

Cross-cultural experiences of culture shock abroad: are international students getting lost in transition in the western cultures?

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the salient difficulties as experienced by international students from developing countries studying in Western universities. International students as review of several studies done in this paper has shown may be getting lost in transition due to the enormous nature of challenges they have to surmount while abroad. The extant literature on study abroad challenges used the culture shock framework to reveal some of the problems the sojourners encounter in the course of their living and studying abroad in Western universities. This paper has examined the nature of such culture shock experiences and how it affected this group of travelers abroad. As the review revealed, culture shock experiences of sojourners has obvious negative psychological and social implications in their overall wellbeing which is akin to getting lost in transition. Likewise, the Albert Ellis theoretical framework examined in this paper has shown that the manner at which events are appraised may mediate the kind of effect it will produce. In this regards, the international students' experiences of overwhelming acculturation challenges may be partly based on the kind of mental interpretation they give to the conditions they meet abroad. It is concluded that international students sometimes approach foreign cultures with ethnocentrism and in-group bias which affect them in reconciling the differences in values and conditioning between their home and the host culture.

Keywords: *Culture Shock, International Students, Cognitive Theory, Host Culture*

Travelling to a novel and unfamiliar cultural environment has not been easy for international students. Although other travelers experience cross-cultural challenges, international students experiences has becomes an area of concern because the effects of cross-cultural difficulties manifest and affect their academic, social and self-realization process. Intercultural contact therefore has over the history been associated with adjustment problems and with the expansion of educational exchanges and the quality of education in the western world, there has been an enormous increase in the number of students travelling abroad from the developing countries. Thus, the exponential growth in the number of international students

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abroad over the last few decades from developing countries has escalated. These students spend time in educational institutions of relatively more developed countries so that, upon returning, they can make enriching contributions to their economy, health care system, social conditions, and technology of their countries (Hanboyan & Bryan 1995). Intercultural contact and culture shock remain part of the process of travelling abroad.

International students face a lot of problems regarding adjustment and coping with the norms and values of the culture where they find themselves leading to some psychological problems as depression, identity crisis and lack of confidence in the realisation of their sojourn objectives among other problems. The students have to successfully adjust to a different lifestyle, food, climate, time zone, and often learning a foreign language or accent to be able to succeed in their new environment. Consequently, a student who arrive in a new culture is faced with conformity to the new cultural conditioning because there will be loss of familiar cues, signs and symbols of social intercourse, breakdown of interpersonal communication and identity crisis leading to anxiety (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). Such experience is akin to a person getting lost in transition. This is generally regarded as culture shock.

However, culture shock affects different international students differently such that international students from distant cultures may be affected more than those of close cultures with their host. This is of course supported by the works of (Hanboyan & Bryman 1995) who noted that among the notions of culture shock, culture-distance may explain why sojourners experience culture shock such that the absolute amount of difference or distance between a sojourner's own and the host culture is directly proportionally related to the amount of stress or difficulty they experience.

The newness that international students encounter in the new culture sometimes trigger some level of discomfort on them such that some of the students end up adjusting to the new cultural environment for the entire period of their study. This will be reflected in their academic performance and their consistent uncertainty about what progress the new culture holds for them. The issue has become important and requires best practices to reduce negative effects of overseas sojourn in the experiences of international students. This can be achieved both at individual level and at the university management level considering the teeming population of international students that enroll consistently into the Western universities

Ward et al (2001) noted that despite the fact that people have sojourned since time immemorial, it is not until the last 50years ago that research was done with the different groups of these travelers. Knowledge of what constitute the best acculturation process for international students from Africa, Asia and Middle East who are studying in Western universities needs to be illuminated and improved upon. This will allow for a better understanding and knowledge of how they negotiate boundaries between the host culture demands and the realization of their sojourn goals.

Culture Shock of international students

It is recorded that international students' encounter of diversity can be threatening and unsettling and can pose threat to the sense of who they are (Montgomery, 2010). Major explanations of the concept of culture shock are rooted in the psychological understanding of how culture shock affects the personality and emotional adjustment of the people involved (Ward et al, 2001). One major reason why it is important to examine culture shock of

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international students is that it often affects the realization of their sojourn objectives as noted earlier. This observed problem of culture shock is worth addressing to help the students in the Western universities achieve their individual and group targets.

Culture shock is primarily a set of emotional reactions to the loss previous familiar reinforces and may encompass feelings of helplessness, irritability, and fear of being cheated, contaminated, injured or disgraced (Ward et al, 2001). The word culture shock was first used by Kalervo Oberg, (Ward et al, 2001) to describe a psychological disorientation experienced by people when they enter a new and different cultural environment to live, work, school or for such other purposes.

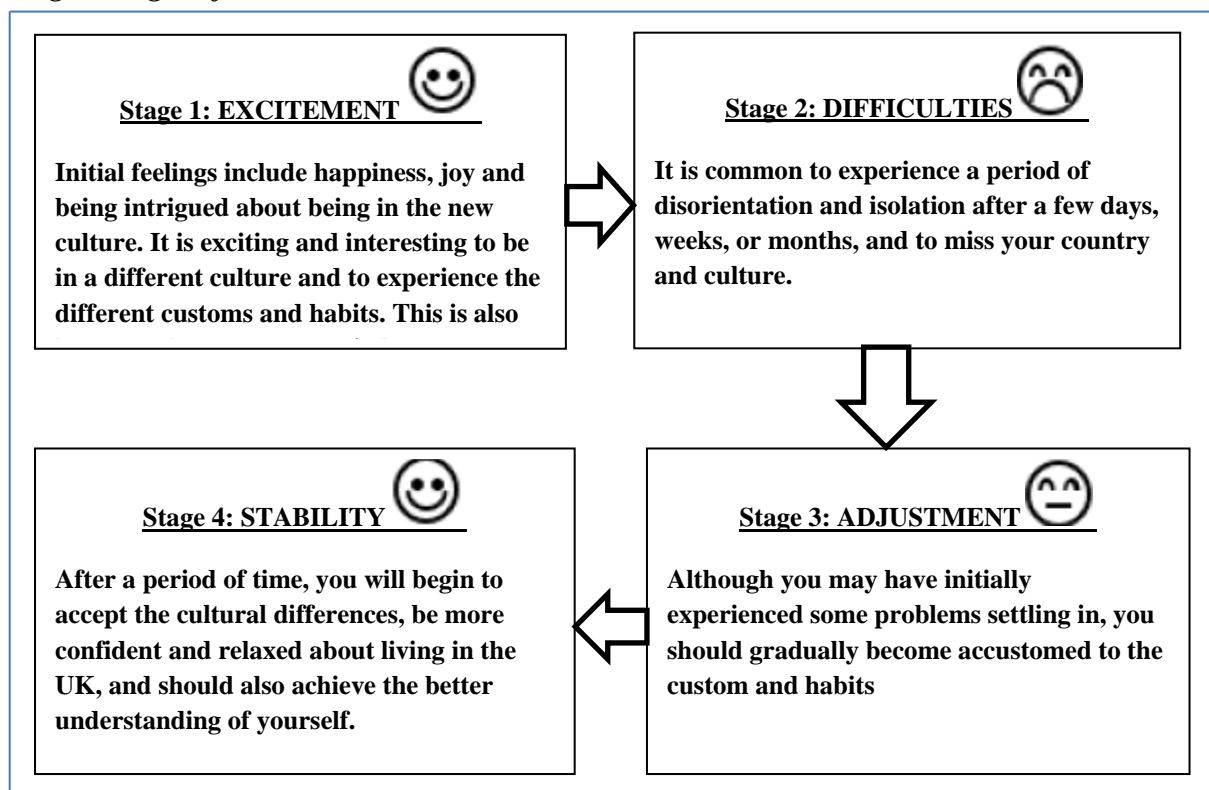
The challenges of travelling abroad happen to affect international students as well as other migrants. It is normal for an unfamiliar environment to trigger some discomfort such that expecting and living by it becomes an adaptive response. Meanwhile, it becomes a problem when it affects the realization of set objectives and interferes with an individuals' relaxed state of mind for effective functioning in the new environment. Furnham (2004) has identified among others the primary causes of culture shock among international students to include: Strain due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations, sense of loss and feelings of deprivation with regard to friends, status, profession and possessions, being rejected by, or rejecting members of the new culture. Other causes are: confusion in role and role expectations, values, surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences (Furnham, 2004). Likewise, Ward et al (2001) added that the major symptoms of culture shock are homesickness, boredom, withdrawal, frustration and anxiety, irritability, stereotyping of host nationals and hostility toward host nation. There are also some feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment (Furnham, 2004). These factors in one way or the other are grossly responsible for the feeling of psychological and physical discomforts which are inherent in culture shock experience of international students.

Culture shock seems inevitable because the abrupt loss of familiarity has been seen as chief among the notables causes of culture shock experience as Ward et al (2001) has suggested. When familiar signs and social symbols have been removed, the resultant effect for international students is culture shock. It is important to note that culture shock takes the form of a process and not a single event. Likewise, as Pederson (1995) added, culture shock experience is individualized such that some people may report less shock while others exhibit serious discomfort in the new culture. The author is of the view that the individual's acceptance of the situation or refusal to accept the changes in the new culture will determine the degree of the shock, with regards to whether it is reducing or adding. Meanwhile, either of that suggests that different international students will experience culture shock differently. In the light of this, it is very crucial that adaptation and transformation of students be positively reconciled with respect to culture shock difficulties so as to ensure a rewarding study abroad experience.

Karlevo Oberg identified four major stages of culture shock that people go through when they experience a first-hand contact with a new culture. The four stages are excitement, difficulty, adjustment and stability as shown in the diagrammatic illustration below

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Fig. 1 Stages of culture shock



SOURCE: (Davy, 2008)

Davy (2008) noted that there are four stages of culture shock. However, the author said that every individual experience culture shock but might not sequentially go through the four stages in chronological manner. The author advised international students who are intending to study in the UK to expect the four possible stages as seen above which they have to successfully surmount to be able to maintain stability as they progress in their stay and study abroad.

The first stage is where the international students initially feel so happy for making it to the new country. At this stage of culture shock the students are always full of joy to meet and interact with the host culture people and people from other countries. The author is of the view that the students may not take cognisance of acceptance or rejection of certain behaviours and may not easily identify cultural gaps that may throw them off. This view is largely accepted as many people also see this period as a period of excitement and exhilaration. Similarly, Marx (2001) added that Oberg the originator of the phases of culture shock pointed out that the first encounters of sojourners abroad is always full of excitements, positive and stimulating. The sojourners' new life in the few days of arrival in the new culture is full of excitements and happiness as they view life as providing endless opportunities leaving them in a state of exhilaration.

In this first stage it was noted that everything is new, different and delightful, with the euphoria of change of environment and the happiness that can be compared to that of buying a new house or marriage otherwise known as honeymoon (Marx, 2001).

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In their view, UKCISA (2010) added that the honeymoon stage is exciting to the international students because they still remember home and are protected by close memory of their home culture. The strength of generalizing this position may be weak as some people who travel abroad may start having their shock from the first day of their arrival in a new culture. Thus, measuring how long the excitement stage lasts and whether it is the same across sojourners is an issue to be considered when discussing the different stages of culture shock.

Davy (2008) consequently maintained that the second stage of culture shock is a stage of disorientation and isolation. The reason for the disorientation stage is that the international students at this period would have been able to notice cultural differences between their culture of origin and the British culture. This view was also supported in the work of Ward et al (2001) who posited that the second phase of culture shock is a stage of distress and loss of social discourse. This stage following the excitement period is a period that many people will be able to identify cultural differences in behaviour and values as it will become more obvious. At this point the excitement gradually diminishes to frustration. This is because everything around the new culture begins to unfold and reveal their real self and the moment of stress had suddenly arrived. The new discoveries and observations made during the honeymoon period will contribute to stress as some of them will conflict with what the sojourners know.

Every honeymoon has an ending for the married couples to face the reality of the marriage and so does the honeymoon phase of culture shock end for the foreign students to face the realities of being in a new culture. Petkova (2009) added that the sojourners at this period begin to actively compare the values in their native countries with those in the host country while basing perception of the new cultural environment on comparison.

The third phase of culture shock is a period when one may reject what is around, perhaps becoming opinionated and negative. At that stage as experience have revealed, sojourners may have the notion that people in the host culture hates them or does not want to associate themselves with them. International students at this stage will become close to people of the same national as them in search for a sense of belongingness (Davy, 2008).

Davy (2008) observed that as time progresses in the fourth stage, the sojourners will become fully aware of what is obtainable in the new culture and how to behave to be able to become a conformist. This is the point when the sojourners realize that they cannot change the hands of things in the new culture so they start accepting what is right and wrong in the host culture to maintain the mainstream behaviour. Meanwhile, suffice to say that every individual is different which means that some sojourners may not accept the host culture and their values at any stage until they finish and leave.

Sojourning abroad can be an exciting period for making friends and establishing contacts but international students' needs to develop a robust optimistic personality and confidence to survive in the new culture. This is because students who come to study abroad have different personality types, some are very flexible and easily accept changes, some are easy going and tolerant while a host of others possess none of these characteristics. Marx (2001) also noted that the problems of culture shock may be more serious that it may degenerate from exhilaration and developing confidence to serious intercultural problem and even a worse case of nervous breakdown. Considering the seriousness of the situations associated with issues of culture shock, it is important that there is an understanding of the international

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students and their adaptation problems so that what will make them internationally effective will be put in place to prepare them to adapt to culture shock challenges socially and emotionally.

It is generally accepted that culture shock is a normal phenomenon for travelers abroad, sometimes maybe enough information is not readily available to the students sojourner, or maybe the students lack information on how and where to use available information. All of these suggest that there is a problem that leaves majority of them in poor adaptation conditions.

UKCISA (2010) have identified among others the problems international students face when they arrive abroad for their studies to include: shock of being separated from important people in their lives, some of which may include family members, friends, colleagues, teachers and such other kind of people whose relationship with the students have been so intimate that living without them will pose a problem. Consequently, the climate, food, language, dress, social roles, rules of behaviour, values among other changes as noted earlier affect the international students negatively.

The accent phonetics of English people for example is considered to be fast in Africa and some part of Asia. Students from these countries will have more shock of not understanding people very easily when they are communicating with them. This may also be the case in the class room where an English teacher or lecturer is teaching these international students. Some will not have the courage to ask questions when they are lost from the acclaimed fastness of the teacher and the result is that the students would not have learnt anything and so the aim of coming to the class will be defeated. These difficulties and stressors associated with transition to a new school or university in a new culture as noted by Ward et al (2001), hamper and affect learning.

Psychological problems associated with culture shock

When there is a disagreement between what is expected and what is experienced, there would be a problem. This is called cognitive dissonance in psychology. Psychological problems of culture shock among international students are those perceived disturbances which makes the students less effective in the pursuance of their academic goals. It is important to classify some of the problems sojourners face abroad just as Robertson, Lines, Jones, and Thomas (2000) also supported this view by informing that recognising and demystifying the problems they face as learners in unfamiliar contexts are critical and the first step towards improving the learning environments of international students.

More severe psychological breakdown could result from culture shock problems if they not properly tackled by the individuals involved and the institutions where the students are studying. Research has shown (Furnham, 2004) that there has been incidence of psychological and fairly severe breakdown in the lives of students studying abroad. For instance, a 25-year retrospective analysis of the psychiatric morbidity of foreign students in Yugoslavia, traced 63 foreign and 120 domestic students who were hospitalised, and found high rates of paranoia and depressive reactions on the foreign students Furnham (2004). Of the foreign students admitted from the analysis of the study, 67 per cent showed paranoid delusions, 62 percent anxiety, and 52 percent depression, which, when compared with lower rates for domestic students, they took as evidence of the correlation between 'psychiatric morbidity and maladaptation to the new living conditions' showed how related these cases

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were to the vagaries of the cultural differences and poor adaptation issues by the foreign students (Furnham, 2004).

Hanboyan and Bryan (1995) observed that when students immigrate to a country, they often develop symptoms associated with an "uprooting disorder". These symptoms as the researchers noted might include disorientation, nostalgic-depressive reaction, and feelings of isolation, alienation, powerlessness, hypochondriasis, paranoia, and hostility. To further clarify the issues of psychological disorder that can manifest from culture shock of a new environment, Hanboyan and Bryan (1995) cited a 1984-1988 study on health care use by students in the United States which revealed that international students had many more diagnoses of stress related illness, including depression, anxiety, headache, constipation, and insomnia, than domestic students. The same kind of experience can apply to international students across the world because cultural differences that exist among the host country and the culture of origin of these students put them in a tough condition. On the other hand, accepting the host culture values and content obviously contradict their personal held values from their own cultures. This may lead to disorientation and possible shock.

In order to restore homeostasis and balance in the new culture, efforts should be made to manage transitional difficulties. However, suffice to say that the approach to managing culture shock may not be universal but specific because of personal factors of the international students. Psychobiologists believe that there is an emotional reaction to the stressful condition which triggers imbalance in the body system such that intermittently, adrenalin is secreted into the system due to a high level of fear and uncertainty (Charney, 2004). Sojourners experiencing culture shock are always faced with the feeling of insecurity as most sojourners will complain. This inevitably may arouse physiological imbalance leading to other circles of psychological malfunction. This is of course the case because Davis, Headley, Bazemore, Cervo, Sickinger, Windham, and Rehfuss, (2010) has already noted that there is a perpetual atmosphere of grief and loss which can often lead to high levels of stress during acculturation. Such Stressors in the host culture that affects the international students is also known to reduce their ability to adjust to the socio cultural environment which influences their learning performance (Hwang, Sodanine & Wang, 2011).

Patterns of relationship adopted by international students in the host culture

Researchers has consistently examined the pattern and outcome of monocultural, bicultural and multicultural relationships in overseas students (Ward et al, 2001), but notwithstanding this research studies, the problems of culture shock and its negative encounters on the students are still prevalent.

Interpersonal and intergroup relations and the effects of a novel culture are core concepts in this paper. International students form a network of relationship that is considered to contribute to effective adjustment of the international students studying abroad. It is also observable that contact with fellow nationals help reduce psychological stress like depression and feeling of alienation in the new culture (Montgomery, 2010). It also reduces the feeling of loneliness which basically mediates home sickness. The network international students build with their fellow nationals which reduces their psychological distress is likened to those they build in their home country. Contact with fellow nationals has thus been seen as helpful in building strong social integration (Montgomery, 2010).

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Montgomery (2010) undertook a research on 4,796 international students from 150 different countries in UK Higher Education. The research focused on which network of social integration helped the students in reducing intercultural conflict. The result showed that students who were in close contact with their fellow nationals, reported having less cultural and academic problems as it concerns adaptation to the UK culture (Montgomery, 2010).

The second network is keeping a close relationship with the host nationals. People in the second network that sojourners belong to include other students, teachers, counsellors, university bureaucrats and government official whose relationship are more formal than personal in nature (Ward et al, 2001). Church (1982) concluded that, researchers consider positive social interaction with host nationals as among the necessary condition responsible for effective sojourner adjustment since it fosters a sense of connectedness with the immediate social order. This second network serves the function of being largely instrumental to facilitate the academic and professional aim of the students. Likewise, Ward et al (2001) submitted that international student's relationship and interaction with the host students may provide a functional benefit such as improved communication competency and quick adaptation to life while they are overseas. International students who are in close contact with host nationals may consistently form better cross-cultural adjustment skills such that they learn from the new culture and better understand the way of life of people in host culture. This of course has been supported in a research by Ramsay, Jones & Barker (2007), who in a study of some local and international first year students in an Australian University found that student who adjusted more and better were those who established and formed social companionship with their host culture counterparts.

It may be argued from this point of view that frequent contact with the host culture students provides a real sense of satisfaction to the sojourners and a profound less level of stress. It may consequently help to yield a better psychological support through a co-interaction network. Ward et al (2001) supported this view when they posited that favourable attitudes towards socializing with the host nationals are positively related to a more positive mood state. Meanwhile, it is worthy to note that the host culture students may be blocking avenues for social interaction with the international students just as international students could face perceived prejudice from host students. This is resonated in a study conducted by Giffene, Charles-Toussaint, and Crowson (2010) in USA which revealed that there was a clear indication of prejudice against the international students by U.S home students.

The third group of social integration networks are friends from other non-compatriot foreign students, whose relationship is only recreational and for providing mutual social support base on shared foreignness (Ward et al, 2001). The importance of international students' interaction with other international students from other nationalities was supported in a research conducted by UKCOSA where 59% of the international students reported that they maintained international friendship of people from their own culture and other international students (Montgomery, 2010). That means they adjusted better to the UK culture and had less homesickness.

International students may adopt available options when forming patterns of relationship fails. Thus, social isolation may result but the sojourners have a way of overcoming this isolation, through maintaining an enclave. As observed in most countries, social isolation from host nationals was also a way of life for Far Eastern students in America (Church, 1982) and forming enclaves was useful. The fuction of enclaves to international students therefore

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is to reduce the anxiety, feelings of powerlessness and social stresses they encounter in the new culture. Likewise, Church (1982) noted that enclaves enable traditional value and belief systems to be maintained and thus is active in reducing the need for psychological and behavioural adjustment.

Culture shock keeps deepening especially for those who enter another country with an attitude of what anthropologists call 'naive realism' (Petkova, 2009). This is the view that everyone sees the world essentially as they do and if the naive realist also holds an ethnocentric belief that his or her cultural ways are preferable and superior to all others, the likelihood of some kind of conflict escalating enormously for such sojourners becomes high (Petkova, 2009).

Theoretical Support

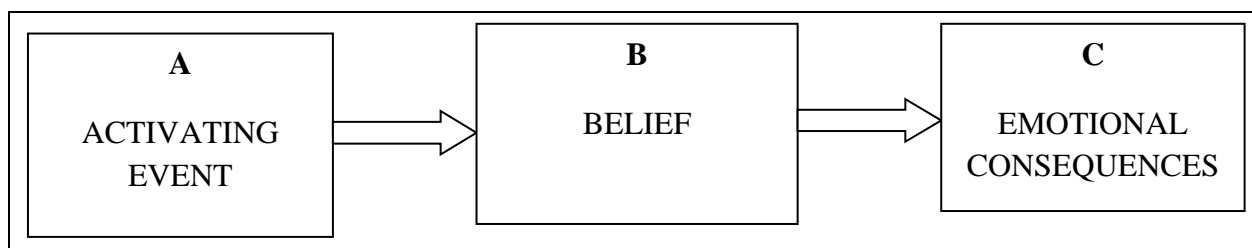
The theoretical framework in this study is basically meant to support the arguments projected on the reasons why some international students experience more culture shock challenges as on discourse in this paper. The theory considered in this paper is the Albert Ellis ABC theory.

Albert Ellis Cognitive Theory

Albert Ellis (1913-2007) was an American psychologist who did most of his works in clinical therapy (Boree, 2006). The central theme in this theory is the use of ABC to explain the way people react to circumstances in their life. The theory has been used by psychologists to explain that the way individuals perceive and interpret circumstances in their lives lends reason to what happens to them psychologically. In other words the appraisal of a life event determines the consequences of such events in people's lives.

Boree (2006) informed that ABC was construed by Ellis as: "A" meaning the activating event in the environment such as stress, trauma, negative sources of unhappiness and distressing event in people's life. "B" stands for the belief system or the irrational self-defeating beliefs and thought we have about those experiences, and "C" the consequence of such beliefs which is manifested as emotional torture, depression, panic etc (Boree, 2006). This model of thought developed by Ellis is known as the rational emotive therapy (RET). The theory was developed in 1955 when Ellis referred to it as a counseling theory and a philosophy (Weinrach, 1996). As a theory, it stands to give meaning and explanations on typical thinking errors in humans and as a therapy it is aimed at changing those self-defeating thoughts and replacing them with self-enhancing thoughts (Boree, 2006). It is used here to foster understanding of international student's distress in the new culture and how the ABC phenomenon relates to student sojourners' experience.

Fig. 2: The ABC of live events



International students are confronted with different levels of distressing situations when they sojourn abroad to study including experiences of culture shock. Irrespective of the cause of

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this stress and challenging life situation whether cultural differences or individual psychological problems, this theory assumes that they situation should be appraised constructively rather than destructively. In effect, as Weinrach (1996) informed, the emotional turmoil felt by individuals may block their constructive actions. The outcome most of the times when activating events are appraised in a negative light is usually self defeating and non-adaptive for the individuals. The feeling of isolation and loneliness experienced by international students for instance during culture shock is caused by loss of familiarity of friends and families as Ward et al, (2001) noted. The loss of this familiarity is the activating events from Ellis explanation which invariably places some level of discomfort on the international students. When this happens, the emotions of the sojourners are affected negatively leading to other psychological distress.

As Ellis pointed out, when our emotional ties are broken, it activates series of discomfort which we interpret as negative or positive depending on the surrounding factors and the individual involved. The interpretations and beliefs given to these experiences by international students could account for why it poses more threat for them to survive and adapt in the host culture. The nature of belief becomes an issue because as Boree (2006) informed, Ellis thought of those belief as irrational thus having negative effects on the individual. The belief system B from that ABC theory of Ellis is especially the self defeating beliefs which obviously are the actual cause of the emotional distress experienced. An international student who is confronted with culture shock, unfamiliarity of the host country and people, who have difficulties in language proficiency and academic issues, will behave in a particular manner.

Albert (1992) noted that for some persons, they usually want people around them to see them as being right always and thus continuously construct self-defeating behaviours. Such self defeating beliefs include the belief that things are horrible when they are not the way we want them to be (Boree, 2006). Student sojourners in this case may begin to interpret their unhappiness as the worst thing that happened to them since some of them usually believe that no one cares about them (Ward et al, 2001). Albert believes that it is a well-known fact that those conditions or situations that because unhappiness could actually be very devastating. However, he believes that it is the belief and interpretation given to it that actually makes it a long term disabling problems. The expectation that coming abroad is sweet is usually dampened by challenges of adjustment leading to series of psychological discomfort. This throws the students off their feet because those new order are inconsistent with their expectations. Albert Ellis's "C" which is the consequence of the belief system is consequently manifested into anxiety of the feared situation, depression as a result of the feeling of helplessness the sojourners experience and other psychological problems accompanying their thought processes.

Irrational beliefs provided by Albert Ellis that causes problems as Boree (2006) informed could include the feeling of worthlessness, feeling of incompetency, the feeling that one must be very comfortable always in life etc. International students are best for these examples when they are facing difficulties in the host culture. The difficulties may lead to conclusions like "I am worthless here unlike my home country", "I think I should have been treated well like I use to be treated in my own culture" and related talks. This kind of belief is what Ellis referred to as self –defeating. These thoughts are considered illogical and irrational beliefs. On that note, Albert(1987) maintained that the irrational beliefs that people have which include their expectations that their rational preferences must be met, which escalate into

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absolute dogmatism must lead into emotional and behavioural problems when they are not met (Albert, 1987). This theory to a large extent explains the reasons why people have problems when their expectations are not met like the case of international students studying abroad.

The students may have an expectation that life will be as normal as it is in their home countries and cultures. When these expectations are not met, then depression, anxiety, mental health problems could be the outcomes of the disappointment of their preconceptions. In one of his arguments, Albert says: “it is theorized that even when helped by the most efficient forms of psychotherapy, contemporary humans still find it virtually impossible to consistently achieve and maintain good mental health” (Albert, 1987). From Albert’s theory and postulations, it thus follows that maintaining good mental health by being rational could be difficult to attain for people in various situations. For sojourners like international students who may have complex problems of academic issues coupled with social and financial difficulties, interaction and language problems and others, it may be more difficult to achieve good mental health state. However, it may be irrational or general to say that contemporary humans may not achieve good mental health state because some people who are open to change and approach every situation with confidence may have a belief system that could guarantee them good mental health. Cognitive restructuring is central to Albert Ellis postulations.

To conclude from this theory, activating events that affect international students in the new environment where they have sojourned to study could have a lesser effect on them if their belief systems adjust to those events in a more positive and self enhancing manner. It could be more self defeating if they expect to enjoy in the host culture the status they had enjoyed in their home culture and country or if they become dogmatic and expect to be right always. This is because the host culture defines what should apply to them both in terms of laws, regulations and otherwise. Suffice therefore to say that the consequences which are seen manifesting themselves into series of psychological problems and poor mental health of sojourners could be partly because of their belief system of those events and other uncontrollable factors. Thus, accepting what one cannot change positively could be a way of increasing and improving good mental health in a new environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions that can be drawn in this paper are the following: travelling to unfamiliar cultural environment and conditioning can be very unsettling and can pose a threat to sojourners psychological wellbeing. It is observed that international students are faced with adjustment difficulties that sometimes affect the realization of their academic sojourn objectives. There are salient psychological and social maladies associated sometimes with sojourners acculturation experiences in western universities. Culture shock framework contains all of these understanding and affect individuals in varying different ways. These experiences are similar to an individual getting lost in transition such that making decisions sometimes is difficult. Surviving abroad has also been seen as a period when international students have opportunities to make new social connections even though culture shock challenges affect their realization of those sought goals. Forming enclaves and maintaining relationships with fellow host culture nationals is seen as providing emotional support to the student sojourners overseas. Albert Ellis cognitive theory can be useful in understanding how activating events can be appraised positively to help reduce the overarching consequences in different live events. It is concluded that international students sometimes approach foreign

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cultures with ethnocentrism and in-group bias which affect them in reconciling the differences in values and conditioning between their home and the host culture.

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Conflict of Interest

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