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International Students' Social Adjustment and Self-Esteem: Are they Interrelated?

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Abstract   *Internationalization in higher education remained unsuccessful to obtain the concentration of investigators in Pakistan. The ultimate goal of this research is to explore the correlation between social adjustment of international students and their self-esteem (SE). Sample of the study comprised international students (N=204) who studied there in different institutes of Pakistan. For measuring social adjustment, Student Adjustment to Collage Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by R. W. Baker and B. Siryk in 1989 was adapted. To measure students' self-esteem (SE), Renieose questionnaire (2017) was adopted. The findings of this research show that the international students had high self-esteem with the highest score on self-regard and lowest with social relations. They had high level of adjustment with the highest score on attachment and lowest on academic adjustment. Finally, there was a significant relationship between Social adjustment and self-esteem of international students.*

Key Words: International students, self-esteem, Social adjustment

Introduction

For numerous centuries, academicians have been involved in international student practices, assigning significant concentration to the problem of accommodation. Time has adjusted, and so has international education and international student practices where "now, it is further complicated to remain confined than to become international" (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014, p.xi).

International students are described as entity that for the time being live in a country other than their own country in order to contribute in foreign educational exchange as students (Paige, 1990). Foreign students move from diverse countries with diverse backgrounds and skills. They have different kinds of expertise and level of English knowledge (Bektas, 2008; Directgov, 2011; Lin, 2010; Sovic, 2009). Therefore, they are worried about getting utilization of new approaches of knowledge and learning. International students encounter more troubles in adapting the new conditions. A large number of researchers have notice the issues of international student's education and experience that they have to face during their stay (e.g. Andrade, 2006, Constantine, 2005; Yi, Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003). International students encounter with a variety of adjustment problems, when they learn or reside overseas. For instances, one of the survey research was carried out by Lin and Yin (1997) demonstrated that these students' encountered with variety of problems for example adjustment issues, language barriers, fiscal problems, and cultural confusions.

Paltridge (2012) proved that there is dire need to develop system and approaches for sustaining international students in a social context, economically, academically, and psychologically.

According to many researchers, the level of students' social adjustment differs according to their personality, social characteristics, cultural, demographic, and academic (Alfonso, 2012; Chen& Chen, 2009; Justice& McLachlan, 2009; Shaydenko & Tsze 2011). Other studies (Alfonso, 2012; Jiang, 2010; Pedersen, 2005) showed that a good level of adjustment (academic, personal, and emotional) had predicted the academic achievement and both had a strong relationship with the personality of the individual.

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Review of literature

Social adjustment is based on behavioral reactions connected to how successfully a person links to a latest social culture, such as ability of organizing duty needed for daily intercultural living (Ward et al., 2008). Successful adjustment of psychological and socio-cultural aspects also connects to social demographic factors, like education level, educational achievement, previous cultural practices, host language expertise, family income, and perceived cultural distance (Coles & Swami, 2012).

Baker and Siryk (1989) have discussed "adjustment to university "in four general dimensions of modification: (a) societal adjustment that measures how well the adolescent treats with interpersonal practices at university , (b) educational modification that assess how well a freshman manages to meet the educational demands of the university experiences, (c) institutional affiliation that measures the international students loyalty towards the university as an organization, and (d) personal-emotional modification which shows whether students experience psychological or somatic indicators of anxiety. Rienties (2011) used the SACQ to study the academic performance and social integration of international students in relation with their academic adjustment and adaptation interchangeably.

Al-Sharideh and Goe (1998) experienced that a lot of international students constitute societal interactions with people who share the same ethnic, racial, national, or religious background. They asserted that social relationships with locals only occurred when the international student was incapable to shape such associations with others. Developing cultural societies within the university framework provides them social networks that can help the international students to solve problems that they have in the host society.

The literature is full of apparently identical terms of 'acculturation', 'adjustment', and 'adaptation. Community set up plays a very important role in understanding international students' foreign language utilization and adaptation to their new atmosphere. Studies about acculturation of new international student's shows that language expertise and SE become linked in a circle with positive dealings, and contributing a sense of belonging with confidence (Hullet & Witte, 2001; Matsumoto et al., 2004).

In recent times, different studies have focused on individual aspects such as SE with the aim of problem-solving that is how to decrease anxiety and enhance the positive features of adaptation and knowledge in the host community. SE has been exposed to be analytical of adaptation in a variety of researches. Those students who have better SE had improved on the whole for domain specific adjustment. SE is supposed the essential section of core self-evaluations, presenting overall value of individual places on oneself (Ward, 2008).

In the views of Schmeck (1988), SE presents a significant affective assessor that might have an effect on the extent of stability in performance. Furthermore, self-esteem has been recommended as a characteristic of human being choices, as well as variety of learning strategies (McCarthy & Schmeck, 1988), found that students with higher SE are straight, to engage their self-concept in their information processing, e.g., by adopting a complex and highly structured approach to studying. Abouserie (1995) conducted a research on 135 undergraduate students in the UK, discovered that self-esteem as a determinant of students' constructive involvement with comprehends processing and a negative connection with apparent or surface learning in study approaches. Furthermore, students with better self-esteem have a tendency to accept a constructive approach for studying, whereas students with poor self-esteem utilize an exterior approach for studying. Conversely, Mone, Baker, and Jeffries (1995) disagreed that self-esteem has not been originate to calculate the creation of individual ambitions nor educational performance accomplishments. Furthermore, there are limited correlation between self-esteem and approaches to studying.

According to Lane and Kyprianou (2004), examined the relation of self-efficacy, SE, earlier achievements and educational success along with 205 students. Final sample that was chosen for this study completed the measures of past achievements with the help of SE, and self-efficacy at the beginning of two-week studies. Every participant's usual position from modules studied was considered as the presentation evaluation. Findings pointed out an important correlation between self-efficacy and SE. Several decline consequences pointed out that self-efficacy intervened the relation between achievements and educational success. Final results provide sustainability to the analytical usefulness of self-efficacy assessments in educational situations.

A study conducted by Sadaat, Ghasemzadeh and Soleimani (2012) intends to study SE and its firm relation with academic achievement of university students. At the end result, a considerable variation among boys and

girls self-esteem is observed. Although male students scores greater than women students. Students of diverse faculties of social sciences, psychology and educational sciences, and electro- computer demonstrated considerable variation in SE. Scholastic and family SE had a straight encouraging relation with the academic accomplishment of international students.

Mohammad (2010) draws attention to the correlation between SE and academic achievement in the university students. Furthermore, it intended to recognize the variations in academic achievement between male and female students. The aim of research was attained with the current and previous semesters CGPA of students' by using the Coppersmith questionnaire. For data collection process 50 males and 50 females were chosen randomly. Data were collected with the help of questionnaires and it was circulated amongst 100 students. End results confirmed that there was major constructive relation between SE and academic achievement. Furthermore, he found, an important difference in academic achievement between males and females.

Although no considerable variation was established in SE between boys and girls. At the end, this study suggests that better SE is an essential feature and reinforce the prediction of academic attainment in students.

Literature based on diverse psychological and sociological studies shows how SE can influence an individual's success. A multidimensional model develops by Harter (2003) points out the diverse features that contribute on the whole SE of an individual. Such as Scholastic proficiency, Social recognition, Athletic capability, Physical manifestation and Behavioral accomplishments are as parts of the overall SE. Harter's research originates that an individual might have perfect performance on one feature, and might have a poor on another. It is no longer surprising that due to an increasing significance on interpersonal relations, relations such as making new friends can greatly affect the SE of students.

Abdullah (2000) performed a research to measure the relation among accomplishment, motivation, SE, locus of control and academic achievement of institute of higher education students. The aim was to find out the level of university student's academic achievement which was subjective by decisive factors. A total number of 1335 participants from seven disciplines take part in this study. Participants were chosen by stratified cum simple random sampling technique. Findings from regression analysis exposed that the independent variables did not calculate objective evaluation of students' academic performance. Psycho-sociological confirmations flourish the need of achievement ,motivation , low self-esteem, generate less concentration to try hard for higher educational success and absence of enthusiasm to participate completely and competently for general development in students,.

A number of researches point out that SE show to restrain the consequence of anxiety. On psychological basis the human beings stress appears to be contrarily related with SE (Kreger, 1995). Those Individuals who have high SE appear to be defended from sensitivity distress from pessimistic happenings. Constructive SE seems to have more active and successful coping result and improved stimulus in the appearance of stress (Abel, 1996).At the same time, common experimental sustain shows an optimistic and straight relation between SE and adjustment. A few researches' have initiated additional complexes interactions. According to Karmos (1981), in a college study found a U-shaped relation among SE and emotional adjustment, where the poor grades on SE highlighted a great self-ideal contradiction and got interrelated to better emotional adaptation after a definite level. Different verification shows that the relationship among SE and academic attainment is not only depended on the level of SE but also on what it is conditional for "contingencies of worth" (Crocker & Luhtanen, 2003). They found low SE of college students to be rational of societal issues, whereas academic issues were envisaged by academic competence emergency .Results of one more research explained both SE and false incidence were straight and main factors of all kinds of college adjustment. SE was initiate to be arbitrated throughout the societal support seeking process and avoidant management, as problem-solving coping was dissimilar to any sort of college adjustment (Lefkowitz, 2003).

This research is conducted with the aim of considering the relation of self-esteem of a person to adjustment. It has also plans to comprehend confronts of international students' that they are facing during their stay. During their stay in different institutes international Students need multidimensional assistance from their Counselors, teachers, and the academic community and they may give them a thorough assistance but such types of issues are not completely solved so there is need of this type of research. It also expects a framework of the special programs of educational institutions may offer to international students.

Methods and Procedures

Sample

Sample comprised 204 students from different faculties of ten universities of the Punjab. They were from Physical Sciences (47%), Engineering (18%), Social Sciences (10%) and Medical (25%). They belonged to BS/MA/MSc. (48%), MS/M.Phil (17%), Ph.D (9%), and others (25%) levels of education. Both male (83%) and female (17%) students participated in the study. Their range was from 18 to 52 years (M=22.94).Their range of time spent in Pakistan was from 1 to 20 years (M=2.78, SD=2.25). Mostly they belong to Asian continent 141 (69%).

Instruments of the study

For collection of data related to social adjustment, "the Student Adjustment to Collage Questionnaire developed by Robert W. Baker, Ph.D. and BohdanSiryk, M.A. (1989) was adapted. It is on 9 point Likert scale to assess total Social Adjustment along with four variables: Academic Adjustment (24 items), Societal Adjustment (20 items), Personal Emotional Adjustment (15 items), Attachment (7 items). In addition, it comprised 33 positive and 33 negative items. Reliability of SA scale was .813 in this study.

Renieose's SE questionnaire (2017) was adopted to measure students' SE. It was a 32 items scale on 5 point likert – type scale. It comprised four sub scale, i.e., Physical Attribute (PA), Social Relationship (SR), Self-Efficacy (SE) and Self-Regard (SR). Reliability of SE scale was .842 in this study.

Data Collection

In order to collect data the researcher herself visited the institutes. Data were gathered with the consent of HOD, registrars and rectors of the universities. After seeking consent from administrative authorities, consent from students was also sought. Both questionnaires were distributed among 400 students of the different universities.241 students returned the questionnaires back. Questionnaire from37 students were disposed off as they did not either provide their demographic information or did not fill the questionnaire completely.

Data Analysis

For analysis of data, descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were used according to the research questions.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Sub Scales of Social Adjustment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	*M*	SD
Academic Adjustment	204	3.48	9.00	6.44	1.26
Attachment	204	2.75	9.00	5.74	1.55
Societal Adjustment	204	3.15	8.93	5.58	1.04
Personal Emotional Adjustment	204	2.14	9.00	4.67	1.39
Overall Social Adjustment	204	2.67	8.71	5.48	1.0 2

Table 1 points out the Mean, Standard Deviation and range of all factors of Social Adjustment. Maximum mean score depicts maximum level of agreement with the statement. Therefore, students agree most with the factor Attachment which means they found their Personal Emotional Adjustment good but their societal Adjustment level falls at another edge. On Overall Social Adjustment, their score (M=5.58, SD= 1.02) shows higher agreement as it is higher than mean of the scale (M=5).

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Sub Scales of Self Esteem

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Social Relationship	204	1.00	5.00	3.69	0.66
Self-Efficacy	204	1.38	5.00	3.80	0.75

Physical Attribute	204	1.13	5.00	3.84	0.76
Self-Regard	204	1.00	5.00	3.94	0.83
Overall Self Esteem	204	1.16	4.91	3.82	0.62

Table 2 points out the Mean, Standard Deviation and range of all factors of self Esteem which constitute the factor "Over all Self Esteem". Level of agreement with the statements increases with an increase in the mean score. Therefore, students agree most with the factor Self Regard which means they found their Self-regard good but their Social Relationship falls at another edge. On over all Self Esteem, their score (M=3.82, SD= .62) shows higher agreement as it is more than mean of the scale (M=3).

Table 3. Comparison of Social adjustment scale and self-esteem scale of International Students

	Physical Attribute	Social Relationship	Self–Efficacy	Self–Regard	Overall Self Esteem
Academic Adjustment	.267**	. 212**	.296**	.190**	.291**
Societal Adjustment	.371**	.389**	.397**	.330**	.448**
Personal Emotional Adjustment	.398**	.401**	.362**	.329**	.449**
Attachment	.277**	.229**	.282**	.218**	.304**
Overall Social adjustment	.418**	.388**	.422**	.337**	.472**

Table 3 shows that there is either small or medium significant relationship between Social adjustment and self-esteem of international students. The relationship values range from .190** in case of relationship of Academic Adjustment and self-regard to .472** in case of Overall Social adjustment and Overall Self Esteem.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine the intensity of international students' social adjustment and their self-esteem and relationship between these constructs. This was a survey design study and data were collected from international students .These students were enrolled in different universities in the academic year 2015-19. Results showed that there was a statistically significant correlation between International student's social adjustment and self-esteem.

The quantitative data pointed out that students experience difficulties mostly with academic adjustment and societal adjustment. This result is in accordance with the findings of other research related with international students. As, Andrade's (2006) results demonstrate that international student academic adjustment is affected by English expertise, educational skills, and learning background. The findings of this research also show that sustainable help from peers, family, faculty, and staff was significant factor for these students to succeed academically. However, in contrast to Andrade's finding, Holmes and Vaughn (2015) found that in spite of inadequate English proficiency, international undergraduate students can succeed academically.

Concerned with the social factors, the results showed that international students experienced cultural stress. It was also found that isolation, nostalgia and inequity were the major problematical aspects. These results correspond with the results of earlier researches' (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Sawir et al., 2008; Yue, 2012).The results also showed that international students feel some difficulties in making friends because of communication ability and societal differences. Such difficulties are shown in chosen food, societal and spiritual activities. This result is correlated with the findings of a recent study done by Abdel Razek (2012) that Saudi students' contribution in the social life in America is very limited due to religion, mix-gender characteristic and dietary limitations. This result also supported the findings of Yue (2012). International students who had got in touch with socially with host students during their study period have a tendency to report greater satisfaction in general with their academic experience and overall adjustment (Sam, 2001).

Another motivating result in this research is to which degree international students are attached with their institutes. According to literature, "positive attachment," is difficult to define. Although, the literature does specify that academic and social support services tends to create positive association among international students'

college adjustment and experience (De Araujo, 2011; Stebleton 2014). A study related to institutional attachment demonstrated that "teachers in divers' disciplines have recognized international student requirements and planned suitable strategies for these students" (Andrade, 2016, p. 147).

Further, results of this study reveal that there is significant relationship among Social adjustment and self-esteem of international students. SE is the main factor that influencing students' academic performance, it is very important than other factors such as stress and body image (Rosli, Othman,Ishak, Lubis, Saat & Omar, 2011). Zimmerman (2010) performed a study to recognize main procedures, in which students self-regulate their academic performance. He defines broad meaning of self-regulated academic learning and recognizes the unique aspects of competence for getting knowledge and skills.

Renierose (2017) conducted a study to establish a relation among SE and freshmen students' adjustment to college in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In this research the researcher were used descriptive correlation and comparative research methods. The research finding shows that the international students, who had high self-esteem, had high level of adjustment to college; the two variables have a positive relationship. He also suggested that there should be proper institutional and classroom activities that promote the adjustment of new students and the growth of their SE.

In this research, the self-esteem components such as physical attribute, social relationship, self-efficacy and self-regard were significantly related with over all social adjustment of international students.

Conclusion

The aim of this article is to address those factors that are contributing to the social, academic, psychological adjustment and institutional attachment of international students and their relation with self-esteem and the contributing factors such as Physical attribute, social relationship, self-efficacy and self-regard.

At the end results, it is found that international students from different institutions have higher self-esteem. They can effortlessly adjust in their institutions in terms of academic and emotional adjustment, additionally, being emotionally concerned to their institution but it takes them some time to be socially adjusted. There is a difference between physical attributes, social relationship, self-esteem and self-regard and the self-esteem factors. It acts differently to an individual's life and these factors might be considered differently that depending on what one supposes. International students have diverse traditions of adjusting to institutes as regards to academic, social, emotional, and institutional attachment. A few of these factors were, might be straightforward for international students to adjust than the other. Self-esteem and adjustment have a positive relation.

Recommendations

Findings of the study suggest that the academic community, particularly the teachers/professors must provide classroom activities that endorse individual development and holistic growth for those students who generally have higher self-esteem. There should be institution related activities that give them confidence for adjustment and strengthen their retention rate in a new atmosphere. Students pay full attention to their academic as they are receiving and how it will affect their future career and their expected learning will be improved. International students are expected to be self-regulating; involvement of their parents in academic influences the students' adjustment.

In order to concentrate on psychological constructs teachers must adopt multidimensional approaches in teaching and in counseling. Finally, instructors, teachers and administration of Higher Education Institutions might design a guidance program for these students. These programs might comprise seminar, workshops, and psychological testing that facilitates international students in their adjustment and improvement of self-esteem.

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