

## **CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY "THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

Mohd. Tajudin b. Hj. Ninggal  
Fakulti Pendidikan  
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

**ABSTRACT:** The reality of being an international student in a strange land is not always an easy endeavor. Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994), in a study on international students psychological problems in U.S. colleges and universities revealed that these sojourners have to make a number of educational and social adjustments upon their arrival to this country. Talbot, Geelhoed and Ninggal (1998), and Schram and Lauver (1988) in their related studies concensusly agreed that college experiences for international students are often filled with more stress, and limited resources for professional help during their 4 year undergraduate experience than the majority of White American students.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The study of international students' psychological well-being in U.S. colleges and universities has always been an interesting topic of discussion among higher institutional administrators, educational policy makers as well as counselors (Mayerson & Massy, 1995; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Sue & Sue, 1990). For the past 4 decades, thousands of these bright and academically prepared students throughout the world have sought admission to a variety of American colleges and universities which offer a wide range of disciplines in meeting international students' educational needs and expectations (Coleman, 1997; Wilson, 1990).

According to Lambert (1992) and Seigel (1996), the number of international students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities has increased steadily over the past few decades. From an approximately 34,000 students in 1954, the number of undergraduate and graduate students enrollment from 193 countries rose to almost 408,000 in 1990. Kwan, Sodowsky, and Ihle (1994) predicted that the number of international students will increase to approximately 1

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

million by the year 2000, and the majority of these students will be coming from Asia, primarily from China, Japan, Taiwan, India, and South Korea.

Leong, Mallinckrodt and Kralj (1990) and Holstein (1988) added that the presence of international students on U.S. colleges and universities campuses is usually taken for granted despite their contribution to the enrichment of educational and cultural diversity in the U.S. higher education. Coleman (1997) and Pedersen (1991) in their related studies on international students in U.S. colleges and universities agreed that less attention were given by the university counselors to their academic and welfare needs when they first arrived to the United States. The majority of these students who were first timers in this country faced with educational and social problems that are unique to their cultural identity.

Most studies on international students are usually limited in scope and do not universally represent their worldviews and concerns. Gong-Guy (1985), Pedersen (1991), and Sue (1994) in discussing stereotypical issues among international students in U.S. colleges and universities suggested that these students should be viewed in their own cultural context since they have different types of subcultural adjustment issues. Sue and Sue (1990) added that research on different international ethnic groups should also be expanded and carefully interpreted, because they provide meaningful insights and understanding to the body of knowledge of international students' educational, and social experiences in U.S. colleges and universities.

Consensusly, researchers agreed that it is important not to view any particularly ethnic group as a "wild card" in understanding international students' experiences in U.S. higher education (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Solberg, et al., 1994).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Malaysian students constitute one of the fastest growing international student groups in U.S. colleges and universities in the last 2 decades. Between 1986 to 1990 academic year, there were approximately 49,000 Malaysian students studying abroad, of whom 7,500 were in the United States. There were approximately 20,000 government-sponsored and private-sponsored Malaysian student enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities (Malaysia, 1991).

The complexity of Malaysian students in U.S. colleges and universities has gradually changed with the increase of Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnic groups. Unlike 15 years ago, there is new breed of younger Malaysian student comprised of Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnicities that add to the legacy of previous Malaysian students in U.S. higher educational settings. These students constitute a wider spectrum of ethnicity, educational backgrounds, and family socio-

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

economic status, and they need considerable attention with respect to their cultural adjustments and psychological well being in U.S. colleges and universities.

Hence, it is timely that a study be conducted to identify the variability of experiences and adjustment problems among these three Malaysian groups in U.S. colleges and universities. Suradi (1984), in concluding his study on the Malay ethnic group at one of the midwestern universities suggested that further investigation should include other Malaysian ethnic groups who are studying in U.S. higher educational institutions. He added that findings on other ethnic groups will deconstruct false perceptions and stereotypes of Malaysian students' experiences and adjustment problems in the U.S. colleges and universities.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The primary purpose of this study was to any differences in the Culture Shock and Perceived Fear acculturative stress themes experienced by three Malaysian ethnic groups i.e. Malay, Chinese, and Indians who were enrolled at one of the midwestern universities in the U.S. during the Fall 1997 semester. The study also was to examine differences in stress by gender, age levels, academic majors, socio-economic status, and Test of English Language as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score.

In addition, this study was designed to provide useful information to Malaysian educational leaders and policymakers on the most recent development with respect to students' adjustment issues and psychological well being in U.S. colleges and universities. The results of this study would provide useful information in designing orientation programs for students who are planning to pursue their studies in U.S. colleges and universities, as well as appropriate intervention programs for students who are already in the U.S. higher educational institutions.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Consistent with the statement of the problem and current research on acculturative stress among international students in U.S. colleges and universities, the research questions proposed below examined two acculturative stress themes among three Malaysian ethnic groups enrolled at Western Michigan University during the Fall 1997 semester.

The research questions were: Was there any differences between the two acculturative stress themes (Culture Shock and Perceived Fear):

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

- i) Across three groups of ethnicity (Malay, Chinese, Indian) and two levels of TOEFL scores?
- ii) Across gender and three levels of age?
- iii) Across three academic majors and two levels of sponsorships?

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms used by Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) in their study of international students' adjustment problems in U.S. colleges and universities are used for the purpose of this research.

i. Acculturative Stress : The loss of vitality, the inability to cope with everyday pressures, and the incompetence to function effectively due to massive adjustments that international Asian students are required to make in their social and academic lives while attending U.S colleges and universities.

ii. Acculturative Stress Themes: Recurring acculturative stress experienced by international Asian students in U.S. colleges and universities. The following acculturative stress themes measured by the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) (Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1994) were chosen.

a. Culture Shock: Students' feeling of stress after migrating to strange land where they experience differences in climate, food, social values, modes of behavior, as well as in verbal and nonverbal communications.

b. Perceived Fear: The sense of insecurity in unfamiliar surroundings, high rates of crime and violence in American society, racial discrimination, and sociopolitical Realities of off and on hostile relations between some international students' native countries and the United States.

**METHODOLOGY**

This section describes the methodology of the study that include research questions and related hypotheses, population, sample, instrumentation, and procedural methodology. Discussion of the statistical analyses used in this study follows.

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The research questions formulated in this study were derived from previous studies on acculturative stress among international students who were studying outside of their country. Consequently, discussions among educational leaders, policy makers, and parents in Malaysia concerning educational and welfare issues of Malaysian students who are studying abroad have added to the outcome of these research questions.

The research question derived is to reveal whether there are differences in the six different acculturative stress theme test scores:

1. Across the three Malaysian ethnic groups on three levels of TOEFL test scores (3 x 3 ANOVAs).
2. Between genders and across three age levels (2 x 3 ANOVAs).
3. Across students' academic majors (three) and two types of sponsorships (government and private) (3 x 2 ANOVAs).
4. Across three types of students' residential settings and three socio-economic levels (3 x 3 ANOVAs).

The following hypotheses were formulated based on null hypotheses that there would be no differences in the two acculturative stress themes: Culture Shock, and Perceived Fear among three Malaysian ethnic groups across the following demographic variables such as gender (2 levels), age (3 levels), academic majors (3 levels), financial sponsorships (2 levels), socio-economic status (3 levels), residential settings (3 types), and TOEFL scores (3 levels) as measured by the ASSIS. Hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

**Research Question One:**

Are there differences in the Culture Shock and Perceived Fear acculturative stress theme scores across three Malaysian ethnic groups on three levels of TOEFL test scores?

**Ho: # 1 - 2**

There is no significant differences in the two acculturative stress theme scores ((1) Culture Shock, and (2) Perceived Fear) across three Malaysian ethnic groups and across three levels of their TOEFL scores.

**Research Question Two:**

Are there differences in the Culture Shock and Perceived Fear acculturative stress theme scores between gender and across three age levels?

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

**Ho: # 3 - 4**

There is no significant differences in the two acculturative stress theme scores ((1) Culture Shock, and (2) Perceived Fear) between gender and across three age levels.

**Research Question Three:**

Are there differences in the Culture Shock and Perceived Fear acculturative stress theme scores across students' academic majors and types of sponsorships?

**Ho: # 5 - 6**

There is no significant differences in the two acculturative stress theme scores ((1) Culture Shock, and (2) Perceived Fear) across students' academic majors and types of sponsorships?

**Research Question Four:**

Are there differences in the Culture Shock and acculturative stress theme test scores across three types of students' residential settings and three socio-economic levels?

**Ho : # 7 - 8**

There is no significant differences in the two acculturative stress theme scores ((1) Culture Shock, and (2) Perceived Fear ) across three types of students' residential settings and three socio-economic levels?

In addition to the above hypotheses testing for main effects, null hypotheses for interaction effects were also tested. If main effect differences were found, a Post-hoc analyses using a Scheffe method was performed in order to locate the difference.

**Population**

The population from which the sample was drawn consisted of 667 (421 males and 246 females) currently enrolled students at Western Michigan University during the Fall 1997 semester. They comprised of 171 Malays, 450 Chinese, and 46 Indian undergraduate and graduate students majoring in various field of studies and their ages ranged between 18 and 37. These students are either being sponsored by the Malaysian government or government agencies, or by their parents to study at this university.

Overall, the Malaysian students constituted approximately 35% of the total number of international students (2,050) and about 2.5% of the total number of the university's enrollment (27,000) during the 1997/78 academic year.

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

### **Sample**

Participants were 138 undergraduate and graduate level Malaysian students. The mean age of participants was 25 years ( $SD = 6.78$ ) with a range from 18 – 37 years of age. Participants were 55% male and 45% female; 33% of the participants were Malay, 47% Chinese, and 20% represented by the Indian. The pool of participants were chosen because they represent the Malaysian cultural and ethnic group in Malaysia.

### **The Survey Instrument**

The Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) developed by Sandhu and Asrabadi in 1989 and revised in 1994, is a brief 36-item rating scale designed to measure international students' acculturative stress in colleges and universities outside of their home countries. It represents a significant step forward in providing institutions and researchers with a picture of what international students might experience while studying in U.S. colleges and universities.

Items in the ASSIS instrument are short descriptors of students' behavioral or emotional responses rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree with 3 = as not sure). Higher scores on each item indicate higher acculturative stress perceived by respondents. The potential range of scores in this revised version is between 36 to 180. The test takes approximately 15 minutes to answer and can be easily administered using the key provided with the test. Test scores may be quickly computed by hand or with the aid of a calculator.

The ASSIS instrument offers institutions and researchers alternative instrument that can be used to assess objectively the dimensions of international students' college life. Many researchers mentioned and tended to agree that there have been many cases where international students have been sporadically measured in the past. This has resulted in the misrepresentation of data concerning international students especially who are studying in U.S. colleges and universities.

The ASSIS instrument measures students' level of emotional stress in a broad range of campus and social environments. Besides collecting background information from students, it provides scaled scores on 12 principal themes of acculturative stress of international students during college i.e. Perceived Discrimination, Social Isolation, Threat to Cultural Identity, Inferiority, Homesickness, Perceived Fear, Anger/Disappointment, Mis trust, Communication Problems, Cultural Shock, Perceived Hate, and Guilt.



**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

However, for the purpose of this study, only two acculturative stress themes were utilized and tested. These themes represented major concerns among international students tested in previous studies. The two acculturative stress themes chosen are Culture Shock and Perceived Fear.

### **Reliability**

Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) have provided a well-organized and informative psychological report of the ASSIS instrument. The report describes the intended use of the Scale, the conceptual basis behind the scale, scale development, and the target population for whom the scale was designed. Procedures for administering and scoring the scale were both well-written and unambiguous.

Although there have been no data reporting directly on the reliability of the Scale, the preliminary and follow-up findings of the Scale detailed important information about its overall technical quality. These findings provided supporting empirical data that will contribute to the construction of its reliability. Welsh and Betz (1995) stated that reliability could also mean consistency, stability, replicability, and repeatability.

A follow-up study on the ASSIS instrument was conducted on a larger number of international students in 1995. Participants were 86 men ( $M=23.6$  yr.) and 42 women ( $M=22.8$  yr.) representing Latin American, Europe, Middle East, and Asian countries. Asian students from China, India, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan ( $n=56$ ) accounted a large number of the participants (43.75%). Participants from Latin American countries ( $n=34$ ) accounted for 26.56 %, Middle Eastern students ( $n=22$ ) accounted for 17.19 %, and the remaining participants from Europe and Africa ( $n=6$ ) accounted for 12.50 % of the students.

The Scale has been standardized with a relatively diverse sample representing Asian, Middle East, European and African continents to assess the psychological needs of international students in a comprehensive manner. The Scale takes into account both ethnic and cultural differences often seen in international college students. It is an attempt to construct a test instrument that can provide a composite measure of adjustment problems among international students. Both authors are to be commended for the extent of measurement validation that has been conducted on ASSIS. They have examined the construct, content, and factorial analyses of the instrument.

The ASSIS instrument appears to have a number of positive features and may be a useful acculturative stress tool in clinical settings. The test is very brief and takes only a few minutes to complete because many of the items consist one or two words. According to Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994), the ASSIS is an objective instrument which is uninfluenced or undistorted by



CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"

the beliefs or biases of the individuals who administer and score it. It seems to have a high degree of face validity, i.e., the test appears to measure what it purports to measure.

### Validity

Data on validity of the ASSIS instrument is presented in a variety of ways. First, intercorrelations between factors of acculturative stress for international students are presented for the norm group. These data showed that six themes i.e. Perceived Discrimination, Homesickness, Perceived Hate, Perceived Fear, Cultural Shock, and Guilt accounted for 70.6% of the total explained variance using the method of principal components. Bois's (cited in Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1994) statement that "perceived discrimination" of international students caused by difficulties of strangeness and social distance rather than cruder varieties of racial discrimination seemed to hold true although the observation was made almost 4 decades ago. Similar intercorrelations analyzed using the correlation and factor analyses procedures are presented from studies at other institutions and these findings are consistent with previous writings.

Second, factor analyses were performed to provide evidence supporting the construct validity of the ASSIS instrument. Principal factors and representative items with their factor loadings and communalities were extracted using the method of principal components. Computations were performed using the SPSS Release 3.0 for UNISYS. This analysis showed a relatively large loading for each factor (between .6 to .9), thus justifying the use of the subscales.

The feasibility of using factor analysis was supported by the anti-image correlation (the negative of the partial correlation coefficient). A measure of sampling adequacy (0.864) using the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin formula was quite large. Kaiser (cited in Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1994) defined the value of the measure as "meritorious." Consequently, the individual measures of sampling adequacy were larger than .76, and suggested that there was strong support for the application of factor analysis for these data.

The result of factor analysis successfully measured 6 major acculturative themes i.e. Perceived Discrimination, Homesickness, Perceived Hate, Perceived Fear, Cultural Shock, and Guilt. Walse and Betz (1995) stated that construct validity is not a necessary part of the test's basic quality since the instrument also takes into account characteristics by which it acquires meaning, interpretability, and usefulness.

Finally, the hypothesis that the population correlation matrix was an identity matrix was conducted using the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The 3698.84 value of the test statistic for

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

sphericity with an associated significance level of  $p < .00001$  rejected the hypothesis that the population correlation matrix was an identity index.

### **Research Design**

Two hundred and twelve copies of the ASSIS instrument, a cover letter, and personal data sheet were mailed to all Malaysian students chosen in this study. Samples from the Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnic groups were chosen from a comprehensive list of Malaysian students at WMU available at the Office of the International Student Services (OISS) and the Malaysian Student Organization directory. Seventy Malay students and 96 students from the Chinese ethnic group were chosen based on a systematic sampling procedure. However, due to its limited number of enrollment, all 46 Indian students were included in this study. A sample of convenience was used with the Indian population.

Self-addressed and self-stamped envelopes were provided to facilitate the completion process. The Director of the International Student Services at WMU was contacted to get a complete list of names and addresses of these students. The researcher provided 2 weeks for participants to respond to the questionnaires. A follow-up phone call was made to those who did not respond by the expected date. They were given another week to reply before the researcher began to analyze the data.

### **Statistical Procedures**

The SPSS for Windows 6.5 was used to analyze the data. Tables were utilized to report the students' demographic characteristics. Mean scores and standard deviations were computed to describe the six acculturative stress themes in relation to students' demographics data.

Two-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were used to determine significant differences among the two acculturative stress themes. Post-Hoc analyses using the Scheffe method and graph were used to illustrate interactions among variables. All comparisons were established using an alpha 0.5 level of significance.

### **RESULTS**

This section reports the results of this study in two sections. The first section presents the results on the eight hypotheses tested using two-way analyses of variance (Two-way ANOVA) in determining whether there are significant mean differences in the two themes of acculturative

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

stress among three Malaysian ethnic groups. Additional statistical analyses on the representative items of the two acculturative stress themes constitute the second section.

Result 1 reported the mean and standard deviation scores of two acculturative stress themes extracted from the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) computed on three Malaysian ethnic groups: (1) Malays, (2) Chinese, and (3) Indians. The Malay group scored higher means on the two acculturative stress themes in comparison to the Chinese and Indian groups. The two acculturative stress themes are as follows: (1) Perceived Fear ( $M = 9.73$ ), and (2) Culture Shock ( $M = 7.83$ ).

Result 2 reported the means and standard deviations of the Perceived Fear acculturative stress theme representative items computed on three Malaysian ethnic groups. Four items that contributed to this theme were based on how participants felt about themselves in relation to their safety while interacting with the dominant culture. The Malaysian group demonstrated higher mean scores on 2 of 4 items presented in comparison to the Chinese and Indian groups i.e. "I fear for my safety because of my cultural background" ( $M = 2.50$ ), and "I feel insecure here" ( $M = 2.27$ ).

Result 3 reported the means and standard deviations of the Culture Shock acculturative stress theme representative items computed on three Malaysian ethnic groups. Malay group scored higher means on all items presented i.e. "Multiple pressures are placed on me after migration" ( $M = 2.68$ ), and "I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new cultural values" ( $M = 2.51$ ) and "I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new food" ( $M = 2.66$ ). The Chinese group scored low scores on all the three items presented.

### **Hypotheses Testing and Analyses of Variance**

This section reports the results of eight hypotheses testing to determine if there were significant differences in the acculturative stress themes among the Malay, Chinese, and Indian groups who were enrolled during the Fall, 1997 semester at Western Michigan University. Two-way analyses of variance (ANOVA), Post-Hoc analyses using the Scheffe method, and interaction plots from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 6.5 were used to identify interactions among different groups and main effects within groups understudied. All hypotheses were tested using .05 level of significance. Data analyses and results are presented in the following.

CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"

**Null Hypothesis No. 1 - 2**

There will be no significant differences in the two acculturative stress theme scores i.e. Culture Shock and Perceived Fear among the three Malaysian ethnic groups and across two levels of their TOEFL scores.

**Table 1: Two-way ANOVA among Three Ethnic Groups and Across Two Levels of TOEFL Scores on Perceived Fear**

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
<b>Main Effects</b>					
Ethnicity	158.18	2	79.00	10.47	0.00*
TOEFL	38.02	1	38.02	5.00	0.27
2-way Interaction	35.14	2	17.50	2.33	0.10
Explained	231.35	5	46.27	6.12	0.00
Residual	997.29	132	7.55		
Total	1228.64	137	8.97		

Note. n = 138

As shown in Table 1, the two-way ANOVA  $F(2, 137) = 2.33$  is not significant ( $p = 0.10$ ) at the .05 alpha level. The analysis indicates that there are no significant mean differences and interactions among the Malay, Chinese, and Indian groups and across two levels of TOEFL scores on Perceived Fear. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. However, the significant value  $p(0.00^*)$  on ethnicity at the alpha .05 level indicates a main effect within the three groups. Post-Hoc analysis using the Scheffe method demonstrates that there is a significant mean difference between the Malay and Indian groups on Perceived Fear.

CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"

**Table 2: Two-way ANOVA among Three Ethnic Groups and Across Two Levels of TOEFL Scores on Culture Shock**

Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
<b>Main Effects</b>					
Ethnicity	55.73	2	22.87	4.37	0.01*
TOEFL	2.21	1	2.21	0.35	0.56
2-way Interaction	18.62	2	9.31	1.46	0.24
Explained	76.56	5	15.31	2.40	0.04
Residual	840.80	132	6.37		
Total	917.37	137	6.69		

Note. n = 138

As shown in Table 2, the two-way ANOVA  $F(2, 137) = 1.46$  is not significant ( $p = 0.24$ ) at the .05 alpha level. The analysis indicates that there are no significant mean differences and interactions among the Malay, Chinese, and Indian groups and across two levels of TOEFL scores on Culture Shock. However, the significant value  $p(0.01^*)$  on ethnicity at the alpha .05 level indicates a main effect within the three groups. Post-Hoc analysis using the Scheffe method demonstrates that there is a significant mean difference between the Malay and Indian groups on Culture Shock.

## SUMMARY

Studies on international students' psychological well being in U.S. colleges and universities in relation to ethnicity are beginning to appear in the literature on higher educational research. Several studies indicated that ethnicity plays significant roles in international students' life and experiences. How they perceive and interact with their surroundings and other human beings are due to the reflection of their identities, belief systems, and cultural and religious values (Pedersen, 1990).

**CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"**

Studies also suggested that the application of tools for assessing students' psychological problems and well being need to be carefully adapted. As aforementioned, international students were often subjected to prejudices and misrepresentation when the tools used did not represent the true nature of international students' issues and concerns.

This study was intended to explore the influence of ethnicity with respect to acculturative stress in U.S. colleges and universities. In its practical sense, this study intended to disseminate valuable information to the body of literature on international students and in relation to counseling services at U.S. colleges and universities.

The review of the literature relating to international students' stress and problems related to variety of difficulties ranging from loneliness, homesickness, and irritability to severe depression, confusion, disorientation, and communication problems will be further discussed in the following chapter.

International students come from a variety of life styles and socio-economic backgrounds prior to enrolling in U.S. colleges and universities. They may be the son of a king from Saudi Arabia, the daughter of a wealthy Singaporean exporter, or a Japanese exchange student admitted to study English in a midwestern university. In addition, there are countless numbers of illegally registered immigrants who flock to U.S. colleges and universities each year (Coleman and Carsky, 1994; Lambert, 1992). Often times, international students are perceived to be "inscrutable."

Often times, the presence of international students in U.S. colleges and universities is taken for granted by university officials. Less attention were given in addressing their academic concerns and welfare needs when they first arrived in the United States. International students are expected to be able to solve all their problems such as academic advising, registering for classes, lodging arrangement, opening bank accounts, and food independently or within their subgroups (Cheng, Leong, and Geist, 1993).

Therefore, it is hoped that the result of this study will enhance the understanding of American higher education, its international policy on international students, and the campus environment affects the educational and psychological well being of Malaysian students in U.S. colleges and universities. It is also hoped that this study will add to the understanding of international students' worldviews and struggles in relation to acculturative stress.

In addition, limited attention on the variety of stressors encountered by these three ethnic groups in previous studies has sparked the attention of researchers. Martin and Midgley (1994), Pedersen (1989) and Sodowsky and Plake (1992) mentioned that ethnicity and cultural



CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"

differences could be some of the major factors that increases the potential for misconceptions when providing counseling to Asian students by the so-called "professional" counselors.

## REFERENCES

- Cheng, D. , Leong, F. T. L. , & Geist, R. (1993). Cultural differences in psychological distress between Asian and Caucasian American college students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 21, 182-190.
- Coleman, S. (1997). International Students In The Classroom: A Resource and An Opportunity. *International Education*, 26, 52-61.
- Coleman, S. , & Carsky, M. (1994). Responding To Cultural Differences: An Innovative Approach to Measuring International Student Satisfaction. *International Education Journal*, 23, 5 -13.
- Gong-Guy, E. (1985). Depression in Students of Chinese and Japanese Ancestry: An Acculturation, Vulnerability and Stress Model. (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1985). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 46-07B, 2457.
- Holstein, W. J. (1988). The Asian Invasion: A Blessing For The U.S.? *Business Week*, 3071, p. 16, 20.
- Holt, S. L. (1997). Responding To Grammar Errors. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 70, 69-76.
- Kwan, K. L. K. , Sadowsky, G. R., & Ihle, G. M. (1994). Worldviews of Chinese International Students: An Extension and New Findings. *Journal of College Student Development*, 35, 190-197.
- Lambert, R. D. (1992). *Foreign Student Flows And The Internalization Of Higher Education*. NAFSA Working Paper #37. Evans City, PA: NAFSA Publication.
- Leong, F. T. L. , Mallinckrodt, , & Kralj, M . M . (1990). Cross-Cultural Variations in Stress and Adjustment Among Asian and Caucasian Graduate Students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 15, 115-119.

CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"

- Malaysia (1991). *Sixth Malaysia Plan 1991-1995*: Kuala Lumpur. National Printing Department.
- Martin, P. , & Midgley, E. (1994). Immigration To The United States: Journey To An Uncertain Destination. *Population Bulletin*, 49, 2-45.
- Mayerson, J. W. , & Massy, W. F. (1995). *Revitalizing Higher Education. The Standard Forum for Higher Education Futures*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 391 1452).
- Parr, G. , Bradley, L. , & Bingi, R. (1992). Concerns and Feelings of International Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 33, 20-25.
- Pedersen, P. B. (1989). The Effect of Secrecy on The International Educational Exchange of Scientific Knowledge. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 485-499.
- Pedersen, P. B. (1991). Counseling International Students. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 19 (1), 10-58.
- Sandhu, D. S., & Asrabadi, B. R. (1994). Development of an Acculturative Scale for International Students: Preliminary findings. *Psychological Reports*, 75, 435-448.
- Sandhu, D. S., Asrabadi, B. R. , & Rostam , B. (1991). An Assessment of Psychological Needs of International Students: Implications for Counseling and Psychotherapy. *Psychological Reports*.
- Schram, J. L. , & Lauver, P. J. (1988). Alienation in International Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 29, 146-150.
- Siegel, S. (1996, December 2). More Students Studying Abroad, Travelling Farther. *Detroit Free Press*, p. 1, 8 sec A.
- Sodowsky, G. R. , & Plake, B. S. (1992). A Study of Acculturation Differences Among International People and Suggestions for Sensitivity to Within-Group Differences. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 71, 53-59.
- Solberg, V. S. & et al. (1994). Asian-American Students' Severity of Problems and Willingness to Seek Help From University Counseling Centers: Role of Previous Counseling Experience, Gender, And Ethnicity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 41, 275-79.

CULTURE SHOCK AND FEAR ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES: THE MACROSCOPIC FACTORS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY  
"THE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS"

- Sue, D. W. (1994). Asian-American Mental Health and Help-Seeking Behavior: Comment on Solberg et al.(1994), Tata and Leong (1994), and Lin (1994). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 41, 292-95.
- Sue, D. W. , & Sue, D. (1990). *Counseling The Culturally Different*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Suradi, S. (1984). *Adjustment Problems of Malaysian Students at Western Michigan University*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Western Michigan University.
- Talbot, D. M. , Geelhoed, R. J. , & Ninggal, M. T. (1998). An Exploratory Qualitative Study of Asian International Students' Attitudes Toward Black Americans. *NASPA Journal*.
- Walsh, W.B., & Betz, N.E. (1985). *Test and Assessment*. New Jersey : Prentice Hall, Inc.