & Yoon, 2009). On the other hand, sojourners need to maintain their strong ties with their families and friends in their home countries as well. It is these ties that provide the emotional support so crucial for the sojourner's psychological health.

Hendrickson et al. (2011) examined how international students managed their social resources. Their findings supported Bochner et al.'s (1977) model of three types of social networks. The conational friendships allowed students to add to their understanding of the new culture by discussing their experiences with others undergoing the same emotions. Strong friendships with conationals increased self-esteem. Friendships with host nationals facilitated international students' understanding of why people in the new culture behave and communicate in the way they do. Having host national friends was integral to the sojourner's adjustment process, and friendships with multinationals gave the sojourner a certain sense of commonality, a feeling of "we're all in this together."

Social Network Sites (SNSs). With the advent of the Internet, gaining social capital and maintaining social networks has taken on a whole new dimension (Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001). N. Lin (1999) maintained that "we are witnessing a revolutionary rise in social capital" due to the Internet (p. 45). Because the Internet transcends time and space, we can now easily maintain our bonds with our strong ties (Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001). Today, we can do so through e-mail, texts, tweets, and Skype. We can also enhance our ability to access information by easily expanding our network of weak ties through the use of SNSs such as Facebook.

boyd [sic] and Ellison (2008) defined social network sites as:

…web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. (p. 211)

Users of social network sites can post pictures and comments and can send messages to those on their contact lists. They can use these sites to interact with people they already know offline or to meet new people. Online tools, such as SNSs, provide users with powerful tools for accessing resources in their social networks. Facebook is the best-known SNS, but there are many others throughout the world, such as Orkut, CyWorld, Friendster, Xionei, QQ, Wretch, and Mixi.

Although early research suggested that the Internet socially isolated individuals (Nie, 2001; Vitak & Ellison, 2013), more recent research posited an opposing view. SNSs have revolutionized how people connect and interact with each other (J.-H. Lin, Peng, Kim, Kim, & LaRose, 2012). Donath and boyd (2004) found that SNSs could increase weak ties, explaining that today's technology is "well suited to maintaining ties cheaply and easily"(p. 218). Weak

ties, or bridging social capital, can function as important sources of new information (Mak & Buckingham, 2007; Ye, 2006).

Not only can students use Facebook and other SNSs to generate and maintain bridging social capital (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) but also existing social networks that users had prior to their sojourn can still be used for emotional support, or bonding capital, (Cemalcilar, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005). This increase in bonding capital aids in the student's psychological well-being. The other part of acculturation is sociocultural. Sociocultural adaptation is aided by interactions with host nationals (J.-H. Lin et al., 2012).

Students use Facebook to generate and maintain bridging social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). Ninety-seven percent of international students use SNSs and often use them to acquire everyday-life information (Sin & Kim, 2013). Steinfield, Ellison, and Lampe (2008) found that young adults used Facebook to maintain "large, diffuse networks of friends, with a positive impact on accumulation of social capital" (p. 444).

The directionality of interactions and social networks has been studied as well, with mixed results. The general assumption is that students use SNSs to meet new people. Indeed, McKenna, Green, and Gleason (2002) found that a substantial proportion of their study's respondents had formed close relationships with people they had met on the Internet. In other words, they had moved an online relationship offline. However, Stefanone, Kwon, and Lackaff (2011) found that the relationships in their study were first established offline and then maintained online.

For the past decade, social network theory in general has been used to explain the friendship patterns and social networks of those learning to adapt to a new culture. Results of some are:

- Kudo and Simkin (2003): The concept of friendship is different in Japan and Australia. Those acculturating to a new culture must learn to see host nationals as unique individuals and not as general representatives of the host culture if they want to become friends with them. This finding is important because international students recognize the need to make friends with host nationals to improve their language proficiency and to learn about the host culture. If they view all Americans as the same, for example, this study showed that it would be difficult to become friends with Americans. They need to see each person as a unique individual.

- Kashima and Loh (2006): Psychological adjustment of Asian students in Australia was explained by both host national and multinational ties. Friendship with host nationals increased cultural knowledge of the host country.

- Williams and Johnson (2011): Students who feel connected to a host country's social network experience less acculturative stress.

Research involving the specific use of SNSs in the past decade is below:

- C. Yang, Wu, Zhu, and Southwell (2004): Chinese students use the Internet to stay connected to friends and family in China while also gaining information about their new host culture.

- Peeters and D'Haenens (2005): Immigrants use media to seek information about their country of origin as well as to become acculturated to their host country.

- Gezduci and D'Haenens (2007): Using media in the host country can add to one's bridging capital, or weak ties.

- Al Omoush, Yaseen, and Alma'aitah (2012): The majority of Facebook users in the Arab world are male students ages 13-24. SNSs played a critical role in the so-called Arab spring.

International students' perceptions of their social networks are one of the factors that predict the level of acculturative stress they experience (Sumer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008). Greater social connectedness predicts less acculturative stress (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). It is important for international students to make new friends, particularly with host nationals, in order to enhance their sociocultural acculturation. It is equally important that they maintain their ties with their friends and families in their home countries in order to enhance their psychological acculturation. Becoming acculturated to the host country results in emotional well-being and feelings of being satisfied with life, thereby increasing the chances that the sojourner will stay in the host country until his/her goal of graduation is met. With the advent of social networking sites such as Facebook, international students now have an opportunity to begin connecting to others, whether to conationals, host nationals, or students from other cultures, even before they leave their countries, possibly contributing to their anticipatory adjustment.

While easing the acculturation of international students and their adaptation to a new culture was the goal of this research, the institutions that recruited these students have an obligation to provide support to them so that they can achieve their personal goals of learning English and graduating from an American university. To this end, we turn to research on student retention and orientation programs.

Student Retention

Approximately one-quarter of the students entering four-year institutions leave at the end of their freshman year (Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000; Radford, Berkner, Wheeless, & Shepherd, 2010), and student retention has been of interest to researchers for over 40 years. When this research first began, student retention, or the lack thereof, was viewed as a reflection of an individual's personality, motivation, and skills. Students did not graduate because they were not as motivated, not as willing to commit themselves to the long-term goal of graduation, or not as academically prepared as those who persisted. "Students failed, not institutions" (Tinto, 2006, p. 2). This view began to change in the 1970s, during which time we began to realize that the institution itself plays a role in whether or not students stay.

Students come to college with a range of individual characteristics (e.g., gender, race, academic ability, family socioeconomic status) along with individual goal commitments (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, p. 60). "It is the individual's integration into the academic and social systems of the college," Tinto (1975) argued, "that most directly relates to his continuance in that college" (p. 96). The first year is especially critical.

According to a model created by Tinto (1975, p. 95), noted theorist of student retention in higher education, the academic and social systems into which students must integrate consist of several components. The commitment to one's personal goals is fostered by attaining desired grades and by the student's intellectual development, both of which lead to a student's academic integration into the institution. The commitment to the institution is fostered by the student's interaction with his/her peers and with faculty, which leads to the student's social integration. The stronger the individual's level of social and academic integration, the greater his/her

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subsequent commitment to the institution and eventual graduation (Milem & Berger, 1997, p. 386; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfle, 1986, p. 155).

Tinto (1993) modified his model to include student perceptions of institutional support. The successful integration of a student into the academic and social systems of an institution consists of three stages:

1. Separation: the student separates him/herself from the norms of family, friends, and other local ties.

2. Transition: once separation is successfully negotiated, the student enters the transition stage during which the new norms and behaviors are gradually learned even as the old norms and behaviors are being left behind.

3. Incorporation: the student has adapted to, and even adopted, the new norms and behaviors of his/her institution (Milem & Berger, 1997, pp. 388-389). Once incorporation has been reached, if indeed it is ever reached, the student has successfully become integrated academically and socially.

This process of becoming integrated socially and academically appears to parallel Berry's assimilation dimension of acculturation in which the sojourner gradually divests him/herself of the norms and behaviors of the heritage culture and assumes those of the host culture.

Social and academic integration, however, does not in and of itself guarantee persistence. Students need to feel that the institution supports them. If they perceive support from the institution, they will invest more energy into their studies and other activities, which will connect them even more to the institution.

Milem and Berger's (1997) study demonstrated strong support for Tinto's model, particularly that students' early social and academic involvement with the institution positively

influenced their perception of institutional support for them and that these perceptions influenced the extent of subsequent involvement with the institution. Their findings, moreover, showed that involvement with peers was a positive predictor of perceived institutional support, which led to persistence.

Those who study student retention and persistence feel that tertiary institutions need to find ways to connect students to their institutions and to each other, and these programs need to be carefully designed to accomplish these goals and not just tacked onto existing programs (Tinto, 2006). Because international students add so much to a university's economic health and campus diversity, it is imperative that the university find ways to support students as they become academically and socially integrated into their institution. One of the main reasons international students leave without graduating is their maladaptation, or their inability to adjust to the new environment (Gullekson & Vancouver, 2010, p. 316). Furthermore, as Sherry, Thomas, & Chui (2010) noted, "Institutions which do not address the unique needs of international students may leave these students feeling disappointed, unfulfilled, and even exploited" (p. 34).

Orientation Programs

Beginning the adjustment-to-college process early has positive effects on a student's persistence (Mori, 2000; Rice et al., 2012; Sam, 2001; Suanet & Van De Vuver, 2009; Zheng & Berry, 1991). Institutions have long recognized the need for orientation programs and have even established student affairs offices to coordinate such programs. Scholarship on the effectiveness of these programs is scant. Mayhew, Vanderlinden, and Kim (2010) conducted a study investigating the influence of orientation programs on social and academic integration, two dimensions found to be crucial to student persistence. Their study showed that attending an

orientation program had a direct effect on both the students' academic and social integration. Pascarella, Terenzini, and Wolfle (1986) also found that attending an orientation had significant direct effects on social integration and institutional commitment.

In Mayhew et al.'s (2010) study, White students were more likely than Black, Asian American, Latin American, and Native American students to feel their orientation programs contributed to their academic integration. On the other hand, African American and Latin American students were more likely than Caucasian students to ascribe their social integration to the orientation experience. Because international students are quite often non-White, one would expect their responses to parallel those of African American and Latin American students; however, international students did not credit an orientation program with aiding in their social integration within the institution. Mayhew et al. stated that a key limitation to their study of 14,208 students (both domestic and international) at 35 institutions is that they did not take into account whether these orientation programs were specifically geared to international students and/or led by facilitators with intercultural competence training (p. 339).

Because international students must not only transition from high school to college, or from college to graduate school but also must acculturate to a new culture and language, they face greater obstacles. Many institutions, however, seem to expect international students to adapt on their own (Kelly & Moogan, 2011, p. 24). Studies have found that having accurate prior knowledge of norms, customs, and values of the host culture aids in the sojourner's adjustment (Church, 1982, p. 549). As Black and Oddou (1991) noted:

The more accurate expectations individuals can form, the more uncertainty they will reduce and the better their anticipatory adjustment will be. The better the anticipatory adjustment, the fewer surprises and negative affective reactions or less culture shock

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individuals will experience, the more appropriate behaviors and attitudes they will

exhibit, and the smoother and quicker their adjustment will be. (p. 304)

If international students can learn about these potential problem areas before they even

leave home, their transition might be smoother and less stressful. Where are students currently

getting their information?

Students often get their information from agents in their country and from family and

friends. Much of this information is inaccurate and incomplete. Students also pore over their

American institutions' websites, but those websites are usually not designed to have all the

information an international student needs in one easily accessible location (Yu, Ph.D. student in

Educational Technology, personal communication, February 21, 2013). As a result of this

incomplete and often inaccurate information, students are likely to arrive with generalized and

stereotypical misconceptions about the United States, Americans, and university study at U.S.

institutions. The scholarship has shown that knowing about appropriate/inappropriate behaviors

and having practical information about the new environment *prior* to departure can ease

sojourners' level of anxiety, thereby aiding in their adjustment (Brown & Aktas, 2011;

Gudykunst, 1998; Gullekson & Vancouver, 2010; Murphy, Hawkes, & Law, 2002; Yakunina et

al., 2013). But, how can this pre-departure learning take place?

If conducting in-country orientations is not feasible, if mailing materials to new

international students is expensive and unreliable, and if asking friends/family or in-country

agents for information can result in misleading information–yet the scholarship shows that

having information prior to departure can aid in students' acculturation process–then how else

can we help these international students to begin their acculturation before they even leave for

the United States?

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Today's digital natives turn to the Internet for information. Because most international students are already using the Internet, it would seem that we could take advantage of this and consider a computer-mediated *anticipatory* orientation as a part of students' predeparture preparation.

Computer-mediated orientation offers a possible solution to this problem. Mediation in technology means the process of bringing about a result, in this case using a computer to conduct an orientation program. With the rapid advances in technology, we can overcome geographical and temporal restrictions very cost effectively by using the Internet as a means of sharing information across a wide range of cultures. But is online learning as effective as face-to-face learning? According to noted multimedia learning experts Clark and Mayer (2011), several studies have found that online learning can be as effective as learning in a classroom.

Numerous studies can be found on the effectiveness of online technologies on acculturation, but all of these studies were undertaken with international students who were already in their host countries. Even though educators such as Murphy, Hawkes, and Law (2002) have recommended Web-based orientation programs for international students since 2002, in searches using Google, Google Scholar, and the online databases at the University of Kansas, no mention was found of any American university currently using an online orientation program for their international students. There are, however, such programs being used in the United Kingdom.

In 1999, the UK launched an aggressive campaign to recruit international students to its higher education institutions (Merrick, 2004). In order to retain these students, the UK institutions have revamped their orientation programs and their websites to offer more pertinent information to international students, both prospective and current. One of the first to do so was

the University of Southampton. Julie Watson, in its Modern Languages Department, was charged with the design of an open website titled *Prepare for Success*; this website hosts multimedia learning resources and features 23 different topics ranging from British food to types of classes found in British universities. The link is available to anyone, so students could conceivably access this information prior to their departure, although the intent of the website was an interactive exchange of information to better assist international students in their academic adjustment. The website has videos of international students describing their experiences in regards to the topic of discussion. A transcript is available, and there is an interactive comprehension exercise provided for each topic. In all the references cited for the website, and in articles written by Watson, no mention is made of how she decided on the 23 particular topics. In an e-mail, Watson explained that she had used her extensive experience with international students to decide which topics to cover (personal communication, April 5, 2013). She had been instructed to facilitate students' *academic* adjustment only and chose topics that she felt would aid them.

While *Prepare for Success* is very well done, and the University of Southampton's analysis of the data they have compiled shows that students find the prearrival information very helpful, this underscores the need for research into the areas international students themselves feel are the most problematic as well as on students' perceptions of how an online orientation would be received by those about to embark on their study abroad.

The overall purpose of this study is to help students acculturate to the United States with as little acculturative stress as possible. Acculturation is sociocultural, or learning to fit in and navigate daily life, and psychological, or maintaining one's emotional well-being. Sociocultural acculturation depends on the sojourner's familiarity with cultural learning, while psychological

acculturation depends on how the sojourner views the stresses s/he will encounter during acculturation. If an international student has realistic expectations of what s/he will encounter, his/her anxiety about the unknown should lessen. Another way to reduce acculturative stress is to have a strong social network consisting of close friends and family back home and adding American and multinational friends in this country as well.

American tertiary institutions need international students to enhance their finances and to provide needed resources in their quest for producing global citizens. In order to help international students persist to graduation–thereby adding to the institution's retention rate–an effective orientation program, beginning prior to departure and continuing upon arrival, is one way to help students begin to acculturate. We can take advantage of today's technology to create such an orientation, but first we need to discover what areas are most problematic for international students. To do that, I created a survey to ask students themselves what they wish they had known before they had come that might have made their acculturation a little easier.

METHOD

Research and Subsidiary Questions

The research questions drove the research design of this study. They were as follows:

Research Question 1

What do college-age international students in Kansas City and the surrounding areas wish they had known before they came to the United States in order to aid their academic and sociocultural acculturation and psychological acculturation?

Subsidiary Questions for Research Question 1

1. What do students consider to be the most important features of an effective orientation program?

2. What are the needs of college-age international students in Kansas City and the surrounding areas as far as acculturating to the United States?

3. How does what happens at these schools meet or not meet student expectations?

Research Question 2

What resources did college-age international students in the Kansas City metro area access prior to their departure for the United States?

Subsidiary Questions for Research Question 2

1. What role does the Internet play in students' "anticipatory adjustment" to living and studying in the United States?

2. What are students' perceptions of face-to-face versus online cultural learning?

3. How effective were these resources, both mediated and "traditional" (e.g., print material, talking to others) in preparing them for what they later encountered?

In order to answer the research and subsidiary questions, I needed to find out (a) what international students found most problematic in adapting to a new culture, (b) what kinds of institutional support they received and what perceptions they have of that institutional support, (c) what resources they tapped into prior to their departure and the effectiveness of those resources in terms of their "anticipatory adjustment," and (d) how familiar they are with various technologies as well as what access they have to these technologies in their home countries. I used three primary techniques to collect data related to these questions:

1. Questionnaires with close-ended and open-ended questions administered to international students from seven institutions in the Kansas City metro and surrounding areas,

2. interviews of 12 international students, and

3. a review of the orientation programs currently in effect in the institutions in which the participants study.

Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Studies

Because the data were quantitative and qualitative, this was a mixed methods study. A very brief summary of the three research designs is provided here. For much of the 20th century, the methodological orientation for social and behavioral science was a quantitative paradigm. Quantitative methods are techniques associated with the gathering, analyzing, and interpreting of numerical data. The worldview guiding quantitative research is that of positivism/postpositivism, or the science of facts and laws. Quantitative research explores research questions objectively and is interested in the common features of people, or a macroperspective of the features being studied.

Beginning with the last quarter of the 20th century, qualitative researchers began arguing for the qualitative paradigm and the use of narrative to construct the meaning of the phenomena

being studied. The worldview guiding qualitative research is that of constructivism, or understanding that reality is constructed both individually and socially. Qualitative researchers explore the lived experiences of individuals, providing a microperspective of these phenomena.

For many years, researchers in the social sciences waged an "either/or" debate on these two research designs; that is, research had to be either quantitative or qualitative. Beginning with the last decade of the 20th century, a third methodological orientation has arisen: mixed methods. Mixed methods has been defined as "a type of research design in which QUAL and QUAN approaches are used in types of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis procedures, and/or inferences" (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, p. 711). The worldview guiding mixed methods is that of pragmatism. Pragmatism rejects the "either/or" tradition and posits that knowledge is constructed and is based on the reality of the world we experience and live in (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 74). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) proposed a research continuum with QUAN at one end, QUAL at the other, and mixed methods in the middle. The mixed methods researcher studies questions of interest to him or her and chooses the best method to answer the question(s).

One of the primary reasons for mixed methods research is that the researcher can make more accurate inferences. To paraphrase Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009, p. 35), the consistency between the experiences of international students' acculturation (quantitatively described through the close-ended standardized questionnaire) and their subjective interpretations of these experiences (qualitatively determined through their responses to the open-ended questions and subsequent interviews) will make the inferences from the study much stronger.

Questionnaires

I offered two versions of the same questionnaire: a Web-based version using Qualtrics for those who liked the convenience of filling it out at home and, because of the potentially low return rate of online questionnaires, a paper-and-pencil version that I administered at each location. Having responses from over 200 students (126 online and 81 paper-and-pencil) enabled me to have more reliable statistics from a more diverse sample.

Dörnyei (2007) and Brown (2001), who made extensive use of questionnaires, cautioned against the low return rate of such instruments. That said, Shih and Fan's (2008) meta-analysis of Web-based questionnaire response rates found that, while the Web-based questionnaire response rates are definitely lower than those of mailed questionnaires, college students are the exception. My sample was of college students.

Originally, I had planned to obtain 100 completed questionnaires, but, based on my dissertation committee's recommendation, I raised my target to 200 in order to have more robust data from which to generalize. Because of the increase in the number of participants needed, I expanded my scope to include students from Emporia State University and Northwest Missouri State University in addition to the original institutions of the University of Kansas, Park University, the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the University of Central Missouri, and Johnson County Community College.

As noted in the literature review, scholarship has proposed that there are two domains to acculturation: (a) sociocultural (behavioral), or the ability to fit in, and (b) psychological (affective), or one's emotional well-being or satisfaction with life.

Sociocultural adaptation involves the learning of a new culture's norms, behaviors, and social skills. Psychological adaptation involves coping styles and social support and is usually

operationalized as depression. I used a questionnaire to determine how both domains factored into the acculturation processes of the participants.

As a novice researcher, developing a questionnaire about acculturation that was reliable and has external and construct validity was overwhelming, so I chose two instruments that have been used for many years in cross-cultural research: the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) and the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS).

Ward and Kennedy (1999) developed the SCAS in 1999. The SCAS has been refined and tested in numerous studies since and has been found to be a "flexible instrument…easily modified according to the characteristics of the sojourning sample" (Ward and Kennedy, 1999, p. 662). The instrument has been used in many cross-cultural studies through the years; Cronbach's alpha scores in these studies range from 0.75 to 0.95 showing that it has internal reliability. Participants are asked to indicate the amount of difficulty they experienced in particular situations using a five-point Likert scale (no difficulty/slight difficulty/moderate difficulty/great difficulty/extreme difficulty). The items in the SCAS are divided among three factors: (a) university/academic life, (b) social interaction, and (c) daily life. As such, it is close-ended and is therefore a quantitative data collection instrument. I did note one potential limitation to the SCAS: while students may rank certain items as being quite difficult, it is possible that they may feel that these items are also relatively unimportant to them. Therefore, I added a scale to each item where respondents ranked the degree of importance (not at all important/a little important/important/very important/extremely important). In addition, because I was interested in knowing how the participants experienced acculturating to the United States, I added a text box to each question so that students could explain their answers in more detail. These were open-ended and required qualitative analysis.

Psychological adjustment was assessed by the Zung (1965) Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS). The SDS consists of 20 statements that tap affective, physiological, and cognitive components of depression. Participants respond to each statement on a four-point rating scale (a little of the time, some of the time, good part of the time, and most of the time) to decide how much of the time the statement describes how they have been feeling during the past several days. The SDS has been used extensively in cross-cultural research and has consistently proven to be reliable (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). Cronbach's alpha scores in over a dozen studies range from 0.70 to 0.92. Note: my survey used 19 of the 20 questions; I chose to omit the statement "I enjoy sex as much as I used to" because I felt it would be offensive to many of the students. The scale for the SDS is as follows:

<46 normal

46-55 mild depression

56-65 moderate depression

≥66 severe depression

Additionally, to better address my own research interests, I added my own questions regarding orientation programs and information received prior to students' departure for the United States

Orientation Programs

1. Did the student attend an orientation?

2. Was it helpful?

3. Do they prefer online programs, face-to-face programs, both, either, or neither?

Resources

      I also included a matrix where students checked off where they got their prior
information from and the language they used (English or their native language). I then asked
questions about whom they would have liked to communicate with prior to coming to the United
States

Technologies

      The next section dealt with technologies. What access to these various technologies do
the students have in their home countries, which ones do they feel most comfortable using, and
which ones do they prefer using?

Demographic Questions

      Finally, demographic questions were asked regarding gender, country of origin, length of
residence in the United States, type of English language program, marital status, and whether the
student was an undergraduate or a graduate student.

      To summarize, the questionnaire was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To assess the extent to which students were experiencing psychological adjustment
  problems at the time of the survey,

- To assess the extent to which students experienced or were experiencing sociocultural
  adjustment problems,

- To assess the importance students attach to items of sociocultural adjustment,

- To assess the importance students attach to orientation programs,

- To identify what resources students used in their countries to obtain information about
  the United States prior to their departure,

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- To explore whether demographic and other variables have an impact on the above measures, and

- To assess how familiar students are with various technologies and what access they have to these technologies in their home countries.

Pilot Testing

Once I had the approval of my committee and the IRB, I pilot tested the questionnaire with seven students and made some minor adjustments to wording based on their recommendations.

<div align="center">

Survey Participants

</div>

Because of the contacts I have developed over the years, I was successful in surveying 207 international students from the following institutions/organizations:

- Emporia State University

- Johnson County Community College

- Northwest Missouri State University

- Park University/Language Consultants International

- The University of Central Missouri

- The University of Kansas

- The University of Missouri–Kansas City

This was a convenience sample because I used international students at only the institutions/organizations where I was granted access. Because the questionnaire was in English, only those students who were fairly proficient in English were selected to participate. The directors of the English language programs and/or the International Student Services offices at these institutions/organizations made the determination as to which of their students were

proficient enough to fill out a questionnaire in English. Thus, the sample was comprised of (a) students who were taking all upper-level English language classes, (b) students who were taking some upper-level English language classes and some academic classes, (c) students who had exited the English language program and were taking all academic classes, and (d) students who never took English language classes and went directly into academic classes.

After obtaining IRB approval from the various institutions, I contacted the directors of the English language programs at these schools by telephone and e-mail to explain my research and to ask if they would be willing to allow me access to their students. I followed up this initial contact with a personal visit to classrooms to explain my research, answer questions, and ask for volunteers. I also gathered orientation materials at this time. Some instructors put the link to the questionnaire on their web page; others had me ask volunteers to write their e-mail addresses on a paper. I later sent the link to the questionnaire to these addresses and then shredded the paper with the addresses in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

If I had limited myself to just one institution, I might not have gotten 200 respondents and might also unwittingly have used a biased sample that is unique for some reason and not at all like other samples. Having responses from students from more than one institution therefore allowed me to conduct analyses on each sample and on the total in order to increase the possibility that the results can be generalized to other populations.

The demographic information on the respondents is presented in Table 2. A little over 200 questionnaires were completed. The modal respondent is a single Asian or Middle Eastern male undergraduate, 20-23 years of age, who has been in the United States more than eighteen months and is taking all ESL classes. According to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Student and Exchange Visitor Program, in 2015 55% of the international students

in the United States were male, and 45% were female. In my study, 60% were male, and 40%

were female, so my respondents reflected the national trend.

Table 2

Descriptive Data of the Participants

	N	%
Gender		
Male	124	59.9
Female	83	40.1
Age		
<20	26	12.7
20-23	81	39.5
27-28	57	27.8
>28	41	20.0
Marital Status		
Married with no children	23	11.2
Married with children	27	13.1
Single	156	75.7
Length of Time in U.S.		
<3 months	53	25.9
3-6 months	30	14.6
7-12 months	36	17.6
13-18 months	16	7.8
>18 months	70	34.1
Level of Education		
Undergraduate student	131	63.9
Graduate student	74	36.1
Region of the World		
Middle East	75	36.8
Asia	76	37.2
South America	30	14.7
Europe	14	6.9
Africa	9	4.4
Type of English Program		
No ESL classes taken	53	26.0
Exited ESL program	51	25.0
Combination ESL and academic classes	40	19.6
All ESL classes	60	29.4

Data Analysis

I began administering the questionnaire in February, 2014. Qualtrics downloaded data directly into SPSS. I manually entered the pencil-and-paper questionnaires into SPSS. Data analysis involved the following:

1. Use of descriptive statistics from the demographic questions to create a profile of respondents,

2. Determination of mean item scores and standard deviations,

3. Mapping mean item scores onto the three scale labels (university/academic life, social interaction, and daily life) to determine which items were perceived to be most/least difficult and most/least important,

4. Grouping demographic information into categories in order to conduct a series of t tests with the demographic information that has two categories and F tests on the other demographic questions, and

5. Running post hoc tests to determine where the differences lie.

I conducted correlations between each of the two scales (SCAS and SDS) and the demographic variables and looked at simple effects to determine whether there appeared to be any interactions in order to understand the data better.

After analyzing the quantitative results, I also coded and categorized the open-ended responses. I used the same three factors (university/academic life, social interaction, and daily life) and first studied all answers to individual items in the SCAS and then all answers to all items within each category to determine if there should be additional, or other, categories. I also grouped responses based on gender, length of residence, and country of origin to see if I

discerned any commonalities. The data from the quantitative analyses appear in the Findings

section that follows; the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Analysis of Comments Made on the Survey Questions

Text boxes were provided on the survey in order for participants to explain or to

elaborate on their answers to each item. I copied these items into charts labeled Basic Needs

Difficulty/Importance, Academic Difficulty/Importance, and Communication and Social Skills

Difficulty/Importance. I ranked these in the order of difficulty from least to most and of

importance from least to most. I then read over the comments several times to determine if there

were common answers cited and made a list of them. The areas most frequently cited were

accommodations, transportation, weather, food, clothing, health care, visa and work regulations,

writing academic essays, plagiarism, cultural differences, and what is in the area surrounding the

school. I also created charts labeled Resources Used, People I Wanted to Talk to, Technology,

and Orientations. I drew from the information in all these charts to form interview questions.

Interviews

Once I analyzed the results from the questionnaire, I began interviewing international

students using open-ended questions, which I developed on the basis of the results of the

quantitative analyses. The purpose of these interviews was to delve more deeply into the lived

experiences of acculturation among the participants. In terms of my sample, ideally, I wanted to

have a mix of those who had been more successful vs. those who had been less successful at

adapting, male and female, and those from a public/research institution vs. those from a small

private liberal arts school. Additionally, I had hoped to interview those who felt adept at using

technology and those who did not. Unfortunately, the proposed matrix did not work out for a

number of reasons that arose upon analysis of the quantitative data. First, a large majority of the

respondents considered themselves to be digital natives. (This will be explained further in the Findings section). Also, a series of one-way ANOVAS revealed that there was no statistical difference in the means for public/private institutions, or for small/large institutions. Gender also was found not to be a significant variable. Instead, region definitely produced some statistically significant results.

Because of the findings above, I adjusted my interviewee selection to focus on an equal representation of home countries. I interviewed four students from the Middle East (36.8% of respondents), four from Asia (37.2% of respondents), and four from Latin America (14.7% of respondents). I interviewed two males and two females from each region; six were undergraduates and six were graduate students. I also chose interviewees who approached the extremes on the SCAS and SDS in order to understand more fully the acculturation experiences of those who appeared to be acculturating well and those who appeared to be having difficulties, either socioculturally, psychologically, or both. I recorded, transcribed, and coded these interviews.

After transcribing the interviews, I read the transcriptions many times looking for themes. I formed the broad categories of daily life difficulty, academic difficulty, communication and social skills difficulty, children, friends/family, cultural differences, resources, technology and orientation. I created a matrix for each category and copied and pasted comments from each interviewee relative to the category. From these matrices, I compiled a list of what students felt it was important to know yet sometimes had difficulty doing; whether friends/family were used as a resource, for emotional support, or both; what resources were used and how effective they were; what technologies students routinely used; what effect children had on their difficulties acculturating; and what the most effective orientation would consist of.

A sample of the open-ended interview questions can be found in Appendix B; a sampling of the interview analysis is provided in Appendix C.

Review of Orientation Programs

After analyzing the data from the questionnaire and the interviews, I reviewed orientation materials from each participating institution. I looked for the kinds of information they provide international students prior to their arrival and immediately upon their arrival to see if it is the information the students themselves feel they need. I reviewed the written materials the schools provided me as well as their websites that are accessible to anyone.

I created a matrix of the categories interviewees had identified as important yet sometimes difficult to do. They were accommodations, transportation, weather, food, clothing, health care, visa and work regulations, writing academic essays, plagiarism, cultural differences, and what is available in the area surrounding the institution. I checked off which of these areas were covered in the school's orientation materials that they had provided me. Then, I went to the school's website to see if any of these categories were addressed.

Methodological Concerns

The response rate for electronically delivered questionnaires is generally lower than for face-to-face questionnaires. Because of this, I needed a large pool of international students from which to draw in order to end up with my goal of 200 responses and, therefore, had to expand my search to include two other universities further from Kansas City than I had originally planned.

Because the questionnaire was in English, the respondents needed to be fairly proficient in English. The directors of the English language program at each institution made the

determination as to which of their levels would be able to understand the survey questions. Even with this screening, there were over 300 questionnaires that were not completed and, therefore, could not be used. I assume these were not completed either because the respondents' level of English was not proficient enough or the length of the questionnaire was daunting. In fact, most respondents took about 40 minutes to finish the questionnaire (data from Qualtrics).

For the interviews, some of the interviewees were former students of mine, but one-half of the interviewees were pulled from the survey based on their region, gender, and their willingness to be interviewed. Because they were unknown to me prior to the interview, it is highly likely that they are more extraverted, a personality trait for which I could not control.

In order to answer my research questions, I used a mixed methods design consisting of a survey, interviews, and a review of orientation materials provided to me by five institutions. Acculturation is both sociocultural and psychological. To assess how students have acculturated socioculturally, I used Kennedy and Ward's SCAS assessing the difficulties of daily life, academic life, and communication/social skills. To this, I added a scale for students to assess the importance of these same activities. To assess how students are acculturating psychologically, I used Zung's Self-rating Depression Scale. I also added questions about resources used to get information prior to coming to the United States, people students would have liked to talk to before coming, technologies, and demographic information. After analyzing the statistical data, I formulated questions to interview twelve students. Using the data from the survey and the interviews, I made a list of what students would have liked to have known and examined orientation materials and school websites to see if they addressed the issues the students felt are most important. In the end, using mixed methods and having information that is both numerical and descriptive in form has allowed me to more fully answer my research questions and

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subsidiary questions than either the quantitative or qualitative approach alone. As a result, I have

a much more robust and nuanced understanding of what international students wish they had

known before coming to the United States, in addition to what their needs are as far as

anticipatory adjustment.

FINDINGS

This study sought to address two main, and several subsidiary, research questions.

Research Question 1. What do college-age international students in Kansas City and the surrounding areas wish they had known before they came to the United States in order to aid their academic and sociocultural acculturation and psychological acculturation?

Subsidiary questions:

1a. What do students consider to be the most important features of an effective orientation program?

1b. What are the needs of college-age international students in Kansas City and the surrounding areas as far as acculturating to the United States?

1c. How does what happens at these schools meet or not meet student expectations?

Research Question 2. What resources did college-age international students in the Kansas City metro access prior to their departure for the United States?

Subsidiary questions:

2a. What role does the Internet play in students' "anticipatory adjustment" to living and studying in the United States?

2b. What are students' perceptions of face-to-face versus online cultural learning?

2c. How effective were these resources, both mediated and "traditional" (e.g., print material, talking to others) in preparing them for what they later encountered?

In this section, the findings are presented in the order of the research questions, first providing the quantitative findings with accompanying tables and then presenting a summary of the qualitative findings.

The comments on the questionnaires and the interviews uncovered four themes:

1. What is most problematic for international students in their daily lives, in their academic lives, and in their interactions with others

2. Institutional support in the form of orientation

3. Resources used prior to and after arriving in the United States

4. Technologies used by students

These themes will be elaborated on in relation to the research questions.

To answer Research Question 1a (*What do students consider to be the most important features of an effective orientation program?*), I used the SCAS, which asked respondents to rank the difficulty of various everyday activities in three categories: (a) basic needs and daily life, (b) academic/university life, and (c) communication and social skills. Respondents answered using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (no difficulty/slight difficulty/moderate difficulty/great difficulty/extreme difficulty). The specific activities with their respective means and standard deviations are found in Table 3, specifically the data labeled Difficulty. The data show that finding their way around the city was the most difficult activity in basic needs and daily life (mean = 2.73), while buying daily necessities was the least difficult (mean = 1.88). As for academic/university life, writing papers was judged to be the most difficult (mean = 2.87), while dealing with staff at the institution was the least difficult (mean = 2.33). In social interactions (communication and social skills), understanding American jokes was the most difficult (mean = 3.19), while making friends with people of other cultures was the least difficult (mean = 2.36).

I added a scale asking students to rank the importance of these same activities also using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (not at all important/a little important/important/very important/extremely important). These results are also found in Table 3 below, labeled Importance. Responses indicated that buying daily necessities is the most important daily activity (mean = 3.97),

whereas going to restaurants is the least important (mean = 3.18). For the category academic/university life, understanding lectures is most important (mean = 4.41) and dealing with bad service at the university is the least important (mean = 3.62). A surprising finding for this category is the relatively low ranking students gave the importance of "expressing your ideas in class" (mean = 4.15). This was unexpected because class discussion and participation in American universities and colleges is generally a part of the grade. Because students did not rank this near the top of importance, they need to be told how the American educational system differs from what they are used to.

Meyer (2001) suggested that orientation should begin before students leave their countries and should provide information about students' basic needs and how they can meet those needs in the United States (p. 66). An effective orientation should attempt to address what students consider important yet difficult to do. For example, according to the survey responses, in the category of basic needs and daily life, finding one's way around the city is not only difficult, but also important to participants, indicating the need for an orientation that would involve discussing transportation and available stores in the area. For the category of academic/university life, writing papers is considered difficult yet important, so an introduction to American academic writing would be deemed appropriate. For the category of communication/social skills, making American friends was cited as important yet difficult to do. An orientation should thus provide lists of campus organizations and athletic intramural sports that students could join.

Table 3

Academic and Sociocultural Acculturation

		Range 1-5			
		Difficulty		Importance	
Basic needs					
Enjoying your favorite leisure activities	N=278	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.20	1.172	3.49	1.097
Finding your way around the campus	N=277	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		1.97	1.127	3.76	1.199
Finding your way around the city	N=278	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.73	1.144	3.63	1.224
Buying daily necessities	N=276	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		1.88	1.131	3.97	1.160
Going shopping	N=278	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.37	1.337	3.56	1.205
Going to restaurants	N=278	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.35	1.290	3.18	1.266
Academic/University life					
Writing papers	N=240	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.87	1.109	4.29	.935
Expressing your ideas in class	N=240	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.59	1.214	4.15	.933
Understanding what is required of you	N=240	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.39	1.148	4.24	1.005
Dealing with staff	N=242	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.23	1.121	4.00	1.086
Understanding lectures	N=243	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.33	1.093	4.41	.912
Reading course materials	N=243	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.30	1.166	4.34	.970
Getting used to teaching methods	N=243	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.28	1.115	4.10	1.023
Dealing with bad service at the university	N=242	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.56	1.239	3.62	1.280
Communication/social skills					
Making friends with people of other cultures	N=228	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.36	1.217	3.83	1.087
Making American friends	N=228	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.98	1.342	3.84	1.098
Understanding American jokes	N=229	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		3.19	1.294	3.15	1.264

(continued)

Table 3: Academic and Sociocultural Acculturation (continued)

Communication/ social skills		Range 1-5			
		Difficulty		Importance	
Understanding the local accent	N=229	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.69	1.259	3.78	1.216
Dealing with someone rude	N=228	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		3.11	1.270	3.32	1.376
Dealing with living away from your family	N=229	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.90	1.347	3.88	1.173
Dealing with people in authority	M=228	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.43	1.134	3.68	1.126
Dealing with people being physically close to y ou	N=226	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		2.45	1.289	3.48	1.254

What Students Would Like in an Orientation

Also, to address RQ1a, respondents were asked which kind of orientation they preferred: face-to-face only, online only, a combination of the two, either, or neither. A majority (41.5%) preferred a combination of face-to-face and online, with online only preferred the least (13.5%). Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Kind of Orientation Preferred

Kind	N	%
Face-to-face only	67	32.4
Online only	28	13.5
Combination	86	41.5
Either	21	10.5
Neither	5	2.4

The qualitative data from the interviews and the comments on the questionnaire corroborated the quantitative findings while providing a more nuanced look at what students

expect from an orientation. First of all, and as illustrated in Table 4, 97.9% of the students surveyed favor some kind of orientation. This was reflected in the interviews as well: all 12 students expressed interest in an online orientation they could begin in their countries prior to arriving in the United States, covering the general topics above (what they deemed "urgent") and then continuing with a face-to-face orientation that would go on for several weeks or months once they arrived. Overall, students in their interviews also expressed concerns with accommodations, transportation, weather, food, clothing, the health care system, visa and work regulations, learning to write an essay or research paper, plagiarism, and understanding some of the basic cultural differences between their culture and American culture. The qualitative findings with respect to what participants deemed both important and difficult are presented, below, in four categories: daily life/basic needs, academics, communication/social skills, and preferred resources.

Daily Life/Basic Needs

In a prearrival orientation, students expressed that they would like information about dormitories and nearby apartments in safe neighborhoods along with pertinent information such as costs for the various dormitories and meal plans as well as contact information for the apartments.

They told me that they would like information about stores, banks, pharmacies, and restaurants that are accessible to the institution. The expectation that many students would probably end up cooking many of their meals, they felt, needed to be explicitly stated. Students would like a list of ethnic grocery stores in the area along with their addresses and contact information. Information about public transportation, or the lack thereof, needs to be clearly spelled out. As one student noted, "I didn't have a car in the beginning. I lived in the dorm for

one-and-a-half years, and I didn't have a car. I didn't know there is no public transportation."

Another student summed this up by saying, "Transportation? It means most of the time I was in my room because I didn't have anybody to take me. I didn't have a car. I didn't have anybody to transport me around."

Although students are easily able to look up average temperatures online, most told me that they did not and were, therefore, surprised by the cold winter. They often do not have clothes that are suitable for cold temperatures and wished they had been told that they would need to buy some warm clothes once winter arrives. As one student noted, ""I know about the cold winter, but it is hard for us to feel it exactly until we come." Another student commented, "The first year I was here, we had a lot of snow. I wasn't expecting that."

Five of the 12 interviewees expressed to me that the health care system in the United States is very confusing to students, as most come from a nationalized health care system. One student noted, "Medical care is another thing that shocked me. Insurance doesn't pay for anything. We need to know these things. We need someone to tell us to go to urgent care and not the emergency room." Another student related, "My first week here was horrible, just horrible. I was sick. I had a fever. I was so surprised I had to pay money to the doctor. I have insurance, and I still have to pay money if I go to the doctor. I don't understand that."

Students related to me that they wanted to be able to understand the visa and work regulations so that they do not inadvertently break the rules and risk being sent home. Many students commented on the survey that they came to the United States thinking that they would be able to find jobs in order to help cover costs and were surprised to find out that their ability to work is severely limited by the visa regulations.

Academic Difficulty

Students felt that the American way of writing a paper is very different from what they did in their home countries. Since learning to write essays is a long process, they would like to begin writing early on and continue after their arrival with an instructor who can give them specifics about what needs to be revised instead of a general "This needs to be rewritten."

Students need to understand just what plagiarism is and its serious consequences if caught. One student noted, "I didn't know that in America copying and pasting is a big deal." Another expressed to me that "plagiarism isn't a big problem in my country. It's no big deal."

Communication/Social Skills Difficulty

Students in the study articulated to me their desire to meet Americans in order to improve their English and to learn about American culture. To this end, four of the interviewees requested (a) a list of clubs and organizations on campus with a brief description of what they do and when they meet and (b) a list of available athletic facilities both on campus and near the college. This list, one student suggested, should include any intramural teams the institution has.

Additionally, there were two specific cultural differences that were mentioned by many of the students I interviewed: (a) the practice of leaving home at age 18 and (b) physical distance between people in general. From what they told me, people from other regions of the world, such as Latin America and the Middle East, generally do not understand why Americans leave home at 18 either to attend college or to live independently. Two interviewees also mentioned not understanding the idea of nursing homes. As for physical distance between people, those students from Latin America and the Mediterranean did not understand that Americans like personal space, or as one student from Latin America put it, "Americans like their bubbles."

The students expressed to me that the American preference for independence is something that needs to be explained to international students.

Preferred Resources

Students expressed a desire to either talk to or e-mail someone who speaks their language, preferably someone from their country to get information about the school and the surrounding area. This was usually because they were not proficient in English. This was summed up by one student: "Part of the problem is many international students don't know much English, so answering questions in English isn't always helpful." Another commented, "At the beginning, I would prefer talking to someone from my country."

College websites generally have excellent information, but they are not always organized well. Having all the information an international student might need located in one place would be very helpful was one suggestion given by a student.

What a Prearrival Orientation Should Look Like

As to what form an online prearrival orientation should take, students professed an interest in something more than text only. One school has an online orientation that they expect students to do before they arrive, but one student noted, "The online orientation was just a textbook and not a very interesting textbook. It was all in English. We have to read some materials and answer some questions. Actually, that doesn't help us much." Links to pertinent information about the topics they are most concerned about, students felt, would be most helpful, along with a way to return to the home page. Having videos, especially of international students talking about these topics, would be interesting. One student suggested, "I think universities should make a short video and put it on the YouTube. Then potential students could look at the YouTube videos. The colleges could make a link on their website to their YouTube video."

Having pictures of typical American foods with their names and how to pronounce them were suggested by many students.

Although most students had not had any experience with online courses prior to coming to the United States, many expressed an interest in an online writing class to introduce them to American academic writing.

Students told me that they wanted to continue their orientation once they arrive and would like this to be face-to-face. They would like a schedule of topics to be covered with corresponding dates so that they can choose which sessions they feel they need. They also told me they would like conversation groups where they can discuss American culture, hopefully having American students in attendance as well. Ideally, several students said, the face-to-face orientation and conversation groups would go on for at least six months.

In relation to Research Question 1b (*What are the needs of college-age international students in Kansas City and the surrounding areas as far as acculturating to the U.S.?), just as I did for Research Question 1a, I interpreted "difficulty" that international students have in making a life for themselves in the United States as a need they have in terms of acculturation. And, for this question, I also used the results of the SCAS, which indicates that the greatest difficulties for international students in my study were (a) finding their way around the city, (b) writing papers, and (c) understanding American jokes. Furthermore, buying daily necessities and understanding lectures were deemed the most important aspects of acculturation to university life in the United States

In addition to the SCAS, results from the Zung SDS, which assessed the emotional well-being of students at the time they took the survey, serve to further identify these participants' needs. According to the scale, a score of 46 and above indicates moderate depression, a score of

31-45 indicates mild depression, and a score below 31 indicates no depression. In my sample, 1.4% of participants were moderately depressed, 23.7% were mildly depressed, and 74.9% were not depressed at all. The SDS scale has been used extensively in cross-cultural research and has been correlated with the SCAS previously; in my study, the correlation between the two scales was significant, but not high, r (209) = .214, p = .002. These figures indicate that the more difficulty a student has, the higher his/her depression score. In other words, the correlation of these two sets of scores suggest that, overall, the needs of international students in my sample, at least with respect to their well-being, are being met.

Relationships Among Demographic Variables

To further understand the relationships between students' needs and various demographic variables, I ran a series of independent samples t tests for gender and level of education on the overall daily life difficulty score, daily life importance score, academic difficulty score, academic importance score, communication difficulty score, communication importance score, and emotional well-being score. One-way analyses of variance for the same categories and marital status, region, English language classes, and length of time in the United States provided additional evidence of relationships between student acculturation and individual characteristics, evidence that is described in the following sections.

Gender. Females in this study rated academic skills higher in importance than males did (mean = 34.36 versus 32.02). Females also rated communication skills higher in importance than males did (mean = 30.11 versus 28.20). Depression scores were similar for both genders (mean = 42.42 for females and mean = 41.81 for males). Data are found in Table 5.

Table 5

Mean Scores for Acculturation by Gender

	Males N=124 Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40		Females N=83 Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t* value	*p*
Needs						
Diff	13.28	4.833	13.33	5.367	-.060	.952
Imp	21.42	5.033	22.13	4.632	-1.031	.304
Acad						
Diff	20.15	6.859	18.64	6.001	1.627	.105
Imp	32.02	6.976	34.36	5.944	-2.512	.013
Comm						
Diff	21.69	5.921	22.37	5.878	-.812	.418
Imp	28.20	6.222	30.11	5.650	-2.241	.026
Emot			Range 19-76			
	41.81	5.582	42.42	4.892	-.734	.464

Needs=Basic needs/daily life
Acad = Academic/university life
Comm = Communication and social skills
Diff = Difficulty
Imp = Importance
Emot = Emotional well being

Level of Education. As illustrated in Table 6, as far as basic needs difficulty, there were

no significant differences between graduate students (mean = 12.82) and undergraduate students

(mean = 13.55). In addition, as far as the difficulty of academic life, there were no significant

differences between graduate students (mean = 18.64) and undergraduate students (mean =

20.08). Furthermore, in the area of the difficulty of communication skills, there were no

significant differences between graduate students (mean = 22.01) and undergraduate students

(mean = 22.04). There were no significant differences between undergraduate students and

graduate students in the importance of those categories as well. Depression scores were similar

for graduates (mean = 41.32) and undergraduates (mean = 42.44). Data are in Table 6.

Table 6

Mean Scores for Acculturation by Level of Education

	Undergrads N=131 Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40		Grads N=74 Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t* value	*p*
Needs						
Diff	13.55	5.063	12.82	5.051	.986	.325
Imp	21.53	5.113	22.04	4.495	.710	.478
Acad						
Diff	20.08	6.695	18.64	6.319	1.510	.133
Imp	32.60	7.195	33.72	5.627	-1.147	.253
Comm						
Diff	22.04	5.950	22.01	5.816	.029	.977
Imp	29.06	6.253	28.96	5.718	.115	.908
Emot			Range 19-76			
	42.44	5.344	41.32	5.038	1.457	.873

Needs=Basic needs/daily life
Acad = Academic/university life
Comm = Communication and social skills
Diff = Difficulty
Imp = Importance
Emot = Emotional well being

Marital Status. As far as the difficulty of basic needs, there were no significant

differences among married respondents with no children (mean = 13.39), married respondents

with children (mean = 12.78), and single respondents (mean = 13.35). As regards the difficulty

of academics, there were no significant differences among married respondents with no children

(mean = 19.91), married respondents with children (mean = 20.89), and single respondents

(mean = 19.28). As to the difficulty of communication skills, those means, also, showed no significant differences for the three categories (20.74 versus 24.33 versus 21.79). However, these results suggest that children appear to be more of an influence on daily life difficulty than marital status as the mean of married respondents with children is lower (mean = 12.78) than either that of married respondents with no children (mean = 13.39) and single respondents (mean = 13.35). On the other hand, the mean of academic difficulty of those who are married with children (mean = 20.89) is higher than the means of those who are married with no children (mean = 19.91) and those who are single (mean = 19.28). In addition, the mean of communication difficulty is highest for those who are married with children (mean = 24.33). As to the importance of these three categories, there were no significant differences among married students with no children, married students with children, and single students. Findings for the category "marital status" are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Mean Scores For Acculturation By Marital Status

	Married No Children N=23 Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40		Married w/Children N=27 Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40		Single N=156 Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F value	*p*
Needs								
Diff	13.39	5.483	12.78	4.108	13.35	5.152	.154	.857
Imp	22.87	3.877	22.19	4.549	21.47	5.063	.957	.386
Acad								
Diff	19.91	7.109	20.89	6.612	19.28	6.490	.730	.483
Imp	35.17	4.638	32.07	7.631	32.83	6.714	1.544	.216
Comm								
Diff	20.74	6.348	24.33	4.715	21.79	5.921	2.797	.063
Imp	31.13	5.328	27.00	5.981	29.04	6.071	2.971	.054
Emot			Range 19-76					
	42.01	5.822	43.40	5.807	41.77	5.059	1.036	.357

Needs=Basic needs/daily life
Acad = Academic/university life
Comm = Communication and social skills
Diff = Difficulty
Imp = Importance
Emot = Emotional well being

Region of Origin. Region of origin definitely produced statistically significant results in the areas of academic/university life and communication and social skills (see Table 8). Middle Eastern and Asian participants experienced significantly more difficulty academically than do Latin Americans, Europeans, and Africans. It is noteworthy, however, that Middle Easterners and Asians also ranked these categories as being less important than did the Latin Americans, Europeans, and Africans. In addition, communication skills were considered most important by Latin Americans and least important by Middle Easterners.

Table 8

Mean Scores For Acculturation By Region Of Origin

	Middle East N=73		Asia N=78		Latin Amer N=30		Eur/Africa N=23		F value	p
	Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40		Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40		Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40		Needs Range 6-30 Acad Range 8-40 Comm Range 8-40			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Needs										
Diff	13.47	4.811	14.01	5.179	11.47	4.569	12.04	4.311	2.494	.061
Imp	21.51	5.434	21.56	4.491	22.73	4.653	21.17	4.589	.592	.621
Acad										
Diff	21.63	7.218	19.01	5.951	16.37	4.537	18.65	6.984	5.406	.001
Imp	30.92	8.142	33.64	5.040	35.33	6.723	34.39	4.164	4.405	.005
Comm										
Diff	22.36	5.753	23.04	6.003	20.37	5.089	19.26	6.047	3.435	.018
Imp	30.92	8.142	33.64	5.040	35.33	6.723	34.39	4.164	4.405	.005
Emot	Range 19-76									
	41.86	5.847	41.77	4.922	41.99	4.124	42.78	5.681	.229	.876

Needs= Basic needs/daily life
Acad = Academic/university life
Comm = Communication and social skills

Diff = Difficulty
Imp = Importance
Emot = Emotional well being

English Language Program. The options that participants had for the category of English language class were (a) took no ESL classes, (b) have exited the ESL program and are taking only regular academic classes, (c) are taking a combination of ESL and regular academic classes, and (d) are taking only ESL classes. As the figures in Table 9 illustrate, participants who had exited ESL and were taking only regular academic classes at the time of the survey as well as those who were taking a combination of ESL and regular academic classes ranked academics to be more difficult than those who took no ESL classes or were taking only ESL classes. Academic difficulty was the only category that was statistically significant.

Table 9

Mean Scores For Acculturation By English Language Program

	No ESL N=53		Exited ESL N=51		ESL & regular N=40		All ESL N=60		F value	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Needs (Range 6-30)										
Diff	12.62	4.708	13.20	4.771	12.75	5.276	14.07	5.433	.922	.431
Imp	22.09	4.302	20.20	4.552	21.90	5.212	22.40	5.263	2.194	.090
Acad (Range 8-40)										
Diff	17.26	5.854	20.80	7.424	20.37	6.464	19.60	6.001	3.074	.029
Imp	33.57	5.862	32.90	7.089	33.23	4.785	32.45	8.108	.277	.842
Comm (Range 8-40)										
Diff	21.13	6.403	22.31	5.627	22.08	5.744	22.22	5.675	.454	.715
Imp	29.25	6.486	29.37	5.720	28.17	5.267	29.27	6.491	.367	.777
Emot (Range 19-76)	42.57	4.651	41.52	5.299	43.02	6.111	40.97	4.698	1.599	.191

Needs= Basic needs/daily life
Acad = Academic/university life
Comm = Communication and social skills

Diff = Difficulty
Imp = Importance
Emot = Emotional well being

Length of time in the U.S. The categories participants could choose from regarding the length of time they had been in the United States at the time of the survey were (a) < 3 months, (b) 3-6 months, (c) 7-12 months, (d) 13-18 months, and (e) > 18 months. The one category that correlated significantly for length of time was that of academic difficulty, in that the longer a student had been in the United States, at least up to 18 months, the more difficult academics became for them. Table 10 provides the results of statistical tests in this category.

Table 10

Mean Scores For Acculturation By Length Of Time In The United States

	< 3 months N=53		3-6 months N=30		7-12 months N=36		13-18 months N=16		> 18 months N=70		F value	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Needs Needs Range 6-30												
Diff	13.74	5.171	13.47	5.151	14.53	5.664	11.69	4.094	12.51	4.687	1.482	.209
Imp	22.13	4.256	22.03	5.321	21.89	5.646	20.50	4.099	21.46	4.983	.430	.707
Acad Acad Range 8-40												
Diff	17.13	5.008	19.87	6.511	20.14	6.450	21.00	7.174	20.66	7.255	2.649	.035
Imp	33.26	5.913	32.53	6.962	32.11	7.570	33.69	5.546	33.26	6.984	.281	.890
Comm Comm Range 8-40												
Diff	21.81	5.864	21.50	5.211	22.94	5.737	22.19	5.845	21.94	6.336	.299	.878
Imp	29.60	5.329	27.83	7.023	28.42	6.063	31.19	6.199	28.7	6.029	1.048	.384
Emot Range 19-76												
	40.89	5.207	41.11	4.227	43.01	5.940	42.28	5.197	42.63	5.229		

Needs= Basic needs/daily life
Acad = Academic/university life
Comm = Communication and social skills

Diff = Difficulty
Imp = Importance
Emot = Emotional well being

In addition to the independent samples *t* tests that were run to understand relationships between various acculturative and demographic variables better, I performed a series of two-way ANOVAS. The results of the tests demonstrate no significant interactions in the category of communication and social skills difficulties. However, significant interactions were discovered in the categories of difficulty of daily life and basic needs, academic difficulty, and emotional well-being. Due to time and space constraints, the tables below provide results of only those two-way ANOVAS with statistically significant interactions.

Daily life and basic needs: Region of origin and ESL program status. The interaction of region and ESL program status was significant as regards the difficulty of daily life and basic needs (p=.008) (See Table 11). Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among the means for region, with alpha set at .0125 (.05/4), $F_{(3, 77)} = 7.146$, $p = .000$, Adjusted R Squared = .193. Asian participants taking all ESL classes reported the most difficulty (mean = 18.17). Those that took no ESL classes, had exited the ESL program, or were taking a combination of ESL and regular academic classes had means that are similar (13.82, 11.60, and 12.06, respectively).

Table 11

Basic Needs Difficulty: Region of Origin x ESL Program Status

Region of origin	ESL program status	Range 6-30 F(15,199)=2.562 p=.008 Mean	SD	N
Middle East	No ESL	11.71	5.648	7
	Exited ESL	15.11	4.593	19
	ESL & regular	12.79	4.441	14
	All ESL	13.10	4.828	29
	Total	13.45	4.794	69
Asia	No ESL	13.82	4.761	28
	Exited ESL	11.60	4.323	15
	ESL & regular	12.06	4.815	17
	All ESL	18.17	4.579	18
	Total	14.01	5.179	78
Latin America	No ESL	10.00	4.163	7
	Exited ESL	12.78	4.893	9
	ESL & regular	13.33	3.786	3
	All ESL	10.82	4.854	11
	Total	11.47	4.569	30
Europe/Africa	No ESL	11.82	3.790	11
	Exited ESL	12.13	5.167	8
	ESL & regular	13.67	5.508	3
	All ESL	9.00		1
	Total	12.04	4.311	23
Total	No ESL	12.62	4.708	53
	Exited ESL	13.20	4.771	51
	ESL & regular	12.57	4.494	37
	All ESL	14.15	5.439	59
	Total	13.21	4.921	200

Difficulty of daily life and basic needs: Marital status x ESL program status. The interactions of marital status and ESL classes were significant as far as the difficulty of daily life and basic needs ($p=.012$) (See Table 12). Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among the means for marital status, as it appeared that students who were

married with no children had the most difficulty with daily life. The interaction was significant

due to an outlier. Once the outlier was removed, there were no significant interactions. The

ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between marital status and basic needs difficulty, F

(2, 21) = .609, *p* = .554).

Table 12

Basic Needs Difficulty: Marital Status x ESL Program Status

Marital status	ESL program status	Range 6-30 F(11,201)=2.832 Mean	*p*=.012 SD	N
Married with no children	No ESL	11.43	3.409	7
	Exited ESL	12.33	4.320	6
	ESL & regular	30.00		1
	All ESL	13.78	4.842	9
	Total	13.39	5.483	23
Married with children	No ESL	15.80	3.701	5
	Exited ESL	12.89	4.400	9
	ESL & regular	11.40	5.505	5
	All ESL	11.71	2.628	7
	Total	12.85	4.173	26
Single	No ESL	12.44	4.915	41
	Exited ESL	13.42	5.022	36
	ESL & regular	12.75	4.382	32
	All ESL	14.50	5.837	44
	Total	13.33	5.140	153
Total	No ESL	12.62	4.708	53
	Exited ESL	13.20	4.771	51
	ESL & regular	13.03	5.258	38
	All ESL	14.07	5.433	60
	Total	13.27	5.046	202

Difficulty of daily life and basic needs: Institution x ESL program status. The

interaction of institution and ESL classes on daily life difficulties was significant (*p*=.008) (See

Table 13). This interaction was significant due to an outlier. Once the outlier was removed, there were no significant interactions.

Table 13

Basic Needs Difficulty: Institution x ESL Program Status

| | **Range 6-30**   F(25,200) =2.189 | *p*=.008 | | |
Institution	ESL program status	Mean	SD	N
University of Central Missouri	No ESL	14.30	4.923	10
	Exited ESL	10.67	1.155	3
	ESL & regular			
	All ESL	17.07	4.287	14
	Total	15.33	4.715	27
Johnson County Community College	No ESL	13.67	3.559	6
	Exited ESL	12.29	3.989	14
	ESL & regular	13.50	6.403	4
	All ESL	9.90		1
	Total	12.68	4.171	25
Park University/LCI	No ESL	11.28	4.885	18
	Exited ESL	13.67	5.305	24
	ESL & regular	13.33	6.241	15
	All ESL	17.09	5.629	11
	Total	13.51	5.661	68
University of Kansas	No ESL	9.50	2.121	2
	Exited ESL	8.50	.707	2
	ESL & regular	13.55	4.906	11
	All ESL	7.83	1.472	6
	Total	11.05	4.500	21
University of Missouri–Kansas City	No ESL	13.60	4.506	5
	Exited ESL	18.67	1.528	3
	ESL & regular	8.75	2.500	4
	All ESL	12.42	4.640	26
	Total	12.68	4.703	38

(continued)

Table 13: *Basic Needs Difficulty: Institution x ESL Program Status* (continued)

Institution	ESL program status	Range 6-30 F(25,200) =2.189 Mean	*p*=.008 SD	N
Oklahoma State University	No ESL	15.00		1
	Exited ESL			
	ESL & regular			
	All ESL			
	Total	15.00		1
Northwest Missouri State University	No ESL	13.18	5.212	11
	Exited ESL	12.33	6.807	3
	ESL & regular			
	All ESL			
	Total	13.00	5.306	14
Emporia State University	No ESL	9.00		1
	Exited ESL	15.00		1
	ESL & regular	10.00	2.944	4
	All ESL	23.00		1
	Total	12.43	5.473	7
Total	No ESL	12.62	4.708	53
	Exited ESL	13.14	4.802	50
	ESL & regular	12.58	5.356	38
	All ESL	14.07	5.433	609
	Total	13.17	5.081	201

Academic difficulty: region of origin x ESL program status. A two-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship of students' region of origin and ESL program status on academic difficulty (See Table 14). Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among the means for region of origin. With alpha set at .0125 (.05/4), the ANOVA indicated no significant interaction among regions and ESL program status.

Table 14

Academic Difficulty: Region of Origin x ESL Program Status

Region of origin	ESL program status	Range 8-40 F(15,199) =2.264 Mean	p=.020 SD	N
Middle East	No ESL	18.14	6.414	7
	Exited ESL	24.95	7.145	19
	ESL & regular	22.14	7.336	14
	All ESL	19.48	6.900	28
	Total	21.39	7.303	69
Asia	No ESL	16.61	5.166	28
	Exited ESL	19.27	7.611	15
	ESL & regular	19.76	5.460	17
	All ESL	21.83	4.866	18
	Total	19.01	5.951	78
Latin America	No ESL	15.71	6.873	7
	Exited ESL	17.78	4.024	9
	ESL & regular	11.33	1.52	3
	All ESL	17.00	2.783	11
	Total	16.37	4.537	30
Europe/Africa	No ESL	19.36	6.697	11
	Exited ESL	17.25	7.086	8
	ESL & regular	23.33	6.028	3
	All ESL	8.00		1
	Total	18.65	6.984	23
Total	No ESL	17.26	5.854	53
	Exited ESL	20.80	7.424	51
	ESL & regular	20.27	6.615	37
	All ESL	19.54	6.035	59
	Total	19.40	6.573	200

Academic difficulty: institution x ESL classes. The two-way ANOVA of institution

and ESL program status was statistically significant ($p=.037$) on academic difficulty (See Table

15). Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means of

students taking all ESL classes. Interactions were significant, F = (5, 58) = 3.516, p = .008.

Even after removing an outlier, the interactions were still significant, F (4,57) = 4.154, p = .005,

Adjusted R Squared = .181. Students taking all ESL classes had the most difficulty academically at Park University (mean = 24.55) and the least at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (mean = 17.88).

Table 8

Academic Difficulty: ESL Program Status x Institution

| ESL pgm status | Institution | **Range 8-40   F(25,200) =1.809   *p*=.037** | | |
		Mean	SD	N
No ESL classes taken	UCM	17.20	4.264	10
	JCCC	22.67	7.474	6
	Park/LCI	17.50	5.953	18
	KU	12.00	4.243	2
	UMKC	19.60	7.092	5
	NWMS	13.91	3.673	11
	Emporia	17.00		1
	Total	17.26	5.854	53
Exited ESL classes	UCM	15.00	7.000	3
	JCCC	19.57	7.387	14
	Park/LCI	22.46	7.472	24
	KU	24.00	.000	2
	UMKC	26.00	7.810	3
	NWMS	12.33	1.528	3
	Emporia	24.60		1
	Total	20.90	7.468	50
ESL and regular academic classes	UCM	16.50	7.047	4
	JCCC	21.47	6.947	15
	Park/LCI	19.91	7.449	11
	KU	23.50	5.447	4
	UMKC			
	NWMS	18.50	1.732	4
	Emporia			
	Total	20.39	6.599	38

(continued)

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Table 15: *Academic Difficulty: ESL Program Status x Institution* (continued)

| | **Range 8-40   F(25,200) =1.809   *p*=.037** | | | |
ESL pgm status	Institution	Mean	SD	N
All ESL classes	UCM	20.21	4.726	14
	JCCC	8.00		1
	Park/LCI	24.55	4.967	11
	KU	18.33	4.033	6
	UMKC	17.88	6.199	26
	NWMS			
	OSU	15.00		1
	Emporia	25.00		1
	Total	19.60	6.001	60
Total	UCM	18.52	4.987	27
	JCCC	19.36	7.544	25
	Park/LCI	21.26	6.930	68
	KU	19.10	6.379	21
	UMKC	19.34	6.638	38
	OSU	15.00		1
	NWMS	13.57	3.345	14
	Emporia	20.00	3.367	7
	Total	19.46	6.574	201

Academic difficulty: Institution x region of origin. The two-way ANOVA of institution and region was significant (*p*=.017) (See Table 16). Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among the means for region of origin with alpha set at .0125 (.05/4). Asia had statistical significance, $F(7,74) = 4.901$, p = .000, Adjusted R Squared = .270. Park University was the most difficult academically for Asians (mean = 25.17), while Northwest Missouri State University was the least difficult for Asians (mean = 13.54). The other regions were not significant statistically.

Table 16

Academic Difficulty: Institution x Region of Origin

	Range 8-40	**F(21,200)=2.183**	*p*=.017		
Institution	Region of origin	Mean	SD	N	
University of Central Missouri	Middle East	16.60	3.782	5	
	Asia	18.95	5.196	22	
	Total	18.52	4.987	27	
Johnson County Community College	Middle East	23.00	16.971	2	
	Asia	18.50	6.164	8	
	Latin America	16.88	3.980	8	
	Europe/Asia	22.14	9.703	7	
	Total	19.36	7.544	25	
Park University/LCI	Middle East	22.92	6.966	37	
	Asia	25.17	5.458	12	
	Latin America	13.40	2.074	5	
	Europe/Asia	16.00	3.916	13	
	Total	21.27	6.995	67	
University of Kansas	Middle East	23.20	3.768	5	
	Asia	20.88	6.978	8	
	Latin America	14.75	4.713	8	
	Europe/Asia				
	Total	19.10	6.379	21	
University of Missouri – Kansas City	Middle East	20.23	7.952	22	
	Asia	17.17	4.355	6	
	Latin America	19.00	4.796	9	
	Europe/Asia	26.00	4.243	2	
	Total	19.77	6.792	39	
Oklahoma State University	Middle East				
	Asia	15.00		1	
	Latin America				
	Europe/Asia				
	Total	15.00		1	

(continued)

Table 9: *Academic Difficulty: Institution x Region of Origin* (continued)

Institution	Region of origin	Range 8-40 F(21,200)=2.183 p=.017 Mean	SD	N
Northwest Missouri State University	Middle East			
	Asia	13.54	3.479	13
	Latin America			
	Europe/Asia	14.00		1
	Total	13.57	3.345	14
Emporia State University	Middle East	20.50	4.950	13
	Asia	19.80	3.271	1
	Latin America			
	Europe/Asia			
	Total	20.00	3.367	14
Total	Middle East	21.63	7.218	73
	Asia	19.03	6.038	75
	Latin America	16.37	4.537	30
	Europe/Asia	18.65	6.984	23
	Total	19.53	6.625	201

Academic difficulty: Level of education x length of time in the U.S. The two-way ANOVA of level of education (undergraduate or graduate) and length of time in the United States was significant on academic difficulty ($p=.029$) (See Table 17). Follow-up tests were conducted on the pairwise differences among the means for undergraduates and graduates, with alpha set at .01 (.05/5). There were no significant interactions among undergraduate students. For graduate students, academics became progressively more difficult the longer they were in the United States until they reached 18 months, at which point the mean dropped slightly, $F(4, 73) = 4.169$, $p = .004$, Adjusted R Squared = .148.

Table 17

Academic Difficulty: Level of Education x Length of Time in the United States

Range 8-40	F(9,203)=2.183		p=.029	
Level of education	Length of time in the U.S.	Mean	SD	N
Undergraduate	< 3 months	18.15	5.319	26
	3-6 months	21.56	6.662	18
	7-12 months	18.30	6.242	20
	13-18 months	20.00	6.696	13
	> 18 months	21.25	7.353	53
	Total	20.09	6.719	130
Graduate	< 3 months	16.00	4.596	26
	3-6 months	17.33	5.614	12
	7-12 months	22.44	6.132	16
	13-18 months	25.33	9.074	3
	> 18 months	18.82	6.821	17
	Total	18.64	6.319	74
Total	< 3 months	17.08	5.040	52
	3-6 months	19.87	6.511	30
	7-12 months	20.14	6.450	36
	13-18 months	21.00	7.174	16
	> 18 months	20.66	7.255	70
	Total	19.56	6.598	204

Emotional well-being: level of education x ESL program status. The two-way

ANOVA of level of education (graduate or undergraduate) and ESL program status was

significant on emotional well-being (*p*=.026) (See Table 18). Follow-up tests were conducted to

evaluate the pairwise differences among the means for graduates, with alpha set at .0125 (.05/4).

Graduate students who were taking both ESL classes and regular academic classes reported the

highest mean for depression, while those graduate students taking all ESL classes reported the

lowest mean, *F* (3, 71)=5.340, *p*=.002, adjusted R Squared = .155.

Table 18

Emotional Well Being: Level of Education x ESL Program Status

	Range 19-76 **F(7,193)=3.152** *p=.026*			
Level of education	Type of ESL program	Mean	SD	N
Undergraduate	No ESL	43.75	3.998	20
	Exited ESL	41.88	5.619	31
	ESL & regular	42.56	5.923	32
	All ESL	42.18	4.780	39
	Total	42.46	5.186	122
Graduate	No ESL	41.85	4.925	33
	Exited ESL	40.88	4.755	17
	ESL & regular	46.83	5.601	6
	All ESL	38.28	3.240	16
	Total	41.24	5.027	72
Total	No ESL	42.57	4.651	53
	Exited ESL	41.52	4.299	48
	ESL & regular	43.25	6.008	38
	All ESL	41.04	4.710	55
	Total	42.01	5.149	194

Emotional well-being: marital status x ESL program status. The two-way ANOVA

for marital status and ESL program status was significant on emotional well-being ($p=.008$).

Results are reported in Table 19. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate the pairwise

differences among the means for married students with no children. There was an outlier in this

group; this was removed, and the test was run again.   By controlling for Type 1 error (setting

alpha at .0125, which is .05/4), the interactions for married students with no children were not

significant, F (2, 21) = 4.122, p = .033.

Table 19

Emotional Well Being: Marital Status x ESL Program Status

Marital status	ESL program status	Range 19-76 F(11,194)=3.022 p=.008 Mean	SD	N
Married with no children	No ESL	44.29	3.861	7
	Exited ESL	43.50	5.958	6
	ESL & regular	53.00		1
	All ESL	38.02	4.452	9
	Total	42.01	5.822	23
Married with children	No ESL	45.60	4.506	5
	Exited ESL	43.25	6.364	8
	ESL & regular	46.82	6.732	5
	All ESL	38.33	1.633	6
	Total	43.25	5.882	24
Single	No ESL	41.90	4.663	41
	Exited ESL	40.77	4.900	34
	ESL & regular	42.39	5.599	32
	All ESL	42.00	4.668	41
	Total	41.78	4.917	148
Total	No ESL	42.57	4.651	53
	Exited ESL	41.52	5.299	48
	ESL & regular	43.25	6.008	38
	All ESL	40.97	4.698	56
	Total	41.99	5.148	195

Emotional well-being: Gender x level of education. The two-way ANOVA of gender and level of education on emotional well-being was significant (*p*=.044). Results are in Table 20. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means for women and for men, with alpha set at .025 (.05/2). Surprisingly, there were no significant interactions among women, graduate or undergraduate. On the other hand, the mean depression score of male undergraduates approached statistical significance (*p*=.028); however, the effect was very small (Adjusted R Squared = .034).

Table 20

Emotional Well Being: Gender x Level of Education

Gender	Level of education	Range 19-76 F(1,115)=4.099 p=.044 Mean	SD	N
Male	Undergraduate	42.71	5.620	66
	Graduate	40.45	5.092	49
	Total	41.75	5.495	115
Female	Undergraduate	42.14	5.048	59
	Graduate	43.11	4.515	24
	Total	42.42	4.892	83
Total	Undergraduate	42.44	5.344	125
	Graduate	41.32	5.038	73
	Total	42.03	5.248	198

Emotional well-being: Institution x gender. The two-way ANOVA of institution and gender was significant (p=.039) (See Table 21). However, there were no significant interactions in the follow-up tests.

Table 21

Emotional Well Being: Institution x Gender

Institution	Gender	**Range 19-76** Mean	**F(14,196)=2.263** SD	*p*=.039 N
University of Central Missouri	Male	40.52	3.675	19
	Female	41.67	5.052	8
	Total	40.86	4.063	27
Johnson County Community College	Male	47.40	3.847	5
	Female	41.20	4.360	20
	Total	42.44	4.891	25
Park University/LCI	Male	41.49	6.272	42
	Female	43.62	5.271	23
	Total	42.24	5.985	65
University of Kansas	Male	44.17	4.622	6
	Female	41.67	4.670	15
	Total	42.38	4.685	21
University of Missouri – Kansas City	Male	41.99	5.779	29
	Female	41.01	4.067	8
	Total	41.78	5.419	37
Oklahoma State University	Male			
	Female	44.00		1
	Total	44.00		1
Northwest Missouri State University	Male	40.60	6.186	1
	Female	43.00	5.292	
	Total	41.29	5.850	1
Emporia State University	Male	41.75	4.646	4
	Female	49.67	5.132	3
	Total	45.14	6.122	7
Total	Male	41.78	5.625	115
	Female	42.42	4.922	82
	Total	42.05	5.340	197

Qualitative Data From Interviews

During the interviews, the theme of what international students found most problematic in adapting to a new culture was addressed. The comments from the survey and from the interviews are presented below according to difficulties in basic needs/daily life, academic/university life, and communication and social skills.

Basic needs and daily life. Students expressed to me that they were concerned about accommodations and how they would get from the airport to their institution and living quarters. They wanted a selection of accommodations, whether a choice of dormitory or where apartments are located, along with contact information. They expressed concerns about the cost of living and whether their scholarships/stipends/savings would be enough. Weather and the proper clothes to bring are another concern. Food was mentioned by every interviewee and in many of the questionnaire comments. Students enjoyed trying American food, but after a while, they missed their own country's food and found they needed to cook, which necessitated finding grocery stores and transportation to and from these stores. Most students indicated that they did not have cars and had a very difficult time getting to and from stores and entertainment. While the items on the questionnaire were designed to elicit how difficult it was to buy daily necessities, go shopping, go to restaurants, and get around the city, the responses most often given indicated these were difficult activities because there was no public transportation. One student commented, "When I came to here, I stay for one month walking. I walked to the grocery. I walked to take my kids to the day care. But it was really, really difficult." Another student said, "Another challenge is grocery stores. At first I didn't have a car, so you have to find somebody to come with you, to go there and to take you back." Numerous students put the

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comment "no car" or "no transportation" on the survey when responding to the difficulty of going shopping or going to restaurants.

Students wanted to know what was located at or near their school. Moreover, they would have preferred to be shown and not just told where grocery stores, pharmacies, department stores, restaurants, banks, and so forth, are. One student summed this up, "Tell them about the whole area. Take them on a tour. Show them everything. We don't know anything when we come." Another said, "Don't just talk–do. Show us things." One student shared that UMKC takes students who have cars to the Department of Motor Vehicles to get their drivers' licenses, while another student mentioned that Park University takes students who want a Social Security card to the Social Security office. They told me they appreciated this extra effort. Most students claimed they enjoy participating in athletics and wished they had been told where they could play soccer, basketball, volleyball, badminton, cricket, or go swimming.

Five of the interviewees brought up the health care system and mentioned how it was confusing to them, as the majority of the students came from countries where health care is nationalized. They did not understand why they have to pay for insurance and then have to pay even more when they go to the doctor or need a prescription filled. They did not understand what an Urgent Care Center is and, instead, usually went to a hospital emergency room. In addition, most students mentioned that they had no way to get to a doctor when they are sick.

Visa regulations and work rules are important for students to know and understand. They do not want to unintentionally fall out of status and risk being sent home.

Students are curious about American holidays and traditions and want to be included in these, particularly with Americans. They have learned there are cultural differences between the United States and their countries and want to know about these before being embarrassed

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because they did not know, for example, that we do not whistle at waiters to get their attention as they do in Venezuela or move our eyebrows up and down when we agree with someone as they do in Micronesia.

Academic and university life. Expressing one's opinion was difficult for many students to do, whether orally in class or in writing. Many students come from countries where the teacher does most of the talking, and students are expected to memorize and repeat back what was said.

Learning to write an American essay was cited as very difficult by all students. Graduate students in particular had difficulty writing research or scientific papers with citations.

All students felt they needed more help with their pronunciation, as many Americans, fellow students and professors alike, could not understand them and what they were trying to say. This was especially problematic when they had to give presentations or explain their opinions about something in class.

Plagiarism is not allowed anywhere, but if someone plagiarizes in another country, s/he is generally told not to do it again, avoiding severe punishment or penalty. That is definitely not the case in this country, and students felt this needs to be stressed with international students.

Communication and social skills. All students felt they struggle with the language even after being here for several years. They felt their accents and lack of vocabulary hamper their efforts to meet Americans. Pronunciation (already mentioned), slang, prepositions, and modals were cited as being difficult to master.

Students want to meet Americans in order to improve their English and begin to understand our culture. If students are taking all ESL classes, however, their contact with

Americans is limited. Even after they have exited ESL classes, their accents and lack of proficiency hinder their attempts to meet Americans.

Students find themselves in situations in which they do not know the proper way to behave. Examples abound: How much do you tip in a restaurant? How much at a hair salon? What do you wear to a funeral? Why do people look at me funny when I greet them with a kiss on the cheek? Why does everyone laugh when I ask the professor for permission to go to the bathroom?

To answer Research Question 1c (*How does what happens at these schools meet or not meet student expectations?*), I turned to the comments on the survey and the interviews. I also examined orientation packets for international students from five institutions: the University of Kansas, Emporia State University, Park University, Northwest Missouri State University, and the University of Central Missouri. In addition, I looked at the websites of these same five institutions. All institutions that participated in this study have orientations for international students that last anywhere from a half-day to several weeks.

In their written comments and interviews, students frequently indicated a desire for more information on accommodations, transportation, weather, clothing, food, getting around the campus, health care, visa/work regulations, writing academic papers, plagiarism, what is available in the surrounding area, and an introduction to cultural learning. And, although information packets from all institutions I reviewed contained campus maps, information regarding visa/work regulations, and information about health insurance and medical facilities available to students, students indicated that these are three areas about which they needed even more information.

All five institutions addressed most of the areas of concern for students and contained much of what students feel they need to know in order to ease their transition to American academic life and American culture. One interviewee commented, "They have an orientation for international students, so you know you are part of a community. You are not just alone." Still, the amount of information provided in the orientation packet varied greatly from institution to institution and only one, Park University, addressed all areas, even providing a section in the orientation materials on purchasing a car, getting a driver's license, and finding a place to get a car repaired. The section on interacting with Americans discusses greetings, names, friendships, equality, telephone etiquette, and dating, all of which speak to cultural learning. A list of holidays and a short description of how Americans celebrate them is given. International students are strongly encouraged to live in the dormitories on campus, but a list of nearby apartments with their contact information is provided. Terms such as "lease" and "security deposit" are explained, and a list of contact information for utilities is provided. Park University's was the most complete orientation packet of the five I examined.

As for the orientations themselves, they are always conducted in English. For a student who will be taking ESL classes, this means they are mostly incomprehensible. Some students commented that they didn't attend the orientation for this reason. As one interviewee explained, "I can't remember exactly what they covered because I didn't understand it."

For students who are not required to enroll in ESL classes, they often attend a general orientation with all other new students. These generally last a half-day to two days. Topics are usually university, campus, and dormitory rules, but do not offer much help beyond generalities. As one graduate interviewee noted, "[The orientation] didn't really cover much about your life

outside the institution." Graduate students at most of the institutions did not remember having any kind of orientation at all and felt they were expected to "figure things out by yourself."

Students indicated that they appreciated the printed materials and the campus tours, but they also wanted to be shown how to do things and where places are. Suggestions the students made were to show them how the campus busses work and to take them around with their class schedules to show them where their classes are; this is particularly needed for large campuses. Many survey respondents and interviewees suggested a tour of the area surrounding the campus so that they would know what stores, restaurants, etc. were easily accessible and within walking distance. Many students reported that they asked someone who could speak their language to take them to the bank to set up an account. Several students mentioned being very confused when they went to a grocery store for the first time. The choices seemed to be unlimited, and they did not know the English words for what they wanted. The interviewees with children were especially insistent that international students be shown where to go if they are sick and the difference between an urgent care center and the hospital emergency room. There were several comments on the survey suggesting fun activities like a picnic in the park so that they could begin meeting people.

As many students commented, school websites contain a wealth of information. Many of the questions students said they had were actually answered on the websites. Two problems stood out, however:

1. The websites are in English, which renders the content nearly incomprehensible to someone not proficient in English.

2. The websites are often cumbersome to navigate. Information for international students needs to be contained in one place so that students do not need to hunt through the entire site to find what they need. Often, there is no way to easily return to a previous page.

I examined five websites for the information international students say they would like prior to coming to the United States These websites were of the same five institutions that provided me printed orientation materials: the University of Kansas, Emporia State University, Park University, Northwest Missouri State University, and the University of Central Missouri. The website that contained the most information that I could find on the topics students specified was that of the University of Kansas. I had to jump around quite a bit as the information was not all located on the International Student Services page.

Unlike the printed orientation materials that Park University excelled at, their website has recently undergone a re-design. In their previous design, international students could go to the International Student Services page and find links to information about various topics (e.g. visa regulations, forms needed, medical facilities, how to get a Social Security card, and so on). All that is gone now. Students can get information about applying, on-campus housing, and meal plans. I was not able to find any information on the other topics.

From the data, it appears that ESL students, or those who at least started in ESL classes, felt supported by their respective ESL departments. One student noted, "I think what they do here at Johnson County Community College is fantastic. They have their orientation when you come here. One of the people from the International and Immigrant Student Services talks to you one-on-one about what you need to do and how to do it." An undergraduate student at Park University who first enrolled in all ESL classes said, "I think the orientation was good. It did help me to feel I could spend the rest of the semester here. They tried to explain what the

university is like. I felt Park is a really nice, safe, friendly school." However, a graduate student at Park commented that, since there was no orientation for graduate students, she went to the undergraduate orientation instead. Two doctoral students at the University of Kansas Medical Center said their orientation consisted of a day-long session on the ethics of research. A student who was at the University of Kansas's Applied English Center felt that the staff and the instructors were very caring and wanted to help her succeed. When she transferred to Park University, however, to attend graduate school, there was no orientation. She was not even aware that graduate classes are not held on the main campus but instead are held in downtown Kansas City. Once away from the nurturing environment of ESL classes, students related to me that they felt they are often left to fend for themselves.

Research Question #2 dealt with the resources that international students accessed prior to their departure for the United States. Research Question 2a dealt with the role that the Internet played in students' "anticipatory adjustment" to living and studying in the United States

The oldest respondent of the survey was 50, but fully 94.2% were 35 or younger, making them true digital natives. Indeed, when asked how long they had used computers and the Internet, several replied, "Since I was born." In the survey, on a scale of 1 to 9, students rated their expertise in computer usage. The mean score was 6.11 indicating that they feel comfortable with technology. Results are in Table 22.

Table 22

Expertise in Computer Usage

Rate your level of expertise		Min	Max	Mean	SD
Before you came to the U.S.	N=210	1	9	6.11	2.121
Now	N=210	1	9	7.21	1.579

Students were asked to rate their level of expertise with various technologies using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (never used/poor/average/good/very good). The lowest means were for learning management systems such as Blackboard (mean = 3.22) and teleconferencing (mean = 3.37). The highest means were for Web search engines (mean = 4.56) and e-mail (mean = 4.51). Results are in Table 23.

Table 23

Technology Experience

		Range 1-5			
		Now		Home country	
Learning management systems (Blackboard, etc.)	N=206	Mean 3.22	SD 1.353	Mean 2.88	SD 1.334
Microsoft Office Powerpoint	N=206	Mean 3.99	SD .924	Mean 4.08	SD 1.016
Microsoft Office Word	N=206	Mean 4.33	SD .764	Mean 4.34	SD .912
E-mail	N=205	Mean 4.51	SD .758	Mean 4.46	SD .814
Web search engines	N=206	Mean 4.56	SD .735	Mean 4.58	SD .734
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	N=207	Mean 4.29	SD .998	Mean 4.12	SD 1.105
Texting with smart phone	N=206	Mean 4.50	SD .871	Mean 4.28	SD .998
On-line videos (youtube, etc.)	N=206	Mean 4.37	SD .937	Mean 4.05	SD 1.128
Teleconferencing	N=207	Mean 3.37	SD 1.369	Mean 3.41	SD 1.319
Skype	N=206	Mean 4.10	SD 1.203	Mean 3.88	SD 1.291

If an online orientation could be developed, would students be able to access it in their home countries? The results were overwhelmingly positive. In addition, students were asked if they felt they had enough technology experience, and they did. Results are in Table 24.

Table 24

Availability of Technology in Home Country

		Min	Max	Mean	SD
1=strongly disagree					
2=disagree					
3=neither agree nor disagree					
4=agree					
5=strongly agree					
I did not have enough technology experience.	N=206	1	5	2.06	1.156
I did not have a computer at home in my country.	N=204	1	5	1.59	1.100
My school did not have computers for students.	N=205	1	5	1.74	1.120
I did not have Internet access at home in my country.	N=204	1	5	1.66	1.149
My school did not have Internet access.	N=204	1	5	1.82	1.167

One of the themes found in the comments and interviews was how familiar students are with various technologies as well as what access they have to these technologies in their home countries. For example, when asked how they would get information about a particular school or city if they had questions before coming, every interviewee said, "I Google everything" or words to that effect. Moreover, Wikipedia was noted as a major source of information by many students; more on the subject of Wikipedia as a source of information will be addressed later in this section. One interviewee explained, "If we Google something, the first webpage to pop up is Wikipedia, so you can start there."

The majority of respondents have computers and the Internet in their homes. Those who do not have computers at home have access to them at schools or at Internet cafés. One Latin American interviewee explained that students in his country are not introduced to computers until they go to a university. However, Internet cafés are ubiquitous and are staffed by people knowledgeable about the Internet, e-mail, and Microsoft Office applications.

When asked the best way to communicate with them when they are in their home countries and someone from the United States wants to send them information, all interviewees said that e-mail is best. If they do not understand the e-mail because it is in English, they can use Google Translate to get the gist of it.

Survey respondents were asked to list the technologies they use most frequently. In order of frequency, they are e-mail, What's App, WeChat, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, Facetime, Tango, and QQ. It should be noted that Facebook is not permitted in China, although other social media such as QQ are used. Many Chinese students set up Facebook accounts once they arrive here to keep up with fellow students and friends in the United States.

Research Question 2b (*What are students' perceptions of face-to-face versus online cultural learning?*) was asked to determine what kind of orientation program respondents preferred. As stated before (see Table 4), 97.9% of the respondents wanted some kind of orientation with 41.5% preferring a combination of online and face-to-face.

In the survey, students were asked to check off all resources they used to get information prior to coming to the United States in order to answer Research Question 2c (*How effective were these resources, both mediated and "traditional"--e.g. print material, talking to others--in preparing them for what they later encountered?*) Because I am interested in knowing how comprehensible the resources are, I asked respondents to check which language these resources were in, their native language or English. Students relied heavily on friends and family for information. They also used co-nationals who had either attended or were attending the institution in which they were interested. The institution's website and mailed materials were almost always in English, whereas friends, family, and co-nationals obviously spoke the student's native tongue. Results are in Table 25.

Table 25

Resources Used

Check all that apply.	N	Native Language	English	Did not use
Friends/family	211	175	28	8
People from your country who attend/have attended this American college/university	207	137	56	14
This American college/university's mailed materials	204	13	168	23
This American college/university's website	210	9	193	8
Agent in your country	199	107	51	41
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	203	54	117	32
E-mail	201	38	148	17
On-line videos	203	41	131	31
Local library	197	24	136	37
Books, magazines, newspapers	200	33	131	36
On-line chats	199	71	83	35

In addition, students were asked with whom they wanted to communicate before coming to the United States. Using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, (not at all/probably not/ maybe/probably/definitely), they rated eight categories of human sources. Respondents would definitely like to talk to a student from their country who either had studied, or was currently studying, at the institution in which they were interested. They were also very interested in talking to an advisor in their major. Results are in Table 26.

Table 26

People I Wanted to Communicate with Before Coming to the United States

Who	N	Percentages				
		Not at all	Probably not	Maybe	Probably	Definitely
Professors	209	16.7	12.4	22.0	16.1	29.7
Current student from your country studying at this American college/university	209	10.0	6.2	14.8	23.4	45.5
Current student from another country studying at this college/university	207	15.5	12.1	28.5	23.7	20.3
American student at this college/university	209	14.4	12.4	21.5	29.2	22.5
Student from your country who studied at this American college/university	210	8.1	6.7	13.3	26.7	45.2
Student from another country who studied at this American college/university	207	16.9	15.9	22.7	28.5	15.9
American student who studied at this American college/university	208	15.4	14.9	19.7	28.4	21.6
Advisor in your major	209	8.6	5.7	17.2	20.6	47.8

One recurring theme from the qualitative data is that students sought a variety of resources ranging in effectiveness as part of their "anticipatory adjustment." Sources most commonly cited include Wikipedia, the school's website and/or mailed materials, family, friends, or friends of friends.

Wikipedia was frequently cited as a good starting point for general information about a school or city, even though it was acknowledged that it could not be trusted to be 100% accurate. If students wanted more detailed information, they often linked to the sources posted at the bottom of the Wikipedia page.

School websites are trusted and, for the most part, provided a great deal of information to participants as regards the institution itself. Many students commented, however, that there is

little information about the surrounding area such as transportation, stores, restaurants, leisure activities, or religious services on the universities' websites. Graduate students in particular commented on the lack of information about apartments in safe neighborhoods nearby.

Over and over again, students commented that they received information from friends and/or family: "My uncle lived here ten years." "I ask my sister." "My cousin speaks good English, and he contacted the university for me." "There is only one high school on my island, so we know each other. I knew students studying here, so I came." "My brother was already here, so I came to live with him." Undoubtedly, two reasons these resources are preferred is because students do not have to struggle with English and because they trust their friends' and family's advice.

One unexpected finding is that various groups of students have set up websites at their respective universities. For example, there are large numbers of Saudi, Chinese, and Indian students in this country who have set up social media sites where students can post questions or requests. Indeed, many of the students in this study indicated that they rely on these sites to get rides from the airport and to have a place to stay for a week or two while they get moved into their own place. Through such networking, newcomers find compatriots willing to help with lodging, transportation, and finding their way around the city and the campus.

One student, in reference to the website her Saudi co-nationals use, told me, "We have a website where we can ask questions. It's not 100% accurate, but it helps." Another Saudi student explained, "I found my apartment through the Saudi club. They help all new students. We take them from the airport. The Saudi Club at KU took us from the airport to Lawrence. We have to help each other." Another described the usefulness of the Chinese website, "If there are many Chinese students at a university, they usually have a Chinese association and website.

They will help with our orientation even if the school doesn't do a lot. We have a group of Chinese students to help with the new students. They meet the plane and bring you to the campus. We can stay with them for 10 days or two weeks. And they help us with shopping. If you need a ride, you just ask on the website. If you need to know where a Chinese grocery store is, you can find out on the website."

DISCUSSION

As a result of this study, I found that international students see a need for an orientation, and many would like an online orientation they can begin in their countries and continue over a period of several weeks or months once they arrive in the United States In this anticipatory orientation, students would like information on what some students term "urgent" needs: accommodations, transportation, weather, food, clothing, the health care system, visa/work regulations, academic writing, plagiarism, and an introduction to such basic American ideals as the need for independence and for physical space.

In 2013/14, international student enrollment in the United States hit an all-time high of 886,052 students (Institute of International Education, 2014). Colleges and universities recognize the value of having international students in their classes since we are now living in a global economy. In addition to adding diversity and other worldviews to classrooms, international students add much-needed revenue at a time when funding for tertiary institutions is being slashed. In addition, we can hope that these students form positive opinions of the United States and Americans and can go back to their countries to share these good opinions, thereby promoting world peace. The goal of tertiary institutions, then, should not be just to enroll international students, but also to retain them through graduation. That said, international students are still an understudied population. In their study of international student retention, DiMaria and Kwai (2014) found that 63.6% of student affairs administrators had not made adaptations to services to meet the unique needs of international students. They quoted a Student Union manager, "It's like they [international students] come here and you turn them loose, but you don't give them a guide" (PowerPoint slide 43).

Throughout the course of this study, I searched for institutions that have an online pre-arrival orientation course for students. Last fall, I became a site reviewer for the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA). This organization is an outgrowth of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). CEA was founded in 1999 by English language professionals as a specialized accrediting agency. The purpose was "to provide a means for improving the quality of English language teaching and administration through accepted standards" (Commission on English Language Program Accreditation, 2015). The organization is now separate from TESOL and has accredited 300 institutions. [Note: The University of Kansas's Applied English Center is accredited; however, there are no universities or colleges in the Kansas City metro area that are currently accredited]. I sent an e-mail to the executive director asking if I could find out if any of the 300 institutions they have accredited have an online pre-arrival orientation since I had noticed during my reviewer training that this was highly recommended in one of their standards. She graciously consented to send my request to member institutions. The result? Only one university currently has an online pre-arrival orientation: the University of South Carolina at Columbia. The program director there told me that, unfortunately, they do not keep any statistics on this orientation and do not even know if any international students avail themselves of it.

Theorists and researchers in higher education retention, such as Tinto (1975), pointed to the first year as being critical to student persistence. All students go through a transition from high school to college, or from college to graduate school. This transition is even more difficult for international students because they often have to contend with learning another language along with learning about another culture, both socially and academically. Orientation programs

can help with this critical first year by laying the foundation for a student's successful persistence.

For fifty years, it has been assumed that Lysgaard's (1955) U-Curve Theory and Oberg's (1960) Culture Shock Theory are true. That is, that the beginning of a sojourner's stay in a new country is exciting, even exhilarating, and it is only after this "honeymoon" phase that problems begin to crop up, often leaving the sojourner disillusioned and anxious. In fact, researchers such as Selby and Woods (1966), Furnham and Bochner (1986), Suanet and Van de Vuver (2009), and Ward et al. (1998), among others, have shown that the most difficult time for sojourners is most often at the <u>time of entry</u>.

Gudykunst (1998) and his colleagues suggested that this is due to the sojourner losing familiar cues and being unsure of what to do and what is expected of him/her. Add to that the anxiety of not knowing where s/he will live or eat, whether or not s/he will have enough money, how s/he will get places, what will happen if s/he gets sick, whether or not s/he will make new friends, and the stage is set for acculturative stress. Mori (2000) found that the larger the gap between a sojourner's expectations and actual reality, the greater his/her acculturative stress. We need a way, therefore, to ensure that international students have realistic expectations prior to coming to the United States

The purpose of this study was two-fold: (a) to find out what college-age international students wish they had known prior to coming to the United States that might have eased their acculturation, and (b) to find out what resources students tapped into to get information about the school they were attending and whether or not these resources were effective.

As I worked with the data, I was reminded of Maslow's (1943) "Hierarchy of Needs." A person has to have the basic physiological needs of food, clothing, and shelter met before s/he

can move on to the need for safety and security. Once those needs are met, s/he can move to the need to belong and to have friends and, from there, to the need for esteem, achievement, and respect from others. That essentially sums up what my survey and interviewees told me. Students want to know where they are going to live and that it is in a safe area. They want to know where they are going to get food and what that food is called. They want to know how they are going to get from the airport to where they are going to live and, from there, how they are going to get around the town or city. They want to know what will happen to them if they become sick. They want to know the rules and regulations about visas, work, and school. Once these topics are discussed and explained, their next desire is to make friends.

I had wanted to discover if students would be interested in a pre-arrival online orientation. Although no one had heard of such an orientation, participants were overwhelmingly in favor of one and offered suggestions as to topics that they felt should be covered. I was gratified to find that there were, indeed, universal commonalities that international students felt would help them to acculturate. Based on these commonalities and on what the participants themselves told me, I have recommendations for topics to be covered in an online pre-arrival orientation:

- Accommodations: For those students who will live in dormitories, provide pictures of rooms and common areas along with a list of amenities (e.g. kitchen, laundry facilities, common areas for relaxing). Include a price list for the various dormitories and anything else that may not be included in those prices.

    For those students who will live in an apartment, provide names, addresses, and e-mail addresses of apartments in safe neighborhoods near the campus. Include an explanation of terms such as lease, security deposit, pet deposit, and utility companies.

Have a list of utility companies, including Internet service providers, with their contact information, and explain whether or not deposits will be required.

- Transportation: For students coming to the Kansas City area, they need to be told public transportation is poor, and, therefore, they should either live in a dormitory or in an apartment within walking distance of the campus. Information about getting a driver's license could be in this section along with the requirements for having a car (inspections, insurance, taxes).

  Students would also like to know how they would get to the campus from the airport. If they need to find their own transportation, they should be told that. In that case, they should be advised to write their complete United States destination address on a card to show taxi drivers.

- Weather: Describe the seasons and the kind of weather each season typically has. In this part of the country, students need to know about the cold winters. For students coming from warm climates, they need to know they will have to buy warm clothes once the cold weather comes.

- Clothing: In addition to warm clothes for the winter, students should be advised to bring a suit for the times they need to be a little more formal (e.g., presentations or interviews). Several students suggested having pictures of students and what they typically wear in each season.

- Food: Many students were completely overwhelmed in the beginning when they went to the student cafeteria, a restaurant, or a grocery store. They had no idea what the food was, what it was called, or how to pronounce it. Pictures of typical American foods with

their names and an audio pronunciation would be helpful. Information about student meal plans and their costs should be provided along with typical menus for each meal.

Although students were eager to try American food—which many described as burgers, fries, and pizza—eventually they grew tired of it and wanted their own food. They would like a list of ethnic grocery stores and restaurants with their addresses and contact information. Male students in particular will need to be told they will, in all likelihood, be cooking many of their meals.

- Local area and activities: Students expressed a desire to know what services are on campus and what is within walking distance of the campus. These would include banks, coffee shops, restaurants, pharmacies, movie theaters, grocery stores, and basic needs stores (e.g., Dollar General). Moreover, students would like to know what athletic facilities are available to them and at what cost, if any. Sports mentioned most often were soccer, basketball, volleyball, badminton, swimming, and cricket. Furthermore, students would like a list of clubs on campus with a short description of what they do and how often they meet. Several students requested a list of nearby churches, temples, and mosques for those who would like to attend religious services.

- Visa and work regulations: Students need to be told what they are required to do to keep in status. Many students come here thinking they will get a job to help with expenses only to find out they are here on a student visa and, therefore, severely restricted in their opportunities to work. Work-study opportunities exist but are limited, and students need to be told this.

- Academic and university life: The one topic students mentioned over and over was plagiarism. It is not as serious an offense in many other countries, and students need to

know it is a very serious offense here. They need to know (a) what constitutes plagiarism and (b) what the consequences are.

Another suggestion by many students was to have an online writing class to introduce them to American academic writing. Nearly all students felt that <u>all</u> international students, regardless of English language proficiency level, should take a class in American academic writing.

- Health care system: Students do not understand our health care system. They should be encouraged to buy health insurance when they arrive and shown how the student health insurance the school has works. They need to learn terms like co-pay, deductible, and in-network provider.

- Cultural learning: International students can begin learning about American culture before they even leave home. As mentioned before, the American need for independence (as evidenced by 18-year-olds leaving home) and physical distance were cited often as being puzzling to many international students. The idea of designing a cultural learning course may seem daunting at first, but, fortunately, Mikk, Cohen, and Paige (2009) of the University of Minnesota have an excellent instructional guide on the topic of cultural learning titled *Maximizing Study Abroad.* This guide offers strategies for culture learning, both culture general and culture specific, and even includes activity sheets for students to do. Many of these activities could easily be put into an online course.

This is not an exhaustive list, but students do not expect to learn everything in an online pre-arrival orientation. As stated above, they are concerned with "urgent" needs. Once they arrive, they would like to continue orientation sessions. Many schools make these sessions mandatory, but the students would prefer a mandatory session on topics that are crucial in the

first few days, such as necessary paperwork that needs to be filled out, university and dormitory rules, and so forth. Students in my study felt that this orientation could take a day or two, but a week or two is probably more realistic. After that, they would like a schedule of orientation sessions, each one covering a separate topic. These sessions would ideally be offered on a rotating basis so that students could attend as the topics became salient for them. Topics such as the health care system and visa/work regulations, among others, could be re-visited and explained in more detail. Workshops on computer labs, the library, counseling services, academic tutoring, writing center, and cross-cultural training are some suggestions for the ongoing orientation sessions.

Students would like a tour of the campus, especially once they have their class schedule so that they can see where they have to go. The tour would include finding out where to go if there was a problem with their tuition bill or their visa. They would also like to know where to go if they feel sick. If there are campus buses, they would like to be shown how they work. They would like to see what athletic facilities are available to them. In addition, they would like a walking tour of the surrounding area to see what is available. Two students mentioned that what would be helpful would be to have a Club Fair at some point during the first few weeks at which representatives of the clubs on campus would set up tables and students could visit with whichever club representatives they wanted to.

The one barrier to an effective orientation in many students' opinion was that of English. Many students come here to first learn English and then to begin a degree. The University of Kansas's Applied English Center has recently instituted a new "buddy" program. They ask international students who have been here at least one year to volunteer to help new students who speak their language. They meet them at the airport, help them set up a bank account, show

them around the area, and are available to answer any questions that come up. They go to orientations with the new student and translate if necessary.

Many students commented on how helpful Conversation Groups or Cultural Coffee Hours were in which they get together on a weekly basis to discuss whatever topics come up, usually with regard to American culture and customs. These seem to be most effective when American students attend and offer explanations. Reactions were mixed when asked whether hearing about other countries' customs was helpful; some students enjoyed learning about other cultures, while others wanted the conversation to stay with American culture and customs.

In addition to a pre-arrival orientation and subsequent ongoing sessions, based on the information I received from my participants, I have five additional suggestions for universities and colleges:

- Pair each new international student with someone from his/her country or at least with someone who speaks the same language. This "buddy" could begin e-mailing the new student before s/he even leaves home and, once s/he arrived, would show the new student around the campus and the surrounding area, attend orientation sessions (to translate, if necessary), and be available to help with any needs or questions.

- Check Wikipedia to see what is written about the institution. Almost every student in my study mentioned using Wikipedia as a resource. If there is erroneous or incomplete information, correct it.

- Redesign the International Student Services website so that any information an international student might need is contained there. The topics mentioned in this dissertation would be a good starting point, but also consider having links to student

resources such as the Writing Center and the library. Make sure there is an easy way to get back to the home page.

- Help each group of students from the same country set up a social media page (e.g., Facebook) where they can post questions, requests, or suggestions. The Saudi students already have a national site. The Chinese and Indian students usually have sites set up at individual institutions. Be sure to tell prospective and current students about these sites, and encourage their use. If there are too few students from the same country, consider grouping students who speak the same language.

- Consider the needs of married spouses. Too often these, usually female, sojourners are ignored, and they are left to sit at home all day with nothing to do. A doctoral student at the University of Kansas Medical Center told me he had friends who returned home without completing their degrees because their spouses were so unhappy. He suggested having ESL classes for them and also setting up side trips to area attractions [Note: the University of Kansas Medical Center currently offers no ESL classes].

Limitations

Many international students cited their lack of fluency as the main reason for their acculturative stress. Because this survey was in English, I had to limit my selection of respondents to those who were already fairly proficient in English. The directors of the English language program at each institution made the determination as to which of their levels would be able to understand the survey questions. Even with this screening, there were over 300 questionnaires that were not completed and, therefore, could not be used. I assume these were not completed either because the respondents' level of English was not proficient enough or the

length of the questionnaire was daunting. My findings revealed that the participants in my study were acculturating well, and that may be due to their already high level of English proficiency.

In addition, the survey was very long, requiring an average of 40 minutes to complete (data from Qualtrics). Even though Qualtrics saves answers and a student can return to the survey, over half of the 541 who began the survey did not complete it.

The response rate for electronically delivered questionnaires is generally lower than for face-to-face questionnaires. Because of this, I needed a large pool of international students from which to draw in order to end up with my goal of 200 responses and, therefore, had to expand my search to include two other universities further from Kansas City than I had originally planned.

For the interviews, some of the interviewees were former students of mine, but one-half of the interviewees were pulled from the survey based on their region, gender, and their willingness to be interviewed. Because they were unknown to me prior to the interview, it is highly likely that they are more extraverted, a personality trait I could not control for.

The respondents were from a midwestern city and surrounding areas, including suburban and rural institutions. Undoubtedly, their needs could be different from students living in other parts of the country.

Future research

There are three countries whose students comprise the majority of international students enrolled in tertiary institutions in the United States: China, India, and Saudi Arabia. Students from these three countries comprised 48.7% of all international students in the United States in 2013/14 (Institute of International Education, 2014). Future research targeting each of these

groups is suggested in order to see if they have any unique needs or difficulties that are different from others.

Additionally, I would like to collaborate with someone in Educational Technology to design an online pre-arrival orientation based on what the participants in my study suggested. Once designed, I would like to test its acculturative impact with a control group who does not use the online pre-arrival orientation and a group who does.

Conclusion

I began this study wondering if international students would avail themselves of an online pre-arrival orientation, and, if so, what topics should be covered in it. To answer these questions, over 200 college-age international students in Kansas City and the surrounding areas completed a lengthy survey. More in-depth information was provided by interviews. International students would definitely like to begin their anticipatory adjustment before coming to the United States and suggested focusing such an orientation on urgent needs. The list of topics applies to everyone, graduate or undergraduate, male or female, from every region in the world. The students would like orientation to continue in a face-to-face format once they arrive as they begin acculturating to the United States both socially and academically.

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Appendix A

E-mail to be sent out to prospective respondents about a week before:

Subject line: International students' acculturation needs

  The Department of Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. You have the option of filling out a paper version or an online version.

  The purpose of my study is to find out what international students wish they had known before coming to the U.S. in order to make their transition easier. The best way to find out is to ask international students like you. The questionnaire is expected to take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

  The content of the questionnaire should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, we believe that the information obtained from this study will help us gain a better understanding of international students' acculturation needs. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to participate in this study.

  The questionnaire has five parts:

1) Questions on daily life and fitting in, the difficulty you have/had, and how important you think each one is
2) Questions on your emotional well-being over the last several days
3) Questions about resources you used to get information about the U.S. and your university
4) Questions about your experience with, and access to, technologies
5) Demographic questions

  If you would like additional information concerning this study or your participation, please feel free to contact the principal investigator or the faculty supervisor. Thank you for your precious time that you will spend to complete this survey, and we appreciate your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Deborah Garza   Lizette Peter, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator   Faculty Supervisor
School of Education   School of Education
University of Kansas   University of Kansas
d714c864@ku.edu   lpeter@ku.edu

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has 5 parts:

1. Questions about daily life and fitting in, the difficulty you have or had with certain situations, and how important you think each one is
2. Questions on your emotional well-being over the last several days
3. Questions about resources you used to get information about the U.S. and your college/university
4. Questions about your experience with, and access to, technologies
5. Demographic questions

All information will be kept strictly confidential. This questionnaire is completely voluntary, and you may stop at any time.

I thank you for your precious time and your thoughtful answers.

Deborah Garza
University of Kansas

Part I: Daily life and fitting in

This part measures how difficult you found certain situations to be and how important you think these situations are.

INSTRUCTIONS: for the items below, please circle a number from 1 to 5 that best describes the amount of difficulty that you have experienced in the U.S.

1 = not at all difficult
2 = slightly difficult
3 = moderately difficult
4 = very difficult
5 = extremely difficult

Below that, please circle a letter from A through E that explains how important you feel that item is

A = not at all important
B = slightly important
C = moderately important
D = very important
E = extremely important

In the space, if you choose, please explain your answer or give an example.

BASIC NEEDS

1. Enjoying your favorite leisure activities

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

2. Finding your way around the campus

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

3. Finding your way around the city

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremel

4. Buying daily necessities such as food, toothpaste, soap, etc.

   How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

   How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

5. Going shopping

   How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

   How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

6. Going to restaurants, fast food restaurants, etc.

   How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

   How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

<u>ACADEMIC AND UNIVERSITY LIFE</u>

7. Writing papers that earn you good grades

   How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

   How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

8. Expressing your ideas in class

   How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

   How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

9. Understanding what is required of you at the college/university

   How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

   How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

10. Dealing with staff at the college/university

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

11. Understanding lectures

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

12. Reading and understanding course materials

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

13. Getting used to teaching methods

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

14. Dealing with bad service at the college/university

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

<u>COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS</u>

15. Making friends with people of other nationalities/ethnicities

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

16. Making American friends

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

17. Understanding American jokes and humor

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

18. Understanding the local accent

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

19. Dealing with someone who is unpleasant or rude

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

20. Dealing with living away from family members and friends back home

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

21. Dealing with people in authority

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

22. Dealing with people being physically close and/or touching you

    How <u>difficult</u>?   not at all 1   2   3   4   5 extremely

    How <u>important</u>?   not at all A   B   C   D   E extremely

Part II: Emotional well-being and satisfaction with life

This part measures your own perception of how satisfied with your life you are at this moment.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each statement and decide how much of the time the statement describes how you have been feeling <u>during the past several days</u>. Put an X in the appropriate box.

	A little of the time	Some of the time	Good part of the time	Most of the time
23. I feel sad.				
24. Morning is when I feel the best.				
25. I sometimes cry or feeling like crying.				
26. I have trouble sleeping at night.				
27. I eat as much as I used to in my home country.				
28. I notice that I am losing weight.				
29. Sometimes my stomach hurts.				
30. My heart beats faster than usual.				
31. I get tired for no reason.				
32. My mind is as clear as it used to be.				
33. I find it easy to do the things I used to do.				
34. I am restless and can't keep still.				
35. I feel hopeful about the future.				
36. I am more irritable than usual.				
37. I find it easy to make decisions.				
38. I feel I can help people, and I do.				
39. My life is pretty full.				
40. I feel that others would be better off if I were dead.				
41. I still enjoy the things I used to do.				

Part III: Resources and communication

This part will tell me where you got your information about the U.S. before you came and what language it was in.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put an X in the box that describes each resource you used and which language(s) you used.

Resource	Your native language	English	Did not use
42. Friends/family			
43. People from your country who attend/have attended this American college/university			
44. American college/university's mailed materials			
45. American college/university's website			
46. Other websites Which ones:			
47. Agent in your country			
48. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)			
49. E-mail			
50. Online video (youtube, vimeo, etc.)			
51. Local library			
52. Books, magazines, newspapers			
53. Online chats			

54. In the space below, please describe any other sources of information you used:

55. Of all the resources you checked and listed above, which ones do you feel helped you? How did they help you?

Who would you have liked to communicate with BEFORE coming to the U.S.?

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check the box that best describes how likely you would have wanted to communicate with these people.

	Not at all	Probably not	Maybe	Probably	Definitely
56. Professors					
57. Current student from <u>your</u> country studying at this American college/university					
58. Current student from <u>another</u> country studying at this college/university					
59. American student at this college/university					
60. Student from <u>your</u> country who studied at this American college/university					
61. Student from <u>another</u> country who studied at this American college/university					
62. American student who studied at this American college/university					
63. Advisor in your major					

64. Are there any other people you used to get information?

Part IV: Technology

This part gives me information about how familiar you are with technologies and what access you had to them in your home country.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following questions.

65. How many years have you used a computer? _____

66. How many years have you used the Internet? _____

67. On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your level of expertise in computer usage:

    Poor 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Excellent

68. How would you rate your level of expertise in computer usage BEFORE coming to the U.S.?

    Poor 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Excellent

Experience with technologies

How good are you at using these technologies? Put an X in the appropriate box.

	Never used	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
69. Learning management systems (Blackboard, Moodle, Jusur, Canvas, Angel, etc.)					
70. Microsoft Office Powerpoint					
71. Microsoft Office Word					
72. E-mail (Microsoft Office Outlook, Gmail, Yahoo, etc.)					
73. Web search engines (Google, Yahoo, etc.)					
74. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)					

	Never used	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
75. Texting with smart phone					
76. Online videos (youtube, etc.)					
77. Teleconferencing					
78. Skype					

79. List any other technologies that you use:

Which of these technologies are most useful for you <u>in your home country</u>?

Put an X in the appropriate box.

	Not useful	A little useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
80. Learning management systems (Blackboard, Moodle, Jusur, Canvas, Angel, etc.)					
81. Microsoft Office PowerPoint					
82. Microsoft Office Word					
83. E-mail (Microsoft Office Outlook, Gmail, Yahoo, etc.)					
84. Web search engines (Google, Yahoo, etc.)					
85. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)					
86. Texting with smart phone					
87. Online videos (youtube, etc.)					
88. Teleconferencing					

	Not useful	A little useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
89. Skype					

90. If you had been offered an online orientation before coming to the U.S., would you have taken it?

_____ Yes   _____ No

91. What kind of orientation do you prefer? Please check one.

_____ Face-to-face only

_____ Online only

_____ Combination of face-to-face and online

_____ Either

_____ Neither

Barriers that affect using technologies for online orientations

Would it have been difficult for you to take an online orientation in your country BEFORE leaving for the U.S.?

INSTRUCTIONS: For each statement, please put an X in the box that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
92. I did not have enough technology experience.					
93. I did not have a computer at home in my country.					
94. My school did not have computers for students.					
95. I did not have Internet access at home in my country.					
96. My school did not have Internet access.					

Part V: Demographic questions

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following questions.

97. Gender:

_____ Male

_____ Female

98. Age: _____

99. Marital status:

_____ Married with no children

_____ Married with children
Ages of children:

_____ Single (divorced or never married)

100. Country of origin: _____

101. Population of home city: _____

102. How long have you been in the U.S.?

How many academic years? _____

How many months (if less than a full academic year)? _____

103. Current level of education

_____ undergraduate student

_____ graduate student (Master's)

_____ graduate student (Ph.D)

104. Department/degree area:

_____

105. Type of English language program (check one)

_____ I took no ESL classes.

_____ I have exited the ESL program and am currently taking academic classes.

_____ I am taking some ESL classes AND some academic classes.

_____ I am taking all ESL classes.

106. What do you wish you had known before you came to the U.S.?

107. Are you willing to talk to me at a later date about your experience adapting to the U.S.?

_____ Yes
Please write your name and your e-mail address:

_____

_____ No

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Appendix B

<div align="center">Interview Questions</div>

Let's talk about friends. The word "friends" can have different meanings for different people. Let's say a "friend" is someone you know that you can talk to and/or do things with.

1. Do you have American friends?
2. Do you have other international students as friends?
3. Are you friends here with anyone from your home country?
4. Do you keep in touch with your friends back home?
5. When you don't understand what Americans are doing or why, do you ask your friends? Which ones -- an American? Another international student? Someone from your home country?
6. If you are lonely, do you call a friend? Which one—an American? Another international student? Someone from your home country?
7. If you don't understand an assignment, do you call a friend? Which one -- an American? Another international student? Someone from your home country??
8. If you feel homesick, what do you do?

Let's talk about how your school has helped, or not helped, you.

1. Did your school have an orientation for international students? Was it online, face-to-face, or both?
2. Did you attend? If no, why didn't you? If yes, did it help? What specifically helped you?
3. What do you think should be covered in an orientation for international students?
   Tell me if you had any difficulties getting used to the following:
   a. Getting around the city and the campus
   b. Learning where to shop for food, clothes, etc.
   c. Understanding what is required of you at the university
      1) Understanding what a GPA is, what an elective is, what plagiarism is
      2) Knowing how to participate in a class discussion and how to write an academic paper
      3) Understanding the American concept of time (coming to class on time and turning papers/assignments in on time)
4. You say your school had an orientation that lasted ____. Do you think you should have had additional meetings to discuss problems or questions – maybe a freshman seminar of some sort?
5. Do you feel that [name of institution] cares about you and wants to help you? Talk about your experiences.

Let's talk about technologies.

1. What is the best way to communicate with you back in your country?
2. Where did you get your information about your university?
3. Did you find that this information was correct? If not, what was incorrect? How did you get information about the U.S. and about your school before you came to the U.S.? Was the information accurate?
4. Did you use Wikipedia to get information? Facebook? Twitter?
5. What was the best, most accurate source of information for you?
6. If your school had provided you with a student, either American or another international student, with whom you could e-mail before you came to the U.S., would you have done that?

Appendix C

SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Technology

Middle East male	Middle East male	Middle East female	Middle East female
Not Skype. There is Tango, Facetime, What's App. We can make the video and send to our families. A lot of the technology now we can do in our home. We can make the video, and they can watch while I sit and drink tea here.	I talk to my friend with What's App. I think the phone is useful. Because we can't call Saudis' number, so I think e-mail and Facebook are good.	When I'm back in my country, I use e-mail or Skype.	I use What's App a lot. The Internet for everything.

Asian male	Asian male	Asian female	Asian female
We have some social media, like QQ, where we chat and share some updates, things like that. Facebook is a nice way to connect with people when you are new to the U.S. We don't have Facebook in China though. The best way to communicate with me back home is e-mail.	Facebook in Micronesia and the Internet, but it's pretty slow. We don't have a computer at home, so my little sister usually uses the school's computers. E-mail is best to communicate with me.	Do you know We Chat? It's like Facebook Messenger. You can text them any time. The best way to communicate with me between my country and here is through the website or through e-mail. In my country everyone has computers.	

Latin American male	Latin American male	Latin American female	Latin American female
In Venezuela, most of the people do not have computers at their places. However, we have cyber cafes. I didn't know how to use computers because you are not introduced to computers until you get to the university. But if you don't know how to use computers, in these cyber cafes,	The best way to contact me is my phone, e-mail and Facebook.	[The best way to communicate with me in Mexico is with] computers, phones, e-ails, Facebook Twitter. Since we are close to the U.S., we have all the technology. I use Facebook, What's App, Facetime, Skype. With my mom, I just call because she can't figure the technology out.	I don't have Facebook. Maybe because I work in domestic violence. I don't want to expose anybody to my life. People can e-mail me. No problems with the Internet in my country.