

PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OF PREDEPARTURE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

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ABSTRACT

Overseas studies are students leaving their home country for education in a foreign land for an extended period of time. Studying abroad may induce stress and anxiety among students. It may also cause excitement and elation. This study strives to provide knowledge on the emotions of the international students at their predeparture state. The present investigation found that international students, prior to arriving at their destination country, developed eight broad dimensions. International students formed elements of early intercultural learning by providing cultural and geographical information of their country of destination. Linguistic proficiency and its challenges were also expressed by the respondents. There were also data of imminent parental separation before leaving their home country, foreign education expectations, psychosocial adjustment and social-peer support assumptions. Predeparture international students also provided information in regard as to how they will be view upon by the foreign society. Knowledge in this study will aid educators and institutions in their cultural orientations and education approach towards this international community.

KEYWORDS: Predeparture Student, International Student, Intercultural Learning, Linguistic Proficiency, Parental Relationship, Psychosocial Adjustment, Social-Peer Support

INTRODUCTION

This study wishes to investigate the views, thoughts and expectation of international students before parting for overseas studies. Their thoughts, should there be any, will be able provide knowledge on their state of mind before leaving their home country. This information will also be able to assist their hosting countries counterpart to understand them better adequately manage their expectations and difficulties. It is only those whom have study abroad will know the differences. It is a far cry from the experience and monogamy of studying at their home country. Studying abroad is not a subtle change. It is a drastic full fledging experience. It is akin to being submerge underwater where the full range of human senses convulses to every stimuli. Going through this immigration process for an extended period of time is indeed a stressful experience (Ling, X. & Chi, I., 2013). One group experiencing these difficulties are the world-bound international students. Unlike international expatriates whom are relocating due to monetary gains and direct organizational support, students are often much younger and face a multitude of difficulties for the first time. Studies have also supported the notion that international students from various countries of origin have been reported to experience more adjustment problems than their domestic peers (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011).

Similar with previous studies (Tummala-Narra, P. & Claudius, M., 2013) it is hoped that this investigation into the psychosocial expectations of international students from China bound for Malaysia will aid in creating more awareness and understanding among Malaysian educators, teachers, lecturers and professors towards this international community. By understanding what they were expecting and looking forward to prior to arrival, Malaysian society as a whole may

more adequately embrace these China International students and prepare to receive them towards a better multi-cultural living. Being able to cater to this group, will possibly create a constructive learning environment and improve relationship between two different societies.

Predeparture knowledge is knowing the environment where a person will live for an extended period of time. Having this knowledge will reduce the stress faced by students and prepare them to adjust to their new surroundings with ease (Tsang, E.W.K, 2001). Therefore, predeparture factors are important information to gauge the psychological well being of international students in which this study will attempt to highlight.. International students receiving inadequate information about psychological difficulties and challenges for were found to be experiencing homesickness, loneliness and isolation (Popadiuk, N.E., 2009). This form of negative experience could hamper their focus and determination to study and causes further strain towards educators and institutions. Studying in China may also prove to be very different from studying in another Asian country. Students from China have grown up in a education system that upholds a collectivistic tradition which embodies compliance, silence in classes and suppression of thoughts or ideas until asked by teachers (Chia-Chih D.W. & Mallinckrodt, B., 2006). Students from China bound for Malaysia may experience this dissonance as to which is the accepted norm studying in a different country. Their predeparture expectations on how to behave with their news teachers, lecturers and professor at a university level is examined in this study. Expectations of a different method of studying between Chinese and a more western culture may generate acculturative stress among the overseas bound students (Yeh, C. & Inose, M., 2003). Data from this predeparture stance into a different education world were investigated.

One of the main reasons China families are sending their children to Malaysia is to learn the English language. English is currently the international language of business and world finance. Mastery of this language will provide their children a greater advantage towards their upcoming working life. It will also provide an added option of applying towards international organizations and possible an expatriate working opportunity. Similar to a reported literature (Kim, H.J. & Okazaki, S. 2013), sending children overseas to English-speaking countries is now a more commonly favourable option practice by Asian families. This form of practice was also recorded in South Korea where families of this country have sent their children and adolescents in increasing numbers to English-speaking countries (Kang & Abelmann 2011). This study also explored the student's expectation of English fluency in Malaysia and if this could contributed to their acculturative stress. Their positive or negative remarks on their English language proficiency were recorded prior to arrival in Malaysia. International student migration from China to other countries is not a new strategy but rather a phenomenon that has been happening since the late 1990s (Xiang, B. and Wei, S., 2009).

METHODS

Design

A qualitative research approach was selected by the author to allow for a more in-depth report of personal experiences and expectation. Without being confined to restricted answers, participants can freely express their thoughts, impressions and expectations. This design will also allow participants to report their remarks in a positive, neutral or negative statement. Information provided in this method is able to project personal circumstances is a more descriptive way. This study design used a self-report open-ended questionnaire. This design was selected to give respondent ample time to answer and to choose their words carefully.

Participants

Participants were 31 China International Students (19 male, 12 female) adolescents whom have successfully received offer letters to study at Universiti Malaysia Sabah Foundation Programmes in Sabah, Malaysia. The participants were recruited through Universiti Malaysia's Sabah's Chief Representative in China and gathered at hotel meeting room in Beijing China to undertake a self-report open-ended questionnaire.

Instrument

For this study's qualitative data collection, a form with 8 open-ended questions was constructed and distributed to international students. This instrument uses the self-report open-ended questionnaire approach used in the field of psychology (Gecer, A. & Dag, F., 2012). Questions were constructed to investigate areas of acculturation, intercultural learning, adjustment process, linguistic learning approach, problem solving, vulnerability, ambivalence, self-doubt, insecurity, social support, acculturative stress, psychosocial adjustment, homesickness and isolation tendencies. Constructed questions consisted of (1) What do you think of Malaysia?, (2) How do you feel about your English mastery?, (3) How do you feel, being so far away from your parents to study in Malaysia?, (4) How do you feel about studying in Malaysia?, (5) How do you feel that you are going to meet your new teachers/lecturers/professors in UMS?, (6) How do you feel you are going to meet your new friends and classmates in UMS?, (7) What did your parents tell you about studying in UMS? and (8) How do you feel people in Malaysia will treat you as a China International Student?

PROCEDURE

Analysis

The analysis of this qualitative approach was done using the content analysis method. Under this method, similar information was clustered around a specific repeating category that was detected in the study. These themes were further arranged and revealed as understandable groups of similar responses. Coding of the research data was done through the QSR Nvivo 8.0 qualitative data analysis program. Each investigated question required three answers, so each set of questionnaire yielded a total of 24 responses. There were a total of 31 respondents during this study which provided an approximately 700 codes excluding repeating answers and blanks. All answers for each question were arranged according to the emerged themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study managed to yield results on the state of mind of international students bound for overseas studies. It is found that international students at their predeparture state are not a blank thoughtless situation but a relentless clash of positive and negative thoughts. Positive thoughts comprised of eagerness and excitement which this study managed to produce. Negative thoughts were clustered around fear and reluctant-stricken thoughts about leaving their home country. Results were obtained when questions probed their views, thoughts and expectations while still at their country of origin. In a sense, it is literally stepping out of the box and their comfort zone. Findings were reported through the eight constructed questions on their predeparture state.

The first question examined areas of acculturation that the international students might experience. Entering into a new country may require one to succumb to a more dominant culture and this area was investigated. International students were also asked if they know any information about their destination. This was to investigate if

international student do perform intercultural learning before departure. Areas of adjustment process were also explored if the international students made preparations and anticipation towards a new environment.

In this question of “What do you know of Malaysia? International students responded with statements that describe Malaysia as an beautiful country. Descriptions were obtained that international students characterized Malaysia as a beautiful island and have beautiful oceans. Its geographical information were collected from international students, indicating that they did do some research of the country to destination. Statements such as ‘one of the most beautiful country if the world’ were recorded in the questionnaire. International students also clustered their answers towards the English language and its usage in Malaysia. Before departing their home country, international students anticipated that the people in Malaysia speak English. Reference to this language was also made of its education system where classes are taught in English. Another category of answers centred around the citizen of Malaysia where they were described as ‘friendly’ and ‘kindly’.

The people of Malaysia were also portrayed as ‘outgoing’ by these international students before arrival at Malaysia. International students also made references to Malaysia’s weather system. Their prior groundwork provided them with the knowledge that Malaysia has a ‘one hot season only’. Answers gathered also provided details such as ‘whole year is Malaysia is summer’ and ‘weather in Malaysia is hot’. Positive statements also was provided that stated Malaysia has a very good weather. Many of the students also knew that Malaysia enjoys a ‘tropical climate’. The location of Malaysia was also obtained through this study. International students bound for Malaysia for overseas studies explained that Malaysia is in the southeast of China, making reference back to their country of origin. Malaysia was frequently referred to as ‘a south-eastern country’ and ‘Malaysia is located in Southeast Asia’. International students were also able to provide very specific information regarding Malaysia such as ‘Malaysia have an economy that is developing very fast’ and ‘Malaysia produces oil, tin and rubber’.

These economical descriptions of a country not of their own were recorded in this study. Another category that emerged was the category of religion and beliefs. International students provided the knowledge that they do know Malaysia is built on multiculturalism. Respondents were able to provide answers such as ‘Malaysia has a lot of Ethnic groups’ and ‘Malaysia has Muslims but also have Indian beliefs’. Malaysia was also known to the international students as a famous tourism destination. Response collected showed answers such as ‘Malaysia is a tourism country’ and Malaysia have many place of interest such as its mosque and the ‘Petronas Twin Tower’. There were also references made towards the food of Malaysia where international students described it as ‘Malaysia has seafood’ and Malaysia has good food. Other responses were grouped in the miscellaneous category such as ‘the people of Malaysia drives on the left side of the road, this is so different from our country of China’, ‘Malaysia was once with Singapore’, ‘Malaysia is a very safe place’ and ‘Malaysia pays a lot of attention to education’. One respondent even provided a fairly accurate report of the number of Malaysia’s population as of 2013 citing ‘Malaysia has 29 million people’.

The second question examined the English language acquisition and proficiency. International students were asked on their English language mastery and how they feel towards this particular language. This question of ‘how do you feel about your English language’ was developed to investigate their linguistic approach prior to arrival to Malaysia. Their overseas studies will include an compulsory English language class and their thoughts and views were examined in this study. Most of the responds from the international students skewed towards an inclination to improve their English

language in Malaysia. These are positive statements extracted from the respondents on their predeparture condition. Responses recorded such as 'I am interested to learn English in Malaysia' and 'I want to improve my English in Malaysia' showed international students were keen to educate themselves on this language in Malaysia. Their predeparture thoughts and views provided knowledge that they have some tendencies already formed before studies started.

They responded with statements such as 'English is an interesting language', 'I think I can improve my English', 'in the future, my English will be better', and 'I will study hard to improve my English' provided information on their eagerness toward this language class in Malaysia. Views on studying English in Malaysia also received a positive response that noted 'studying English in Malaysia is much better than studying it here in China'. There were also statements that showed high determination such as 'I want to improve my English in Malaysia no matter what it takes' and 'my English is just average, and I will study hard to make it better'. A category also emerged which showed international students has a basic to moderate mastery of the English language. Prior to them leaving for overseas studies, they have provided insights such as 'my English is alright', 'English is easy to speak' and 'I can talk to other people in English' indicating some have acquired proficiencies in this language. Some reveal that listening and speaking with friends will improve their English better. Other responses showed a higher confidence stance on their English proficiency and provided statements such as 'I can speak clearly', 'my English grammar is good', 'I am not afraid to talk to people in English', 'English is my second language' and 'I think my English is already good'.

There was also one statement that linked English to their home country main language of Mandarin with the comment 'I can find similarities between English and my country's language'. There was also reported statements that linked their extraverted personality to learning the English language such as 'I am talkative so I will learn English much faster' and 'I enjoy communicating so English will be fast to learn for me'. This study was also able to provide knowledge on respondents facing difficulties with the English language. These international students, before departing their home country, displayed negative thoughts and views on their English language proficiency. Pessimistic statements were extracted such as 'my English is not so good', 'I cannot write English very well', 'my spelling is very bad in English', 'I cannot speak very well' and 'my English is of low standard' demonstrated some of the international students viewed the English language as a challenging language to master. They further iterated that their English is poor and showed low confidence at this stage before their English classes began in another country.

The third construct of this study checked at international students feeling of isolation, loneliness and separation from their parents with the question on 'how do you feel about studying in Malaysia?'. It is also noted that as adolescent, this is would be the first time being so far away from them. Overseas bound students reported they feel lonely, and will miss their family very much. Statements were also recovered that showed they feel worried and sad towards this phase of education in another country. There were also views that they feel very unhappy to be leaving China and to be doing this overseas study with comments such as 'I feel very unhappy' and 'I feel nervous to be leaving China'. A majority of the responses from China's international students however, showed a more positive outlook. Making reference to themselves, much of the statements received reported that overseas study is indeed a good option.

Respondents have commented that it is a worthy challenge to develop oneself into a independent young adult. There were answers retrieved such as 'going overseas is a good chance for me to learn new things', 'I am happy for this new challenge' and 'I can learn to go around the world'. In regard to international students feelings being away for

overseas studies and experiencing separation from their parents, there were information that showed this is not viewed as a challenge. It is a sought after opportunity, combined with feelings of enthusiasm and impatience. Statements making this form of eagerness to leave China such as 'I cannot wait to leave China' and 'I cannot sleep nowadays thinking of going overseas' indicated a very positive take on separation from their parents and country. Further responses from the questionnaire remarked 'I am happy to be so far from my parents to study in Malaysia', 'I don't think they will worry about me being so far', 'my parents wants a better life for me so this is a good thing' and 'I can always go back during holidays so this is no problem'.

Other answers retrieved suggested a strong confidence towards themselves such as 'this is a manageable thing for me', 'I am an adult', 'I am take care of myself', 'I am happy because this will make me stronger', 'I can live independently when I get to Malaysia' There were also responses made to the country of their destination. Responses consisted of 'I feel happy to leave China and improve my English in Malaysia', 'I will suit my new life once I get to Malaysia', 'my parents suggested Malaysia so it does not feel very difficult to be away from them' and 'studying in Malaysia is very good so it is worth it'. Other answers suggested a strong confidence toward themselves in the phase of education in a foreign country. They remarked 'I am an independent person', 'I can always take care of myself', 'I can deal with all things myself', 'this is good for my growth', 'I have travelled overseas alone, booked hotel, tickets, hotel so going to Malaysia is no challenge' and 'I am a man'.

China international students were further asked 'How do you feel about studying in Malaysia?'. This constructed question wishes to investigate if the respondents have feelings of vulnerability, ambivalence, self-doubt or insecurity prior to leaving towards Malaysia. Their views and thoughts in regard to studying in another country were collected and analyzed. Almost all international respondents provided positive statements. Only a single exception where the response of 'I am a little sad' was reported. The majority of the response collected showed the international students looked forward for education in Malaysia. Not taking into account of their relationship and separation with their parents, international students noted the personal benefits of studying abroad. Answers derived such as 'it is better to study abroad', 'I will finally have a different experience', 'studying overseas will open up my mind', 'I will finally be able to face many different people' and 'there are many charming sights that I could finally see'.

The environment was also commented during the respondents predeparture state. Malaysia's environment was mentioned as 'pretty good', 'there is no earthquake in Malaysia', 'Malaysia is a safe and suitable place' and 'I can get in touch with different culture in Malaysia'. One of reasons the respondents choose to study in Malaysia is the friendship factor. Before leaving China, the international students had expectations in terms of friendship with their counterparts in Malaysia. They look forward to create friendship in their predeparture state and made remarks such as 'I will be able to meet a lot of new friends in Malaysia', 'I can make friends with the Malaysian's friends', 'finally I will have friends in another country'. Excitement was also shown by this group of respondent. China international students gave information such as 'I am excited to study in Malaysia', 'I am excited to study in Malaysia', 'this is so cool I get to go Malaysia', 'I think it is great to go to Malaysia', 'It is a good chance for me', 'I feel it is good for me there', and 'I am going to enjoy myself there'. International students also provided information about Malaysia prior to arrival.

They mentioned studying in Malaysia is to 'learn the western style of teaching', 'Malaysia offer the best learning environment', 'Malaysia is a wonderful country to study in', 'Malaysia will give me a better language environment', and

'I think Malaysia will be able to teach us more'. One of the main reasons China international students chose Malaysia for further studies is in the acquisition of the English language. By questioning how they feel about studying in Malaysia, they have related it back to the learning of English. In Malaysia they commented they could improve their English proficiency. The current group of students made applications towards studying in one of the public universities in Malaysia and also made reference towards this university. Information was successfully extracted by this respondents with data such as 'I will be studying at a wonderful university', 'this university is a good place to study English', 'this university is one of the most beautiful university in the world', 'this university teaching all its courses in English' and 'it is really an attractive prospect for us to enter this university and learn English'.

The fifth part of the study yielded knowledge on the international students perception towards their future teachers, lecturers and professors. These are the educators they will be encountering during their overseas education phase. The questions constructed asked 'how do you feel about meeting your new teachers/lecturers/professors in Malaysia'. During the respondents predeparture condition, findings were obtained as to how they feel in their upcoming meet with higher authorities. One theme that this study manage to provide was the knowledge that the international students desire to develop a friendship hiatus. Statements retrieved mentioned notions such as 'I want to have a friendship with them', 'I hope we can be friends', 'I want to be friends with every teacher', 'my future teacher in Malaysia will be my friends' and 'I hope they are friendly towards me'. There were also information that highlighted their excitement in meeting their future educators. International respondents provided knowledge such as 'I cannot wait to meet them', 'I am most happy to meet my new foreigner teachers', 'this is my dream coming true to meet them', 'I am very excited', 'I feel very happy to be able to meet them', 'I am glad to meet them' and 'it is most wonderful because meeting them will open my eyes to new things'.

On a more education related theme, information retrieved showed statements such as 'they will teach me new things in Malaysia', 'I want to learn their culture', 'they will teach me the English language', 'they will help me in when I get to the university', 'they will teach me new knowledge', 'my new professors have good equipment in Malaysia' and 'my new lecturers will help be understand my subjects better'. There were also ungrouped statements that that did not belong to any theme such as 'I think my new teachers will introduce me to Malaysia's food such as its seafood' and 'I hope my new teachers is beautiful and smart'. This study also provided information that some international students have a rather negative feeling before going for overseas study in Malaysia. They gave data that described themselves as rather afraid with statements such as 'I am a little nervous to meet them', 'I am worried about meeting my new teachers in Malaysia', 'I am very worry that I cannot catch their lesson' and 'I feel afraid to meet my new teachers in Malaysia'.

The following section of the study investigated social-peer support tendencies among China international students. Question constructed of 'how do you feel about meeting your new friends and classmates in Malaysia?' probed the respondent predeparture state on how they feel in lieu of meeting their new friends and classmates in the university. Majority of the students gave information that described feelings of excitement. Statements were given such as 'I feel very excited to meet my new friends', 'I am so happy', 'I feel it is good to have new friends in Malaysia soon', 'I like this', 'I cannot wait to meet my new friends', 'I love it', 'I will be good friends with them' and 'I am very excited to meet my new foreigner friends'. Some statement made references towards themselves stating personal characteristic that will assist in developing new friendship. Information retrieved were such as 'I am an outgoing person so it will be easy making new friends' and 'I am a good girl so I hope it will be easy to make friends in Malaysia'.

Many statements also provided knowledge that showed international student feel it is a beneficiary relationship to have new friends in Malaysia. They have noted 'it is a good experience to have foreigner friends', 'having new friends will teach me new cultures' and 'we can share our country's history'. When respondent were asked on this question, they also gave information that showed new friendship in Malaysia will be great towards their pursuit of education. Statements such as 'making new friends will improve my study', 'different country's friends will improve my language', 'we can learn English together', 'I can practice English', 'with my new friends I can increase my speaking ability', 'I want to study with my new friends', 'I will do well in my education my meeting them' and 'we will study together' showed a friendship-education expectations.

There was a remark which showed sports was something they look forward to when a student responded with 'I can play basketball with them'. Statements in regard to the country of Malaysia and its people were also successfully retrieved such as 'people in Malaysia is friendly so I feel very happy', 'people in Malaysia is very friendly and kind', 'we hear people in Malaysia is friendly and kind' and 'I believe we can be friends with the people of Malaysia'. Two statements showed negativity towards their feeling upon meeting their new friends in Malaysia with reports of 'I feel shy to meet them' and 'I am very nervous people in Malaysia are not friendly to us'.

This study also examined the advices international student received from their parents. It is hope this will provide knowledge on whether these advices will have a positive or negative effect of the respondents. Elements such as homesickness, isolation tendencies and adolescent-parental relationship were investigated in this section. The question constructed was 'What did you parents tell you about studying in the Malaysian University'.

As with parents worldwide, their advices to their children were positive. All responses obtain through this study showed the international students received words of encouragement, guidance and motivation. The first category obtain in this section was information of Malaysia's geography passed down from their parents. International students told them 'the state of Malaysia, Sabah, is the eastern part of Malaysia', 'Sabah, is in southeast Asia' and 'Malaysia has a very comfortable weather so don't worry about being cold there'. Advices also made reference to the international students themselves. Data retrieved from their parents such as 'we want you to be happy', 'you must work hard for your future', 'have fun there', 'be careful there my child', 'stay healthy always', 'you can improve being in Malaysia', 'be mature', 'be independent', 'be safe', 'take good care of yourself' and 'we wish you to have as many friends as possible in Malaysia' indicated a personal advice towards self development of the students. There was also a category created in this study that provided knowledge about their family.

This data was able to show that some international students received advices that related back to their family. Parental advice such 'do not worry about your family here in China' and 'we think it will be difficult for you to live alone without us there to take care of you' relates their advices to their family. Other statements indicated a encouragement towards a bright future for them such as 'you must work hard for your future', 'this is a good chance for you to have a better life when you grow up', 'you will have more knowledge after this' and 'study hard and come to China for a good job'. Reports of parents telling their overseas bound children to strive in education were also received. Statements retrieved such as 'you must try your best effort', 'don't give up for wisdom', 'you must study hard in university', 'you must work hard in your studies', 'study according to your interest' and 'be good in your studies' were educational advices commonly pass down from parents to children.

Another category yielded a theme of the university the children are going to. This study provided knowledge that parents informed their children that 'that university is the most beautiful university in the world', 'you will improve your English language in the university', 'the university is a beautiful place to study', 'your new school is beautiful', 'your new university is surround by mountains and oceans', 'this is a good university', 'going to that university will open up your mind', 'is it safe and beautiful in that university', 'the quality of the teaching there is good', 'if you choose this university, you will have a wonderful job when you come back', 'most manager here in China will employ you if you graduate from that university', and 'this university you are going to will give you a better chance in applying for job in the future'.

The final part of the study examined elements of insecurity, vulnerability, discrimination, racism and stereotyping among predeparture international students to Malaysia. Predeparture China students were asked 'How will people in Malaysia treat you as a China International Student?'. Information on how they expect their new hosting country will treat them was gathered. A majority of the data received reported acts of friendliness and kindness. Most of the responses were grouped under this category. China international students noted Malaysians will be 'friendly to us', 'treat us kindly', 'be kind hearted', 'the people there will be very friendly'. 'they are kind', 'they are very nice people', 'the people are friendly and outgoing', 'they will be friends with me', 'we will be happy together', 'we can be good friends', 'they will be friends with me', 'I am not worried because Malaysia people are friendly', 'I think they are really kind', 'people there are polite and kind', 'they will treat me as friend', 'people in Malaysia will be kind to me', 'we will be friends easily', 'we will be friends with each other', 'I think everyone in Malaysia is friendly' and 'it will be good for me to make friends with them'.

The word of friendly and kindly was repeatedly reported in this study. There were also statements that made reference to the Malaysian society such as 'the people of Malaysia are easy going', 'Malaysians are happy people', 'the people in Malaysia are safe'. 'We will chat with them happily', 'Malaysia people are excellent' and 'Malaysia people will be excited to meet me'. Themes of helpfulness were also successfully extracted from the international student's responses. Statements indicating these were 'Malaysia's society will help us', 'the people there will help me', 'they will help me deal with difficulties', 'we will help each other', they will help me in my life there' and 'they are helpful people'.

International students also felt that the Malaysian people will help them in terms of their English language learning. Responses extracted such as 'they can teach me more English', 'they will help me improve my English' and 'Malaysia people will help me learn more English' indicated the predeparture students expected their hosting country will aid them in learning the English language. Knowledge also was shed on how they perceive their hosting country's society will treat them in terms of etiquette. Predeparture students expected their new host will 'invite us to their house and treat us with delicious Malaysian food', 'in Malaysia the host will offer you drinks and snacks to entertain you', 'I think the Malaysia people have delicious food', 'they will invite me to visit beautiful places', 'they will tell me their customs', 'the Malaysian people will introduce their country to us', 'they will teach me their culture and customs' and 'Malaysia people will teach us new things'.

There were also statements recorded on how they perceive Malaysians will treat them in times of difficulties such as 'when you want to go home in Malaysia, the master of the house will arrange for you' and 'if you fall sick in Malaysia,

someone there will follow you to see a doctor'. There were two statements reporting a negative stance on how international students feel they will be treated in Malaysia. They made remarks such as 'I think maybe they will be scared of us' and 'I am worry about how they will treat us'.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study's result provided knowledge that international student embarking on overseas study formed certain ideas and expectations before leaving their home country. The predeparture state of the students and their many views were found to be directed at their host country and its people. This current study managed to provide findings that are similar to previous literatures that strive to provide knowledge on students before leaving their home country. Earlier studies have reported these conditions such as the research by Martin J.N., Bradford, L. & Rohlich, B. (1995) where it was found that predeparture international students described their predeparture expectations involving thirteen dimensions of long term overseas living. This current study has similar objectives and provided information in eight dimensions. Retrieval of data has shown that international students have a wealth of information concerning their current state which could be used to improve their conditions of anxiety and worry. By understanding that almost all international student seem to go through this expectations phase, an intervention approach may be formulated to engage directly at overseas bound students and to alleviate any negativity that may ultimately hinder their education pursuit.

This research also yielded information that international student during their predeparture state has indeed knowledge about their hosting country. Students bound to arrive at a new country do form constructive ideas and information in regard to their new country of living. International students are not found to have a blank and empty state of mind in regard to the country they are travelling to for studies. Instead, they have done research and this study provided data that the respondent have sometimes very specific details about the country of their overseas studies. This form of information was successfully retrieved from this investigation.

Forming and understanding information about their new hosting country has also been reported in another study where international students understood that there will be difference in value, customs, culture and traditions with a more dominant culture of the hosting country (Asvat, Y., & Malcarne, V. L., 2008). By knowing that international student forms knowledge about the country they are departing to, university agencies or representatives could assist in providing additional data whether in part to confirm or correct their existing presumptions. Should the earlier form knowledge be wrong, it would be benefit them mostly if it is corrected at predeparture state rather than facing the misjudgement at the hosting country. Providing, confirming or correcting predeparture student's knowledge of their hosting studying country could instil proper information that will greatly aid them in their lifestyle adaptation.

International students bound for overseas studies were also found to have a personal judgment in regard to their English language proficiency. It is widely understood that the English language is the international medium in the field in education and having a grasp on this language will be highly advantageous. Even though the international students in this study have enrolled for English language courses at a overseas country, they were found to form views and thoughts on their current standard of the English language. In regard to learning this language, the respondents also reported personal state of insecurity and confidence prior to beginning their English course.

This condition which was reported in this study provided knowledge that learning a different language at an adolescent age is very difficult and many thoughts were made in regard to this language learning. These findings echoed a

similar data found in a research by Johnson, J.S., & Newport, E.L. (1989) which investigated the linguistic problems faced by adolescents at a predeparture state. Prior to begin their overseas studies, English proficiency were reported to be especially difficult for the adolescent, and this finding was also shown in the current study on international predeparture students. Confidence about speaking English was also a reported theme in the study of Swagler, M.A. & Ellis, M.V., (2003) which shown that the English language was a concern towards international students prior to arriving at a English speaking country.

Respondents selected in this study were international students preparing to leave their home country for overseas studies. It is also found out that, at this adolescent age, almost of the respondents were separating from their parents for the first time. This form of separation can cause more anxiety between some of the family members including adolescent children (Kins, E., Soenens, B. and Beyers, W., 2013). Negative feelings were indeed reported in this study in the student's predeparture state. Prior to leaving their home country, international students gave statements that highlighted their anxiety and stress. There was information describing nervousness and unhappiness that provided knowledge in regard to international student facing parental separation.

However, there were reports also that displayed a positive stance among the international students in light of parental separation. These may stemmed from parenting practices that promote healthy behaviour choices and reduced risky behaviours such as those found in the study of Paredes, et al., (2014). Such positive outlook was also recorded in this study among the respondents. Separation was expressed as a chance as a family member to traverse greater distance in search of new opportunity. Self development was also expressed in this study by the respondents before they leave their home. Data extracted in this study found that students at their predeparture state developed views and feelings in regard to the imminent.

The current study also contributes to the knowledge of intercultural knowledge by international students prior to arriving at their country of destination. This information highlighted the predeparture preparation that does exist among the respondents. This data also suggest that the respondent has made preparation by finding out cultural, geographical and societal information about their hosting country before arriving for long term living and studies. This form of practice indicated international students made a form of background check in advance of the actual cultural adjustment they will be facing. International respondent in this study also remarked that foreign studies could make them develop positively in terms of being independent and learning different customs and tradition. These findings was in contrary to the study of Kim, H.J. and Okazaki (2013), where it was reported that adolescent had very little information about the condition and environments upon arrival and a foreign country for studies. It was also reported in another study of Kuo, B.C.H. & Roysircar (2005) where adolescent experienced feeling of ill-preparedness and suffering from a lack of information about their host country.

Results from the current investigation also revealed students had constructed ideas and expectations of their educators prior to meeting them in person. This study produced knowledge of what they thought and how they perceive their future teachers, lecturers and professors to be like. The foreign educators were also implied in many different presumptions as to how they will behave and their characteristics. The findings suggest that international student made psychosocial expectations towards higher authority adults that will act as their educators. Information gathered shown that expectations of positive behaviours and characteristics of their future university faculty member gave the departing

students a sense of happiness and reduced anxiety. A very small report of negative assumptions also proved that having a more positive outlook before arriving at their new education campus may ease their transition into a new life of parental separation and intercultural adjustment. These knowledge could help facilitate teaching instructors' interaction with international student from different countries and to further enhance intercultural effectiveness that is crucial to quality education (King, P.M., Perez, R.J. & Shim, W.J., 2013).

The present study obtained information on the subject of predeparture international students and their expectations on meeting new foreigner friends in a different country. Findings in this area suggested that predeparture students had formed feelings of excitement and a non threatening view prior to actually meeting their new friends. Positive statements formed a majority of the findings in this area, implying international students viewed friendship as an important element in their struggle to live and adjust to a new country.

Expectations of easy assimilation and emotional support were found among the respondents. These elements of future psychosocial attachment was also combined to expectations of educational benefits from future peer relationships. Positive feelings such as these suggest that international students may have practice constructive expectation to reduce anxieties in loneliness, social isolation, language difficulties and host contact satisfaction which was found in the study of Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993).

A theme of parental separation and possible homesickness was also retrieved through this study. In this part of the study, information was extracted that reveal the advices that was passed down from parents to children. This is an important part of the study where words of encouragement often prove to be vital in the long term separation phases that is experienced by overseas bound children. This present investigation obtained statements that were of positivism expected of parents even in the face of separation over great distances and duration. Data projected a strong construct that is used by the predeparture international students as a way to adjust into family separation.

This information revealed that parental advices could be a key point in the overcoming the challenges of homesickness and attachment. Failure to receive positive advices may be a turning point in the fight over successful separation and intercultural adjustment. Investigation into this element highlighted separation issue that was carried in a study by Thurber, C.A. & Walton, E.A. (2012).

This study also investigated elements of discrimination and findings reported a very minimal expectation in this area. International predeparture students provided knowledge through this study that suggested they expected a positive embracement by the hosting country's citizen. International students in their predeparture condition reported positive statements in regard to how they will be treated as a foreigner in another country. Elements of discrimination towards themselves was missing, suggesting another positive outlook and strong self-identity that does not seem to invite possible prejudice. This positive expectation in this study opposed the findings by Motti-Stefanidi, F. & Asendorpf, J.B. (2012) where perceived group discrimination and perceived personal discrimination was reported among immigrant adolescent.

Results from the current study provided knowledge on the view, thoughts, feelings and expectations that do exist among predeparture international students. Their statements revealed positive and negative forecast prior to arriving at their destination countries. The findings here will contribute to existing knowledge of international students and may aid foreign educators on how to more sufficiently address the psychosocial and educational needs of this community.

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