Foreign student's adjustment in Academic culture

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Abstract:

   Academic adjustment has been a major problem for foreign students as they are from different cultural background. This paper presents a quantitative study exploring the academic issues based on the difference of learning experiences of foreign students in Davanagere city. The sample size of this study constituted of 240 foreign students. The major finding of this study is foreign students acculturate to adjust with academic environment.

        Key words: foreign students, Academic culture, adjustment, Davanagere

Introduction:

   Culture is an integral part of society. An individual's attitudes, values, beliefs, arts, ideals, modes of perception, and habits of thought are greatly influenced by the culture in which he or she lives. Every society has a different culture, where people who share their culture also share their attitudes, specific languages, behaviours, values, and traditions. It is easy to know the culture background for a person based on their attitudes and behaviours.

 Normally, when international students come to the class, they usually carry their own cultural attitudes towards learning. Their successful approaches of learning in their previous course of study, earlier practices and assumptions lead them into an intense state of "learning shock". Their previous educational experiences usually push them into unexpected academic situations which ultimately affects their performance. It is always significant to unbolt and use their learning experiences and approaches they bring with them (Carol and Ryan, 2005).

        The foreign students who visit India to get education faces lot of problem with academic adjustment. As academic adjustment is also a part of the socio-cultural adjustment, the role of institution will be play vital role in making student's friendly environment in the campus. It's the responsible of the institution to take firm steps like orientation, counselling, awareness of local culture, language classes etc.

        "Academic culture refers to the attitudes, values and ways of behaving that are shared by people who work or study in universities, for example, lecturers, researchers and students." (Brick, J, 2009)

Theoretical frame work:

The popular 'U-curve' theory, which Lysgaard has been credited for establishing (Church, 1982). This theory proposes that a sojourner in a new place often experiences four stages of adjustment. These stages are: the honeymoon stage, which refers to the excitement and fascination of individuals in the new host country , second culture-shock stage referring to disillusionment and frustration of facing the challenges of a new place, In the recovery stage understanding the minor mistake made some friends and managing complexity of college and followed by adjustment stage students successfully adjusted to norms and standards of the college.

Review of literature:

Extensive works have been done by many researchers highlighting International students" learning experiences (Bamford, et al., 2002; Kiley, 2003). Studies on learning experiences of the International students in their host countries usually involve features such as cultural, psychological, social and academic adjustments (Edwards & Ran, 2006; Hewitt, 2002). Despite the widespread report of the difficulties International students encounter, majority of the International students make reasonable adaptation to their cultural and institutional demands.

Adjustment is a dynamic and interactive process that takes place between the person and the environment, and is directed towards an achievement of the fit between the two (Anderson, 1994). Thus, Academic adjustment is a fit of a learner in the academic environment. Many scholars consider academic adjustment a complex process that impacts on all university students (Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones and Callan, 1991). The major reason is that culture of education differs from country to country. For example, universities in advanced countries pay more attention on class participation and the educational approach in these countries looks unfamiliar to international students who are familiar to expect more guidance and support from teachers.

Language is considered one of the greatest academic issues hindering smooth adjustment for international students (Galloway & Jenkins, 2005). This Difficulty hamper in understanding lectures and lack of confidence in their second language inhibits them from participating in class discussions (Zhai,, 2002,). Similarly teaching styles and approaches that differ from those to which the international students are familiar in their own cultures may also be a source of complexity (Andrade, 2006, Zhai, 2002). Thus, the importance of adjustment of the foreign students to the first year of the host university has always been a critical issue. With the increased foreign enrolments in the international universities, development and promotion of effective adjustment has become increasingly important and challenging to achieve the desired educational outcomes.

Objective and Methodology

This research paper is focused on adjustment to academic culture among foreign students in Karnataka. The study is undertaken in Davanagere city of Karnataka state in India. To find out the academic challenges being faced by foreign students in their host place.

Data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is collected from respondents. Using Questionnaire method, for the study. In addition to the primary data the secondary data also use for data collection using books, magazines, government reports. Media, etc…

Sampling size:

240 foreign students studying in Karnataka especially in Davanagere. 40 Nigerian students and 200 Malaysian students who enrolled in 2015. At various course

Limitation of the study

The present study is subjected to some limitations. This study is conducted to foreign students studying in Davanagere city.

Findings and discussion

The findings revealed that most of the respondents experienced difficulties, discomfort and confusion for which they had to struggle hard to make their adjustment well.

Following categories came out of the analysis of the diagnostic task employed for the present research.

A. Self-assessment in reading, writing, listening, and speaking (RWLS):

240 respondents were asked to rate their own communication abilities in English in academic contexts in Karnataka, for listening, speaking, reading and writing, (RWLS. majority of respondents having good and excellent knowledge in English.

B. Academic workload

The term workload can be defined as the amount of work that being assigned to a person in a specified time period. In this case, assignment, tutorial, classes, test or examination, quizzes, report and practical are under academic workloads where student, especially university's student need to fulfilled in order to graduate (Yusoff *et al*., 2010a).

Table.1 Distribution of respondent's level of experiences in Academic work in a Karnataka

Sl. no	Component	Very different		different		Similar		Very similar		unsure		Total	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	240	100%
1	Academic workload	96	40%	120	50%	24	10%	0	0	0	0	240	100%
2	Teaching practices	80	33.33%	125	52.08%	11	4.58%	6	2.5%	18	7.5%	240	100%
3	Assessment procedures	77	32.08%	104	43.33%	28	11.66%	3	1.25%	28	11.66%	240	100%
4	Interaction between student and lecturer	100	41.66%	84	35%	36	15%	9	3.75%	11	4.58%	240	100%
5	Interaction with other student in your class	72	30%	63	26.25%	91	37.91%	14	5.83%	0	0	240	100%

(Reference: primary data)

This table depicts, 40% (96) respondents felt that the academic workload was very different and 50% (120) mentioned different the combined percentage of these two categories were 90%. It means foreign students encountered a new and very different academic system and practices which they were unfamiliar and only 10% (24) have their opinion as similar regarding academic workload.

In the components of teaching practices 33.33% (80) mentioned very different and 52.08% (125) indicates different. 4.58% (11) indicates similar and very few 2.5% (6) mentioned very similar in teaching practices. Remain 7.5% (18) unsure in their opinion.

Further, 32.08% (77) said very different and 43.33% (104) indicates different in assessment procedures. 11.66% (28) mention similar and 1.25 (3) mentioned very similar. 11.66% (28) unsure their opinion regarding assessment procedures.

Teachers who have positive interaction with their students create classroom environments more helpful to learning and meet students' developmental, emotional and educational needs. The teacher-student relationships impact productively on a student's self-esteem and enhance their skills. Student-Teacher interactions are very important for the development of the students' academic self-concept and enhancing their enthusiasm and success. In the component of interaction between student and teacher, 41.66% (100) respondents mentioned very different. 35% (84) mentioned different. 15% (36) indicates similar and very few 3.75% (9) mentioned as very similar and 4.58% (11) said unsure.

In the class room context interaction with other students, 30% (72) respondents give their rating as very different. 26.25% (63) mentioned different. 37.91% (91) respondents said similar, 5.83% (14) indicates very similar in interaction with other students.

C. Managing study workload
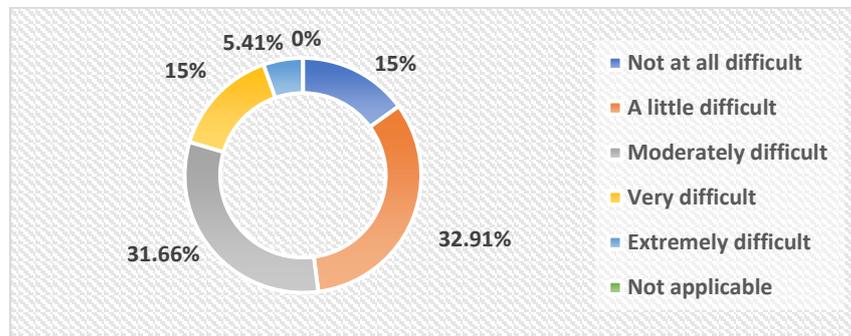
reference: primary data

When student land in a new country for study, they have not suddenly immersed in a strange environment, an unfamiliar culture and different time zone, managing notes, understanding lectures, making time for themselves. Out of 240 respondents 15% respondents mentioned not at all difficult. Remaining 85% percent express their opinion about different level of difficulties as showing above chart.

Conclusion

The study led to the findings that majority of the respondents had experience discomfort, confusion, and difficulty in adjustment to the host environment and they had to struggle hard to make their fit. Their adjustability problems were largely influenced by their previous learning experiences and the difference of experiences in their host institution. Language issue in an international classroom is a natural phenomenon. There should be orientation sessions for them in their home countries and if they are not doing this, then it becomes the responsibility of the host institution to arrange counselling sessions with the help of senior students already experienced and adjusted ones or they may be attached with the senior student from their home country for guidance to the academic norms and conventions of the host institution.

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Study in India – A Guide by Knowledge must- Page 32.

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