

A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF CULTURE SHOCK AND THE
INFLUENTIAL FACTORS AFFECTING NEWLY-ARRIVED KOREAN STUDENTS
AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation

by

KENT DOEHR MCLEOD

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2008

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Examination of Culture Shock and the Influential Factors Affecting Newly-Arrived Korean Students at Texas A&M University. (May 2008)

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The primary purpose of the study was to reveal the perceptions of three newly-arrived male Korean students enrolled in Texas A&M University during the 2007 fall semester regarding their experiences with culture shock and the reasons they ascribed for this phenomenon through three in-depth, individualized interviews and weekly L1 journals. The manner in which they responded to the culture shock as well as the influential factors that assisted them in coping was also explored. By using a constant comparative method of analysis, the collected data was scrutinized and analyzed for emerging patterns. To assist in this process, the data was input into computer files and analyzed using the software program NVivo 7.

The findings uncovered the existence of some degree of culture shock for each of the three participants at different times throughout the semester. In particular, a comparatively much higher incidence of interpersonal and psychological symptoms of culture shock than of physiological ones was displayed. Strong support for the individual

nature of culture shock was also exhibited. In addition, the participants' perceptions of the experiences as well as their ability to cope or not cope with culture shock revealed a capacity to overcome obstacles and reflect upon differences.

Support for the majority of the factors hypothesized to be influential in helping or hindering the participants' ability to cope with culture shock was exhibited. The noteworthy impact of the participants' personal outlook, marital status, length of stay in the U.S., religiosity, and previous international experience on lessening the effects of culture shock was found. The influence of English, the university, and social connectedness, however, was important in increasing their adjustment stress. The cultural and ethnic differences between Korea and the U.S. were found to be the source of highly individual challenges faced by the participants during the study. As all the participants were males and their ages were within five years of each other, it was not possible to compare the influence of these variables among them. The only factor expected to have been influential in the participants' adjustments to culture shock that was not evident was counseling.

DEDICATION

To the people of Korea, who changed the course of my life

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I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Eslami, and my committee members, Dr. Burlbaw, Dr. Egan, and Dr. Smith, for their guidance and support throughout the course of this research.

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Finally, my deepest sense of gratitude is for my family for their unconditional love and support throughout my life. Words cannot fully express how humbled I am by all that you have provided me. In particular, I want to thank my brother and his wife for having always offered me a safe haven from the outside world and for having helped me keep life in perspective. To my parents, Charles and Donna, thank you for instilling in me a love of learning and inspiring me to explore the world. None of this would have been possible without you.

NOMENCLATURE

L1 First (Native) Language

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

American universities and colleges are increasingly the institutions of choice for international students in need of higher education. The student body enrolled in these educational establishments is diverse, representative of the variety of people that populate the globe, and defies simplistic categorization. For in fact, these international students include both genders, young and old, Western and non-Western cultures, newly arrived as well as returning, full-time and part-time, matriculated and non-matriculated, and graduate and undergraduate. With that said, however, they all share a desire to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to achieve success in academic, personal, and/or professional arenas. From classes in their majors to internships, American college and universities provide the access to the knowledge that is de facto required for entry into the globalized world of the 21st century (McKay, 2002).

To assume, however, that the benefits of studying in the U.S. accrue only on the side of international students in this equation is erroneous and ignores the reciprocal gains of exposure to and contact with these learners for the United States (Porter, 1962). International students enhance the academic environment by providing resources for the internationalization of the curriculum and promote global understanding through their varied educational backgrounds and cultures (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). In addition, they have the potential to contribute to the development of a

This dissertation follows the style of the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*.

worldwide network of alumni and to the construction of long-term international relations.

At Texas A&M University, the large public university that was the site of this study, for example, these learners constitute an invaluable resource for the overwhelmingly White, American student body by serving as exemplars of the world beyond the state's borders. According to the 2008 spring semester enrollment profile figures compiled by Dutschke (2008), of the over 43,000 students, over 70% were White and only 3,533 (8.07%) were international students. The complete integration of these learners in classes and in the building of cross-cultural relationships with local students could provide a much needed window on the world, especially given that the future employment roles of the American students may very well require global perspectives (Arthur, 2002).

Economically, strong relations are forged whether international students elect to stay in the U.S. or ultimately decide to return to their home countries. In fact, many smaller colleges and universities would be hard pressed to maintain enrollment levels without the tuition paid by international students (Paige, 1990). According to *The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States of America: A Statistical Analysis, 2006-2007*, published by NAFSA: Association of International Educators on their website, international students and their dependents contributed approximately \$14.5 billion to the U.S. economy during this 12-month period. In Texas alone, where there were 49,081 foreign students during 2006-2007, the net contribution to the state economy totaled approximately \$995,386,000. At Texas A&M, a university

with the 18th highest total among all U.S. institutions, the foreign students made a net contribution of nearly \$67,410,200.

The size of these figures when considered in tandem with the academic, social, political, and cultural rewards reinforces the contention that the internationalization of post-secondary education in the U.S. is a mutually beneficial investment. However, in the wake of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the favorable aspects of granting access to large numbers of international students into American institutes of higher learning have been questioned. As a consequence, measures have been adopted by the federal government that aim to close loopholes in the visa-granting process. When coupled with the negative emotions of many of these students and their families about the wisdom of studying in the U.S., the enrollment figures initially dropped precipitously, before recently leveling off, to a total that still lags behind that of seven years ago.

In Open Doors Online: Report on International Education Exchange, for example, the Institute of International Education (2007) reported that beginning in the 2003-2004 academic year, the number of international students (572,509) enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities declined for the first time in three decades, falling 2.4% when compared to the previous year's total (586,323). While the decline was not as steep in the following years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006), it nevertheless continued to be negative (-1.3% and -0.05%, respectively). Only during the 2006-2007 academic year did the total enrollment figures return to nearly the same level as 2001-2002 (582,984).

If one examines these figures more closely, certain facts become evident. First, among the top 20 nations which send students to the U.S., Asian countries remain the

largest contributors, accounting for 54.2% of the total (Institute of International Education, 2007). In particular, enrollment of students from the Republic of Korea,¹ the home country of the participants² of this study, ranked third among all nations. The number of students from this country rose 5.7% to 62,392 for the 2006-2007 period. Second, Texas, the state in which the following study was conducted, is third among the 50 states in terms of international student enrollment, trailing only California and New York, respectively. This large number of students, however, begs the question as to whether or not these academic institutions are fully prepared fiscally, pedagogically, and culturally to accommodate the needs of this diverse and expanding group of students.

For in fact, culture is an essential variable that must be considered in the education process for international students in the U.S. The relationship between culture and language, for example, is inextricably linked. Both are semiotic systems that rely on signs and symbols to transmit and receive messages. However, when those customary signs and symbols are changed or removed completely, as they are for sojourners in a new environment, culture shock can emerge. The "...multiple demands for adjustment that individuals experience at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological levels, when they relocate to another culture" (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004, p. 168) are undeniably critical for the adjustment of international students and often elicit initial debilitating intrapersonal and interpersonal issues. However, these travails

¹ While the Republic of Korea is the official name of the country, South Korea, Korea, or Korean is used when referring to this nation and its citizens.

² In line with the commonly accepted terminology used by qualitative researchers, "participants" rather than "subjects" is used when referring to the three Korean students involved in this study in order to connote the idea of inclusion and willing cooperation (Merriam, 1998).

are neither preordained for all sojourners nor are they necessarily the only results of this potentially positive transformation (Adler, 1975; Anderson, 1994).

Although a substantial amount of literature exists regarding culture shock in general (Brislin, 1993; Carter, 1991; Casson, 1981; Dulebohn, 1989; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Hall, 1981; Oberg, 1960), there is a dearth of empirical research in regards to the factors affecting newly-arrived Korean students of colleges and universities in Texas as they attempt to meet this challenge. As international students from Korea constitute one of the largest groups of individuals studying in this state, there is an urgent need for a better understanding of the variables associated with culture shock among this group so that advance rather than ex post facto attention can be provided. If information on this topic were uncovered and made available, the potential for developing an appreciation for the individual nature of this phenomenon could benefit not only the students and the programs that serve them but the educational institutions as a whole while providing the impetus for the judicious implementation and construction of (more) effective strategies, programs, support systems, and infrastructure for coping with the shared and distinctive effects of culture shock (Arthur, 1997; Wan, Chapman, & Biggs, 1992).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While by no means a foregone conclusion for all, most newly-arrived international students in American colleges and universities are often faced with the simultaneous challenge of not only competing with their American classmates but also adjusting to the host culture. Depending on an array of factors, including age, gender, previous experience with the language or overseas, as well as the perceived distance

between the home and host cultures (Pedersen, 1991), for example, these sojourners can be overwhelmed by the magnitude and the number of foreign demands placed upon them. In particular, the pursuit of academic knowledge in universities without recognition of the need for learning about American culture is too narrowly defined and short-sighted as it ignores the very real possibility that international students will encounter culture shock. Smalley (1963) even goes so far as to purport that the term *language shock* be added to the conceptualization of culture shock because of the central position language problems have in inducing this phenomenon and due to the acute negative reactions that some international students have to language study.

Central to any examination of the cross-cultural adjustment of these sojourners, however, are the sojourners themselves. When international students arrive in the American university classroom, they are not like open books to imprint our instruction on them. Some bring with them the fears, insecurities, and perhaps excitement of experiencing a new culture for the first time; while for others, this cross-cultural engagement is not so new and perhaps not so fearful. Although many studies have been conducted in culture shock experiences, most of them have been quantitative and they tell us little about their qualitative nature or the diverse impact of inter-cultural encounters.

In terms of the host culture, Texas A&M, the large public university that was the site of this study, is an institution that prides itself on maintaining its conservative traditions. While this fact in and of itself is not incriminating, when linked to the ethnic background statistics provided earlier, the particularly traditional culture of this university could exacerbate international students' feelings of culture shock. The

integration of this minority of learners into the campus community, while a stated goal of the administration, may remain elusive given the traditional ethos and the meager population. As such, the demands for cross-cultural adjustment may be felt more intensely on the campus of this study by international students than it would in a more cosmopolitan setting, for example, a supposition supported by the results of Lysgaard's (1954) seminal study.

When the conservative and somewhat homogeneous culture of Texas A&M University is considered alongside the equally conservative and homogeneous culture of the Korean participants of this study, the possibility for culture shock is heightened. While Western influences generally and the U.S. influence in particular have been noteworthy over the last half-century in Korea, the fact remains that the somewhat archaic yet still apt dichotomy between West and East continues to this day. Add to this division the ethnic and language differences as well as the particular political relationship between Korea and the U.S. and the potential for cross-cultural adjustment difficulties is greater than it would be for international students from Western cultures (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Regardless of the home country, however, culture shock is an issue for not only the students but for the faculty and staff of the universities as well, especially given the wide range of potential challenges that exist interpersonally as well as intrapersonally in the new, foreign setting. In the first case, interpersonal issues may emerge from a host of environmentally-situated concerns, such as cultural differences, language, classroom experiences, and difficulty in social interactions (Jacob & Greggo, 2001). Arthur (1997)

adds financial and social support as categories of concern for international students. Lin and Yi (1997) also identify academic pressures, relationship problems, stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, familial concerns, securing of employment after graduation, and readjustment to the home country as some of the demands faced by international students.

In terms of intrapersonal challenges, culture shock can lead to a host of problems characterized by psychological and physiological symptoms such as irritability, loneliness, anxiety, homesickness, alienation, feelings of helplessness, withdrawal, frustration, and depression (Lin & Yi, 1997; Oberg, 1960; Ross & Krider, 1992). In addition, some researchers report that a loss of identity (Brinson & Kottler, 1995) or a sense of inferiority can result (Sandhu, 1994). Finally, scholars have reported that some within the international student population have such serious mental health crises as suicide attempts and schizophrenia (Oropeza, Fitzgibbon, & Baron, 1991). All of these are risk factors in learning beside the health risk that they represent.

The characterization of culture shock as inherently negative, however, has been called into question by some scholars who view this phenomenon as potentially a positive experience (Anderson, 1994). Weaver (1994), for example, does not perceive culture shock as an illness or a disease, and consequently, does not hold that this transition is entirely disadvantageous. While acknowledging the stress inherent in the adjustment for international students, the researcher also highlights the opportunities for personal growth and discovery that culture shock creates. Individuals who successfully navigate the course of adjustment to the host culture often emerge with a greater sense of esteem,

confidence, and awareness. However, little is known about the factors that would make the same experience of moving to a different culture with a foreign language a positive rather than a negative one. Identifying some of these factors is one of the purposes of this study.

Another noteworthy limitation of much of the research that has informed the field about culture shock, however, reflects a lack of appreciation for the heterogeneity and the strength that accurately characterizes international students. The tendency to group individuals from the same country or culture together reveals a monolithic understanding of the individual differences within and among learners. Leong and Chou (1996), for example, while acknowledging the concerns that are common to only international students (language, education methodologies, diet, finances, etc.) and to those of color (racism and discrimination), also recognize those issues which are shared by all learners (registration, major selection, and class sizes, in particular). They caution against the stereotyping of international students as inherently very different from or weaker than domestic students, pointing out that individuals in both of these groups actually share many of the same issues related to making the transition into post-secondary education. This advice is particularly important in reference to Asian students generally and Korean students specifically. Whether a positive or a negative stereotype, a stereotype remains just that—an overly simplified picture of a large group of people.

Popadiuk and Arthur (2004) add that it is unsound to assume that all international students experience culture shock in the same way and to the same degree. Accordingly, it is inappropriate not to distinguish between the culture shock-related factors associated

with newly-arrived international students from Latin America, for example, and Korean students; these two groups, while sharing their sojourner status, can be anticipated to differ in regards to their cultural distance and English language proficiency, in particular. As both of these factors have been hypothesized to have a significant influence on the impact of culture shock (Barratt & Huba, 1994; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Chung, 1988; Lysgaard, 1954; Porter, 1962; Wingfield, 2000), with the Koreans being comparatively farther from Western culture and possessing less facility with the language, the failure to distinguish between students of different nationalities could obfuscate fundamental differences.

Methodological considerations can also have an impact on the blurring of important distinctions among international students. Quantitative methods, such as the use of surveys, can make groups appear homogeneous, hiding differences of gender, culture, and power (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). Further, in paper-and-pencil self-report research, participants often exhibit the tendency to choose the socially appropriate response rather than the one that truly reflects their reality (Chung, 1988). As a consequence, the needs of individual international students are marginalized, and these sojourners are made out as victims, more unable than their domestic peers to cope with the demands of the new environment.

Finally, the continued use of traditional models to conceptualize culture shock, such as the U-curve (Lysgaard, 1955) and the W-curve (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) are inappropriate given the questionable assumptions upon which they were formulated and inadequate in light of what is now known about the individual nature of this

transition. First articulated in Oberg's (1960) depiction of culture shock as a *disease*, these models have characterized this adjustment as maladaptive rather than as a natural response to cultural dissonance. In addition, this characterization of culture shock as an illness conveys the idea that it is unpreventable, debilitating, and without benefit (Dulebohn, 1989) as well as a dichotomous phenomenon in which an individual is either healthy or ill (Benson, 1978). As a consequence, international students are expected to let the illness "run the course of the 'culture shock cycle' and once 'adjusted' they 'recover' as if they have had a cold or the flu" (McKinlay, Pattison, & Gross, 1996, p. 391).

Ultimately, while much knowledge has been gained over the last half-century about culture shock, this information is not without its gaps and limitations. First, the pairing of newly-arrived international students with other already matriculated internationals in research (Chung, 1988, for example) ignores not only the differences between these diverse groups but within them. Further, and in line with this blending, the sustained use of models and quantitative methods to conceptualize culture shock grossly over-simplifies and mischaracterizes this inherently complex and individual phenomenon (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). While individually each model may provide one or more pieces to the puzzle, their theoretical isolation from other equally valid models prevents the construction of a cohesive impression of this phenomenon that examines the social, behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and physiological aspects jointly (Befus, 1988). In addition, the simplification and assumptions which are inherent in modeling and surveys also creates problems. In particular, the specific characteristics of individuals from similar as well as different groups are often obscured (Leong & Chou, 1996), too often

resulting in a deficit-type orientation that pits international students against domestic students who are assumed as the standard. As a consequence, shared issues of adjustment to a new environment are overlooked while sojourners are cast in the role of the pitiable fool.

The present study was intended to overcome these methodological and conceptual limitations of previous culture shock research by focusing on the individual experiences and perceptions of newly-arrived international students from Korea. Respect for the differences and similarities among these sojourners as well as an appreciation for the distinctive nature of their reactions to this phenomenon informed the exploratory course and humanistic tone of the research.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of the study was to reveal the perceptions of newly-arrived Korean students enrolled in Texas A&M University regarding their experiences with culture shock and the reasons they ascribed for this phenomenon over the period of a 15-week semester through in-depth, individualized interviews and L1 journals. Additionally, the manner in which they responded to the culture shock as well as the influential factors that assisted them in coping were explored. The selection of these newly-arrived learners as opposed to returning students, for example, was in keeping with Popadiuk and Arthur's (2004) contention that the need for rapid learning about the new host culture is most apparent at the initial stage of contact for all sojourners, irrespective of other factors such as previous overseas or language learning experiences. In addition, the longitudinal nature of this study was selected because it echoes the findings of scholars (Arthur, 1997;

Shougee, 1999) who contend that culture shock-related issues are not uniform in terms of severity or timing.

Secondarily, I anticipated the research would uncover the participants' feelings and attitudes about the impact of the university in helping them cope with this phenomenon. Their roles in and knowledge of this institution were postulated to potentially trigger their focus on Texas A&M University. In particular, the selected international students' opinions of the faculty, students, classes, international programs, and various cultural activities were (directly and indirectly) solicited as it was expected, based on the pilot case study findings, that these individuals and endeavors would also have an influence on their adjustment to the host culture.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central questions explored in the study were:

- (a) Are the newly-arrived Korean students going through culture shock?
- (b) What are the feelings they are experiencing that could be a sign of culture shock? What examples can they provide that reveal discomfort for them? What are their perceptions about this experience and how do they cope or not cope with it?
- (c) What factors could make the experience of culture shock more intense or less severe?
- (d) How has the university in particular helped the newly-arrived Korean students in coping with culture shock?

HYPOTHESES

I expected that the research would reveal individual and complex narratives that, while containing shared elements, were nonetheless representative of the unique attributes of the interview subjects and the phenomenon of culture shock. As numerous scholars have asserted (Leong & Chou, 1996; Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004), one of the most noteworthy limitations of research in the area of culture shock heretofore has been the tendency to ignore differences among individuals and instead to assume a uniformity of experience that simply does not exist.

Given the results of the pilot case study that was conducted during the spring semester of 2006,³ which informed the direction of this research, I anticipated that there would be several influential factors that assisted the Korean students in the university in coping with culture shock. One of these was the impact of the university itself. This finding was anticipated to be of interest in understanding how newly-arrived international students perceived the efforts of the faculty and the various cultural-based programs, for example, in helping them overcome feelings of culture shock owing to the inclusion of cultural as well as academic knowledge in the curricula and methodology of the university in this study (Canale & Swain, 1980; Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Hymes, 1972; Kramsch, 1993; Redmond & Bunyi, 1993; Wolfson, 1989; Zimmermann, 1995).

The other influential factors revealed in the pilot case study were hypothesized to be present in the current study as well. Based on the analysis of the pilot case study, I

³ The participant in this study was a 22-year-old female Korean who was a full-time student in my class in the English Language Institute at Texas A&M University. She was interviewed for one-hour in English.

expected that the participants' personal outlook, previous experiences, and perceptions of cultural differences would play an important role in coping with culture shock. Fig. 1 summarizes the major findings from the referenced pilot case study and highlights the complexity of this phenomenon.

Finally, the review of the literature on culture shock raised the possibility that a relationship between the sojourners' facility with the English language, communication ability, social connectedness, marital status (including family status and living arrangement), length of stay in the host country, religiosity, previous international experience, gender, age, cultural factors, counseling and the degree of cross-cultural adaptation would prove meaningful.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Following Dulebohn (1989), *culture* was defined in the present study as the learned social heritage that is both covert and overt, implicit and explicit, conscious and unconscious, and serves as a model for perceiving, relating to, and interpreting reality. Additionally, it provides structure and predictability for individuals and communities.

A conceptual definition for the term *culture shock*, the linchpin of this study, was complicated by the fact that agreement among researchers about the most appropriate name much less a description has not been reached. Depending on whether they correlated culture shock with occupational, situational, experiential, or personal variables, they have defined the phenomenon differently. Nevertheless, agreement exists among a majority of scholars as to the term *culture shock* (e.g., Adler, 1975; Cort & King, 1979; Foster, 1962; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Skinner, 1971; Smalley, 1963; Surdam, 1980),

first introduced in the late 1950s by Oberg (1960), that it shall be used throughout this study to mean: “...the multiple demands for adjustment that individuals experience at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological levels, when they relocate to another culture” (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004, p. 168).

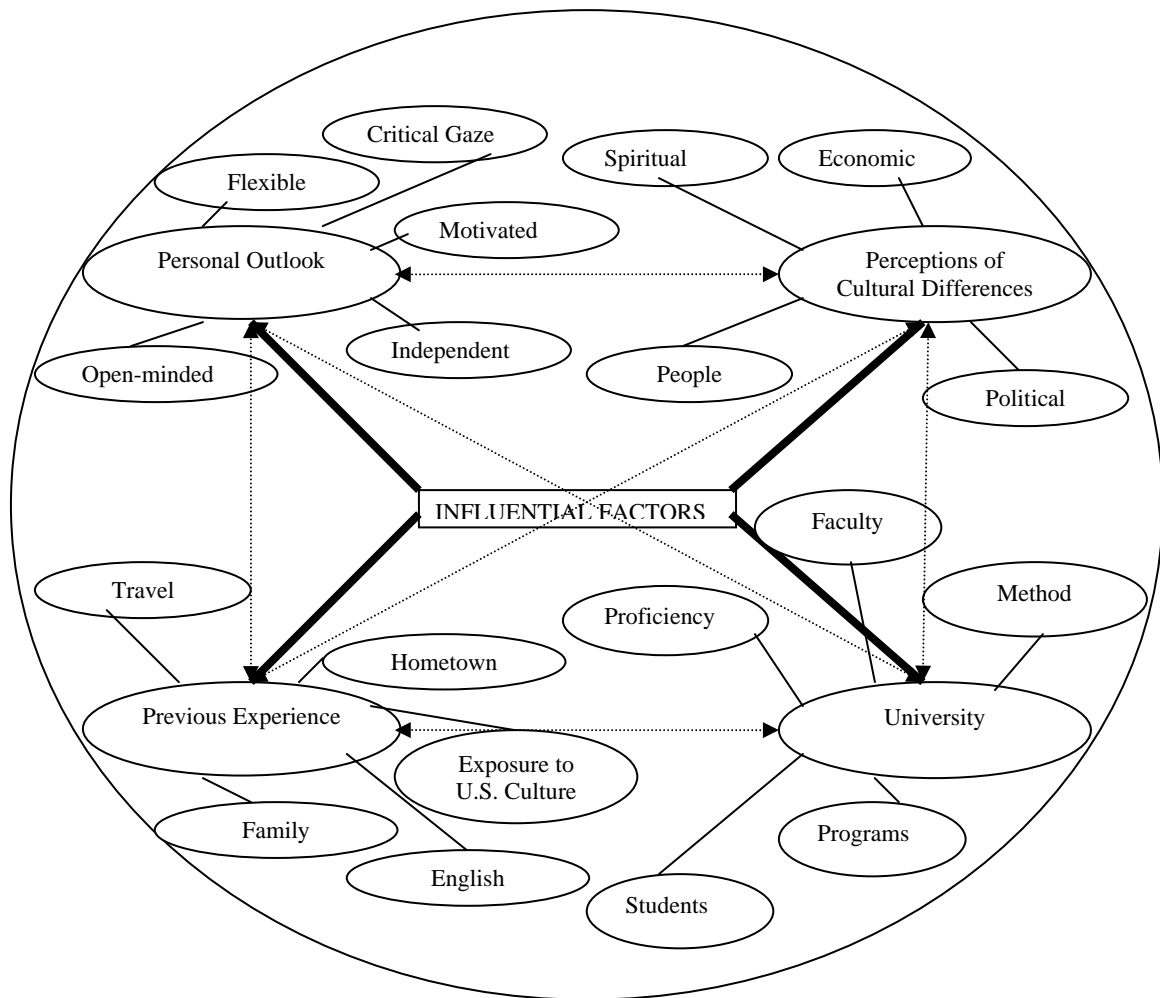


Fig. 1. Influential factors affecting the impact of culture shock in the pilot case study.

While acknowledging the existence of a precise distinction in the literature between the terms *adjustment* and *adaptation* in terms of objectives (drive satisfaction and survival, respectively) and time frames (short-term and long-term, respectively) (Shaffer & Shoben, 1956, p. 56), for the purposes of this study they both were used interchangeably to describe the attempt to achieve a balance between the international student and the new culture (Anderson, 1994). In essence, these terms were synonymous with culture shock.

Finally, *international students* and *sojourners* refer to the three newly-arrived Korean male graduate students in this study who were enrolled in Texas A&M University during the 2007 fall semester. These individuals were all non-U.S. citizens, as none of them possessed dual citizenship.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in Chapter II was intended to provide a conceptual and theoretical basis upon which the phenomenon of culture shock could be understood. To ensure comprehensive coverage of the topic without sacrificing clarity, the chapter was divided into four main sections.

The first section, Search and Selection Procedures, outlines the parameters that were initially set to guide the research process. In the second section, Theoretical Conceptualization, a brief history of the research on the terminology associated with this phenomenon is presented. Next, four conceptual models of culture shock and their respective etiological explanations are described. As part of this discussion, criticisms of the models are presented and their implications for the findings are offered in the literature. Table 1 provides a concise overview of the disparate terminology associated with culture shock as well as the different epistemological stances of scholars in the field over the last four-and-a-half decades.

The third section, Research Review, describes 14 key factors that have been purported by various researchers to be related to the cross-cultural adjustment among international students. The results of 27 studies are summarized in Appendix A, which describes the author(s), report type, purpose, participants, methodology, data collection and analysis, and findings. Finally, the last section, Significance of the Study,

summarizes the major points discussed in the previous sections and provides justification for this study by identifying gaps in the literature.

SEARCH AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

For the purpose of this study, the preliminary source that was used in the literature search was the electronic database *Psycinfo* (<http://www.apa.org/psycinfo/>). The descriptors were “culture shock” and “foreign students”. The only limitations on the parameters of the search in the database were placed in terms of the age described in the study (adulthood 18 years and older), population (human), and language of publication (English). As a consequence, this initial search returned 24 publications: 15 peer-reviewed journals, two chapters/essays, and seven dissertations. In addition to the results returned from this search, references within the aforementioned publications as well as current peer-reviewed journals were also examined in order to find the most current and relevant citations on the subject of culture shock in regards to the aims of this study.

THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION

Definition

The range of terminology employed by the researchers surveyed is representative of the changing perceptions of this phenomenon over time from one characterized by an emphasis on physical reactions (*culture shock*) to a much broader one exemplifying a recognition of the social, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional responses (*acculturative stress*) as well. These differences may be representative of the different perspectives of researchers regarding culture itself, for whether this term is defined sociologically, anthropologically, or sociolinguistically, the weight afforded certain aspects of this

phenomenon will most assuredly shift (Li, 1999). Chung (1988), for example, reports that there are more than 150 definitions of culture in the literature.

Numerous early scholars in the field of culture shock research have followed the lead of Oberg (1960) in defining culture shock as a disease. Foster (1962), for example, identifies this phenomenon as an unpreventable mental illness in which the unwitting victim becomes irritated and depressed. Similarly, Clarke (1976) asserts that culture shock is a disease akin to schizophrenia owing to the international students' desire to avoid threatening social encounters with members of the host culture while erecting defensive mechanisms to blunt the impact of the stresses. Finally, and by extension of this view of culture shock as a malady, Arensberg and Niehoff (1964) contend that it occurs during the earliest part of an individual's sojourn to the host culture, but like any sickness, it is temporary and easily remedied through greater familiarity with the local customs.

Later researchers, however, have opted for descriptions that are more representative of the totality and the nature of the challenges required of international students in the host culture. While not denying the physiological demands for adjustment that must be satisfied, other scholars have emphasized, for example, the learning (Furnham & Bochner, 1986) and equilibrium-oriented (Grove & Torbiorn, 1985) requirements. In addition, the characterization of this phenomenon as negative, step-wise, and unique to international students that is commonly found in the early literature has been called into question by scholars who view culture shock as potentially a positive

experience, impossible to construct universal stages for, and common to all people confronted by the stressors of a new environment (Anderson, 1994).

Nevertheless, the original term, *culture shock*, notwithstanding the limitations and critics who decry the employment because of its vague, over-generalized, tautological meaning (Anderson, 1994; Searle & Ward, 1990), remains the most widely used and recognized description, owing perhaps more to its initial coinage of this experience and linguistic impact than to conceptual accuracy. Table 1 summarizes 24 studies in which a conceptual definition of the term *culture shock* is included.⁴

Table 1

Selected summary of definitions and terms used for culture shock (1898 to 2004)

Author(s)	Definition	Terminology
Kline (1898)	A fundamental reaction primarily caused by the loss of the familiar environment which resulted in a loss of psychic orientation	<i>Nostalgia</i>
Lysgaard (1955)	An attitude change involved in a person's sojourn in a foreign country in the personal-social area as well as within the professional-educational area over time	<i>Adjustment process</i> and a <i>culture clash</i>

⁴ The timeframe of the studies selected is not intended to imply that culture shock is a new phenomenon nor that it has not been previously recognized. In fact, from the 17th century until the 19th century, members of the European medical community researched this malady, characterizing it as both a mental illness and an organic disease while describing it as *nostalgia* or *homesickness*. The concentration of cited studies within the last half-century, however, reflects the post-World War II expansion in interdisciplinary research into the adjustment problems of cross-cultural experience triggered by increased international student exchanges and the Peace Corps' movement in particular (Dulebohn, 1989).

Table 1 (continued)

Author(s)	Definition	Terminology
Oberg (1960)	An occupational “disease” resulting from the inaccessibility of the home culture, e.g., the loss of familiar signs and symbols of social discourse, resulting in confusion, anxiety, frustration, and helplessness (p. 177)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Foster (1962)	“A mental illness, and as true of much mental illness, the victim usually does not know he is afflicted” (p. 187)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Smalley (1963)	“Emotional disturbance which results from adjustment to new cultural environment” (p. 49)	<i>Culture shock and language shock</i>
Arensberg & Niehoff (1964)	“A temporary attitude that will pass as soon as he/she becomes familiar enough with local customs and manners” (p. 189)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Byrnes (1966)	“The frustrations and stresses associated with such discrepancies as between what a technical assistant views as the ideal role for himself and what he learns or finds the actual role to be abroad or between the role he expects to play abroad and the role he actually plays” (p. 96); as opposed to culture shock, stresses are severe, mount over time, and seldom disappear	<i>Role shock</i>
Skinner (1971)	A maladaptive response to a new situation in which previous learning was inadequate for coping with the new stimuli	<i>Culture shock</i>
Adler (1975)	“Primarily a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one’s own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences” (p. 13)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Guthrie (1975)	A failure to learn to live effectively in an unfamiliar culture	<i>Culture fatigue</i>

Table 1 (continued)

Author(s)	Definition	Terminology
Clarke (1976)	A disease arising in a strange culture in which threatening social encounters and defensive mechanisms are symptomatic of schizophrenia (p. 380)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Cort & King (1979)	Psychological and behavioral changes, often dysfunctional, resulting from the experience of moving from one cultural environment to a radically different one (pp. 211-212)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Surdam (1980)	“Emotional and intellectual withdrawal as a response to the stress caused by sudden placement in an environment where the gratification of physiological and psychological needs is uncertain, and unpredictable” (p. 11)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Furnham & Bochner (1982)	A socially-oriented difficulty arising from cross-cultural interaction	<i>Culture shock</i>
Grove & Torbiorn (1985)	“A type of mental and physiological stress resulting from overstimulation and overuse of the body’s coping mechanisms due to a high degree of novelty in the environment” (p. 214)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok (1987)	“A reduction in health status (including psychological, somatic and social aspects) of individuals who are undergoing acculturation, and for which there is evidence that these health phenomena are related systematically to acculturation phenomena” (p. 491)	<i>Acculturative stress</i>
Befus (1988)	“An adjustment reaction syndrome caused by cumulative, multiple, and interactive stress in the intellectual, behavioral, emotional, and physiological levels of a person recently relocated to an unfamiliar culture, ...characterized by a variety of symptoms of psychological distress” (p. 387)	<i>Culture shock or cross-cultural adjustment</i>

Table 1 (continued)

Author(s)	Definition	Terminology
Dulebohn (1989)	“The [normal] psychological reaction caused by an immersion into an unfamiliar culture in which the sojourner’s cultural knowledge and behavioral learning is inappropriate” (p. ii)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Dodd (1991)	“The transition period and the accompanying feelings of stress and anxiety a person experiences during the early period upon entering a new culture” (p. 305)	<i>Culture shock</i>
Anderson (1994)	A common process of environmental adaptation that entails learning to live with change and difference	<i>Change shock</i> or <i>cross-cultural adaptation</i>
Weaver (1994)	A psychological reaction to the new culture which manifests itself in various reactions to stress	<i>Culture shock</i>
Pedersen (1995)	“An internalized construct or perspective developed in reaction or response to the new or unfamiliar situation” (p. vii)	<i>Culture shock</i>
McKinlay, Pattison, & Gross (1996)	The array of experiences of international students in the host, foreign culture as they familiarize themselves with new customs oftentimes with the expectation of integration	<i>Culture shock</i>
Chapdelaine & Alexitch (2004)	“...the multiple demands for adjustment that individuals experience at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological levels, when they relocate to another culture” (p. 168)	<i>Culture shock</i>

Models

Table 1 also indirectly highlights the four main models used to characterize culture shock in the literature and to provide explanations for the etiologies of this phenomenon: recuperation model, learning model, journey model, and equilibrium model (Anderson, 1994). The range of definitions and terms used for culture shock in Table 1 illustrate the similarities and differences among researchers as to how best model the phenomenon as well as its causes. Each are discussed in turn along with criticisms that have been leveled against them.

Recuperation Model

The first, and by far the most preeminent, is the recuperation model. This model incorporates both recovery from physical symptoms associated with this medical condition as well as psychological ones triggered by identity crises. In this conceptualization, recovery from the initial shock associated with the new culture is viewed as the key mechanism.

Lysgaard's (1954) famous U-shaped curve is illustrative of the medical process, representing the transition in the introductory stage from initial positive feelings about the host culture during the first six months, to negative ones sparked by cultural dissonance and language problems in the loneliness stage from six to 18 months, and finally to a return to a "high" of cultural acceptance and adaptation in the integration stage from 18 months onwards. Sewell and Davidsen's (1956) study with 40 Scandinavian students at the University of Wisconsin also confirms this recuperation pattern in the participants' personal and academic adjustments over a year.

Oberg (1960) adds to Lysgaard's (1954) conceptualization by coining the term *culture shock* and articulating four stages of this occupational disease: (a) honeymoon, in which the relationships with the new culture and the hosts, while superficial, are idealized; this stage can last anywhere from a few days or weeks to six months; (b) crisis, when language and communication differences produce anger, frustration, and inadequacy that may lead to departure from the host culture; (c) recovery, when individuals begin to learn more about the host culture, accept their lot, and develop coping strategies such as humor that will lead to the successful resolution of crises; and (d) adjustment, in which individuals know how to function in the host culture and may even develop positive impressions.

Similar to Lysgaard's (1954) U-shaped model is Gullahorn and Gullahorn's (1963) W-shaped model. The fundamental difference lies in the extension of the earlier model to include either a five-stage adjustment in the host culture or a re-entry stage for individuals returning to their home countries, as it is hypothesized that these sojourners will undergo an acculturation process akin to the one in which they were engaged in the host country. Weaver (1994), for example, asserts that most international students experience more stress during re-entry rather than entry, and those who were the most well-adjusted in the host culture actually have the most difficult problems with reverse culture shock. In essence, Gullahorn and Gullahorn's model is a double U reflecting the stages of excitement at the prospect of returning home, followed by the re-entry shock of encountering family and friends who may not understand or appreciate the sojourner's

changed identity, and finally re-integration with family, friends, and the culture as a whole, signifying a realization of the positive and negative aspects of both countries.

The other version of the recuperation model incorporates a psychological as opposed to a physical point of view when conceptualizing culture shock. In this more recent variant, the challenges to the identities of international students are acknowledged to be threatening to the sense of self, but just as importantly, these struggles are not viewed as entirely negative phenomena as they are with other researchers, such as Lysgaard (1955) and Oberg (1960). Instead, they are perceived as natural and as opportunities for personality development and growth.

Although the recuperation models are the most widely recognized and used, they are plagued by linguistic and conceptual problems. In the first case, Anderson (1994) contends that the reliance on a vague, catch-all phrase such as *culture shock* masks the individual etiologies and their magnitudes. She adds that based on how the term is loosely employed in the literature, it is more appropriate to label the adjustment problems of international students to their new environments, if they occur at all, as *change shock*.

In the second case, the premise that adaptation to a new culture necessarily entails a shock and that it involves the passage through successive U-shaped stages has not been conclusively proved. In fact, according to Church's (1982) review of the literature, approximately 80% of the international students in the examined studies make

reasonable adjustments to the host culture and to the institutional demands.⁵ Several researchers have found either no culture shock at all (Byrnes, 1965; Lundstedt, 1963) or only feelings of “general irritation” (Torbiorn, 1982, p. 170). Further, numerous researchers disagree with the universality of the U-shaped curve for describing international individuals’ adjustment, citing examples of only a small percentage fitting this pattern (Kealey, 1989), chronic alienation (Campbell & Yarrow, 1958), or a linear pattern of adaptation (Kealey, 1989; Kim, 1978; Klineberg & Hull, 1979). According to Furnham and Bochner (1986), the U-shaped curve does not accurately account for the many dependent variables, such as depression, loneliness, and homesickness, for example, nor does it allow for sufficient latitude among international students starting with different levels of adjustment needs or differing rates of adjustment.

Like Furnham and Bochner (1986), Weaver (1994) disagrees with the underlying assumption of the recuperation models because of the (over)emphasis on physiological causes as opposed to psychological ones. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, Weaver does not perceive culture shock as an illness or a disease, and consequently, does not hold that this transition is entirely negative. While acknowledging the stress inherent in the adjustment for international students, this researcher also highlights the opportunities for personal growth and discovery that culture shock creates. Individuals that successfully navigate the course often emerge with a greater sense of esteem, confidence, and awareness. Finally, but somewhat incongruously, Weaver, while

⁵ Lysgaard’s (1954) seminal work, in fact, the very linchpin upon which much subsequent research has been based, relies strictly on retrospective accounts of cultural adjustment.

accepting the U-shaped curve of culture shock adjustment, also agrees with Furnham and Bochner that the severity and duration of this phenomenon for internationals depends on the individual and the nature of the host culture.

Pedersen (1995) concurs with Weaver's (1994) rejection of culture shock as an inherently negative phenomenon. Instead, the researcher considers this adjustment to be a normal and natural growth or transition process as one adapts to the new host culture. Implicit in this metamorphosis is the necessity of initial feelings of disorientation, ambiguity, and discomfort; however, the end result of this process is the emergence of a more stable and centered individual. Culture shock can neither be avoided nor eliminated. This phenomenon is a natural process that all individuals who find themselves forced to adapt to new environments must undergo. As such, the goal of any training or program should be to minimize the known stressors and thereby make this adjustment a more positive experience through language study, learning about the host culture, simulations, and interactions with nationals.

Learning Model

Another model is based on the conception of culture shock as a learning process (Anderson, 1994). This model combines both anthropological and behavioral etiologies (Befus, 1988). Initially, international students are held to be ignorant of not only their own unconscious assumptions about life but also the norms of the host culture, and therefore, they must learn the sociocultural skills necessary for adjustment and integration by increasing their cultural awareness. As such, the U-shaped curve is eschewed in favor of a gradually upward sloping learning curve.

As with the recuperation model, two different visions of which type of learning is of the greatest importance are present in this conceptualization. In the first school of thought, the acquisition of communication skills is held to be paramount, for it is contended that without the ability to engage verbally and nonverbally with members of the host culture, culture shock will ensue (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). In the second case, other scholars (Anderson, 1994; Brislin, 1993; Skinner, 1971) contend that learning appropriate social behaviors is the overriding concern for international students. The inability of these individuals to use their existing knowledge of stimuli in the new culture often results in inappropriate responses. As such, both the behaviors as well as the rewards and punishments associated with these new behaviors must be learned through instruction, modeling, role playing, feedback, and reinforcement. This operant conditioning is held to best prepare individuals for what to expect and for how to respond positively in the new culture.

The learning curve model also suffers from limitations. In particular, the need for international students to learn about the foreign culture is over-emphasized and mechanized; for in fact, these individuals must also accept the customs and mores of the host society (Anderson, 1994). In addition, the behaviorist approach of Skinner (1971), among other researchers, focuses exclusively on the visible behaviors of international students rather than on the emotional, cognitive, attitudinal, or physical factors. Moreover, Gudykunst and Hammer (1983) assert that there is no data to support the contention that the learning of culture-specific behaviors alone leads to adjustment in the host culture.

Journey Model

The third model treads a middle ground between the first two models as it conceives of culture shock in linear terms as a transitional experience that is symptomatic of both recovery and learning (Adler, 1975; Anderson, 1994). This phenomenological journey conceptualization portrays the psychological adjustments that international students engage in over time as a methodical progression from the periphery of the host culture to the center as well as from rejection and unawareness to acceptance and understanding. By resolving their feelings of cognitive dissonance, these individuals develop cultural sensitivity as they move from early “ethnocentrism” to full “ethnorelativism” (Bennett, 1986).

In line with this phenomenological conceptualization, Adler (1975), for example, categorizes culture shock as a transitional experience and eschews the correspondence of time frames to his five different stages: (a) contact, in which the individual is insulated from the host culture by his/her own ethnocentrism; as a consequence, similarities rather than differences are emphasized which validate the home culture; (b) disintegration, in which confusion and disorientation arise because of the growing recognition of cultural differences; (c) reintegration, characterized by a hostile rejection of the host culture that acts as a fulcrum in determining the nature of future reactions; (d) autonomy, in which increased sensitivity, personal flexibility, and appropriate coping skills for dealing with the host culture develop; and (e) independence, in which the individual accepts and enjoys social, psychological, and cultural differences.

Ito's (2003) five-process model of cross-cultural adjustment for Japanese international students also reflects a phenomenological journey conception: (a) *Building the Dream*, students start dreaming about coming to the U.S. while still in Japan; (b) *Discovering*, students experience various initial reactions in the new environment for a brief period; (c) *Surviving*, students struggle to meet the demands of the new environment; (d) *Overcoming Obstacles*, students learn to cope with the new environment; and (e) *Reflecting on the Journey*, a process that involves reflecting on self, self in society, and the future.

According to some scholars, the journey model, while descriptive in nature, fails to provide specifics of the cross-cultural adjustment process in terms of the precise forms and dynamics of adaptations in which international students are engaged in the host culture (Anderson, 1994). It relies too heavily on vague descriptions of the process by which sojourners progress from discomfort to comfort in the new culture.

Equilibrium Model

The final model is a dynamic, mechanical, and cyclical one based on the contention that individuals suffering culture shock are in disequilibrium, and their reactions to the host culture evince a desire to return to balance (Anderson, 1994). To achieve homeostasis, international students must adequately adjust to the new cultural demands by achieving a satisfying level of functioning in terms of his/her frame of reference, behavior, and environment (Grove & Torbiorn, 1985).

The equilibrium model, however, is overly simplistic and one dimensional in that internal adjustment processes are given more weight than externally-situated ones. In

addition, physiological responses to stressors are emphasized to the virtual exclusion of cognitive ones. Moreover, the desire for stasis, especially in reference to higher order cognitive processes such as learning or growth, is not always evident in human beings; in fact, many actively seek disequilibrium in order to challenge themselves.

As Anderson (1994) points out, each of these models has their own shortcomings as they present only a partial conceptualization of culture shock. In addition, each model is founded on assumptions which, for the purposes of theoretical clarity and precision, may be justified, but when viewed through a more concrete lens, in fact blur the rough, individualized edges that mark this transition period.

In sum, the sustained use of models to conceptualize culture shock is not without its share of problems. While individually each may provide one or more pieces to the puzzle, their theoretical isolation from other equally valid models prevents the construction of a cohesive impression of this phenomenon that examines the social, behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and physiological aspects jointly. (This cacophony, while indeed confusing, is somewhat defensible on the grounds that the study of culture shock is the province of researchers in many disciplines, including anthropology, psychology, sociology, and linguistics.) In addition, the simplification and assumptions which are inherent in modeling also creates problems; in particular, the specific characteristics of individuals from similar as well as different groups are often obscured. Further, a deficit-type orientation as is most commonly found in recuperation models pits international students against domestic students who are assumed as the standard. As a consequence, shared issues of adjustment to a new environment are overlooked.

RESEARCH REVIEW

As with the unclear conceptualization of culture shock previously described, the findings from the research into the important variables affecting international students' ability to cope with culture shock are also mixed. Different results have been reported because of numerous factors, such as definitional and/or methodological issues, in particular. Further, the inability to completely isolate one variable and its effect from others complicates attempts to accurately assess the individual importance of the factor.

Nevertheless, the growing volume of studies in this field has gradually offered some key insights into this phenomenon. Broadly speaking, most studies have looked for a relationship between the sojourners' facility with the English language, communication ability, social connectedness, attitudes, personality type, marital status (including family status and living arrangement), length of stay in the host country, religiosity, previous international experience, gender, age, cultural distance and differences, country of origin, counseling and the degree of cross-cultural adaptation. Appendix A provides a selected summary of the research on culture shock.

English Skills

The relationship between culture and language is one that is inextricably linked. Both are semiotic systems that rely on signs and symbols to transmit and receive messages. According to Casson (1981), language operates as a subsystem of the overarching culture. As such, one could anticipate that difficulties in acquiring a language could lead to difficulties with the culture. Smalley (1963) even goes so far as to purport that the term *language shock* be added to the conceptualization of culture shock

because of the central position language problems have in inducing this phenomenon and due to the acute negative reactions that some international students have to language study.

Several researchers have in fact reached similar conclusions, pointing to the importance of highly developed English skills for mitigating the negative effects of culture shock. According to Mori's (2000) findings, English-language-related difficulties may be the most challenging issue faced by the majority of international students, acting as a kind of domino effect from academic problems to psychological distress. The higher the self-reported frequency of use, fluency level, and comfort level with speaking English, the lower the degree of culture shock. Hall (1981) and Li (1999) also assert that English proficiency is the most important factor in assisting international students in their adjustment to American culture. Similarly, Dale (1996), Meloni (1986), and Porter (1962) contend that competence in the host language helps to alleviate feelings of culture shock. Henderson, Milhouse, and Cao's (1993) survey of 150 adult Chinese college students in the U.S. largely confirmed these findings as 97% of the participants reported that language problems caused them the most difficulties.

Several other studies have found that the higher the level of English fluency, the lower the degree of feelings of culture shock (Barratt & Huba, 1994; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Juffer, 1983; Shandiz, 1981). Reasons asserted for this contention stem from the fact that if international students encounter fewer difficulties communicating in English, and therefore feel less self-conscious or embarrassed in social situations, then their adjustment into the host culture will be much smoother. In addition, greater facility with

English could promote greater overall academic achievement through the raising of confidence levels and through increased opportunities to participate in class discussions (Kao & Gansneder, 1995). Furthermore, the positive reciprocal correlation between English language proficiency and the amount of social interaction has been cited as an additional important factor for promoting an easier and swifter transition into the host culture (Church, 1982).

Interestingly, Cauchon (1994) looked at the issue from the opposite direction; that is, she wanted to know what effects culture shock has on English language acquisition and proficiency among 61 international ESL students. Among several findings, the most unanticipated was that culture shock over a two-month time period, while reported not to be a conscious phenomenon in second language acquisition among international students, did highly negatively affect the language learning process.

Communication Skills

Hall (1981) and Althen (1994) contend that international students who are able to effectively communicate with members of the host culture are not as acutely affected by culture shock as compared to those who lacked this same skill set. Confidence in terms of initiating contact when coupled with insight and proficiency leads to a mutually beneficial exchange in which both parties learn, enjoy, and ultimately pursue deeper relationships. Awareness and understanding of culturally-determined patterns of behavior and the differences they engender help international students communicate more effectively and constructively build associations with their host peers.

Ruben (1976) also purports that effective cross-cultural communication skills are essential to adapting and coping with culture shock. Those international students who are able to recognize the limitations of their own beliefs, values, and views as well as remain open to new ideas often find it much easier to establish relationships with members of the host culture, especially in comparison to those who tenaciously resist any alterations in their perceptions. Recourse to appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills and strategies, adoption of an empathetic stance, and a tolerance for ambiguity can go a long way towards creating an atmosphere of trust and respect, within which inter-cultural bonds can be formed and strengthened.

Social Connectedness

Irrespective of national or international status, it is a universal need of all people around the globe to feel connected to their local surroundings specifically and their society generally. Importantly, this longing has been found to increase in importance over time for sojourners (Lysgaard, 1955). When these bonds are absent, individuals are prone to feelings of isolation, depression, and loneliness. For newly-arrived international students in the host culture, oftentimes unprepared for and alone in their new home, culture shock-associated symptoms may become overwhelming.

More precisely, international students from cultures that are more group-oriented, such as those found in Asia, Africa, southern Europe, and Latin America, may experience severe adjustment problems in the U.S. owing to the more individualistic culture in the host country (Henderson, Milhouse, & Cao, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Self-conception in the West is largely an individual responsibility whereas in

these cultures, one's view of him/herself is dependent on the views of those around them. As a consequence, some students may feel cognitively, emotionally, and motivationally bewildered by the lack of close connections with Americans or consider these new relationships to be too superficial (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

A substantial quantity of research has shown that the more satisfying friendships that international students have with members of the host culture, the better their adjustment and the lower their feelings of culture shock (Gezi, 1965; Juffer, 1983; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Li, 1999; Searle & Ward, 1990; Sewell & Davidsen, 1956; Shandiz, 1981). Gezi, in particular, points to the importance of the type and quality of interaction as opposed to the quantity in determining the success of adjustment efforts. Further, peer programs, in which individual international students are matched with their American peers, and home stays have been found to greatly alleviate the feelings of culture shock (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Juffer, 1983; Meloni, 1986). Hassan (1961), however, contends that not just any social interaction between individuals from different cultures will automatically lead to favorable perceptions of the host culture. Instead, the type of experience is the most essential factor to consider.

A research study conducted by Weaver and Uncapher (1981) also found that feelings of social connectedness with members of the host culture were essential to enabling international students to overcome feelings of culture shock. The majority of the over 1,000 Nigerian students in the U.S. and the hundreds of international students attending The American University followed the U-curve pattern of adjustment, and

these participants explained that the establishment of friendships with American students was the primary reason for their return to positive impressions about U.S. culture.

Brislin (1993) asserts that the presence of “cultural informants”, i.e., individuals who themselves had gone through adjustments to other cultures and who are familiar with the host culture, are important resources for international students struggling with culture shock. The firsthand knowledge of these experienced individuals provides not only empathy but the very real possibility of hastening the transition of international students from feelings of discomfort to ones of comfort.

Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004) also found a strong link between the amount of social interaction between international students in their study and members of the host culture and decreased feelings of culture shock. Interestingly, the researchers also concluded that the larger the co-national group, the lower the levels of social interaction with the hosts, which in turn led to stronger feelings of culture shock. Surdam and Collins (1984) and Pruitt (1978) uncovered a similar result, finding that those international students who spent more of their leisure time with Americans rather than with members of their own co-national group adapted much better.

It should also be noted that several researchers have found somewhat conflicting results associated with social connectedness and feelings of culture shock. Kealey (1989) and Rohrlich and Martin (1991), for example, each found that increased contact with members of the host culture eventually leads to better psychological adjustment and satisfaction. After an initial rough period of adaptation due to the stress of learning new cultural behaviors, international students who brave these challenges often emerge with

more satisfying intercultural experiences. Similarly, Torbiorn (1982) asserts that those individuals who established friendships with members of the host culture actually experienced greater initial adjustment difficulties. However, the researcher also found that later, perhaps as a consequence of this identity crisis, these participants were more accustomed and satisfied with their sojourn. Finally, Chung's (1988) and Wingfield's (2000) studies offered a different take on the relationship between contact with the host culture and cross-cultural stress. These researchers reported no significant relationship between interaction with members of the U.S. and reduced feelings of culture shock.

Attitude

Adler's (1985) description of culture shock as a phenomenon resulting from the inability of some international students to cope with the overwhelming quantity of new stimuli and cues highlights the individual nature of this adjustment as well as the impact of attitude. The researcher contends that not everyone will experience debilitating amounts of stress; instead, whether this transitional experience is a positive one full of personal growth or a negative one replete with destructive tendencies depends on the individual's expectations, adaptability, tolerance for ambiguity and stress, and an understanding that there will be discomfort that can be managed and eventually overcome.

Gezi (1965) and Weaver (1994) also found that the attitude of international students towards the host culture plays a noteworthy role in determining how successfully they are able to cope with culture shock. Difficulties in the new environment are unavoidable, but those individuals who are able to take ownership of

their problems deal more effectively with them. Further, international students who accept the customs of the country in which they are residing as different but an equally valid way of doing things are subject to reduced feelings of anxiety. This sophisticated cross-cultural thinking as opposed to ethnocentrism empowers individuals with an understanding of and appreciation for behavior from the point of view of people in the other culture (Triandis, 1990).

Kleinjans (1972), echoing Gardner's (1962) description of a "universal communicator", asserts that the individual who is interculturally effective possesses the following attitudes: (1) considers people as individuals before reflecting on their culture; (2) believes in the essential goodness of people; (3) understands the inherent value of all cultures; (4) controls his/her visceral reactions; (5) communicates optimism and honesty; and (6) possesses self-confidence in his/her uniqueness.

Finally, Hammer, Gudykunst, and Wiseman (1978), in a study involving 53 American students at the University of Minnesota who were selected on the basis of their extensive international experience and recommendations, identified three major dimensions of intercultural effectiveness that are seen to positively contribute to this measure: (1) the ability to deal with psychological stress (such as frustration, interpersonal conflict, stress, pressure to conform, financial difficulties, social alienation, different political systems, and anxiety); (2) the ability to effectively communicate (such as initiating interaction with a stranger, establishing meaningful dialogue, and dealing with communication misunderstandings and different communication styles; and (3) the ability to establish interpersonal relationships (such as dealing with different social

customs, developing and maintaining satisfying relationships, understanding the feelings of others, empathizing with others, and working with other people).

The relationship between positive attitudes towards the target culture and the facilitation of the acquisition of a second language has been well-established in the literature. The import of this finding, presented in the following sections on communication and English-language skills, rests in the parallel relationship between culture and language. Ultimately, if a high degree of identification with the target culture is found or can be promoted, which simultaneously is fueled by the adoption of more favorable attitudes towards the target language, this entire process will indirectly lead to the reduction of culture shock (Guiora, Brannon, & Dull, 1971; Lambert, 1963; Taylor, Catford, Guiora, & Lane, 1971).

Personality Type

Somewhat aligned with the research into the relationship between attitude and culture shock among international students are the studies looking for a correlation between certain personality types and this phenomenon. In some sense, the distinction between an attitude and a personality type is akin to the proverbial splitting of hairs owing to the difficulty in separating the two variables, or if divided, determining the direction of the relationship.

Nevertheless, researchers have found that those international students who more successfully adapt to the host culture generally possess many of the same characteristics. Kealey and Ruben (1983, p. 165), for example, reported that empathy, respect, flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, interest in the local culture and the people, sociability, kindness,

patience, intellectual curiosity, and open-mindedness were all present in their review of various sojourning groups. Juffer (1983) and Searle and Ward (1990) also stated that the participants in their studies who perceived themselves as outgoing instead of shy were substantially better adjusted to U.S. culture. Nearly 100% of the Chinese participants in Henderson, Milhouse, and Cao's (1993) study professed that their unassertiveness and shyness were the cause of their adjustment problems. Kealey and Ruben (1983), however, warn against the use of these traits as predictors of adjustment owing to the impact of both the task and the environment on the relative emphasis found among the different characteristics. In addition, they add that the heretofore reliance on self-report measures of personality-related characteristics rather than behavioral measures has consistently failed to illustrate a relationship between this variable and successful cross-cultural adaptation (Ruben & Kealey, 1979).

Ruben and Kealey (1979), however, in an earlier study, reported that contrary to their expectations, some evidence reveals that those individuals who are the most open and skilled in communicating with and transferring skills and knowledge to internationals actually are more prone to severe culture shock. Conversely, those individuals who are ethnocentric, narrow-minded, and inflexible often experienced culture shock to a lesser degree but were generally ill-equipped to effectively handle professional responsibilities in the host environment.

Marital Status

A comparison of those international students who were married with their single counterparts and culture shock also provides mixed results. The contradictory findings

strongly suggest the need for caution and further study. Porter (1962) found that married students suffer less from culture shock than single students. However, married international students who brought their spouses with them did not achieve greater adjustment in the host culture than other married students who did not travel with their spouses. Meloni's (1986) conclusions echo those of Porter, leading her to assert that there is a strong relationship between marital status and lower levels of culture shock. Nevertheless, other researchers have not found a significant positive correlation between these factors (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Chung, 1988; Juffer, 1983; Li, 1999; Onyemenem, 1988; Shandiz, 1981; Wingfield, 2000). Finally, in a related finding, on the impact of family status on feelings of culture shock, Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004) assert that the larger the family group, the lower the levels of social interaction with the hosts, which in turn leads to stronger feelings of culture shock.

Length of Stay in the Host Country

Beginning with Lysgaard's (1955) articulation of the U-curve, belief in the importance of the length of time in the host country as an important factor in determining how effectively an international student copes with culture shock has remained a permanent feature of much of the research in the field. As alluded to previously in the discussion of the limitations of the various conceptualizations of this phenomenon, however, consensus on this point is far from having been reached. While other researchers have concurred with Lysgaard that the longer the residence in the U.S., the more positive the attitude, interaction, adjustment, and achievement (Hassan, 1961; Li, 1999; Pavri, 1963; Shandiz, 1981; Surdam, 1980), others have either reported a

negative correlation (Porter, 1962) or no significant association at all (Chung, 1988; Gezi, 1965; Wingfield, 2000). These findings, as with the other variables previously examined, suggest that additional research is needed in this area.

Religiosity

The relationship between religion and the degree of culture shock has been explored by numerous researchers with differing findings.⁶ Those who have postulated that there is a significant, predictive association include Hassan (1961), Surdam (1980), and Pruitt (1978). Hassan reported that religious affiliation and increased social interaction with Americans among the 304 international students surveyed at Purdue University was significantly and positively related. Surdam found similar results, uncovering the fact that those international participants at the University of Wyoming who developed positive attitudes towards religion had significantly better adjustment. Finally, although Pruitt found that over time 24% of the nearly 300 African participants in her questionnaire decreased their amount of religious observance and evinced an increasingly negative attitude towards religion as compared to their pre-departure attitudes, there was a large positive correlation between the continued practice of one's faith and overall adjustment to American culture across all nine of the U.S. campuses on which the study was conducted. Pruitt speculates that the magnitude of this relationship may be due to the sense of identity and belonging that maintaining one's religion

⁶ While not specifically mentioned, religiosity refers primarily to the influence of Christianity. Given the preponderance of this faith in the U.S., this was expected. However, this is not meant to imply that other religions, e.g., Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, would not potentially have the same influence.

provides, which in turn causes an individual to feel more secure, as well as to the relatively easy access to American families that attending church offers.

In contrast, other researchers have not uncovered a significant relationship between religion and culture shock (Chung, 1988; Hill, 1966; Juffer, 1983; Nelsen & Whitt, 1972; Wingfield, 2000). These mixed results, as with the other variables examined in this chapter, once again highlight the wide range of findings that have been reported and thus, the difficulty in uncovering unequivocal correlations.

Previous International Experience

Examination of international students' previous experience either living in or traveling to another country and the degree of culture shock has also returned mixed results; with that said, the weight of the findings is more on the side of a positive correlation rather than a negative one. Researchers such as Abe, Talbot, and Geelhoed (1998), Chung (1988), Juffer (1983), Kealey (1989), Klineberg and Hull (1979), Li (1999), Rohrlich and Martin (1991), and Sewell and Davidsen (1956) have all reported better adjustment and higher culture shock adaptation among individuals with earlier experience in another country. However, some scholars, Cort and King (1979) and Torbiorn (1982), in particular, assert that there is no reduction in culture shock as a result of previous travel experiences. Further, both researchers found that older participants (American tourists in Africa and Swedish business people, respectively) with far greater amounts of travel experiences as compared to the younger participants suffered greater amounts of culture shock. It must be noted, though, that the influence of the age variable

should also be taken into consideration when analyzing this unusual result, for in fact, age may be a confounding influence.

Gender

There are mixed results for the variable gender and its impact on culture shock. Much research has postulated that females more than males suffer from culture shock (Oberg, 1960; Pruitt, 1978; Rohrlich & Martin, 1991). These researchers purport that the overall adjustment as well as the specific academic one demanded of women affects this group more severely (Hill, 1966; Porter, 1962). Meloni (1986), on the other hand, asserts that the levels of culture shock between men and women are equally high. Finally, however, several other studies have uncovered no significant relationship between gender and culture shock at all (Chung, 1988; Juffer, 1983; Li, 1999; Lysgaard, 1954; Onyemenem, 1988; Pavri, 1963; Shandiz, 1981; Torbiorn, 1982; Wingfield, 2000). Care, however, must be exercised in interpreting these findings, in particular for women, as gender is often confounded by other variables, such as educational background and professional experience.

Age

Most studies have examined the demographic variable age in an attempt to uncover the extent of the relationship of this factor with culture shock; however, the results are inconsistent across the various researches. Somewhat contrarily, Scott (1954) reported that the younger Swedish students in his study were more easily influenced by U.S. culture, and thus exhibited a greater ease of adjustment in reference to American conditions and ideas; however, the older students in the sample of 50 adjusted more

easily to academic and professional learning, most likely due to their maturity and experience.

In an oft-cited study, Lysgaard (1954) found that among the 198 Norwegian Fulbright grantees, who ranged in age from less than 20 to more than 60 (average age of about 30), retrospectively interviewed about their experiences in primarily large northeastern and north-central urban U.S. universities for less than three months to more than three years (average of one year), the younger students had more academic and social problems when compared with the older students. Lysgaard speculated that this result may have been due to the relatively greater tendency among the younger students to involve themselves more deeply in their situations in America. Similarly, Porter (1962) asserted that the international students in his study on the Michigan State University campus who were 25 years old and younger confronted more adjustment problems in comparison with those students 25 and older.

More recent research in this area, however, has consistently reported no significant relationship between age and culture shock (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Chung, 1988; Juffer, 1983; Li, 1999; Onyemenem, 1988; Shandiz, 1981; Wingfield, 2000).

Cultural Distance and Differences

The size of the cultural difference between international cultural groups and U.S. culture, real or perceived, has been reported to impact the degree of culture shock experienced. For example, Sue and Sue (1977) found that in cultures that place a greater emphasis on familial bonds, such as those usually found in Asia, Latin America, and

Africa, psychological difficulties are exacerbated in a host culture such as that in the U.S. where not only are the sojourners' families absent but the conception of families differ. As such, feelings of homesickness, anxiety, and helplessness, for example, intensify, potentially leading to a psychological crisis. Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004) as well as Searle and Ward (1990) uncovered similar findings, professing that the higher the levels of cross-cultural differences, the lower the levels of social interaction with the hosts, which in turn led to stronger feelings of culture shock.

Surdam and Collins (1984) concur with Sue and Sue (1977) and Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004). They found that international students from Western nations tended to experience significantly fewer adaptation difficulties when compared to their peers from non-Western countries. Likewise, Juffer (1983) and Abe, Talbot, and Geelhoed (1998) discovered that because Asian students are generally more reserved when it comes to initiating contact with Americans, especially in comparison to Europeans, they typically suffered more culture shock than their peers from other nations. In essence, students who were willing to talk with Americans adjusted better than those who did not.

While these results are undoubtedly noteworthy and suggest a strong positive link between the degree of cross-cultural difference and the amount of culture shock, one must be careful not to over-extend the relationship. If a generalized algebraic equation is erroneously formulated, then the likelihood of stereotypical views of entire cultures will emerge, thereby compromising any of the benefits of these results.

Country of Origin

International students from Western nations, primarily those in Europe, have been found to experience lower levels of culture shock in comparison to students from non-Western nations (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Hassan, 1961; Juffer, 1983; Lysgaard, 1954; Meloni, 1986; Michailidis, 1996; Porter, 1962; Surdam & Collins, 1984; Yeh & Inose, 2003). This result is not entirely unexpected as the close historic and cultural ties joining the U.S. with Europe have until relatively recently been the norm. However, the greater ease of adjustment for European students as opposed to non-Europeans deserves further study in order to ascertain how important a role racial and ethnic variables play in addition to the cultural one. For in fact, some researchers have reported that international students from non-Western cultures may encounter greater degrees of culture shock due to racism and discrimination as well as to non-Western norms (Carter, 1991; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Pruitt, 1978; Yeh & Inose, 2003). In addition, the impact of international students' beliefs that Americans hold negative perceptions of their homelands can lead to dissatisfaction and adjustment problems (Gezi, 1965). In spite of the preponderance of evidence that strongly suggests a significant link between the country of origin and feelings of culture shock, there does exist research to the contrary. Chung (1988), Li (1999), and Shandiz (1981), for example, are scholars who have not found a correlation between nationality and culture shock.

Counseling

Research on the connection between multicultural counseling services and culture shock illustrates the challenges inherent in providing therapy in this context as

well as the mixed results. Michailidis (1996) asserts that, generally speaking, the counseling offered to international students experiencing adjustment problems is not only minimal but inefficient. Further, the researcher contends that American counselors have not received appropriate training in assisting sojourners from other cultures, instead relying upon their own set of largely middle-class values as the basis for their treatments instead of tailoring their approaches to fit the individual needs of these individuals. Carter (1991), Idowu (1985), and Walter (1978) add that the understanding of cultural values, one's own and those from other cultures, is the basis of successful counseling, for without this knowledge, international students will turn to peers from their own countries who more than likely are suffering many of the same problems. As a consequence, culture shock is allowed to fester, potentially leading to academic, psychological, and emotional problems.

Several research studies have in fact confirmed Walter's (1978) assertion that international students are virtually non-existent in university counseling centers. Lee (1973), for example, found that out of the 101 international students enrolled at the University of Virginia who returned her questionnaire, only four of them had ever used the campus counseling service and the majority (66) had never heard of this facility. Idowu (1985), in an informal survey of counseling centers in the tri-state area of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, discovered much the same result, describing how less than two percent of Nigerian students had gone to the counseling center. Finally, Abe, Talbot, and Geelhoed (1998) reported that nearly 80% of the participants in their study had never used the campus counseling center.

It must be noted, however, that the entire fault does not lie in the method adopted by American counselors. Part of the problem may arise from the cultural background of the international student. Henderson, Milhouse, and Cao (1993), for example, in a survey of Chinese students, found that 97% of the participants believed it was shameful to use a counselor or psychologist for help with personal problems. In line with this finding, Sue and Sue (1977) pointed out that international students were generally much more reluctant than their American peers to enter into a counseling relationship because of language variables, class-bound values, and culture-bound values. Locke and Velasco (1987) include the following reasons for this reticence: lack of knowledge, doubts about the efficacy of the treatment, suspicion of the process, and fears about the consequences of admitting they have a problem on their legal status in the U.S.

The research findings in this area do not provide a clear picture of the impact of counseling on feelings of culture shock, especially in light of the fact that so few international students avail themselves of these services. On the one hand, Michailidis (1996) purported that there is a strong need for counseling services for international students in order to help them cope with the acculturative stress in the U.S. Wingfield (2000) also found that there was a statistically significant relationship between having a counselor and behavioral symptoms of culture shock as exhibited by the students in her study. Chung (1988), however, found no significant relationship between counseling and the degree of culture shock adaptation among the participants of his study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As the previous sections have shown, culture shock is an issue of concern for international students owing to the deleterious potential it possesses for affecting these individuals' interpersonal, psychological, physiological, and academic well-being. The changing terminology associated with this condition, while evidence of a growing appreciation for the seriousness of this transition period, also revealed a lack of clarity in identifying what exactly is meant by culture shock; this opacity has often led to a vague conceptualization of this phenomenon, one in which an array of factors and symptoms are unsystematically lumped together under this umbrella term.

Additionally, while the diverse models employed by researchers in the field of culture shock are individually useful in providing a theoretical basis upon which to examine the etiologies associated with international students' adjustment, none of them provide a complete explanation owing to the limitations of the respective paradigms in which they operate. As a consequence, the concentration of individual scholars on individual conceptualizations of culture shock has unintentionally reified understanding of the phenomenon instead of expanded it.

The reviewed research also indirectly highlighted the dangers of viewing culture shock too narrowly. There are numerous factors associated with this phenomenon, factors which often overlap and influence each other. As such, establishing simple cause and effect relationships between variables is highly problematic and wrought with the perils of over-simplification as the "messy" assortment of factors involved in culture shock emphasizes the individual nature of this phenomenon. The different results from

the different studies did not necessarily point to flawed research; instead, this lack of consistency merely illustrated the complicated and distinctive nature of culture shock.

Further, the literature review also revealed the fact that the majority of the research on this phenomenon relied on quantitative methods. While not questioning the procedures employed to conduct the studies, this positivistic epistemology masked individual differences among research participants by reducing findings to statistical representations. Consequently, the unique demands of international students were obscured.⁷

It was this gap between the majority of existing research focused solely on the quantitative depiction of culture shock and my primary intent to reveal the qualitative aspects of the phenomenon that provided the motivation for this study. My desire to uncover the perceptions of the three newly-arrived Korean students enrolled in Texas A&M University regarding their experiences with culture shock and the reasons they ascribed for this phenomenon over the period of a 15-week semester formed the basis of the research. While previous studies have done much to conceptualize this condition and to identify key factors, the specific concerns of individuals, in this research Korean

⁷ For example, in Chapdelaine and Alexitch's (2004) study, the researchers provided sample demographic information by country of origin only; however, they did not show the effects of the main constructs (culture shock, social interaction, cross-cultural differences, size of co-national group, family status, and previous cross-cultural experience) on these same subgroups. Instead, only the overall mean, standard deviations, ranges, and reliability coefficients for the group as a whole were provided. As a consequence, valuable information about similarities and differences among the different countries of origin overall were unavailable, leaving one to speculate about the potential differences. In addition, the designation of nearly half of the sample (47%) as "Other" for the country of origin category masked the probable differences among the different ethnic groups.

learners, have not been sufficiently addressed. Thus, given what is known about culture shock as well as what remains unclear, the study was developed.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

While previous studies of culture shock have provided valuable insights into this phenomenon, the vast majority of this research has been quantitative and driven by negatively-oriented models. The present study was intended to overcome these methodological and conceptual limitations by focusing on the individual experiences and perceptions of three newly-arrived Korean students. Respect for the differences and similarities among these sojourners as well as an appreciation for the distinctive nature of their reactions to this phenomenon informed the exploratory course and humanistic tone of the research.

This chapter describes the methodology that was used to qualitatively examine culture shock and the influential factors that affected the Korean participants at Texas A&M University in the 2007 fall semester. Initially, information about all of the participants in the study, the newly-arrived Korean students, the transcriptionist / translator, and the researcher, are presented. Then the instruments used in the study, the interviews and L1 journals, for data collection are described as well as the procedure for administering them. Finally, the method of analyzing the collected data follows.

SELECTION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM AND RATIONALE

The research design was a basic or generic qualitative study, which according to Merriam (1998) “seek[s] to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved” (p. 11). The rationale for this

decision stemmed from the individual nature of the questions that I desired to answer as well as from my belief in the existence of the social construction of multiple realities. Through individual interviews in a secure location and a systematic review of the journal entries of the three participants over a 15-week semester, the “stories” of these individuals were able to be told in a more comprehensive and meaning-sensitive fashion than a survey alone. The experiences of these international students with culture shock were brought to life by embracing the participants’ power to speak for themselves. This in-depth exploration of a select few university students rather than a surface level rendering of many international students provided a more complete “picture” of the phenomenon for these individuals, which in turn helped to uncover “concrete universals”, i.e., the presence of the general in the particular (Erickson, 1986).

Second, the flexibility inherent in qualitative research allowed me to remain open to emerging problems and/or ideas in the study. The ability to modify (or change completely) questions in interviews as well as L1 journals, for example, reflected the evolving nature of the research. By translating and transcribing the data collected from these two instruments on a regular basis as well as consistently checking with the bilingual interviewer, I was able to constantly compare the findings with my assumptions and make changes accordingly if and when needed. Without this freedom to explore, valuable insights would potentially have been missed.

PARTICIPANTS

Korean Students

The three international students from Korea selected were all newly-enrolled students in Texas A&M University during the 2007 fall semester. They were all male master's-level students of roughly the same age (27, 30, and 32). Two were married and one was single (although one of the two married participants was living apart from his wife and child, who were in Korea, for the first semester). One was a Korean military officer and two were full-time students. Two designated themselves as Christian, and only one participant had spent more than two weeks in a foreign country. One participant's English proficiency level, as measured by the TOEFL, was relatively low. Table 2 provides a snapshot of several demographic factors related to the three participants.⁸

Table 2

Selected demographic factors related to the three newly-arrived Korean participants

	Sang	Kwang	Hong
Gender	Male	Male	Male
Age	32	30	27

⁸ To maintain confidentiality, the real names of the participants and the transcriptionist / translator have been truncated. In the first case, the three participants will henceforth be referenced as Sang, Hong, and Kwang, and the transcriptionist / translator referred to as Sung. I am aware that the names Sang and Sung are very similar for individuals not familiar with Korea and the Korean language. However, out of respect, I did not want to either change the preferred spelling or to substitute Western names for their Korean ones.

Table 2 (continued)

	Sang	Kwang	Hong
Marital Status (including Family)	Married (with wife, daughter (age 5) and son (age 3))	Married (living apart from expectant wife and son (age 2))	Single (living with mother from August to September and Korean roommate)
Profession	Military Officer	Full-time Student	Full-time Student
Academic Classification	Master's Level	Master's Level	Master's Level
Major	Industrial Engineering	Transportation	Industrial Engineering
Religion	None	Christian	Christian
Previous International Experience	U.S. (2 weeks)	Thailand (5 days) China (4 days) Japan (4 days)	Canada (10 months)
TOEFL Score ⁹	68 (Internet)	250 (Computer)	270 (Computer)

The sampling strategy used in this study was nonrandom and purposeful. It was based on the assumption that "...in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth, ...one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research..." (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Consequently, the approach entailed the selection of students from the same country who were predicted to share many of the same

⁹ The minimum TOEFL score for international graduate students to gain admission to Texas A&M University is 550 on the paper-based version, 213 on the computer-based version, and 80 on the Internet-version. The Department of Industrial Engineering at Texas A&M University, however, does not require a TOEFL score for admission at the graduate level for international students, accepting instead a GRE score.

responses to the host culture in the present study while simultaneously revealing the individual nature of the culture shock phenomenon. I anticipated the identification of common problems and responses to culture shock as well as individual ones would result from this study. Other than the requirement that the three participants be first-semester Korean students at Texas A&M University and not enrolled in one of my classes, no other restrictions were placed upon involvement in the study.

To overcome concerns about credibility surrounding purposeful sampling based solely on convenience (Merriam, 1998), the procedure employed in this study was only partially dependent on the expediency of conducting research in the university that was my place of employment. The proximity to the participants permitted me to continuously collect and analyze data and to evaluate and modify the data collection instruments as necessary. In addition, my familiarity with Korea due to my eight years of experience in this country as an English instructor provided for a greater degree of critical analysis and interpretation throughout the research process. The potential conflict of interest, given that I was employed in the university, was acknowledged. Every effort possible was made to minimize this impact on the findings. For example, by not selecting my own students and by fully describing any biases in the final report, I was able to substantially negate undue influence on my part.

The three participants were initially recruited during the summer semester via primarily an electronic Korean student association message board as well as by word of mouth (see Appendix B). The cooperation of the research participants was gained on a strictly voluntary basis through a face-to-face invitation to join the study. In addition,

they had the option to quit the study at any time. At the first face-to-face meeting on August 15, an information sheet and consent form was provided that explained in detail the entire research project, including my pledge to maintain confidentiality and to be transparent about the purposes of the study (see Appendix C). I was also available to answer any questions. More precisely, spoken and written explanations in English and the participants' native language were proffered by the bilingual assistant and me. Involvement in the study was unrelated to academic compensation, although the promise of a gift certificate and English-language assistance was made.¹⁰

The phenomenon of interest was whether these three first-semester students from Korea enrolled in Texas A&M University would in fact suffer from culture shock, and if they did, how they would perceive and cope with their symptoms. In addition, the impact of various factors that affected their responses to this phenomenon was also of interest. These factors included the participants' facility with the English language, communication ability, social connectedness, attitudes, personality type, marital status (including family status and living arrangement), length of stay in the host country, religiosity, previous international experience, gender, age, cultural distance and differences, country of origin, and counseling. Finally, I anticipated that the attitudes of the selected participants about how the university's resources and programs, in particular, assisted them with this cultural adjustment would be of importance, and as such, this factor was also investigated through the interviews and L1 journals.

¹⁰ In the first case, upon completion of the final interview in December, a \$15 gift card to a local coffee shop was given to each participant. In the second case, corrections of any English errors in their weekly journal entries were provided per the participants' stated wishes.

Transcriptionist / Translator

As a Korean male in his 20s who had lived in the U.S. since attending middle school, the transcriptionist / translator was a fluent bilingual of the participants' L1 and English. He was also a recent master's graduate of Texas A&M University and was unknown to the three participants.

The cooperation of the bilingual transcriptionist / translator was gained in the same fashion as the participants' involvement was. That is, he was asked to assist me in the study via the face-to-face meeting on August 15; this orientation and instruction session was when an information sheet explaining the entire research project was provided (see Appendix D). At that time, I informed him of the purposes of the study, my expectations, and addressed any questions or concerns that he had.

More precisely, his rights and responsibilities as part of the study were explained in detail. In particular, the importance of maintaining confidentiality was stressed, e.g., breaches of confidentiality would have resulted in dismissal from the study. Given the volume of the work involved over the 15-week semester, financial compensation for the transcription and translation was negotiated and decided upon at a mutually agreed upon rate. Finally, specific instructions as to how to type the transcribed and translated L1 interviews and journals was provided so that a higher level of consistency could be achieved (see Appendix E).

Researcher

As an English instructor in South Korea for eight years, I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the culture to a great extent. In particular, I devoted my efforts to

learning the language, as I was convinced that this was best way to understand the culture and the people. I was able to achieve an advanced proficiency level in Korean in speaking and listening, with my reading and writing skills being slightly less developed. In addition, the relationships I established with citizens of the country enabled me to develop a deep appreciation for the culture of both Korea and the U.S.

I positioned myself in the study between strict objectivity and complete subjectivity. The middle ground that I occupied in this research in many ways reflected my status as an “intercultural mediator” who, along with the transcriptionist / translator, strove to provide an equal exchange between Korean and U.S. culture (Bedeker & Feinauer, 2006; Federici, 2007) while remaining sensitive to epistemological concerns, hierarchical language power differentials, and the inherent dangers involved in speaking for the “other” (Temple & Young, 2004). Further, as a “cultural informant” (Brislin, 1993), I expected that my firsthand knowledge of both cultures would be a resource that enabled me to be empathetic.

In all cases where my voice was inserted into the body of the text, my motivation was merely to provide background and context to the participants’ interview responses and journal entries. I made every effort to avoid over-generalizations and the creation or perpetuation of stereotypes by remaining aware of my own biases and clearly delineating my etic perspective from the participants’ emic ones (Merriam, 1998).¹¹ The interaction of the multiple constructions of reality among me and the participants, resulting in the

¹¹ The distinction between etic and emic in this study was relative as it was recognized that all etic categories are contextual (Schwandt, 2001).

negotiation of layers of meaning, were subjective; nevertheless, this subjectivity allowed me to make "...a distinctive contribution, one that result[ed] from the unique configuration of [my] personal qualities joined to the data [I] collected" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 55).

DATA COLLECTION

Interviews

Three approximately one-hour interviews at selected intervals during the 15-week fall semester (mid-August, mid-October, and mid-December) were conducted primarily by me in English with assistance from the bilingual transcriptionist / translator. The individual informal format involved the use of a semi-structured, open- and closed-ended set of questions and probes (see Appendices F, G, and H for a framework of the three interviews as well as a correlation matrix among the research and interview questions). The bilingual transcriptionist / translator was in attendance at all of the interviews, functioning primarily as an observer and an interviewer.

The location of the interviews was in my office (for the first two interviews) and in a study room in the Evans Library Annex (for the last interview), environments that were secure and comfortable for the participants. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and translated (when necessary). The questions posed to the participants in the interviews included ones about their respective backgrounds and experiences in the university specifically and U.S. culture generally and often included probes of content from previous interviews and journal entries. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed both the participants and me the freedom to explore other

unanticipated factors as they emerged (Merriam, 1998). The deviation from the original plan that occurred at times was a hoped for outcome as this flexibility provided for more natural discussions that elicited more spontaneous responses.

To the greatest extent possible, a non-threatening environment in which the participants could feel comfortable sharing their ideas and experiences was created by actively listening, being empathetic, remaining flexible, assuming a neutral stance, and fostering a sense of rapport.¹² I drew upon my knowledge of the participants' culture when necessary so as to promote greater trust. Interviewing in this study was not about getting the "right" answers; rather, the interviewing was about establishing an atmosphere conducive to honest communication and reflection.

L1 Journals

Document analysis was also incorporated to provide for a triangulation of the data. The constant reviewing of the participants' L1 journals¹³ offered insight into their experiences and attitudes relating to culture shock. The participants were asked to keep a weekly electronic journal in Korean over the 15-week semester that was open-ended but guided by the provision of questions and statements that asked them to reflect on their experiences in the host culture (see Appendix I). It was submitted each Friday. The questions and statements, however, evolved throughout the semester in order to capture

¹² While on the surface the last two concepts, neutrality and rapport, appear diametrically-opposed, per Patton (1990), there is an important distinction and thus the possibility of promoting both: "Rapport is a stance vis-à-vis the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-à-vis the content of what that person says" (p. 317).

¹³ In spite of the encouragement to write their journal entries in Korean, the majority of the submissions were in English, primarily because of the participants' desire to have assistance with this language.

any emerging trends or unanticipated events or experiences, such as incidents that directly or indirectly involved the participants and their adjustment to the host culture.

Based on the findings of researchers such as Best (1996), I anticipated that this exercise would enable the participants to better articulate their respective experiences, attitudes, feelings, and emerging beliefs during the interviews. Consequently, the culture shock-related findings gathered from the L1 journals provided the basis for questions in subsequent interviews in which the participants were asked about their perceptions of these events or instances. More precisely, by systematically and promptly transcribing and translating the L1 journal entries on a weekly basis, I was able to incorporate information from the participants' writing into future interviews and journal entries.

DATA ANALYSIS

Constant Comparative Method

By using a constant comparative method¹⁴ of data analysis, the focal point was simultaneously on description, explanation, and evaluation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). My simultaneous and continuous reflection upon the data collected as well as my own perceptions created a thick description (Geertz, 1973), thereby allowing for a thorough elucidation of the cases at hand.

The research focused on identifying constructs, themes, patterns, and categories related to the symptoms, perceptions, coping mechanisms, and influential factors associated with the participants' feelings of culture shock. The data collected from the

¹⁴ In spite of its development for grounded theory, I adopted this method for my generic qualitative study because of the compatibility between it and the inductive, concept-building orientation of all qualitative research (Merriam, 1998).

interviews and L1 journal entries was input into computer files and analyzed using the software program NVivo 7. It was scrutinized for emerging patterns through a process of transcribing the interviews, coding the transcripts, sorting the codes into logically related groups, and then identifying labels to describe the resulting categories.¹⁵ Finally, and in line with Merriam's (1998) guidelines for assessing the effectiveness of the categories derived from the constant comparative method of data analysis, the classification scheme was evaluated and found to reflect the purpose of the research, be exhaustive, sensitizing, and conceptually congruent.

The data analysis focused primarily on the emic perspectives of the three Korean participants as they experienced culture shock and as they reflected on the factors that assisted or hindered them in dealing with this phenomenon. However, my own etic perspective was utilized in order to conceptualize the cases. Whichever "voice" was heard, the author was clearly defined.

Transcription / Translation

Unless a journal entry or interview utterance was translated, the original version that was submitted was used so as to preserve the integrity of each participant's words. I did not believe that the grammar and spelling mistakes, when and where in evidence, severely impaired comprehension, but rather, they served to maintain the voice of each participant. The only changes that were made were in terms of formatting, in order to keep a consistent appearance, and the omission of names, in order to maintain anonymity.

¹⁵ In addition to the generation of the categories from the data, the reviewed literature was also a source of the classification scheme used in the study. In keeping with Glaser and Strauss's (1967) cautionary advice about the borrowing of existing categories, however, these previously published findings served only as corroboration for the emergent categories derived directly from the data.

Finally, throughout Chapter IV, to distinguish between a participant's translated words and utterances and those that were originally communicated in English, the following system was used: if translated, the quotation was in italics; if not, it was in the regular font (Times New Roman, Regular, 12 point) found throughout the dissertation.

In addition, the transcribing and translation of the interviews as well as the L1 journals was pragmatically-oriented rather than literally-oriented. Paralinguistic devices, for example, while potentially important, were not expected to be recorded. Per An (2002), Bassnet (1994), Federici (2007), and Temple (2002), there was no one perfectly correct, equivalent, and transparent translation, just as no one individual can represent an entire culture or community. In many ways, this endeavor was as much an art as it was scholarship. This was particularly true in the translation of Korean into English given the grammatical and semantic differences between these two languages.

As such, the bilingual research assistant was asked to translate as accurately as possible, but he was also told to focus more on capturing the meaning of the participants' concepts than the actual terms themselves as well as to concentrate on the impact of the context on their expressions (Temple & Edwards, 2002). As an "intercultural mediator", he, like myself, was charged with maintaining a balance between the Korean and U.S. cultures (Bedecker & Feinauer, 2006; Federici, 2007) in terms of his language choices and his own voice (Temple & Young, 2004).

The translator was an active participant in the process of knowledge production; he was not neutral. This social constructivism acknowledged that he would be a dynamic participant in the making of knowledge that was historically and socioculturally

influenced (Schwandt, 2001). The differences in power between myself as the researcher and the translator and between the Korean and English languages was part of this process and recognized. A completely objective, bias-free, 'correct' interpretation of the participants' language was not possible. What was possible, however, was to be consistent in the approach to translation, remain aware of the construction (rather than expression) of meaning in language, and fully account for the impact of the cultural and linguistic filters on his interpretation.

To accomplish these goals and thereby ensure the visibility of the transcriptionist / translator in the research, I engaged in discussions of the transcribed and translated data as well as his interpretation of the issues raised. This procedure was in accord with the research design of other qualitative researchers, such as Edwards (1998), Temple (2002), and Neufeld, Harrison, Stewart, Hughes, and Spitzer (2002), who have reached the conclusion that translation is more than a mechanical attempt at uncovering equivalence among words in different languages.

In particular, I followed the lead of Edwards (1998) and instructed the translator to remain aware of the construction of the written accounts he produced for me and consequently, the impossibility of neutrality in the transmission of messages. I expected that the translator would be capable of functioning as a visible and accountable "key informant" in the process of interpretation. In this capacity, he provided information that included a reflexive evaluation of his own social location, values, beliefs, relationships with the participants and me, and included interactions during the interviews. "Without talking to interpreters about their views on the issues being discussed," Temple and

Young (2004, p. 171) argue, “the researcher will not be able to begin to allow for differences in understandings of words, concepts and worldviews across languages.”

Trustworthiness

There were seven relevant measures employed for enhancing the trustworthiness¹⁶ of the results. First, dependability in all facets of the data collection and analysis process was followed. Accurate records of individuals, times, dates, and settings were meticulously kept. Any categories or themes that were derived from the data were traceable to specific examples, thus providing an audit trail for other researchers to assess the dependability and consistency of my findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Second, a thick description of the Korean students’ experiences with culture shock were organized by themes and participants, enabling readers of the study to gain as realistic and concrete a conception of the related events as possible. Third, the primary method of data collection, the interviews and L1 journal entries, allowed for the triangulation of the collected data (Merriam, 1998).

Fourth, quality control of the bilingual transcriptionist / translator’s output was evaluated throughout the study by comparison of his version of the interviews and journal entries with mine. To ensure the accuracy and fidelity of the translations, a modified forward translation technique was utilized which required me to transcribe and translate approximately 20% of the data collected in order to check for truthfulness and accuracy in translation. In this way, I hoped to maintain a high-level of dependability.

¹⁶ Per Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness refers to the quality of an investigation as well as its findings that make it noteworthy to audiences. It includes four criteria: credibility (parallel to internal validity), transferability (parallel to external validity), dependability (parallel to reliability), and confirmability (parallel to objectivity).

Additionally, the scheduled and unscheduled meetings, emails, and phone calls throughout the semester with the bilingual transcriptionist / translator ensured a high level of trustworthiness.

Fifth, member checks were performed continuously throughout the study to enhance the credibility. The collected data and tentative interpretations of each of the interviews as well as the weekly L1 journals were provided to the participants. In addition, they had complete access to the final report. The participants were urged to check the soundness of the data and interpretations in terms of accuracy, bias, and completeness as well as in terms of their fit with the participants' respective constructions of reality. However, as no feedback was provided, participant-generated revisions of the report were not in evidence. Sixth, my colleagues in the English Language Institute as well as fellow graduate students were asked to comment on the findings as they emerged in the study (Merriam, 1998).

Finally, my involvement in the study was as transparent as possible. By clearly establishing my assumptions, worldview, theoretical orientation, goals, and role in conducting the research from the outset, participants were made aware of my biases (Merriam, 1998). No deception in either the concealment of my true intentions or unauthorized digital recording was utilized in order to provide the participants with greater confidence in me and the aims of the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter IV summarizes the data collected and analyzed from the three newly-arrived Korean student participants during the 2007 fall semester at Texas A&M University. The three interviews and the weekly journals provided the basis of the results that were qualitatively examined for evidence of culture shock and other influential factors affecting the adjustment and transition of these individuals into their new environment.

Initially, this chapter briefly presents the main results of both sets of data, e.g., the interviews and weekly journals, that were gathered and analyzed. Two tables as well as two conceptual maps accompany this discussion, the first three of these providing visual support for the interview-, journal-, and literature-generated themes and categories. Then, based on this broad overview, the major findings from the two types of data collection are reported.

OVERALL RESEARCH FINDINGS

The major findings in this study were divided into two broad categories: culture shock and the influential factors associated with this phenomenon. They are presented in Table 3. In the first category, evidence supporting the existence of some degree of culture shock at varying points during the semester was supported by the interviews and journals of Sang, Kwang, and Hong, the three Korean participants. However, while there were similarities among the three, there were also important differences in the quantity

and quality of the symptoms, revealing that this phenomenon was an individual rather than a collective experience.

Table 3

Interview-, journal-, and literature-generated themes and categories

Culture Shock	Influential Factors
Symptoms	English Skills
Interpersonal	University
Social	Academic differences and demands
Behavioral	Social Connectedness
Psychological	Personal Outlook
Cognitive	Attitude / Personality
Emotional	Demographic and other Background Factors
Physiological	Marital status (including family)
	Length of stay
Perceptions	Religiosity
	Previous international experience
Ability to Cope or not to Cope	Gender
	Age
	Culture
	Cross-cultural differences
	Country of origin

The specific examples of their respective cultural adjustments revealed in their interviews and journals were broken down into social, behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and physiological symptoms per the selected definition of culture shock used for this study.¹⁷ Given the inherent connections among several of these categories, however, three subcategories were created from these five reference points so as to provide a broad accounting of the interpersonal (including social and behavioral), psychological (including cognitive and emotional), and physiological symptoms of the participants' cross-cultural adjustments. Accordingly, the expansive nature of this classification meant that none of these categories were mutually exclusive. An example in this chapter could potentially have been linked to any of the three categories if the entry were examined from a different angle or perspective. A conceptual map representing the interconnections among the three culture shock-related symptoms is presented in Fig. 2.

The collected data revealed a comparatively much higher incidence of interpersonal and psychological symptoms of culture shock than physiological symptoms for all three participants. Interpersonal symptoms of culture shock displayed the participants' questions regarding the behavioral and social norms in the U.S. and reflected their comparatively limited interaction with Americans. Cognitive and/or emotional demands for adjustment elicited a wide range of feelings, including confusion, surprise, anger, and frustration. Physiological symptoms, of fatigue primarily, were infrequently mentioned throughout the study. In most cases across the three categories,

¹⁷ The definition of culture shock for this study, provided in Chapter I, is "...the multiple demands for adjustment that individuals experience at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological levels, when they relocate to another culture" (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004, p. 168).

the stress surrounding the three participants' adjustments to the use of English and Texas A&M University provided the impetus for many of their interpersonal, psychological, and physiological symptoms.

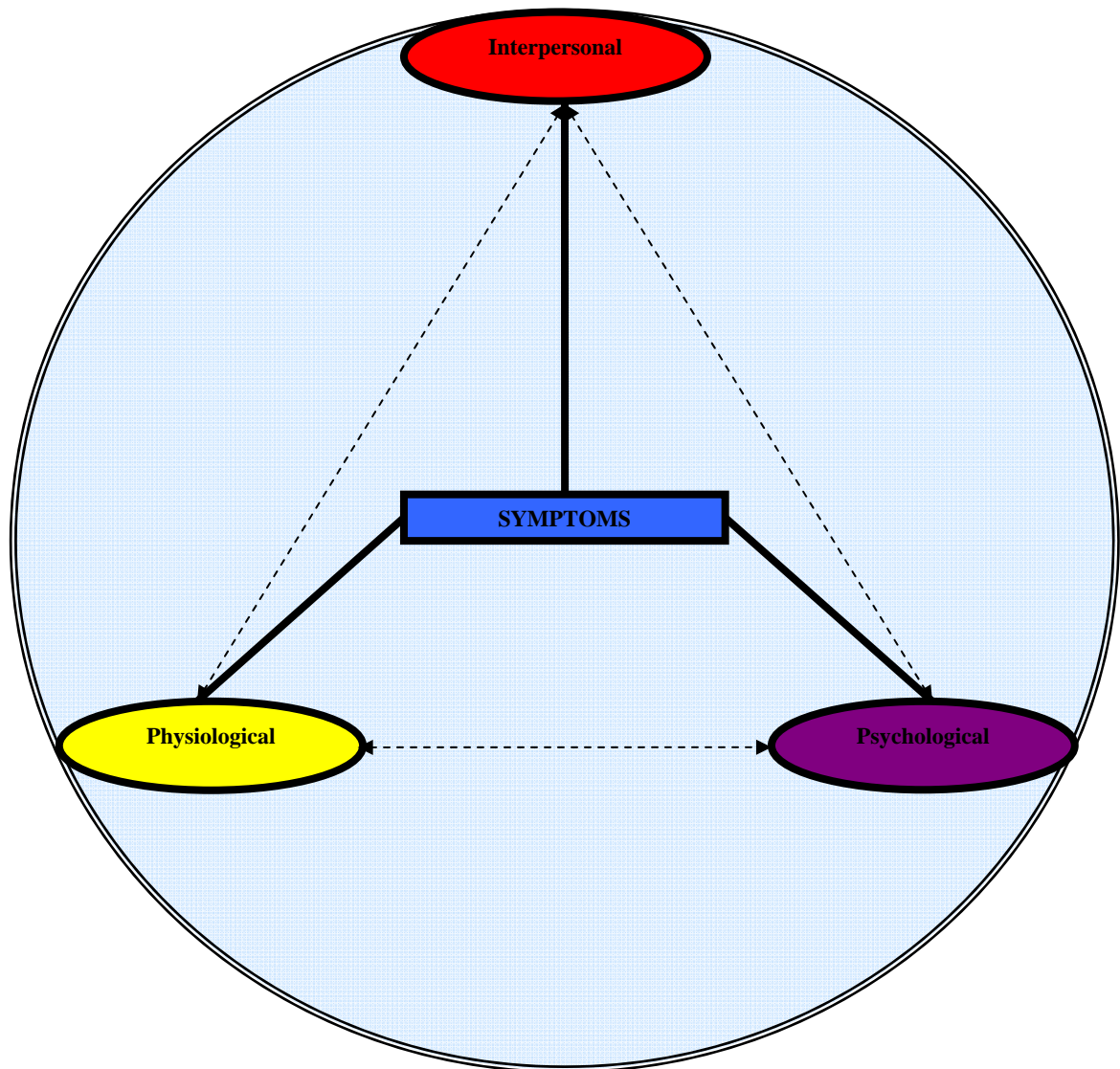


Fig. 2. Conceptual map for the culture shock-related symptoms.

Finally, data corresponding to the participants' perceptions of the experiences as well as their ability to cope or not cope with culture shock were gathered. While each individual faced some similar events or situations that challenged their expectations and demanded adjustment throughout the semester, in particular in their use of English and in their dealings with Texas A&M University, there were differences among them. Nevertheless, the collected data revealed that each participant viewed these trials, for the most part, as capable of being overcome and temporary obstacles. Sang, Kwang, and Hong as a whole exhibited a strong sense of pragmatism, a willingness to understand the sources of cultural discord, and a belief that things would improve in the future, which allowed for the resolution of any dissonance.

The influential factors that assisted or impeded the three participants' respective adjustments to U.S. culture composed the second major category of data collected and were found to varying degrees throughout the interviews and journals and across each individual. As stated in the previous section, while there were similarities among Sang, Kwang, and Hong, there were also important differences in the impact of a particular factor, once again implying that this phenomenon was an individual rather than a collective experience.

These influential factors were identified from both the data itself and from the literature review. They included the participants' facility with the English language, communication ability, university, social connectedness, attitudes, personality type, marital status (including family status and living arrangement), length of stay in the host country, religiosity, previous international experience, gender, age, cultural distance and

differences, and country of origin. These fourteen variables were grouped into six categories: English (including facility and communication ability), university, social connectedness, personal outlook (including attitudes and personality type), demographic and other background (including marital status, length of stay in the host country, religiosity, previous international experience, gender, and age), and cultural (including distance, differences, and country of origin) factors.

The rationale for the organization of the influential factors into six categories was similar to that used for the organization of the culture shock-related symptoms. That is, given the inherent connections among many of these factors, these six categories were created from the fourteen reference points so as to provide a broad accounting of the English, university, social connectedness, personal outlook, demographic and other background, and cultural factors impacting the participants' cross-cultural adjustments. Accordingly, the expansive nature of this classification meant that none of these categories was mutually exclusive. An example in this section could potentially have been linked to any of the six categories if the entry were examined from a different angle or perspective. For instance, the personal outlook of a participant could be influenced by a demographic variable, such as age or gender, or vice versa. As such, the division of the influential factors into apparently discrete categories was somewhat deceiving and was only done so as to provide a sense of organization and clarity for the volume of data. The correlations among the six influential factors are represented in Fig. 3, the second of the two conceptual maps for the study.

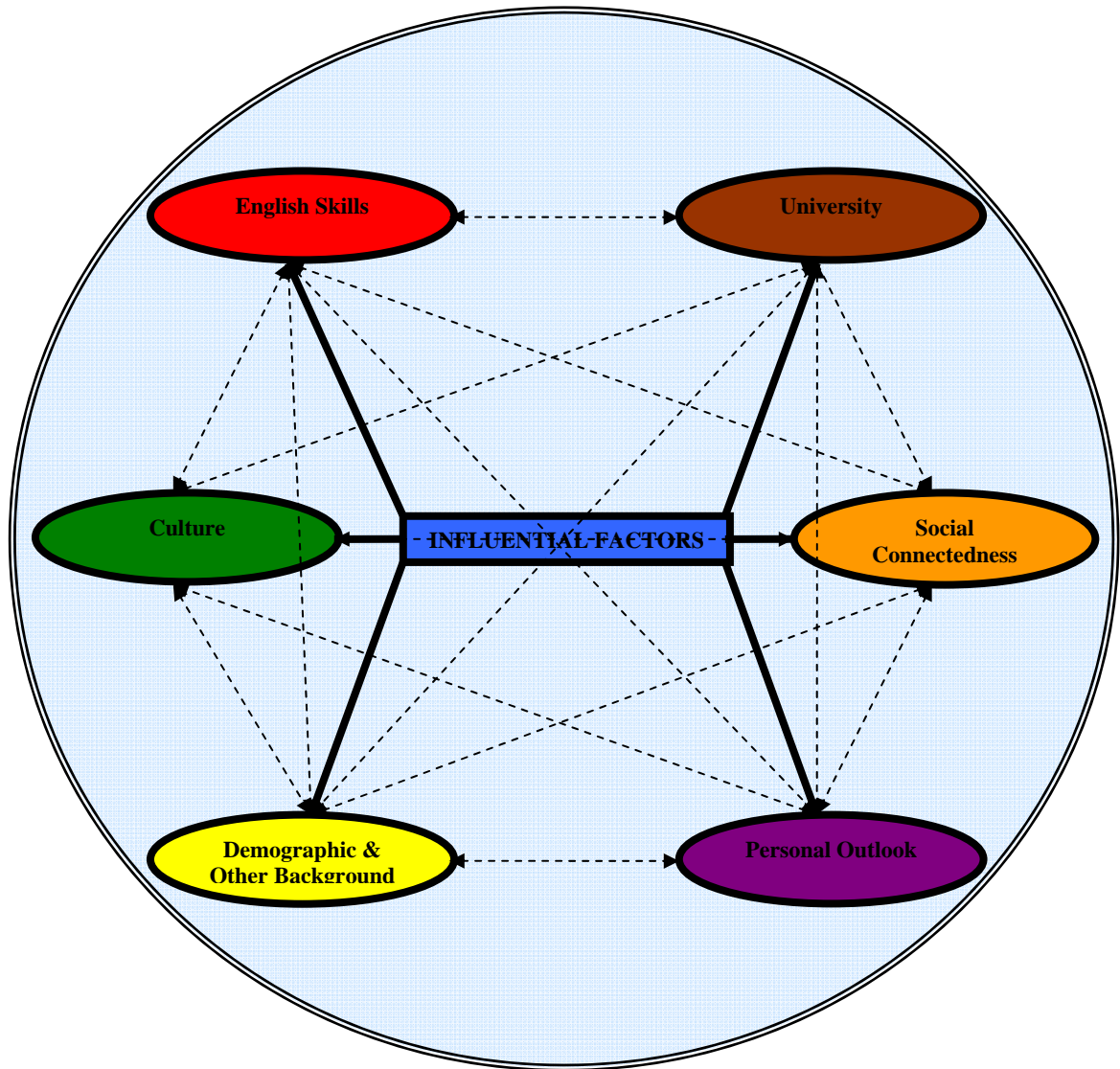


Fig. 3. Influential factors affecting the impact of culture shock.

The influence of English on the respective adjustments of the three participants to U.S. culture was substantial and constant throughout the study. The self-professed

difficulties that Sang, Kwang, and Hong faced in using this language in all spheres of their lives proved to be the most daunting of the challenges they faced. Their relative lack of proficiency with English affected them both inside and outside of the university classroom and severely curtailed their opportunities for establishing any real sense of connection with the host culture.

The influence of Texas A&M University on the respective adjustments of the three participants to the culture in the U.S. was also found to be an important factor. Owing to the amount of time the three participants devoted to their studies, the magnitude of this influence was substantial, pervasive, and unrelenting. The combination of the differences in education systems between Korea and the U.S., the rigors of coping with graduate-level study, the virtual absence of accommodations for international students, and the medium of instruction being English all united to hinder Sang's, Kwang's, and Hong's abilities to cope with the host culture.

A third factor found to have had an impact on the adaptation of the three participants to the host culture was the degree of social connectedness. Sang, Kwang, and Hong, to differing levels, were overall not successful in their attempts to form social bonds with members of U.S. culture in spite of their separate attempts to achieve greater integration into the local community. A combination of factors, including their English proficiency, the presence of a large Korean community, and the university demands, severely limited their opportunities to interact with Americans, and thus, develop a greater appreciation for the local culture.

Another influential factor was the noteworthy impact of the participants' personal outlook on lessening the effects of culture shock. The attitudes and personalities of Sang, Kwang, and Hong, to varying degrees, evidenced a strong sense of resiliency in the face of cultural challenges as well as the optimism that things would improve over time. In addition, the willingness to not only understand cultural differences but to learn from them characterized many of the participants' interview responses and journal entries.

The fifth factor revealed by the interviews and journals to be important was the influence of demographic and other background factors. The marital and family status, length of stay in the U.S., religiosity, previous international experience, gender, and age of the three participants each proved to be of varying degrees of importance for Sang, Kwang, and Hong in their respective adjustments to the culture in the host country. The similarities as well as differences among the participants revealed the disparate effects that these variables had on moderating the influence of culture shock.

Finally, cultural factors also proved to be influential in their impact on the participants' adjustments to U.S. culture. More precisely, the cultural and ethnic differences between Korea and the U.S. were found to be the source of many of the challenges faced by Sang, Kwang, and Hong during the study. In the first case, cross-cultural dissimilarities in terms of economic, societal organization, environmental, transportation, dietary, and safety issues were revealed and shown to have influenced the transitions of Sang, Kwang, and Hong into U.S. society. In the second case, concerns

about racism and prejudice, while only mentioned by Sang, led to a greater level of adjustment stress.

INTERVIEWS AND JOURNALS

The following section presents the data collected from the interviews and journals. To avoid unnecessary redundancy while not sacrificing clarity, the information gleaned from these two sources was combined (see Table 4 for a word count). In this way, a unified presentation of the overall findings for each participant over the course of the study was established, thus enabling a more complete impression of their experiences with culture shock and the influential factors associated with alleviating or exacerbating the symptoms. Whether the referenced data was from an interview or a journal entry for a particular participant, the origin was always clearly delineated.

While not discounting the differences among the participants (which is also discussed), the general regularity of responses in their interviews and journal entries allowed me to extract the two major themes related to the research questions--culture shock and the influential factors related to this phenomenon—that were presented in the previous section on the OVERALL RESEARCH FINDINGS. To some extent, the amount of repetition was unexpected as it had been predicted that different details of the participants' respective experiences would have emerged. Evidence for each of the categories was gathered from these two data sources and is described in detail.

As can be anticipated and is illustrated in this chapter, each of these major findings was inter-related and cannot be considered independently of the others. Consequently, several examples from the participants were found to be relevant across

one or more categories. Nevertheless, whenever a coded example was used as representative of more than one theme, the alternative emphasis and interpretation was clearly delineated. This fact is shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the conceptual maps of the study.

Table 4

Word count for the interviews and journals of the three newly-arrived Korean participants

	Sang	Kwang	Hong
Interview			
1	4,808	5,641	5,117
2	5,198	5,920	5,194
3	4,525	4,773	3,577
Journal			
1	499	563	297
2	304	427	360
3	331	224	397
4	392	305	289
5	334	322	372
6	243	427	204
7	268	215	237
8	254	267	160
9	395	294	126
10	245	242	192
11	278	191	256
12	250	450	0
13	396	211	0

Table 4 (continued)

	Sang	Kwang	Hong
14	993	146	0
15	0	0	0
Total	19,713	20,618	16,778

Interviews

One source of data in the study was the interviews. The three interviews, conducted before, at the midpoint, and immediately following the semester, provided the participants with the freedom to express themselves in the language of their choice, to say as much as they desired, and to be selective in what they related to me. In addition, the nearly two-month gap between each interview allowed for a clearer comparison of the changes in symptoms, perceptions, coping ability, and influential factors, if any, each participant was undergoing over the course of the study than the weekly journal entries alone had provided.

The main questions for each interview (see Appendices F, G, and H for a framework of the three interviews as well as a correlation matrix among the research and interview questions) were consistent for Sang, Kwang, and Hong, but for the midterm and final interviews, more specific queries based on their journal entries and previous interviews were also utilized. This more targeted line of questioning for the last two interviews provided, in some cases, the opportunity to explore the meaning and significance of events that had only been reported in the journals.

The language chosen for the interviews was unanticipated. While each of the participants was encouraged to use Korean when responding to questions, there were important distinctions for each individual over time. Sang's use of Korean and English fell somewhere between the other two participants, but like Kwang, he used more of his native language for the last interview. Kwang, on the other hand, chose to speak in English for the majority of the first two interviews but spoke in Korean for most of the final interview. Hong elected to use his native language almost exclusively throughout the study.

As none of the participants were asked to explain their choice of language, the primary reason for their respective linguistic decisions was presumed to have stemmed from their confidence levels with English.¹⁸ Where Sang and Kwang may have initially viewed the interviews as opportunities to practice speaking English, Hong did not. However, the fact that all three individuals spoke in Korean for the majority of the final interviews may have been noteworthy as confirmation of their frustration, expressed in their interviews and journal entries, with the lack of improvement in their English language proficiency, in particular in terms of speaking. Whatever the reason for their change of languages, the gradual switch to Korean enabled them to express themselves more fully and with greater ease.

¹⁸ The use of Korean could also have been evidence of their greater comfort with me and confidence in my ability to comprehend their interview responses.

Journals

The seven weekly online journal prompts (see Appendix I), constant throughout the research, provided the participants with the freedom to express themselves in the language of their choice, to write as much as they desired, and to be selective in what they related to me.¹⁹ In spite of this great latitude, there was a general level of consistency across the three participants in the respective content of their weekly journals.²⁰

As with the interviews, one unanticipated difference for this data source was in the language chosen. While each of the participants was encouraged to use Korean when making their submissions, only one participant, Sang, on three occasions elected to do so (his eighth, eleventh, and fourteenth journal entries, respectively).²¹ Instead, they opted to write almost exclusively in English. The primary reason for this decision stemmed from the fact that the three individuals desired assistance with their English in the form of corrections or suggestions. Although this development could have limited their ability to express themselves fully, there were benefits nonetheless for both parties. For the participants, there was the opportunity to gain valuable practice in writing in English. In essence, they had access to a tutor who was available for not only English questions but

¹⁹ One of the participants, Kwang, asked me to provide more specific prompts towards the end of the semester as he increasingly found it difficult to write his journal entries. The significance of his request is described in greater detail in this section as evidence of either his relatively smooth adjustment to U.S. culture or his relative lack of opportunities to learn about the culture here.

²⁰ While 15 journal entries were the planned number for the study, two participants (Sang and Kwang) submitted 14 and one (Hong) submitted only 11. In each case, the primary reason was a lack of time due to the increasing academic demands they were facing at the end of the semester.

²¹ While Sang was not directly questioned as to why he opted to write these three entries in Korean, his comparatively lower level of English proficiency, as measure by the TOEFL, as well as the time constraints he was under towards the end of the semester may have accounted for this occurrence.

cultural ones as well. The primary benefit for me was that I could more easily and with greater facility understand, process, and respond to the participants' weekly submissions. The medium of the English language enabled me to engage in a running dialogue with the participants, which made the interaction between each participant and me less impersonal.

Culture Shock: Symptoms, Perceptions, and Ability to Cope

The symptoms commonly associated with culture shock were supported to varying degrees for each of the participants by the data collected from the interviews and journals (in spite of Sang's, Kwang's, and Hong's utterances to the contrary at our last meeting). As the data shows, the culture shock-related symptoms for each participant differed except in the case of physiological symptoms, where none of them mentioned this category with any degree of regularity. For Sang, interpersonal and psychological examples of his stress in adjusting to U.S. culture were expressed in all of his interviews and found in many of his journal entries, with the social and behavioral factors being the most common. In Kwang's case, the analysis of what he had written and said revealed numerous instances of cognitive and emotional strain. Finally, for Hong, the psychological demands of adjustment to U.S. culture were the most commonly mentioned symptoms. Unlike the other two participants, virtually no discussion of stress from interpersonal contact with members of the host culture was related to me.

The participants' perceptions of and ability to cope with culture shock were also illustrated in their interviews and journal entries, but to a far greater extent in the former data source. This higher degree of expression was likely due to the reflective and direct

nature of the questions utilized for the second and third interviews in particular.

Nevertheless, in both cases, their written and verbal responses revealed not just the capacity to accommodate the shocks of a new culture when they presented themselves but a willingness to understand them.

The participants, in spite of stated or implicit feelings of confusion or surprise from earlier in the semester, were overall thoughtful about any cultural differences rather than dismissive, so much so that by the final interviews, they asserted that any culture shock they had experienced, if at all, was marginal and in the past. Sang, for example, stated: *“There are a few differences I noticed, but they are not shocking or hard to accept.”* Kwang declared that while *“I didn’t have culture shock in particular...I was struggling in several areas of my life on a very small scale.”* Finally, Hong, when asked whether any things had shocked him during the semester asserted, *“Some in the past, but I don’t remember any now.”* The veracity of these statements as well as the impact of several factors that figured prominently as reasons accounting for this confident attitude are discussed in detail in the following section.

*Interpersonal*²²

Interpersonal symptoms of culture shock were far more commonly mentioned by two of the participants’ in their interviews and journal entries. For Sang and Kwang, questions regarding the behavioral and social norms in the U.S. frequently arose from the beginning of the semester until the end, reflecting both confusion and a desire to

²² As previously described, the division of culture shock symptoms into interpersonal, psychological and physiological categories does not connote mutual exclusivity. In particular, the interpersonal and psychological categories often overlapped when the use of English was referenced in the interviews and journal entries. As such, instances of both symptoms in a particular example were not unusual.

learn. For Hong, however, there was a relative silence in terms of interpersonal challenges, perhaps revealing little difficulty in adjusting to the customs of the host culture but more likely a sign of his comparatively limited interaction with Americans. Nevertheless, the content of the discussion this theme generated was noteworthy, providing evidence of the stress the three participants had faced in adapting to the social and behavioral norms of U.S. culture. In addition, their responses revealed a differential capacity to cope with this anxiety.

For Sang, in particular, interpersonal issues were described in many of his interviews and journal entries, demonstrating his comparatively greater challenge of adjusting to the social and behavioral norms of U.S. culture than Kwang or Hong. In fact, among the three participants, Sang reported the most instances of interpersonal symptoms of culture shock.

In his first interview, for example, the implications of the multicultural nature of U.S. society distressed him. While Sang expressed a desire to "...try hard to make friends", he was convinced that this endeavor would be a complex process for not just linguistic reasons but ethnic ones as well:

...Making friends here is difficult because this place is very diverse....there are cultural differences that make the establishment of relationships hard.

The need to become accustomed to the presence of individuals from many races in the U.S., a relatively rare sight in Korea, was a new experience for Sang. Nevertheless, by the second interview, he was more able to cope with the different ethnicities in the host culture:

... Before... I would look at people because they looked different. Now, I am very used to people around me.

It was apparent that after two months, Sang had become more accustomed to the variety of races to be found in the U.S.

A second example of interpersonal stress in adjusting to U.S. culture for Sang was a product of the behavior of Americans towards individuals from other nations. In one instance, the lack of interest in him which he observed upon his arrival was an unpleasant surprise. Coming from a country composed of just one ethnic group, Koreans have traditionally been curious about individuals from other ethnicities and/or nationalities. In the U.S., though, especially in a university town, this fascination with people of other races or countries is far less common. Consequently, Sang related his opinion of the apathetic reception that he had received in August:

No one seems to really care. They seem more indifferent about it. Of course, scholars or other tourists might be interested in Korean and Oriental culture, but common Americans don't seem to want to know about Korea. Maybe they think Korea is just a country with no importance...If people are interested in Korea or the Korean language, they would probably ask, "Are you Korean?" when I pass by. However, due to their lack of interest, even if I say I'm a Korean, I don't think people are attracted to it. That doesn't make me too happy.

In another instance, from the midterm interview, Sang felt wounded by the expectation of some Americans that he should be able to use the language in a native-like fashion:

When people see me and know that I am Asian and a foreigner, people such as in dealerships speak just as fast as though I am someone who's from here. When I ask them to slow down because it's too fast for me, about half of the people reacted positively. The rest seemed to be more frustrated.

In both examples, the behavior of some Americans towards Sang most likely was the source of stress for him in his attempt to adjust to U.S. culture.

Finally, Sang related his difficulty in adjusting to the relative absence of concern for the age and status of interlocutors evident in interactions in the U.S. In Korean culture, however, much more so than in the States, proper behavior is of paramount importance in establishing and maintaining the strict hierarchical nature of the society, and it is ruthlessly maintained through a combination of tradition, education, and societal pressure. In spite of many changes over the last half century, the Confucian principle of respect for one's elders remains sacrosanct. As an example, it is customary in Korea at a first meeting to ask the other party his/her age so that the proper level of respect in both action and word can be maintained. In addition, even one year's difference in age precludes two individuals from being friends in the strict Korean sense of the word.²³

How one relates to others who are below, equal to, and above them in Korea follows Confucian conventions that have been ingrained over centuries. As the only military officer among the three participants, Sang's interpretation of and adherence to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of interactions among individuals was evidently more exacting than it was for Kwang or Hong. In his tenth journal, for example, Sang revealed his contemplation of the dissimilar estimations of age in Korea and in the U.S. Initially, he explained the custom in his own country:

²³ This was my own experience with many of my older Korean friends. (I have not explicitly stated that these were male friends. However, it is generally not possible for an adult male and female to be friends in Korea.) When I addressed them as such in front of mutual acquaintances, I would often witness the discomfort or even anger my having done so would engender. The reason for these reactions was that a title and the family name are always used when referring to or addressing someone older than you in Korea. As such, I was expected to address these friends with *hyung*, which loosely translated means older brother.

The Korean people always concentrate on their boss. It was derived from respect old people. Therefore we should obey old people's order regardless of relationship. Especially, it applies to the military strictly.

Sang continued in the same entry to consider the pros and cons of the Korean deference to age:

In my opinion, it is sometimes good and sometimes bad. The good thing is the strength the solidarity and the bad thing is that it makes a forced smile. In other word, they cannot own opinion or contrary opinion. However, American does not like this. They meet equally each other so older person do not order to someone who younger people. They looks respect each other.

His reflection, while exhibiting his capacity for an open-minded consideration of this cultural difference, implied a struggle to accommodate this disparity in interpersonal relations between the host and home cultures.

In Sang's midterm interview, he described his dismay at the lack of concern or respect for others that American students' actions and inactions revealed:

In terms of behaviors, I was surprised to see people sleeping anywhere, lying down, and so on. In Korea, from childhood, we are educated to look right in front of others and act properly. When I see people reading outside on a beautiful day, it looks good. But people sitting down anywhere, lying everywhere, eating during a lecture while making noise, putting their feet up on chairs in front of professors, or leaving classes early very loudly, don't seem to be considerate for others and they look selfish.

As a student of not only the Korean education system but also of the Korean military academy, Sang's displeasure and confusion was understandable. In Korean society, for example, the teacher has traditionally held a position of honor and respect. For example, a famous maxim from the country states that a student should not even walk in the shadow of his or her teacher. Given this substantial difference in the proper behavior expected of students in the academic cultures in Korea and the U.S., it was clear that this

fundamental dissimilarity was a source of shock. With that said, however, Sang was careful neither to ascribe to the behavior of his fellow students individual responsibility nor positive or negative characteristics. Instead, he chose to look at what he had witnessed as a cultural issue and with some measure of objectivity:

It's not an individual problem. It's the culture. I can't say it's good or bad. For a person who is educated not to act that way, I can see it's bad, but for people who never thought or learned that way it's okay. About being rude to professors, as long as professors allow it and don't mind students doing that, I can understand it as a culture here. I just am not brought up that way. I learned to respect elders and to be careful in front of others.

His neutral and open-minded assessment of this behavior implied that Sang was capable of coping with this challenge.

In Sang's seventh journal entry, he expressed bewilderment about the American habit of greeting a person on the street regardless of whether or not the individual was a stranger. On the Texas A&M University campus in particular, one where students, faculty, and staff alike pride themselves on their friendliness and willingness to say "Howdy!", this perplexity could be anticipated to have been heightened. In Korea, on the contrary, people would almost never greet someone unless they were known to them.²⁴

Sang related his early confusion about this "unfamiliar work" before deciding to adopt this custom:

If we do not know about western cultures, maybe it confused us as like they are concern about us...Therefore, I decide to say hello with others

²⁴ My own experiences in Korea lend credence to what Sang has written. However, I had the "advantage" of being a White American who was willing to address Koreans in their native language. As a result, after the stunned silence, my greeting was usually returned by an enthusiastic one.

However, his attempts to greet strangers were sometimes met by an absence of any reaction:

On the contrast, I usually met students who do not exchange greetings. If they do not show any reactions after my salutation, I'm so confused that time. These days I'm of two minds about telling strangers on the road.

As a consequence, Sang's perception of these experiences was one of having been ultimately rebuffed, which likely left him still feeling unsure about the customs of U.S. culture and relegated to the role of the outsider.

This incongruity in whether to think of American culture as friendly and welcoming to others or not was echoed in a later entry. Sang's eleventh journal described his uncertainty:

There are lots of activities in the college station. We received public information from free-K, my daughter's school and Barbara Bush school almost every week about an events. My wife loves it. She wants to take part in all of them the reason why she want to accustomed to here. I think that it is very good for international. I have went to a museum, exhibition, festival, school party and so on. By the way, I wonder about they are delight in make a events or they should do that according the custom of society (I don't know if all these events are held as routine or because people love to participate. Since they are free)

The conflicting events of not having his greeting returned and of having so many community-related activities available to him and his family, related separately a month apart, reflected lingering doubts about U.S. culture. However, Sang's willingness to indirectly ask me my opinion exhibited a desire to move beyond his previous confusion and to consider another possibility.

In his tenth journal, however, Sang revealed his dismay with another feature of U.S. culture, devoting his entry to his confusion with the lack of language distinctions:

It is strange that they call their father or professor as just “you” It is the same between children and adult. On the contrary, the Korean language has many term of respect. We think much of propriety. In fact, It’s unfamiliar with me to call the kent as “kent”. In Korea, If younger people call older people’s name, it is very bad manner.

As was alluded to previously, the hierarchical nature of Korean society, originating from Confucianism, dictates strict adherence to the respect of individuals in senior positions by younger individuals, irrespective of whether they deserve this esteem or not. Whereas in the U.S. respect is not de facto granted to more senior individuals, in Korea it is. As such, the much more (apparently) lax and casual interaction among Americans, irrespective of age or status, would most assuredly be a source of confusion for Sang. In addition, his military training had likely served to intensify his beliefs in this area and thus added to his displeasure with this custom.²⁵

Given these cultural and individual differences in the areas of language and respect, Sang’s difficulty in adjusting to American speaking norms was both foreseeable and understandable. As a product of both the Korean and military cultures, respectively, his adherence to hierarchical distinctions was deeply ingrained and unlikely to change quickly or at all. As a consequence, his ability to cope with this facet of U.S. culture remained unclear.

²⁵ The lack of propriety in English is deceiving, though, and therefore, potentially problematic for Sang as it is for most Koreans. Somewhat surprisingly, in my own acquisition of Korean language forms and norms, I found that after a short period, the different levels of propriety were not that difficult to use correctly. Because of the clear distinctions, I soon learned the occasions that dictated the appropriate register. In terms of when, where, and how to express formality or informality in English, however, the differentiations are far more tenuous than in Korean. Variables related to the individual personality or style of the speaker, relationship, setting, topic, and occasion can dictate a language choice in English to a far greater degree than in Korean. In addition, more than in Korean, body language and intonation, for example, can also convey respect. Without the rigid, clearly delineated levels of language found in Korean, it would be easy for individuals from Korea to misapprehend the oftentimes more subtle language forms and customs used in English.

Kwang, like Sang, reported several interpersonal symptoms of culture shock in his interviews and journal entries. Initially, for example, he found greeting a passerby as “too much unusual” in his tenth journal entry:

Koreans are not usually favorable toward other people who there are no relations with themselves. When someone came across a person on walking roads, they regard greetings with each other having no any special reason as unfamiliar. That is, daily greetings are not normally generated among strangers.

However, upon further reflection, Kwang exhibited a willingness to not only change but to understand the reasons behind the cultural difference:

However, when I thought their attitude, such a culture really seems good. Then, where come from such a difference with comparing The States with Korea? I have no idea exactly about that. But, one of many reasons obviously would be Confucian ideas bred in the bone. The comfort greeting culture and conversation culture without considering their age are the highest difference compared with Korea. I think this is good merits in that they make an equal social culture having no a formal atmosphere as hierarchy. How do you think about these?

This capacity to consider the reasons for the behavior he had witnessed illustrated his perception of dissimilarity not so much as a challenge but as an opportunity to learn, indicating his ability to cope with the other divergences he was sure to encounter in U.S. culture.

In contrast with Sang, Kwang’s third journal entry and midterm interview, respectively, revealed a very different perspective on the relative disregard for age differences in the U.S. and the corresponding interpersonal dynamic that it created. His words illustrated his reflection upon and acceptance of the American style of class administration and management in the university:

Korea is the country dominated by Confucian ideas considerably even than China from which the ideas originated. Therefore, that younger pay elder respect is considered natural things. In Korea, such environment as the ideas made not only

social cultures become more rigid but also wrong authoritarianism like hierarchy appear. A number of universities in Korea are especially occupied by the wrong authoritarianism on the relation between students and professors. That is, the professors usually want to be respected from their students at least within universities, so that which makes university cultures become more rigid.

...In such situations, it is very difficult to improve the relationship between the professor and students. In the U.S., there's no such situation, such as Confucianism, so I am surprised at the relationship between professors and students; they talk freely about whatever—textbooks, problems, and so on. It seems very free.

As a product of the much more hierarchical social structure in Korea generally and Korean schools specifically, the teacher-student relationship common in U.S. education systems would have been initially shocking for Kwang; however, his appreciation for the relatively more natural interaction in his classes at Texas A&M University as opposed to Korea illustrated his comfort with the level social playing field in the U.S. and willingness to adopt the behavioral norms of the host culture.

A further example of this positive reception was exhibited in Kwang's first interview, where he expressed admiration, rather than surprise or shock, for the freedom with which members of U.S. culture could act:

For the positive aspect, I don't need to care too much about other people's eyes. In Korea, the culture requires you to be conscious of yourself in front of others, but the diversity of the culture and people allows anyone to be himself/herself... This gives more room for relaxation.

Unlike for Sang then, Kwang did not feel the expression of individuality by Americans was disturbing, providing corroborating evidence for his self-described flexibility in dealing with relationships.

Nonetheless, not all interpersonal dissimilarities that Kwang encountered were as readily adjusted to. In his fifth journal entry and midterm interview, respectively, Kwang

found the behavior of some Americans towards him disappointing. Specifically, his perception of their attitudes about the necessity of everyone speaking English well frustrated him:

In the States, there are so many kinds of races and people from different countries. Thus, people don't care about where they are from. In Korea, however, a number of foreigners don't exist as the States, and Korean think that it is natural they don't speak Korean well. In contrast, American seem think foreigners in the States well speak English. Is it real? I feel some difficulties in studying because of some people sometimes regarding as a natural one.

...The situation depends on case by case...Because of that, it was difficult to be satisfied with other people, especially Americans, because my language skill is poor.

As Sang had also reported, the behavior of these individuals was the source of stress for Kwang in his attempt to adjust to U.S. culture. In essence, he found himself in a vicious circle: he wanted to improve his English by interacting with Americans but he could not accomplish this goal without first improving his English.

Finally, in Hong's case, the virtual absence of mention of social and behavioral symptoms related to culture shock in his interviews and journal entries most likely did not represent a comparatively better interpersonal adjustment than the other participants, but rather an overall lack of quantitative and qualitative interaction at all. From the fact that his mother lived with him for the first part of the semester to his Korean roommate, Hong did not describe many interactions with Americans.

The few opportunities that he did have to communicate with members of the host culture were evidently negative or confusing events, reflecting his struggle to understand the social and behavioral norms. For example, in his second and third journal entries, Hong related his disbelief and anger at a local supermarket's refusal to sell him beer, at

the potential levying of a fine for changing his mother's flight reservation, and at a worker's lack of concern for his rights as a customer, respectively.

In his first interview as well, he described how the lack of linguistic distinctions for addressing people in English was a baffling and important difference for him at first. The fact that "*there are no honorifics and everyone talks like they are friends*" was a source of consternation as the use of titles and other markers of respect are essential for the maintenance of proper relations among Koreans.

The casual and friendly nature with which people in the U.S. greeted and interacted with him in English was likely off-putting to Hong, as this behavior, rather than an attempt to be sociable, was too informal and familiar. This unceremonious speaking style among Americans, irrespective of age, station, or relationship, made Hong question the respect members of the host culture had for him:

I don't know about respect. I hardly felt it. They see me just as another person. For people in the business sector such as bankers and car dealers, they are nice to me to sell things to me. They offer drinks and are extra friendly, but I don't see respect from that if it's not that specific situation.

Whether he believed this lack of respect was just directed at him or all members of his culture was unclear, but his words did reveal the likely reason for his conjecture:

I don't have a close American friend, so I wouldn't really know.

As this interview illustrated, Hong's interaction with members of the host culture after his arrival had been limited, raising doubts about his capacity to successfully adjust to the sociolinguistic norms here.

With that said, however, he did signal an interest in his fourth journal of knowing "what American students do after exams", implying a recognition of his lack of

interaction with members of the host culture as well as a desire to potentially resolve this deficiency. In sum, the tenor of Hong's interview responses and journal entries, for the most part, painted a portrait of an individual who, for a variety of reasons, was positioned on the periphery of U.S. culture. Consequently, his perceptions of the host culture's interpersonal norms as well as his ability to cope with them were unclear.

Nevertheless, in the third interview, Hong retrospectively related how his initial feelings of shock at being expected to interact with a relative stranger had been replaced by an understanding of this social norm:

The most surprising thing was a stranger saying hi to me. I moved into my apartment and the next morning I saw one of my neighbors. He said, "Good morning. How are you?", but I felt awkward since he was a total stranger to me. I was puzzled at why he would even say hi to me.

I'm fine now about it. I realize that people don't say hi to make friends. It's only a sense of friendliness. So when others say hi to me I greet them back and I'm used to it now.

As previously described in this section, people in Korea would almost never greet someone unless they were known to them. Accordingly, Hong's early confusion at this behavior in the U.S. was understandable. However, the evidence of his having become accustomed to this American custom was noteworthy as it implied that he had been able to adequately cope with this difference.

Psychological

Psychologically-based symptoms of culture shock were described by all three of the participants in their interviews and journal entries, lending support to the contention that Sang, Kwang, and Hong were attempting to cope with this phenomenon at various times and to varying degrees of success throughout the semester. Their perceptions of

the challenges that they had faced (or were still facing) were signs of their efforts to adapt to U.S. culture as well as of their capacity to manage these stresses. While in several cases unique to the individual, the anxiety surrounding the three participants' adjustments to Texas A&M University provided the impetus for many of their feelings of cognitive and emotional dissonance. This strain was in some instances the result of differences in the administration of classes as well as of the time needed for their study, but in most, it stemmed from the use of English as the sole medium of instruction.

The data collected from Sang's three interviews and journal entries provided evidence of an individual whose instances of cognitive or emotional dissonance during his adjustment to U.S. culture intensified over the course of the semester. While the presence of his family and his personal outlook were two influential factors that enhanced his ability to cope with his symptoms, the more troubled psychological state his words illustrated in the last interview and journal entry were indicative of stress, primarily originating from the university- and English-demands, that had increased.

Throughout his journal entries during the study, Sang used words such as "confused", "unfamiliar", "wonder", "surprise", and "anxiety" to report examples of the cognitive and/or emotional demands for adjustment that he underwent during the following interactions with the host culture: the unlimited and free access to public facilities, prices, taxes, practice of tipping, lack of minorities on campus, disregard for environmental issues, greeting custom, obesity, automobile industry policies, and the apparent lack of formality in English.

In his first interview, Sang related two examples of his psychological state at the beginning of the study. In one case, he stated that he “would have been very lonely” if his family were not with him; instead, their presence here had been a source of comfort and inspiration. In the second case, Sang expressed some discontent at the lack of concern for who he was and where he was from by Americans:

Ah, it doesn't bother me, but I feel unhappy because it also means that they don't care about me.

This indifference would be difficult for anyone who had come to a foreign culture to adjust to, but for Koreans in particular, it would likely be more of a challenge. Given the ethnic and cultural bonds shared by Koreans, individuals from this country have traditionally been very curious about people from other countries, in particular Westerners.²⁶ In the U.S., however, a land populated by people of all races, seeing individuals who are different from us is not unusual. In addition, on a university campus or within the surrounding community, people are perhaps even more immune to feelings of surprise upon viewing someone from a foreign country.

In regards to the predominantly debilitating impact of Texas A&M University and English, Sang, in his fourth journal entry, asserted that he felt “surprised”, “dumbstruck”, and “gloomy” because of his misunderstanding of the grading system in one of his classes. Unlike in Korea, where in general the education system deals in absolutes rather than in hypothetical situations, in this class, his instructor had asked the

²⁶ My own experiences in Korea are testament to this fact. I found the level of curiosity and interest in me to be flattering most of the time but somewhat daunting at others. From being asked for an autograph by Korean children to being stared at through the window at McDonald's, I felt the natural inquisitiveness of Koreans on many occasions.

pupils to estimate their confidence level next to each of their responses. If correct, there would be no problem; if incorrect, it was possible to even receive a negative score, which in Sang's case was indeed the outcome. In the following week's journal as well, Sang related how "unhappy" he was about the time required to study for his classes because of his English ability.

By the second interview, Sang continued to encounter some challenges in his adjustment to the culture in the U.S. Nevertheless, his attitude at this point in time reflected someone who was not going to be deterred from his goals and who was capable of coping with the psychological alteration that these differences necessitated. For example, he stated that, in spite of the difficulties he faced in the university in terms of time and English, "I don't get depressed or angry." Instead, he dedicated even more effort towards finding a solution. In addition, Sang expressed his increased level of comfort with both the use of English and with the individuals speaking this language:

Let's say I get on a bus, I don't feel weird to be around non-Koreans. When I hear people speaking English, even though I don't understand what they're saying, I don't feel uncomfortable.

Finally, he related how his initial positive attitude had returned to him:

...I am very confident and optimistic now as I was in the first place.

Sang's renewed sense of assurance at the halfway point of the semester was a signal of his ability to cope with the cultural challenges that still lay in front of him.

However, by the end of the study, Sang's psychological state, while not negative, had receded from an optimistic level to a "neutral" one. In his fourteenth journal entry,

for example, his words revealed that his psychological adjustment to the English-driven culture in the university had not improved:

Unfortunately, my English ability is the same before this time.

Further, his cognitive and emotional dissatisfaction with the administration of his classes made him question the value of his having come to the U.S. to study at all:

...This makes me wonder if the math-oriented research is worth my coming here...I sometimes doubt if this is right for me.

As a consequence, Sang expressed in his final interview how his reflections of his entire experience during his first semester had made him feel:

I became somewhat depressed.

His lack of connection with the subject matter and the professors, in part a result of his English ability, left him feeling alienated from the curriculum and the culture. For Sang then, his contemplation of the challenges he had faced over the previous fifteen weeks, in particular the academic ones, had battered his initial positive attitude evident earlier in the study.

Nevertheless, Sang's words in his fourteenth journal entry and final interview, respectively, showed that he had not given up on his ability to adjust to U.S. culture; if anything, his utterance exhibited his resolve to learn from his experiences:

...Problems originate from me, from my lack of English ability, so I have hopes for changes in my thoughts if time passes.

For the next semester, I want to study more efficiently and do more activities as I initially planned.

Sang's sanguine approach to his future prospects was primarily because of the presence of his family:

They helped me not to be so lonely in this environment. When I realize that I am my children's dad, I am motivated to persevere through the difficulties.

His wife and children were important factors for helping him continue to cope with the cognitive and emotional stress of adapting to U.S. culture.

In Kwang's case, he described in his journal entries being "confused", "surprised", "startled", and "uncomfortable" because of the automobile industry policies, lack of efficiency and concern for customers, impartial administration of policies, indoor carpeting, driving custom, prices, and the greeting custom. Kwang also related psychological symptoms related to culture shock because of the differences in diet in the U.S. and in Korea. He expressed his emotions about living without the Korean foods that he was accustomed to in his final interview:

The food was quite irritating since it's the basic need and desire and I was not satisfied with my eating. I had to replace my diet with another diet that fits here. I was sad about it...

Given that this cultural difference was one that he had to confront on a regular basis at least three times a day, the alteration in his diet was likely a relatively constant irritant and reminder of the dissimilarities between Korea and the U.S.

Like Sang, Kwang, in his first journal entry, also described feeling psychological (and physiological) symptoms of culture shock due to his English ability, yet the conviction that things would improve:

...I feel a lack of energy and enthusiasm due to only English... I hope to return my mind from discouragement to the mind that I can do everything. ...

Even though Kwang faced such feelings after only a short time, his attitude in the face of his language difficulty exhibited a sense of optimism that he could once again feel confident in his capacity to adapt to the demands of U.S. culture.

Due to the fact that he was living apart from his wife and child for the first semester, Kwang also wrote about having to endure feelings of “loneliness” in his journal. In fact, one of the biggest psychological adjustments to life in the U.S. for him was being without his family. In the first interview, for example, he related how this separation made him feel:

...At first, after I arrived here, I was very alone and very sad because I was with my family for the whole time and I became alone all of a sudden. Plus, there was nothing in the house, so it made me feel worse.

By the second interview, Kwang had not overcome the feelings that the division of his family had engendered, but he did state that the emotions had abated:

...I am feeling still alone, but because this semester is very busy, I don't have enough time to feel alone...So the emotion is less than at first.

However, the source of this reduction, his busy schedule, was also the basis of his feeling “angry” and “mentally tired.” Thus, the cognitive and emotional demands that the university had placed upon him, while keeping him occupied, were also the basis for some of Kwang's symptoms.

In the third interview, Kwang did not directly relate his psychological state in regards to his separation from his family other than to say that had this unit been with him:

...that would have helped me a lot...I know that her presence would be great for me.

It was thus clear throughout the study that the absence of his wife and child had been one of the most substantial sources of stress for him.

Nevertheless, Kwang's utterances in the final interview revealed not only his belief in the magnitude of the cognitive and emotional strains he faced but more importantly his capacity to cope with them. In the first case, he related his opinion:

Mental stress is more difficult to deal with than physical fatigue...

In the second case, Kwang's words evidenced his willingness to admit that he could not resolve his cultural struggles on his own or through recourse to his own value system, respectively:

...I need to overcome the stress through my faith.

...I just realize and accept that this is the culture and the system here...

In his thirteenth journal entry as well, he remained positive about his ability to adjust in spite of feeling "heavy":

However, I do not frustrate even though the English problem leads me to stress...

Consequently, Kwang's words revealed his capacity to cope with any future shocks he would face in the host culture.

Finally, the data collected from Hong's three interviews and journal entries exhibited the most U-shaped pattern of adjustment. In his first interview, he expressed feeling "*embarrassed*" and "*weird*" when confronting the greeting culture in the U.S., but he also asserted that he was "*not lonely*" because of his Korean roommate. In the latter data source, Hong related initial feelings of "frustration", "embarrassment", "anger", "confusion", "uncertainty", "wonder", "nervousness", "perplexity", "surprise",

and “worry” arising from the lack of efficiency and concern for customers, differential enforcement of the alcohol policy, impartial administration of procedures, practice of tipping, enforcement of the laws of the road, concerns about criminality, coeducational nature of athletics, and the prices in U.S. culture.

Hong, like Sang and Kwang, described challenges in dealing with the academic culture of Texas A&M University. In his fourth journal, he related how he felt “nervous” because of his unfamiliarity with the format and level that he should expect on the first exam he was to take. In addition, in his first and fifth journal entries, respectively, he related his apprehension of the role of English in his classes:

...I am really worried about that.

...That is my big concern nowadays...

Hong’s writing expressed symptoms of psychological stress which were directly related to the university and his concerns about the English language, both factors that were likely to take time and effort with which to cope.

Unlike the other two participants, however, he did not exhibit the same level of optimism about his ability to manage the culturally-originated challenge of English. In his fifth journal entry, for example, Hong expressed his frustration with the impossibility of improving his language skills while maintaining his academic standing:

... I have to study my course and prepare for tests, so I cannot concentrate on learning English even though I want to improve English skill.

For Hong, the strain of knowing how important English was for his ability to be successful in all aspects of the host culture was exacerbated by his feeling of powerlessness to improve his facility with the language.

In his midterm interview, Hong had reached the low point in his psychological adjustment to U.S. culture. He related feeling “*frustrated*”, “*nervous*”, and “*pathetic*” because of the difficulties he was having with the English- and time-related demands under which the university had placed him. In addition, Hong reiterated the episodes described in his journal entries of how “*disappointed*”, “*mad*”, and “*angry*” he had felt because of the inconsiderate and inefficient treatment he and his roommate had received at the hands of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and a car dealer.

Nevertheless, by the last interview, Hong had returned to, if not surpassed, his initial psychological comfort with the culture in the U.S. He confidently asserted to me at that time:

I'm already all adjusted, so there is nothing surprising anymore... There have been surprising issues during the 4 months, but I don't find them anymore... I think people need to have confidence because it's not too difficult to live here and anyone can do it. There should be no worries. I worried a lot in the beginning... People live here, so there shouldn't be any problem, so no worries, take it easy. I don't even see the need for advice... My advice is not to worry.

This utterance provided evidence of an individual who felt assured that he had emerged on the other side of his adaptation to the host culture and believed that he was cognitively and emotionally capable of surviving any future challenges.

Physiological

All three participants rarely reported physiological symptoms commonly associated with culture shock in their interviews and journal entries. In fact, in the first and third interviews with Sang, Kwang, and Hong, no mention of physical indicators was made at all. In each case that they were mentioned, however, their exhaustion was due to the rigors of their respective academic programs.

For example, in his fourth journal entry and second interview, respectively, Sang explained:

Nowadays, I feel so tired because of my classes. I had been had homework and quiz which hard and complicated problems every week.

I try really hard to study, so I get physically tired and I am chased by time.

Kwang, in his midterm interview and thirteenth journal entry, respectively, reported how the constant stress of classes had affected him:

Even the weekend is not a weekend here. Everyday is the same; everyday is busy. I can't rest my body, my mind... Sometimes, I felt emotions such as angry and physically tired.

...I feel heavy.

Finally, Hong echoed this sentiment in his second interview and ninth journal, respectively:

I'm so tired right now because of the exam today.

Nowadays, I am very busy and tired of studying,...

As these examples showed, Sang, Kwang, and Hong cited the academic requirements of the university as the source of their lack of energy in both their interviews and journal entries during the study.

In sum, no other reasons within the host culture for these physiological symptoms that they encountered in their respective adjustments were mentioned. To some extent, given the amount of time and effort expended by Sang, Kwang, and Hong during their first semesters in master's-level programs at Texas A&M University as well as the timing of the second interview, this was not unanticipated. (The cited interviews were conducted during the eighth and ninth weeks of the semester, two weeks in the

middle of October and the midterm testing period.) In all of the cases mentioned, therefore, it is important to be cautious in automatically ascribing these feelings of fatigue to the domain of culture shock. For in fact, feeling tired is a usual aspect of graduate study for most students, regardless of their country of origin. In addition, students in the first semester of a course of study could be expected to feel a physiological drain due to the demands placed upon them.

However, the basis of the university as the cause of the participants' fatigue may also have been culturally generated. Given my own knowledge of the Korean education system in general and Korean universities in particular, their interviews responses and journal entries were possibly expressions of the physical drain that adapting to the educational culture in the U.S. had produced. To a great extent, the Korean education system teaches students to pass the university entrance exam. This emphasis requires students to work individually and to regurgitate information in the form of facts and formulas; independent thinking and creativity are generally not highly emphasized. By stressing admission to university as the goal, Korean students and professors have generally not required nearly the same effort as their American counterparts do at the post-secondary level of education. In many ways, admission to a university in Korea has traditionally been synonymous with graduation from that same university. As a consequence, these educational differences could be the source of the three participants' tiredness and by extension, potentially feelings of culture shock.

The perceptions of the physical challenges that the three participants were facing were viewed differently by each individual and thus revealed disparate capacities to cope

with them. Sang and Kwang were of the opinion that their respective physical symptoms were merely temporary features of their lives. In addition, they perceived their physiological difficulties as obstacles to be overcome, irrespective of whether they were derived from cultural differences or not. In contrast, Hong's utterance was indicative of an individual who was overwhelmed by the university's demands.

Sang, for example, relied on his strength of character, relating in the same journal entry and interview referenced above:

Anyway I have to face difficulties resolutely also I do not mistake again.

...Yet, this makes me livelier...I actively respond to my situation right now.

Kwang, somewhat like Sang, felt that his weariness was not an unusual or insurmountable obstacle. As such, in his second interview and thirteenth journal entry, respectively, he expressed his belief that he could overcome his physical difficulties through his own determination and exercise:

However, everything is a natural problem for me, so anyway I have to overcome these problems and consume time for this year's degree plan.

Also, running is a good way to relieve my stress. Sometimes, when I run around park close to my apartment or on running machine in fitness room, I feel I can do whatever.

Hong, on the other hand, while desirous of an opportunity to temporarily escape his academic requirements, felt incapable of doing so. Consequently, he was far less able to cope with his exhaustion, stating that he could not allow himself any free time in his second interview:

There's break time from studying. However, I don't want to spend even that small break for those things. I used to play tennis three times a week in the

beginning...On Saturdays they show football on TV from noon and I want to watch it, but I have to study...

These methods for dealing with the physical strain of adjusting to the culture in the U.S. provided evidence that the participants were coping in different ways and to differing degrees of success.

While the resolve of Sang and Kwang was symbolic of an unwavering sense of purpose in the face of their respective physiological challenges, Hong's contention that he had no time for anything but studying signaled an inability to even temporarily escape from the demands of his life in the host culture. In each case, however, the physical toll of the requirements of the university was extreme and unremitting, in many ways a barrier to the participants' respective adjustments to U.S. culture because of their confinement to their academic obligations.

Influential Factors

The participants' interviews and journal entries were also analyzed for evidence of influential factors that were responsible for making the experience of culture shock more intense or less severe. However, care should be taken in ascribing causation as any hypothesis articulated was somewhat dependent upon the participants' mentioning of a factor as having been influential or not. The failure to have done so cannot necessarily be considered proof that this variable had no influence. Instead, silence in describing difficulties in adjusting to U.S. culture may have been the result of several factors, for example, a lack of metacognitive awareness and of a sufficient amount of time for

noticing and reflection as well as a general discomfort in expressing problems to a relative stranger.²⁷

As described previously, the fourteen variables identified from the literature and the data itself were grouped into six categories: English, university, social connectedness, personal outlook, demographic and other background, and cultural factors. However, just as with the culture shock symptoms, none of these categories were mutually exclusive. Each example described could potentially have been linked to any of the six categories or could have been one that had previously been mentioned. In addition, as culture shock is an individual phenomenon, the effect or lack of effect of any factor for one participant did not in and of itself provide conclusive evidence either supporting or disproving its relevance for other people.

English Skills

The influence of English on the participants' feelings of culture shock during the study, along with that of Texas A&M University, was the most often cited of all the factors described in this section. This finding is only unanticipated to the extent that it played such a major role from the first week until the last week of the semester. No participant felt completely confident in his ability to use English effectively both inside and outside of the classroom, but all of them recognized that attaining a higher level of

²⁷ For in fact, in Korean culture, as in many other cultures, discussing troubles, much less psychological ones, with outsiders is generally not looked upon favorably. Being able to endure and having patience in the face of difficulties are the expected behaviors. As such, the one mention of the benefits of counseling, for example, as a potential resource in helping one of the participants in dealing with culture shock did not necessarily indicate that this factor was absent from consideration by the other participants.

proficiency and facility with the language was indispensable for their integration into U.S. culture and success in the university classroom.

Based on the number of interview responses and journal entries devoted to the role of English in the participants' respective adjustments to the culture in the U.S., this factor was an instrumental variable in all facets of their lives. In particular, given that this language was the sole means by which content was delivered in the vast majority of the classrooms on the Texas A&M University campus and that this environment was where the three participants spent the majority of their time, it was not unforeseen to find that concerns about their English proficiency in this arena were the most often mentioned. For international students such as Sang, Kwang, and Hong, the university's general lack of any provision or accommodation for the needs of second language learners placed them at a disadvantage in relation to native speakers and thereby had the potential to engender culture shock-related symptoms.

For Sang, perhaps more than for Kwang or Hong, the lack of improvement in his English proficiency level was the most influential factor in his struggles to adjust to the culture in the U.S. The combination of his lecture-driven classes, family situation, military affiliation, and secular orientation were all reasons for this assertion as each of these issues impeded his access to opportunities for language development and consequently, his development of a deeper understanding of U.S. culture.

Sang "...studied English intensively..." in Korea from his middle school days and recognized the failings of the education system in his country due to it being "...mostly oriented towards getting a better score in the exam rather than having good

conversational skills.” Consequently, he described his overall English ability in the first interview as “very, very low”, with his reading skill level being the best and his speaking ability being the worst.²⁸

Sang considered speaking English well in the U.S. to be “very important” and was thus concerned about the upcoming semester:

I do worry... To live here, I want to be able to talk well and get my points across. I am worried since I am not good at speaking...

He also expressed his belief that the link between learning a language and learning a culture were inherently connected and thus a fundamental objective for him to pursue:

I believe culture is embedded in language. There are many good writers in Korea, yet they are not recognized internationally since other people must read the translated version of the books that Koreans write. Translation probably cannot fully communicate the messages and expressions clearly. There are also cultural backgrounds in terms of word choices and all. So if someone cannot understand that, or have access to dictionary definitions of words, it is rather difficult to understand. Therefore, if you have a good understanding of the language, I think learning about a culture is very quick and effective.

Sang’s utterances during the first interview made it apparent that he considered the improvement of his English proficiency level to be of paramount importance over the course of his sojourn in the U.S.

However, in his fourth and fifth journal entries, respectively, he expressed frustration with how his English proficiency remained an impediment, interfering with his ability to perform and denying him valuable time:

²⁸ Among the three participants, Sang’s English proficiency level was the lowest if the TOEFL is used as the basis of making this determination. As described in Chapter III, he scored 68 on the Internet-based version of the examination, which was below the score of 80 officially required by Texas A&M University for the admission of international graduate students.

I had been had homework and quiz which hard and complicated problems every week. Though it is 3 courses, it is so too hard to understand because of my English ability. Sometime I cannot understand what is question and moreover, what is homework today? That's because I have to spend much time to solve the problem.

...More and more I don't have any time to spare. It is unhappy to me. Only from house to school.

One week later, Sang described his English-related difficulties in understanding his professors as well as his belief that accommodations should be made for him and other international students:

I have three courses this semester. Linear programming, Decision analysis and Math(Statistic inference). One professor is Chinese and others are American. It is so hard to understand Chinese professor's lector. Also one of American professor is too fast to understand. He does not have consideration for international students though most of them not American. Industrial Engineering's the proportion of international students almost 7 of 10(70% over). However, Dr. C²⁹ pay due regard to students convenience. Also he offer record of lecture in his site.... It is very help to me. I usually use three time a week. He speaks slowly in main point. Therefore we can understand easily. In my opinion that is very important factor in first semester for international student in case of most of students are foreigners.

The influence of Sang's English proficiency level, given the central role it played in the university, was a noteworthy source of stress in his attempts to adjust to and feel connected with U.S. culture.

At the second interview, Sang articulated his opinion that his speaking skills had stagnated because of the dearth of opportunities for him to practice:

I have about the same speaking ability, but I am a little more comfortable with listening for sure...I don't have that many chances to speak. I can only speak at the university. Most of my classes are not discussion-oriented, but they are all

²⁹ To ensure anonymity, only the first letter of the professor's last name was used.

lecture style where professors teach the material and I learn programming and problem solving because I study engineering.

Halfway through the semester, Sang's comments provided evidence of virtually no improvement in his language ability and no interaction with Americans. Nearly two months into his stay, he offered this sobering assessment of his level of comprehension:

Right now, I think I understand about 30% of what people say.

With this meager grasp of the English language and few chances for remediation, the probability of success in the academic, much less cultural, arena was uncertain.

In Sang's third interview, although convinced that he had not raised his proficiency level in English, he did express a greater degree of confidence in using this language:

I don't think I have improved much. One difference would be that I couldn't speak much in Korea since I wanted to make my sentences perfect before I spoke, while I would speak rather imperfectly here, but give keywords which would give the gist of what I am saying to people here. People understood me without any problem here. For example, if I wanted to find a place, I would say, "I want to find ...", then people would give me directions. Now, I'm not afraid to speak. I still lack the ability to express myself clearly in English, though.

While the emergence of his resolve to speak in English was a positive sign, without the chance to practice, it was unlikely how he could develop more facility with the language.

In fact, the scant opportunities to speak that classes provided, the arena where Sang spent most of his time, were not conducive to improving his language skills:

I also thought I would get better in English by using it a lot. Nonetheless, it didn't happen and I just got very familiar with studying with the textbooks...I didn't have many chances other than the time we meet, so that's why I try to speak in English even though I still can't speak very well. In general, I don't have many chances. I have an advisor now and maybe that could be a variable in terms of opportunities in the future.

Further, in Sang's fourteenth journal entry, he conveyed his frustration at being made to feel like an outsider because of his English ability:

My major is Industrial Engineering so I hardly to say in English in the engineering class. We only listen to the lecture and solve the statistics problem by hand ...Most of students are international in my class. In good order Indian, Chinese, American, Korean and Asian. I don't know why...Before I sad, professors are very different. One professor thinks over the international student who studied first semester but the other professor is quite the opposite. He is always talking with only American. They laugh but I cannot laugh.

As a consequence, Sang was likely to remain disconnected from U.S. culture, lacking any promising prospects to bolster his English ability through interaction with Americans.

The influence of English for Kwang, as it was for the other participants, was substantial in hindering his more rapid adjustment to U.S. culture. In spite of his attendance at English academies and recourse to private tutors before his arrival in the States, he still thought that his ability was "...very low." In his first interview, he provided his frank assessment of his proficiency level in the four main skill areas:

...Writing is stronger than listening...Speaking would improve if I am exposed to the speaking environment as well as listening, but I need to put more effort to place myself in it...There's no problem reading wise...It's because Koreans can do reading, writing, and stuff from the dictionary quite a bit. However, direct communication skills such as speaking and listening are lacking for Koreans.

Like Sang, Kwang was aware of the importance of oral communication in English for coping with the stresses of U.S. culture both inside and outside of the classroom:

You can't adjust to the culture if you can't speak English.

My English is lacking and it is possible to face serious trouble. I will need to solve this problem by providing a good understanding to the other person.

Of course, if your English is good, the speed of studying is faster than if you don't know English.

Consequently, he articulated his plan to devote 70% of his time and effort to "...learning about American culture and studying English" and "...to understand[ing] 90% of basic conversation even if I wouldn't be too fluent." As described previously, the central component of his idea was to make a conversation partner through his church.

In spite of his intentions, the influence of Kwang's limited English skills on his self-image was noteworthy from the outset. In his first journal entry, for example, he described this impact:

I'm not familiar yet with English especially in the area of listening and speaking. So I don't satisfy with everything here. It looks like a speech-handicapped person.

Kwang's characterization of himself as a disabled individual because of his language ability revealed his frustration with the negative impact of this factor on his adjustment to U.S. culture.

At the second interview, Kwang still felt that the "...most challenging" aspect of his adjustment to life in the U.S. remained his need to learn the language, and he did not believe that he had enhanced his proficiency with English:

My English skill has improved only a little when compared to before; I still have my speech handicap, English speech handicap.

In particular, his belief in his linguistic affliction centered on his disappointment with his conversation partner, conceding that the demands on his time and the lack of feedback he had been provided had both left him disenchanted with the experience. Whatever the source of this choice of words, Kwang's opinion that he was crippled by his facility with English left little doubt as to the severity of the problem for him.

In his classes, Kwang also professed distress with the important role that English played in the struggles he was facing and hinted at his unhappiness with the advantage this language gave Americans:

I think it's not the same for Americans as it is for international students, especially given that many countries don't use English, so it's difficult to follow every process in my courses.

However, Kwang did not believe that English was the only or the most prominent reason for the challenges he faced in the university:

...There are a lot of causes for my grades, but the first one is not English, just only studying major. And then, of course, English is applied to my problem.

Regardless of whether English was the primary source of Kwang's difficulties or not, the fact remained that its impact in the classroom was important.

A specific example of this challenge was one method of instruction that was often employed in Kwang's classes. Group work, while beneficial and not unfamiliar, was also a struggle for him:

Solving problems by making groups is a good way to know English and to know American culture and to study my courses. The result is good, but it's difficult to follow every process for me only because of the language barrier.

Additionally, the disparate reception Kwang received at the hands of the members of his various groups was stressful for not only the extensive amount of English his active participation required but also for the reliance upon others this instructional method necessitated:

Well, some people are very kind to me even if I don't speak English well. They understand everything about me, especially English. So, they will always help me to do homework and to check homework and so on. They always try to help me. But other people are not. For example, I have groups of 4 members to make term projects in my classes. They are all Americans. One group's members are

very kind to me, but another group's members are so chilly. I think the problem is my English skill. We talked about our project problems. I cannot speedily interrupt my thinking, so communication is very difficult in this group. But this group's members are very kind to me. Always afterwards, I am thinking that I can tell them whatever, so my mind is very easy in this group. But this other group is not like that, and it is very difficult to talk with them.

On the one hand, given the limited opportunities Kwang had to improve his proficiency level, group work was a good source of contact with native speakers of English. On the other hand, the differential quality of contact in the various groups in many ways counteracted these benefits.

Because of the challenges of associating with other Americans, English for Kwang remained the primary source of stress for him in adjusting to U.S. culture throughout the semester. Although he understood the importance of his language skills for improving his chances for success, he expressed concern in his twelfth journal entry about the negative impact his relative lack of proficiency would have on the future course of his academic career:

On last Thursday, I met a professor who I was considering my prospective advisor after making an appointment in his office. Because I am a M.S. student and going to Ph.D. after completing M.S, I need to choose an advisor researching my interesting areas. It ,however, is really important to choose my prospective advisor so that I can get a RA position and buy a insurance covering my whole family who arriving on this Dec. Due to these reasons, choosing a professor is highly important.

However, the trial to meet him seems difficult to me because I have already showed my disadvantage in English so that I think that the professor may have not good impression for me. After I made an appointment, a little concern about meeting him approached to me because of what I mentioned above. However, the result of the meeting differed from my anxiety. Even though I cannot feel my English skill improved, he praised me for improved my English ability. He was favorable to me and positively reviewed what I hope.

Perhaps due to this boost to his confidence, unlike Sang, Kwang related in the same journal entry his belief that his classes were assisting him in improving his English:

The end of this semester is fast approaching. Therefore, a lot of stuff approaching due date should be finished as quickly as possible. In such cases, team projects in every course make in natural many opportunities to meet other students in my team, such situations exposes me English-environment. The more many the situations, the more beneficial it seems to increase English than what I thought.

Somewhat incongruously, however, only one week later, Kwang was not as optimistic about his English ability and the implications of this deficiency in his classes:

The biggest stress is English communication with other people. Basically, the origin reason of it is deficient English skill. Also, the problem causes several additional difficulties and they make me more stressful. First, the deficiency of English expression ability is an obstacle when my thinking and opinion is presented to other people. Secondary, the speed absorbing some knowledge is slower than when using my language. These problems are the most basic problem to study in the States. Whenever I encounter such a basic problem during study or in daily life, I feel heavy.

While not discounting the inconsistent self-evaluation of his English proficiency level, Kwang's journal entries revealed his opinion of this language as a major source of stress in his attempts to adjust to U.S. culture.

In his final interview, he described how anxious he was about his proficiency level and the need to increase it:

I think some parts, especially listening, writing, and reading, are more improved than before, but in speaking, it's not improved. I'm not satisfied with my English.

I do want help, especially in terms of English...To learn English, I need someone else to provide feedback and all and I am desperate for help.

His worry about his facility with English was constant, "...everyday I'm trying to improve my English skills...", and motivated by his belief that improvement with the language would offer substantial benefits for him in the university:

...It would help me a lot in classes. My studying pace and understanding will increase. I wouldn't be lost so much. If I have some problems, I can find exactly the answer or something I want. That means I'm not lost.

The constancy of the anxiety produced by Kwang's English proficiency level did not abate throughout the semester; if anything, this strain increased over the course of the study, implying that his ability to adjust to U.S. culture had been impeded by his language ability.

Finally, in Hong's first interview, he related how his hatred of English had set him apart from other Koreans his age who studied in academies and in their universities. Not until his experience learning the language in Canada did he change his mind about both the language and the culture of which it was an expression. As a consequence of this relatively late desire to improve his proficiency with English as well as the aforementioned emphasis in the Korean educational system on reading and writing, Hong believed that there were differences in his mastery of the language skill areas:

Reading and writing are okay. I think my speaking and listening abilities are still very lacking.

However, he was aware of the significance of his oral limitations in particular for his ability to feel at ease in U.S. culture:

I think it's very important...It would be uncomfortable because I can't converse...Anything I do, it will be difficult... I still can't say everything I need. I want to be fluent and talk continuously, but I speak and I have to pause to think. I don't like that.

His lack of proficiency in speaking (and listening) made him reluctant to attend an American church or to foster relationships with members of the host culture.

Consequently, Hong felt in many ways trapped on the periphery of U.S. culture, unable to approach a deeper understanding of it without first improving his English.

To remedy this situation, Hong related his intention to join a Bible study where he could learn the language:

...I need help and that will teach me English better. I have seen some people whose English has gotten so much better. Bible study or dinner invitations could enhance their abilities. I hope there are many opportunities like that.

His willingness to improve his proficiency with the language illustrated his recognition of the need for improvement in this area if he were to adjust to U.S. culture.

In the university as well, Hong elaborated on the primary source of his apprehension about his class schedule during the semester in his first journal entry:

I took Statistics, and three major courses. A professor in Statistics class is Chinese, and I cannot understand more than 70 percentage among what he talked. Thus, I must read the material and textbook, and then understand the contents, meaning from chapter by myself. I think it is very big problem to me, because it will last for one semester. Also, one of three major courses is Decision making analysis. The class has a lot of reading homework and every week quiz. Because of my reading skill, reading is time-consuming work, so I am really worried about that.

In another example, Hong, in his fifth journal entry, the week following his first exam, described his fears of the role of English in the classroom:

...I thought that American students would get much higher score than international students because their native language is English, which enables them to study and understand the difficult concepts more easily.

Maybe listening English in the classes is everything related to English. That is my big concern nowadays....

The influence of Hong's English proficiency level, given the central role it played in the university, was an important source of stress in his attempts to adjust to U.S. culture.

By the second interview, Hong's overall confidence in his ability to use the English language, and thus become more integrated in the host culture, had not improved; if anything, it had deteriorated:

I have no confidence in terms of speaking... Recently, I went somewhere and tried to speak English, but I failed. I felt that my English got worse... I have slight confidence for listening. I read a lot everyday, so I am comfortable with reading. Writing wise, without caring about grammar at all, maybe slight confidence.

In addition, he described how his academic schedule had forced him to forego his plan to learn English through a Bible study:

...I tried a few times by going to church and Bible studies in English. Because of time constraints from homework and exams, I couldn't continue, so it's becoming worse for me...

After two months in an English-speaking environment, this admission by Hong reflected a belief that his language skills were regressing (as well as a virtual absence of interaction with members of the host culture).

Inside of the university classroom, the impact of Hong's English proficiency was just as pronounced. At the midterm interview, he related how "*the worst part* [of his experience in the U.S.] *was the classes, understanding them.*" Hong elaborated on his opinion:

The professor speaks in English and I couldn't understand. Maybe about 30%. After class, I go to the library and read the textbook. It's more like a self-study because I don't understand the class. If it's in Korea, I can study at a faster pace because I study in Korean. The material is also difficult, so my pace is very slow.

It's frustrating. American students can communicate with the professor perfectly, but Koreans in general have a hard time understanding. When I prepare for the exam, probably American students already caught on to what the professor emphasized, which is information likely to be on the test. I just rely on the textbook for studying since I don't get much out of the classes.

...In Korea, everything is easy to understand. When the professor writes in Korea, I don't have to write anything if I understand the point. Here, I feel like I need to write down everything the professor writes since I might be missing out on something. So I have to give up one thing. Either I can listen carefully or take notes well. In the beginning, I tried listening hard but I could understand maybe 20%, so as the time passed, I started to concentrate on writing more. I try to understand the material when I study the notes after class.

While he also asserted that “it has gotten better compared to the beginning”, the fact that “now, I understand about half the material...” was the basis of this admission provided evidence of both where he had started from and how much more he still needed to improve in order to feel any degree of comfort with English and accordingly, U.S. culture.

By the final interview, Hong stated that he still had not witnessed any improvement in his speaking skills in particular:

I think speaking is the most important aspect in English, but that's the one I am having the most trouble with...I still don't think it's better...I do encounter everything in English but I can only see signs on the streets in English. I hardly speak though...I could try to make chances, but I was too busy studying and playing. I wasn't able to make opportunities to speak.

In his classes as well, he felt trapped by his low level of English proficiency:

...Listening to unfamiliar things in English doesn't let me understand any of the material the professor is talking about. I need to study ahead; otherwise the lecture is a waste. I just sit and come back home. That was hard. For homework, I don't even understand what the professor says.

In many ways, Hong's language skills had effectively limited his access to most facets of U.S. culture.

In spite of this English-induced isolation, Hong did not view his struggle with the language as an unfair burden; rather, he expressed the opinion that his somewhat static

proficiency level was primarily due to his lack of opportunities to speak English during the semester:

I must speak in English since this is America here. I have no problem with that. I shouldn't. I shouldn't have come here if I didn't want to speak English. Before the semester started, I went out to shop and look around, but now all I do is go home, to the library, and exercise. That means I have a very routine schedule and no chance to speak English.

Once his time was freed up after the semester, however, Hong was ready to resume his initial goal of improving his English so that he could make more inroads towards an understanding of and integration within U.S. culture:

...I will now concentrate on learning English over the winter break. If I become more fluent, it's more likely that I can talk to more people and get exposed to the culture here. I don't have any particular problem right now, but I think it will be better if my English improves.

In sum, his recognition of the probable benefits of increasing his English ability was an indication that his lack of facility with the language had been a substantially influential factor in his adjustment to the host culture.

University

The university's impact on the participants' adjustment to life in the U.S. was in evidence in many of their interviews and journal entries. However, this influence was not generally a consequence of any intentional, concerted effort by Texas A&M University. Rather, the differences in academic culture between Korea and the States generally as well as Texas A&M University specifically was the source of Sang's, Kwang's, and Hong's respective challenges.

From what was related to me in the interviews primarily, Texas A&M University did provide some initial university-wide assistance to the three participants and other

international students. In spite of this early effort, though, the rigorous academic demands faced by Sang, Kwang, and Hong as well as their intense desire to achieve scholastic success made it difficult for them to attend other such events throughout the semester.

More specifically, the university did not take a proactive role in assisting these three Korean students with the phenomenon of culture shock, if and when it existed, in their classes. They were accorded the same privileges and faced the same requirements as all of their fellow classmates, both international and domestic. When and if accommodations were made, they were individually- rather than university-instituted. Nevertheless, only Sang felt that Texas A&M University had a responsibility to aid international students in their respective adjustments to U.S. culture. Kwang and Hong, on the other hand, did not consider assistance in this area to have been a duty of the university; instead citing their own accountability for adaptation.

Each participant's struggle in adjusting to the academic culture and expectations of the university was also described in the previous section on culture shock-related symptoms. As first-semester graduate students, their difficulties were not unforeseen given that virtually all students are taxed by the demands of completing an advanced degree. However, for international students such as the Korean participants, they also had to cope with their lack of familiarity with the American university educational system as well as with the use of English as the medium of instruction. These added burdens, without assistance from the university, proved to be important at times.

Academic differences and demands

From Sang's first interview, unlike Kwang and Hong, it was apparent that he had high expectations for the role that Texas A&M University would play in his adjustment to the culture in the U.S.:

Introducing the advanced systems in the developed countries to the students here would influence them. Different ways of life here will fuse with the culture of other countries among the international students. They will in turn go back and influence and contribute to their own countries.

In his second interview, he related the initial practical assistance that the university had provided him:

For the first two weeks when I was here, I got to go to orientations where they show information about the library, banks, and other necessary places to go to and how to take care of matters. They were informative and people tried to educate me about the culture here. Since the semester started, nothing else has happened.

While Sang's response illustrated the beneficial nature of these programs, the cessation of these endeavors after only a fortnight implied that he had not received any further aid throughout the rest of the semester.

Ultimately, Sang was of the mind that the university had not done enough on a system-wide level to assist him in his transition into the academic culture in the U.S. While recognizing his own responsibility to improve his English proficiency level, he believed that Texas A&M University could have done more to accommodate the needs of the majority of the students:

I have only met three professors and those are the only people I know. One professor tries to speak slowly and he tries to make us comprehend the material. I could see him trying very hard. Others, they would not consider much about international students. I could see that when the professor makes a joke. There are only a select few that laugh at the joke. International students just smile even

though they don't understand. So it feels like we're left out. Some American students love the class and ask a lot of questions, but the problem is that I don't understand what's going on there. Others just stare at the person. If most of the people, like 70~80%, are with the class, I wouldn't talk about this, but most of the students in the class are international and they have a hard time in classes...Up to a certain point, all international students need to try their best to learn English. However, if international students are the majority of a class and considering their first language is not English, maybe the professor could slow down or use easier words. I think that would be a more effective way of teaching.

In sum, Sang's final interview provided evidence that the influence of the university on his adjustment to U.S. culture had been noteworthy and in most ways viewed as an impediment.

In terms of the dissimilarities between the culture of Texas A&M University and universities in Korea, these differences were a source of discomfort for Sang from the beginning of the semester. As an example, Sang described in his fourth journal entry how he felt bewildered by the grading system in one of his classes:

One of my classes, strange mark on a strange scale. After we choice the answer among the A,B,C,D we should write a percentage of correct answer. Also the sum of percentage is 1. Therefore it is concern about student's belief. For example, I believe my choice(if "A") is 100% of correct answer, I may write A=1, B=0, C=0, D=0. However, a matter of grave concern is that if the correct answer is B, I got the minus score because the mark program is logarithmic function. As a result, anyway, it is possible to minus score. According to that calculate, probability 1=8.3 point(the highest score), 0.5=4.2, 0.1=-5.5 but 0.01=-19.3, 0.0001= -47 point(the lowest core is infinite number). Unfortunately, I got the -19.3 points not a zero point this week quiz! I'm so surprised, dumb struck. I do not know about that exactly. I just know we may get the minus score. I leave out of consideration. I do not calculate Log Function.

While this grading system was also potentially confusing for domestic students as well, it was more of a shock for Sang. Having been educated in a system that stresses the importance of memorization and solving problems with unambiguous answers, his

instructor's desire to incorporate students' beliefs about the probability of correctness may not have been fully understood.

By the end of the term, Sang's fourteenth journal entry and final interview were devoted almost exclusively to expressing his frustration and disappointment with his readiness for and the administration of his classes. He wrote:

In a word, it is a big cave. I do not know about that's information. Before I came here, I have a great expectation however I endure hardship because of my lack expert knowledge. Also, my major require mathematics' understanding...I have been lots of tests and homework. It decides the grade.

Even considering that my major is engineering, most of the graduate level courses are very monotonous and too math oriented...I have learned course materials mostly through others rather than from lectures to prepare for exams. In this adverse condition, I am maintaining grades slightly above average...

From the depressed tone of Sang's final entry, it was apparent that the impact of the university on his satisfaction with his life in the U.S. had been substantial.

In the last interview as well, Sang's disenchantment with his experiences in his classes was palpable, signs that his expectations had not been met. For example, Sang had come to this country believing that his education at Texas A&M University would provide him with opportunities for interaction with his classmates and professors.

However, what he found here was akin to what he initially believed that he had left behind in Korea:

...I was very curious how a student is evaluated here by professors. I thought that there would be conversations and discussions and presentations of opinions based on readings and other knowledge. I would say something more interactive. I thought of graduate studies to be taught in that way, but because my major is industrial engineering, it was all about lecture, math, homework, exam results. It was quite different from what I had expected. In Korea, people are used to studying by themselves with textbooks for the college entrance exam. From a Korean's point of view, American education focuses on creativity through

discussions and other methods. I have seen non-engineering students having classes outside and having a good time, so I envied them. My classes were all about just listening and there were no dynamics between classmates at all. It was the routine, library and home life, back and forth. It was different from my expectations.

According to Sang, the lack of contact he had with others was not due solely to the teaching method employed in his classes. While acknowledging the impact of English on curtailing his chances to interact with others, he also expressed a degree of frustration with the composition of his classes and his own preparedness for the content:

...The language is different and I had to listen in English, so that was tough. Even if I am in America, more than 70% of the students are Asians, such as Indian or Chinese. They all came to the U.S. with their own goals and they influenced the classes to be at a high level...I also lacked background knowledge for some classes. I wanted to go back to the beginning of the semester because now I feel like I know what's going on here. Probably I would be able to get better grades at this point. However, my grade had to pay the cost of adjusting to and learning the new environment. I even pulled many all-nighters and my grades didn't reflect the effort. I feel that the semester was extremely difficult.

The relative dearth of American students in his classes, when combined with the limited time afforded him to socialize, left Sang dissatisfied with the relationships that he had formed over the semester:

There are not many chances to make close friends. To make good friends, you need to talk, eat, play sports together, and so on...There are very few Americans in classes....

Individually, each of these utterances was important as an example of Sang's struggles to adjust to the academic culture in the U.S. However, when viewed together, they implied that the scope of adaptation required was considerable and unremitting.

In addition, the academic and linguistic demands of Sang's classes meant that he had to give up his initial goals of learning more about the host culture:

I thought in the beginning that I would experience many different things including learning English, academics, etc. I did want a lot from here. I am sponsored by the Korean government and the only scale of evaluation comes from my grades, so I wanted to do well. I wanted to do many things in this freer environment than Korea, where things are a little more strict and stiff than here especially in the military setting. I thought I would be active in many things. Once the classes started, because it was difficult to follow the lectures, I focused more on catching up and performing better. As a result, I came to school at night and on weekends, so I had to neglect my other desires. At this point, if I got the grades I wanted, I would be more elated and be able to spend the winter break happily. However, my academic performance does not reflect my time and life investment for the whole semester, so it made me wonder what I am doing here. I didn't even spend much time with my family because of the studies. I started thinking about what this whole studying abroad means.

Sang's final utterances revealed a far greater deal of despondency about what had transpired over the course of the study, implying that he had been affected to a great extent by the weight of his academic burden.

Kwang, unlike Sang, considered the process of adjusting to the host culture to be his responsibility alone. In his first interview, he related his belief in the different roles that the various levels of education should play:

I don't think the university has the obligation to help with that. Maybe in middle school or high school I would expect such help. The roles among the education systems are different. The university is for more autonomous learning.

Kwang's opinion that the onus for learning about U.S. culture was on him was reflected in his remark in the same interview that he had made no effort to uncover Texas A&M University's role in this capacity:

I didn't really search for what services Texas A&M offers to students to get them acquainted to this culture.

In addition, Kwang expressed an overall level of satisfaction with the function of Texas A&M University in his first journal entry while relating his English and culture-related hopes for the semester:

The role of university is sufficient me to adjust to life as it is. However, if university offers international students several kind of program to improve English and experience native's cultures, it is much more beneficial for me.

Kwang's favorable impression of the approach adopted by the university as well as his desire to enhance his linguistic and cultural knowledge at the beginning of the semester illustrated his optimism about Texas A&M University's capacity to assist him in his adjustment to U.S. culture (while implicitly confirming his earlier utterance that any action taken was not a duty).

By the midterm interview, Kwang had not uncovered any university-sponsored assistance:

I didn't find any club or program to help international students, so I don't know. His ignorance of the existence of aid after half of the semester was continuing evidence of his belief in who was required to assist him in adjusting to U.S. culture and also in what a university education constituted.

In his final interview, Kwang expressed the opinion that the university had played a noteworthy role in his adaptation to U.S. culture:

School is the most important aspect in adjusting to life here, in terms of lifestyle and friends.

This conviction, however, did not imply that Texas A&M University had engaged in any specific culture-related actions as Kwang's utterance would attest:

I don't think the university has actively helped me by providing programs.

Rather, his words were indicative of the centrality of the university in his life, a core position around which everything else revolved. The centripetal force exerted by Texas A&M University on Kwang severely limited his access to other parts of U.S. culture.

The differences in the culture of Texas A&M University when compared with universities in Korea were not a source of discomfort initially for Kwang. Rather, these dissimilarities were the basis of reflection and personal growth. As an example, in his third journal entry, the administration and management of classes in Texas A&M University, when contrasted with Korean universities, did not engender feelings of uneasiness or confusion:

...I surprised at the sight of classes for 3 weeks after the first class day. The attitude of professors to start their classes is much more flexible without the authoritarianism than Korea. The whole prepares for progressing the classes were performed themselves, and they were never late to their classes. It is a good point whenever students can easily do their questions the professor.

Kwang's positive perception of the attitude of his professors in Texas A&M University provided evidence that this difference had not hindered his adjustment to U.S. culture.

In his fourth journal entry, Kwang devoted the entire content to expressing his opinion of the problems facing the Korean education system at the university level, motivated by the positive differences he had observed at Texas A&M University:

Students of Korea are superior in their intellectual abilities until they were at least high school students. Even though the education of high schools in Korea too much leaned toward the education for university entrances, the abilities for solving problems in their subjects are excellent. However, when they go universities they want, their abilities do not give out any more. Why does such situation happen? I exactly don't know why. It may be resulted from the simple education for the only university entrance exam. Therefore, it might be natural that high school students in Korea are more outstanding than high school students of other countries at least in the simple problem they learned. A number

of universities of Korea nowadays become larger more and more in the quantitative aspect without having no qualitative growths. The education system should be changed from simple one to more complicated and creative one. Many students of universities are going to abroad to learn more superior education. If simply such situation is resulted from a genuine purpose in order to learn developed countries, such situation must be welcomed. However, pure purposes going to abroad is because Korea is deficient the will of creative education. So I also went here due to such cautions.

He concluded the entry by providing a particular instance of a dissimilarity with Korean universities and indirectly evidence of his willingness to not only face new challenges but to embrace them:

There is a specific example what I felt here pursuing U.S creative education, 'Term paper' or 'Term project', which is good a real example to convert the education system of Korea. The term project can be solved when students know entire knowledge of a textbook they learned. It is difficult for me to find its solutions, but it makes students think more creatively as well as complicatedly.

In these examples, Kwang expressed a high degree of satisfaction with Texas A&M University in spite of the educational differences that he had encountered.

In his second interview as well, Kwang enumerated what for him were other differences in the education systems between Korea and the U.S. If the number of items was any indication of importance, then these dissimilarities were influential factors in his adjustment to U.S. culture. In addition, when the amount of time spent in classes and studying was also taken into account, the stress that the divergent academic culture at Texas A&M University engendered was indicative of a culture shock.

Kwang related his views on the differences between schooling in Korea and in the U.S.:

The most challenging is to learn English and familiarizing myself with American culture focused on American education. The American education system is so much harder than Korea. For example, the strict and organized curriculum and

there are a lot of assignments, such as homework, pop quizzes, and midterms three times...Then term projects, making groups. Even though only graduate students have to make a term paper, it's really hard in every course. I am taking three courses in my major and one has a term paper and term projects, three times.

In addition to the quantity of work required of him, Kwang also found the strict adherence to the educational goals set forth in the syllabi of his American professors to necessitate adaptation on his part:

Because professors gave assignments and the due date for the assignment and exam is sometimes the same, I don't know how can I do both on the same day. ...In Korea, professors sometimes organize assignments and exams on the same day, but Korean professors sometimes delay one of them....In the U.S., they are following their curriculum.

Korean professors are more flexible than American professors, but I know the American education system is superior to the Korean system. Because Korean professors can be pressured, sometimes they didn't follow their curriculum. Sometimes, they have no class without advance notice. But I know the system is wrong. But this system is good.

Finally, the frequent employment of group work was disconcerting for Kwang given the pedagogical emphasis he had been accustomed to in Korea:

Students in the U.S. are studying entirely through making groups. They solved some problems by making groups, and professors received the entire assignment problem according to what he lectured on in the textbook. My thinking is that Korean students are studying only tests for entrance to university in high school. That was a very simple way. They don't have time to think about any other case except only preparing for the university entrance exam. I don't enjoy it, but it's good. I don't like it because every assignment takes so much time to solve; it is very difficult.

For Kwang, the differences between the educational systems in Korea and the U.S. were substantial. In spite of his predominantly favorable impressions of these dissimilarities, these demands for adjustment were a fairly constant source of stress throughout the semester.

In his twelfth journal entry as well, Kwang still felt favorably inclined to the methods utilized in his classes, in particular because of the assistance these techniques had offered for improving his English:

...team projects in every course make in natural many opportunities to meet other students in my team, such situations exposes me English-environment. The more many the situations, the more beneficial it seems to increase English than what I thought.

The significance of English for Kwang in his adjustment to U.S. culture cannot be overstated. Accordingly, his perception of the university's role in providing him with opportunities to increase his linguistic acumen explained his satisfaction.

However, just two weeks later, in his fourteenth journal entry, Kwang's approval of the university had waned:

It was really busy in every class because of many assignments, team projects and term paper in every class. In some class, an instructor manages so many things in his lecture, so that there is no depth in a specific area. That is, I don't feel satisfaction over this class. With finishing this semester, the satisfaction seems to be deficient in overall class in my case. Maybe this problem appears to be language problem.

Kwang's dissatisfaction may have been symptomatic of nothing more than the stress he and virtually all students felt at the end of the semester, and thus, not evidence of culture shock. On the other hand, the differences in class management and organization as well as in the quantity and quality of assignments between Texas A&M University and his university in Korea may have been more dissimilar than he had initially supposed, and thus, engendered feelings of stress arising from the adjustment he had undergone.

Lastly, Kwang related his belief that the burden of having to complete his class requirements had left him little time for anything but studying in his third interview:

...The time in my case is spent only studying. I didn't have enough time to study, so I am regretful about not being able to do other activities. Maybe this is natural. My initial goal was those, but I failed to achieve these and my life was all about school and the library, like a clock.

It was apparent that his attempts to successfully complete the academic demands of his classes had necessitated the foregoing of any attempts to learn about the host culture, in essence denying him the opportunities to educate himself about more than just his major.

Finally, Hong, in his first journal entry, related his apprehension about the semester to come:

Working for the first week in the school, I worried myself about course and class. I took Statistics, and three major courses....In general, my big concern after the first week is to follow my courses this semester.

Three weeks later, in his fourth journal entry, Hong's anxiety had not abated in spite of his relief at the difficulty of his first exam:

I was very busy and nervous because I got the first exam this week. The exam is the first one which I take a test in the USA. I did not know the format and level of exam. After all, I took a test yesterday, and it was not difficult, but I have not done well.

The customary stress associated with an examination is an emotion felt by virtually all students. However, when Hong's agitation was viewed alongside his lack of knowledge of how the test would be structured, his ignorance of the university's academic culture was an influential factor in his adjustment to life in the U.S.

Hong's second and third interviews, respectively, exhibited his belief that while the university had done its part to assist him and other international students in their adjustments to U.S. culture, his academic requirements had effectively denied him the opportunity to gain from these efforts:

I think there are a lot of events and activities in the university, but I don't have time nowadays. I don't get to look for any of those since I can't attend them anyway.

There is an organization for international students. I get weekly email telling me to come to their meetings. It's supposed to be helpful. I never went, not even once... There were too many exams, almost every week, so I just was living to take exams and time just flew by... I see the university putting a lot of effort out for international students

In more detail, Hong elaborated in his third interview on the reason why he constantly felt pressed for time:

Maybe it's the difference between undergraduate and graduate level, but the pace is too fast. Here, in one day, they cover certain material which would take 5 days in Korea. That's really difficult.

Thus, in spite of his awareness of campus activities and organizations created specifically for international students like him, Hong reported that the demands on his time had prevented him from taking part. Consequently, a potential resource for assisting him in coping with his transition into U.S. culture was left unutilized.

Nonetheless, Hong remained steadfast throughout the study in his belief that the ultimate responsibility for learning more about the culture in the U.S. was his alone. In his first and third interviews, respectively, he refused to lay blame at the feet of the faculty or the society for his admitted lack of connection to the host culture:

Professors have their own work to do. I don't expect them to do something else. It's your own responsibility. I don't think asking for something from them is right.

...It's the school work load; it's not the society's fault.

In sum, Hong's self-sufficiency, class requirements, and circumscribed sense of the role of the university were all influential factors in the formation of his opinion of the impact of Texas A&M University on his adaptation to U.S. culture.

Social Connectedness

The degree to which Sang, Kwang, and Hong felt connected to their new culture, while different for each participant, was overall not indicative of individuals who had successfully formed social bonds. Each made some attempts to achieve greater integration into the local community. For Sang, his family's involvement in the local community, reported in the *Interpersonal* symptoms section, offered him the chance to interact with Americans because, as he reported in his fifth journal entry, it "...is hard to make foreign friends." Kwang and Hong turned to the church for help in establishing social ties with members of U.S. culture. As described in detail in the Religiosity section, this organization provided them spiritual, linguistic, and practical guidance. In spite of their efforts, however, these attempts were not generally accomplished to the extent hoped for by the three participants.

As was in evidence in the discussion of his proficiency level, Sang's imperfect command of the English language was an influential factor in his struggles to become more socially connected to the culture in the U.S. In particular, his need to improve his skill level and establish relationships with Americans formed a vicious circle. When other variables related to his lecture-driven classes, family situation, military affiliation, and secular orientation were considered, the opportunities for him to break this impasse were not promising.

Nevertheless, from the first interview, Sang related his awareness of the importance of establishing interpersonal connections with members of the host culture for not only himself but also his family. He stated his goals for his family:

...I am going to send my daughter to a kindergarten here and I want to provide her chances to learn English and American culture. For my other family members, I want them to experience something they cannot do in Korea since America is a developed country. Maybe they can make non-Korean friends, attend events, parties, or banquets, invite others, or be invited. I want a variety of experiences before my return to Korea.

For himself, Sang had similar ambitions, but he was aware of the linguistic impediments that he would face or perhaps had already faced:

[If my family were not here,] Then I would try hard to make friends. Yet, making friends here is difficult...First, I have a language problem...that makes the establishment of relationships hard. Therefore, if I face any difficult situations, trying hard to resolve the problems, I would possibly isolate myself even more.

In spite of the challenges he described, Sang's words provided evidence of his desire for everyone in his family unit to develop a sense of connection with the local society.

However, Sang's positive opinion of establishing bonds with other Koreans, in spite of his understanding of the potential risks for his English development, were incongruous at first glance:

The fact that there are many Koreans means that they could help me a lot settling down. I can meet them when I'm lonely; I can eat Korean food with them, and I can do things more comfortably. Most officers from the military worry that meeting Koreans and getting used to speaking Korean can deter me from learning English and my major-related materials. Having a lifestyle revolving around Koreans makes forming relationships with others more difficult on top of little improvement in English. Therefore, my friends tend to go where there are less Korean people even in terms of choosing a church. I see a large Korean population as a positive thing.

The primary reason for this last assertion, though, was succinctly captured by the following statement:

One thing I want to point out is that the time I get to spend here with non-Koreans is very little.

In such a social void, it was somewhat natural that Sang would see only the benefits of his relationships with other Koreans.

A primary reason for this relative deficiency was his lack of English proficiency. As U.S. society is by and large a monolingual society, if international non-native students want to become more involved with the culture around them, they must possess a high level of facility with the language. Without this skill set, it was extremely difficult for Sang to gain access to American culture and thereby feel connected to his new home.

An example of the de facto English-only policy in the U.S. and the feelings of isolation that it produced was noted by Sang in his fifth week's journal:

There are so many information map in the road, building, public place and so on. Specially, some places where many people use need a wide range of languages and indicate. However, I can not see other language guidance. It is very strange. Whereas many people have a English ability and have to study English, it looks like needless but in my opinion, it is essential to unfamiliar person who under the emergency situation.

For Sang, the exclusive use of English in the U.S. was a source of stress in his adjustment because of the barrier it represented in his attempt to feel more connected to the society here.

By the midterm interview, Sang had not altered his pattern of interaction, providing no evidence that he had entered into any interpersonal relationships with Americans. While he stated one of his goals as being “...to make American friends, hang

out, and get to know them”, he reported almost no substantial interaction with other Americans except for me, even after half of the semester had passed. In many ways, he was a spectator, relegated to this status by the demands and organization of his classes in the university:

It probably is related to my classes, but my major classes don't give me chances to interact with other students or professors. After class I go home and I am usually busy. There's very little chance to get to know others. I only know you. I sometimes talk with fellow students who I ride the bus with at the same time everyday.

As a consequence, Sang was still in many ways personally positioned on the periphery of the host culture, no closer to an understanding of it than when he had arrived in August.

Because of his family's comparatively greater involvement in the local community, however, Sang did have some opportunities to learn about the host culture:

First of all, my wife goes to Barbara Bush School, so she learns about the community or other information very easily about College Station and all. That made it easier for us to settle down. My child brings home newsletters from the school and we sometimes participate in school events and see how the culture here is. I don't take life here as uncomfortable or bothersome, but I think that it's good here.

Without his family's participation in the local society, it was unlikely that he would have been as positive about his life or the culture here.

Finally, Sang's second interview revealed no abatement in his positive feelings about his near-exclusive interactions with other Koreans as well as a lack of appreciation for the attitude of his civilian countrymen:

There is nothing that makes it hard for me. I hang out with other military officers who are here, so that is good for me. For civilians, I feel that Koreans should be happy to see other Koreans and greet each other and all; however, that's not the

case here. It's more of not saying hi and not wanting to be friends with other Koreans. I heard before that unless you see immigrants, most Korean students have stress about English and they are trying to learn English somehow. This means that many people try to avoid contact with other Koreans because you get to only speak in Korean. I guess it's not really avoidance but indifference when they see you.

The fact that he had reported little to no personal contact with Americans as well as the fraternal nature of the military organization of which he was a member shed light on his opinion while pointing to at least a partial acceptance of his own status as an outsider in U.S. culture.

By the final interview, the limited interpersonal contact Sang had previously reported had not changed. The primary reasons for this dearth of opportunities, according to him, originated with the university because of the demands on his time, teaching method, and preponderance of international students in his classes. Sang described the minimal number of relationships he had made during the semester:

I thought I would make a lot of non-Korean friends from classes, but there are very few friends I made....I have only met three professors and they are everyone I know.

His virtually non-existent interaction with individuals from other countries was in part a consequence of the lecture-style of his classes:

Rather than having discussion-style classes, everything was lectured. Professors would write on the board and show math problems, and the focus was on the solving of those problems which made it more difficult to have open-ended discussions...I thought that there would be conversations, discussions, and the presentation of opinions based on readings and other knowledge. I would say something more interactive. ...[B]ecause my major is industrial engineering, it was all about lecture, math, homework, and exam results...My classes were all about just listening and there were no dynamics between classmates at all.

In addition, Sang pointed to the majority presence of international students in his classes as another reason why he had made no inroads towards establishing contact with them or with members of the host culture:

...there are a lot of other Asians. There are many Koreans and Indians. If they're all by themselves, maybe mingling is easier. Yet, the fact that there are people from their own country sitting next to them, it is rather difficult to get out of the comfort zone and talk with others...Making American friends and being invited over would be a rare case.

After a fifteen-week semester, Sang's accounts of his restricted connections in the classroom indicated that he was socially marginalized.

His continued remoteness from interpersonal interaction with Americans led to the strengthening in Sang's attitude towards the presence of other Koreans from when he first arrived in August to December:

When people apply for colleges in the U.S., there are some who try to avoid places where there are many Koreans. Their approach is that if they live amongst many non-Koreans, they would learn English faster and going to America together with other Koreans would not help improving their English. That's what I thought as well, but after I came here, I never thought of that. On the other hand, I could ask for advice and get help from fellow Koreans, so I didn't feel as lonely. People helped me out getting an apartment, a car, and other things. I would say they are very helpful.

As a consequence of what had transpired in the university and his turn towards citizens from his own country, Sang did not directly learn much about the interpersonal norms of U.S. culture over the course of the semester, implying that there were still challenges in this area to which he had yet to encounter and adapt.

For Kwang, establishing social contacts with members of the host culture was a goal from the outset. In the first interview, however, he reported that he only had interactions with people in his major—his advisor and other researchers in particular—

and other members of the Korean community. In an attempt to broaden his exposure to members of the host culture, Kwang mapped out a strategy for coping with the positive and negative aspects of dealings with other Koreans in College Station.

Kwang was aware that “there are both aspects” to relying on other Koreans during his adjustment to U.S. culture. On the one hand, he asserted that he could more readily acquire knowledge of how the culture worked here as well as receive assistance from his countrymen:

In terms of a positive aspect, I can learn about the systems here more easily... There are Korean people who helped me out. When I first came here, I didn't have a car and I didn't know how things work here. I couldn't even go to a grocery store. I got rides from some people.

On the other hand, Kwang was wary of the fact that spending too much time with other Koreans “...would not help too much for me to learn American culture...” as “...Koreans only speak Korean to each other.” So as to avoid this outcome, he reported his plan for allocating his interpersonal time among Americans and Koreans:

I set a timeline. Until the end of the year, I'll be alone. During that time, 70% of my time will not be spent with Korean people. The remaining 30% can be used to set foundations for relationships with Koreans. When my wife comes, the portion of time that I spend with Koreans will increase, especially since I have a child.

In sum, Kwang's responses throughout the first interview signaled a willingness to establish interpersonal relationships with Americans, no where more evident than in the following statement:

I just want to have a friend who can have direct communication with me.

This initial desire to manage his relationships with Koreans and Americans reflected his appreciation of the importance of social connections for easing his transition into U.S. culture.

At the midterm interview, however, Kwang's frustration with his relative inability to improve his English and thereby increase his amount of social connectedness with Americans was noticeable. In an attempt to remedy the discomfort he felt because of his English ability, outside of the university, Kwang attended an American and a Korean church. Nevertheless, he described his disappointment at the ineffectiveness of his efforts to become more proficient with English, and thus more socially connected, through his church conversation partner:

At first, I thought the conversation partner would be beneficial for me because I have many chance to speak English with him to know more about English culture. But this thinking was just only optimistic thinking.

It's difficult to improve my English by talking with a conversation partner because I have not enough time to meet my conversation partner and sometimes we meet only every couple of weeks, but of course we talked about whatever in English. I can't improve my English in such situations because when I speak English, such as wrong or right expressions, I want him to talk to me sometimes when I say a wrong expression and teach me the right expression. But there's no feedback. Only just I talked English, that's all. I listen to his speaking, that's all. So it's difficult to improve English. I think the best way is to read English conversations in books. So, I try to remember some statement, whatever. It will be better to use the situation in my memory when I meet people.

Kwang's departure from his initial plan meant that his already limited opportunities to interact with Americans had been reduced, further compromising his capacity to develop an understanding of the behavioral and social norms of the host culture.

In the classroom as well, he did not relate having any meaningful chances to communicate with Americans even though he was surrounded by them. Through humor, he described this fact:

...I always met Americans in the classroom. My classmates on both sides of me are Americans, a man and a woman...Just kidding.

His disappointment with his chances to interact with members of the host culture on more than a cursory level was clear.

As a consequence of this predicament, Kwang's stated that he would only solicit assistance from Americans as a last resort:

...First of all, I solve them with Korean students. In the Korean group, we can't solve some problems and then I go to international students. I am taking one class in which there is only one Korean. If I have some problems, I'll try to ask my American classmate. Sometimes I'm trying to ask my teachers.

This ordering of Koreans, internationals, and Americans, respectively, revealed his reluctance to engage with members of the host culture after two months.

Finally, Kwang's formerly balanced opinion of the efficacy of interacting with other Koreans was replaced by a more negative one. On the one hand, he still found some positive aspects to report:

...Basically there are many new Korean students this year, so of course I got a lot of help from them and from pastors, from any other Korean Christians. They gave me information about this area such as hospitals, kindergarten, a site to study English for my wife, and whatever.

However, Kwang spoke more about the drawbacks of living with other Koreans and of the implications of his marital status on the topic of his conversations with his countrymen:

Living in the same place with many Koreans is not so good; it will be better if I am alone. If I am alone, I will ask for help if I want some help, but in this situation, such as in my apartment, I didn't need any help so far; rather I gave my help to some Koreans.

Kwang's frustration at the quantity of his interactions with other Koreans reflected his dissatisfaction with his inability to improve his English, and in the process, his relationships with members of the host culture.

By the final interview, Kwang revealed that he had made some progress in establishing meaningful social bonds outside of the classroom through his attendance in a volunteer organization of a local church. As described in the Religiosity section, the International House gave him the opportunity to learn English and meet Americans and international students while engaged in recreational activities. However, Kwang reported that he "...*didn't go all that much...*" because of his academic demands.

Inside of the classroom, however, Kwang's impersonal interactions with his classmates had caused him to become far less favorably inclined to making the effort to foster bonds:

The most interaction occurs in class, only in class during the group project time, but there isn't any special interaction not related to class. We only met to finish our team project. There isn't any enjoyment from meetings with American people and sometimes I don't like to meet some people because some people are very cold and they don't say hi. There are people like this, so I didn't like meeting them and doing work together. This applies not only to Americans but Koreans as well. I just want people to be friendly when I say hi, but they say nothing. I was kind of angry because I said hi, but there's no hi back.

While unwilling to brand all Americans as inconsiderate, Kwang was of the opinion that a substantial minority of them did not extend to him any measure of understanding of the challenges that speaking in English posed for him:

It depends on the person. Thirty percent are not polite but other people are very kind and polite to me. Some people understand my situation. I'm an international student and I have some English problem and they're very kind. They understand me a lot and I am thankful for them. I didn't necessarily ignore the 30% of the people who were not so nice, but I just did a typical greeting; that's about it.

With the minimal number of times that Kwang had to interact with Americans, the veracity of this percentage remained unchallenged.

In regards to interacting with other Koreans, Kwang maintained a level of cautiousness about the beneficial aspects of this action:

...I think that in some ways it is useful. In general, it's useful for me to meet many people, but I never tried to actively seek relationships with Koreans. It's more likely that if I meet Koreans a lot, we would talk about needless things, chatting, or drinking, so I don't like it.

His wariness of communicating with his countrymen, when considered alongside the limited opportunities he had for interactions with Americans, implied that he was disassociated from not only members of his own culture but also those in the host culture.

Finally, Kwang reflected during his last interview on how he had to adjust his initial goals to engage the culture here because of the requirements of his classes:

At the beginning, my goal is 50% for study and the other 50% is to learn English and American culture. That was my first purpose when I arrived here, but with passing times, I realized because there's not enough time to consider things such as American culture or making friends or a lot of things...

Consequently, he related how disconnected he felt to U.S. culture as well as his opinion of the degree of adaptation he had undergone in the semester:

[Spreading his hands wide]...My point is this is American culture and this is my own culture. I think my position is now this, my own culture. So this means I didn't adapt to American culture; I'm just living by my own ways...I think there's no special change in my case.

Kwang also described how he was not even sure whether learning about the host culture was essential given his academic goals:

I don't know exactly. I'm not sure if it's necessary or not. For now, when I'm living here, my attitude is about studying well here. I didn't feel I tried to learn about American culture. No, I didn't have time because the priority in my case is only studying faster...I have to go my own country, so that was my priority, so I didn't feel that I needed to learn the culture here...I didn't convert my mind or my daily life.

In sum, Kwang's experiences during the semester, one after which he felt no closer to U.S. culture, had convinced him that the effort required to learn more about the ways of Americans was not essential, especially given the extreme importance of his academic goals and plan to return to Korea.

Finally, in Hong's first interview, he repeated his desire to have multiple opportunities to meet Americans and also to make friends several times, but he felt, like Sang, that this goal was "...very difficult" to obtain. He realized that interpersonal interaction with members of U.S. culture was vital for his adjustment, expressing his "...wish that there are a lot of opportunities to meet American people" and his longing "to try to encounter U.S. culture" by attending an American church where he could make friendships.

However, throughout the semester, Hong was largely unsuccessful in his attempts to bridge the behavioral and social gaps between the culture in Korea and the U.S. In large measure, this failure was a result of his lack of confidence in his English ability, the presence of other Koreans, and the university's demands on his time. As a consequence, Hong's initially stated goals from the beginning of the study still remained

his goals at the end, signifying that he had yet to learn much about the interpersonal norms of U.S. culture.

One important obstacle for Hong was the use of English as the medium of interpersonal interactions in the U.S. This factor gave him reasons to doubt whether he could in fact achieve his stated goal of communicating with Americans:

...To make friends, I should be able to speak, but neither can I understand them nor can they understand me, so it's very difficult.

Nevertheless, Hong expressed his recognition of the need to improve his English skills so that he could become more integrated in the host culture. In spite of his uncertainty as to whether or not the local community had programs for international students, he was confident that programs similar to a Bible study he had discovered existed:

...I am not sure what the school or the community does. There's a Bible study I found that gathers international students and teaches English, so I am guessing there is a program to help us. I am sure there are several other programs that the community offers to people. They should help compared to when I try to do something by myself.

Hong's utterances reflected his awareness of the need to improve his English by establishing interpersonal connections with Americans.

A second impediment was the large Korean community. Initially, Hong was ambivalent about turning to fellow Koreans for assistance. On the one hand, he felt the presence of his countrymen was beneficial "*because Koreans who have lived here know useful information I need and it helps me adjust better.*" Hong added a specific example of the support other Koreans had provided him and his mother upon his arrival:

...When I first came here with my mom, I didn't have a car, so we couldn't buy groceries. We didn't have a bed or a dining table, so we had to sleep and eat on

the floor. A Korean person who took care of me gave me a ride to go shopping for food, furniture, etc. He also helped me buy a car.

In addition, Hong stated his motivation for selecting a Korean roommate:

Because he and I are in the same major and new students, we have very common opinions about things in the university.

As his utterances revealed, the practical and social advantages of utilizing his countrymen were useful for Hong in his initial adjustment.

On the other hand, Hong was aware from the outset that by resorting to Koreans he was potentially making his transition into U.S. culture more problematic, especially in terms of his understanding of interpersonal norms:

... We have to speak Korean. It's not good. We have to improve our English skill. It's not good for us.

I don't know about later on though, maybe it won't be helpful. I will be adjusting to culture and starting my studies here. Right now in terms of settling, Korean people can help me, but from now on I will be facing a different situation.

A little over a month later, in his fifth journal entry, in fact, he expressed his frustration with his primarily Korean social ties and the effects of these relationships on the atrophying of his English ability:

Nowadays, I usually do not use English. I live with my roommate and other Korean students all day, so I do not need to speak English... That is my big concern nowadays. Even I am staying in the United States. I do not speak English all day. It cannot be understood by any body. I think that my english skill is lower and lower everyday because I do not use it.

Hong's inability to improve his English skills and to foster social connections with Americans was not an unforeseen outcome; nevertheless, this failure impeded his attempts to familiarize himself to U.S. culture.

By the second interview, Hong's initial eagerness to engage in interactions with Americans had evaporated, being replaced by the reality of his status as not only a first-semester graduate student but also as a member of a large contingent of Koreans. In the first case, he stated that he would have to postpone his desire to discover more about U.S. culture because of the demands of the university:

Right now, I am willing to learn the culture, but I don't have enough time, so when things get better, I will try harder. Maybe during vacations, I will focus on learning the culture with my roommate.

In the second case, as a consequence of his busy schedule as well as the presence of other Koreans, Hong found that, in spite of his initial intentions, his interpersonal contact with Americans was miniscule at the midterm:

I talked to professors a few times via email. I have a friend who takes three classes with me, so I say hi and ask how the exam and homework are, those types of questions, so I don't know if it's real friendship. I have almost no interaction.

On the contrary, he asserted that the amount of time spent with other Koreans made him feel as if he had never left Korea:

I spend most of the time with Koreans. When I go into classroom, most of the people aren't Koreans, but the people I am close to, the ones I study with are Koreans. All the others I don't interact with, so I feel my exposure to others is very limited...Some of my friends concentrate more on making friends and learning English, but I feel that academics is more important because it's the first semester. My grades are important and I value it more at this time. It's America here, but I feel like it's Korea. I eat lunch with my friends. We all eat Korean food here. We are in America and I feel like I am at a Korean restaurant. I feel that a lot.

Hong's response was revealing in that it exhibited his belief that doing well academically or making American friends were mutually exclusive choices that he had made; he did not think it was possible to do both.

Hong's meager amount of exchanges after over two months in the U.S. was a sign of someone whose dealings with Americans were cursory at best. Whether his gradual shift towards more and more interpersonal relationships with fellow Koreans was a product of his academic environment, English skills, evidence of the general Korean tendency to associate with other Koreans, or all of these factors, is unknown. However, the fact remained that nearly all of his time was spent with Koreans and that he was aware of the consequences:

...Let's say I have all non-Korean friends, I will learn English better, but my pace will be slower since I have to understand others, eventually frustrating others as well. Now, speaking only Korean allows me to catch up and learn things quicker. That's beneficial. It's disadvantageous in that I become more comfortable around Koreans and speak more Korean and less English, plus I don't get to make non-Korean friends.

As his words evidenced, halfway through the semester, Hong had somewhat willingly and unwillingly abandoned his initial plan to establish relationships with Americans.

Nevertheless, he was not concerned by this development. In fact, Hong was increasingly confident that the advantages of spending the majority of his time with other Koreans outweighed the disadvantages:

I don't get lonely and we can help out each other when studying. People are good at different things, too. For academics, it's very helpful.

The gradual reliance on communication with other Koreans by Hong was in some ways considered the lesser of two evils. In spite of the loss of opportunities to establish bonds with members of U.S. culture, the benefits of personal contact with members of one's own culture had come to overshadow the known drawbacks.

By the final interview, Hong's movement towards more and more social interaction with Koreans and away from connections with Americans continued. While he still felt the demands of the university had severely limited his opportunities to establish interpersonal relationships with Americans, he also believed that he needed to have made more of an effort:

...I myself want to achieve my academic goals. I need to put effort in, but I don't. That's the problem. I focused too much on the academics, so I hardly tried. Before the semester started, I went to Bible study for a conversation partner, but it was time-consuming for me, so I quit in the middle and I couldn't get back into it since I felt bad. I have some friends who invest their time into those activities, but I don't.

Nevertheless, Hong's words describing his degree of social connectedness to the culture in the U.S after one semester were revealing:

I feel like it's still far away, yet I feel natural about it now... I am now very used to it... Yes, I am very comfortable... This shouldn't happen though.

Whereas on the one hand he was aware that he was far removed from a deep understanding of U.S. culture and that this cultural isolation should not have persisted, he was not disturbed by this development. Hong had decided that, based on his experiences during his first semester as well as on his belief in his level of comfort with U.S. culture, learning to cope with the interpersonal differences in the host culture was not necessary.

As a consequence of this interactional pattern and attitude, Hong had few American friends and did not feel it essential to redress the imbalance in the proportion of time he allocated to Koreans and Americans:

...I talked to professors for questions, but no others.

I don't see anything bad about meeting Koreans... In terms of studying, I met many students who came before me, so they helped me out a lot. It was beneficial for my living too...I go play tennis with Koreans. I also go to a small church group. I like it because I can hear news and helpful information about life here.

With a preponderance of his time spent communicating with individuals from his country, it was uncertain whether Hong would be able to foster a sense of connectedness with members of the host culture.

He did relate his awareness of the need to return to his initial plan to "...make more friends..." and thereby increase his English proficiency between the semesters, however. Hong described his awareness of the connection between English and encounters with U.S. culture:

During the winter break, I will go to Bible study. I have friends who have conversation partners. They meet and have meals together, so I'm interested in starting that and continuing on the next semester...If I become more fluent, it's more likely that I will talk to more people and I can get exposed to the culture here.

Given the limited opportunities he had or made during the previous five months to communicate with Americans, though, it remained unclear whether his aim to do so during the intersession would ameliorate this imbalance and thus facilitate his integration into the host culture.

Personal Outlook

As revealed to a limited extent in several journal entries and extensively in the interviews, the personal outlook of the three participants played a noteworthy role in mitigating the effects of culture shock. While still subject to interpersonal, psychological, and/or physiological difficulties, Sang and Kwang were capable of coping with them because of their respective attitudes and personalities. They both at various times and to

varying degrees exhibited traits that served them well in their respective transitions into life in the U.S.

In particular, Sang's personal outlook was the most influential factor in assisting him with the challenges he faced adapting to the culture in the U.S. His sense of duty, determination, and reflective capacity, all linked to his status as an officer in the Korean military, instilled in him a sense of responsibility for not just himself but others as well. Nevertheless, by the final interview, there was evidence that his attitude about the challenges he had faced during the study had waned, causing him to temper his initial optimism. Kwang's attitude, like Sang's, was also influential in his adjustment to the host culture. From the outset of the study until its conclusion, he did not waver in his conviction that he could and would ultimately succeed in his adjustment to the U.S.

Hong, on the other hand, when faced with situations that challenged his understanding at the beginning of the study, at times displayed frustration or even anger at the unexpected event. As such, his adjustment to U.S. culture was initially stunted, delayed, or halted completely by his inability to consider the event from all angles and to see the challenge as a learning opportunity. However, as the latter journal entries and interviews revealed, Hong began to consider an alternative perspective and to express curiosity about the habits of Americans, signaling a potential transformation of his mindset to one characterized by a more positive orientation towards the culture in the U.S. It was this capacity to change his personal outlook that was revealed to be a substantial factor in his adjustment to the challenges of U.S. culture. In spite of a self-

professed propensity for inflexibility and close-mindedness, his “...*great desire to learn other cultures...*” proved to be a more influential factor over the course of the study.

Attitude / Personality³⁰

Sang was self-assured as to his ability to adjust to life in the U.S. at the beginning of the semester. In his second journal entry, he described his own physiological difficulties and his belief in his ability to prevail over them:

My second week of classes has been a good. The classes however, are so hard to me because of my insufficient background. For all that, I'm so happy now and feel so good. I think that I'm a student with potentialities.

Nowadays I feel so tired and sleepy because of my hard class and to be solved problem. I cannot understand professor's speaking, particularly Chinese professor (STAT 610), then I have to study hard with textbook. However, I believe that it is possible to understand in the near future. I feel well everyday and I want to it continue.

In the first interview as well, Sang's personal outlook was indicative of an individual prepared to cope with the culture shocks he would potentially encounter during his time in the U.S. At our first meeting, for example, he described his eagerness in the face of the unknown culture:

...So when I came here, I was very excited for my family to live in a new environment and culture while getting an advanced education and learning English.

Given that these initial feelings of excitement are often espoused by most sojourners upon arrival in another culture, these comments were perhaps not particularly remarkable or unforeseen. However, when considered alongside Sang's assessment of

³⁰ As described in the literature review in Chapter II, the distinction between attitude and personality is a difficult one to establish and not the primary focus of this study. As such, these two influential factors will be combined in one heading. Where a difference is clear, then one or the other term will be used.

his concerns and perceived personal weaknesses in the same interview, more credence could be lent to his views as symbolic of more than just an initial euphoric utterance.

In one such example, he related his capacity to deal with his unease about his ability to use English effectively:

...rather than being very worried, I am confident that I am in an environment where I can be in contact with people and learn English better. So, I don't have too much of a problem with it.

As his response reflected, Sang was aware that he could neither remain apart from U.S. culture nor solve all problems on his own; he knew that after careful consideration, flexibility and openness to new ways of thinking could provide him with the opportunity for greater integration in U.S. culture and the solutions he desired, respectively:

When I was in Korea, I thought that I was flexible. However, my family and people around me tell me that I was very strict while I am in the military, so I try to work on it. Because the culture here is very different, if I persist in being inflexible, I would isolate myself. For example, beating someone is bad and it is taken as bad in both Korea and the U.S., so I won't tolerate violence here. However, American culture says that I can wear my shoes on a carpet even though I think it is extremely dirty. Then, I am somewhat willing to change. In that sense, I am flexible.

Um, I am open. When I do a routine job and let's say the effectiveness is only 70%, then there is still 30% more room for improvement. Then, I would try to think of ways to improve, rather than innovate completely new ways to do the job. I am very willing to accept others' creative opinions and ideas that I couldn't think of. However, if I know something is wrong with the idea, I don't blindly accept it. Anyway, I am willing to be open.

Sang's personal outlook was indicative of an individual who was conscious of the fact that he would face challenges during his sojourn and was prepared to maturely reflect on any changes the host culture might necessitate.

In another example from the first interview, Sang explained his approach to dealing with ambiguous and stressful situations, respectively:

...There are people who make decisions real quick and easy, yet I belong to the group who consider and compare options. I tend to rely on information.

I can control my mind. I am a pretty calm person, so when I face stressful situations, I tend to sit down. Lose my temper? I write down what the problem is. While I am writing about it, ideas of why this happens and what to do next come up. Being pessimistic isn't healthy for me. Just as you take headache medicine when your head hurts, I invest time to find the cause and try to control my emotion.

His description of his contemplative and composed attitude was evidence of a personal outlook that was well-suited for managing cross-cultural ordeals.

Finally, as briefly described above, Sang's personal outlook was in many ways fashioned by his experiences in the Korean military. A large proportion of his responses reflected the influence of this training in molding him into an individual equipped with the attitude and personality to cope with the stress of adjusting to a foreign culture. Sang credited the military with having "...shaped [his] inner being" by instilling in him the following traits:

It makes me strong and patient. Problems can also show what my ability is and what kind of training I need to carry out such missions to become better and stronger. These are the lessons I got from the military. Essentially, it teaches me to excel and go beyond the current situation and prepare for the future and the next stage. It provides vitality to my life. That could in the end give me a feeling that I had the right life and I feel excited about it.

In sum, Sang's responses to my questions in the first interview illustrated his optimism about the transition he was only just beginning in August.

At the midterm interview, Sang's comments provided evidence that he had been challenged by the cultural demands, in particular by the use of English and by the university requirements:

When I got very stressed, I used to think, "Why did I choose this? This is too hard on me."

Nevertheless, his fortitude and indomitable spirit allowed him to retain his positive outlook:

Now, the midterm is over and I see how I can study and do things. So overcoming the difficulty has given me confidence...This difficulty gave me a sense of achievement...I want to challenge myself and overcome this difficulty...Yet, this makes me livelier. I don't get depressed or angry. I actively respond to my situation right now.

Halfway through the semester, Sang's words evinced his determination to view his struggles with the language and the university as opportunities to test himself, indicating the importance of his personal outlook in his adjustment to U.S. culture.

In addition, the influence of Sang's military education once again was reflected in his description of the responsibility he felt for doing well in the U.S.:

A soldier works to give up his/her life for the country. All military personnel are assumed to risk their lives for missions and the country. No matter how difficult the task is I have already vowed to give up my life. Coming here is not easy, but this is my duty and mission here, a challenging one. This mentality helps to give me a sense of direction and motivation.

...For me, grades reflect the evaluation of my carrying out of my duties. There's no other way for the military to tell whether I am doing my job hard or not and my grades are the only basis for evaluating me. If my grades are bad, it will be taken as I am not serving my country by fulfilling my duties.

While this level of accountability could have been burdensome for other individuals, it nonetheless was one that Sang was not only used to but welcomed for the challenge it

provided him and the opportunity to help others. As an example of this mindset, he expressed his opinion of his involvement in the study:

When I tell people about coming to the interview and writing journals for this, they think it's too much for me to take along with academics. While I am doing this, I try to be more observant to write my journal entries. If it wasn't for this opportunity, I probably would have just lived without thinking much about anything culturally or in other ways. I want to provide helpful information for Kent's research. So I decided to take some notes on my observations of everyday life here. When I see something here that is different from Korea, I get to think about why that is even though most of my friends don't pay attention to those small things. Also, I can also explain about America better than others since I had speculations, observations, and I gained knowledge. I can help people who want to come to America and give them a good overview of the life here. Thanks for the corrections on journals as well. I'd like to submit them on time and I want to write a lot, but my English ability is still not beyond simple writing. I could write in Korea, but that doesn't look like I put effort in it. This interview is only for a semester, but if there are further investigations later on, I would be glad to participate.

Sang's words exhibited his concern for me and for his fellow Koreans while illustrating his reflective capacity, both examples of a selfless attitude and a desire to learn.

By the end of the semester, however, Sang's positive personal outlook had been battered, in particular by the academic demands he had faced. He professed in his final interview that he was "neutral" about the life he had made over fifteen weeks in the U.S. and even questioned his decision to have come here:

It was my choice to apply for the study abroad program in the military. I had to take an exam for that and it was totally my choice to come here. My wife told me that she likes it very much here. I told her that it might have been better not to come here, maybe it was because of my depressing thoughts nowadays. I wondered a lot about how much this degree would help my military career. While I'm here for two years, my friends in Korea would be building up their careers in the military and I was afraid I would fall behind. If I go back to August, I would still come here, but I would consider it very seriously and not make the decision lightly. Learning about the culture here is great, but the academics are a very difficult area for me.

Sang's words, when compared with his initial responses in the first two interviews and his second journal entry, illustrated how substantially his attitude had been affected over the course of the study.

Nevertheless, his sense of accountability for the consequences of his decisions as well as for his family remained evident, indicating his undiminished desire to persevere. This resolve, while severely tested by the demands of his academic program and his English ability, remained apparent in Sang's fourteenth journal entry:

End of the semester is approaching. I think that many concepts from classes will be helpful in the future. I just wish that exams aren't everything to the studies and I want to be where I am expected to think as a scholar. I want all A's if possible. I study with that goal, but I don't think it's feasible. I will still try my best, maybe I will do better next semester.

Sang's words exhibited the influence of his personal outlook on his willingness to cope with the challenges of U.S. culture--previous, current, and future.

Like Sang, Kwang's positive and resilient attitude was evident throughout his interviews and journal entries. In his first journal entry, for example, he evinced a high level of self-confidence and patience in his ability to overcome his English-related problems:

...I convince that it will be getting better.

He concluded his first entry by describing one of the "factors helping in adjustment to life":

My confidence that I can overcome difficulties

While it is possible that Kwang's conviction in the face of the differences he had begun to encounter in U.S. culture was predictable given the relatively short amount of time he

had spent in the States and thus not an important indicator of his personal outlook, the content of his later journal entries confirmed his initial accounts.

In Kwang's first interview as well, numerous responses to questions posed reflected the fact that his positive personal outlook would potentially play a large role in his adjustment to U.S. culture. In particular, he expressed his acceptance of trials, inquisitive nature, and willingness to adapt to the customs of the host country:

I like challenges unlike most Koreans and I am very curious about what's going on around here.

...I am trying to fit in this culture because I live here...

Kwang elaborated on his desire to familiarize himself to the culture in the U.S., while simultaneously providing evidence of the strength of his own identity:

If I have a purpose to live here for a long time, I should adapt to this environment at least 50% and probably not 100%, maybe more than 50%. I know that even a lot of Korean people who live here for a long time still eat kimchi which represents Korean culture. I am willing to go back to Korea, so that rather than staying away from my culture and blindly adapting to the culture here, I will keep some of my culture.

His mature contemplation of the acculturation to the host culture that he would likely undergo exhibited his willingness to accommodate these differences without losing himself in the process.

Kwang's utterances also showed that he was "...convinced that [he] can survive" in the U.S. and that he felt it was his "...responsibility to understand..." other people and to uncover solutions to problems that might emerge. His straight-forward, pragmatic approach to dealing with issues boded well for his transition into the culture in the States:

If it's not possible, make it work. It's possible; you can do it. You have to do it. You have to solve it.

I haven't encountered any ambiguous situation, but either way, I will ask directly to clear any doubts.

...Some people stress a lot, but I don't in particular. If I need to face a problem and solve it, I will have to do it no matter what, so what's the point of stressing over it. Most issues we face need a little bit of time for a good amount of careful consideration. Also, during that time I can get advice from others. In the end, I didn't get too stressed about any matters, so I am not very afraid of problems.

Rather than avoid or fret over cultural difficulties that he might encounter, Kwang's personal outlook illustrated a courageous and commonsensical method for coping with them.

Specifically, Kwang expressed not just an awareness of the magnitude of one such problem, English, but the desire to tackle this difficulty head-on. He was convinced that "...you can't adjust to the culture if you can't speak English" and that his deficiency with the language made it possible for him to encounter "serious trouble." As a consequence, Kwang articulated a plan to combat this linguistic issue:

...The portion for studying is 30% and for learning about American culture and studying English is 70%.

...I will need to solve the problem by providing deep understanding to the other person. I guess if I can't take care of things with my own ability, I will ask for help from someone who is good at English.

Kwang's words illustrated his appreciation for the challenge that was ahead of him as well as his willingness to solicit assistance from others.

By the second interview, it was apparent from Kwang's responses to my questions that his positive personal outlook had been tested, in particular by the English language. Nevertheless, his determined and optimistic attitude remained intact:

...I can't deny that English is a problem in every course...But the English problem is an essential problem for me before I arrived here...The problem should be overcome in this year.

His words bespoke a stoic response to the challenges he faced, so much so that he felt that he needed to confirm the existence of his own failings:

...I am trying to [overcome challenges] everyday, but sometimes it's difficult to do my thinking...I am human...Always I am trying to do better than now, so I have optimistic thinking, but sometimes I get angry at people; sometimes I am frustrated by little things.

Kwang's unflagging belief in his capacity to rise above any problems through his concerted efforts and in the fact that the future would be better than the present provided proof of the continuing influence of his personal outlook on managing the symptoms of culture shock.

At the end of the study, Kwang's optimism had not waned. In both his thirteenth and fourteenth journal entries, respectively, he conveyed his belief in the fact that things would continue to improve:

...I have a hope getting better more and more than when I first arrive here.

I don't know exactly, but did my best in every class.

In his final interview as well, Kwang reaffirmed his willingness to adapt to the norms of the culture in the U.S.:

I don't know if it's the matter of understanding...Just different ways of doing things. So I would say, the system is your system, but in Korea it's different, so that's it...

Over the five months of the study, Kwang's optimistic and open-minded personal outlook in the face of the cultural challenges he had faced had not wavered, indicating that his attitude had aided him in his adjustment to the host culture.

Most likely as a consequence of his time spent overseas, Hong's personal outlook about the challenges that he would face in the U.S. reflected the desire to learn and the resolve to overcome any difficulties he would encounter either through his own efforts or through assistance from others. By his own admission during the first interview, in spite of not knowing "...*how to learn U.S. culture...*", he wanted "...*to try to encounter U.S. culture.*" Hong recounted how he combated the doubts about his preparedness for life in the U.S. while at Incheon International Airport:

I wasn't exactly ready, but I said it to remind myself and to have a strong determination. I will work hard. Rather than being ready, I thought that I would achieve something here. I tried to think positively rather than being depressed about not being ready.

Finally, he evinced a willingness to seek out the help of others if he could not solve a culture-related problem on his own:

First, I will need to find solutions on my own. However, in this case, I probably have to ask for help by either meeting or calling others...If Koreans don't know the answer, I will have to go to Americans.

Hong even spoke of his readiness to "...*find someone like an expert or counselor*" in the event he fell into a depressed state while in the U.S.³¹

Nevertheless, Hong also admitted to some aspects of his personality that hindered his ability to cope with the phenomenon of culture shock during the period of the study. He described feeling "*stressed out*" in ambiguous situations, preferring instead "*black and white*" answers to his questions. In addition, Hong acknowledged his rigidity and somewhat myopic view of differences:

³¹ As alluded to earlier, this admission was somewhat surprising given the cultural prohibitions against sharing one's problems with individuals outside of the inner circle of friends.

I like to try new things, but I don't think I am that flexible. I am more close-minded...I try to be open to cultures. If I am in a Korean cultural setting, I can't take how Americans are. If you are in the U.S., you should follow the American way. I am putting forth an effort to understand, but I don't think I am flexible.

In spite of his recognition of these potential impediments to his adjustment to the host culture, some of his journal entries expressed an unwillingness to try to accommodate the different norms he would likely find here.

As an example, Hong's second entry related his frustration and anger with his difficulty in purchasing beer:

I had very embarrassing and angry event in the preceding week. On Monday, I went to HEB to buy some beer with my friend. After we picked a pack of beers, I and my friend were about to pay money, but in the regular counters, there are so many people lining up. Thus, we went to self-payment. When I scanned the beer, the machine said that I needed to contact with clerk. So, I went to her and showed my passport, and then I accepted for payment. Thus, I thought that we would buy beer, and enjoyed it with my friend. However, after I scanned all items, my friend got his wallet, and took his debit card. Actually, we shared Bank of America debit card together, because we are roommate, and we wanted to share the same card, which makes us convenient. At that time, the clerk reached us, and she took beer from us, and she said we could not buy beer, because my friend was about to pay for beer.

I and my friend was very embarrassed, so I said, Ok, I will pay for it, I have a debit card.. However, she refused it. Again, I persuaded her that my friend also is 26 years old. However, nothing changed. After all, we could not take a pack of beer, so I alone tried to buy beer. With a new pack of beer, I lined up for counter. On my turn, I again refused to buy beer. I was very angry why I cannot buy item. A clerk who had a lot of muscle reached me and said, "you and your friend tried to cheat our clerk. We cannot sell beer to you."³²

³² When this event is placed in a Korean context, his feelings of having been ill-treated are more understandable. While Korea does have laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol to minors, this restriction is rarely if ever put into practice. I can recall, for example, standing in line at a convenience store and watching a young child purchase *soju*, a strong Korean alcohol similar to *saki* or vodka. I have never seen a vendor request identification before selling alcohol in Korea. In general, alcohol occupies a much more central role in most social activities in Korea than it does in the U.S.; as such, there are relatively fewer constraints, legal or otherwise, on its sale and consumption.

Hong was unable or unwilling to understand the store's policy at that moment. Due to what he reported had transpired shortly thereafter in another store, the illogicality of his ordeal increased:

I would not like to get beer there any more. Thus, we went to EZ shop near my house to get some beer. However, the clerk in EZ shop did not let me show even my passport. Thus, I asked him why you do not ask to show ID. He said that I looked very old, so ID was not necessary. The situation was very absurd. I cannot understand it until now.

Hong's confusion and feelings of having been mistreated, while understandable given the lax enforcement of the law, were indicative of an individual who found it difficult to accept differences or to tolerate proceedings that ran counter to his expectations.

By the fourth week's journal entry, however, Hong's queries displayed an interest in understanding the actions of members of the host culture:

Third, we played the billiard and sang a song in karaoke, and drank beers. However, I do not know what American students do after exams. What do they do? Just drink a beer?

His desire to know more about the behavior of American students was evidence of an emerging sense of curiosity, implying a greater willingness to appreciate differences if and when they occurred.

By the midterm interview, Hong had struggled with adapting to the demands of U.S. culture, but he remained positive about his ability to adjust:

I think it will get better. I don't know how long it will take, but I am sure it will be fine. I am optimistic.

Nevertheless, the time constraints he was under because of his classes led to his deferment of a "...focus on learning the culture" until after the semester. Like Sang and Kwang, all of his efforts were consumed by his pursuit of his academic goals. Hong's

single-minded philosophy illustrated a belief that culture, like a book, was an item that could be opened and closed at will during the learning process, instead of viewing it as the all-encompassing structure that it was.

Finally, Hong's responses in his last interview provided evidence of how the alteration in his personal and cultural outlook over the course of the semester had positively impacted his experience:

When I first went shopping, I should've asked for directions and information from others when I couldn't find what I wanted, but I couldn't dare to do that. Now, I know that people are very kind, so I can easily ask others. Such things have changed.

I think I am more relaxed. Before I was always pressured by time and other circumstances, maybe because I was in Seoul, but I have a freer mind. For example, I go to the library after I relax for a bit even though I feel like I can't take a rest. My attitude has changed a lot.

From an initial personality characterized by timidity and stress to one marked by courage and peace of mind, Hong's capacity to adapt to the differences between Korean and U.S. cultures was an influential factor in his adjustment.

Demographic and other Background Factors

To varying degrees for each participant, six demographic variables were identified as influential factors in helping or hindering them in their respective adjustments to life in the U.S. These variables included marital status (including the family situation), length of stay, religiosity, previous international experience, gender, and age. It is important to note, however, that the failure to directly or indirectly mention one of these factors by a participant did not necessarily imply that it did not play a major role in his ability to cope with the cultural demands. Rather, this silence may have been

evidence of a variable that remained at the subconscious level, and as such, could not be offered up for reflection. In particular, the age and gender of each participant, given that these factors were not ones that any of the participants had chosen, may have been difficult to carefully consider. In addition, the fact that Sang, Kwang, and Hong were all males and only five years apart in age (32, 30, and 27, respectively) provided neither a female perspective nor a substantially younger or older opinion. In contrast, marital status and religiosity, for example, were variables that existed because the participant had selected them; consequently, they were perhaps more readily discussed and contrasted with their respective opposites.

Marital status (including family)

The marital and family status of each participant was shown to be an influential factor in their respective adjustments to the culture in the U.S. in their interviews and journal entries. The direction and magnitude of the impact of this factor, though, was somewhat dissimilar for the Sang, Kwang, and Hong owing to their differing statuses and changed over the course of the study (see Table 2). Nevertheless, these participants were each in their own way affected by this demographic variable.

Sang's wife and children were not only a potent resource, but they were also motivation for his desire to succeed in the host culture. For Kwang, in spite of the anxiety he felt because of the semester-long separation from his wife and child, the future reunion with his family was a source of strength for him when coping with U.S. culture. For Hong, his single status provided the impetus for associating with other

Koreans, thereby denying him the opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships with members of the host culture.

Sang's three interviews and journal entries illustrated the important role that his wife and two young children played in his adjustment to U.S. culture on an emotional and practical level. In the first interview, for example, he described the benefits he reaped from their presence here:

I can save much time for my study, and I do not feel lonely.

He elaborated on how his time was spared by listing the help he received from his wife in the preparation of clothing, food, and other duties related to the upkeep of the house. For Sang, however, the advantages of having his family with him in the U.S. did not just involve housekeeping duties. He found in their presence a feeling of unity, shared purpose, and sense of pleasure for the opportunities they would share in the host culture:

Because my family is here, I am happy and we can depend on each other. Be the moral support for one another. Also, as a parent, I get to push myself too because I see my responsibility for my family and I get motivated to work harder.

Sang's words illustrated the essential function of his family in his adjustment to U.S. culture through their provision of succor for him.

With that said, the added burden of integrating himself into U.S. culture as well as his family was a concern for Sang. In Korean culture, traditionally, even if the woman is highly educated, the man assumes near-total responsibility for providing for the needs of his wife and children outside of the home. As such, Sang was initially concerned by the need to care for everyone in his family in his new environment. However, he

described in his sixth journal entry his happiness upon finding services in the community for his family:

My wife had been going to Babara Bush school. It is possible that because of their child care system. Of course it is free. I have two children. My daughter goes to Pre-K from 12:00 to 3:00 P.M. However, my son is too young to go to school. If they not offer child care she does not anything because of my son. She is very happy to have a chance to study in English. Moreover, she also gets a chance to make friend and their cultures. It is a very help to foreigners. I appreciate their kindness.

The connection between Sang's adjustment to U.S. culture and that of his family was by all accounts, indistinguishable, indicating that his wife and children had facilitated his involvement in the host culture and compensated to some extent for his own disappointment and frustration at his inability to do so.

Approximately eight weeks later, Sang's opinion of the positive influence that his wife and children had on his adjustment was unchanged in his second interview:

It's great. My family is very helpful. They let me concentrate on my studies. As I mentioned before, if I get sick or have a hard time when I am by myself and lonely, that would be very bad, but my family cheers me up, and when I think about my kids, it's very soothing.

The comfort of having other people with him during the study was beneficial for easing the loneliness that he felt.

In Sang's eighth journal entry as well, written around the same time as the midterm interview, he expressed his appreciation for the family-oriented culture in the U.S. as compared to Korea:

I feel that the drinking culture is healthy here. Even considering that this is a college town, there are few bars. In Korea, not only there are many bars, but the whole nightlife culture is well developed. Countless Karaoke, DVD parlors, etc. provide good entertainment. However, Americans tend to be more family oriented, so that they go home early after work to exercise or spend time with the

family. I see a lot of homes not lit at night, so I wonder if the whole family went out somewhere. I think that people are more active in the morning. Of course it is a healthy lifestyle, but I wonder what the American male population thinks of the lack of nightlife.

The important role of alcohol, marriage, family, and patriarchy in Korea was indicated in this journal entry. This combination of factors has led to a family structure that in many ways is quite different from the American equivalent.³³

Sang's fourteenth journal entry, however, written before the end of the semester, provided some evidence that the presence of his family with him in the U.S. had not always been entirely pleasant. Given the academic demands placed upon him, he felt guilty about his lack of involvement with his family:

I invested a lot of time for studying, so I neglected my family. Other than exercising time, I was at school and even when I was home, I didn't share time with my family with an excuse of studying...As long as some of my goals are reached in academics, I want my family to enjoy life here. That's my goal for next semester.

The responsibility to not only succeed in the university but to provide for his family was alternatively a source of motivation and stress for him in his adjustment to U.S. culture.

³³ The relatively greater independence of the nuclear unit as well as the economic equality between spouses in the U.S. provides part of the context for Sang's musings. Married Korean men spend a substantial amount of their free time with colleagues and friends rather than their families. In particular, the consumption of alcohol for many married males in Korea after work or on the weekends is generally accepted as the price for how hard and how long they are working to provide for their families. In addition, the choice whether to get married and have children, which in the U.S. is almost entirely decided by the man and the woman on the basis of love and feelings of compatibility, is in Korea much more of a family decision. In many ways, marrying and producing offspring is a duty. In such a culture, some males believe that the satisfaction of these responsibilities means that they are freer to relax. Finally, the division of labor in a common Korean family dictates that the men work outside of the home and the women work inside of it. This arrangement means that Korean men generally take a less active role in the upbringing of their children as compared to their American counterparts. As such, Sang's wonder at American males' (rather than females' as well) opinion of the relative lack of nightlife was understandable and telling, indicative of his recognition of the differences in the family in the U.S. and in Korea.

Nevertheless, in his final interview, Sang once more described the emotional sustenance his family had supplied him as well as the practical benefits. In addition, he expressed his appreciation for the sense of responsibility that providing for them had engendered in him:

They helped me not to be so lonely in this environment. When I realize that I am my child's dad, I am motivated to persevere through the difficulties. If I am single here, I would have to care about eating and clothing, but my wife provided new clothes, food, and everything else so I didn't have to waste my time. Talking to my family lets me relax a lot as well. Of course, it is possible that the studying time decreases as I spend more time with my family, but being together helped me get through the semester.

In spite of the possible reduction in time spent studying, Sang's utterances made it apparent that his adjustment to U.S. culture was assisted by the presence of his family.

For Kwang, his separation from his pregnant wife and two-year-old son affected him throughout the period of the study. In his first journal entry, he wrote:

Factors hindering in adjustment to life Loneliness according to separating from my wife and baby

Of course, these feelings were not culturally-specific. For any individual who has gone to a foreign country to live for an extended period of time, the probability of loneliness due to the sudden separation from family and friends is high. However, in Korea, given the communal nature of the society and the import of marriage, these emotions were likely felt more acutely and more often than they would have been for many Americans

in a similar situation, for example. My own experiences in Korea attested to this fundamental difference.³⁴

In Korean culture, being alone is synonymous with being lonely. Most Koreans have an almost pathological aversion to individuality. A group mentality has been instilled through their families, schools, living arrangements, and even geography. As such, Koreans eschew most things of an individual nature in favor of communal activities. This preference extends from the relatively inconsequential, such as always eating together, to the more consequential, such as marriage and illustrates the important role matrimony and family played for Kwang as well as Sang and Hong in dealing with the much more individualistic culture in the U.S.³⁵

The three interviews with Kwang were also filled with references to his loneliness and sadness because his wife and child were not with him, providing further evidence that this factor was influential in hindering the ease of his adjustment to U.S. culture. For example, in his first interview in August, he described the joys of married life as well as the pain of his separation from his family:

³⁴ While at times I would reminisce or long to see my family, this was not an all-consuming emotion. For many Koreans around me, my ability to remain separated from loved ones for months at a time was not really looked upon with respect for my independent nature; rather, I could see the confusion, concern, and even doubts in their eyes about my priorities in general and my regard for my family specifically.

³⁵ In fact, it is customary within the initial greeting to ask the other party his/her marital status. Being single, when I would inform my questioner of this fact, the next question of "Why aren't you married?" would reveal the fact that the initial query had really just been a formality. I cannot count the number of times I had to explain not just to strangers, which was somewhat understandable, but to my Korean friends how it was possible for me to be happy and yet remain single. In no uncertain terms, this was a virtual impossibility in their minds. By remaining single, I was not only denying myself fulfillment but also defying the natural order of life. In effect, I was guilty of not showing the proper amount of respect to my parents through my lack of filial piety. In Korea, marriage has traditionally remained a family decision rather than an individual one. Although this has changed among the younger generation of Koreans, the parents' final approval of one's mate is essential. I met several students during my tenure in Korea who related to me the fact that they were not married to the love of their lives because their parents had refused to consent to their proposal.

Being with them is the greatest thing. Then, I can also depend on them. It's been 4.5 years since we got married and once you get married, your lifestyle and culture is different from when you are single. Since I am by myself here, I have to get used to the single lifestyle, but I have a hard time doing that. I have a friend who is in a similar situation with me, but not being able to be together with my family makes it harder for me to get along with other families whose family members are here. It's very difficult for now, but I am sure that everything will be just fine when she comes here. Going back to the normal marriage life after 5 months of unstable single life is very psychologically soothing for me.

Two months later, in his second interview, Kwang again related the emotional burden, although less extreme than in August, that being apart from his family had placed upon him:

Of course I am still feeling alone, but because this semester is very busy, I don't have enough time to feel alone, so the emotion is less intense than at first.

In spite of the diminution of his loneliness, he asserted unequivocally his opinion of the relative merits of being single or married when adapting to U.S. culture:

Of course I think being married will be more beneficial in adjusting to this culture than being single.

Given the strength of Kwang's conviction, the separation from his family was undoubtedly an influential factor in his adjustment to the host culture.

In his final interview, Kwang related the likely utility of having his family with him in the U.S.:

My wife studied a similar major as mine. Therefore, sometimes, she's my wife and also she's my counselor in my major, so if I met some problems in my major and school life, she gave me good advice sometimes, so I was very comforted by her and that would have helped me a lot. We experienced it in Korea, so I know that her presence would be great for me. Of course if my family was here, I wouldn't have been able to invest all my time to studying. However, I don't think the hours of studying would be that different whether they're here or not because if I live alone, I think I would waste a lot of time and be inefficient. In the end, if my family was here, it's much more beneficial for me.

His wife in particular was the source of not only emotional comfort but academic assistance as well, and as such, her impending arrival as well as his son's was influential in his continuing adjustment to U.S. culture.

Finally, Hong's single status placed him at a comparative disadvantage in relation to Sang and Kwang in adapting to U.S. culture. As described previously, in Korean culture, the preference for the group as well as the traditional belief that until marriage a man or a woman was a child³⁶ are both cultural values that dictate that bonds with other Koreans are essential. However, the presence of Hong's mother for the first part of the semester³⁷ as well as his selection of a Korean roommate formed a living arrangement that limited his interaction with members of U.S. culture:

Sometimes I have to be worried about my mom when I go out with my friends because she cannot enjoy U.S. life I think...She doesn't have any friend in College Station and she cannot watch TV...She can't understand English...I think she feels very lonely, so I have to think about it when I go out...And sometimes I want to be alone in my room but I can't be...

The positive thing is that I am not lonely. The reason I looked for a roommate is because we can help each other when we're sick or going through difficult times. He's a Korean like me and we can feel similar when we are here. However, with many Koreans around me, it would be more difficult to get adjusted to life here in terms of language and culture. Another positive aspect would be that using Korean would be less stressful.

In many ways, Hong's near exclusive association with other Koreans at the beginning of the semester, while understandable given his recent arrival, was also a culturally determined outcome.

³⁶ As a single male, I encountered this attitude on several occasions when associating with my Korean friends. Being in my mid-thirties at the time, it was oftentimes frustrating to be considered a child, in spite of my education and experiences, simply because I was not married.

³⁷ Her presence with her 27-year-old-unmarried son is not that uncommon in Korea, where it is customary for the children to live with their parents until they marry.

Accordingly, the potentially negative impact of Hong's single status was initially buffered by his mother for the first six weeks of his stay in the U.S. In his third journal entry, written right after his mother's departure for Korea, he expressed his mixed emotions about this event:

After I came back my home, I can feel much more freedom, but I felt much concerns and worries. I have to make food, clean the room, etc without my mom. I thought that the abroad studying is from just right now. I have to be independent from right now..

Hong's entry revealed the extent to which he, like most unmarried Korean males, was culturally conditioned to depend on his mother for the management of the household (to a much greater extent than the average American male in the same situation). Given this fact, the implications of her return to Korea for his adjustment to U.S. culture was noteworthy, necessitating as it did the need for his self-sufficiency.

By the midterm interview, Hong's opinion of having had his mother with him at the beginning of the semester was entirely positive:

I think it was very helpful. I didn't have to worry about cooking or anything. I am not a kid anymore, but still when I bought items such as beds and desks, my mom's advice helped a lot.

Having most likely never had to engage in the activities he mentioned, her presence and efforts on his behalf were, at least temporarily, influential in helping him to cope with the demands of life in the U.S. Nevertheless, the long-term effects of Hong's mother having spent the first part of the semester with him were the postponement of his understanding of and interaction with U.S. culture.

At the final interview, Hong's words made it clear that he believed that his single status throughout the semester had hindered his adjustment to U.S. culture (while providing evidence of the traditional gender roles still in effect in Korea):

I have a few friends who are married. One friend has a wife who's also a student and the other's wife stays home. I don't really envy the friend with the wife who is studying since I'm sure they're going through a tough time. I see a big difference in the friend whose wife is at home. He always has to go home at night when friends hang out and he brings a lunch box from home while single Koreans just go out and buy lunch. I feel like he just needs to focus on his studies and he's got nothing to worry about. For me, I need to cook, do dishes, clean, etc, so I envy him and I feel like he's settled very well here. Single men don't seem to be completely adjusted yet. I have a friend who worried about his future a lot. He doesn't have a girlfriend and he's pretty old. The sad thing is there's no Korean woman who he wants to date here. He's trying to get his PhD, which takes about 7 years, so he's very worried. That's my roommate. I don't think single life is that beneficial even though I'm sure married ones envy us. I envy them a lot.

While not discounting the provincial attitude towards the benefits of having a wife espoused by Hong, his utterance encapsulated the commonly-held opinion among Korean males regarding the very practical role that having a spouse provides.

Length of stay

A second demographic factor that the participants' journal entries and final interviews revealed to be influential in their respective adjustments to the culture in the U.S. was the length of stay in this country. This result was somewhat unexpected given the relatively short amount of time that they had been in the U.S. and due to the fact that this variable was not directly solicited in the journal prompts. As a consequence, recognition of the importance of the passage of time by Sang, Kwang, and Hong strongly suggested that important cultural changes occurred throughout the study.

Sang, in his fourth journal, expressed a degree of optimism when relating his feelings about College Station and what he was learning over time:

I want to live here, college station in the future, after I retired. In my opinion, this is really good place to live. Though I'm new here, little by little I know about what is really freedom.

His growing appreciation for what he perceived as positive differences with Korean culture indicated the influence of the passage of time on his adjustment to U.S. culture.

Sang also related in his third interview his comparatively greater challenge to adapt to the host culture because of his military training:

During these five months, everything has become quite natural. I just get accustomed to it. For example, Korean military officers are very strict in Korea. In Korea, we have to salute each other, but my superiors told me not to salute, just say hi. A lieutenant colonel, who I have a lot of respect for, I just say hi to now, and he kind of became my neighbor, not a superior. Now, it's natural to just say hi rather than saluting. In the same way, I encountered differences in the beginning, but as time passed, I got used to the culture here.

His utterance revealed his conviction that the length of his stay in the U.S. had been influential in his ability to gradually habituate himself to the norms of the host culture.

Kwang, in his first journal entry, professed a cautious level of optimism about his ability to become familiar with the culture in the U.S.:

I'm well adjusting here despite of having trouble with English. Maybe, if time gets along, it will be getting better than now.

By his tenth journal entry, in fact, his opinion from the first week of the study, that time was an essential variable in the acculturation process, had become a reality for him:

Finding a topic, which is related to cultural differences or special things compared with Korea, to write journals becomes difficult more and more with taking times here. Maybe, it seems to mean that I become familiar with these lives. I found a topic of a topic of 10th journal with difficulty after a good while.

Kwang's description of the struggle he faced in relating his experiences with cultural divergences indicated his belief that the longer he was in the host culture, the less likely it was that he would face challenges.

By the final interview, Kwang made it apparent that he believed that the previous five months in the U.S. had a noteworthy effect on his level of comfort with the host culture:

The most important factor is time. Because time has passed, I have gotten used to the environment here... The conclusion is that everything has become easier. My English has improved, so I can do things better. Next, I know this town better and where everything is located, so it's convenient for me to go anywhere. In school, I had hard times when I first got here since it was my first time, even in the library. I'm not saying everything was difficult, but in general it was. Usually it's difficult. Using the library, catching-up on the assignments, and other things have become a routine and I'm comfortable now. Daily life such as shopping or finding some items when I needed them... Time solves most problems even though it's probably the slowest and stupidest way to solve anything, but it worked for me and it was the most important factor.

For Kwang, despite his frustration with the rate and illogicality of his length of stay here on his gradual adaptation to U.S. culture, he was nonetheless convinced of its utility.

Finally, Hong asserted that "*I don't have anymore fear. Probably it's because time has passed...*" in his third interview. His recognition of the importance of the passage of time revealed the fact that important cultural changes had occurred throughout the study, many times on a subconscious level.

Religiosity

Religion in Korea is an interesting assortment of traditional, Eastern, and Western beliefs. From animism to Buddhism and Christianity, spirituality is a large part of many Korean's lives. However, there are also a large number of Koreans, such as

Sang, who would be considered atheist or agnostic. For those who are believers, however, their devotion to their respective faiths is often quite fervent and fundamental. Finally, given the relatively recent influence of the West and Christianity, it is not uncommon to find members of the same family believing in different religions or to find a fusion of practices and tenets from different faiths within one religion.

The correlation between religiosity and a decrease in feelings of culture shock was supported by the interviews and journal entries of two of the participants. The influence of this factor was evident when viewed from both a spiritual and a practical perspective. In the first case, the sense of connection to a higher power instilled in Kwang and Hong the confidence and faith that their respective adjustments to life in the U.S. would be accomplished. In the second case, the social network provided by both Korean and American churches offered these two participants the provision of an organization to help support their transition and integration into U.S. culture. For Sang as well, even though he did not profess any belief in an organized faith, he, too, was aware of the assistance that churches in the local community provided for other Koreans.³⁸

³⁸ In Sang's first interview, he related his view of the almost exclusive role that churches played in helping newly-arrived Korean students:

...Mostly, churches or the Korean student association help new comers. After the initial settlement period, if people don't attend churches, they probably don't have anyone to help them until they are fully settled down here. I think there should be international student associations which provide conversations and a help desk for people who don't necessarily go to church, since churches are the major helpers in the community...

In spite of his awareness of the church as a resource for cultural adjustment, Sang did not turn to religion to help him adapt to life here throughout the study.

Nevertheless, the differential impact of attendance in either a Korean or an American church on the respective adaptations of Kwang and Hong was also apparent in these two data sources. Where both congregations afforded the participants spiritual and practical assistance, the Korean church also hindered their adjustment to U.S. culture. In particular, the replication of Korean culture here, including the Korean language and tight social bonds with their countrymen, was a barrier to Kwang's and Hong's more rapid acculturation. On the other hand, the American church was viewed more as a resource for learning the English language and establishing relationships with Americans than as a place to worship.

To a greater extent than for Hong, religion maintained a central position in Kwang's life during the study. His devotion to his faith was apparent from the first journal entry and throughout his three interviews because it offered him both practical and spiritual guidance. In his first journal entry and interview, respectively, he described the interpersonal benefits of attending an American church:

I'm looking for groups to learn English more actively so that I want to make American friends to communicate and know about U.S cultures. As a result of finding, I will visit a American church this Sunday morning...

...I sent [pastors] emails and asked them if they had any programs for international students. I am a Christian and I am familiar with the church. To get exposure to American culture, I thought contacting the church was the best option. I got to go to a Bible study last week for international students. It was very enjoyable. It was a cool experience to listen to my previous Bible knowledge in English.

For Kwang, the English assistance that the church offered him was mentioned twice more in his second and sixth journals, respectively:

I found a program to improve English skills from 'Fellowship Church'. The program is 'English Conversation Class' located on 'University Apartment'. I didn't go there yet but hope to increase my English skills. Worship participated in 'Fellowship Church' is also good way to learn English and know U.S culture.

I am constantly trying to break a language barrier from the time when I arrived here to now. Then I made a native conversation partner with a help of an American church. The role of the conversation partner is to help me improve English as well as to introduce and to be felt American cultures here.

It was apparent that, through religion, the improvement of his English and of his involvement in the host culture with his conversation partner was a desired outcome of his attendance of an American church.

Lest one think that Kwang was not interested in the spiritual aspect of religion and was therefore just using the church to improve his English, he professed in his first journal entry that his faith was one of the factors, in addition to his confidence, helping him in his adjustment to life in the U.S.:

God guide and bless me

In his first interview as well, Kwang was certain of the power of God to help him overcome all of his problems:

Because I am a Christian, when I was in a difficult situation I prayed to God. I am convinced that God guides me. I am convinced of that, so I can do it.

There have been some serious problems in my life. First, I would talk to my wife and after praying, there were no more major problems.

...I am a Christian. So I have certain prayer requests. I believe and want that my education here would lead me to achieve the answer to my prayers.

For Kwang then, religion provided him with the access to members of U.S. culture, a moral and spiritual compass, and a sense of confidence in his ability to successfully navigate his future life in the States.

At the midterm interview as well, Kwang's religious conviction was unchanged as was his confidence that this was the most essential resource for him in his endeavors to learn about the culture in the U.S. He attended both an American and a Korean church, receiving different types of assistance:

Because I am a Christian, so the church is very important for me. Because of that I am trying to know American culture and to know English ... I think the way is good for me...

Basically Koreans have new students this year, so of course I used a lot of help from them and from pastors, from any other Korean Christians... Information about this area such as hospitals, kindergartens, a site to learn English for my wife, etc.

As his words evidenced, the provision of spiritual and practical guidance for Kwang that was dispensed by the two churches continued to be a great resource for him at the second interview.

Nearly two months later, the influence of the church on assisting Kwang in his ability to cope with his adaptation to U.S. culture remained constant. He described the interpersonal benefits he had received from attending a volunteer organization of a local church:

...I tried to meet some American people or international students out of campus. I took part in some programs. One program's name was I-House. It meant International Students' House, so the program prepared programs for international students, such as going to a ranch, camping, or fishing. The meeting is often every week, every Thursday night. But I didn't take part in it every time because of time. I didn't go all that much, but sometimes, time allowing, I tried to go and it was very enjoyable. It was time dedicated for English and cultural learning, so it was very different from academic meetings. Like the team project meetings, we all thought about how to solve problems and get things done. We had to try to make each other understand something. So all the meetings were like brainstorming time. Sometimes, I thought it's difficult making the meeting. Pure leisure time apart from classes provided a good

opportunity to learn English better. If I go into a meeting with stress, I don't think I learn English or anything much because it's all about problem solving.

Spiritually, Kwang felt that his belief in God was the only solution to the stresses of his life. He expressed this opinion in his thirteenth journal entry and last interview, respectively:

Bible is my place to rest whenever I meet some troubles and fall into depressed motion.

Because I am Christian, the church is very necessary for me to live my life if I have some problems or not. Of course, my religion controls my whole life, so if I have met some problems, first, I depend on God. Mental stress is more difficult to deal with than physical fatigue and no one can solve the stress for me; I need to overcome the stress through my faith. Therefore, I need to depend on God not only here, but also in Korea. It's necessary.

Kwang's faith throughout the study provided him with opportunities to develop culturally-specific social skills as well as instilled in him a steady influence during his transition into the culture in the U.S.

For Hong, religion was an important factor throughout the study for facilitating his linguistic and social needs. In his first interview, for example, he related his desire to learn about the culture here by attending an American church. He asserted:

Through religion, I want to make friends from the U.S.

While Hong viewed the church as a conduit to greater interaction with and understanding of life in the States, he felt uncomfortable doing so because of his English proficiency level:

...I want to go to a church, but then if I say I want to go, when I see pastors and other people, they will speak in English and I won't be able to understand. That's why I am slightly hesitant...

As his later interviews would also show, Hong's use of what he considered to be an important method for establishing contact with members of U.S. culture was not fully realized during the five months of the study.

In his first journal entry, he illustrated not only the communal nature of Korean society generally but Korean churches specifically:

Up to now, I got lots of help from Korean people in adjusting to College station life, especially people who go to church. If I did not know any Korean people and did not get any help from them, I could not have been suitable for life here as soon, easy as I actually did.

For Hong, the members of Korean churches were an invaluable resource in helping him to smoothly and relatively quickly adjust to life in the U.S.

By the midterm interview, even though Hong still professed that "*It's good to go to church*", the demands of the university as well as his sense of responsibility for the well-being of his mother both conspired to limit his access to this resource:

I want to go to church, but I can't wake up on Sunday after studying hard on Saturday evening. I should go to church. When my mom was here, I heard that you have to stand up and say hi to everyone at the church. So my mom didn't like that and she just told me to go. It felt kind of awkward to go by myself with my mom at home. So I didn't go and I just kept not going for going to Houston with my mom...

While his opinion of the benefits of religion had not changed, his utterance made it evident that for a variety of reasons he had not been able to frequently draw upon the church for assistance.

In his final interview, Hong's utterances showed that in spite of his sporadic attendance on Sundays or at Bible study, he remained convinced that religion was a positive influence on his life:

I get to hear the pastor speaking and I reflect upon my week. That time is when I could meditate and think of my life seriously, so it's good for me.

This statement as well as his plan during the winter break to go to Bible study once more in order to make a conversation partner was testament to his belief that religion was a spiritual vehicle by which he could approach a better understanding of both himself and U.S. culture.

Previous international experience

While not directly mentioned by any of the participants in their journal entries in reference to themselves, previous international experience was nonetheless shown to be important for both Sang and Hong in their respective adjustments to U.S. culture in their first interviews. This communication for each revealed time spent in the States and Canada, respectively, which had a lasting effect on their perceptions of U.S. culture. For Kwang, on the other hand, this factor was not directly influential given the limited time he had spent overseas prior to his sojourn to the States. He reported that he had only been in foreign countries, all Asian, for a total of 13 days: Thailand for 5 days and China and Japan for four days each. Indirectly, however, Kwang did believe that this variable was important.

In his first interview, Sang described the benefits of his previous exposure to U.S. culture in assisting him in his adjustment here in spite of the fact that he only felt "...a little bit" equipped for the experience:

...I couldn't prepare much, but I worked with the American Eighth Army for two years while I was in the Korean military service. Because of that, I don't feel too strange meeting Americans. Not strange, I was rather familiar...

In addition, his two-week stint at West Point in 1998 added to his confidence through the familiarity and newness of this environment:

...I was seeking a new environment, so it looked good. It is also a military academy and comparable to the one in Korea. Since the Korean academy was modeled after the American one, when I came here, the uniforms and rules were strictly enforced here as well. There are things that I could not see in my school, so I don't know for sure. But the facilities, disciplined cadets, overall history, pride, and all were impressive to me...At that time, I thought about coming here to study not only to learn English but also academics. After I went back to Korea, I prepared for a sponsor program in the Korean military and applied.

For Sang then, his only exposure to U.S. culture prior to this study had been in a military context. While beneficial in assisting him in dealing with some of the adjustment demands, this very specific domain of the host culture also may have hindered his ability to adapt because of the oftentimes extreme differences between the military and civilian cultures in the U.S.

For Kwang, in spite of his relative lack of previous international experience, he did implicitly discuss his belief that this variable should have an effect on Korean professors teaching in Korean universities who had received their education in the U.S. in his third journal entry:

...I don't know why are the professors different with professors of the U.S even though considerable professors in Korea graduated from outside countries such as the U.S and EU which has no Confucian ideas.

Kwang, in a short time, had recognized and expressed appreciation for the less domineering position assumed by American professors in comparison with Korean professors. His lack of understanding for the reason behind this noteworthy difference in cultures given the previous international experience of the American-educated Korean instructors, however, was not a source of psychological discord for him. Rather,

Kwang's conjecture conveyed his opinion that his own adjustment would alter some of his beliefs and that this change would not be unwelcome.

Finally, in Hong's first interview, he exposed his former aversion to U.S. culture and the reasons behind his attitude:

Most of the younger generation is highly exposed to American culture, but I disliked America very much. I wasn't good at English in school, so I avoided listening to pop music and watching Hollywood movies. I am a very rare person since most other people like American culture; therefore they are more exposed to the culture. I deliberately avoided the culture.

His experience living and studying English in Canada for ten months, however, changed his mindset and perhaps the course of his life:

I hated the situation and it was difficult for me. When I went to take a language course over at Vancouver, I could not speak a word in English. All I knew was how to say my name. I was the only Korean there. I lived in an apartment and when I was on the elevator with other Canadians, they would always talk to me. I didn't understand what they were saying, but they would keep talking. I just smiled since I didn't get it, but they kept talking and I didn't like that. I had to get up to the fifth floor in the apartment and people lined up in front of the elevator. I hated facing them, so I walked up to my apartment for a month. After a month, I could start hearing a few words. When I didn't understand something, I let people know and told them to slow down. They thought that if I smiled, that means I understood, so I had to fix that. I didn't even want to open a bank account.

After my experience in Canada, I traveled a lot and I love it. Countries have different cultures and I try to get to know them. I have a great desire to learn other cultures wherever I go. Now, when I see restaurants, shops, or a mall, I just go in even though I am not familiar with them. I am not hesitant or reluctant anymore... During that one year, I changed quite a bit even though I still retain the introverted side of me.

Given Hong's own admittedly reserved nature and inflexibility as well as his aversion to ambiguity, his previous international experiences were influential factors in his ability to adjust to U.S. culture as they instilled in him a desire to communicate, learn, and explore.

Gender

As all the participants were males, it was not possible to compare the influence of gender among them. Nevertheless, while Kwang was silent on this factor, the interviews and journal entries of Sang and Hong did provide evidence of attitudes about this variable that were impacted by Korean culture to a great extent. Where these views differed with those commonly found in U.S. culture offered some insights into the impact of gender on their adjustment.³⁹

Sang described his opinion of the role of gender in U.S. culture in his thirteenth journal entry. He related what he had witnessed when he was a guest in an American home at Thanksgiving. In addition, Sang's words illustrated not only his recognition of the relative equality between men and women in the U.S. but also his preference for this cultural difference:

In Korea, a member of family gets together and make a food and prepare whole thing. However, the owner of house prepares all food and a visitor carries the present and some food. Also, there is no division between man and woman. Woman should make food and man just talk about their news. Nowadays, in spite of a shift in attitude, many old people don't like man go to kitchen. I do not agree with them. The western style is better than ours for women.

³⁹ Gender and gender-defined roles in Korea are distinct and fairly rigid. Even though Korean women have made great strides towards equality with men, traditional values still dominate the cultural landscape. These values, based on Confucianism, are patriarchal and ingrained from birth. As an example, the desire for male offspring is so great in Korea among some families that it is not uncommon for the husband's parents to coerce the son and daughter to continue having children until a son is born. I can recall asking some of my married students in the past how many boys and girls they had. Inevitably, in many cases where there were multiple girls and only one boy, I would be right in assuming that the male offspring was the last. This environment has led to an unnatural imbalance in the male/female ratio of births. Nowadays in Korea, for every 100 female births, there are substantially more male births. This potentially tragic state of affairs has resulted from the preference for male offspring which in turn has led to the abortion of female fetuses among some parents. As a consequence, ultrasound technology is outlawed and doctors are prohibited from informing the expectant parents as to the sex of the baby.

Sang comfort with the differences in gender-defined roles between Korea and the U.S., signaled that his acceptance of this custom in the host culture had not produced stress.

Sang's initial incomprehension of the American custom of greeting strangers, previously referenced in the section on *Interpersonal* culture shock symptoms, was further compounded by the fact that both men and women engage in this practice in the U.S. By way of contrast, in Korea, women are much more reserved in conversation, even with known males. For a Korean woman to greet a strange male is virtually unheard of and would connote a certain level of audacity if not impropriety. Nevertheless, his seventh journal entry related his willingness to accept this practice in the American cultural context:

...Anyway, to receive greetings from adorable women is very happy events.

Sang's words evidenced the fact that the influence of this substantial interpersonal difference did not have a substantially negative impact on his adjustment to U.S. culture.

Hong, as the only unmarried participant, was the most impacted by the gender differences between Korea and the U.S. As a single Korean male, he had likely not had the same amount of interaction with females as a comparable American male of the same age. Most Korean schools, for example, are divided into boys and girls schools. Add to this condition the fact that the rigors of the Korean education system demand attendance in after-school institutes and studying until late at night, and it is not unforeseen that the quantity and quality of relations between the two sexes in Korea is comparatively limited, circumscribed, and innocent.

Hong's seventh journal entry and his three interviews supplied instances of the role gender played in his adjustment to U.S. culture. In the first interview, for example, he related the beneficial aspects of having his mother with him for the beginning of the semester:

I am not a bad cook, but I cannot make good Korean food. My mom makes any Korean food for me; it's very good.

As a Korean male, Hong did not have many opportunities to prepare meals for himself. Traditionally, that task has been the exclusive responsibility of females to a far greater extent than is common in the U.S. As a consequence, his inability to provide for himself, at least in the kitchen, hampered his transition, necessitating dependence on his mother instead of himself. While not denying the existence of individual differences, this culturally-generated incapacity may not have been evident for a Korean female or to the same extent.

In Hong's seventh journal entry, he commented upon the fact that American males and females were playing sports together and that these females were in no way less proficient than their male counterparts:

Last Tuesday, I went to Rec center with my friends who major in Industrial Engineering. There we go to play pingpong. Even after 10o'clock, there are so many people working in the rec center. Every pingpong tables were occupied by some people, so we had to wait for it. In the center, vollyball game.. I saw it. and, I was very surprised at the game. Some girls were in the vollyball court at that time. I cannot imagine that girls are playing any games with boys in Korea. However, here, it seems to be very natural and normal. Girls were playing much better than I anticipated.

Hong's astonishment as well as the underlying condescension in the last line was the product of Korean culture. The relatively equal footing on which American males and

females tread in the athletic arena is far less common in Korea. Consequently, the lack of distinction between sexes (or of elevation of one over the other) that he observed was potentially a source of stress for Hong. However, his acknowledgment of the ordinariness of this event in the U.S. cultural context implied that he had neither struggled with this difference nor would he be incapable of adjusting to it.

In the same entry, Hong also described his astonishment at his and his roommate's ability to cook for themselves upon his mother's departure:

After my mom left here, I and my roommate becomes little bit boring about cook and food. Thus, we determined to try to make Korean traditional soup such as 미역국, soysoup 된장국. Because we have never made the kind of soup by ourselves, I did not expect taste soup. During cook, we are very hesitate to put some stuff, and we do not know how much we should put the stuff. After all, finish.. and then, we tasted the soup. very delicious. It is very amazing. After the first trial to cook, we are full of confidence, and we have made different kinds of soup every evening. Almost every time we made, it was not bad. We enjoyed to make a food.

Hong's realization that he and his roommate could cook for themselves was important.

As alluded to previously, in Korea, the kitchen and all household activities have heretofore been the responsibility of the woman. In contrast, all things outside of the house were the man's responsibility.⁴⁰ Coming from such a culture, Hong's recognition that he could not only be self-sufficient outside of the home but inside of it as well suggested a capacity to adjust to the non-gender-specific demands of providing for oneself in U.S. culture.

⁴⁰ I can recall on many occasions wanting to assist a Korean male friend's wife with either the preparation of the meal or the cleaning off of the table after the meal, only to be rebuffed by not only my friend but his wife as well.

In his second interview, Hong reiterated a point he had made in his seventh journal entry about his shock at the co-educational nature of athletic participation in the U.S. as well as at the effect it had on female bodies:

In Korea, girls and boys don't play together. Let's say you go out to a field to play soccer and you find a girl. That's pretty amazing and she must be very special whether she's good at it or not. I went to the Recreation Center and played volleyball. Half of the people were females and they were very skilled. My friends and I were all surprised at how good they were. It was quite amazing, but I am used to it now.

The next thing is about the female body shape. I think girls' thighs are very thick maybe because they exercise like guys.

His assertion of having become accustomed to the quantity and quality of female involvement in sports was contradicted by his commentary on the masculine nature of American female bodies. Having come from a culture in which the ascendancy of the male in all arenas of life is virtually unchallenged, the physical prowess of females in the host culture was likely threatening for Hong. In addition, the much more proscribed and traditional role assigned Korean females as compared to American females was possibly intimidating for him as it challenged his view of what was properly male and female.

By the third interview, Hong was still wrestling with the implications of the culturally-determined gender roles in Korea and the U.S. On the one hand, he did not feel that being male or female was an influential factor in an individual's adjustment to culture here:

It depends on each person. People are good at different things.

On the other hand, Hong professed a belief that people in this country were kinder to females than males from Korea:

American people are nicer to Korean females than males. I don't know if I feel that because I am Korean. I don't even know if Americans treat males and females equally. I feel that Asian males and females are treated differently, and I don't know about how Americans treat other Americans of a different sex.

His idea that there was differential treatment in the U.S., accurate or not, was evidence of his inability to accept the comparatively more gender-neutral treatment of individuals in the host culture than in Korean culture.

Age

As all of the participants' ages were within five years of each other, a comparison of the differences among Sang, Kwang, and Hong in terms of this variable did not prove directly distinguishable in their journal entries. Only Kwang and Hong mentioned age as an influential factor in their interviews in a straightforward fashion.

Kwang, in his second interview, contended that adjustment to U.S. culture was an individual issue:

...It depends on case by case. I don't know exactly what age is better to familiarize oneself with this environment because everything depends on case by case.

With that said, however, in the same interview, his opinion of living in the same apartment complex with single Korean males reflected a far clearer point of view on the value of being older:

Many Koreans are single, but I am married, and there are many people in my apartment who are just single. So, their thinking is sometimes like children. They ask my advice about their problems, such as relationships, about marriage, and whatever.⁴¹

⁴¹ While nowhere in this utterance was specific mention of the comparatively younger age or the gender of the unmarried Koreans provided, as has been described in greater detail previously in this chapter, it can be safely assumed that these individuals were both younger and male. In the first case, given the importance of age distinctions in Korean culture, advice would generally only be solicited from someone

Kwang's irritation at the lack of maturity of his younger countrymen provided implicit evidence that he believed there were benefits to age (and marriage).

On the contrary, Hong, in his final interview, was more certain than Kwang as to the importance of a relatively younger age in minimizing the shocks of adjusting to U.S. culture:

I'm here for graduate school, so I have a lot more pressure. If I came here when I was younger, even younger than 22, maybe in high school or middle school, where I could spend a lot of time with friends without studying, my adjustment here would be better.

As alluded to previously and in evidence in Kwang's and Hong's comments, however, the influence of age cannot be considered without also contemplating age-related variables, such as level of school, employment, and marital status, for example.

One instance of this connection was evident in Sang's final journal entry and interview as well as in Kwang's last interview, respectively. The impact of employment, and thus implicitly a belief in the negative influence of being older as opposed to younger, was described by both participants:

...I have been served as a soldier for 8 years before I came here. During that time, I had stopped the study. I think it is natural that I feel so hard...

...I had too long of a break from studying after my college graduation since I worked in industry. So I think it's a personal thing rather than some culture-related issues.

The benefits that had accrued to both participants in the interim, e.g., a greater sense of maturity and marriage chief among these, did not equal the detrimental aspect of this

older. In the second case, friendships among Korean males and females are the exception rather than the norm.

hiatus, e.g., the interruption of their former academic mindset. In both cases, the influence of employment was intrinsically related to that of age, making the isolation of only this factor difficult.

Cultural Factors

As could be expected both in the presentation of the symptoms of culture shock and of the influential factors that helped or hindered the three participants of the study in coping with this phenomenon, the variable of culture played a noteworthy role. In fact, nearly all of the other factors described in this section as influential can be associated with or traced to the impact of cultural differences between Korea and the U.S. English ability, attitude, and religion, for example, while each individually determined to some extent, are nonetheless all tied to the source culture. Accordingly, Sang, Kwang, and Hong, having all been born and raised in Korea, were affected by the differences in culture between their home and host countries. It was their responses to these dissimilarities that at times distinguished one from the other two and thus revealed the individual nature of the culture shock phenomenon.

Cross-cultural differences

The cultural distance between Korea and the U.S. is in many ways as wide as the Pacific Ocean that separates the two countries. In his first interview, for example, Hong related his belief of how “...*Eastern and Western cultures are totally different*”, perhaps reflecting not only his opinion but Sang’s and Kwang’s views as well given the quantity and diversity of issues that were discussed. For in spite of the U.S. influence in Korea over the last fifty years as well as the technological bridges that have been constructed

among the vast majority of the nations of the world, fundamental differences still remain in countless aspects of everyday life. These include but are not limited to economic, individualism, environmental, transportation, dietary, and security issues. For the three participants in this study, the stress of adjusting to these dissimilarities varied across the individuals as well as over time, and they were mentioned in both their interviews and journals.

Economic

The influence of economic factors on the adjustment of the three participants, while noteworthy throughout the study, was more commonly reported in their journal entries than their interviews. Irrespective of the source of data, this finding was somewhat unforeseen given that both Korea and the U.S. have advanced capitalist economies. However, differences in terms of choices, convenience, efficiency, pricing, and impartiality were evident in many of their journal entries as well as in their interviews.

The range of goods to be bought and sold in the U.S. market is confusing at times.⁴² In the Korean economy as compared to the U.S. economy, there are a relatively smaller number of choices facing consumers. The rapid rise of Korea under the guidance of former President Park Chung-Hee during the 1960s was fueled by the formation of

⁴² My own experiences upon returning to America provide evidence of this fact. I found myself overwhelmed at times with the simplest of choices because of the endless ways that products could be delivered to the customer. For example, unlike in Korea where ordering a cup of coffee was a simple, relatively straight-forward procedure, here in the States doing the same thing required knowledge of and experience with the numerous available options. As a consequence, in their efforts to satisfy the preferences of each customer, many American companies have complicated even the most basic of transactions.

huge conglomerations with oftentimes “cozy” relationships with the government. These *jaebol* made everything from toilet paper to cars. As a result, there have heretofore been only a few corporations making all of the products in the marketplace.

Given this state of affairs as well as the previously described desire for conformity, there is a high degree of uniformity among the product choices, pricing, and services. Whereas in the U.S. it is not unusual to see two of the same general type of cars either parked next to each other or on the road, for example, it is far from common to see exactly the same color with exactly the same “extras”, such as a moon roof, spoiler, etc. In Korea, on the other hand, noticing exact replicas of other cars is an everyday occurrence.⁴³

While purchasing a car is not a basic transaction for most people, the distinct differences among sellers, classifications, and prices of vehicles in the U.S. as opposed to Korea was an example of an economic dissimilarity that proved problematic for two of the participants. Sang, in his ninth journal entry, related an incident he had when he needed to repair his car:

One strange thing is the car price is very different as a dealer. A few days ago, maintenance required light turn on in my car. I did not know it's mean by that time before I went to Honda service. I bought my car in the body shop. The Honda dealer told me it's cost depends on test result but it maybe 500-600 dollars. Only test fee is \$40. Therefore I went to Aggie Land Body Shop and ask them. They turn off the light using some button and there is no problem. That's Okay. However, the light's mean is we should check the car. Now, I'm so confuse between them.

Similarly, Kwang, in his first journal entry, described his experience:

⁴³ I can recall looking at the cars in parking lots or on the road and being shocked at the fact that not just one other car was the same as mine but literally tens of them.

...the system buying vehicles relevant to body shop does not exist in Korea. It might be a simple difference between the U.S and Korea, but I was confused in understanding such system when I arrived here at first. Also, the method to classify vehicles such 'Blue Title', 'Salvage Title', 'Green Title' as 'Built-In' with vehicles is new way comparing with Korea, which not only is providing exact information for consumers having mind to buy their cars but also can prevent potential customers from being played the rogue from auto-dealers. And I want to speak regarding automobile prices except used cars. Despite of a new car, the price of automobile, which is a same model of an auto-company and has same options, is highly different according to several dealer-shops. At first, I couldn't understand why the price of a vehicle is various because the price of new cars was fixed in Korea. Because of such differences between U.S and Korea when buying vehicles, Korean is not familiar with buying a car through dealing.

For both Sang and Kwang, the differentiation in the pricing system of the respective auto industries in Korea and the U.S. was a source of bewilderment in their adjustment to the host culture. Given the virtual absence of public modes of transportation in the local community, the significance of understanding this disparity was elevated.

In Kwang's third interview, however, his attitude towards the range of car prices (and the initial exclusion of sales tax from an item's cost) in the U.S. exhibited his broad-minded acceptance of these dissimilarities:

...I can't reject it because I have to follow the U.S. system in the U.S.

In sum, Kwang's utterance in his final interview provided evidence of his receptivity to these two differences, indicating his willingness to adjust to the host culture.

A second aspect of the U.S. economy that caused stress for at least two of the participants was in the lack of concern for the customer. While for the most part, customer service remains important in America, the growth in the number of multinational corporations, preference for automation, and the outsourcing of labor, for example, have all contributed to a decline in this area in comparison with Korea. In spite

of the domestic and international conglomerates that dominate the economic landscape and the state of the art technology, Korean culture, for the most part, remains communal at its heart. Personal connections and reputations are valued possessions because they are established over time, through much effort, and relatively permanent. The unparalleled importance of maintaining proper relations with all people, much less customers, cannot be overstated. Regardless of the service rendered, personal interactions are conducted with civility and decorum. In such a culture, bargaining and negotiation are expected and the satisfaction of the consumer is demanded. As such, the difficulties the participants had with customer service here on several occasions were distressing.

Kwang, for example, expressed his dissatisfaction with the pace of life in his first interview:

People are kind of slow here unlike in Korea where things are taken care of almost instantly. If I want to get something done here related to other people, it takes a while and I need to urge them to work and do what needs to be done and I've only been here for a few weeks.

However, it was not apparent from Kwang's subsequent interviews or in his journal entries whether this opinion remained the same or changed over the course of the study.

In Kwang's second journal entry, he related his frustration and disbelief at the lack of consideration for customers exhibited by both his cell phone provider and the Department of Public Safety (DPS), respectively:

I called the customer service of my mobile phone twice weeks ago, which was the most difficult work of that I faced in this here because I waited for 20minutes to speak my problem from contacted time until waiting time. This was not just a problem of the waiting time. That is which made me difficult was unconcern about customers using mobile phones, not waiting time. How makes the customer service their customers to wait for a long time without any understanding? Although there are several reasons, it is a situation which cannot

happen in Korea. I received an impression that sellers' motion is quick when people open their wallets to buy items but slow when people do not open their wallets. Is this a normal thing customers wait in order to receive service related to mobile phones? And is this an aspect of the States' cultures?

I went the Department of Public Safety to take a driving test, where I waited for about 30minutes from 7:30 A.M. I surprised at the sight there are many people in there form early morning. Even if I heard about that many people are always in a line to make an appointment to take the exam, such situation standing in a line was not expected from the early morning. I helplessly returned at home without having anything after all. And then, I visited again there at 6:45 A.M not to face situation of the preceding day, and there were around 15 persons in front of me, which means that I can make a appointment at desirable time. After I waited for a hour at the front of door of DPS, staffs opened the office and I got a time to take the driving test at 3:15PM with difficulty. That is this is a problem in daily life why the DPS does not make an appointment by on-line nowadays. Why on earth does not the DPS give such inconvenience to applicants to take the exam? I can't understand the reason.

Kwang's contact with the private and public organizations in the U.S. economy, while mystifying and aggravating, also made him question the values of U.S. culture, indicating that these interactions were influential factors in his adjustment.

Hong, in his first journal entry, was similarly disappointed by the lack of concern for customers exhibited by the DPS and confused at its occurrence in the U.S.:

This week, I took a driving test for licence. At that time, I had to get up very early in the morning, because I have to line up in front of DPS in order to make a registration for test. Even though I got there at 6:40, there were a few people who had already waited for registration. DPS is a kind of public institutions, but why don't the public institution think of public convenience and service? The situation is result from the remiss administration of DPS. DPS should try to consider more rational system for people such as internet reservation. I cannot understand why the absurd situation happens in the United States.

Two weeks later, Hong related another example of the apparently selfish attitude of American workers:

...My roommate bought a new car two weeks ago, so he had to change a temporary plate which expires to last Friday to a new one. However, he has

not received any plate and any call about a new plate. After all, he went to the dealer shop for a new plate, but there was not a dealer who sold his car to him. Thus, my roommate asked another worker to change a new plate. The worker replied, "I do not know, Just wait for him, I will call you when he come back.~~~~" He seemed that he do not want to take care for him. I and my friend were very wondering why he could not change the plate. In the United States, each worker has different duty? I know that America society is very individual and independent. However, I think that just a plate can be charged of any workers. I think it is not matter who sold a car.

In his fifth journal entry as well, Hong described his frustration with his inability to quickly and easily cancel his bank card, owing in part to the automated manner in which his financial institution dealt with customer service-related issues:

Last Week, I lost my wallet in the gas station... However, I cannot find how to cancel to use my Debit card on the internet although I tried to find it more than one hour. Thus, I have to call the service center of Citibank, and cancelled the usage of debit card...The event makes me perplex.

As a consequence of these interactions with the American economy, Hong found the customer service of the economic culture in the States to be disconcerting, and thus problematic to adjust to for him.

In his midterm interview, Hong, like Kwang, also related his shock and anger at the inefficient and inconsiderate method of business operation that he had encountered in the U.S.:

One thing is that people work very slowly here. In Korea, you are given a number in the order of coming in at a bank, so that you can sit and wait for your turn. It's more comfortable that way rather than here where you must always stand and wait. People here are very slow. I got mad at first about waiting for so long...DPS was like that. I was in a long line. I thought that America would have good systems for queuing because it's a developed country, but I think otherwise now. Why make people wait in a line and make them uncomfortable?

Coming from a culture where the Korean expression "Ppali! Ppali!", meaning "Quickly! Quickly!" is akin to a mantra, the comparatively slower pace of life in the southern

United States, in particular, was a source of stress for him. By the final interview, Hong's words made it evident that he had not changed his opinion over the course of the semester:

I feel that Koreans are very fast paced culturally. I don't know if they're smart or not, but Koreans are very fast in taking care of businesses anywhere.

For Hong, this difference in efficiency (and potentially intelligence) between members of U.S. culture and Korean culture remained unresolved, implying that he had not adjusted to this dissimilarity.

On the contrary, Sang reported that he had no difficulties with customer service. In his third journal entry and second interview, respectively, in fact, he described his amazement at the ease with which he could exchange items that he had purchased:

There is a strong point in the USA market. We can change, return and refund without terrible problem. It is very easy to solve my bad decision. I wonder about it is profitable job or not for the company. I returned and exchange many object because I am not familiar in US goods. However, I bought many things because of that policy. The reason why I do not spend much time to choose things.

...If I have a problem at my apartment and I report the problem to the office, then they take care of it. When I buy something at a store and if something is wrong, Korean people think that the money is wasted because of the lack of a refund policy in Korea. However, if I bring the broken items to the stores and explain what the problem is, normally I could get a new one here.

Sang's much more favorable impression of the convenience in the U.S. economy was in contrast to the opinions Kwang and Hong had expressed, highlighting not only the wide range of factors that compose any culture but also the unique nature of experiences that individuals may have within any given society.

The impartiality and relative inflexibility with which most dealings in the U.S. economy are transacted was also a source of confusion and stress for Kwang and Hong.

The personal nature of dealings in the Korean economy provides many more opportunities for discounts and accommodations to be made to customers than are found here. As such, given the generally detached objectivity by which the American economy is operated (when combined with the high cost of education), dismay on the part of the two participants could be expected.

As an example, Kwang conveyed his complete astonishment at the strict enforcement of the fine policy in the university library in his fifth journal entry:

My mid-term exams began from last week so that I have a lot of stuff to do study. Evans library is a main place to stay me a whole day. In particular, I usually used a group study room in the library because the place is well equipped with facilities for studying. I also studied in there on last Saturday. However I startled at unusual email from a library officer. The title was 'Library Fine/Fee Notice'. I thought 'What on earth is this?' I noticed that the study room must be renewed every 4 hours after reading the email. I, off course, have known the information from a library officer when I check out the key, but I didn't carry out renewing the key because the closing time of the library was 9 P.M on Saturday and the due time to renew it was 8:20 P.M, so that I didn't feel necessary to do it, and then I returned the study room on 8:35 P.M being late 15 minutes. An officer took the key as if there is no any problem. Even though the mount of the fine is little, how can the fine be imposed with only such a timid happening? It is absolutely my mistake that I thought such regulations related to schools more flexible than general ones. It might be a unique Korean thinking of me, and the experience would be a good lecture to get away wrong Korean customs.

In spite of his surprise at the impartial administration of the university library fine system, Kwang evidenced the ability to view this unexpected event as a chance to learn more about the culture in the U.S.

Hong's eighth journal entry and second interview, respectively, described his dissatisfaction and cynicism regarding the university's pricing policy:

I cannot understand any price in the campus. In Korea, usually, in the campus, we can get any food including cookies, drinking, or meal For example, outside the campus, we have to pay about 5dollars for some lunch food, but, in the

campus cafeteria, we can have the similar food with only 2 - 3 dollars. In addition, we can get any soft drink from vending machines in the campus at cheaper price. As well as food, there are so many cases, such as pencil, ink, papers and so on. However, here in the campus, I have to pay more money to get food, drink, cookies. In the case of work materials, I cannot buy them because of considerably high price. I think that the situation in Korean campus is reasonable, because students do not have a lot of money. Here, does school want to get more money from students? Is it a kind of nice business?

...I feel that the university is only concerned about making money and I think it's weird.

In spite of describing the cost of living in the U.S. as cheap in his midterm interview, his displeasure with the university's lack of concern for the limited finances of most students was an event for which he had not been prepared. While indeed the cost of attending school is a predicament for virtually all students at American institutes of higher learning, for Hong and other Koreans, accustomed to far cheaper tuition, fees, and prices on campus, this fact was a source of stress.

As seen in Hong's journal entry and interview, the price of goods and services in the U.S. economy as well as the frugality of Americans were also influential factors in the participants' respective adjustments to the culture in this country. In general, the size of the market and the level of competition among sellers here provide consumers with many benefits, chief among these being low prices. However, the sales tax system, tipping custom, and use of rebates in the U.S. constitute hidden costs, are differently administered, and virtually non-existent in Korea. As such, for Sang, Kwang, and Hong, the shock at the cost of items and services was palpable in their interviews and journal entries. In addition, the fiscal conservatism of members of the host culture that was witnessed by Sang and Kwang surprised and impressed them.

Sang, for example, described his astonishment at the range of prices but also related his confusion at the application of sales taxes to his purchases in his first journal entry:

When I went to mega mart, I'm so surprised because the goods' price. Almost necessary of life goods are 15-20 dollars. It's so cheaper than I feel before calculation. 1 dollar is 950 won(Korea monetary unit). Something is lower price than my country, but others are expensive. Since the US monetary unit is small, I have spent more money, also as a result, I have a habit to calculate monetary unit. Second, I bought the TV(\$449) but I do not consider about tax. I always see the market prices and sum all goods'. After all, however, I realized that total money is higher than my calculate. Before I made the debit & check, I'm so confused because I have smaller money than I bought the goods' total price. In my country, all of things' price include the tax(10%)

Additionally, he commented on the free and convenient access to public facilities as having been an astonishing finding:

It is so surprise that we can play tennis without any pay. It is too much money required to play tennis at night in our country. The first reason is not many free welfare facility, the second reason is that electric charge is too high. Therefore, this is unfamiliar to me.

Further, in Sang's second interview, he related his positive impression of the thrift of Americans, providing evidence of this opinion in his fellow students' choices of clothes:

I see people being frugal and they don't care about being too wasteful because of others' eyes. I think people value what they are comfortable with for studying, so I hardly saw girls wearing skirts. In Korea, in the beginning of the semesters, people buy new clothing, shoes, etc, but here girls don't carry expensive purses and just carry backpacks and wear comfortable clothes. America is a very wealthy country and it's a good university here, but students are frugal.

Sang's appreciation for the cheap cost of goods and services and the economical nature of members of the host culture when juxtaposed with his unfamiliarity with the sales tax system was evidence of the impact of the economy on his adjustment to U.S. culture.

Finally, in Sang's eleventh journal entry, he explained his uncertainty about the tipping custom in the U.S.:

There's a tip culture in the U.S. In Korea, some hotels and places where most of the customers are foreigners require tips. In America, there's tipping everywhere. Being here for the first time, it is very confusing. Some walk-in restaurants don't have servers, so there's no tip. I sometimes get confused what to do in some restaurants. I think that the tip amount varies between 10~15% depending on the person. I have seen some Americans leaving coins for tips which means that people pay a very exact amount. In Korea, tips are more like 10 dollar bills. No one gives or takes a dollar bill. Here, I don't think people mind giving a dollar for a tip. I want to know more about why there's a tip, how much is a proper amount, and when to give it. In America, the total amount of expenditure increases because of taxes and tips added onto the price.

The exactitude with which many Americans calculate tips would be foreign to him, especially when one considers that in Korean culture such a level of accuracy would exhibit a lack of etiquette.⁴⁴

Like Sang, Kwang described in his ninth journal entry his surprise at the differences in food prices in Korea and in the U.S.:

...When I went to a market first time here, I surprised that the prices of meat was really low especially related to beef. The beef prices in Korea are really expensive as you know. Maybe the prices of Korea are more expensive at least three times or greater than The States... Even though there are some kinds of seafood such as shellfish and shrimp, it is highly expensive except froze seafood. In Korea, kinds of seafood are much more various and cheaper than here although the prices of beef is very high.

For Kwang, the variation in prices, in part due to the diet of Americans, was the source of some degree of psychological distress in his adjustment to the economic system of the U.S.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ There is an implicit belief that you cannot put an exact monetary amount on the service that someone provides you and to attempt to do so is offensive. In addition, in the traditional communal nature of Korean society, especially among friends, family, and associates, there is an unspoken understanding that balance will ultimately be achieved.

Aside from this criticism, however, Kwang found other economic differences both pleasant and worthy of his adoption in many of his comments during his first interview. In particular, his discovery of garage sales, "...the best thing ever", evinced feelings of admiration for the frugality of members of the host culture and caused him to reconsider his own sense of economy:

...It's awesome. [Holding up a pen on my desk] In Korea, we throw out pens like this and I threw out quite a few of them... In my case, before I arrived here, I threw away a nearly new bed. After experiencing the culture here, I felt bad for throwing away that bed and I couldn't buy a new one...But here, even the items that are old can be sold at garage sales. I think it's something for Koreans to learn... I was impressed that people here, who have a higher GNP, still know how to conserve things and use them. I learned a lot...I felt like only poor people would come to these sales, but I was surprised to see that neighbors come and buy items. I've been to three garage sales and all good items are sold really early.⁴⁶

Kwang's positive opinion of this particularly American economic practice, like Sang's, indicated that he did not find this substantial dissimilarity to be a source of stress in his adjustment to U.S. culture.

For Hong, a lack of understanding of issues related to prices in the U.S. characterized one of his utterances in his first interview. As an example, he failed to see the financial logic behind the use of rebates here:

⁴⁵ My own experiences in Korea mirrored those of Sang and Kwang. Depending on the area of the economy, prices were often quite different in our two countries. My surprise at the disparities lasted until I found myself, after a period of time, no longer converting the cost from Korean won to American dollars.

⁴⁶ My own experiences in Korea confirmed this difference between Koreans and Americans. As described previously, the pressure to maintain an appropriate appearance in the eyes of others dictates that the exterior (of self, home, and possessions) must always be flawless. As such, a sign of wear and tear in one's property, for example, requires that it be discarded and replaced by a newer version. I was often shocked by what I would find at the curb on a regular basis. In fact, the vast majority of the furniture and other items in my apartment had been acquired in this manner.

...There's no such thing in Korea. A rebate system bothers people by making them photocopy, fill out forms, etc. Why not just discount the price on the spot? Why does the company give it later? I bet they will make better business if they discount it right away.

Hong's words evinced his struggle to accept this different practice in the U.S. economic system as compared to the Korean one.

Hong was also confused by the custom of tipping. However, unlike Sang, he was unsure of whether or not to tip in a Korean restaurant in Houston in his fourth journal entry. Given the aforementioned tendency of Koreans to replicate their own culture in other countries, his uncertainty was justified:

...In Houston, I have something curious. First one, about TIP(gratuity), which is a kind of American culture. I went to Korean restaurant, and when I paid the price, I was hesitated to pay tips because the restaurant is not American one but in the USA. Eventually, I paid 10% tips for food. However, I thought I did pay extra money, which means that I do not pay tips to Korean restaurant unlike American restaurant.

For Hong, providing extra money to someone who was already obligated to provide him with the best possible service is considered rude and insulting, regardless of the setting. Consequently, his indecision in the Korean restaurant reflected his consternation about which culture's rules to apply.

Finally, Hong, like Sang, related his pleasure at discovering the cost-effective and convenient access to sporting facilities while distinguishing the U.S. system from the Korean system in his ninth journal entry:

...but I can enjoy several sports with convenience. There are so many tennis courts, and nice golf course. In Korea, we do not have tennis courts in my neighborhood area. I have to drive a car for thirty minutes, and have to pay some money to use the court. However, here, I can play tennis at any time, and free. It is very good. Also, in Korea, we have to pay more than 120dollars to play golf (green fee). Also, we have to go to golf course for long time. However, here I

can enjoy golf at any my free time with only 30 dollars. Here, very nice place to enjoy favorite sports.

While a positive report of having been surprised, this emotion was nonetheless shocking to him given the relatively fewer public recreational services and the comparatively greater number of people interested in using them.

*Individualism / Group*⁴⁷

Just as individuality is a hallmark of U.S. culture, a group orientation is a trademark of Korean culture. When such disparate philosophies come into contact, the outcome of the interaction would likely engender feelings of stress more for Koreans than Americans. While not ignoring individual differences, U.S. citizens, having grown up in a society that prizes freedom and independence, would be comparatively well-prepared for the sudden removal of the support of family and friends upon their arrival in a foreign country.⁴⁸

Based on the silence on this theme by Hong and the single favorable mention of an appreciation for the individualism found in U.S. culture by Kwang in his first interview, neither participant was adversely affected. In fact, for Kwang, the freedom of expression offered by the norms of the host culture was welcomed for the opportunity it provided for a respite from the social pressure exerted by the group mentality in Korea. For Sang, however, the more frequent mention of the differences in an individual as opposed to a group orientation exhibited by members of Korean and U.S. cultures

⁴⁷ Because of the strong correlation between this abstract concept and its actual expression in behavior, several instances reported by Sang and Kwang were previously provided in greater detail in the *Interpersonal* symptoms section.

⁴⁸ My own experience of moving to Korea did in fact confirm this as my separation was far from a traumatic experience; instead, I found it to be exhilarating.

indicated that it was a factor which impacted his adjustment over the course of the semester. This fundamental difference in mindset was deeply felt and did elicit discussion in several of his interviews and journal entries.

Along with his aforementioned struggles with the English language, the group-oriented culture of Korea was a further reason for the challenge Sang felt to become more integrated in U.S. society. However, establishing social connections with members outside of his group, for example, with members of the host culture, is generally not a culturally-accepted or practiced behavior. As a consequence (and as reported in the *Interpersonal symptoms* section), mingling with strangers, Korean or otherwise, is relatively unheard of in Korea.⁴⁹

This behavior is a natural response to the challenges of an unknown environment; many individuals from other cultures do likewise. However, where Koreans in general and Korean students specifically differ is in the relative permanency of their attachment to fellow citizens of their country long after their arrival, the nearly complete re-creation of Korea in the new society, and in the highly coercive pressure to remain part of the group. In fact, these bonds, which encompass living arrangements, educational

⁴⁹ I can recall many times where I would come face-to-face with this cultural difference when I was in Korea. For example, when I would be engaged in a conversation with one Korean student who was unknown to another student who approached us, the complete silence and nearly complete lack of eye contact between the two would make the casual meeting suddenly very strained and awkward, even after my forced introduction. Additionally, the one time I attempted to have students from different classes over to my apartment for a party, this cultural norm once more was in evidence. In spite of my best efforts to have the Koreans mingle, as would be expected in the U.S., separate corners of my home were staked out by the students of the respective classes, in essence creating four separate parties instead of one. Finally, my own experiences with my Korean students who would go on business trips or conferences in other countries would always astound me with their accounts of what they had done (or rather not done). Inevitably, these individuals would remark that the first thing they did upon arriving was to seek out the local Korean community.

affiliations, businesses, social gatherings, and religious organizations, for example, are practically unbreakable.⁵⁰ As a consequence, most Koreans never get beyond a superficial understanding of U.S. culture. When this tendency is considered alongside the large number of Korean students studying at Texas A&M University, then the possibilities for the participants achieving a deep understanding of and integrating into U.S. culture were substantially reduced.

The compulsory nature of Korean culture in regards to maintaining strong bonds is the most noteworthy impediment to Koreans establishing connections with members of different cultures. Unlike in the U.S., the freedom to do as one pleases without too much consideration for the group is in many ways anathema to Koreans. The American sense of individuality is at best strange and at worst threatening and selfish for most Koreans. In such an environment, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for citizens of this country to be able to establish anything more than superficial links with Americans. Thus, feelings of culture shock, if and when they were present, would be allowed to fester as the opportunities for learning about the host culture would be marginalized.

Among the three participants, the individualism of Americans caused the most discomfort for Sang if the quantity of journal entries he wrote is used as the basis of deciding. His military education fed into his contemplation of the pros and cons of each mindset. For example, in Sang's tenth and twelfth journal entries, respectively, he

⁵⁰ Here in the U.S., I have heard from my Korean friends that they primarily patronize Korean-run establishments, both legal and illegal. For instance, dentists, barbers, and even a Korean "restaurant" run out of a local Korean woman's apartment provide the comforts of home as they insulate the patrons from the new and challenging culture.

described how the group mentality in Korea necessitated sharing and consideration of others:

We do not want to weed out. It is not only crowned with great success but also human relationship. Also, it is very closed relation in a drinking party or dine together. For that reason,...all of them who have relationship... should accompany after cancel their plan.

Mostly, we do not like to eat lonely beside others. Because they think that is not good manner for other people. ...As a result, Korean choices between two things, together eat or do not eat in case with other peoples regardless of their empty stomach.⁵¹

While briefly acknowledging the sublimation of the individual to the group, Sang's defense of the solidarity which came from not excluding anyone was evidence of his obvious familiarity and comfort with this culturally-generated philosophy.

In contrast, his perception of the examples of individualism in U.S. culture that he had observed illustrated his ambivalence. For example, in Sang's twelfth journal entry, he related his feelings about the American custom of paying for and consuming only what is theirs:

...American does not like share their food and individual things, especially like water. After drinking in the bar, the Waitress asks us, "Separately or together" in spite of "10 person drinking 10 bottles" Many of Korean do not like this payments. Usually, we raise money before start or senior, oldest and higher rank person pay the charges. I can not say it is good or not. It is just one difference method. Sometimes, Dutch treat is better than others I think.⁵²

⁵¹ My own experience has shown me many similar examples of the concern of the Korean people for others in their group. One such example involves the cultural prohibition against leaving a social gathering early or before the most senior member has. I will always remember the first time my adult students had taken me to a karaoke. Where we had started with around ten students, as the night wore on, I had noticed that one-by-one students had excused themselves to go the restroom only to never return. Only after asking the remaining student or two what had happened did I understand that they had not wanted to disturb the atmosphere of the party by leaving directly.

⁵² My own experience with the culturally-mandated sharing of food and drink (as well as the cost) in Korea could shed some light on the very different mentality between our two cultures. Whereas in the U.S., a bag of chips would usually be opened by pulling apart the top, and thus allowing only one hand at a time

While not dismissive of this cultural difference, Sang's more strongly developed sense of the group as opposed to the individual was a source of stress when he was confronted with situations such as the one related in this journal entry.

In his eighth journal entry as well, Sang observed a lack of concern for others as demonstrated by the patrons of Wal-Mart:

Public order is an important aspect to support the value of individual freedom. I surely believe that most Americans are lawful citizens. It is worthy to learn how people yield and care for each other to maintain the order. However, there are exceptions to this good image. Looking at the shopping carts at Walmart, I hardly see people returning the carts and placing them in an orderly manner. They either leave the carts near the parking spot or just push the carts to the returning point. Maybe it's because people know there are employees who are responsible for collecting and lining up the carts. Even inside the store, many items are lying on the floors, no one seems to care.

This description echoed the one written by Sang in the fifth week (and mentioned in the section on the *Interpersonal* symptoms) in reference to the attitude and behavior of his fellow students. In both instances, as a product of the Korean military, an institution devoted to service and the maintenance of public order, the disregard of anyone's needs but their own was an incomprehensible action that hindered Sang's adaptation to U.S. culture.

In spite of these reservations, in Sang's fourth and fourteenth journal entries, respectively, he evinced his recognition of the advantages of individualism and expressed admiration for Americans' ability to balance their own needs and those of society:

to grab the snack, in Korea, the bag was designed to be opened lengthwise, so that the food could be shared by many people.

If I have endeavor, it is possible to any thing what I want regardless of other's eye.

I respect Americans who know how to enjoy their lives with very relaxed attitude. Individuals are very unique, but they care about others, while pursuing their dreams.

In his midterm interview as well, he related the liberating effect of not having to concern himself with the opinions of his fellow countrymen:

...They don't judge how others are dressed. I feel that any style is accepted and appreciated here. That's very good. Korean people are all about images and we care so much about others. Here, it's very free to do whatever an individual wants.

It's difficult to explain, but when I am with all non-Koreans, I tend to have more confidence. When a Korean person with similar or better English ability compared to mine is next to me, I get somewhat shy. I feel that non-Koreans take it as it's natural that my English is not good, so I don't mind trying to speak. With another Korean person, I care about that person's ability. For example, when I go out with my wife I speak a lot in English with confidence, but with other Koreans who speak pretty well, I just keep quiet.

Taken as a whole, Sang's words in his various interviews and journal entries offered insight into his attempt to balance the positive and negative aspects of individualism in U.S. culture throughout the study.

In his final interview, however, he related his awareness of the fact that the latitude of individual expression afforded Americans was not unlimited, in particular on a societal level:

Life here is very free, but public etiquette such as on the road and other places is important. Be aware not to litter, speed, or put kids in the car without a car seat. You will be caught for sure. The law is strictly enforced here.⁵³

⁵³ His utterance provided evidence of a cultural difference that was unanticipated for me in Korea as well. In many ways, the attitude of citizens of Korea and the U.S. were diametrically opposed in regards to opinions of the individual, group, and society. Where in the U.S., individuality is a cornerstone of the culture, a general concern for the rule of law, nonetheless, exists, and in many ways, distinguishes

In sum, Sang's appreciation of individualism grew over the semester, indicating his gradual adjustment to this aspect of the culture in the U.S.

Environmental

The environment in the U.S. was revealed as a theme in several of Sang's and Kwang's journal entries and in only Sang's second interview. Environmental differences between Korea and America in terms of natural and manmade conditions as well as internal and external factors were described; in addition, for Sang in particular, the dissimilar awareness of issues related to conservation, recycling, and efficiency constituted the majority of the content of his referenced entries and midterm interview. Taken as a whole, these examples provided evidence of this variable as an influential factor in these two participants' respective adjustments to the culture in the States.

For Koreans unfamiliar with the natural environment in Texas, their opinion was at times based on the movie *Giant*. As such, on countless occasions while in Korea, I had to dispel the myth that my home state was only a desert populated by cowboys, horses, and cows. For Kwang, in his eleventh journal entry, he alluded to this preconception as well as to the environment in Korea:

Today is a special day because I experienced what I saw in Korea. Most of Koreans think about Texas a scene running getting on a horse. And I also wanted to see such a representative scene of Texas, but I cannot feel genuine looks of Texas because there was no chance to go this College Station out. Even though

members of this culture from Korean culture. In Korea, consciousness of one's place in his or her group dictates how this individual will behave, but in the societal arena, respect for the rights of the "other" is at times neglected, perhaps as a consequence of Confucianism, a hyper-developed sense of regionalism, and the relatively recent adoption of a democratic political system. Consequently, I sometimes observed a far less developed sense of obligation to others on the societal level in Korea than in the U.S.

there were no enough times to enjoy everything today, it was a really good time as well as nice experience to feel Texas.

A farm, called 'Ranch', is highly bigger than what I thought, and also it was an enviable thing which we never have in my country. In the ranch, during taking a horse and shooting a gun, I felt like a cowboy appearing in western movies. However, such things would not be unique cultures of only the States. Only what I felt today is that the ranch is really big and people seem to have comfort livings. Of course, the appearances with easy and composed lives can be seen in rural areas of Korea like here, but there might be no a natural comfort from the wide nature in Korea.

Sang also commented on his appreciation of the natural environment in College Station.

In his second journal entry, he stated:

Texas has a good habitat. Especially, clean air and natural grass. It is true hot air but it is very clean. Therefore I don't need to wash my car frequently. (I love my car) Also there are so many grass area like park, ground, a front yard and so on. I can see mow the grass almost everyday. It is great place to play soccer for me.

While the physical environment is not a product of culture, it can be shaped by and, in turn, shape culture. Consequently, Sang's and Kwang's observations and expectations of the local setting, respectively, reflected the influence of this factor on their adjustments to the host culture.⁵⁴

Internally, an important difference between the environment of the Korean home and that of the American home is in the flooring. Where in the U.S. most homes have

⁵⁴ In their journal entries, they were each describing environmental differences between Korea and the U.S. in terms of space, air quality, and ground cover. In the first case, the entire country of South Korea is only one-third the size of Texas but has nearly three times the population. In addition, mountains constitute seventy percent of the land. As such, the wide open spaces to be found throughout Texas would be shocking. My own experiences in Korea confirm this difference; for even when climbing a mountain, it was still possible to have to wait to proceed on a trail because of the volume of human traffic. Secondly, the pollution from domestic and international industries as well as the yearly occurrence of a massive dust storm originating in the Yellow River area of China both combine to make breathing conditions in many cities of Korea problematic. It is no exaggeration to say that entire mountains in Seoul can be obscured from view on many days. Thirdly, the naturally rocky and dry soil conditions in the country means that ground cover, such as grass, is far less common than in the U.S. For example, most playgrounds in schools and the communities throughout the nation are dirt.

wall-to-wall carpeting, in Korea, the vast majority of homes has a shiny, laminate material and is heated. The texture of this material as well as the customary yellow color both conspire to easily reveal dirt and other foreign particles. In addition, many activities, such as eating and sleeping, take place on the floor or on a cushion placed on the floor. Also, until relatively recently, most homes irrespective of the weather keep their windows open because of the Korean penchant for fresh air. As such, nearly daily cleaning is required. The inability to completely remove grime from carpets, on the other hand, compounded by the relative infrequency of cleaning them, would therefore be a source of consternation.

When the fact that shoes are not taken off inside of a house in the U.S. is added to this environmental dissimilarity, then it was predictable to find that Kwang, in his seventh journal entry, expressed his inability to understand the advantages of carpeting over the flooring found in his country:

...I had already known Americans mainly use carpets and even do not take their footwear off inside through TV or movies... When I arrived here (actually, I went to the States first time in my life), I was surprised at the sight that the whole floors of my house entirely consist of dark carpets except kitchen and bathroom although I already expected such cases. Of course, the floors covered with carpets are softer than the floors in Korea. However, I did not discover any merits except mentioned above. If some liquid is spilled on the carpet, it cannot be easily eliminated and it is hard to wash. Even though cleaning the carpets is often executed by a vacuum, the carpets cannot be perfectly maintained clean. If the surface consists of hard materials being easily scrubbed, such defects could be solved. Carpets have a lot of dust and many probabilities many harmful insects can live. I don't know why Americans do not take their footwear off inside even if carpets have such defects.

In spite of Kwang's search for a justifiable number of benefits to explain the use of carpet in the U.S., he remained disturbed by this preference.

Finally, the lack of concern for the environment witnessed by Sang was a shock for him. In spite of his aforementioned belief that American students were financially prudent, his view did not extend to their wastefulness of the natural resources in his second interview:

...Here, cars are always on and most office buildings have A/C and lights on 24/7. People often use disposable paper products as you can find in the park trash cans. In restrooms, paper towels are wasted by using many at a time for no reason. There are many aluminum cans as well...I feel it's such a waste. I guess that being able to waste means that either there's a lot of money or the items are very cheap.

In contrast, in part because of the large number of people living in a limited area as well as the lack of natural resources, recycling, conservation, and issues related to energy efficiency are mandatory and in many cases enforced by law in Korea. Accordingly, the comparative abundance of space, available resources, and voluntary character of environmentalism to be found in Texas is different from Korea.

For example, in Sang's third journal entry and midterm interview, respectively, he highlighted the differences between his home and host culture and described his apprehension about the consequences of the actions in the U.S.:

In my country, we have to separate all of garbage and classify things into many kinds of recycle articles. However, we don't have to disjoin trashes in college station. It is very convenience, but on the other hand, I am anxious about environmental pollutions.

There are two reasons for conserving in Korea. One is because Korea lacks all natural resources, and the other is that we are concerned about how waste management can affect the environment, so many items are recycled by law.

Consequently, he struggled to find a rationale for the lack of concern for the environment in this culture in his seventh journal entry:

I believe that we are now energy crisis. I wonder about a general American's opinion because they seem to me not concern about that. Perhaps they have lots of natural resources. In Korea, many general people do not use air conditioner because it more uses electric energy 30 times than a fan. I'm not certain that is saving energy or money. In America on the contrast, each building and home use air conditioner. Of course it is positively necessary because of strong hot weather but many students wear [long-sleeved shirts]in doors. Also they carrying 긴팔옷 [long-sleeved shirts] against indoors. I usually can see people who feel chilly. Oil price, electric fee are too lower than my country. I like it but I'm feel anxiety

This contrast in attitudes about environmental issues in Korea and the U.S. that Sang had observed negatively impacted his perception of the host culture as well as its members. His fearfulness about this apathy implied that he had been unable to adjust. Sang's comments, when viewed as a whole, reflected the importance of the environment as an influential factor in his adaptation to U.S. culture.

Transportation

Another theme that was mentioned by all three participants was related to transportation. More specifically, perceptions of the quantity of public modes of transportation as well as of the dissimilarities in the strict adherence to and enforcement of traffic laws were cited by Sang, Kwang, and Hong in their interviews and journal entries as examples of influential factors in their respective adjustments to the culture of the U.S.

The relative dearth of public transportation options in College Station as compared to Korea required a substantial adjustment on the part of the participants to life in the U.S. Coming from a country where trains, buses, subways, and taxis are not only plentiful but economical options for travel to one where the opposite is true, this

contrast proved challenging for the Korean participants. For Sang, he expressed in his first journal entry the difficulty that he faced in getting around in August:

There are so many kinds of public transportations in Korea like bus, taxi, subway, train, airport and so on. Above all, taxi is very efficient transportation for strange person. College Station, however, doesn't have any taxi and commercial buses. It is true that other big city in USA are have taxies. But before I have my own car, I really inconvenience to live here. If we take the taxi, we don't need to know about the map.

While most Koreans have their own cars, the necessity of moving around the U.S. via this mode of transportation was both a nuisance and a source of stress for Sang.

In Kwang's final interview as well, he retrospectively related his initial mystification about the lack of public transportation in College Station, a fact that he had discovered upon his arrival:

I didn't understand why there's no transit system in this town. Before I got my own car, it was very inconvenient. When I go shopping or meet a friend or go anywhere, it's very difficult.

This virtual absence of public transportation options available here, as it was for Sang, was a shock for him.

However, this huge difference between Korea and the U.S. in terms of public transportation did not distress Sang two months later. Rather, in his second interview, he professed an understanding of how the geographic and financial dissimilarities between the two countries made the relative absence of public modes of transportation in the U.S. justifiable:

...America is a big country and cars are quite cheap. In the old days in Korea, having a car showed the wealth of the household, but now it has become more like America. A car is a necessity just like TVs. It's very natural to have cars; I have seen 3 in a household so far. Even if the person does not own a house, a car must be there, so I don't see a need for public transportation. Also I don't mean

to say there is no bus or subway because they are there in major metropolitan areas. However, due to the land size, it might not be worth investing so much money in building up those transportation systems. Probably having a car is more cost effective. In Korea, it's easy to catch a cab, but there's no taxi, bus, or subway here, so I have to ask for a ride. If I can't get a ride, I'm stuck...I see that a car is a necessity and public transportation is not necessary.

In spite of his previously stated feelings of frustration and concern for the environment, Sang did not view his approval of the private transportation culture in the U.S. as contradictory, implying that he had not found his adjustment to this aspect of life here overly problematic.

The second major difference in terms of transportation revealed in the two of the participants' interviews and journal entries was the driving culture. For Kwang, his opinion of both the manner of driving and the transportation system in the States reflected a belief contrary to the one expressed by Hong. In his first interview, he initially stated that he did not find many dissimilarities:

First, I think the driving style is very similar except for the stop signs, so I feel very comfortable driving here. Because I think a lot of the transportation system in the U.S. has been copied in Korea, they have to be similar.

The fact that his major was in the field of transportation and had been a subject of study for him likely prepared him for what he would find in the U.S.

In his eighth journal entry, however, Kwang provided a very comprehensive and accurate depiction of differences in the transportation systems of Korea and the U.S.:

...In the aspect of traffic facilities, the biggest difference between The States and Korea is 'Stop Sign' on unsignalized intersections. The stop signs only in The States play a important role for ordered traveling on many intersections. When I drove first time here, I were not familiar with the signs so I sometimes confused whether or not should I stop on intersections with no signals even if I knew the fact every vehicles must stop on intersections with 'Stop Sign'. Because as you know, there are no the stop signs and exist only signals on intersections in Korea.

So in an intersection having no signal, drivers can go through with decreasing their speeds without stopping. Maybe such a regulation in Korea may be more convenient for drivers if the problems related to pedestrian safety are not considered. The stop signs were so uncomfortable for me driving the first time in my life in The States. As the proverb in Rome should follow Rome's law, I also have to comply with the rule. However, according to driving more and more I became aware that the stop signs make me discard a tendency of hasty driving being accustomed in Korea. That is, there was a yielding culture on the intersections. Also, people usually did not sound the horn even if a front car of them starts late. Their easy and composed attitudes when driving will make traffic accidents less and such traffic cultures may be a necessary culture for Korea having highly traffic accident rates.⁵⁵

In spite of his recognition of major driving dissimilarities, Kwang's acceptance of the norms of U.S. culture as well as his contemplation of the benefits of the system reflected the influence of his personal outlook and the passage of time on his capacity to adjust.

By his final interview, though, Kwang's experiences driving in the U.S. had caused him to alter his initial favorable impression of drivers in this country as opposed to Korea:

At first I found some differences in traffic systems, especially drivers. When I was in Korea, I know that usually American people drive gently and slowly. They yield very well. That's what I thought. Compared to Koreans, they have good driving habits. However, when I got to drive here, I realized that it's not that different. Of course, people are so much better yielding wise. Yet, on the highway, people cut off others without blinkers very often. That's a difference I see from my perception prior to coming here.

The opinion expressed in Kwang's utterance was in contrast to the one expressed at the beginning of the study. This dissimilar viewpoint was not so much a sign of

⁵⁵ For people who have never been to Korea, Kwang's characterization of stop signs and signals as being optional is hard to conceive. However, having driven in Korea for eight years, I must confirm the accuracy of his account. As a consequence, it was a risky proposition to cross the street at times because of the lack of certainty surrounding whether the driver would stop or not. I can even recall a television program in Korea which attempted to call attention to the severity of this problem. They installed a hidden camera at a busy intersection and videotaped the number of vehicles that actually came to a full stop, giving an award to the few motorists who obeyed the law.

dissatisfaction with U.S. culture as it was a realization of the similarities between the host and home cultures, indicating his capacity to adjust his preconceptions.

In Hong's first interview, he related his annoyance at the comparatively exacting observance of traffic laws by American drivers as well as his surprise at the existence of different laws:

... When I drive, I am frustrated when I see a stop sign because I must stop. If there's a stop sign in Korea, I can just look around and pass through the intersection. From the middle lane, here I can make left turns anywhere. At first I didn't know about it. Someone told me about it and I find it interesting.

Unlike Kwang, by his final interview, nearly five months later, Hong applied a negative stereotype to people from his own country, in spite of evidence to the contrary:

When I see people speeding or not driving correctly, I am worried that they might be Koreans. When I went to Houston, I felt that drivers there were pretty rough like Seoul drivers. However, in general, when I see rough driving, I feel like there's a Korean in the driver seat of the car.

Based on my experiences driving and as a passenger in Korea, Hong's adjustment to the differences in driving manner, more so than the traffic laws, was noteworthy.

Consequently, Hong's observance of the approach to driving in the U.S. practiced by many drivers was the impetus for the aforementioned utterance.

Finally, the enforcement of the traffic laws by the police in the U.S. was a third difference reported by two of the participants. In Sang's third journal entry, for example, he professed his negative opinion of the power of the police in this country:

I feel that I pay specially attention to traffic regulations. The polices' authority is too strong and also fine is very in price. They often assumed a coercive attitude...In my opinion there is necessary for classification which is really, intentionally dangerous and violate the rule.

As in the previous discussion of the impartiality of economic practices, the strict enforcement of the traffic laws by the police in the U.S. was also viewed as unnecessary and excessive by Sang. While it is true that police in the U.S. can also selectively implement the laws, it is comparatively far less common here than in Korea.⁵⁶ As a consequence, Sang found the uncompromising approach of the police officers in the U.S. to be a source of stress.

For Hong, in his fourth journal entry, the dissimilarity in the technique for apprehending motorists in Korea and the U.S. by police officers was something that intrigued him:

...when I came back to College Station, I saw several police cars. Some drivers had already been stopped in front of policemen. I am curious of how policeman can stop drivers. In Korea, there are many instruments in the road that regulate over speeding car. Thus, the machines take a picture that implies the cars, and we have to pay a fine. However, in the USA, I cannot find any instruments in the road. However, there are many policemen, and I am wondering about how they can catch up the drivers.

Given the widespread police presence and the necessity of stopping for them, the legal nature of these cross-cultural dissimilarities between Korea and the U.S. in many ways required Hong's adjustment if he was to successfully and safely avoid the shock of erroneously applying his own customs in the host country.

Dietary

Given that the diet of Koreans and that of Americans is in many ways substantially different and that Koreans require certain staples at every meal, it was anticipated that this factor would prove influential in the participants' respective

⁵⁶ While by no means the norm, the habit of bribing or fleeing police officers in Korea is pervasive.

adjustments to the culture in the U.S. However, the relative dearth of mention of food- and drink-related challenges proved otherwise, implying that the dietary dissimilarities for Sang, Kwang, and Hong were not overly problematic.⁵⁷ More specifically, the influence of dietary differences between Korea and the U.S. were only reported by two of the participants, Kwang and Sang, in their journal entries and final interviews.

For the period of the study at least, each participant in their own way acted in exactly the same manner as my former students had; that is, they had minimized the impact of diet on their adaptation to U.S. culture. Hong, for example, as the only single individual in the study, was the most likely candidate to have difficulties with the differences in food between Korea and the U.S. However, as described in the previous section on Gender, he discovered in his seventh journal entry upon his mother's departure that he and his roommate could still enjoy traditional Korean food.

Sang, as the only participant with his wife and children present, was likely the best situated to cope with the dietary differences. Accordingly, through the first three-quarters of the fifteen-week semester, only one journal entry, his ninth, referred to his

⁵⁷ As elaboration, my own experiences with Korean food and with the strict requirements at Korean meals will provide some insight into the surprising nature of the participants' journal entries. First of all, the different types, smells, colors, and tastes of Korean cuisine are in many cases unfamiliar and unique to the U.S. outside of the relatively few Korean restaurants. Secondly, the absolute necessity of having *kimchi* (spicy pickled cabbage), rice, and soup at virtually every meal is in stark contrast to the diversity of types of meals in the U.S. I remember being astounded the first time I had finished eating Korean barbecue with my friends only to find out that this was not considered a meal; this designation was only applicable if *kimchi*, rice, and soup had been consumed. In addition, I was always surprised and mildly disappointed by my Korean students who would return from a trip to another country having eaten only Korean food and expressed no real interest in trying another country's cuisine. Given that food is part of the culture of any society, this tendency to insulate oneself from new experiences in a foreign land by seeking out one's own culture could have long-term detrimental effects on Korean sojourners' ability to adjust to another culture.

confusion at the lack of apprehension for the consequences of consuming fast foods on both an individual and a societal level:

There are extreme fat person in USA... I strongly wonder about what does American's opinion like that. Is that just individually problem? They are indifferent to their shape If I see they eat lots of fast foods.

In Korea, people share not only their ethnic background but a heretofore healthful diet composed of rice, vegetables, and fish.⁵⁸ As such, individuals who were overweight were the exception rather than norm. Add to this circumstance the fact that Sang is an avid sportsman, and it is understandable how he could marvel at the lack of regard for one's health by not only the individual but also the society.

In Sang's thirteenth journal entry, however, he was willing to try the traditional American cuisine served to him and his family at Thanksgiving:

...very delicious food, especially Turkey and cheese cake...The Turkey is very delicious...I have never it before but it is good for me. I ate much. I will never forget it. I want to learn how to make it.

Sang's favorable disposition to the consumption of food from the host culture exhibited an openness to the culture here.

By the end of the study period, though, the comparatively greater access to the dietary choices found in the host culture as compared to in Korea had caused him to express less rather than more desire for them in the last interview:

I liked American food in Korea and going out to eat American food happened very infrequently, but I got to have it more often here. I even liked burgers in Korea, but I don't like them anymore since I ate them a lot.

⁵⁸ With the introduction of high calorie, processed foods, the industrialization of the country, and the increased participation of women in the workforce, the eating patterns of many Koreans is rapidly changing, however, to resemble that of the U.S. As a consequence, the percentage of young Koreans who are overweight has risen.

As alluded to in his utterance, his understanding of American food had been synonymous with fast food until attending Thanksgiving at an American's house:

...I never experienced having well made meals. I generally think of fast food when we say American food. There are buffets or Cheddar's which are good. But in general, I refer to fast food, something you eat for the sake of eating, not to enjoy when it comes to American food. I loved the food...

Without this experience, it was likely that his understanding of and appreciation for this aspect of the host culture would have remained limited and decidedly negative.

Initially, I had also supposed that Kwang would be challenged by the differences in diet. As his wife was not expected to join him until the end of December, he had been temporarily forced to cook for himself. Nevertheless, Kwang, while surprised by and inquisitive about the American diet, did not find the dissimilarity with Korea to be a source of stress in his ninth journal entry:

Usually do Americans like meat than seafood? There are so many kinds of meat such as beef, pork, and chicken in the marts. Of course, there are several kinds of meat people can eat. However, what I want to talk about is the culture enjoying them, not just kinds...And also when saw meats displayed to sell in the food-storages, I surprised that Americans really enjoy eating them even if I have already known the facts in Korea. Only such a fact will not enough represent that all Americans like flesh. However, the scene being sell and bought flesh in most of the markets at least shows Americans enjoy eating meat considerably. Individually, because I enjoy eating seafood and vegetables than meat, they are my main items I buy in marts. However, there are different kinds of seafood in markets here...Do not Americans enjoy eating seafood?

Another interesting characteristic is the culture associated with instant foods. I know that The States is a place of the origin developed several kinds of instant foods. Especially, McDonald's chains, the most popular one of hamburger brands, are the most representative kind in the instant foods. The culture of instant foods really seems well developed.

Instead of strain from these dietary dissimilarities, Kwang found the consumption of meat and fast food by Americans to be objects of curiosity.

However, by the end of the semester, Kwang's adjustment to the food in the U.S. had become more challenging, in part due to his preference for seafood and his separation from his wife. He related his unhappiness with the range of items available as well as the prices in his third interview:

In the market, I try to find some food, for example, seafood such as mussels. There are a lot of shrimp, but other types of seafood are nowhere to be seen. I don't like meat, but I like seafood and vegetables. The grocery stores sell a lot of meat, and it's cheap relative to vegetables and seafood, which are more expensive compared to Korea. It's sad that I can't enjoy what I love to eat.

Ultimately, he found that he could not accommodate the differences in diet:

... When I first got here, I didn't think I needed to go to the Korean market. For two months I didn't go to the market and never had kimchi, but I couldn't hold on anymore. Now, I visit the oriental market the most out of all the places that I shop.

In spite of his considerable effort to adapt to the food in the U.S., the dissimilarity in diet proved too challenging for Kwang. The emotional reaction that this difference elicited was evidence that this factor was a noteworthy influence on his adjustment to the host culture.

Safety / Security

The issue of safety in the U.S. was a theme positively mentioned in only Sang's second interview and Hong's journal entries, but one that I had anticipated would have been cited negatively more frequently. The preconceived notion among many Koreans

that the States are a dangerous place, while disturbing, was not without its merits.⁵⁹ The safety of College Station, however, proved to be a positive factor in Sang's and Hong's adjustment to U.S. culture.

The issue of safety in the U.S. was a theme mentioned in Sang's second interview when he reported what had happened after losing his wallet:

When I lost my wallet with \$500 in it by leaving it in a shopping cart, I got the wallet back the next day. I didn't expect any of the money to still be there, but it was; I was surprised by that and said that this is a good place to live. People don't have greed over others' possessions.

The return of both Sang's wallet and the cash that had been in it provided confirmation that this culture offered a secure social environment for him and his family. As previously described, given the view of American society as dangerous that is held by many Koreans, his adoption of an attitude contrary to this was important, implying a sense of security in the host culture and with its members.

In Hong's fifth and tenth journal entries, respectively, he also related how his expectation that people in the States were honest was confirmed by the return of his lost wallet:

Last Week, I lost my wallet in the gas station. First time I realized that I lost my wallet, I thought I left it somewhere in my room, so I was not much concerned about it. However, after I looked for everywhere even in the car, I felt very nervous. In the United States, anybody can use my debit card in the shop? or

⁵⁹ There is comparatively more crime in the U.S. as compared to Korea. My own experiences in Korea often left me astounded by either the incredible naivety or the honesty of the citizenry in regards to fear of theft. For example, I was always stunned by the sight of open doors to homes, cars left running with no one in them, and having my boss pay all of his employees on the same day and at the same time every month in cash. In addition, the right to bear arms in the States, one not granted to Koreans, makes citizens of this country wary of what they will find in America. Further, the impact of the news and the American entertainment industry's propensity to show guns in many movies and music videos has led to a fear of the U.S.

how about my driver license and student ID card in the wallet? First, I checked the balance of my account on the internet, but nothing was changed.

Last Friday, I got the wondering mail from Police department. When I realized that it was from police department, I was really worried. However, after reading the contents, I was very pleased. It said, they got some item which might be owned to me, and they are keeping it and want to check whether it is mine or not. Immediately, I perceived that it is just wallet I lost in Houston about one month ago. In fact, the first time I lost it, I thought that it would return to me because the USA is very nice country, but nowadays, I have given up getting it. True to my expectation, the American society is very nice and good. If I lost it in Korea, I could never think returning the lost item such as the wallet.

Hong's sense of security indicated his confidence in members of U.S. society and the positive impact of this factor on his adjustment.

Country of origin

Korea, as opposed to the U.S., is a country that has historically been unified along ethnic lines. As such, racism and prejudice are not issues with which the vast majority of Koreans have had personal experience.⁶⁰ However, knowledge of the multicultural nature of American society as well as the challenges this diversity has engendered is well-known among Koreans primarily due to television and movies. Thus, Koreans do not come to this country unaware of what they will find. If anything, they have fairly rigid preconceptions about the characteristics of different races. In particular,

⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Korea, like all societies, is not immune to this problem. From differences as benign as the noting of skin color dissimilarities among Koreans to the much more serious and tragic relegation of Korean children of mixed heritage (such as those born to Korean and Black American parents) to second-class status, racism and prejudice are in evidence. Additionally, and perhaps most surprisingly, Korean-American individuals who elect to return to Korea for work in the English teaching field, for example, often face severe cross-cultural challenges from Koreans who cannot comprehend or refuse to believe that they are not still culturally as well as ethnically Korean.

positive impressions of White Americans abound while negative views of other minority groups, Black Americans in particular, are often in evidence.⁶¹

Nevertheless, among the three participants, the ethnic differences between Koreans and Americans only generated comment in Sang's journal entries and midterm interview. Kwang and Hong, on the other hand, did not directly refer to the influence of race as having been influential in their adjustments to U.S. culture. For Sang, however, his awareness of the differential status and treatment of people of diverse ethnicities and the implications of this racism and prejudice in the host culture were topics that captured his attention and made him question the values of this society.

As an example, in his second journal entry, he openly wondered about the implications of the absence of Black Americans at Texas A&M University while asserting his repugnance of the practice of racism:

The population of this town consists of many kind of ethnic group. In my opinion however, a white man, Blacks, Asian and Hispanic are large part of U.S.A By the way, why the Blacks cannot be found in the Texas A&M University. There are almost White man in our university exclude international students. I usually can see Black and Hispanic scrubwoman. In my house, Winsor Pointe, many Black man live. I already know the antagonism between blacks and whites. I wonder about the blacks' intelligent. If that is not a problem, why are they do not study in higher a college of education. I strongly believe that we must not discriminate against a person because of race or religion.

Sang's observations revealed his consciousness of prejudice in the local community and desire to understand the meaning for himself, the university, and the community.

⁶¹ My own experiences with my Korean students who were going to take a trip to the U.S., for example, usually involved assuring them that Black Americans were neither more nor less dangerous than any other ethnic group.

In another entry from just a week later, Sang related a much more personal example of his fears of discrimination against foreigners in general and Koreans specifically:

...My junior's wife in school paid a fine. She was charged with speeding over 30mile(5mile over) in 25mile limit sign. She was stiff with fright. She is a pregnant woman also have a very little baby...She is stranger in this town. It is correct or not she felt discriminate against foreigners. I had an experience like that too. But I just warned because of wrong way. Anyway, I am confident that we have to obey the regulations under any circumstances

While part of this episode could be traced to the far more personal and subjective nature of administering traffic laws in Korea as compared to the U.S.,⁶² the suspicion of unfair treatment revealed his doubts about the equitable treatment of individuals from all races, potentially exacerbating the stress of adjusting to the culture in the U.S.

In the midterm interview, Sang professed that he had become more comfortable around non-Koreans but forced to wrestle with the origins of his preconceived notions of other races generally and Black Americans specifically:

I thought about this before I came here. I remember the instance of African-Americans looting stores in L.A., and I saw the conflicts between the different ethnicities. I also heard that I should give my possessions away when an African-American person approaches at night, otherwise I could be killed... When both a White and non-White people passes by me at night, I don't feel so scared with a White person, but when I see a healthy looking African-American male, I get scared. I was thinking why I feel that way... It's probably because someone has told me so. I kept asking that question.

On the Texas A&M University campus, the virtual absence of a minority presence among the student body as well as a near-caste-like employment structure (with Whites

⁶² Given the comparative lack of training provided Korean police officers (many of them are serving in this capacity as part of their military duty), it was not uncommon for me to witness motorists fleeing or bribing these individuals with near impunity.

at the top) had also once again triggered Sang's speculations about what he had witnessed:

...I was observing carefully and I wondered why there are not many minorities in school. Texas A&M is a prestigious school and this place produces leaders in the society, but I don't see many minorities. Most of those people I encounter work in not so privileged jobs such as cleaning or gardening because they are not educated. I can see how the lack of education passes down from generations to generations and escaping their status or producing people with power and a voice is difficult. This vicious cycle generates their involvement with crimes, maybe not because they are evil, but because they are poor. For educated people, people who do supporting jobs are needed, and I see how minorities take that place here. I believe that a similar proportion of minorities must be in school and educated to achieve equality in society. I think that those jobs aren't for minorities but they are for uneducated or incapable people, so that if people are more educated, different things could happen.

Sang's utterances, revealing his acute awareness of his own prejudices and of the implications of racism in U.S. culture, were indicative of an individual who was attempting to cope with the significance of being from Korea.

As a consequence of what he had directly observed and previously heard about U.S. culture, Sang was filled with doubts about the attitudes of White and Black Americans towards other ethnic groups in general and him specifically:

I heard about the KKK. When I heard the story, I was surprised and wondered what White and Black people think about that issue. The KKK doesn't directly apply to me, but I am just curious. Maybe White people think they are more superior in terms of race, intelligence, etc, and African-Americans are inferior and have nothing. For minorities, they probably wonder why the society is this way. When I face a situation where I get in an argument with White people and when they get mean or yell at me when I am not at fault, I feel that maybe it's coming from their racist thoughts and they look down on me.

While the validity of his thinking could not be verified, it was not the most important issue; rather, it was the suspicion of prejudice by Sang that was the key concern, for these beliefs had the potential to color all future dealings with members of the host

culture. As a result, his ability to remain open to the challenges of adjustment here may have been compromised.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter V initially presents the answers to the research questions. The four central questions explored in the study were:

- (a) Are the newly-arrived Korean students going through culture shock?
- (b) What are the feelings they are experiencing that could be a sign of culture shock? What examples can they provide that reveal discomfort for them? What are their perceptions about this experience and how do they cope or not cope with it?
- (c) What factors could make the experience of culture shock more intense or less severe?
- (d) How has the university in particular helped the newly-arrived Korean students in coping with culture shock?

Next, the implications for the literature are provided. More specifically, the similarities and differences between the results of this study and the work of other authors are discussed. Then the practical implications of this research are described. The next section suggests improvements on the current study and proposals for future research. Finally, a brief summary concludes the chapter.

FINDINGS

Before the study, I expected that the research would reveal individual and complex narratives that, while containing shared elements, were nonetheless

representative of the unique attributes of the interview subjects and the phenomenon of culture shock. This expectation was supported for the singularity of the experience, which in turn led to the less conclusive finding for the existence of culture shock.

In addition, I anticipated that there would be several influential factors that assisted the Korean students in coping with culture shock. Based on the pilot case study and the review of the literature, I hypothesized that a relationship between the sojourners' facility with the English language, communication ability, Texas A&M University, social connectedness, attitudes, personality type, marital status (including family status and living arrangement), length of stay in the host country, religiosity, previous international experience, gender, age, cultural distance and differences, country of origin, counseling and the degree of cross-cultural adaptation would potentially exist and prove to be meaningful. My expectation was supported for the majority of the factors but not all of them. The differences among the participants as well as with previously published reports led to the conflicting findings for the different variables, and in the process, further emphasized the individual nature of the culture shock phenomenon.

Culture Shock Symptoms

For the central question of this study, i.e., were the newly-arrived Korean students going through culture shock, the findings revealed the existence of some degree of culture shock for each of the three participants at different times throughout the semester. In effect, this variation provided strong support for the individual nature of culture shock. While there were similarities among Sang, Kwang, and Hong, there were

also important differences in the quantity and quality of the symptoms, implying that this phenomenon was neither a preordained nor an entirely shared experience.

Based on the definition of the phenomenon used in this research (“...multiple demands for adjustment that individuals experience at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological levels, when they relocate to another culture” (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004, p. 168), the three participants at various times did display interpersonal, psychological, and physiological symptoms. In particular, the collected data revealed a comparatively much higher incidence of interpersonal and psychological symptoms of culture shock than of physiological ones, implying that the behavioral and social as well as the cognitive and emotional demands, respectively, for adjustment were felt more intensely than the physical demands.⁶³

For Sang, interpersonal and psychological examples of his stress in adjusting to U.S. culture were found in many of his journal entries and expressed in all of his interviews, with the social and behavioral factors being the most common. These sources of data provided evidence of an individual whose feelings of dissonance during his adjustment to U.S. culture intensified over the course of the semester. In particular, interpersonal relations related in many of his interviews and journal entries,

⁶³ However, as all cited examples were dependent on both the participant’s willingness and capacity to reflect upon experiences that they were having during the study, care should be taken in assuming that physiological symptoms were unquestionably less prevalent than the interpersonal or psychological ones. Further, as none of the three categories were mutually exclusive, each example could have been linked to another division if the data were examined from a different angle or perspective. Finally, the somewhat easier task of contemplating the source of interpersonal or psychological dissonance as being a product of culture as opposed to doing the same for physiological discord may have been another reason for the substantially lower proportion of mention of physical symptoms of culture shock.

demonstrated his comparatively greater challenge of adjusting to the interpersonal norms of U.S. culture than Kwang or Hong.

As the only military officer among the three participants, Sang's interpretation of and adherence to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of interactions among individuals was likely more exacting than it was for Kwang or Hong, thus providing a reason for his comparatively greater struggle with the psychological symptoms. On the one hand, his strong sense of camaraderie with his fellow officers offered him a support system to turn to when faced with difficulties. On the other hand, this resource demanded his loyalty and time to a greater degree than that experienced by Kwang or Hong. As a consequence, Sang's words did not reveal a great amount of interaction with members of the host culture. In fact, outside of his communication with me, he had no close associations with Americans.

In Kwang's case, the analysis of what he had written and said revealed numerous instances of cognitive and emotional strain. However, the psychological stress he faced, while primarily a consequence of his academic load and separation from his family, did not ever vary to a great extent over the course of the study. In the first case, the anxiety surrounding his adjustment to Texas A&M University provided the impetus for many of his feelings of cognitive and emotional dissonance. This strain was in some instances the result of differences in the administration of classes as well as of the time needed for study, but in most, it stemmed from the use of English as the sole medium of instruction. In the second case, due to the fact that he was living apart from his wife and child for the

first semester, Kwang often described having to endure feelings of loneliness. In fact, being without his family was the biggest psychological adjustment to life in the U.S.

Finally, for Hong, the psychological demands of adjustment to U.S. culture were the most commonly mentioned symptoms. In spite of the cognitive and emotional demands constituting the majority of his symptoms, the collected data exhibited the most U-shaped pattern of adjustment, indicating his belief at the end of the semester that he had emerged on the other side of his adaptation to the host culture. In addition, and unlike the other two participants, virtually no discussion of stress from interpersonal contact with members of the host culture was related to me. This virtual absence of mention of social and behavioral symptoms related to culture shock, however, did not represent a comparatively better interpersonal adjustment than the other participants, but rather an overall lack of quantitative and qualitative interaction at all. From the fact that his mother lived with him for the first part of the semester to his Korean roommate, Hong did not describe many interactions with Americans.

Perceptions and Coping

The second research question, i.e., what were the feelings, examples, and perceptions of the newly-arrived Korean students that could have been signs of culture shock as well as how well did they cope with this phenomenon, revealed each participant's views of these trials, for the most part, as capable of being overcome and temporary obstacles. Sang, Kwang, and Hong, as a whole, exhibited a strong sense of pragmatism, a willingness to understand the sources of cultural discord, and a belief that things would improve in the future, which allowed for the resolution of dissonance. In

spite of stated or implicit feelings of exhaustion, confusion, or surprise, for example, they were overall reflective about any cultural differences rather than dismissive, so much so that by the final interviews, they asserted that any culture shock they had experienced, if at all, was marginal and in the past.

Influential Factors

Answers to the third and fourth research questions, i.e., what factors, including the university in particular, could have made the experience of culture shock more intense or less severe, provided support for the majority of the variables hypothesized to be influential. Given that none of the individuals suffered to a great extent from this phenomenon, many of these factors had a positive effect. However, care should be taken in ascribing causation as this hypothesis was somewhat dependent upon the participants' mentioning of a factor as being influential or not.

These influential factors were identified from both the data itself and from the literature review. They were grouped into six categories which were further subdivided into smaller themes. These included English, university, social connectedness, personal outlook, demographic and other background, and cultural factors. However, just as with the culture shock symptoms, none of these categories was mutually exclusive. Each example described could have been linked to any of the six categories. As such, the division of the influential factors into discrete categories was somewhat deceiving and was only done so as to provide a sense of organization and clarity for the volume of data.

In addition, as culture shock has been revealed to be an individual phenomenon, the effect or lack of effect of any factor for one participant does not in and of itself

provide conclusive evidence either supporting or disproving its relevance for other people. While there were similarities among Sang, Kwang, and Hong, there were also important differences in the magnitude and quality of the impact of a particular factor, strongly implying that this phenomenon was an individual rather than a collective experience.

English Skills

The influence of English on the respective adjustments of the three participants to U.S. culture was noteworthy and constant throughout the study. The self-professed difficulties that Sang, Kwang, and Hong faced in using this language in all spheres of their lives proved to be the most daunting of the challenges they faced. Their relative lack of proficiency with English affected them both inside and outside of the university classroom and severely curtailed their opportunities for establishing any real sense of connection with the host culture. Based on the number of comments throughout the study devoted to the role of English in the participants' respective adjustments to the culture in the U.S., this factor was an instrumental variable in all facets of their lives.

In particular, as this language was the sole means by which content was delivered in the vast majority of the classrooms on the Texas A&M University campus and this environment was where the three participants spent the majority of their time, concerns about their English proficiency in this arena were the most often mentioned. For international students such as Sang, Kwang, and Hong, the university's general lack of any provision or accommodation for the needs of second language learners placed them at a disadvantage in relation to native speakers and thereby engendered culture shock-

related symptoms. The constancy of the anxiety produced by their English proficiency level did not abate throughout the semester; if anything, this strain increased over the course of the study, implying that their ability to adjust to U.S. culture had been impeded by their language ability.

In addition, the relative lack of openness of Americans to people from other cultures and their lack of tolerance for different accents of English revealed in the interviews and journals compounded the struggles of Sang, Kwang, and Hong to adapt to the host culture. In spite of the fact that effective communication entails some degree of negotiation and accommodation, the onus rested solely on the shoulders of the Korean participants. Many Americans that Sang, Kwang, and Hong attempted to interact with were not accommodating. Moreover, these members of the host culture did not realize the important opportunity provided to them by the presence of international students.

University

The impact of Texas A&M University on the respective adjustments of the three participants to the culture in the U.S. was also found to be an important factor. However, this influence was not generally a consequence of any intentional, concerted effort by the school. Owing to the amount of time the three participants devoted to their studies, the magnitude of this influence was substantial, pervasive, and unrelenting. The combination of the differences in education systems between Korea and the U.S., the rigors of coping with graduate-level study, the virtual absence of accommodations for international students, and the medium of instruction being English all united to hinder Sang's, Kwang's, and Hong's abilities to cope with the host culture.

Social Connectedness

The degree to which Sang, Kwang, and Hong felt connected to their new culture varied among the three, with Kwang, relatively speaking, the most successful, Sang the least successful, and Hong in between the other two participants. Each made some attempts to achieve greater integration into the local community. Kwang and Hong, for example, turned to the church for help in establishing social ties to members of U.S. culture. For Sang, his family's involvement in the local community offered him the chance to interact with Americans. In spite of their efforts, these endeavors were not accomplished to the extent hoped for by the three participants.

The primary reason for this relative deficiency was their lack of English proficiency and Americans' willingness to accept their role in facilitating communication. As U.S. society is by and large a monolingual society, if international non-native students want to become more involved with the culture around them, they must possess a high level of facility with English. With neither this skill set nor a high level of accommodation among Americans, it was extremely difficult for them to gain access to the host culture, and thereby feel connected to their new homes. A second reason for the lack of social connectedness was the debilitating impact of the Korean tendency to associate with their countrymen on the participants' ability to improve their English proficiency level. A final reason was the influence of the university, which based on the participants' views, hindered their ability to improve their English proficiency level.

Personal Outlook

The impact of the participants' personal outlook on lessening the effects of culture shock was substantial. The attitudes and personalities of Sang, Hong, and Kwang, to varying degrees, evidenced a strong sense of resiliency in the face of cultural challenges as well as the optimism that things would improve over time. In addition, the willingness to not only understand cultural differences but to learn from them characterized many of the participants' interview responses and journal entries.

Among the three participants, Sang's personal outlook was the most influential factor in assisting him with the challenges he faced adapting to the culture in the U.S. His sense of duty, determination, and reflective capacity, all closely linked to his status as an officer in the Korean military, instilled in him a sense of responsibility for not just himself but others as well. Nevertheless, by the end of the study, there was evidence that his attitude about the challenges he had faced during the semester had waned, causing him to temper his initial optimism. Kwang's attitude, like Sang's, was also influential in his adjustment to the host culture. From the outset of the study until its conclusion, he did not waver in his conviction that he could and would ultimately succeed in his adjustment to the U.S. In Hong's case, more so than in Sang's and Kwang's, it was his capacity to change his personal outlook that was revealed to be an important factor in his adjustment to the challenges of U.S. culture. In spite of a self-professed propensity for inflexibility and close-mindedness, his desire to learn about U.S. culture proved to be a more influential factor over the course of the study.

Demographic and other Background Factors

Another variable revealed to be noteworthy was the influence of demographic and other background factors. The marital and family status, length of stay in the U.S., religiosity, previous international experience, gender, and age of the three participants each proved to be of varying degrees of importance for Sang, Kwang, and Hong in their respective adjustments to the culture in the host country. The similarities as well as differences among the three participants showed the disparate effects that these variables had on moderating the influence of culture shock.

It is important to note, however, that the failure to directly or indirectly mention one of these factors by a participant did not necessarily imply that it did not play a major role in his ability to cope with the cultural demands. Rather, this silence may have been evidence of a variable that remained at the subconscious level, and as such, had not or could not be offered up for reflection. In particular, the gender and age of each participant, given that these factors were not ones that any of the participants had chosen, may have been difficult to carefully consider. In contrast, marital status and religiosity, for example, were variables that existed because the participant had selected them; consequently, they were perhaps more readily discussed and contrasted with their respective opposites.

The marital status of each participant was shown to be an influential factor. Given the important role marriage and family play in Korean culture, this finding was anticipated. Sang's wife and children, as they were for Kwang, were not only a resource, but they were also motivation for his desire to succeed in the host culture. For Kwang, in

spite of the anxiety he felt because of the semester-long separation from his wife and child, the future reunion with his family was a source of strength for him when coping with culture shock. For Hong, his single status provided the impetus for associating with other Koreans, thereby denying him the opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships with members of the host culture.

The second demographic factor that the participants revealed to be influential in their respective adjustments to the culture in the U.S. was the length of stay in this country. Sang's, Kwang's, and Hong's conviction that the passage of time in the U.S. had been influential in their ability to gradually habituate themselves to the norms of the host culture was particularly apparent at the end of the study.⁶⁴

The influential connection between religiosity and feelings of culture shock was supported by the collected data of primarily two of the participants. The influence of this factor was evident when viewed from both a spiritual and a practical perspective. In the first case, the sense of connection to a higher power instilled in Kwang and Hong the confidence and faith that their adjustment to life in the U.S. would be accomplished. In the second case, the social network provided by both Korean and American churches offered Kwang and Hong the provision of an organization to help support their transition and integration into U.S. culture. For Sang as well, even though he did not profess any

⁶⁴ It also bears mentioning that among the three participants, Kwang was the only one who on two occasions clearly articulated his intention to return to Korea upon the completion of his studies. The importance of his desire to repatriate to his home country (along with the time requirements associated with his classes) may have impacted his willingness and ability to adjust to U.S. culture as the study progressed. Consequently, Kwang's defined period for his sojourn in the States may also have influenced his adaptation to the host culture.

belief in an organized faith, he, too, was aware of the assistance that churches in the local community provided for other Koreans.

Nevertheless, the differential impact of attendance in either a Korean or an American church on the respective adaptations of Kwang and Hong was also apparent in these two data sources. Where both congregations afforded the participants spiritual and practical assistance, the Korean church may also have hindered their adjustment to U.S. culture. In particular, the replication of Korean culture here, including the Korean language and tight social bonds with their countrymen, was a barrier to Kwang's and Hong's more rapid acculturation. On the other hand, the American church was viewed more as a resource for learning the English language and establishing relationships with Americans than as a place to worship.

Previous international experience was noteworthy for both Hong and Sang in their respective adjustments to U.S. culture. The time spent in Canada and the States, respectively, had a lasting effect on their positive perceptions of U.S. culture. In particular, given Hong's own admittedly reserved nature and inflexibility as well as his aversion to ambiguity, his previous international experiences were influential factors in his ability to adjust to U.S. culture as they instilled in him a desire to communicate, learn, and explore. For Kwang, on the other hand, this factor was not influential given the limited time he had spent overseas prior to his sojourn to the States.

As all the participants were males, it was not possible to compare the influence of gender among them. Nevertheless, while Kwang was silent on this factor, Sang and Hong did provide evidence of attitudes about this variable that were affected by Korean

culture. Where these views differed with those commonly found in U.S. culture, in particular in terms of the distinct, traditional, and fairly rigid gender and gender-defined roles, some insights into the potentially important impact of gender on the respective adjustments of all three participants were offered.

While Sang made scant mention of the influence of this factor, he was comfortable with the differences in gender-defined roles in Korea and the U.S., signaling his acceptance of the greater equality between men and women in the host culture and that this factor had not produced stress. Hong, however, as the only unmarried participant, was the most impacted by the gender differences between Korea and the U.S. As a single Korean male, he had more than likely not had the same amount of interaction with females as a comparable American male of the same age. In addition, the lack of distinction between sexes (or of elevation of one over the other) that he observed in the U.S. could have been a source of stress for Hong. In spite of these differences, he adjusted to the cultural norms in the U.S. in regards to gender.

As all of the participants' ages were within five years of each other, a comparison of the differences in the degree of culture shock among Sang, Kwang, and Hong in terms of this variable did not prove directly distinguishable. Nevertheless, evidence of their attitudes about this factor was provided, offering some insights into the potentially noteworthy impact of age on the respective adjustments of all three participants.

Sang's and Kwang's opinions about the influence of having been away from the university environment for a considerable amount of time offered implicit evidence of a shared belief in the negative effect of being older as opposed to younger. The probable

benefits that had accrued to both participants in the interim, e.g., a greater sense of maturity and marriage chief among these, did not equal the detrimental aspect of this hiatus, e.g., the interruption of their former academic mindset. However, illustrating the complex nature of attitudes in general and attitudes in relation to age in particular, Kwang at other times professed a belief in the irrelevancy of this factor and in the benefits of being older. Consequently, it was unclear at the end of the study as to how important a role age had played. Hong, however, was far less equivocal as to the importance of a relatively younger age in minimizing the shocks of adjusting to U.S. culture because of the greater amount of time he assumed he would have had to establish relationships with Americans.

Cultural Factors

Finally, cultural factors also proved to be influential in their impact on the participants' adjustments to U.S. culture. More precisely, the cultural and ethnic differences between Korea and the U.S. were found to be the source of many of the challenges faced by Sang, Kwang, and Hong during the study. In the first case, cross-cultural dissimilarities in terms of economic, societal organization, environmental, transportation, dietary, and safety issues were revealed and shown to have influenced the transitions of the three participants into U.S. society. In the second case, concerns about racism and prejudice, while only mentioned by Sang, led to a greater level of adjustment stress. It was their responses to these dissimilarities that at times distinguished one from the other two and thus revealed the individual nature of the culture shock phenomenon.

The influence of economic factors on the adjustment of the three participants was noteworthy throughout the study. Differences in terms of choices, convenience, efficiency, pricing, and impartiality were in evidence, indicating that these variables negatively impacted Sang, Kwang, and Hong at times during the study.

Based on the silence on the theme of individualism by Hong and the single favorable mention of it by Kwang, neither participant was adversely affected. For Hong, his failure to comment may have been a consequence of his very limited amount of interaction with Americans. For Kwang, the freedom of expression offered by the norms of the host culture was welcomed for the opportunity it provided for a respite from the social pressure exerted by the group mentality in Korea.

For Sang, however, the more frequent mention of the differences in an individual as opposed to a group orientation exhibited by members of U.S. and Korean cultures, respectively, indicated that it was a factor which impacted his adjustment over the course of the semester. While not dismissive of this cultural difference, Sang's strongly developed sense of the group as opposed to the individual was a source of stress. Taken as a whole, Sang's words throughout the study offered insight into his attempt to balance the positive and negative aspects of individualism in U.S. culture. His military education fed into his continuous contemplation of the pros and cons of each mindset.

The environment in the U.S. was revealed as a theme in only Sang's and Kwang's data. Environmental differences between Korea and America in terms of natural and manmade conditions as well as internal and external factors were described; in addition, for Sang in particular, the dissimilar awareness of issues related to

conservation, recycling, and efficiency constituted the majority of the content of his entries. Taken as a whole, these references provided evidence of this variable as an influential factor in these two participants' respective adjustments to the culture in the States.

Another theme that was mentioned by all three participants was related to transportation. More specifically, perceptions of the dissimilarities in the strict adherence to and enforcement of traffic laws as well as of the quantity of public modes of transportation were cited by Sang, Kwang, and Hong as examples of influential factors that hindered their respective adjustments to the culture of the U.S. to varying degrees.

The influence of dietary differences between Korea and the U.S. were rarely reported by the participants. Given that the diet of Koreans and that of Americans is in many ways substantially different and that Koreans require certain staples at every meal, however, the virtual absence of any mention of food- and drink-related challenges was not anticipated, implying that the dietary dissimilarities for Sang and Hong were not overly problematic. However, the reason for this near silence, revealed in their interviews and journals, was due to the participants' near-exclusive consumption of Korean foods. Nevertheless, Kwang's frustration with the diet of Americans was a comparatively greater source of stress for him as the study progressed.

The issue of safety in the U.S. was a theme positively mentioned by only Sang and Hong. In spite of the preconceived notion among many Koreans that the States were a dangerous place, the safety of College Station proved to be a positive factor in Sang's and Hong's adjustments to U.S. culture.

Finally, among the three participants, the ethnic differences between Koreans and Americans only generated comment by Sang. The implications of racism and prejudice in the host culture were topics that captured his attention and made him question the values of this society, indicating that this factor hindered his adjustment to U.S. culture.

Kwang and Hong, on the other hand, did not directly refer to the influence of race as having been influential in their adjustments to U.S. culture. While it was possible that their silence on this issue meant that they did not encounter any negative events related to prejudice, their failure to mention this factor may also have been a consequence of my presence in the study. As both an American and a Caucasian, I was a member of the majority ethnic group in this country. As a result, Kwang and Hong could have felt uncomfortable discussing such a sensitive issue with me for fear of my reaction.

Counseling

The only factor expected to have been influential in the participants' adjustments to culture shock that was not evident was counseling. Outside of Hong's hypothetical expression of his willingness to find a counselor in the case he became depressed in his first interview, no other mention of this resource was made.

However, the failure to mention this factor (as well as other variables) as having been influential or not cannot necessarily be considered proofs that they had no influence. Instead, silence in describing difficulties in adjusting to U.S. culture may have been the result of several factors, for example, a lack of metacognitive awareness and of a sufficient amount of time for noticing and reflection as well as a general discomfort in expressing problems to a relative stranger. As such, the one mention of the benefits of

counseling, for example, as a potential resource in helping Hong in dealing with culture shock may not necessarily have indicated that this factor was absent from consideration by the other participants.

IMPLICATIONS

The following section presents the implications of the findings for the literature, practice, and future research. More specifically, the similarities and differences between the results of this study and the work of other authors are discussed first. Then the practical implications of this research are described. Finally, suggestions for improvements on the current study and proposals for future research are provided.

Literature

A comparison of the findings in this study with those in the literature reveals a mixed level of agreement. While there was an overall high level of concurrence in terms of the influential factors, there were also important differences in terms of the nature of the culture shock phenomenon. In particular, the individual and mild occurrence of this stress for the three participants in this study provided counter-evidence for the inevitability of culture shock as well as for the advisability of recourse to generalized models, which reduce the inherently complex and unique nature of the phenomenon to a lockstep, predictable occurrence.

The definition of culture shock used in this study, from Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004), was not completely supported. The demands for adjustment that the three participants experienced were primarily at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social levels. Physiological symptoms, however, were largely absent. On the other hand,

strong support for Smalley's (1963) conceptualization of culture shock as a kind of *language shock* because of the central position language problems had in inducing this phenomenon was provided by the current study.

The present study did not confirm the appropriateness of using models to represent culture shock. Instead, support for the findings of other authors (Arthur, 1997; Befus, 1988; Leong & Chou, 1996; Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004; Shougee, 1999), who contend that issues related to this phenomenon are individualized and thus not uniform in terms of severity or timing, was provided. In addition, the comparatively different experiences of the three participants with culture shock as well as their capacity to view many sources of stress as opportunities for change and growth were in agreement with Adler's (1975), Anderson's (1994), Pedersen's (1995), and Weaver's (1994) results.

Based on the findings of the current study, many of the influential factors cited in the literature as having an impact on the occurrence of culture shock were supported. For example, the noteworthy correlation uncovered in the current study between English (proficiency level and communication ability) and the degree of culture shock was supported by numerous researchers (Althen, 1994; Barratt & Huba, 1994; Church, 1982; Dale, 1996; Hall, 1981; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Henderson, Milhouse, & Cao, 1993; Juffer, 1983; Kao & Gansneder, 1995; Li, 1999; Meloni, 1986; Mori, 2000; Porter, 1962; Ruben, 1976; Shandiz, 1981; Smalley, 1963).

The substantial influence of the academic differences and demands on the phenomenon of culture shock in the current study was not a factor that was examined by most researchers outside of Jacob and Greggo (2001), Leong and Chou (1996), and Lin

and Yi (1997), who each acknowledged the stress associated with attending a university for international students in terms of language and education methodologies. The relative silence in the literature in the discussion of this variable may reflect nothing more than the fact that this is a composite factor which incorporates many of the other variables that have heretofore been discussed separately. Nevertheless, the wide purview of the primarily negative influence that the university occupied in the participants' attempts to adapt to U.S. culture was substantial.

The link between the relative lack of social connections revealed in the current study and the difficulty in adjusting to U.S. culture was a finding that echoed the work of previous researchers (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Gezi, 1965; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Searle & Ward, 1990; Sewell & Davidsen, 1956; Weaver and Uncapher, 1981). In addition, the present study confirmed the findings of numerous researchers (Adler, 1985; Gezi, 1965; Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978; Kealey & Ruben, 1983; Kleinjans, 1972; Triandis, 1990; Weaver, 1994) that attitude and personality, in particular an understanding that there will be discomfort that can be overcome and a strong sense of confidence, are related to lower levels of culture shock.

In terms of marital status, the current findings are in line with those of Meloni (1986), Porter (1962), and Sue and Sue (1977) who reported that there is a substantial relationship between marital status and lower levels of culture shock. The finding of a positive influence of the length of stay in the U.S. on the adjustment of the participants was supported by other researchers' work as well (Hassan, 1961; Li, 1999; Lysgaard, 1955; Pavri, 1963; Shandiz, 1981; Surdam, 1980). In addition, the relationship between

religion and a lower degree of culture shock in the present study concurred with the results of Hassan (1961), Surdam (1980), and Pruitt (1978) who also found that there is a noteworthy, predictive association. Also, the findings in the current research about the positive correlation between previous international experience and higher culture shock adaptation are supported by numerous researchers (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Chung, 1988; Juffer, 1983; Kealey, 1989; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Li, 1999; Rohrlich & Martin, 1991; Sewell & Davidsen, 1956). Finally, as all of the participants in the present study were males and of the same general age, a comparison of the findings in the present study with those of other researchers whose sample included participants of both genders was not possible.

The influence of the cross-cultural differences (economic, individualism, environmental, transportation, dietary, and safety issues) that were revealed in the current study on the feelings of culture shock confirmed the findings of other researchers (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Juffer, 1983; Searle & Ward, 1990; Surdam & Collins, 1984). More precisely, the impact of the more group-oriented culture of Korea as compared to the individualism in the U.S. on the participants' degree of social interaction, a factor found to be a noteworthy source of adjustment stress for Sang in particular, was also reported by other researchers (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Henderson, Milhouse, & Cao, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Pruitt, 1978; Surdam & Collins, 1994; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Additionally, the correlation between greater degrees of culture shock due to racism and discrimination, a finding only in evidence for Sang in the current study, echoed the

results of other researchers (Carter, 1991; Gezi, 1965; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Pruitt, 1978; Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Finally, the research findings in this area did not provide a clear picture of the impact of counseling on feelings of culture shock, especially in light of the fact that none of the participants availed themselves of these services. This virtual silence on the impact of this resource, however, resembles the findings of other researchers (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Idowu, 1985; Lee, 1973; Walter, 1978), who reported the rarity with which international students utilize this resource.

Practice

Based on the findings of this study, the practical implications for university administrators in particular are several. Given that this was a qualitative study with a small number of participants, however, care should be taken in the application of these recommendations as rigid prescriptions. Nevertheless, the detailed description of this study's context means that the generalizability of these findings is possible if the level to which the findings in this study are applicable to other situations is left up to the individuals in those situations. Alternatively described as "reader or user generalizability" by Merriam (1998), "case-to-case transfer" by Firestone (1993), or "transferability" by Lincoln and Guba (1985), this method of generalization from a small, nonrandom sample is ultimately determined by the practitioner. With this in mind, the following suggestions have been proffered.

In no particular order, attendance at orientation sessions and meetings with individually-assigned advisors throughout the semester would help international students

continue to learn about the university as well as feel that they were valuable members in the campus community. By having monthly meetings, for example, these individuals would be less likely to feel that their needs were being marginalized. The content of these orientation programs and workshops could include information about the community, university requirements and resources, classroom expectations, and safety and security issues. The academic advisors could closely monitor the grades of international students, and based on this information as well as their personal contact, suggest methods for remediation of their issues.

Second, the development of a brochure or pamphlet of campus and community resources available to assist international students could be beneficial. Specifically, given the import of English and religion in this study, this information could be instrumental in helping them adjust to the challenges they face in the host culture. Third, in spite of the aforementioned hesitancy of international students to discuss personal problems, overcoming this taboo by having a counselor provide answers to questions or advice at orientation sessions could be a step in the right direction. By giving a tour of the counseling center, for example, they could be assured that this resource was a place to share their concerns in a mutually supportive environment.

Fourth, the stress associated with the English language, while present for most international students, is perhaps most acute for those beginning their academic programs. Accordingly, the following accommodations could help to alleviate this strain. While most universities have a proficiency examination, the somewhat haphazard method in which it is administered as well as the oftentimes lax enforcement of the

results needs to be remediated. In the first case, greater concern for the reliability and validity of the testing instrument and environment as well as the training of the administrators should be enforced.

In the second case, if a student is identified as having a need for English remediation, he or she should be strongly encouraged to take classes in the university's intensive English program or in the community, request help from on-campus facilities that provide tutoring or aid in study skills, or hire a private tutor during the same semester. In addition, assigning an American partner to international students during both students' first semesters could prove to be a mutually beneficial arrangement. For the American, this system would give them valuable exposure to individuals from outside of the U.S.; for international students, this partnership could provide valuable linguistic and cultural assistance.

Further, the entire faculty of the university, but particularly the native speaking members, could be reminded of the necessity of consideration of the linguistic needs of international students as well as of the different educational systems from which they have emerged. Lecture, group work, and frequent testing, for example, may be unfamiliar approaches to learning. As a consequence, training on how to facilitate the interaction of international students with American students in classroom activities, validate different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in classes, and do group work, for example, could be provided faculty members. Additionally, international students could be strongly encouraged by the faculty to ask questions and seek out the instructor for clarification on content that they do not understand.

Finally, consideration of the number of hours and the composition of groups in classes could assist international students in making a smoother transition into U.S. culture. In the first case, having these individuals take less than the full-time load, especially if they will be enrolled in English classes, could help them to avoid feeling overwhelmed by the academic and cultural demands. Further, the likely increase in leisure time could allow the international students more opportunities to engage in the host culture. In the second case, to the extent possible, using groups or teams composed of students from various countries could aid in breaking down the natural tendency to only associate with learners from one's own nation.

Future Research

To overcome the limitations of this study, there are several suggested improvements. First, expansion of the participant pool in terms of number, demographics, and location could help to provide a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon of culture shock and a basis of comparison. In particular, by researching more than three individuals of both genders and from a wider range of ages from Korea, the impact of these variables on their respective adjustments to U.S. culture could be more firmly established. In addition, research involving international students from other Asian countries as well as from non-Asian countries could also more clearly highlight the shared strengths and weaknesses as well as delineate the more individual and culturally-specific ones. Further, the inclusion of Americans in future studies who were in their first semesters or who had studied abroad could offer another source of data highlighting their similar and dissimilar adjustments to new cultures as compared with

international students.⁶⁵ Finally, the widening of the research into culture shock to include international students attending different universities and/or at different geographical locations in the U.S. could assist in solidifying the understanding of the influence of certain factors and increasing the level of confidence in the generalizability of the results.

Second, the alteration of methodological and procedural issues in future studies could prove beneficial. For example, recourse to a mixed methodology might allow for greater confidence in the obtained results. By comparing the results of a survey, for example, with what a participant wrote, said, or was observed doing, the deficiencies in either approach could be overcome. In addition, the use of a group interview instead of an individual interview might provide participants with a greater feeling of assurance because of the shared experiences, and as a consequence, they might be more forthcoming and willing to express themselves in their native language. The presence of other individuals involved in the study might also serve to alleviate some of the imbalance in power that is inherent in the interviewer / interviewee relationship as well as decrease the impact of ethnic differences between these two parties.⁶⁶ Finally, if more

⁶⁵ More specifically, the involvement of Americans could potentially focus attention on the impact of differences in power and prestige among various nations on the culture shock felt by citizens of that country. For example, as members of an economic, political, military, and cultural superpower, U.S. individuals are often afforded greater advantages than individuals from other nations, such as Korea, when they make a sojourn abroad. They are usually appreciated and welcomed by members of the host culture. However, for visitors to the U.S., the same reception is rarely afforded them; in many cases, as the participants' data revealed, their presence is greeted by indifference.

⁶⁶ Per Temple and Young (2004), however, my status as an Anglo-American did not necessarily position me as an "outsider" and therefore, at a disadvantage relative to the Korean "insiders"; in fact, my ethnic difference with the Korean subjects could potentially have been a stimulus rather than an obstruction to communication in that the participants may have felt a relatively greater need to express themselves more fully than they might normally have done. In addition, Seidman (1991) contends that the "distance"

time at the beginning of the study were spent in orienting the participants to the researcher, transcriptionist / translator, and the goals of the study, it is possible that these individuals would be less reticent about expressing what could potentially be private or sensitive information, e.g., psychological symptoms, racism, etc. Further, their understanding of the primary objective of the study would mean that their participation would not be primarily a consequence of their desire to improve their English language skills. Thus, more in-depth responses unfettered by linguistic limitations could be achieved.

Finally, an extension of the period of the study could offer greater insight into the effect, if any, of the length of stay on participants' abilities to cope with culture shock. By tracking individuals over several semesters, the concerns of Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) (cited in Cort and King, 1979) about the feasibility of a study of culture shock for a period less than a year could be overcome. In addition, a much more substantial bank of data could be accumulated, which could increase credibility as well as foster a potentially much closer bond between researcher and participant; as a consequence, the level of trust between the two parties could be enhanced and in the process, the quality of the data obtained increased.

SUMMARY

The primary purpose of this study was to reveal the perceptions of three newly-arrived Korean students enrolled in Texas A&M University regarding their experiences

between myself and the participants provided me with the perspective necessary to ask important questions that explored rather than reinforced assumptions.

with culture shock and the reasons they ascribed for this phenomenon over the period of a 15-week semester through in-depth, individualized interviews and L1 journals.

Additionally, the manner in which they responded to the culture shock as well as the influential factors that assisted them in coping was explored.

This study uncovered the individual nature of the culture shock phenomenon. While no participant suffered to a great extent due to this transition, all of them did exhibit certain symptoms at various times throughout the semester that were indicative of the stress brought on by their respective adjustments to the demands of the host culture. As the results showed, these signs were primarily evident in the interpersonal and psychological areas.

The factors that were revealed to be the most influential in the participants' ability to cope with culture shock were English language proficiency, the university, social connectedness, personal outlook, marital status, length of stay, religiosity, and previous international experience. Given the individual nature of this experience, however, none of these variables had exactly the same quantity or quality of impact. While there were certain similarities shared by the participants, their interviews and journal entries illustrated the greater significance of certain factors in helping or hindering their adjustments to U.S. culture.

In conclusion, the participants in this study for the most part proved to be strong individuals who were capable of coping with the shocks of adjusting to U.S. culture. While tested at various times and in different ways throughout the period of the study, their respective voices made it clear that the challenges they had faced would not likely

dim their pursuit of their academic, personal, and professional goals. In sum, they had not come to Texas A&M University completely unprepared for what they would find; they were neither weak nor incapable of dealing with life in the U.S.

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APPENDIX A

SELECTED SUMMARY OF CITED RESEARCH ON CULTURE SHOCK

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed (1998): U.S.	Journal	“to assess the effects of a Peer Program on international students’ awareness, knowledge and use of campus resources; assess the effects on ongoing, organized interaction with host students on international students’ adjustment; determine whether students from non-Asian countries have higher scores on adjustment scales than students from Asia” (p. 541)	60 (31 males, 29 females) newly admitted international students at a public, Midwestern university during the fall of 1997: 28 (11 males, 17 females) students in the semester-long International Peer Program (IPP) and 32 (20 males, 12 females) students who did not participate in the IPP	Quantitative	Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) and Demographics and Campus Resources Questionnaire	Statistical tests (correlations, means, standard deviations, and ANOVAs)	IPP participants exhibited significantly higher social adjustment scores than nonparticipants; students from Asian countries had greater difficulties adjusting to campus life than their peers from non-Asian countries; both groups of participants rarely used the counseling services; students with previous experience in the U.S. had higher social adjustment scores
Cauchon (1994): U.S.	Master’s thesis	“...to determine and analyze the effects of culture shock in regards to second language acquisition, socio-economic status, a self-contained cultural past and gender among English as second language learners” (p. iii)	61 international students at Del Mar College, East and West Campuses, in Corpus Christi, Texas	Quantitative	Identical pre test and survey in November 1993 and post test and survey in January 1994 that examined culture shock, English reading/writing, grammar, and aural comprehension ability	Statistical tests separated by gender and country leading to creation of univariate line charts	English as a second language acquisition is highly negatively affected by the subconscious effects of culture shock over time, low socio-economic level in native country, self-contained cultural past, and gender (with males more adversely affected than females)

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Chapdelaine & Alexitch (2004): Canada	Journal	“assessed Furnham and Bochner’s (1982) conceptualization of culture shock by determining whether international students experienced a higher degree of social difficulty in Canada than in their countries of origin” (p. 168)	156 male international graduate students from 38 different countries	Quantitative	Group testing sessions of four or five students lasting 45 minutes collected information on the degree of cross-cultural differences in social interaction, size of co-national group, family status, previous cross-cultural experience, types of social interaction, and culture shock	Path analysis through expanded version of Furnham and Bochner’s (1982) model of culture shock	The greater the social interaction between the international students and the hosts, the lower the culture shock; higher levels of cross-cultural differences, accompaniment by family members, and membership in a large co-national group were associated with lower levels of social interaction with the hosts; no significant differences among participants according to age, marital status, and academic classification in degree of culture shock; cross-cultural differences and previous cross-cultural experience were not found to be significantly correlated with culture shock
Chung (1988): U.S.	Dissertation	to investigate which of the 20 factors examined would highly influence culture shock among international students in the U.S.	100 international undergraduate and graduate students (64 males, 36 females) (18-48 years old) from 38 countries enrolled in 2 IEPs and 2 universities in Southern California in both ESL and regular academic classes	Quantitative	Questions (Culture Shock Adaptation Questionnaire: CSAQ) were asked concerning the relationship between the demographic factors, Benson's (1978) criteria and the students' emotional, physical, and behavioral symptoms of culture shock	Descriptive correlational survey method and ANOVA	Positive significant relationship between the degree of culture shock adaptation and previous experiences of visiting and living in other countries, attitudes toward the U.S.A., communication skills, English skills, the degree of satisfaction with current American life, educational goals, and participation in American activities; no significant relationship between culture shock adaptation degree and age, sex, marital status, nationality, religiosity, counseling, living arrangements, length of stay in the U.S., orientation sessions, number of American friends, grades, ability to move around the city, or personality was uncovered

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Cort & King (1979): Africa	Journal	Examine “the effects on culture shock of prior travel experience, feelings of internal/external control, and intolerance of ambiguity” (p. 211)	42 American tourists (15 males, 27 females) ranging in age from 18 to 68, and with a mean age of 38, on eight week study-tour of East Africa (Kenya for 6 weeks) and Europe during the summer of 1974	Quantitative	Pre-tour questionnaires, ratings of the tour participants by the group leaders on a four-point scale, and self-report questionnaires completed after returning from the tour	Product-moment correlations and stepwise multiple regression	Prior travel experience does not correlate significantly with culture shock, a finding confounded in this study by age; older tourists had more prior travel but also experienced greater culture shock; individuals less tolerant of ambiguity experienced greater culture shock; internal/external control feelings did not correlate significantly with culture shock
Gezi (1965): U.S.	Journal	To test the following hypotheses: adjustment of international students in the U.S. affected by pre-arrival attitudes, type and quality of interaction with Americans, Americans’ attitudes towards student’s home country, and purpose of sojourn (pp. 129-130)	Foreign student advisers and faculty members and 62 Middle Eastern students enrolled at 11 California universities and colleges during the 1958 summer session	Mixed methods	Two open-ended interview schedules	Satisfaction-dissatisfaction ratings; contingency tables; chi-square test	Significant association between pre-arrival attitudes, quality of interaction with Americans, American’s attitudes of homeland, and academic success and adjustment

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman (1978): U.S.	Journal	“to empirically specify some of the major dimensions of intercultural effectiveness” (pp. 384-385)	53 American students at the University of Minnesota who had lived in another culture for at least three months and were recommended	Quantitative	Questionnaire composed of 24 personal ability items	Factor analysis	Three dimensions of intercultural effectiveness revealed: (1) the ability to deal with psychological stress (frustration, stress, anxiety, different political systems, pressure to conform, social alienation, financial difficulties, interpersonal conflict; (2) the ability to communicate effectively (enter into meaningful dialogue with other people, initiate interaction with a stranger, deal with communication misunderstandings between self and others, effectively deal with different communication styles; and (3) the ability to establish interpersonal relationships (develop satisfying interpersonal relationships with other people, maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships with other people, accurately understand the feelings of another person, effectively work with other people, empathize with another person, effectively deal with different social customs)
Hassan (1961): U.S.	Dissertation	“...investigating the social interaction between foreign students and Americans” (p. xi)	304 foreign graduate (179) and undergraduate (125) students (267 males, 37 females) ranging in age from 17 to 59 from 16 countries or geographic or cultural areas enrolled in Purdue University during the 2nd semester of 1959-1960; experience in the U.S. ranged from less than 1 year to over 4	Primarily quantitative with limited provision for qualitative feedback	Mailed questionnaires	Statistical tests (t-test, F-test, variance, Pearson’s Product-moment correlation)	Significant relationship between country of origin and social interaction with Americans; international students from countries that were technologically-developed, egalitarian, had good political and cultural relations with the U.S. had higher interaction with Americans; high social class and occupational prestige significantly positively related with social interaction; democratic orientation, low degree of involvement/identification with home country, greater length of stay in the U.S., English knowledge, field of study (social science majors), and religious affiliation (Judaism and Catholicism) significantly positively related with increased social interaction with Americans; undergraduates had more social interaction than graduates; no significant relationship between sex or marital status and the degree of social interaction; type of social interaction between foreign and American students important as is the adjustment to academic and social life on campus

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Henderson, Milhouse, & Cao (1993): U.S.	Journal	To identify and discuss culture shock among Chinese students and to present ten culture shock management skills	150 adult Chinese students (100 males, 50 females) in a large Southwestern university	Quantitative	Survey	Tables composed of numbers and percents	Adjustment problems included language difficulties (97%), unassertiveness (99%), shyness (93%), and few non-Chinese friends (96%); 97% believed it was shameful to use a counselor or psychologist for help with personal problems
Hill (1966): U.S.	Dissertation	“...to identify the problems of a group of foreign students from Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, and India;...to determine if any of their problems were specific to either nationality or sex” p. 7	78 students (57 men, 21 women) from Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, and India enrolled at Indiana University during the fall semester of 1963	Quantitative	Mailed survey instruments (problems check list and personal data questionnaire) concerning academic, financial, housing, religion, personal, and social adjustment	Tables composed of numbers and percents	Substantial difficulties experienced by members of the four nationalities in the academic, personal, and financial areas; academic problems were the greatest, in particular a lack of proficiency with English; no substantial difficulties experienced by members of the four nationalities in terms of housing, religion, or social adjustment; women experienced substantially greater difficulties than men; Thai students experienced substantially greater difficulty with English proficiency than member of the other three nationalities

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Ito (2003): U.S.	Dissertation	To explore the subjective experience and to generate common themes and properties based on the information obtained of Japanese international students in the San Francisco Bay Area from January 2002 to April 2003	15 (6 males, 9 females) Japanese international college and university students	Qualitative (phenomenological approach)	L1 semi-structured interview	Grounded theory	Five-process model of cross-cultural adjustment developed: Building the Dream, Discovering, Surviving, Overcoming Obstacles, and Reflecting on the Journey
Juffer (1983): U.S.	Dissertation	"...to develop and validate an instrument (Culture Shock Adaptation Inventory) to assess the adaptation process and determine the degree of culture shock an individual is experiencing at a specific point in time" (p. 13)	84 (57 male, 27 female) Iowa Intensive English Program and Credit English as a Foreign Language (graduate, undergraduate, and non-credit) students from 29 different countries during Fall 1982	Quantitative	The impact of country of origin, academic status, age, length of stay, previous experience of visiting/living in other countries, living arrangement, American friends, English language proficiency, sex, marital status, exposure to U.S. media, employment, planned length of stay, personality, realistic expectations, previous school attendance, religiosity, agency sponsorship, and orientation sessions on the degree of culture shock	Statistical tests (reliability, validity, and variance)	CSAI did not support a correlation between lower culture shock and greater length of stay, academic status, sex, age, religiosity, previous school attendance, marital status, agency sponsorship; CSAI did support a correlation between lower culture shock and country of origin (Western), previous experience of visiting/living in other countries, living arrangement, English language proficiency, American friends, exposure to U.S. media, employment, planned length of stay, personality, realistic expectations, and attendance at orientation sessions

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Kealey (1989): Canada	Journal	Theoretical and applied aims looked at adjustment and effectiveness of Canadian technical advisors posted to 20 developing countries; established theories within social, personality, and cross-cultural psychology were tested for their relevance in explaining and predicting overseas outcomes; instruments for screening applicants included	Longitudinal (89) and concurrent (188) Canadian technical advisors posted in 20 developing countries in Asia, Anglophone, and Francophone Africa for a minimum of one year, and the Caribbean, and 120 local counterparts were also interviewed	Quantitative	The longitudinal group completed predeparture questionnaire and followed up in the field 3-12 months after arrival in the foreign country, and the concurrent group completed both predictor and outcome measures in the field.	Factor analysis	Results support Amir's "contact hypothesis" as knowledge of and participation in local culture was found to be associated with effectiveness in working with Nationals and transferring skills and knowledge to national counterparts; over 50% of the sample experienced stress in adjustment but severity of the stress was moderated by the amount of previous overseas experience; however, previous overseas experience was not predictive of effectiveness at transfer of skills; some people who undergo the most severe stress in adjusting go on to be among the most competent in transferring skills and knowledge; research data strongly supports an interactionist position with respect to the influence of person versus situational factors on outcome overseas; data clearly favored the trait side of the continuum as more important in explaining and predicting outcome overseas; assessment of personal, behavioral, and communicative competencies is a critical ingredient for improving the overall effectiveness of development projects
Li (1999): U.S.	Dissertation	"to identify, through survey research methodology, what demographic factors, including age, gender, marital status, nationality, length of stay in the U.S., previous travel experience in other countries, and number of American friends, were related to culture shock among ESL students" (p. v).	54 ESL students, native speakers of Chinese (1 male, 5 female), Japanese (3 male, 3 female), Korean (15 male, 22 female), and Spanish (1 male, 4 female), in the English Language Institute at The U. of Tennessee during 1997-1998	Mixed method	Translated questionnaire (Culture Shock Inventory) with 52 closed-ended questions about demographic factors, linguistic, sociological, and psychological difficulties, and 6 open-ended questions about feelings and perspectives of American people and life	Descriptive correlational survey method (Pearson Correlation Coefficient) for the closed-ended questions and thematic analysis of the open-ended questions	Age, sex, marital status, and nationality of ESL students did not produce significant relationship with perceptions of culture shock; length of stay in the U.S., previous travel experience, and the number of American friends did produce significant relationship with perceptions of culture shock; mixed results of the narrative data exhibited positive (freedom, convenience, advanced technology, respect for human rights, warm, polite, and respectful of privacy) and negative (money-oriented, unsafe, selfish, lacking self-discipline, and arrogant) findings of American society and Americans respectively

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Lysgaard (1954): U.S.	Research report	Exploratory research objectives “to record individual satisfaction and dissatisfaction , with some view to what might be done to ensure a higher level of satisfaction among future exchangees” in relation to their background, attitudes, and experiences in U.S. universities for an average of one year (pp. 2-3)	198 Norwegian Fulbright grantees (148 males, 50 females), who ranged in age from less than 20 to more than 60 (average age of about 30)	Quantitative	Highly-structured retrospective interviews with 43 oral attitude and opinion questions and 13 written demographic questions	Statistical evaluation (single-item distributions and cross-tabulations) of coded oral responses	Younger students have more academic and social problems as compared with older students; sex and family background are not highly correlated with professional or personal adjustment issues; length of stay in the U.S. is related to professional and personal adjustment in a U-shaped fashion; length of stay in the U.S. is related to the effects of the stay in a straight-line fashion; increased need for intimate personal involvement in social relations over time
Michailidis (1996): U.S.	Dissertation	“to explore, through survey research methodology, what factors, including students’ academic status (undergraduate and graduate) and students’ country of origin (first, second, and third world), were related to acculturative stress as measured by the existing Acculturative Stress Scale For International Students (ASSIS)” (p. ii)	118 full-time undergraduate (25 male, 9 female) and graduate (58 male, 26 female) students from 55 different countries enrolled in the spring semester of 1995 at a large, public Northeastern university	Quantitative	ASSIS and researcher’s survey instrument for the variables English proficiency, financial stability, and need for counseling services	Statistical correlations, multiple regressions, analyses of variance, and factor analysis	Most frequently experienced acculturative stress factors were perceived discrimination, perceived safety, and adjustment to the American culture, respectively; third world country students experienced the most acculturative stress; acculturative stress was not significantly different across students’ academic status; English language proficiency was a significantly greater concern for third world country students; need for counseling services and financial stability were concerns for all of the students

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Onyemenem (1988): U.S.	Dissertation	"...to examine empirically the effects of foreign students' age, sex, and marital status on aspects of culture shock exposure at Texas Southern University" (p. 1)	200 full-time undergraduate and graduate international students (100 male, 100 female) stratified into eight subgroups enrolled in Texas Southern University during the 1987-1988 academic year	Quantitative	Questionnaire assessing adaptation, perceived national status loss, and role perception	Three-way ANOVA and 2x2x2 factorial design	International students' sex, age, and marital status, when combined, did not produce a significant effect on their perceptions of the exclusion, hostility, frustration, homesickness, fear, and copelessness aspects of culture shock exposure
Pavri (1963): U.S.	Dissertation	"...to show how well foreign students fared in their academic pursuit at the University; to discover the relationship between some of the following factors (personal, scholastic, and adjustment) and the academic achievement of the foreign graduate students" (pp. 5-6)	319 (266 male, 53 female) international graduate students from 53 countries enrolled at the University of Virginia in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Law and Medicine from 1957-1961	Quantitative	Scholastic records of international students and a questionnaire	Statistical techniques (chi-square, critical ratio or Fisher-t)	No significant difference among sex and degree status at admission and academic performance; greater age, married, country of origin, financial aid, field of study, greater length of stay was significantly related to achievement; English-language difficulties and the lack of orientation program most often cited as an academic problem

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Porter (1962): U.S.	Dissertation	“to develop an inventory which would enable the investigator to determine if the problems of foreign students could be generalized from the problems of foreign students as reported in the literature and elsewhere; to determine if these problems and concerns once identified would be considered unique as compared to the problems of United States students; and, to determine if significant problem differences existed among selected groups of foreign students” (p. 1)	108 foreign (96 male, 12 female) graduate (67) and undergraduate (39) students and 50 U.S. (15 male, 35 female) graduate (1) and undergraduate (49) students on the Michigan State University campus during the winter term of 1962	Primarily quantitative with limited provision for qualitative feedback	Michigan International Student Problem (M.I.S.P.) Inventory and Mooney Problem Check List-College Form	Statistical tests to validity and reliability (correlation coefficients, t-test, and Chi-square test of significance)	Significant difference in mean scores among foreign students in terms of the following variables: females, undergraduates, longer duration of stay, low level of English proficiency, and non-Western culture had greater problems than males, graduates, shorter duration of stay, high level of English proficiency, and Western culture, respectively
Pruitt (1978): U.S.	Journal	“to find bases for predicting how well sub-Saharan African students adapt to American culture; to identify the major problems faced by these students so as to provide guidance for people who are responsible for them” (p. 90)	296 sub-Saharan African (260 male, 36 female) students at nine American campuses during the spring semester of the academic year 1975-76	Quantitative	Questionnaire (self-administered with mainly multiple choice and four open-ended questions)	Data coded and analyzed using SPSS; frequencies and Pearson correlations were determined	Initial major problems include climate, communication with Americans, discrimination, homesickness, depression, irritability, and tiredness; minority of the students feel comfortable with the basic elements of American culture; vast majority are happy with the education; substantial decline in religious observance; positive correlation between toward American values and adjustment if they are from prominent families, young age, undergraduate, attended an orientation to American education, established contact with the foreign-student office, maintained religious commitment, and spent time with Americans; negative correlation between adjustment and female students and those from extended families

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Rohrlich & Martin (1991): U. S.	Journal	“to investigate what influenced the adjustment/satisfaction of U.S. college students who had recently returned from a semester abroad in one of four nations (England, Italy, France, Spain)” (p. 167)	248 (47 males, 201 females) American study abroad students	Quantitative	Post-return questionnaire	Statistical tests of central tendency, distribution, one- and two-way analysis of variance, and Pearson-product moment correlations	Housing, money, coursework, language, and extracurricular travel were reported as highest concern while living abroad; women reported higher degrees of concern (more difficulty adjusting) for all areas except language and having sufficient money; those who had been abroad for 1-3 months reported significantly less difficulty in using unfamiliar currency and in extracurricular travel than those who had never been abroad; students who grew up in large cities reported significantly less difficulty with meeting people and making friends than those from medium size cities or small towns; the more frequently students interacted with host-country people, the more satisfied they were likely to be with their sojourn abroad
Ross & Krider (1992): U.S.	Journal	“explicate the experiences of one group of international travelers, graduate teaching assistants, as they enter a new culture—the United States of America” (pp. 278-279); “discover ways in which this group of international travelers can be better helped to adapt to their new culture and overcome their uncertainty about their new culture and their new role of ITA” (p. 279).	6 international teaching assistants (2 male, 4 female) from 4 different countries	Qualitative	Interviews were taped and transcribed	Phenomenology used to develop common themes of technical teaching difficulties and intercultural difficulties	Recommendations for the development of orientation programs at U.S. universities proposed

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Searle & Ward (1990): New Zealand	Journal	“to distinguish psychological and sociocultural forms of adjustment during the process of cross-cultural transitions” (p. 449).	105 (49 males, 56 females) Malaysian and Singaporean (99% Chinese, 1% Eurasian) university and secondary school students in New Zealand	Quantitative	Questionnaire measuring personal and demographic information, psychological and sociocultural adjustment, expectations, cultural distance, social interactions, attitudes, extraversion, life changes, and cross-cultural experience and training	Multiple regression analysis	Satisfaction with relationships with host nationals, extraversion, life changes, and social difficulty combined to account for 34% of the variance in psychological adjustment; cultural distance, expected difficulty, and depression combined to account for 36% of the variance in sociocultural adjustment
Shandiz (1981): U.S.	Dissertation	“...to provide information about foreign students’ personal characteristics, social interaction, adjustment, and perceptions of American culture to throw light on some aspects of the wide variety of their experiences” (p. iii)	167 international students (129 males, 38 females) from 36 different countries enrolled during the summer semester 1979-1980 in Oklahoma State University	Quantitative	Mailed questionnaire survey measuring adjustment (personal, academic, social, and cultural), social and cultural distance variables, and demographic variables	Statistical Analysis System (SAS) and Fortran Program Testat	Extensive interaction with Americans led to lower scores of troublesomeness and higher scores of favorableness to American culture; trouble with life correlated with lower academic satisfaction and favorableness to American culture; extent of interaction and favorableness to American culture consistent with a U-curve pattern; age, sex, marital status, academic status, hometown size, involvement with home country, past overseas experiences, contact with other cultures, and home country were not significant factors in explaining variations and differences on adjustment scores; homesickness, missing one’s family, anomie, English facility, socio-economic background, and perceived social and cultural distance were significantly related to adjustment

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Surdam (1980): U.S.	Dissertation	“to determine the needs and problems of international students as they sought to adapt to a culturally foreign environment” (p. 6)	143 randomly selected international students (102 male, 41 female) from 35 different countries enrolled in the University of Wyoming during the fall semester 1978 and spring semester 1979	Quantitative	Anonymous questionnaire (adapted from the African Student Questionnaire) that examined relationship between independent variables and composite variable Adaptation	Variance and f-ratios	Significantly better adjustment found for the following types of students: Western hemisphere, highly-educated family, suffered less discrimination, greater time spent with Americans, perception of English as adequate upon arrival, development of positive attitudes towards religion, and length of time; adaptation was not found to be significantly related to sex, orientation programs, frequency of contact with home, travel experience, participation in university and community activities, employment, GPA, age, marital status, pre-departure knowledge about the U.S., length of time before departure, and whether family was nuclear or extended
Wingfield (2000): U.S.	Dissertation	“to measure the stress levels of international students studying at Tennessee State University” (p. vi)	99 international students from 30 different countries	Quantitative	Survey based on Chung’s (1988) CSAQ which gathered demographic variables and measured influences of emotional, physical, behavioral, and attitudinal symptoms	Statistical analysis of each item, including frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, and item total and subtotal correlation using Data Desk, Pearson Product Moment coefficient correlation and an ANOVA	No significant differences among age, sex, marital status, religion, counseling, living arrangements, knowledge of the city, participation in American activities, having American friends, communication skills, degree being sought, orientation, length of stay in the United States, and emotional, physical, behavioral, or attitudinal symptoms; statistically significant difference in grades and emotional symptoms; satisfaction with American life and emotional and physical symptoms; having a counselor and behavioral symptoms; English speaking skills and behavioral and attitudinal symptoms; religion and attitudinal symptoms

APPENDIX A (continued)

Author(s), year, location	Report type	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Data gathered	Analysis	Findings
Yeh & Inose (2003): U.S.	Journal	“study the influence of reported English language fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness in predicting acculturative stress among international students from various regions” (pp. 15-16)	359 international undergraduate and graduate students from 77 different countries (217 female, 142 male) enrolled in urban university in northeastern U.S.	Quantitative	Demographic questionnaire, Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students, Social Connectedness Scale, and Social Support Questionnaire-Short Form	Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of variables	English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness inversely related to degree of acculturative stress; international students from Europe experience lower levels of acculturative stress than peers from Asia, Central/Latin America, and Africa

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR STUDY

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT FOR THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH STUDY:*A Qualitative Examination of Culture Shock and the Influential Factors Affecting Newly-Arrived Korean Students at Texas A&M University****Participants**

- Looking for 3 Korean participants for a research study about culture shock in the United States
- This should be your first semester at Texas A&M University.
- While previous experience in the U.S. or other foreign countries is acceptable, it is hoped that your entry into Texas A&M is from Korea directly.
- You should not be enrolled in the English Language Institute at Texas A&M during the period of the research.

***Purpose**

- To reveal the perceptions of three newly-arrived Korean students enrolled in Texas A&M University regarding their experiences with culture shock and the reasons they ascribe for this phenomenon over the period of a 15-week semester

***Expectations**

- 3 audiotaped interviews over the course of the semester
 - * The interviews will be conducted by a bilingual research assistant who will later transcribe and translate your responses into English.
 - *This study will take approximately one hour for each interview.
- Submission of weekly electronic journal entries over the course of the semester
 - *One page would suffice, written in your first language
 - *Turn in each entry by Friday each week.

***Benefits**

- Possibility that as a result of the interviews and the journal entries, you may feel that your voice is being heard, and consequently, your transition into American culture could be facilitated
- You will not receive any monetary or scholastic compensation for your participation in this study, but
 - * a gift certificate will be provided upon completion of the project
 - * English assistance if necessary

***Contact**

- Please feel free to contact Kent D. McLeod about your interest in this research or with any questions or comments at kentmc15@tamu.edu or 979-255-0598.

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

CONSENT FORM**A Qualitative Examination of Culture Shock and the Influential Factors Affecting Newly-Arrived Korean Students at Texas A&M University**

You have been asked to participate in a research study about culture shock in the United States. You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a newly-arrived international student in Texas A&M University. A total of three people have been asked to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to reveal the perceptions of three newly-arrived international students enrolled in Texas A&M University regarding their experiences with culture shock and the reasons they ascribe for this phenomenon over the period of a 15-week semester through in-depth, individualized interviews and L1 journals. Additionally, the manner in which you respond to the culture shock as well as the influential factors that have assisted you in coping will be explored.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to be part of three audiotaped interviews over the course of the semester as well as to submit weekly journal entries in your first language. The interviews will be conducted by a bilingual research assistant who will later transcribe and translate your responses into English. If you elect not to be audiotaped for the interviews, your participation in this project will be terminated. This study will take approximately one hour for each interview. As a complete transcript of the interview will be produced for your perusal, the time involvement may increase. The principal investigator will also analyze your weekly journal entries that you produce over the semester. You will be expected to submit each journal entry by Friday each week. The risks associated with this study are minimal and unlikely to occur. However, the interview and journal entry questions posed to you could create some discomfort. In order to minimize this risk, short, concise questions will be posed. The benefits of participation are the possibility that as a result of the interviews and the journal entries, you may feel that your voice is being heard, and consequently, your attitude to learning and to American culture could improve.

You will not receive any monetary or scholastic compensation for your participation in this study, but a gift certificate will be provided upon completion as well as English assistance.

This study is confidential, and the records will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records, including the audiotapes, will be stored securely and only Kent D. McLeod will have access to the records. The investigator will keep the results of the interviews as well as the journal entries locked in his office for 3 years. After this time, the results will be destroyed. In addition, the research assistant will sign a confidentiality agreement. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Texas A&M University. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make you uncomfortable. You can withdraw at any time without your relations with the University being affected. You can contact Kent D. McLeod, (979) 862-3293, kentmc15@tamu.edu with any questions about this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia

M. Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067, araines@vprmail.tamu.edu.

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions, and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM FOR TRANSCRIPTIONIST / TRANSLATOR

CONSENT FORM**A Qualitative Examination of Culture Shock and the Influential Factors Affecting Newly-Arrived Korean Students at Texas A&M University**

You have been asked to help conduct a research study about culture shock in the United States. You were selected to be a possible research assistant because you are a bilingual speaker of English and the first language of the newly-arrived international student participants at Texas A&M University. A total of three people have been asked to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to reveal the perceptions of three newly-arrived international students enrolled in Texas A&M University regarding their experiences with culture shock and the reasons they ascribe for this phenomenon over the period of a 15-week semester through in-depth, individualized interviews and L1 journals. Additionally, the manner in which they respond to the culture shock as well as the influential factors that have assisted them in coping will be explored.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in information sessions and keep in regular contact with the principal investigator throughout the semester. Along with the principal investigator, you will conduct three audiotaped interviews over the course of the semester with each participant in your shared first language. You will then be required to transcribe and translate them into English according to an agreed upon schedule. If any participant elects not to be audiotaped for the interviews, their participation in this project will be terminated. This study will take approximately one hour for each interview. You will also translate the weekly journal entries that the participants produce over the semester according to the aforementioned schedule. The risks associated with this study are minimal and unlikely to occur. However, the interview and journal entry questions posed to the participants could create some discomfort. In order to minimize this risk, short, concise questions will be posed. The benefits of participation are the possibility that as a result of the interviews and the journal entries, the participants may feel that their voices are being heard, and consequently, their attitude to learning and to American culture could improve.

You will receive monetary compensation for your participation in this study at a mutually agreed upon rate.

This study is confidential, and the records will be kept private. No identifiers linking the participants to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records, including the audiotapes, will be stored securely and only Kent D. McLeod will have access to the records. The investigator will keep the results of the interviews as well as the journal entries locked in his office for 3 years. After this time, the results will be destroyed. In addition, this consent form will also be deemed a confidentiality agreement, breaches of which will result in your dismissal from the study. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Texas A&M University. You can contact Kent D. McLeod, (979) 862-3293, kentmc15@tamu.edu with any questions about this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia

M. Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067, araines@vprmail.tamu.edu.

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions, and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records.

Signature of Research Assistant _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION

When typing up the transcribed and translated documents:

1. Add continuous line numbers. (File/Page Setup/Line Numbers/Add Line Numbering/Continuous/OK)
2. Make the whole document double spaced.
3. Use consistent heading styles for each interview. (Format/Styles and Formatting)
 - a. Heading 2 for questions, clarifications, and statements from me or the original transcriber/translator (who you can designate as “C”).
 - b. Heading 1 for responses from 3 participants
4. Use only the first initial(s) for each individual for confidentiality purposes, e.g., “K” for Kent, etc.
5. For the transcription and translation, it is not necessary to capture every pause or change of intonation or laugh, for example. However, if you feel that a pause, for example, was particularly meaningful then by all means note this in parentheses.
6. For the translation in particular, just focus on getting the overall meaning, not a word-by-word literal conversion.

APPENDIX F
FIRST INTERVIEW

Background Information

1. Are you married?
 - a. Probe: If the answer is “yes”, then ask whether wife, children, and/or other family members are with the participant or not. Also, ask how this arrangement has influenced his/her life in College Station.
 - b. Probe: If the answer is “no”, then ask about the participant’s living arrangement. Also, ask how this arrangement has influenced his/her life in College Station.

Country of Origin Information

2. How similar/different is your culture to U.S. culture?
 - a. Probe: Ask for specific examples to support response.
3. Which parts of your culture and U.S. culture do you like and dislike?
4. How much exposure did you have to U.S. culture in your country:
Americans, movies, music, food, etc.?
5. Do you feel that your culture is respected in the U.S.?
6. How prepared did you feel for life in the U.S. before you arrived?
7. Have you had any experiences here that have caused you to feel culture shock; that is, have you felt confused, unhappy, and/or angry by differences between the culture in your country and U.S. culture?
 - a. Probe: Ask for specific examples to support response.
8. What has helped you get acclimated to this culture?

Foreign Experience Information

9. Do you have previous experience in the U.S./Texas or other foreign countries?
 - a. Probe: If the answer is “yes”, have the participant describe his/her impression and how this knowledge helped/did not help in the current visit.
 - b. Probe: If the answer is “no”, have the participant describe how similar/different the U.S./Texas is to what he/she expected before arriving.

English/Communication Information

10. When did you start studying English?
11. How would you describe your English ability?
 - a. Probe: Ask for specific examples in terms of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
12. How important do you feel English ability is for becoming comfortable in the U.S.?
13. Do you think that your English ability helps you feel connected to the U.S. and U.S. citizens?
14. Do you feel confident in your ability to communicate with others in English?
 - a. Probe: If the answer is “no”, then describe how this inability makes you feel and how you cope with this situation.
15. How would you describe the assistance of the university in helping you to deal with culture shock?

- a. Probe: Provide the definition of culture shock for the interviewee (“...multiple demands for adjustment [and integration] that individuals experience at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological levels, when they relocate to another culture” (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004, p. 168) and/or an L1 term that is equivalent.
 - b. Probe: Ask for specific examples in terms of the faculty, fellow students, advisor, etc.
16. How has the presence of other students from your country affected your ability to deal with culture shock?

Attitude/Personality Information

17. Describe your response(s) when you face new situations or people. What do you usually do? How do you deal with these new situations and encounters?
18. Do you deal with stress well?
19. Can you tolerate ambiguity; that is, are you able to accept not knowing what to do in all situations?
20. Are you adaptable/flexible?
21. Are you open to new ideas? That is, when/if you encounter new ways of thinking about family or school, for example, here, how do you respond?
22. If you were having problems with adjusting to the new culture here, what would you do? Who would you turn to for assistance?
 - a. Probe: Ask if they would feel comfortable speaking with a counselor.
23. What kind of expectations do you have for your life in the U.S.?

Correlation Matrix among Research and First Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
(a) Are the newly-arrived international students going through culture shock?	7
(b) What are the feelings they are experiencing that could be a sign of culture shock? What examples can they provide that reveal discomfort for them? What are their perceptions about this experience and how do they cope or not cope with it?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
(c) What factors could make the experience of culture shock more intense or less severe?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
(d) How has the university in particular helped the newly-arrived international students in coping with culture shock?	15

APPENDIX G

MIDTERM INTERVIEW

1. Looking back over the last 7 weeks, what has been the most surprising/challenging thing you have encountered?
 - a. How have those surprises/challenges made you feel (physically, emotionally, psychologically)?
2. How well adjusted do you feel to life here in the States?
 - a. Optimistic/pessimistic
 - i. (Sang, wk#2, positive)
 - ii. (Hong, wk#6, can't say about culture because no experience)
 - iii. (Kwang, #1, lack of energy, enthusiasm, discouragement)
3. Who or what has helped/hindered you the most in your adjustment to life here at A&M?
 - a. How substantial a role has English played in this response?
 - i. Describe English ability now as compared to arrival.
 1. (Hong, #5, lower and no time to study)
 2. (Kwang, #1, speech handicapped person)
 3. (Kwang, #6, conversation partner from church)
 - ii. Confidence level.
 - b. Family (asset or liability)
 - i. (Hong, wk#3, mom leaves; wk#7, cooking)
 - ii. (Kwang, #1, loneliness because of separation from wife and baby)

- c. Other Koreans
 - d. Americans
 - e. University
 - f. Church
 - i. (Hong, wk#1, church)
 - ii. (Kwang, #1, #2, church)
4. What are your hopes for the rest of the semester and your entire stay here at A&M?

Sang

- 1. Military background
- 2. Convenience/inconvenience
- 3. Prices
- 4. Resources
- 5. Public vs. private
 - a. Transportation
 - b. Other services (Bush school, public phone incident)
- 6. Environment
- 7. Racism/prejudice
- 8. American students' dress and behavior
- 9. Freedom

Hong

- 1. Public vs. private

- a. Transportation (DPS; police; cell phones; car accident)
2. Convenience/inconvenience
 - a. DPS
3. Cross-cultural differences
 - a. Alcohol
 - b. Individuality (Wk#3, license plate; #6, cell phones)
 - c. Tipping (Wk#4, Korean restaurant)
 - d. Customer service: Personal approach vs. Impersonal/rational approach
(wk#5, losing wallet)
 - e. Male/female roles (wk#7, girls and sports with boys)
4. University
 - a. Academics (#5, test scores)

Kwang

1. Transportation
 - a. Different types of dealerships, classifications, and prices
 - b. DPS (#2)
2. Attitude
 - a. Confidence (#1)
 - b. Americans' expectation that everyone speaks English well (#5)
3. Customer service (#2)
4. Cross-cultural differences
 - a. Confucianism and classroom management (#3)

- b. Teaching to the test vs. creativity (#4)
- c. Impartiality (#5 library fine)
- d. Passion/pride for football (#6)

Correlation Matrix among Research and Midterm Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
(a) Are the newly-arrived international students going through culture shock?	1, 2, 4
(b) What are the feelings they are experiencing that could be a sign of culture shock? What examples can they provide that reveal discomfort for them? What are their perceptions about this experience and how do they cope or not cope with it?	1, 2, 3, 4
(c) What factors could make the experience of culture shock more intense or less severe?	1, 3, 4
(d) How has the university in particular helped the newly-arrived international students in coping with culture shock?	1, 3

APPENDIX H
FINAL INTERVIEW

1. Looking back over the last 15 weeks, what has been the most surprising/challenging thing you have encountered?
 - a. How have those surprises/challenges made you feel (physically, emotionally, psychologically)?
2. What have you learned about the culture here this semester? About your own culture?
3. How well adjusted do you feel to life here in the States now?
 - a. Optimistic/pessimistic
4. How connected to the culture here do you feel?
 - a. Reasons for answer
5. Who or what has helped/hindered you the most in your adjustment to life here at A&M?
 - a. How substantial a role has English played in this response?
 - i. Describe English ability now as compared to arrival.
 - ii. Confidence level.
 - b. Family (asset or liability)
 - c. Other Koreans
 - d. Korean culture
 - e. Americans
 - f. University

g. Church

h. Length of Time

6. What are your hopes for your entire stay here at A&M?
7. What advice would you give to a Korean student who was coming to study at A&M starting next semester?
8. Have you been shocked by the culture here / Have you suffered from culture shock?

Correlation Matrix among Research and Final Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
(a) Are the newly-arrived international students going through culture shock?	1, 3, 4, 6, 8
(b) What are the feelings they are experiencing that could be a sign of culture shock? What examples can they provide that reveal discomfort for them? What are their perceptions about this experience and how do they cope or not cope with it?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
(c) What factors could make the experience of culture shock more intense or less severe?	2, 4, 5, 6
(d) How has the university in particular helped the newly-arrived international students in coping with culture shock?	1, 5

APPENDIX I

JOURNAL PROMPTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

L1 Journal Prompts

- (a) Describe anything that you learned during the preceding week about the culture in the U.S. Were there any surprises?
- (b) Do you have any questions about the culture here?
- (c) How do you feel about your life here? Are there any examples that you can provide that illustrate how you are feeling?
- (d) Do you have any issues or concerns about your life here?
- (e) How effectively do you feel that you are adjusting to life here?
- (f) What factors do you think are helping or hindering you in your adjustment to life here?
- (g) How do you feel about the university in helping you to adjust to life here?

*You do not need to answer each question directly.

*Feel free to use Korean.

*One page per entry will suffice.

*Send your journal entry as an MS Word document attachment in an email to both me (kentmc15@tamu.edu) and Sung Hyun Kim (niceamos@gmail.com) each Friday per the calendar.

VITA

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Professional Experience: LECTURER, 2004 – 2008.
Texas A&M University English Language Institute. College Station, Texas.

VISITING PROFESSOR, 2000 – 2003.
KAIST Language Center. Taejon, South Korea.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, 2002 – 2003.
KAIST International Relations Office. Taejon, South Korea.

RADIO ANNOUNCER, SUMMER 2000 – FALL 2001.
Educational Broadcasting System. – Seoul, South Korea.

HEAD INSTRUCTOR, Summer 1999 -- 2003.
English Village Program – KAIST. Taejon, South Korea.

ESL INSTRUCTOR, 1998 – 1999.
Community English Program – Teachers College. New York, New York.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR, 1997 – 1998.
Yang Duk Middle Schools (Girls and Boys). Masan, South Korea.

HEAD ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR, 1994 – 1997.
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