UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

EFFECTS OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE, GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND HOST COUNTRY NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADJUSTMENT AND PERFORMANCE

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By

EMMANUEL LUKE BALAMI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2017

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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EMMANUEL LUKE BALAMI

June 2017

Chairman : Kenny Teoh Guan Cheng, PhD
Faculty : Economics and Management

International student cross-cultural adjustment at the host country has attracted researchers' attention over the years, especially with the phenomenal proliferation and internationalisation of higher education in response to globalisation. The international student encounters problems of cross-cultural adjustment at the country of choice due to unfamiliar cultural environment. The international student's cross-cultural adjustment has close relationship to student performance at the destination of choice in the literature (Taufiki & Dawi, 2014; Wan, et al., 2013). This study explores the predictive relevance of the following driver constructs: Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) Government Policies (GP) on the following dependent variables-Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Student Performance (SP). This is based on Ang, et al's., (2007) recommendations to test the robustness of the predictive capabilities of Cultural Intelligence on Cross-Cultural Adjustment in terms of individual difference, ethnocentrism, geographical scope and social identity. Equally, the mediating effect of Cross-Cultural Adjustment on Student Performance was tested and the moderating effect of Host Country National Characteristics on Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Student Performance tested. The outcome serve as bases for recommendations to policy makers and future researchers of the significance of these constructs to international student retention effort by host countries.

Because of the complex nature of this study model, the matching robustness of the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling software (PLS-SEM) makes it to be the most appropriate software for analysing the data set for this study. The survey approach employed to collect data from 214 international students from two Malaysian public universities using a multi-method approach.

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The beta coefficient, coefficient of determination and predictive relevance of the driver constructs were analysed for Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Student Performance, the results indicates statistical significance. Then, the effect size (f^2 & q^2) of the driver constructs were also tested with small effect sizes. All the hypothesised relationships were supported at 95% confidence interval with corresponding t-values above the 1.96 threshold value. This was followed by the test of the total effect of the driver constructs on the ultimate dependent variable-Student Performance, the result indicated that Government Policies has the highest total effect on the student performance construct, this was followed by Cultural Intelligence and lastly by the Host Country National Characteristic construct. However, the hypothesised model mediation and moderation tests failed, but after a systematic post hoc procedure the Cultural Intelligence construct was expunge a competing model emerged. This new model was used in testing mediation, the Cross-Cultural Adjustment construct now fully mediated the Host Country National Characteristic—Student Performance relationship, however; Government Policies—Student Performance relationship was not mediated. The moderating effect of Host Country National Characteristics construct on the Government Policies—Student Performance relationship was supported, but did not moderate the Cross-Cultural Adjustment—Student Performance and the Government Policies-Cross-Cultural Adjustment relationships.

In summary, the analysis results so far proved that Government Policies is the most significant in predicting Student Performance, the Cross-Cultural Adjustment construct is a full mediator to the Host Country National Characteristic—Student Performance relationship, and finally, Host Country National moderates the relationship between Government Policies and Student Performance relationship. Suggestions to policy makers and recommendations to future researchers are in the implications to practice and recommendations sections of this thesis (Section 7.6).

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Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KESAN KEPINTARAN KEBUDAYAAN, POLISI, CIRI KEBANGSAAN NEGARA TUANRUMAH KEATAS PENYESUAIAN PELAJAR ANTARABANGSA DAN PRESTASI

Oleh

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Penyesuian rentas budaya (CCA) bagi pelajar antarabangsa di negara tuan rumah telah menarik perhatian penyelidik selama beberapa tahun, khasnya dengan perkembangan pesat dan pengantarabangsaannya pelajaran tinggi sebagai gerakbalas terhadap globalisasi. Pelajar antarabangsa menghadapi masalah penyesuaian rentas budaya (CCA) di negara pilihannya akibat daripada persekitaran budaya yang tidak dikenali. Sorotan karya lepas menunjukkan bahawa, penyesuaian rentas budaya (CCA) pelajar antarabangsa amat berhubungkait dengan prestasi pelajar (SP) antarabangsa (Taufiki & Dawi, 2014; Wan, et al., 2013). Kajian ini menerokai releven ramalan konstrak pendorong yang berikut: Kepintaran Budaya (Cultural Intelligence, CQ), Ciri-ciri Kebangsaan Negara Tuanrumah (Host Country National Characteristics, HCNc), Kerajaan/ Institusi Polisi (Government/Institution Policy, GIP) keatas pembolehubah bersandar berikut iaitu Penyesuaian Rentas Budaya (Cross-Cultural Adjustment, CCA) dan Prestasi Pelajar (Student Performance, SP). Ini berdasarkan kepada cadangan oleh Ang et al's., (2007) untuk menguji kelasakan daya ramalan Kepintaran Budaya (CQ) ke atas Penyesuaiaan Rentas Budaya (CCA) dari segi perbezaan individu, etnosentrisma, skop geografi dan identiti sosial. Serentak dengan itu, kesan mediasi Penyesuaian Rentas Budaya (CCA) ke atas Prestasi Pelajar (SP) diuji, dan juga kesan moderasi Ciri-ciri Kebangsaan Negara Tuanrumah (HCNc) ke atas Penyesuaian Rentas Budaya (CCA) dan Prestasi Pelajar (SP). Hasil kajian dijadikan sebagai asas cadangan kepada pembuat polisi dan penyelidik akan datang tentang signifikan konstruk ini kepada daya tahan pelajar antarabangsa oleh tuan rumah.

Oleh kerana sifat model yang agak kompleks, perisian statistik permodelan persamaan berstruktur (PLS-SEM 3.0), sebuah perisian yang dianggap lasak, telah dipilih sebagai perisian yang paling sesuai untuk penganalisian data. Pendekatan

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secara soalselidik telah diguna untuk mengutip data dari 214 pelajar antarabangsa dari dua universiti awam di Malaysia.

Beta koefisyen, Penentu koefisyen dan Releven Ramalan kepada penentu kontruck dianalisis untuk Penyesuaian Rentas Budaya (CCA) dan Prestasi Pelajar (SP), keputusan menunjukkan ianya signifikan. Kemudiannya, saiz efek (f^2 & q^2) juga diuji dengan efek saiz kecil. Semua hipotesis hubungan disokong pada 95% aras keyakinan dengan nilai-t melebihi dari1.96. Diikuti dengan, ujian untuk kesan keseluruhan konstruk pendorong ke atas pembolehubah penyandar terakhir – Prestasi Pelajar (SP), dan keputusan menunjukkan bahawa Polisi Kerajaan/Institusi (GP) mempunyai kesan kesuluruhan yang terbesar ke atas konstruk prestasi pelajar (SP). Ini diikuti dengan Kepintaran Kebudayaan (CQ) dan akhirnya dengan konstruk Ciri-ciri Kebangsaan Negara Tuanrumah (HCNc). Walaubagaimanapun, ujian mediasi dan moderasi untuk model yang dicadangkan, telah gagal; tetapi, selepas langkah-langkah prosedur post-hoc sepertimana yang telah diarahkan oleh sorotan karya, Kepintaran Kebudayaan (CQ) telah digugurkan, dan sebuah model pesaing telah muncul. Model baru ini telah diguna untuk menguji mediasi dan konstruk Penyesuaian Rentas Budaya (CCA) kini, secara sepenuhnya, memediasikan hubungan Ciri Kebangsaan Negara Tuanrumah (HCNc)—Prestasi Pelajar (SP); walaubagaimanapun, hubungan Polisi Kerajaan/Institusi (GP)—Prestasi Pelajar (SP) tidak dimediasikan. Kesan moderasi konstruk Ciri Kebangsaan Negara Tuanrumah (HCNc) ke atas hubung Polisi Kerajaan/Institusi (GP)—Prestasi Pelajar (SP) didapati disokong, tetapi ianya tidak memoderasikan perhubungan Penyesuaian Rentas Budaya (CCA) —Prestasi Pelajar (SP).

Sebagai kesimpulan, analisis ini membuktikan bahawa Polisi Kerajaan/Institusi (GP) adalah paling signifikan dalam meramalkan Prestasi Pelajar (SP), Penyesuaian Rentas Budaya (CCA) secara penuhnya memediasikan hubungan Ciri Kebangsaan Negara Tuanrumah (HCNc)—Prestasi Pelajar (SP), dan akhirnya Rakyat Negara Tuanrumah (HCN) memoderasikan perhubungan antara Polisi Kerajaan/Institusi (GP) dan Prestasi Pelajar (SP). Cadangan kepada pembuat polisi dan cadangan kepada penyelidik akan datang dinyatakan dalam implikasi untuk praktis dan bahagian cadangan tesis ini (Section 7.6).

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 16 June 2017 to conduct the final examination of Balami Emmanuel Luke on his thesis entitled "Effects of Cultural Intelligence, Government Policies and Host Country National Characteristics on International Student Adjustment and Performance" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND MEANINGS

BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CCA	Cross-Cultural Adjustment
CCT	Cross-Cultural Training
CQ	Cultural Intelligence
EQUIS	European Quality Improvement System
GP	Government Policies
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HCN	Host Country National
HCNc	Host Country National Characteristics
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IIE	Institute of International Education
LEDC	Least Economically Developed Countries
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MNC	Multi-National Corporation
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PG	Post Graduate
PriHEI	Private Higher Education Institution
PuHEI	Public Higher Education Institution
PSPTN	Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi Negara or National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP)
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds
SCT	Social Contact Theory

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SDT	Self Determination Theory
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SP	Student Performance
UG	Undergraduate
UKBC	United Kingdom Border Agency
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

While globalisation and internationalisation of Higher Education has been going on for many years (Trent, 2012; Naidoo, 2006; Schugurensky, 1999), the recent trend however, has shown a tremendous increase, as evidenced in the phenomenal increase in the number of students studying in countries other than their own (Institute of International Education (IIE), 2013). This phenomenal increase is due to many reasons, in particular, the push-pull effect. The defining factors that make a country and Higher Education Institution (HEI) a potential International Student study destination of choice are the push-pull factors. The push factors are issues in a student home country that initiates the student decision to study overseas, while the pull factors are found in the prospective destination (host) country which makes that country relatively more appealing than others as a study destination and/or place to live (vide Appendix 'A').

McMahon, proposed two models to explain the flow of international students from 18 developing countries to the USA during the 1960s and 1970s (McMahon, 1992). Model one concerns the 'push' factors from the home country namely the unavailability of Higher Education (HE) and the country's economic strength; while the second model concerns the economic, political and social 'pull' factors available at the prospective destination (host) country. The work of Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) supported the push-pull concept in a study on students from four Asian countries that moved to Australia to take a course in post-secondary education. The findings of this study (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), confirmed McMahon's (1992) push and pull hypotheses. Their findings pointed out that there are many factors influencing students to choose international education; such factors include among others, personal desire for academic and professional fulfilment, cultural exchange and learning 2-different languages. In another study reputation and ranking were found to be the most influential factors that determine International Student choice of institution for study, especially among post-graduates (Wilkins and Huisman, 2011). This also supports an earlier study that international students have become more brand-aware which poses a threat to low-rated Higher Education (HE) institutions and these institutions will find it difficult to achieve their recruitment targets (Pilsbury, 2007). A slight departure was the work of Bardsley, (2010) who found quality education and affordability as the attracting factors. While Agarwal and Winkler (1985); Migin, Falahat, Yajid, and Khatibi, (2015) and Mazzarol, (2002) saw per capita income in the home country, education cost, education opportunities back home, expected benefits of study abroad, quality of education, intention to migrate after graduation and understanding the West as "flow-drivers".

In fact, in the later part of the 20th century, many researchers have built models that had attempted to explain student choices in the institutional, economic and cultural contexts in which the students find themselves (Roberts, 1984; Gambetta, 1996). For example, Fuller *et al*., (1982); Manski and Wise, (1983); Kotler and Fox, (1995) have proposed an economic model founded on the premise that students are rational beings and therefore make study destination choices based on alternatives available to them in terms of costs and benefits.

Despite all these differing approaches to study destination choices, as highlighted in the paragraphs above, Wilkins and Huisman, (2011) opined that all findings in the literature that attempted to explain student decisions to study overseas identified sets of 'push and pull' factors that influenced these decisions, which uphold McMahon's (1992) push-pull hypothesis (vide Appendix 'A').

The push-pull phenomenon was encouraged by the action of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in promoting the liberalization of trade in 1995, which also included trade in educational services; and the inclusion of internationalisation of higher education and other forms of education into its global trade framework. This action serves as a protective measure and encouraged internationalisation of education as all operations are covered by the WTO framework guidelines (Chen, 2015). In the same vein, support is given by the International Forum on Trade in Educational Services, which mitigates forces that stunt the development of trade in educational services, a forum run by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with other international organizations (Gu, 2009). Since then, education has boomed as one of the products and/or services in world trade and its mechanism of delivery has taken some many shapes pursued by organisations and governments (Ritchie, 2003; Cheung, Yuen, Yuen, & Cheng, 2011) to promote local education development, enhance knowledge as a substrate for power, stimulate country/educational institutions global ranking and to generate revenue.

These changes have led Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the USA to adopt new concepts of educational markets and organizational structures. As the competition among them intensifies, institutional behaviours change and became more like business entities, e.g., adoption of business strategies (Padlee, 2010). However, some countries/ institutions are involved in internationalisation of Higher Education (HE) not for commerce, but to equip their graduates with firsthand cross-cultural knowledge and experiences. For example, Scandinavian institutions tend to direct their internationalisation resources toward local students, to prime their minds in preparation for a globalised society. This is also done to ensure Scandinavian students study abroad and also to encourage multi-cultural classrooms (Tossavainen, 2009). French and other European business schools direct their efforts toward internationalisation in order to comply with European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation body requirements; while the South Korean Higher Education strategic concern is on switching to English as the medium of instruction (Perrin-Halot & Thomas, 2012; Piller & Cho, 2013).

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The internationalisation of Higher Education could take many forms such as, student travelling to host country, partnership and establishing presence in the host market through the creation of branch campuses or virtual classrooms through the deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) backbones (Mazzarol, 1998). Many institutions and countries have harnessed these opportunities and have made their presence felt abroad and have succeeded in attracting many international students to their local universities or through campus operations in a third party host country. Such practices have served as viable sources of revenue, means for attending ranking criteria by ranking bodies like Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and Times Higher Education (THE). It has also led to the development of research and innovations, which have had culminated into students gaining first-hand cross-cultural experiences and/or world class teaching in global (multi-cultural) classroom scenarios.

In the work context, the literature shows there are strong evidences to associate expatriate assignment failures with adjustment to the host country's cultural environment (Shay & Tracey, 2009; Takeuchi, & Wang, 2007; Shay & Black, 2006). This is a phenomenon which usually occurs as a result of what Oberg, referred to in the 'U'-Curve theory as "Culture Shock" (Oberg, 1960). This Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) issue is also common among International Students, thus making them disinclined to consider the host country as a study destination. Naturally, Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) is associated with successful coping with culture shock through Cultural Intelligence (CQ) which facilitates the expatriate's effort to engage in efficient and effective cross-cultural interactions and functioning in such environments. Many studies assert that the crucial problem for the expatriates is the adaptation to the unfamiliar culture more so than with their job requirements (Osman-Gani, 2000; Dowling, Welch & Schuler, 1999). This is supported by the view that expatriate employees operating in a foreign environment need a different set of skills and abilities to accomplish the same task they would have performed successfully in their home country (Tung, 1981).

Similarly, there is a need to carry out more studies to understand how international students can succeed in these diverse cultures they travel to in pursuit of knowledge. Especially as there are varying views of how scholars perceive culture. Some schools of thought see culture as a shared, yet distinctive set of values held by one society with its concomitant behaviour (Hofstede, 2001). In looking at how culture influences a peoples' characteristics, as manifested in their behaviour toward visitors/expatriates—Hofstede's (1980:25) definition of culture does shed more light on the implications of culture on a peoples' behaviour. Hofstede sees culture as, "the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment". Hence, culture determines the identity of a human group in the same way as personality determines the identity of an individual. As cultures vary, so do the ways human groups perceive things, hence, issues can be perceived differently resulting in miscommunication as cultures cross, thus impairing Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) (Earley, *et al*., 2006). As a result of differences in cultures, relocated individuals often face the challenge of living in, and adapting to cultures that are different from their own. Many studies findings that

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showed poor cross-cultural adjustment spills over to poor observable work place performance (Takeuchi *et al.*, 2005; Kraimer, *et al.*, 2001; Cohen, 1988).

We now turn to the issue of adjustment. Even though there are diverse views to what adjustment means to scholars (Yusliza & Shanker, 2010 and Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998). Most researchers tend to approach the adjustment construct by addressing either or both of two domains, the psychological domain—which constitutes stress and coping ability; a transition period where a student tries to overcome psychological distress and other related challenges encountered in the course of an academic pursuit. The second domain addresses the perspective of socialisation; here adjustment is viewed socio-culturally, comprising—behavioral and cultural coping ability which is necessary to address communication, adjustment to food and socialisation predicaments and other similar issues (Al-Sharideh, 1998). In essence, the student is trying to accept and to adopt new social characteristics such that he can be accepted and operate successfully in the new environmental niche (Anderson, 1994).

Studies have proven that there is a strong correlation between students' multicultural experiences and their adjustment to their new environment. For example, a Monash University study on the impact of multicultural experiences in the development of socio-cultural adaptation among international students reported that, there is a significant positive link between students' multicultural experience and their socio-cultural adaptation (Yusliza & Shanker, 2010). This positive relationship is said to develop when international students make effort to interact and form relationships with host country nationals and learn their culture. Al-Sharideh and Goe (1998) refers to this interaction as "association hypothesis" basing their assumption on the premise that international students will be more successful as they interact with host country nationals, obtain social support, acquire language proficiency and become familiar with the host country nationals' customs and value (Ramsay *et al.,* 1999). Further evidences in support of the positive experience have been found in Malaysia (Mahmud, 2010; Al-Zubaidi & Rechards, 2010) who found that International Students, who adjust well to the host country environment, also do well in their studies.

One area of research that is capable of shedding more light on the adjustment issue among international students, specifically in the context of Malaysia Punlic Higher Education Institutions (PuHEI), is the concept of Cultural Intelligence (CQ). Despite the increasing recognition of the multiple forms of adult intelligence, essential for solving different kinds of problems in the work place and school settings (Gardner, 1993; 1999), little or no empirical attention has focused on addressing similar problems in the cultural setting—International Student scenario.

For example, enormous attention has been paid to research on Social Intelligence (Thorndike & Stein, 1937) which deals with interpersonal relationships, Emotional Intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1993) directed to understanding self and other

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peoples' emotions and also Practical Intelligence which emphasises solving practical problems (Sternberg, 1986). Yet, none of these non-IQ intelligences specifically focuses on the ability to solve cross-cultural problems. This is the gap that caught the attention of Earley and Ang (2003) to carry out their work, which they termed 'Cultural Intelligence' (CQ)—A construct based on Sternberg and Detterman's integrative theoretical framework based on multiple loci of intelligence, which proposed a set of capabilities that comprise mental, motivational, and behavioural components focusing on resolving cross-cultural problems (Ng, Dyne, & Ang, 2012; Sternberg & Detterman, 1986).

Earley and Ang, (2003), defines this construct—Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as an individual's capability to effectively operate and manage in a culturally diverse environment. They posited that it (Cultural Intelligence (CQ)) is a multidimensional construct consisting of Cognitive, Meta-Cognitive, Motivational and Behavioural components. The concept of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) therefore explains an individual's (expatriate worker, missionary, military officers in foreign missions, international student), capacity to successfully adapt to new and unfamiliar cultural settings and his/her ability to function effectively in environments of cultural diversity (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004; Earley & Ang, 2003). This construct is well defined and has proven useful in studies on expatriate adaptation and for human resource management practitioners (Ang *et al*., 2007; Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). In trying to further expound the concept of Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Gelfand opined that Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is neither a personality trait nor individual or societal value but has rather to do with abilities and capabilities of an individual in his/her effort to effectively operate in a new cultural environment (Gelfand *et al*., 2008). This will be explained further under the section on Cultural Intelligence (CQ) definition in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.

The Conceptual Model of this study consists of five constructs namely:

- Cultural Intelligence (CQ)
- Government Policies (GP)
- Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA),
- Student Performance (SP)
- Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc),

In attempting to address the research problem (vide Section 1.2) this study proposed a relationship between the constructs that made up the conceptual model for this research (vide Fig. 4.1). The five constructs as listed in the immediate previous paragraph are expected to represent the following functional relationships in the research framework as follows:

Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) and Government Policies (GP) as exogenous constructs (Independent Variables (IV)), Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) a mediating construct on Cultural Intelligence

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(CQ) and Government Policies (GP) relationship with Student Performance (SP) and Student Performance (SP) is the final dependent variable (DV), the Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) serves as a moderating variable.

Hence, this study explores the relationship between Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Government Policies (GP) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA), and how much strength and direction of these relationships between the constructs Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) affect. This study also measures the mediating effect of Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Student Performance (SP) and also Government Policies and Student Performance (SP).

However, though the measurement instrument is structured based on the dimensions of the construct-Cultural Intelligence, the ultimate analysis is based on aggregated impact of the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on Cross-Cultural Adjustment generally. This is because the literature shows that even though Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is an important construct in the CCA process, environmental forces like Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) can determine its direction and strength (Earley & Ang, 2003). As such, this study focuses on understanding the significance of the exogenous constructs to international students in the study area in their effort to adjust to the new environment. And in particular, the study sets out to measure the moderating effect of Host Country National Characteristics on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Government Policies (GP) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and on Student Performance (SP). Since Gelfand (2008) pointed out that Cultural Intelligence (CQ) serves as a gateway to a range of important and interesting phenomena that can be studied in relation to cultural adaptation, this study therefore is carried out as part of responce to that recommendation as some of these phenomena have not been particularly considered before (Gelfand *et al*., 2008). Some aspects of his recommendations include cognitive processes such as self awareness; analogical reasoning and pattern recognition are significant issues to examine in intercultural interfaces, and to achieve greater clarity in understanding effective adaptation (Gelfand *et al*., 2008; Earley & Ang, 2003).

1.2 Problem Statement

The Malaysian government through the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) revisited a policy aimed to attract international students to Malaysian Higher Education Institutions, with internationalisation as one of the drivers in transforming the country's higher education institutions towards global excellence. This was done under the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP) 2020, where the country aimed to accelerate the inflow of international students to 150,000 by 2015 and 200,000 by 2020, which is expected to serve as a major source of revenue and to boost the knowledge economy of Malaysia (MoHE, 2013; Sirat, 2010). The Government again in 2015 expanded the policy for developing its Higher Education to international standards with the following five point global objectives:

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i) to **attract** and **retain** quality international students,
ii) to enhance the prominence of Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (MHEIs) through the promotion of expertise in niche areas for the benefit of the nation and society,
iii) to increase the global reputation of Malaysian higher education,
iv) to intensify the current implementation of higher education as a platform of soft power and,
v) to increase international academic mobility for students and staff.

Apart from revenue generation which is projected at RM7.5 billion from tuition and associated multiplier effects from the anticipated 250,000 international students by 2025, the influx of these students is expected to enhance the portfolio of the country, individual institutions, staff and students of Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (MoHE, 2015).

In an effort to address the 'retention' aspect of the policy as highlighted in the first item of the five point objective, the Ministry came up with a Framework of International Student Management to serve as a guideline to all public and private higher education institutions in the country; to enhance the Higher Education Institutions' International Student management practices. The framework includes a code of practice, management support strategy and management good practice indicators, to mitigate issues concerning international student adjustment. This is gazetted as the Operational Framework for International Student Management for Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (MoHE, 2013).

A task force comprising 10,500 people representing stakeholders, school administrators, unions, associations, alumni and students from all over Malaysia were engaged over a period of two years to review the 2006/2007 Malaysia Education Plan and the 2013 Operational Framework for International Student Management with input from stakeholders and came up with the 2015-2025 Malaysian Higher Education Blue-Print. The volume was developed by 14 chapter-writing teams and 20 lead authors (MoHE, 2015).

Yet, in the MoHE 2015-2025 blue-print, there is no clause that addresses the interactional encounters between international students and host country nationals outside the perimeters of their institutions. These are people whom the international students are always in contact on issues pertaining to housing, shopping, sporting activities, utility services, tourism, clubs, travels and health services.

Studies have reported the significance of the impact of host country socio-cultural factors on the International Student effort to adjust in a host country, (Mahajan & Toh, 2014; Wan*, et al.,* 2013; Mahmud, *et al.,* 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Literature has also pointed out that socialisation with host country nationals is one of the major contributors to expatriate adjustment (Suseela & Provaikarasi, 2011;

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Yeh, 2002). Research findings have also shown that Host Country National Characteristic (HCNc) can attenuate expatriate adjustment efforts (Cultural Intelligence) or mitigate issues that run against the adjustment process of an expatriate (Earley & Ang, 2003; Poo, 2005).

The lack of emphasis on the interaction between Host Country Nationals and International Students in the Ministry of Higher Education Operational Framework for International Students Management despite its significance to the attainment of the first item in the Ministry of Higher Education Blueprint is a problem, which this researcher considers as a research problem. The relative deficiency in the number of research on the cross-cultural issues pertaining to International Students in Malaysian higher education institutions, considering the enormity of resources committed to this aspect of higher education in Malaysia. Again, the lack of theorisation in proffering solution to the cross-cultural adjustment problems in Malaysia's higher education institutions particularly between international students and HCNs, the researcher considers these as research gap that need addressed.

In an era where information and literature on past issues and the prevalence of enabling ICT infrastructure are readily available to forecast, it will be self-destructive, retrogressive and avoidable waste of resources for a nation, research body and/or an institution to wait for problems to take place before undergoing research based on feedbacks. Developing nations in particular should not remain in the era of managerial feedback (treatment) as proactive (immunization) resources for both hard (financial) and soft (knowledge) capital are available. Literatures of yesteryears had long been convoluted with the wasteful idea of feedback as against feedforward. The technology of guided missiles should be adapted for modern day management techniques; this will provide for anticipative research in the frontier of policy and management practices.

The recommendation for government intervention in synergy between International Students and Host Country Nationals has been a global issue decades back and quiet a number of research recommendations have been made, while some are perculiar to countries and institutional policies others are due to environmental factors like culture as pointed out in Section 3.3.1 and 3.4.2 (Smith & Khawaja, 2011, Niven 1987; OST, Fourth Annual Report, 1965). Malaysia has a Blueprint projected for 2025, two years already past with eight years left. The Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) should not wait to witness exodus of international students before it begins to carry out research on how to curb this phenomenon, as the remaining years will not be enough to carry out enough academic research and to begin executing recommendations. This research therefore is more specifically an anticipative research approach based on incidences in other nations and institutions experiences.

Though the number of international students in Malaysian campuses experiences a trend of continual growth with a recent drop in the number of enrolment in some

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institutions, there is only a few studies that examined international student adjustment in Malaysia (Yusliza, *et al* 2010), with yet a negligible ratio of institutions included in the studies (vide Appendix 'D'). The implication of inadequate study on a subject is that policy decisions will be inadequate to the same extent: Therefore, there exists a research gap that warrants investigation. In fact, there has been no study that addresses theoretical relationships especially the use of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) by International Students in their Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) process and Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) in Malaysia. Previous studies have mostly emphasised causation, with no theoretical articulation to explain the phenomenon. Even though this study is also a causative research, emphasis is made on theoretical support for predictive power of constructs by employing the following theories:- Social Contact, Motivation, Social Identity, Social Exchange and Spill-Over Theories to explain the interaction between constructs in the framework of this study and it is extended to support the impact of Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and that between Government Policies (GP) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) processes. This study therefore uses these theories to explain this web of relationships to proffer a theoretical base for policy, operation and practice, (Please see Section 4.4 - Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development for details).

In sum, this study proposes a theoretical framework that encompasses factors that are intra-and extra Higher Education Institutions (HEI) pertaining to international students Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Student Performance (SP). These are derived from theoretical recommendations from the works of Ang, *et al* (2007). Ang, et al., recommended for the integration of different constructs in the framework in order to increase the understanding of the effectiveness of Cultural-Intelligence in its relationship with other constructs. However, caution was taken against having too many constructs to be measured within a single study model, as it can result to respondent fatigue and issues of collinearity within and between the model-constructs and yet not parsimonious. To increase the robustness of the predictive capabilities of Cultural Intelligence (CQ), the followings were recommended for consideration to be tested;

i) Individual difference
ii) Ethnocentrism
iii) Georgraphical scope
iv) Social identity

The research assessed the varying degrees of expression and manifestations of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) by individual International Student. Ethnocentrism as manifested in the attitude of Host Country Nationals toward International Students was assessed of its direct impact on CCA and SP, HCNc was also used in the model as a moderator. Another aspect recommended for research is the study of Cultural Intelligence in a different geographical location aside from the initial location of study (Singapore & USA) and the last recommendation is for employment of the Social Identity Theory (SIT), which this study proposed as the theoretical base for

explaining the interaction between the constructs in this study's theoretical framework.

The above mentioned gaps serve as factors that can attenuate or mitigate Cultural Intelligence (CQ) effectiveness. This can be observed in intercultural effectiveness such as adjustment and performance in a multi-cultural environment (Ang, *et al* 2007). Appropriate hypotheses are drawn for each relationship between the constructs and tested using appropriate analytical instruments that have been used on empirical data in the past this will help in answering the research questions and in meeting the research objectives.

Although prospective international students place priority on the quality of education in their choice of study destination, this choice can be influenced by the reputation and information about the destination country and it's Higher Education Institutions (OECD, 2011; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). For example, students' ease of adjustment in the host country can significantly contribute to the reputation of that country/institution and can make those students ambassadors to the country/institution (MoHE, 2013). This approach has been corroborated by a study in Thailand which observed that as the academic reputation of Thailand is not strong enough to contend with other countries on that basis, the country's (Thailand's) image as a top tourist destination would help institutions in promoting the destination (Jianvittayakit, 2012). By the same reasoning, Malaysia should therefore leverage on its nationals' "shyness, limited expression of feelings, respect for others, collectivistic lifestyle and humble culture" (Mahmud *et al.,* 2010:290) to enhance rapport between International Students and its Host Country Nationals (HCN); whilst at the same time, take advantage of the cultures and beliefs of students from countries that are similar to that of Malaysia.

This study proposes that Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Government Policies (GP) serve as antecedences to International Student adjustment; while the Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) which comprise affective (likeability) and cognitive (credibility) attributes moderates the relationships between these antecedents—Cultural Intelligence (CQ); Government Policies (GP) and the criteria Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Student Performance. Church posits that some personality characteristics influences host country culture and affects the expatriate Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) process (Church, 1982). The phenomenon of Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) itself mediates the relationship between these antecedents and the distal dependent variable Student Performance (SP). This complex web of relationships can make or mar the adjustment process and consequently the ambassadorial function expected of these students to Malaysia as stated in the MoHE operational framework for international student management (MoHE, 2013). The study also intends to assess the direct effect of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Government Policies (GP) on Student Performance (SP), (please see Theoretical Framework, Fig. 4.2).

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The use of the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) constructs in Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) studies and practices have had great impact. Ang *et al.*, (2007) and Templer *et al.*, (2006) have provided initial evidences on the predictive relevance of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on expatriate Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and job performance across differing cultural settings. These assertions are supported by a study carried out in Malaysia in a job environment which found that Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) is necessary for performance of expatriates on international assignments. That Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) influences achievement in terms of satisfaction, performance and assignment completion (Ramalu *et al*., 2010). However, it suffers lack of application on the subjects (International Students) in the study area and the shortfall in progress may be the result of the absence of an overarching theory that can provide a solid theoretical substantiation (vide Appendix 'D').

This study therefore addressed the deficiency due to the absence of theories supporting the predictive capabilities in the interactions between exogenous and the endogenous constructs by using the 'Social Contact Theory' as an overarching theory for the theoretical framework. The interaction between component variables was explained by appropriate theories including, Expectancy Theory of Motivation, Social Identity Theory (SIT), Social Exchange Theory (SET), Social Learning Theory (SLT), and the Spill-Over Theory.

Table 1.1 : Summary of research gaps

S. No	Variable	Description of the Gap
1	HCNc & CQ (Poo, 2005; Ang, 2007)	Host Country National Characterisitics (HCNc) and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has not been use as a predictor in studies assessing International Student Cross-Cultural Adjustment issues in Malaysia.
2	The construct CQ has not been used in International Student study in Malaysia (Ang, 2007)	Host Country National Characterisitics (HCNc) has not been considered as a moderator of Government Policies and Cultural Intelligence in Malaysia

It is therefore anticipated that this study would be used as a guide for the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to aid in the successful management of current students and the prospective students it proposes to attract in order to achieve its aim of making Malaysia a global higher education hub by 2025. It is also expected to contribute to the expatriate adjustment literature and to serve as a pioneer in the use of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and to reveal the significance of the impact of Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) on International Student Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Performance issues.

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1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions capture the main research issues that this study addresses;

i) Do Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) and Government Policies (GP) directly predict Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Student Performance?

ii) Does Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) mediate the relationship between Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) and Student Performance (SP); Government Policies and Student Performance (SP)?

iii) Does Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) moderate the relationships between: Government Policies (GP), Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA)? In addition, between: Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA), Government Policies (GP) and Student Performance (SP)?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Government Policies (GP) and Host Country National Characteristics on the Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) processes and Performance of International Students in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions.

The specific objectives are:

1. To explore significance of relationship between:

   a) Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA)
   b) Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Student Performance (SP)
   c) Government Policies (GP) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA)
   d) Government Policies (GP) and Student Performance (SP)
   e) Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Student Performance (SP)
   f) Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

2. To assess mediation effect of Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) between:
   a) Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) and Student Performance (SP)
   b) Government Policies (GP) and Student Performance (SP)

3. To assess the moderation effect of Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) on:
   a) Government Policies (GP) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA)
   b) Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA)

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c) Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Student Performance (SP)
d) Government Policies (GP) and Student Performance (SP)

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study generally explore factors that will facilitate the international student CCA processes, and in particular, to proffer suggestions and recommendations to the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in attaining the strategic objective to attract and to retain international students through effective management.

The numerical ratio of international to local students in a country/institution increases the country's/institution's chances of high global academic ranking (MoHE, 2015; Yang, 2002b). In practical terms, the ease in the adjustment process will translate to international students serving as ambassadors to attract even more students to the host country - this will serve as a source of revenue (cash inflow) for the host country (MoHE, 2015). The presence of students from different nationalities brings global perspectives to the classroom and encourages innovations in laboratories and services in and around campuses. This also contributes to the development and enhancement of the quality of local education because the globalised classroom scenario will create a wide network between local and international students and promote cultural acceptance (NAFSA, 2014) (vide Section 2.9 - Growth Pattern and Revenue Contribution by Country: MoHE, Blueprint, 2015—2025).

This study also contributed theoretically in exploring the extent of influence Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) and Government Policies (GP) has on Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Student Performance (SP) which is hypothesised to be predicated on the level of Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc) as seen in Fig. 4.1.

The conceptual model for this study is developed from the synthesis of constructs from conceptual models of five studies in support of Ang *et al*., (2007) recommendations.

i)	Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	- Ang, et al (2007)
ii)	Government Policies (GP)	- Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) & Lee (2016)
iii)	Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA)	- Black & Stephen (1989) Malek & Budhwar (2013)
iv)	Student Performance (SP)	- Guzman & Burke, (2009)
v)	Host Country National Character (HCNc)	- Mahajan & Toh (2014)

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CQ, HCNc and GP as predictors, CCA as mediator, HCNc as moderator and SP as the final dependent variable. They were adapted together with their corresponding instruments as developed; however, some were amended and adapted to suit current study, i.e., status of respondents and study location. This serves as a great theoretical contribution to the literature, particularly on retention of international student and the use of theory to support the interactional between the variables—CQ, GP, CCA, SP and HCNc which literature has independently and at various times and locations associated with international students/expatriate cross-cultural adjustments. This study proposes this phenomenon to be best explained by the Social Contact Theory (SCT) as the overarching theory, detail explanation on supporting theories is found in Section 4.4.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study serve to identify major factors that predict retaintion of international students in a country specifically in Malaysian public higher edication institutions as stated in its higher education blueprint (MoHE, 2015).

The identified factors to adjustment (being the primary outcome) of this group of students comprise Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Government Policies (GP) and Host Country National Characteristics (HCNc). Based on this study literature search, there has been no study that developed a model comprising these constructs (vide Appendix 'D').

Because this study explores, the choice of an appropriate statistical tool was guided by set of criteria. Firstly, the complexity of the model demands the use of Structural Equation Model (SEM) software, and the choice of which SEM software is most suitable between COvarian Based Structural Equation Model (SB-SEM) and Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) as in Table 5.7. The study meets the criteria for the use of PLS-SEM software, for example, little a priori knowledge of the structural model relationships, the goal of this study is to predict key drivers (exogenous constructs), the complexity of the model and requirement of latent variable scores as revealed in analysis of predictive relevance Q^2, total effect, and effect sizes (f^2 & q^2) assessments (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012).

The Student Performance (SP) construct happens to be among the many outcomes of the primary outcome (adjustment) (Ramalu, 2010) and therefore this study is not about measuring international students academic performance as can be seen in the survey instrument (Appendix 'E') where the aim to identify factors. But about exploring antecedents (CQ, GP & HCNc) and their predictive relevance to Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and the eventual outcome SP.

Therefore, this study was carried out to explore the predictive relevance and effect sizes of these constructs in ths cross-cultural adjustment study and to guide policy

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makers, practioners and researchers of their significance. This study also covers theorisation of the relationship between these constructs.

This study focused on international students studying in public higher education institutions operating in Malaysia. It comprised International Students who have spent at least one year in the country, which is considered enough time to have had experienced sufficient adjustment and can thus make remarks on interaction with Host Country Nationals. The minimum one year experience is more than the Lysgaard's 'U' curve theory which considers adjustment in weeks (Lysgaard, 1955).

Again, due to financial and time constraints, schools selected were based on convenience; however, one criterion which guided the selection of international students for this study is environment. That students leaving in different socio-cultural environments are believed to experience differences in cross-cultural adjustment issues and thus will adjust differently. Therefore, while one of the institutions selected is from the sub-urban of Kuala Lumpur, the other institution selected is from a remote region far from urban dwelling, north of Malaysia by the Malaysia-Thailand boarders.

1.7 Delimitations

The expansion of scope and the extra rigor needed for this study is left for future studies. Future researchers may wish to conduct a longitudinal or do a cross-sectional study that will involve more public institutions and also the survey should be carried out on Host Country Nationals (HCN) as well as the policy makers as respondents. Also, a study should be conducted on Host Country Nationals' perceptions of International stuents. The trade-off between rigor and resource availability became necessary as a conscious decision made by the researcher based on available resources of time and funds that could match commensurate scope.

1.8 Definition of Terms

This section presents definition of some terms as used in this thesis:

Behavioural Cultural Intelligence (BeCQ) deals with an individual's capability to adapt verbal and non-verbal behaviour so that it is appropriate for different cultures. It includes having a flexible repertoire of behavioural responses that are appropriate in a variety of situations and having the capability to modify both verbal and non-verbal behaviour based on those involved in a specific interaction, or in a particular setting (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang et al., 2007).

Cognitive Cultural Intelligence (CoCQ) deals with individual understanding of how cultures are both similar and different. It reflects general knowledge structures and mental maps about cultures. It includes knowledge about economic and legal

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systems, norms for social interaction, religious beliefs, aesthetic values, and language in different cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang et al., 2007).

Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) - refers to the psychological (dis)comfort or (dis)stress experienced by an individual while on international assignment (Black, 1988; Black et al., 1991). CCA is also an "individual's affective psychological response to the new environment, requiring processing unfamiliar cues" (Black & Mendenhall, 1999)

Culture refers to the shared patterns of behaviour which is identical to that of an individual's group which serves as a guide to future behaviour (Hofstede, 2001).

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) - is an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings or environments (Ang, *et al*., 2007).

General Adjustment deals with the process through which an expatriate become comfortable and establishes familiarity with the local surroundings in the host country (Black, 1988; Black et al., 1991). It includes adjusting to housing conditions, food, shopping, cost of living, entertainment, and health care facilities in the host country.

Host Country National

The host country national is a citizen of the host country, which is defined as the country, where the foreign subsidiary is located (Briscoe, Schuler & Claus, 2009).

Interaction Adjustment refers to an individual's comfortable accomplishment of interactions with host nationals in both work and non-work situations (Black, 1988; Black et al., 1991).

International Student

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) define "International Student" as one who travels to a country different from his/her own for the purpose of Tertiary Education (OECD, 2013). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the OECD and Eurostat define international student as those who are not residents of their country of study or those who received their prior education in another country (OECD 2013).

Going by the definitions and explanations and experiences of international stuents, this study refers to an international stuents as an individual who pursues education in a country where the individual needs a residency permit.

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Intelligence

Refers to an individual's capability to gather and manipulate information, draw inferences, and enact cognitive, emotive or behavioural actions in response to stimuli (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Meta-Cognitive Cultural Intelligence (MeCQ) – refers to how a person refrains from—and makes appropriate use of—encounters and knowledge obtained from cross-cultural experiences (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang *et al*, 2007).

Motivational Cultural Intelligence (MoCQ) refers to the reflection of a person's interest in experiencing other cultures; and interacting with them. It involves the magnitude and direction of energy applied towards learning about—and functioning in—cross-cultural situations. It includes the intrinsic value people place on diversifications in cultural interactions as well as their sense of confidence that they can function effectively in multicultural settings (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang et al., 2007).

Policies

Policy is the principle guide to action taken by the administrative executive branches of the state with regard to a class of issues, in a manner consistent with law and institutional customs. The foundation of public policy is composed of national constitutional laws and regulations (Norwich University Public Administration, Nov. 2014).

Student Performance (SP) constitutes all activities an international student is involved and is considered as part and contributing to the whole international student academic experience (Guzman, Burke, & Watkins, 2009).

Work Adjustment deals with the process through which an expatriate achieve comfort and familiarity with work values, expectations and standards of the host work environment (Wang & Takeuchi, 2007).

1.9 Chapter Summary

Chapter one, is the introductory chapter which covers; background of the study, the problem statement, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, delimitations of the study, definition of terms used in the thesis. The scope and delimitation of the study also briefly highlight the relationship between constructs used in the study and the introduction of theories that supports the various interactions between the constructs.

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