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Cultural shock and integration competencies in foreign culture

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

People frequently encounter two main difficulties when experiencing foreign cultures: cultural shock and integrating competencies. As globalization continues to facilitate more worldwide travel, migration, and economic interactions, the ability to adapt to and assimilate into different cultural contexts has grown in significance. Cultural shock is the unease and discomfort people have when they come across cultural differences, whereas integration competency is the capacity to engage and adjust to a new culture successfully. This study aims to give a broad overview of the complicated issues surrounding culture shock and the capacity of people to adapt to other cultures (Simos & Villierme 2021; Mulyadi et al. 2024).

In the social sciences, there is a lot of discussion surrounding one of the most complicated linguistic terms: expression culture. Still, it's among the most used words in modern speech. Cultural definitions vary these days, ranging from quite technical, scientific terms to the straightforward "the way we do things around here" description. "The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" is Hofstede's extremely illustrated definition of culture (Hofstede et al. 2010). Culture is generally understood to be a common set of values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

To reiterate, Hofstede culture is acquired, not inherited. Parents, siblings, instructors, friends, and the community all influence it. After the level of human nature, which is shared by all people, culture is the second of three levels of individuality in human mental programming. The third level is the individual's personality, which is exclusive to that person and not shared by other group members (Yeke & Semerciöz 2016).

According to this definition, culture shock is defined as a sudden and unsettling impression on the mind or one's own concept of culture caused by an unwanted event or perception in a foreign culture. It can also be defined as a lasting depressive, exhilarating, or excited feeling of any kind. This essay seeks to provide an overview of the key elements of culture shock, including its causes, significant influences, symptoms, and repercussions. It also includes a section on potential remedies for the issue. Once every one of these facets has been covered, it

will be feasible to assess the afore-mentioned assumption and decide whether to accept or reject it (Miller & Nada 2009).

1.2. Statement of Problem

A major problem for anyone exposed to foreign cultures by travel, relocation, or international business ventures is cultural shock. In order to advance intercultural understanding, improve individual wellbeing, and maximize the effectiveness of global programs, these issues must be resolved. Legislation that promotes tolerance and cultural awareness, mental health services, language competency initiatives, and cultural training programs are a few potential solutions to these problems.

Thus, in order to help people and organizations functioning in increasingly globalized environments, the topic of cultural shock and integrating competences in foreign cultures is a complex one that requires attention and answers. By addressing these issues, we can encourage more harmonious cross-cultural relationships and the successful assimilation of people into other cultures.

1.3. Question of Study

2. What is cultural shock, and what are the primary factors that contribute to it when individuals encounter foreign cultures?
3. What are the common emotional and psychological reactions people experience when facing cultural shock, and how can these reactions be mitigated or managed?
4. What role does language proficiency play in an individual's ability to integrate into a foreign culture, and how can language barriers be overcome?
5. How do cultural differences in communication styles, non-verbal cues, and interpersonal norms affect interactions between individuals from different cultures?

1.4. Objective of Study

2. To identify cultural shock and the primary factors contributing to it when individuals encounter foreign cultures.
3. To identify the common emotional and psychological reactions people experience when facing cultural shock, and how can these reactions be mitigated or managed.

4. To identify the role language proficiency plays in an individual's ability to integrate into a foreign culture, and how can language barriers be overcome.
5. To identify cultural differences in communication styles, non-verbal cues, and interpersonal norms affect interactions between individuals from different cultures.

1.5. Significance of Study

People that possess cultural shock and integration abilities are more able to comprehend other cultures. This knowledge fosters empathy, tolerance, and a respect for cultural variety, all of which lead to a more peaceful world community.

Going through cultural shock might spur human development. It pushes people to grow in resilience, adapt, and step beyond of their comfort zones, which increases flexibility and adaptability in a variety of circumstances.

Mental health can be significantly impacted by cultural shock. It is critical to acknowledge and overcome these obstacles if people are to preserve their psychological well-being, lower their stress levels, and avoid mental health problems associated with acculturation stress.

Possessing integration competences, such as language proficiency and cross-cultural communication skills, facilitates more civil and productive relationships between people from various backgrounds. In interpersonal as well as professional settings, this is vital.

Individuals with cultural shock and integration skills are more able to understand different cultures. A more peaceful global society results from the empathy, tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity that this understanding promotes.

Cultural shock may really promote human growth. It forces people to venture outside of their comfort zones, become more resilient, and adjust, which improves flexibility and adaptability in a range of situations.

1.6. Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1:

- Null Hypothesis (H₀): Language proficiency has no significant effect on an individual's ability to integrate into a foreign culture.

- Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Higher language proficiency is positively correlated with an individual's ability to integrate into a foreign culture.

Hypothesis 2:

- Null Hypothesis (H0): Perceived differences in communication styles have no significant impact on interpersonal interactions between individuals from different cultures.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Greater perceived differences in communication styles are positively correlated with increased challenges in interpersonal interactions between individuals from different cultures.

Hypothesis 3:

- Null Hypothesis (H0): Adherence to interpersonal norms has no significant impact on an individual's social integration in a foreign culture.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Individuals who are aware of and adapt to interpersonal norms are more likely to experience successful social integration in a foreign culture.

1.7. Definition of Terms

Cultural Shock

"Culture Shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse," according to the definition given. The thousand and one ways we orient ourselves to the conditions of everyday life are among these cues or indicators (Bennet 1977).

Integration competencies

Integration competencies are the many ways people negotiate and interact with the difficulties of cross-cultural encounters. They include a wide range of abilities and behaviors that are essential for effective cultural adaptation. This complex idea includes not just linguistic ability but also cognitive and affective aspects including cultural intelligence, adaptability, and open-mindedness as well as intercultural communication abilities (Thomas & Inkson, 2004). These

qualities essentially function as the subtle cues that help people navigate the possibilities and challenges that come with interacting with others from different cultural backgrounds.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Historical Perspectives

In the middle of the 20th century, the idea of "culture shock" evolved as a conceptual framework to explain the psychological and emotional difficulties people experience when they are exposed to a foreign and novel culture. The anthropologist Kalervo Oberg is sometimes credited with coining the phrase, which he did in a 1960 paper titled "Culture Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments." Through his study, Oberg helped to identify and formalize the feelings of confusion, unease, and frustration people have when they go across cultural boundaries (Oberg, K. 1960).

Oberg described cultural shock in four stages:

- **Honeymoon Stage:** A period of initial curiosity and enthusiasm toward a foreign culture.
- **Crisis or Culture Shock Stage:** Feelings of annoyance, unease, and confusion arise from realizing differences in culture.
- **Recovery or Adjustment Stage:** As people start to comprehend and embrace the new culture and create coping mechanisms, adaptation happens.
- **Mastery or Acceptance Stage:** Getting used to the new culture, during which people experience comfort and self-assurance in a cross-cultural setting.

As academics and researchers have gotten a better grasp of the mechanics of culture shock, the idea has evolved throughout time. In several disciplines, including as psychology, sociology, and intercultural communication, its importance has grown. Researchers highlight the dynamic nature of the process, emphasize that people may switch between stages, and discuss how a variety of factors, including personality, cultural background, and characteristics of the host culture, affect the experience (Pedersen 1995).

Oberg's pioneering study established the groundwork for more disciplinary studies and investigation of culture shock. In the later part of the 20th century and the early 21st century, researchers have built upon Oberg's original paradigm to investigate the cognitive, social, and psychological facets of culture shock in greater detail.

The realization that culture shock is not a condition that applies to everyone is one noteworthy progress. Different people may react differently to culture shock and experience it in different ways. A more nuanced understanding of the interaction between internal and external factors—such as the host culture's traits and the nature of the intercultural encounter—has resulted from this realization. Personal factors include things like individual resilience, cultural intelligence, and past cross-cultural experiences.

Furthermore, current viewpoints on culture shock recognize that it affects people navigating different and multicultural situations inside their own nations as well as expatriates and overseas students. People now experience a new kind of culture shock due to the worldwide character of today's civilizations, as they come into contact with many different cultures in their immediate surroundings.

Researchers have also looked at how culture shock affects people in the long run, examining how it might change someone's identity, perspective on the world, and even their professional path. The idea has been incorporated into more general conversations about intercultural competency and the creation of methods to improve people's capacity to prosper in a variety of cultural environments.

Culture shock research is still being conducted, and it is helping us comprehend this complicated issue better as time goes by. This covers studies on how technology may either lessen or exacerbate culture shock, how globalization affects cultural adaptability, and how socioeconomic and political shifts affect people's experiences with cultural transitions.

As a result of Oberg's seminal work, the historical perspectives on culture shock have developed into a diverse, multidisciplinary field of research. In order to support useful interactions between cultures and global understanding, it is nonetheless essential to understand how to effectively manage culture shock as the world becomes more connected.

2.2. Stages of Culture Shock

The Honeymoon Stage: During the "Honeymoon Stage," the first stage of cultural adaptation, people often feel joyful and fascinated by their new cultural surroundings. Due to people's immersion in new customs and experiences, this time is marked by an increased feeling of enthusiasm, curiosity, and optimism (Winkelman 1994). Similar to the first few

years of a love relationship, this phase is driven by an early fascination with the host culture, when everything seems new, fascinating, and exotic.

During the honeymoon phase, people might get hooked with the sights, sounds, and tastes of the new culture. As they learn about the customs, food, and views of the area, and they enjoy the novelty of their new surroundings .

Furthermore, during the honeymoon phase, people could encounter very few problems or cultural barriers, which helps them feel comfortable in their new environment. A sense of connection and belonging may be created thanks to having good interactions with the people. As a result, people may feel validated for their decision to accept the change in culture.

But it's important to understand that the honeymoon phase is usually brief and might eventually give place to difficulties adjusting to a new culture. The second stage of culture shock might begin when people start to notice cultural differences, communication difficulties, and homesickness as they get to know the details of the host culture (Bennet 1977).

The Crisis Stage: During the Crisis Stage, people might notice a sense of cultural conflict where their beliefs and principles oppose the beliefs of the society where they are staying. Someone who struggles to fit in in their new environment might feel emotions of alienation as a result of this conflict. Plus, at this phase, frustration and helplessness can get more intense due to having to deal with language barriers and a lack of support system.

A sense of loss for the comfortable confines of home are common characteristics of the Crisis Stage. People may feel homesick for their home culture, the routines, social relationships, and customs they had to leave behind. This need may aggravate homesickness and the emotional instability that characterizes this phase.

Notwithstanding the challenges faced during the Crisis Stage, it offers a chance for resilience and personal development. Through overcoming the difficulties of cultural adaptation, people learn coping strategies, how to solve problems, and get a better awareness of both the outside world and themselves. Many people may overcome the

culture shock crises with patience and time, emerging from it with a stronger sense of intercultural competency and understanding (Winkelman 1994; Thomas 2020).

The Recovery Stage: People continue to acclimate to their new cultural surroundings during the Recovery Stage of culture shock, progressively overcoming the obstacles they had during the Crisis Stage. This stage usually occurs after the Crisis Stage's period of extreme emotional turmoil and represents a shift toward more stability and emotional well-being (Winkelman 1994; Kocak 2014).

As they get more used to the traditions, language, and social norms of the host culture, people may have a renewed sense of confidence during the Recovery Stage. Additionally, they could begin to assemble a network of mentors, friends, and coworkers who will support and guide them throughout the journey.

Furthermore, people frequently undergo a viewpoint change at this point, appreciating the significance of cultural variety. They could start to accept the host culture's traditions as their own and have a greater understanding for its unique characteristics.

As people discover a balance between their own cultural identity and the customs of the host culture, the Recovery Stage is defined by a sense of acceptance. They might have greater adaptation to navigate social situations and clearing up cultural misconceptions. that could help them having meaningful cross-cultural conversations.

The Adjustment Stage: People continue to integrate into their new cultural surroundings during the Adjustment Stage of culture shock, building on the gains gained during the Recovery Stage and strengthening their sense of belonging. As people learn to handle the challenges of cross-cultural encounters and forge stronger relationships within the host culture, this phase symbolizes a time of ongoing and development (Demes & Geeraert 2015).

During the Adjustment Stage, people show a growing level of comfort while interacting with the daily routines, with the communication styles, and social norms of the host culture. They could discover that it's easier for them to participate in community events and build lasting relationships with the locals.

Furthermore, people frequently feel more confident at this point in their abilities to deal with cross-cultural difficulties. Using their newly acquired cultural competency, they can go for academic or career prospects, or personal hobbies within the host culture.

In the Adjustment Stage, people find a balance between their own cultural identity and the customs of the host culture, which is characterized by a sense of integration. They could grow to embrace elements of both their host culture and their own culture in their day-to-day existence, forming a sort of bicultural identity (Demes & Geeraert 2015).

2.3. Types of Culture Shock

As people move across cultural boundaries, culture shock is a complex phenomena that can take many different forms and affect people's psychological and emotional health, and behaviors. Many forms of culture shock have been found by researchers, and each is distinguished by unique symptoms and also difficulties.

- **Cognitive Culture Shock:** Understanding new cultural paradigms and adjusting one's cognitive frameworks to them are two aspects of cognitive culture shock. When people encounter differences between their own cultural presumptions and those of the host culture, this kind of culture shock can cause cognitive dissonance. People could find it difficult, for instance, to understand the underlying values that influence social interactions, the processes involved in making decisions, and also organizational structures. Research by Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2008) emphasizes the significance of cultural awareness and cognitive flexibility in successfully managing cognitive culture shock.
- **Affective Culture Shock:** Affective culture shock can provoke a wide range of emotions, including curiosity but also anxiety that might cause depression. People may go through an emotional rollercoaster when adjusting to the ups and downs of a new culture. Affective culture shock's duration and intensity can be reduced significantly by factors such as resilience and social support. Based on studies by Demes & Geeraert (2015), approaches aimed to improve emotional control and developing social connections could help people in better coping with the emotional difficulties resulting from cultural adaptation.

- **Behavioral Culture Shock:** The modification of people's observable behaviours and interactions in the host culture is a sign of behavioural culture shock. People experiencing this kind of culture shock frequently need to modify their body language, social graces, and communication methods in order to blend in. Hofstede et al. (2010) research highlights the significance of intercultural communication ability and cultural sensitivity in managing behavioural culture shock. Interventions like cross-cultural training programs can assist people in gaining the knowledge and abilities necessary to effectively navigate behavioural differences.
- **Psychosomatic Culture Shock:** Psychosomatic culture shock highlights the connection between physical and psychological health when adjusting to a new culture. Physical symptoms including headaches, stomach problems, and sleep disruptions might be a manifestation of the stress and anxiety associated with cultural adjustment. Grove (1995) study emphasizes the reciprocal connection between physical symptoms and psychological suffering during culture shock. Psychosomatic culture shock can be reduced, and general well-being can be promoted through stress management and other interventions like physical health promotion.
- **Reversed Culture Shock:** Re-entry shock, often referred to as reversed culture shock, happens when people return home after spending a significant amount of time elsewhere. Feelings of confusion about one's identity and nostalgia are common characteristics of this kind of cultural shock. Studies conducted by El-Asri et al. (2024) and Jacobsson (2023) highlight the difficulties in reintegration and the necessity of continuous assistance throughout the re-entry procedure. Reversed culture shock can be difficult to deal with, but interventions like debriefing sessions can make the adjustment back to one's native culture easier. Other methods include cultural reorientation and alumni programs.

2.4. The reasons for culture shock

Cultural distinctions are based on a broad variety of elements, such as values and traditions, and also other social standards. These differences might make it extremely difficult for people to adjust to a new cultural setting. For instance, differences in power distance, individualism vs collectivism, and other cultural dimensions that affect behavior and communication styles are highlighted by Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions (Alqarni 2022). He mentioned the

aspect of uncertainty avoidance also. Achieving successful cross-cultural adaptation requires an understanding of and ability to navigate these cultural variances.

Language competency is essential for successful cross-cultural communication as language is the main channel of social interaction and communication. People may find it difficult to fully participate in social and professional activities, and also express themselves and comprehend others due to language problems. Ye's (2024) research highlight the significance of language training for people going through culture shock. They also mention the support services as well as the negative effects of language barriers on cross-cultural communication.

As people find it difficult to make connections and build lasting relationships in their new cultural setting, social isolation can make emotions of culture shock worse. The process of adjusting might be made more difficult by a lack of social support networks, which can intensify emotions of alienation, loneliness, and homesickness. Research by Gable & Bedrov (2022) and Putra et al. (2022) emphasize the role that social support plays in preventing the detrimental impacts of culture shock and fostering psychological health.

Those who are adjusting to a new physical environment must learn to negotiate strange daily routines and environments. Those who are used to the conveniences of their own society may find this adjustment especially difficult. The idea of cultural code-switching and the mental work needed to adjust to unfamiliar cultural environments are explored in research by Molinsky (2007), which clarifies the difficulties of contextual adaption during culture shock.

There are many cultural factors that worsen culture shock and impair people's feeling of well-being (prejudice, discrimination, ethnocentrism...). The process of adjusting might be made more difficult by emotions of frustration and alienation brought on by discrimination or unfavorable stereotypes. According to research by Gopalkrishnan (2018), structural impediments to cultural integration must be addressed in order to reduce the influence of cultural stresses on mental health outcomes.

People who experience culture shock frequently feel lost since they are leaving behind the security and familiarity of their own society. The process of adjusting might be made more difficult by missing their friends and family, food, and other cultural customs that are more familiar to them. Homesickness and nostalgia can also be increased by these things. Research on the connection between homesickness and cross-cultural adjustment by Hack-Polay (2020)

highlights the importance of coping mechanisms and social support in order to reduce the effects of cultural shift.

2.5. Psychological and Sociocultural Factors Contributing to Culture Shock

Psychological Factors

- 1. *Personality Traits and Cultural Openness:*** Personality attribute variations among individuals greatly influence how the mind reacts to a foreign culture. Successful cross-cultural adaptation has been linked to openness to experience, which is a personality attribute marked by being curious, the adaptability to different circumstances, and also a readiness to interact with fresh ideas (Yeke & Semerciöz 2016). People with high openness tend to be more resilient to cultural differences, which lessens the severity of culture shock experiences.
- 2. *Cultural Intelligence (CQ):*** It has become clear that cultural intelligence (metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, behavioral aspects...) is an essential psychological component for managing cross-cultural relationships (Ang, Van Dyne, & Rockstuhl, 2015). Individuals with higher levels of cultural intelligence (CQ) are better able to comprehend and adjust to a variety of cultural surroundings, which helps them through the culture shock process in a more positive way.
- 3. *Emotional Regulation:*** One of the most important skills for minimizing the psychological effects of culture shock is emotion regulation. Better psychological well-being during cross-cultural transitions has been associated with emotional intelligence, which includes the awareness and control of one's emotions as well as the capacity for empathy (Liao et al. 2021). People who are good at controlling their emotions could be less emotionally distressed and more resilient when faced with the difficulties of adjusting to a new culture.
- 4. *Cultural Identity and Belongingness:*** The relationship between psychological health and a person's feeling of cultural identity and belonging is complex during culture shock. Studies reveal that people who embrace elements of their new culture while yet feeling a strong bond with their old society have less psychological stress (Liu 2017). A stable sense of identity plays a role in facilitating a more robust and good psychological adjustment to the new culture.

Sociocultural Factors

1. ***Communication and Language Proficiency:*** One important sociocultural element impacting the feeling of culture shock is effective communication. Disparities in communication patterns, encompassing both spoken and non-spoken indicators, may result in misinterpretations and aggravate emotions of isolation. An individual's capacity to interact meaningfully with the host culture is greatly impacted by language competency as a component of sociocultural adaptation, which influences both the psychological and social components of the adaptation process (Farah & Vuniqui, 2012).
2. ***Social Support Networks:*** One of the most important factors in reducing the sociocultural difficulties associated with culture shock is the availability of social support networks, both inside and outside the host society. Making friends with locals or the other foreigners, or perhaps meeting with participants in cultural support groups can help reduce feelings of loneliness and give one a sense of community (Gable & Bedrov, 2022; Putra et al. 2022). Social support creates a more favourable transition experience by acting as a buffer against the negative sociocultural effects of culture shock.
3. ***Cultural Norms and Expectations:*** The understanding of cultural norms and expectations while being able to manage them are essential sociocultural elements impacting the process of adaptation. Feelings of confusion might result from not knowing the social and cultural norms, in what we call the unspoken rules (Oberg, 1960; Molinsky 2007). Sociocultural adjustment goes more smoothly when one becomes culturally competent and modifies their behaviour to fit host cultural norms.
4. ***Interpersonal Relationships:*** Establishing and managing relationships with people in the host culture are important sociocultural elements impacting the experience of culture shock. A person's feeling of social integration is influenced by the calibre of their contacts with locals and their capacity to form deep ties (Zhong et al. 2020). A more positive sociocultural adaptation is facilitated by positive interpersonal ties, which can provide a sense of support and community.

Demographic Influences on Culture Shock

Demographic factors (age, gender, cultural background...etc.) can significantly impact the experience of culture shock. While older people could find it difficult to adapt to new cultural norms, younger generations might show greater flexibility during cross-cultural transitions (Nweke 2015). The kind of culture shock experiences can also be influenced by gender-related cultural expectations and roles and can also affect its severity.

Also, people from collectivist / individualistic cultures could have different difficulties while adjusting to a different culture. Studying the interactions between these demographic characteristics and the many forms of culture shock might help us better comprehend the complexity of the situation and design specific support systems.

2.6. Cultural Shock in the Digital Age

A distinct set of opportunities and problems arises from culture shock in the digital era, changing the way people experience and manage cross-cultural transitions in a world that is becoming more interconnected by the day. The substantial influence of digital technology on people's identities, cultural experiences, and interactions which may result in both good and bad outcomes defines this phenomena.

- **Virtual Cultural Encounters:** Through social media and other online platforms, people have never had easier access to a wide range of cultural experiences than they had before the age of internet. Although the internet era promotes intercultural communication and understanding, it also exposes people to a wide range of cultural influences, which can lead to feelings of confusion that might feel like a cultural overload (Huang 2024).
- **Digital Communication Dynamics:** The way people interact across cultural boundaries has changed dramatically as a result of digital communication tools (email, instant messaging, video conferencing...). But in virtual encounters, cultural shock can be exacerbated by disparities in communication and language competence, which can result in misunderstandings (Sawyer & Chen 2012).
- **Online Identity Formation:** In virtual environments, people may create their cultural identities. But for those going through cross-cultural transitions in digital environments, in particular, the fluidity and anonymity of online platforms can make the process of

identity creation more difficult, resulting in identity confusion (Baltezarevic et al. 2019).

- **Technological Dependence:** When people are faced with cultural differences in digital connections, their dependence on digital devices for communication and to access information can contribute to feeling lonely. Also, relying too much on online platforms may make it more difficult for people to fully participate in real in-person experiences (Sawyer & Chen 2012).
- **Cyberculture and Cultural Adaptation:** The rise of cyberculture, which is defined by common behaviors and principles that exist among online groups, brings with it both new difficulties and opportunities for cultural adaptation (Ming 2022). When navigating the cultural dynamics of online groups, which might differ greatly from their offline cultural experiences, people may experience culture shock.
- **Digital Support Networks:** Even with the difficulties that come with culture shock in the digital era, cross-cultural adaption may be greatly aided by online support systems. People can get peer support when navigating the challenges of cultural transition in digital settings (online forums, support groups, instructional websites...) (Ye 2006; Kumi-Yeboah 2019).

2.7. Coping Strategies and Interventions

The basis for creating successful coping mechanisms is the understanding of the many forms of culture shock. Specific support might lessen the difficulties people have adjusting as they move through the various stages of culture shock.

- **Preparation and Cross-Cultural Training:** It is important to prepare before stepping into a new cultural setting. Individuals can get insights into the social norms of the host culture through cross-cultural training programs, where they can also learn about their communication methods. This proactive understanding can serve as a cushion during the early phases of culture shock, assisting people in navigating certain obstacles (Gluesing 2015).
- **Mentorship and Support Networks:** Creating networks of mentoring can be crucial in helping people get through the crisis stage of culture shock. Mentors may offer helpful advice on adapting and also to give guidance. They may be someone with expertise in both the home and host cultures. Through connecting

people with others going through similar situations, peer support networks promote a sense of community (Paloma *et al.* 2020; Zhou 2021).

- **Language Acquisition Programs:** One important aspect of cultural adaptation is language. Both affective and cognitive culture shock might be aggravated by language obstacles. Formal or informal language acquisition programs help people communicate more effectively and improve their capacity to comprehend and also be understood in a new cultural setting (Jones & Bond 2019).
- **Psychological Resilience:** Resilience in the face of hardship and the capacity to remain positive under challenging circumstances are essential elements of effective cross-cultural adjustment. Positive attitudes and an adaptive mindset are traits of resilient people (Chu & Zhu 2023). Studies indicate that augmenting psychological resilience via interventions like stress management, mindfulness training, and cognitive-behavioural therapy can have a favourable effect on a person's capacity to handle the emotional obstacles associated with cultural shock (Gao *et al.* 2023). Furthermore, in the context of culture shock, the idea of post-traumatic growth—the favourable psychological changes brought about by overcoming adversity—is pertinent. Successfully navigating culture shock can lead to the development of greater cultural competency, empathy, and also a more comprehensive understanding of other worldviews (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Understanding the possibility for recovery from trauma emphasizes how culture shock may be a life-changing experience.

2.8. Cultural Adaptability and Learning Strategies

The capacity of a person to modify their behaviour and communication style to suit the cultural environment is known as cultural adaptation. The development of cultural adaptation requires the application of efficient learning techniques. People who actively seek cultural knowledge and participate in cultural activities are more likely to adjust to new situations more easily (Winkelman 1994). Successful cross-cultural transition can be facilitated by educational initiatives that emphasize building cultural adaptation and offering useful resources for cultural learning.

2.9. Integration Competencies in Cross-Cultural Adaptation

➤ Defining Integration Competencies

Integration competences are the skills, know-how, and also attitudes people use to successfully interact with and integrate into a new cultural setting. These abilities encompass more than just getting by in a foreign culture; they also entail actively engaging with and giving back to the host society. According to research, having high integration competences is essential for promoting a sense of belonging and wellbeing in the new cultural setting in addition to lessening the negative effects of culture shock (Masgoret & Ward 2006; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2008).

➤ Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Integration

An individual's capacity to perform well in cross-cultural contexts is referred to as cultural intelligence, which is a crucial component of integration competences (Ang, Van Dyne, & Rockstuhl, 2015). Cultural acuity, adaptability motivation, social skills, and metacognitive awareness are all components of CQ. People with high CQ show a higher ability for successful integration and are better able to deal with the difficulties of culture shock.

According to recent research, cultural intelligence and a number of integration-related characteristics (social integration, cultural adaptability, the efficacy of intercultural communication...) are positively correlated (Karroubi et al. 2014; Guðmundsdóttir 2015). A person with high CQ may more easily integrate into their new environment by understanding the subtleties of the host culture and making appropriate behavioural, communicative, and problem-solving adjustments.

➤ Language Proficiency and Communication Competence

One of the most important components of integration competences is language ability, which promotes efficient social engagement within the host culture. Studies show that those who speak more languages are less likely to be culture-shocked and have a greater chance to be able to adapt to other cultures (Drobot 2021). Being proficient in the target language improves a person's capacity for cultural awareness, which would help them communicate easier and have meaningful community involvement.

Language proficiency and communication competence are strongly related. Communication competence includes the capacity to read nonverbal and verbal clues, and also to modify communication styles, and overcome obstacles in cross-cultural communication (Rcademy 2023). Proficiency in effective communication is essential for developing rapport and cultivating positive relationships in the host community and for connecting as well, all of which contribute to the integration process.

➤ **Cross-Cultural Social Skills**

The capacity to deal with various interpersonal dynamics and social norms within the host culture is a component of cross-cultural social skills. This entails learning the proper manners to forming connections and also adjusting to various communication modalities. These are what we call cross-cultural social skills - forming meaningful relationships, participating in social activities, creating a support system within the host community— which are all essential for a successful integration (Pilarska 2015; Bresnahan & Zhu 2017).

➤ **Openness to Diversity and Flexibility**

Being flexible to different ideologies, and ways of life is another aspect of integration abilities. Open-minded people are more inclined to appreciate the cultural variety of their host environment, where they might confront stereotypes. Cognitive and behavioural flexibility enables people to modify their views and actions to fit in with the host culture, which facilitates a more smooth integration process (Wang et al. 2022).

➤ **Resilience and Coping Strategies**

Psychological resilience and practical coping mechanisms for overcoming culture shock are examples of integration competence. Despite the unknowns of adaptation, resilient people may overcome obstacles and can deal with stress and have a positive outlook (Chu & Zhu 2023; Gao et al. 2023). Coping strategies (seeking social support, engaging in cultural activities, employing problem-solving skills...) are to address the specific challenges encountered in the new cultural context.

2.10. Cultural Competence Training

Programs for developing cultural competency have become essential for preparing people for interactions with people from different cultures. By offering useful tools and encouraging a greater comprehension of cultural subtleties, these programs seek to improve sociocultural flexibility as well as psychological resilience (Gluesing 2015). People can be more prepared to deal with the changing environment of culture shock by incorporating techniques for identity navigation and cultural humility into these training programs.

2.11. Challenges and Future Directions

For those adjusting to cross-cultural shifts, culture shock presents serious difficulties that negatively affect their social, psychological, and emotional health. It is important to comprehend these obstacles and investigate potential avenues for study and intervention in order to improve people's capacity to effectively adjust to novel cultural contexts.

➤ Challenges of Culture Shock

- **Complexity of Cultural Adaptation:** A complex process of adaptation, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components, is involved in culture shock. For those going through culture shock, navigating the nuances of cultural differences and getting used to new social norms may be extremely difficult (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2008)
- **Psychological Distress:** A variety of psychological problems (stress, anxiety, sadness...) can result from culture shock. Effective coping mechanisms are necessary to manage the emotional difficulties of culture shock while preserving resilience and wellbeing (Gopalkrishnan 2018).
- **Impact on Identity:** People's sense of identity and belonging can also be impacted by culture shock. Feelings of identity conflict might result from juggling one's cultural identity with the expectations of the host culture (Cupsa 2018).
- **Reversed Culture Shock:** Those returning home after a prolonged absence face additional difficulties due to re-entry shock, also known as reversed culture shock. It can be confusing and frustrating to reintegrate into familiar environments

that have altered. These environments can be in the social, cultural, or the professional side (El-Asri et al., 2024; Jacobsson, 2023).

➤ **Future Directions**

- **Cultural Competence Training:** Improving people's cultural competency through focused training courses helps lessen the effects of culture shock. Culturally aware, interculturally competent, and communication-focused interventions can better prepare people for cross-cultural shifts and promote effective adaptation (Gluesing 2015).
- **Supportive Environments:** Fostering resilience and well-being in people going through culture shock requires the creation of supportive surroundings. This entails making social support systems and other tools such as mental health treatments for cultural adjustment accessible (Gable & Bedrov 2022; Putra et al. 2022).
- **Research on Resilience:** Finding the elements that support resilience and constructive adaptation in the face of culture shock should be the main goal of future study. The creation of therapies targeted at improving people's ability for adaptation can be informed by an understanding of the protective variables that mitigate the detrimental impacts of culture shock (Chu & Zhu 2023; Gao et al. 2023).
- **Cross-Cultural Collaboration:** Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers must work together to solve the many problems associated with culture shock. Through the promotion of multidisciplinary cooperation and the exchange of optimal methodologies, we can develop more successful approaches to bolstering individuals' cross-cultural adjustment and also their overall welfare (Alqarni 2022).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Approach

At this stage of the study, deductive or inductive methods should be determined based on the chosen research design. In the deductive method, people develop hypotheses based on strategic research as well as theory to develop research strategies to check if a hypothesis is accepted. In inductive law, it is necessary to collect, analyze, and develop a theory based on the results of analytical data. This approach is the link amongst theory and research strategies. Assumptions that can be verified by the empirical analysis are made, based on the body of information that may be inferred from the study's theoretical considerations.

According to Dand and Pheng (2015), a deductive study went through five stages. Accept the theory first, and then use the operational terms to express hypotheses, thirdly, to test hypotheses, and fourthly, to analyze specific research results and verify or modify theories based on the results in the fifth and final stage.

The inductive method is another central piece of deductive law. On the other hand, induction is established on the base of scientific observations. Researchers or inductive methods emphasis on current events and use deductive methods to process small samples instead of large ones. Compared to the general features of highly regulated methods and research structures or induction methods are more supple and not as much of universal. Moreover, the inductive law is also called the bottom-up approach, and the main theories and ideas are based on the main goals of this study (Alase, 2017). In addition, inductive methods often use qualitative research design methods to determine existing information, while inductive rules use research data and information from existing articles and journals of other researchers (Woo et al., 2017). Inductive research methods were used in this study to analyze Cultural shock and integration competencies in foreign culture.

3.2. Research Design

The research will implement the quantitative methodology for analyzing Cultural shock and integration competencies in foreign culture. Moreover, a quantitative methodology based on (Suid, Musa, & Rashid, 2017), a comparison based on several assumptions of existing theories. The necessary conditions for obtaining a sample can be random or differentiated but can

represent a population or a studied phenomenon. Therefore, quantitative research must have an established theory because the scientific method used is deductive. A qualitative method is based on several proposals that have been taken from a theoretical subject for constructing or generating a theory.

In addition, the characteristics that generally stand out in the quantitative methodology are that it selects an idea that becomes one or more relevant research questions; then derives hypotheses and variables; develop a plan to test them; measure variables in a given context; analyze the measures obtained (often using statistical methods) and draw a series of conclusions regarding the hypothesis.

The quantitative method uses data collection and analysis to answer research questions, and test previously established hypotheses and is based on numerical measurements, calculation, and, often, the use of statistics to accurately determine patterns of behaviour in a population.

3.3. Sampling Design

Sampling is defined as a procedure that is employed in the statistical investigation within which the determined number of interpretations is taken into consideration out of a sample. However, it has been identified that the sampling methodology is mainly based on the kind of analysis which is being executed. It might comprise one of the two sampling techniques, i.e. systematic sampling or random sampling (Stadie, 2018).

In this research, the sample size is 107 whereas random sampling has been adopted to collect the desired data through a questionnaire.

3.4. Instrument of Data Collection

Through questionnaires given to people who have lived or worked in culturally varied situations, information about cultural shock and foreign culture integration competencies will be gathered. Through these surveys, we hope to learn more about the difficulties associated with cultural transition and also the methods used to blend in successfully in unfamiliar cultural settings.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

There are three main research methods: descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory. Descriptive (or descriptive) statistics are the basis and the universal method of data analysis. Suppose someone is doing research to paint a portrait of a consumer. Respondents indicated their gender, age, marriage and professional status, consumer preferences, etc. Descriptive statistics will provide information as the basis for a full portrait. In addition to the numerical functions, various graphs have been made to visualize the results. The concept of descriptive analysis combines all kinds of additional data (Levy and Lemeshow, 2013).

The second type of data analysis is exploratory research analysis. It is used to identify trends. Using such studies, business analysis reveals patterns. Exploratory data analysis is often not final. This is still very general information about how a previously adopted strategy influenced the work of the company.

Interpretative or explanatory data analysis is a form of statistical analysis that begins with the study of data, and not with the consideration of previously made assumptions that are clearly expressed (Mihas, 2019). As the name implies, it analyzes a selection of analytical data, taking into account the quantity, level, offset, and grouping before scheduling or converting. In both qualitative and quantitative terms, the purpose of the analysis of research data is to satisfy statistical surveys of parallel programs, which are verified by examining the data when making assumptions, and then relying on statistical support to support these hypotheses (Levy and Lemeshow, 2013).

In this study, explanatory research methods are used to accurately collect and analyze data.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND THEIR EXPLANATION

Statistical analysis was conducted with precision using SPSS software to process the data collected from survey respondents. We also analysed the results to further clarify the connection between integrating competences and cultural shock and how they affect successful cultural adaptation.

4.1. Gender

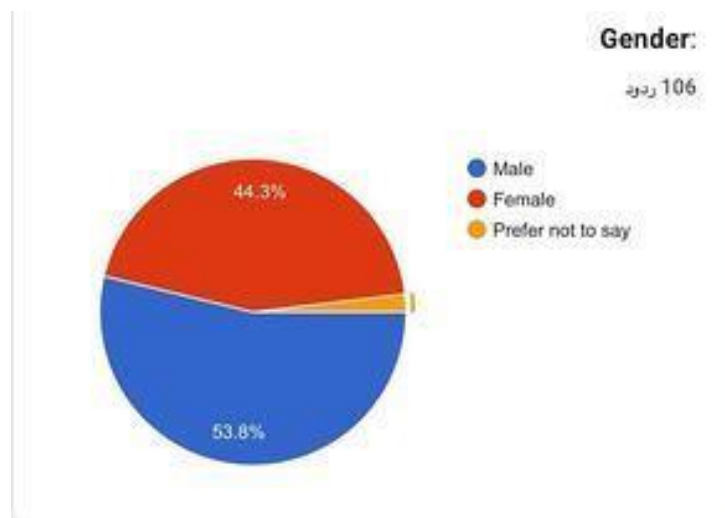


Figure 1 : Participants' gender statistics

In this survey that is aimed at evaluating cultural shock and integration skills in a foreign culture, the gender distribution of participants is represented via the pie chart presented in Figure 1 (106 responses). Notably, 53.8% of the poll respondents are men, which represent a marginally higher percentage of the population. The percentage of female respondents in the survey was 44.3%, in comparison.

It could be helpful to understand how gender variations in experiences of cultural shock work, or the differences between how men and women integrate in anew culture. For example, if it is true that it is more likely for men to experience culture shock, this might assist in the development of focused integration-promoting services. On the other hand, in the event that the survey's representation fails to accurately reflect the demographic distribution, this may

indicate biases in survey outreach or the willingness to participate which should be investigated further in future research.

4.2. Age

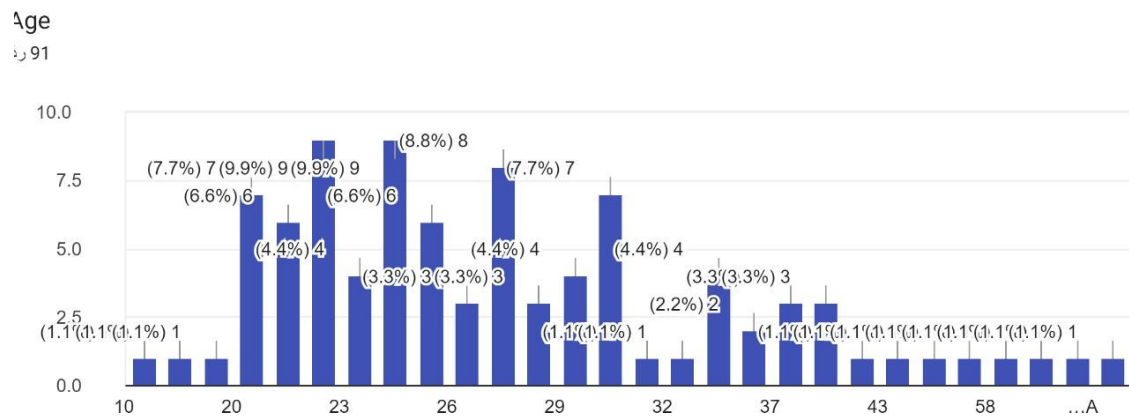


Figure 2: Participants' age statistics

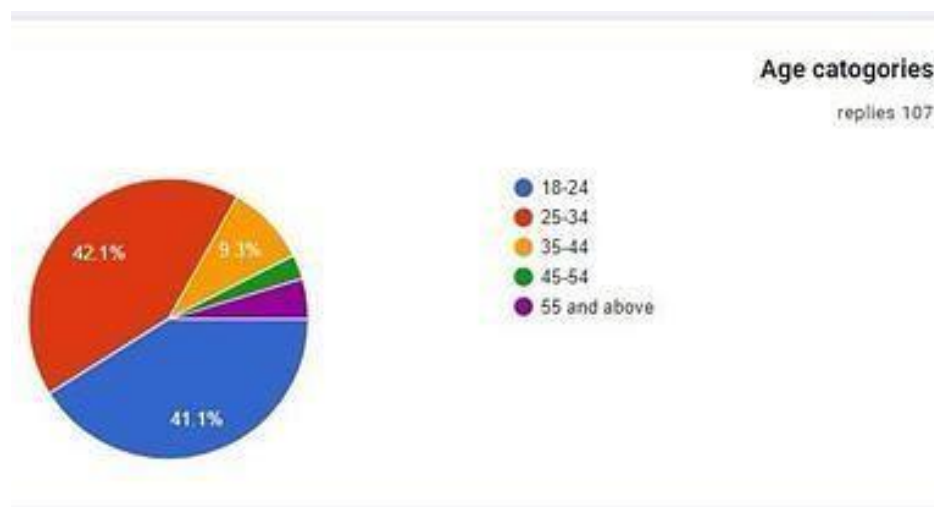


Figure 3: Participants' age categories statistics

The given graphics (Figure 2 and 3) present a demographic overview of the age profiles and related responses from the survey participants. The bar graph (Figure 2), which illustrates a variety of responses from different age groups, has a prominent peak in the 20–21 age bracket. This could indicate that, in comparison to people in other age groups, people in this age range

experience culture shock or have unique integration competencies, either more strongly or more easily.

In support of this, the pie chart (presented in Figure 3) shows that an important proportion of the survey sample—48.7%—falls into the 18–24 age range. This suggests that young adults are either more susceptible to the effects of cultural shock or are more involved in situations that result in such experiences. A significant chunk of the population, or 35.1%, is in the 25–34 age range, suggesting that the study mostly captures the viewpoints of young adults.

Nonetheless, the sample population's age distribution of 35–44 and 50 and above—9.4% and 6.8%, respectively—is minuscule. in the future research might have to zero in more on this topic in order to have a more evenly split age population due to the under-representation of the different age groups.

The responses in the bar chart reveal that young adults may be the most likely to experience culture shock. Also, there may be differences in the integration abilities between age groups. These differences may have an impact on how to create age-appropriate assistance services that help with the integration process. Same thing goes with the educational initiatives.

4.3. Education

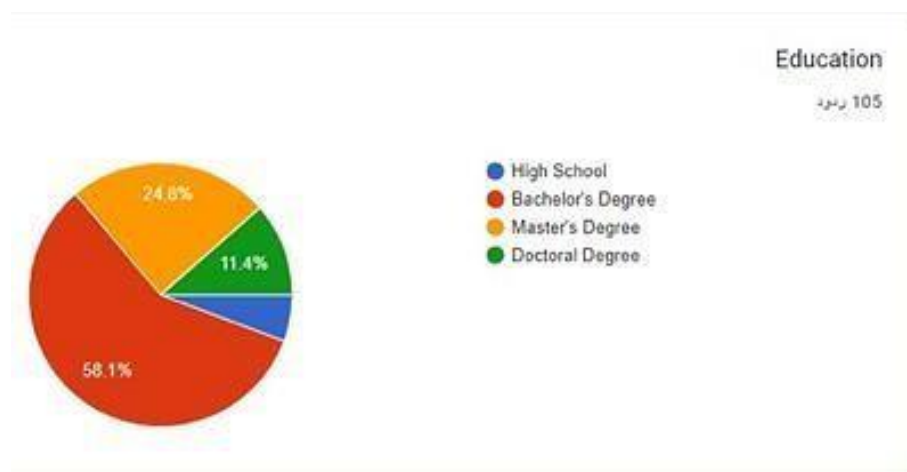


Figure 4: Participants' education statistics

A tendency towards higher education levels among participants experiencing cultural shock and their assimilation in other cultures is indicated by the pie chart of the survey, which

included 105 respondents. Most have a bachelor's degree (58.1%), but also a significant number also have master's (24.8%) and doctoral degrees (11.4%). The least represented group is that of high school graduates (5.7%). Because people with more education may be better able to adjust to culture shock than those with less formal education. This bias towards higher education may have an impact on survey results. The statistics can suggest that a higher education gives people greater integrating tools, but it might also indicate that highly educated people are more likely to participate in these kinds of surveys.

4.4. Country of residence

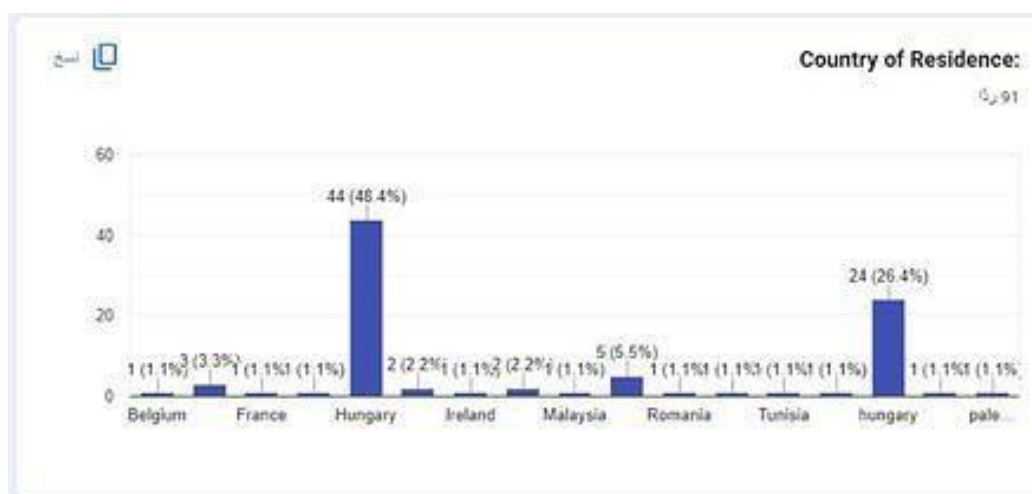


Figure 5: Participants' Country of Residence Statistics

The geographic diversity of the sample is shown by the bar chart (presented in Figure 5), which shows that the respondents came from a number of countries. Hungary is the nation most represented, amounting to 48.4% of the responses. There is not much presence from other nations (Malaysia, Belgium, France, Romania, Tunisia). This distribution suggests that

Hungary's cultural environment could have an important effect on the experiences of cultural shock and on integrating skills.

4.5. Language skills

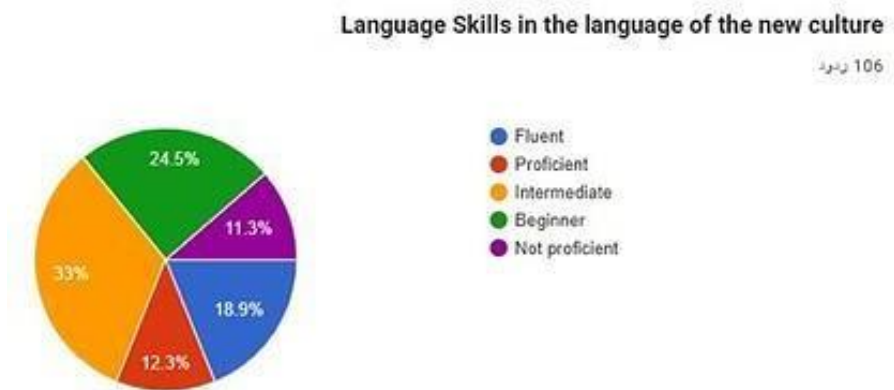


Figure 6: Statistics of Participants' Language Skills in the language of the new culture

Based on the survey, the pie chart (Figure 6) shows respondents' self-reported language proficiency in a new culture. The data is summarised as follows:

- A majority of participants, namely 33%, rate their proficiency in the new language as intermediate.
- 24.5% of individuals are proficient speakers, with fluent speakers making up the next largest category at 18.9%.
- 12.3% are beginners.
- The group of people who are not proficient makes up the smallest portion, 11.3%.

The survey participants' distribution indicates a moderate degree of language competency, with the majority being able to speak in the new language to some extent but fewer being fully fluent or proficient. This could have an effect on how they cope with culture shock and how well they fit in.

4.6. Living arrangements

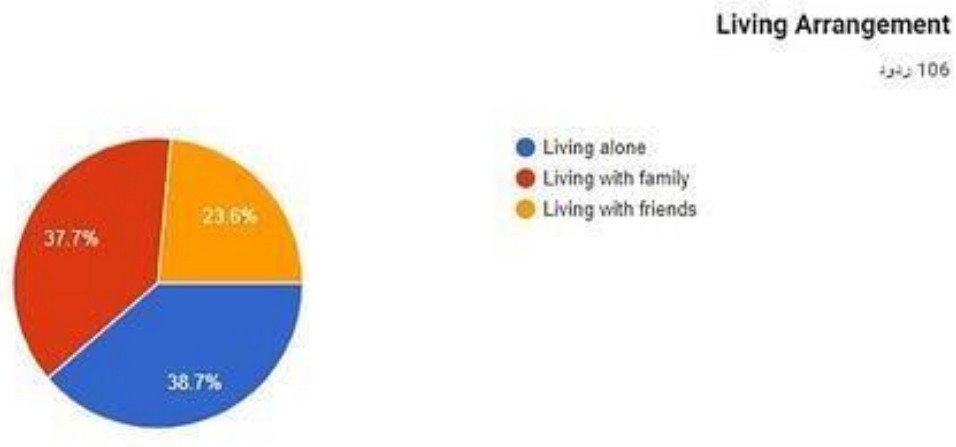


Figure 7: Statistics of Participants' Living Arrangement

This pie chart (Figure7) presents the living arrangements of the 106 survey respondents.

- A close division between those living with family (38.7%) and alone (37.7%) suggests a balanced mix of independence and family support among the participants.
- A smaller proportion, 23.6%, live with friends, which may indicate a supportive peer network.
- Such living arrangements could influence the respondents' adaptation to cultural shock and their integration into the new culture, potentially affecting their social networks and resources.

4.7. Occupation

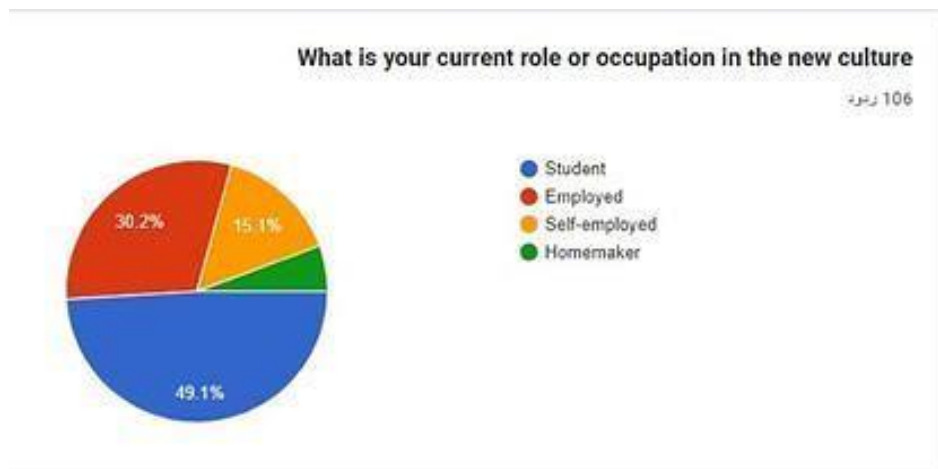


Figure 8: Statistics of Participants' current role or occupation in the new culture

The respondents' occupational distribution is shown in the pie chart (Figure 8) as follows:

- The majority of them (49.1%) are students, indicating a large presence in educational environments.
- The second biggest group is made up of people who are employed (30.2%), indicates that they are actively working.
- The smaller group, made up of people who are self-employed (15.1%), suggests that they are involved in freelancing or entrepreneurship.
- 5.6% of respondents are homemakers, which highlights their household obligations.

This distribution raises the possibility that people's experiences with cultural shock and their ability to adjust to a new culture may be influenced by a variety of everyday settings and also the different social interactions.

4.8. Duration of residence

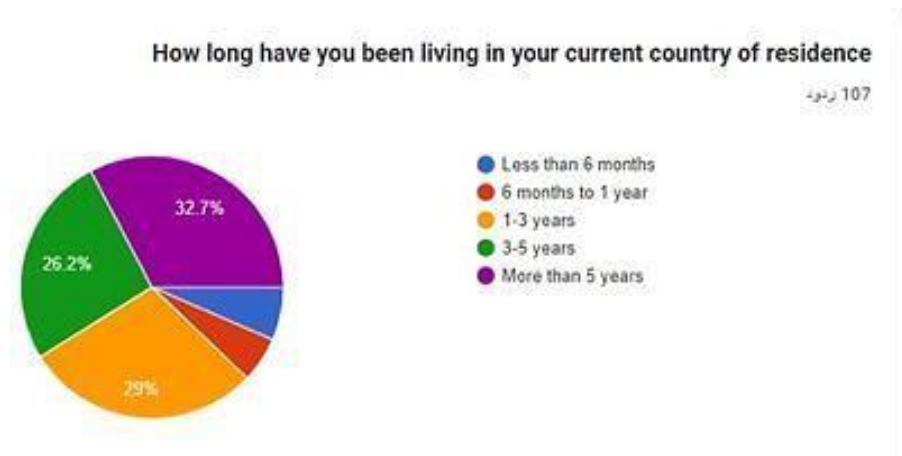


Figure 9: Statistics of Participants' Duration of living in their current country of residence

The pie chart (Figure 9) shows the length of time each responder has lived in the current country:

- 32.7% had been residents for more than 5 years.
- 29% lived there for 1-3 years
- 26.2% of the population had lived in the country for 3-5 years.
- A small percentage of recent immigrants may be seen in the population, with fewer than 12% having been in the country for less than six months.

It is expected from these statistics that the respondents had various levels of cultural shock as well as different degrees of exposure to the new culture and also the adjustment to it.

4.9. Culture shock intensity

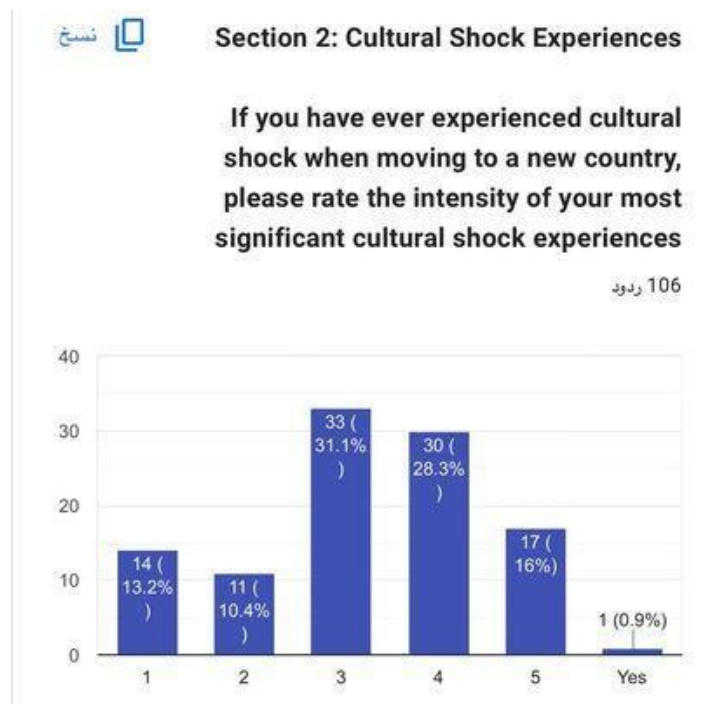


Figure 10: Severity of culture shock experiences

When asked to assess their level of culture shock upon first moving to a foreign country, participants were asked to rank it on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented the least severe culture shock and 5 the most. The findings are displayed in Figure 10:

The most popular answers, 3 and 4 (moderate to high degree of culture shock), were picked by 31.1% and 28.3% of participants, respectively. Only 10.4% of individuals chose a score of 2. A significant case of culture shock is not uncommon, as indicated by the 16.7% of respondents who rated their shock at a level of 5, compared to just 13.2% who rated their shock at a score of 1.

Also, a single respondent (0.9%) answered "Yes" without a rating, this might suggest a significant cultural shock.

4.10. Challenging aspects of the new culture

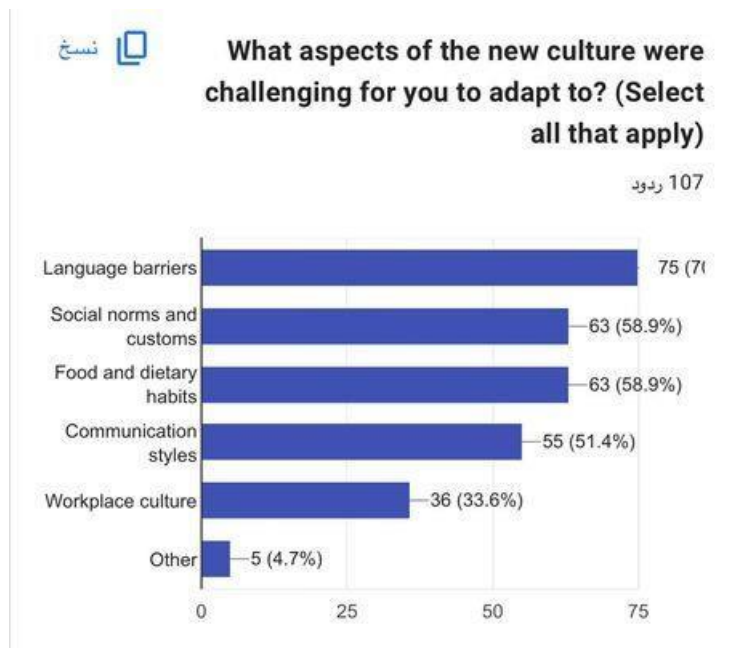


Figure 11: Aspects of the new culture that are challenging to adapt to

Data from 107 respondents about the elements of a new culture that they found most difficult to adjust to is displayed in a horizontal bar chart. Here is a summary of the information:

- Language barriers rank as the biggest obstacle, as indicated by the choice made by 70% of respondents.
- Of the participants, 58.9% found dietary habits as difficult as social standards.
- A noteworthy difficulty for 51.4% of the responders is communication styles.
- Concerns about workplace culture were raised by 33.6% of participants.
- A little percentage (4.7%) selected "Other," indicating that there are other difficulties (religion, beliefs, thought patterns...).

These insights reflect the complexity of adapting to a new culture, with language standing out as the primary hurdle.

4.11. Language proficiency impact on communication

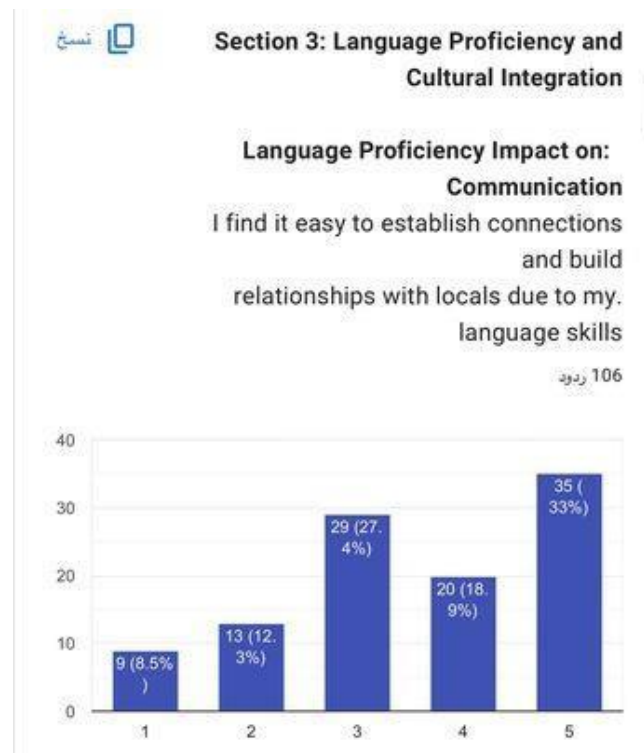


Figure 12: Language Proficiency Impact on Communication

The bar chart from the survey assesses how language proficiency impacts the ease of communication and relationship building with locals, according to 106 respondents:

- A small percentage (8.5%) rate their ease as very low (1 out of 5), suggesting significant difficulty.
- 12.3% have some difficulty (rated 2 out of 5).
- The largest group, 33%, finds it relatively easy (rating 5 out of 5) to communicate and build relationships due to their language skills.
- Respondents who feel moderately at ease (ratings of 3 and 4) make up 27.4% and 18.9% respectively.

This spread indicates that while there is a challenge for some, the majority find that their language skills facilitate effective communication and cultural integration to varying degrees.

4.12. Integration in social settings

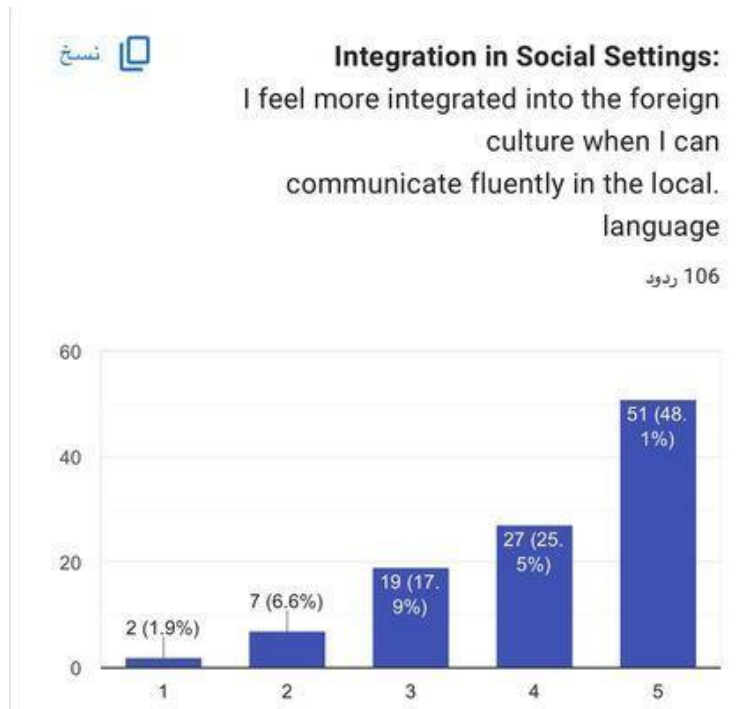


Figure 13: Integration in Social Settings

The bar chart reflects the perceptions of 106 individuals regarding their level of integration into a foreign culture in relation to their fluency in the local language:

- A vast majority, 48.1%, strongly agree (rating 5 out of 5) that fluency in the local language makes them feel more integrated.
- A quarter of the respondents (25.5%) give a rating of 4, indicating they agree to a lesser extent.
- Fewer participants feel moderately integrated (17.9% with a rating of 3) or slightly integrated (6.6% and 1.9% with ratings of 2 and 1, respectively).

The bar chart shows participants' feelings of integration in social settings based on their fluency in the local language. A significant majority of the respondents feel that their language skills are positively correlated with their sense of integration

4.13. Understanding Cultural Nuances through Language

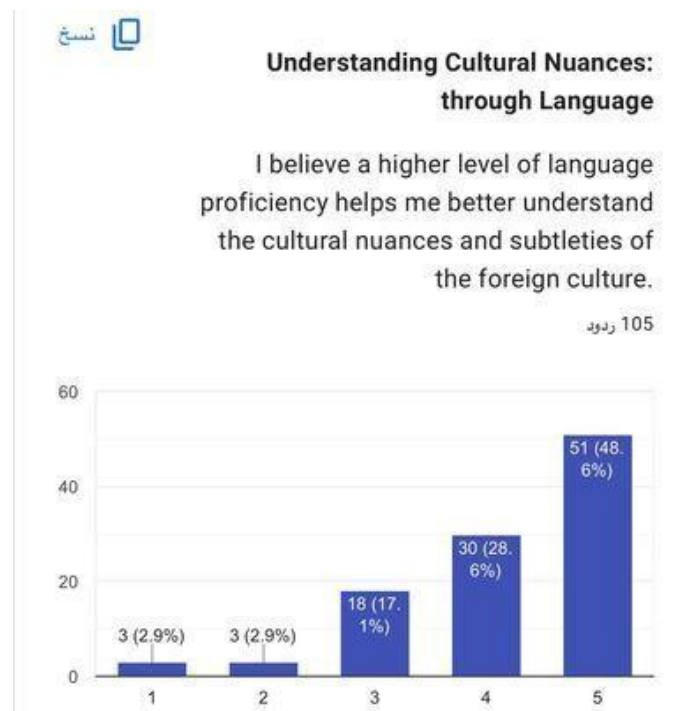


Figure 14: Understanding Cultural Nuances through Language

The bar graph displays 105 respondents' answers about how their language skills affects their views on cultural nuances:

- Of the respondents, the majority (48.6%) strongly agree (5 out of 5) that having a better language competency helps one comprehend cultural differences.
- A sizable portion (28.6%) agrees to a little smaller degree (4 out of 5).
- Less respondents disagree (2.9% each for ratings of 1/5 and 2/5) or feel indifferent (17.1% with a 3/5).

This implies that linguistic proficiency is regarded as essential for understanding a culture's specifics, which is necessary for better adaptability.

4.14. Access to opportunities

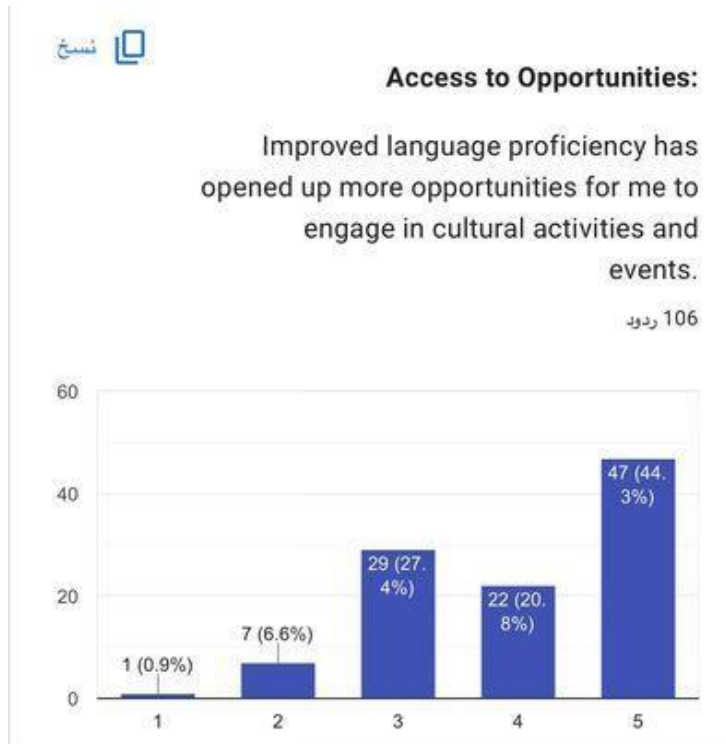


Figure 15: Access to Opportunities

The bar chart from the survey shows 106 respondents' views on how language proficiency impacts their access to cultural activities and events:

- Almost half (44.3%) strongly feel (rating 5) that improved language skills have opened up more cultural opportunities.
- A considerable segment (27.4%) gives a 4 out of 5 rating, aligning with this view but to a lesser degree.
- A neutral stance is seen with 20.8% of respondents (rating 3).
- A very small number disagree (6.6% and 0.9% for ratings 2 and 1 respectively).

The chart reflects a clear trend that enhancing language proficiency is perceived as a gateway to more cultural engagement.

4.15. Perceived cultural integration

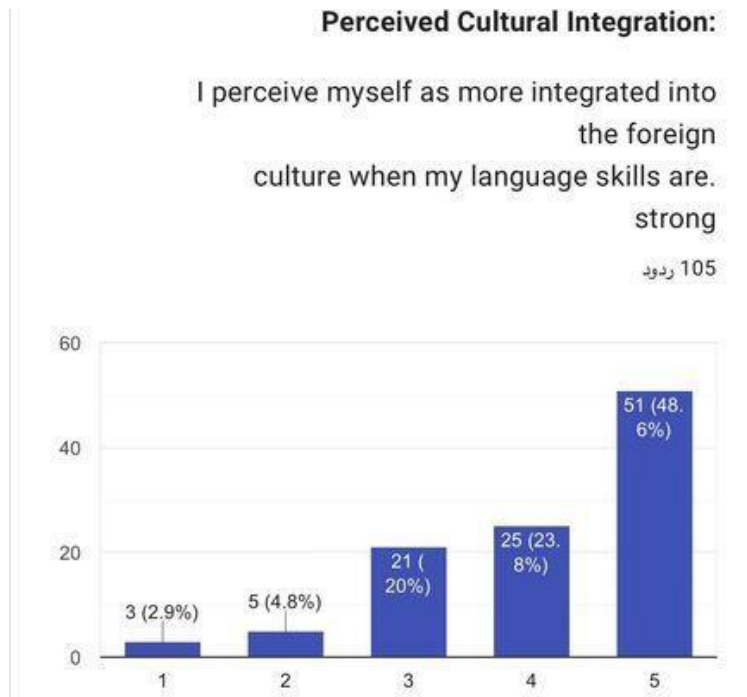


Figure 16: Perceived Cultural Integration

The survey's bar chart shows how 105 respondents felt about cultural integration with regard to their language proficiency:

- Of the respondents, a noteworthy 48.6% strongly agree (5/5) that having high language abilities makes them feel more integrated.
- 23.8% of respondents strongly agree (4/5).
- Twenty percent (3/5) have a moderate opinion, and relatively few people feel less integrated despite having excellent language abilities (4.8% and 2.9% for ratings of 2 and 1, respectively).

This highlights how crucial language ability is to how people perceive their assimilation into a new society.

4.16. Awareness of Communication Style Differences

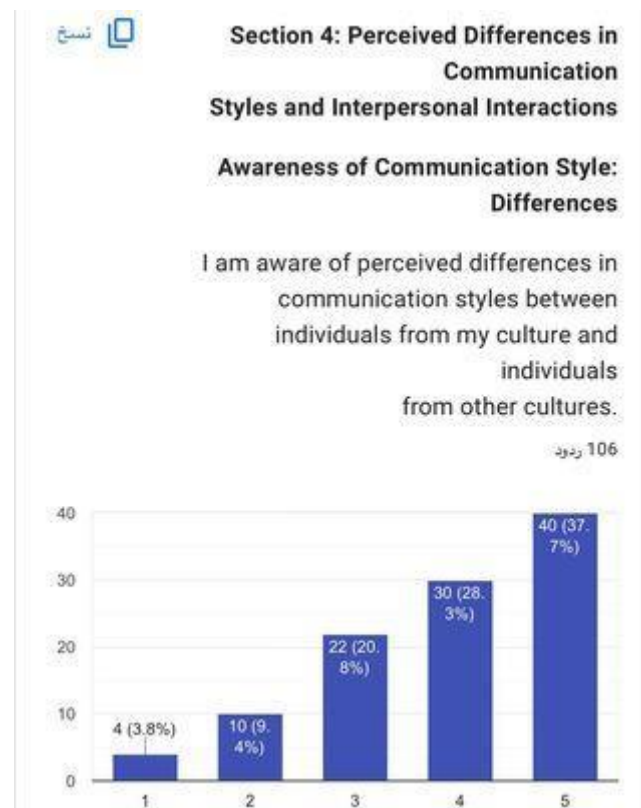


Figure 17: Awareness of Communication Style Differences

The bar graph shows the views of 106 respondents about their knowledge of the variations in communication styles between their own culture and different cultures:

- A sizable percentage, 37.7%, show a high degree of awareness (5/5).
- 28.3% rate their awareness as pretty high (4/5).
- A lesser percentage, 20.8%, give a moderate grade (3/5).
- A small percentage of respondents (3.9%) and 3.8%, who rated awareness as 2 and 1, respectively, felt less aware.

This indicates that the majority of respondents are aware of how different cultural communication styles vary.

4.17. Challenges in Understanding Non-Verbal Cues

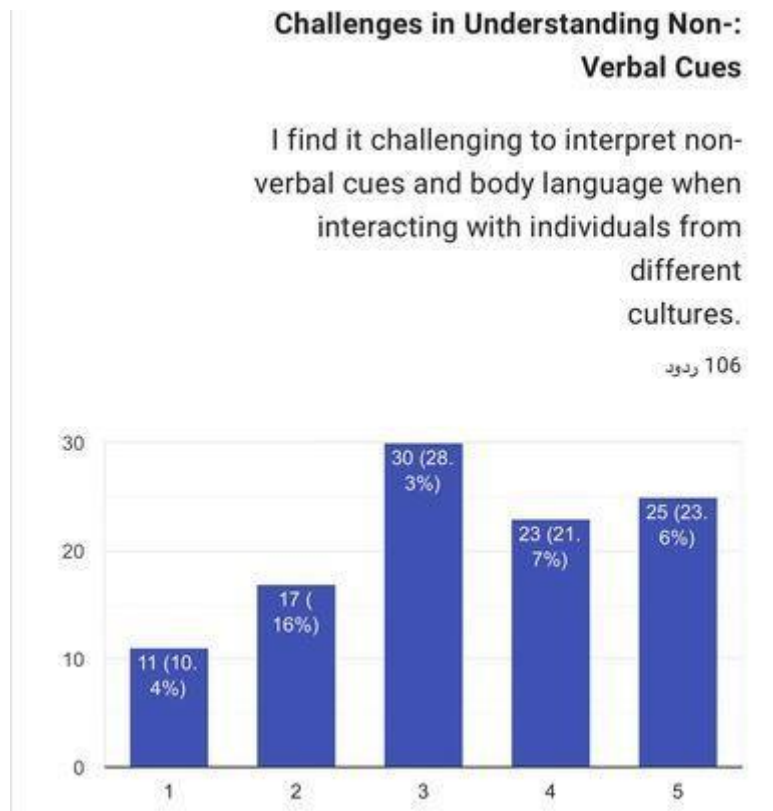


Figure 18: Challenges in Understanding Non-Verbal Cues

The bar chart illustrates the responses from 106 individuals on the challenges of interpreting non-verbal cues and body language in intercultural interactions:

- A considerable number of respondents (23.6%) find it highly challenging (rating 5).
- Those who rated it as moderately challenging (4/5) make up 21.7%.
- The largest single group (28.3%) rated the challenge at a medium level (3/5).
- Fewer respondents find it less challenging, with 16% (2) and 10.4% (1) indicating lower levels of difficulty.

The data suggests that while there is a spectrum of experiences, a significant portion of participants do face challenges with non-verbal communication across cultures.

4.18. Impact on Expressing Thoughts and Ideas

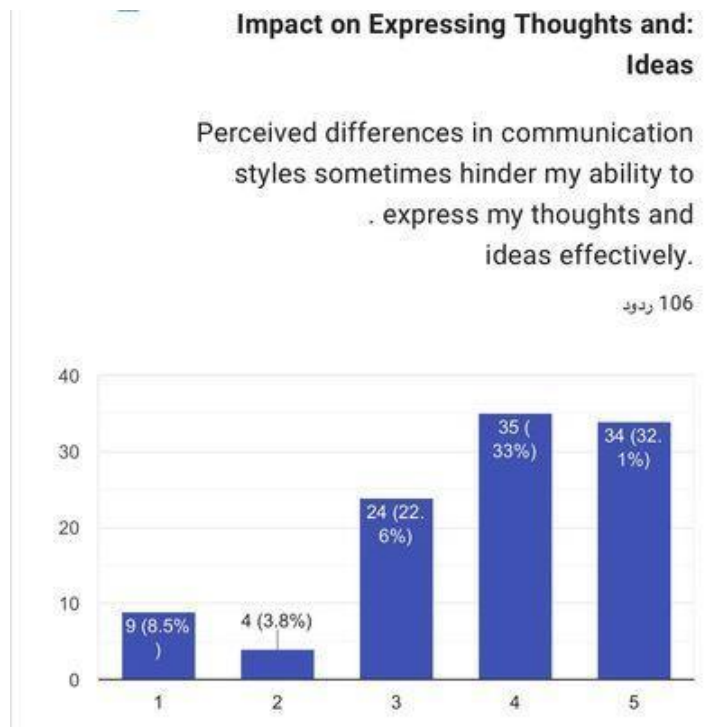


Figure 19: Impact on Expressing Thoughts and Ideas

The bar chart shows the opinions of 106 individuals regarding how the perceived differences in communication styles affect their ability to express thoughts and ideas:

- 32.1% indicate a high level of hindrance (rating 5).
- Close behind, 33% feel a significant but slightly lower impact (4/5).
- 22.6% experience a moderate effect (3/5).
- Fewer participants report low impact, with 3.8% and 8.5% choosing ratings of 2 and 1, respectively.

The majority of respondents perceive that communication style differences do challenge their expression in some capacity.

4.19. Navigating Misunderstandings

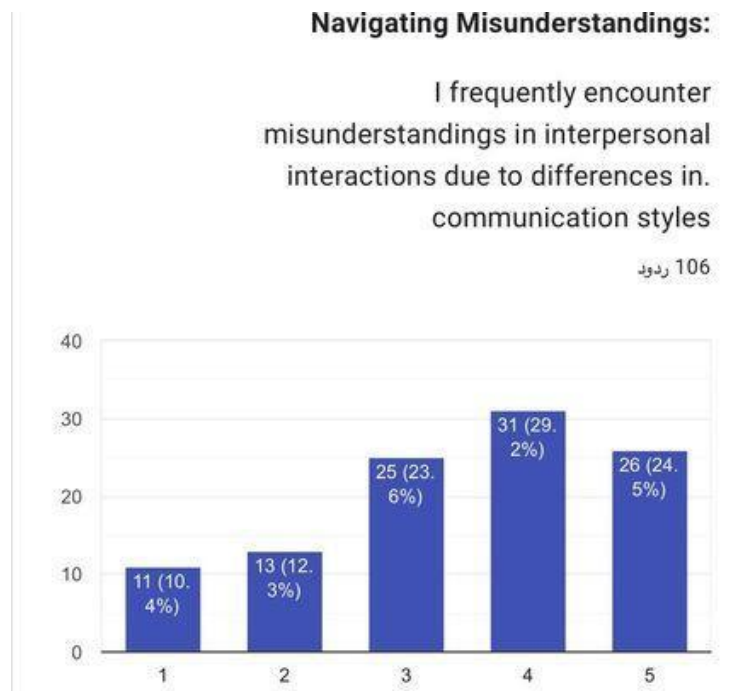


Figure 20: Navigating Misunderstandings

The bar chart displays responses from 106 participants on the frequency of misunderstandings in interpersonal interactions due to differences in communication styles:

- A similar number of respondents feel that they often (24.5%, rating 5) or sometimes (29.2%, 4/5) encounter misunderstandings.
- 23.6% give a moderate rating (3/5), suggesting occasional misunderstandings.
- Fewer participants report infrequent misunderstandings, with 12.3% and 10.4% choosing ratings of 2 and 1, respectively.

The data indicates a spread across the spectrum, with a notable portion of the participants experiencing communication challenges regularly.

4.20. Overall Impact on Interpersonal Relationships

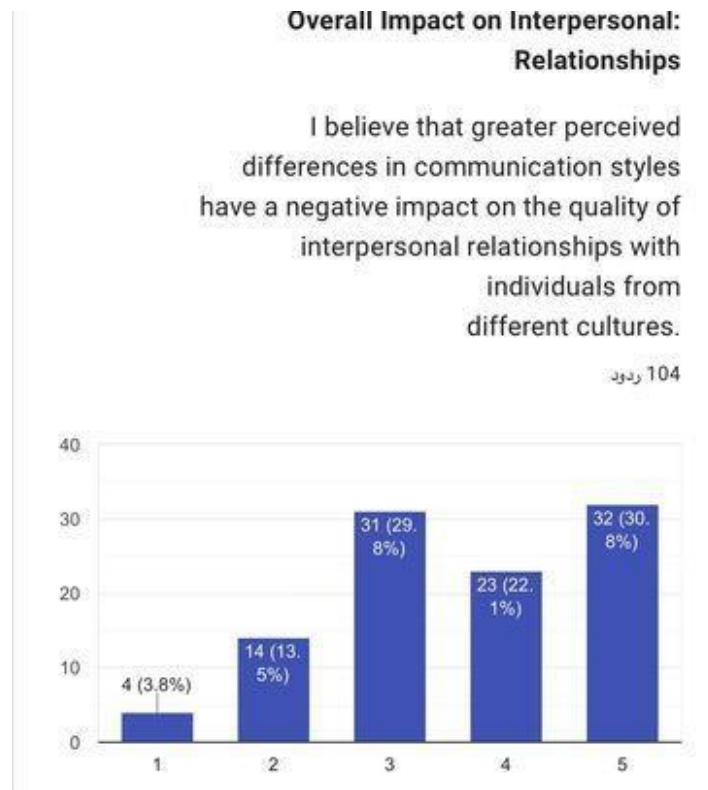


Figure 21: Overall Impact on Interpersonal Relationships

The bar chart presents the opinions of 104 individuals about the impact of perceived differences in communication styles on the quality of interpersonal relationships with people from different cultures:

- 30.8% strongly agree (rating 5) that these differences negatively impact relationship quality.
- Ratings of 4 and 3, suggesting a moderate to high impact, are given by 22.1% and 29.8% of respondents, respectively.
- Fewer participants perceive a lower impact, with 13.5% and 3.8% giving ratings of 2 and 1, respectively.

The majority view is that communication style differences can hinder the quality of cross-cultural relationships.

4.21. Awareness of Interpersonal Norms

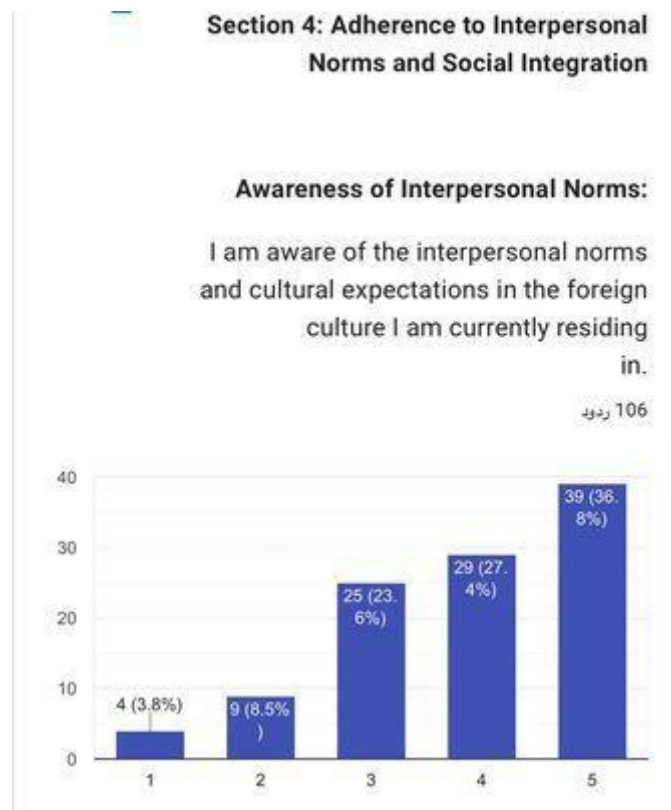


Figure 22: Awareness of Interpersonal Norms

In the bar chart, 106 individuals responded to a question about their awareness of interpersonal norms and cultural expectations in the foreign culture they're residing in:

- The majority, 36.8%, rate their awareness as very high (5/5).
- A substantial portion, 27.4%, rate their awareness as high (4/5).
- Fewer respondents feel moderately aware (23.6%, rating 3).
- A very small group report low awareness, with 8.5% and 3.8% choosing ratings of 2 and 1, respectively.

This indicates that most participants are quite conscious of the cultural norms and expectations in their current place of residence.

4.22. Adaptation to Cultural Greetings and Gestures

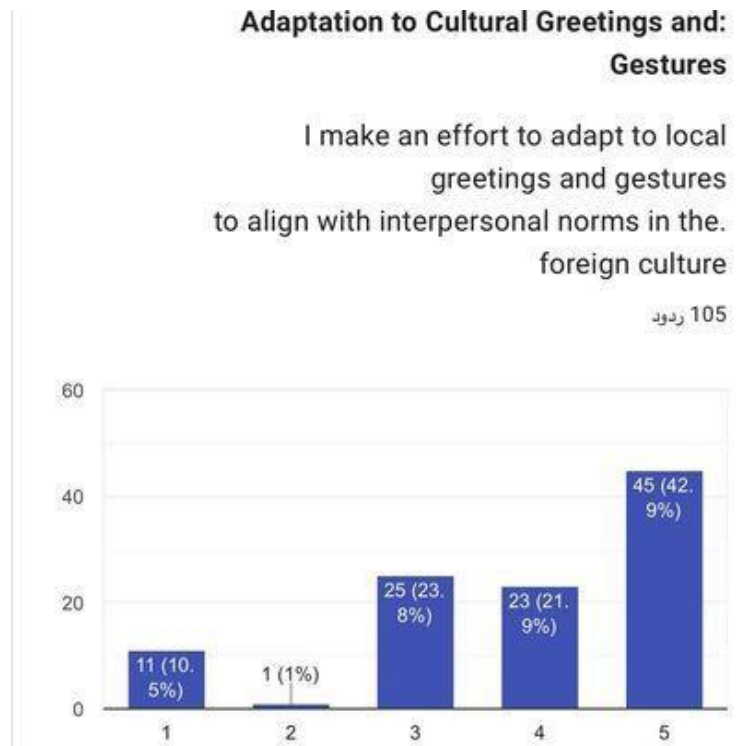


Figure 23: Adaptation to Cultural Greetings and Gestures

The bar chart presents data from 105 respondents on their efforts to adapt to local greetings and gestures in a foreign culture:

- A notable 42.9% strongly affirm their efforts to adapt (rating 5).
- The next largest group, 23.8%, feel they make a somewhat lower effort (rating 4).
- A moderate effort is reported by 21.9% (rating 3).
- Very few feel they make little to no effort to adapt, with 1% (rating 2) and 10.5% (rating 1).

The majority of respondents are actively trying to adjust their non-verbal communication to fit into the foreign culture they are in.

4.23. Respect for Cultural Etiquette

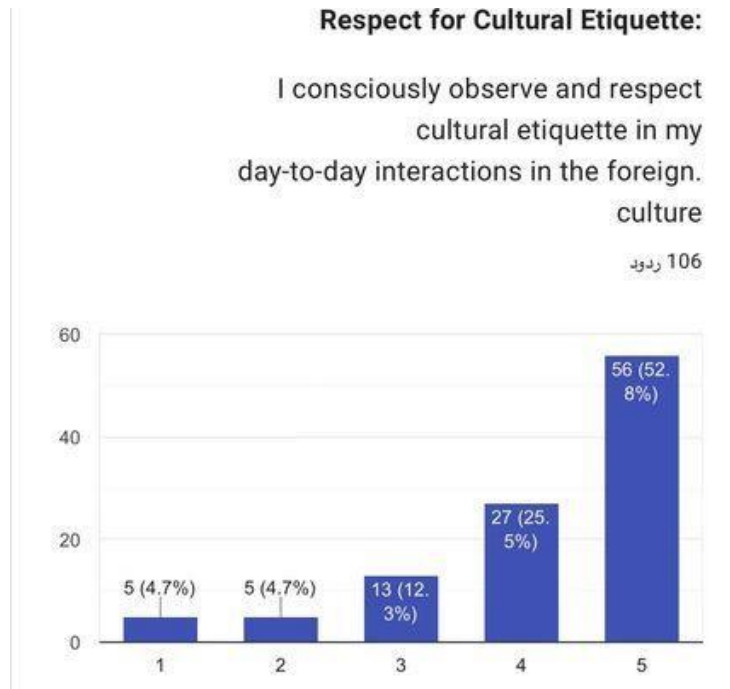


Figure 24: Respect for Cultural Etiquette

The bar graph shows responses from 106 people about how they follow cultural etiquette in everyday encounters with people from other cultures:

- 52.8% of respondents rate their awareness and adherence of cultural etiquette as extremely high (rating 5).
- Of those surveyed, 25% (25.5%) exhibit a high degree of respect (4/5).
- A smaller group (12.3%, 3/5) shows a moderate level of regard.
- Just 4.7% of respondents gave ratings of 2 or 1, indicating that very few of them had low regard.

According to the research, a sizable majority of participants pay close attention to cultural etiquette in their daily lives when they are abroad.

4.24. Navigating Conversational Styles

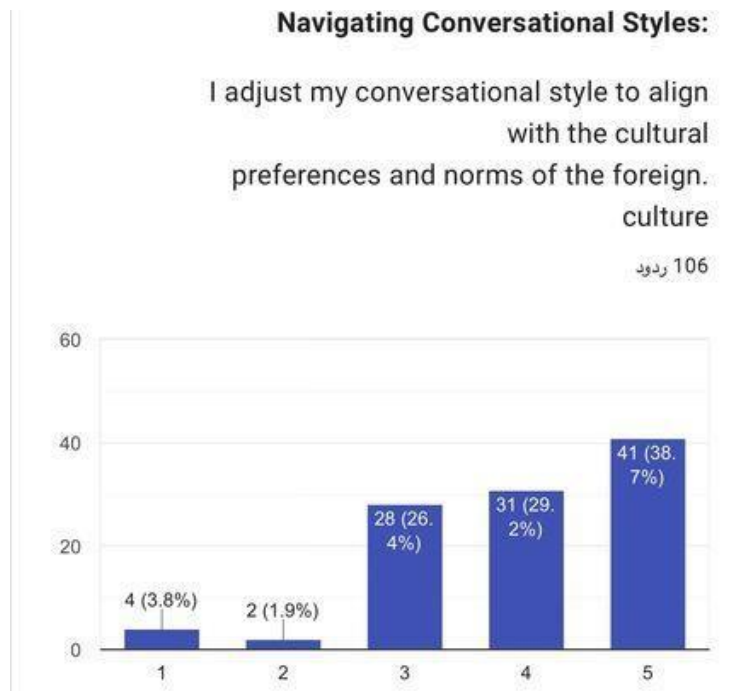


Figure 25: Navigating Conversational Styles

The bar graph represents 106 respondents' comments on their attempts to adapt their conversational style to conform to the social norms of a foreign culture:

- A sizeable percentage (38.7%) give themselves good marks (5/5) for changing their talking style.
- A relatively high degree of adjustment is indicated by 29.2% (4/5).
- 26.4% of respondents rank their level of adjustment as moderate (3/5).
- A small minority, 3.8% of whom rated themselves as 1, and 1.9% as 2, describe making little to no change.

Most participants actively work to match their conversational style to the norms and preferences of the foreign culture they are living in.

4.25. Perceived Impact on Social Integration

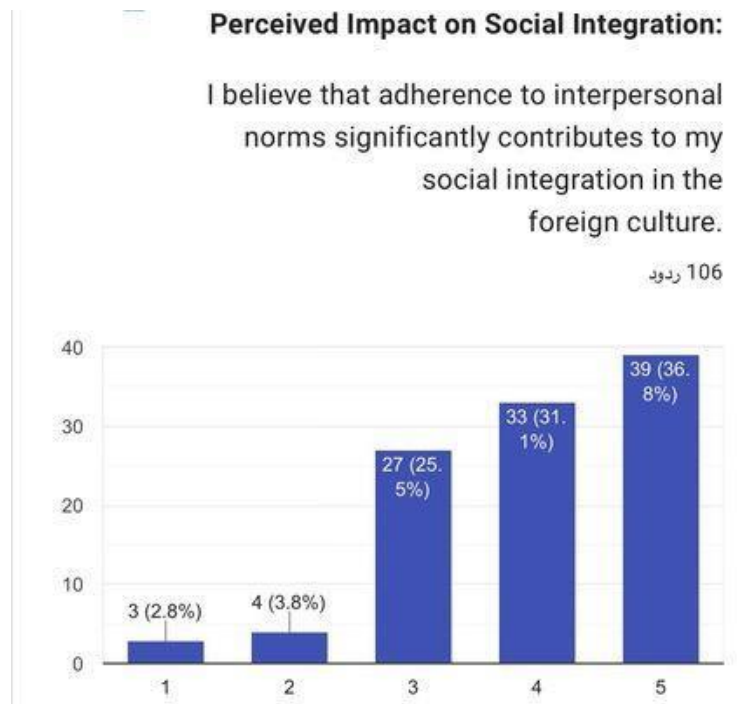


Figure 26: Perceived Impact on Social Integration

The bar graph shows the views of 106 people about how following interpersonal norms contributes to social integration in a foreign culture:

- A sizable portion of respondents (36.8%) firmly feel (rating 5/5) that adhering to these standards is important for integration.
- A significantly smaller percentage (31.1%) also think it's essential (4/5).
- Twenty-five percent of the participants assess things as moderately important (3/5).
- Only a small percentage—3.8% giving it a 2 and 2.8% giving it a 1—feel that it is less relevant.

It seems that most respondents think that adhering to interpersonal rules is crucial for successful social integration.

Discussion

One big part of being an expat is navigating unfamiliar cultural environments. Our study, which is based on reliable survey data, examines the aspects of cultural shock and the skills necessary for effective cultural adaptation.

The first hypothesis emphasizes how important language skills are to an expat's capacity for integration. This theory is supported by the facts, which show a significant correlation between language proficiency and the ease of integrating. Being able to communicate effectively and grasp local subtleties better is reported by expatriates with higher language competence, both of which are essential for adjusting to a new culture and feeling at home.

The second hypothesis looks at how interpersonal interactions are affected by variations in communication styles. The results support the theory, showing that these differences often provide difficulties for expatriates in social situations. Common obstacles include miscommunication and difficulty expressing oneself, underscoring the significance of intercultural communication abilities.

As per Hypothesis 3, social integration is greatly aided by adjustment to interpersonal norms. This is supported by our study, which demonstrates that effective social integration is frequently reported by expatriates who are aware of and respectful of local customs.

These theories speak to more general aspects in the context of the global expat community. The personal journeys of expatriates highlight the significance of cultural competency, much as niche sectors such as specialised tourism have realized the benefits of meeting the requirements of a varied range of cultures for economic success (Language skills, linguistic flexibility, awareness of culture...) which are essential for expatriates to successfully navigate the challenges of living abroad.

The expat experience is complex and involves many aspects (learning, personal growth, capacity to cross cultural barriers...). This study confirms that a vital component of the diverse range of international expatriate experiences is comprehending and adjusting to new cultural contexts.

Conclusion

In the increasingly globalized world, cultural shock and the capacity to adapt into different cultures are crucial factors, particularly in the travel and tourism sector. The psychological reaction (and emotional) to being exposed to a culture that is very different from one's own is known as "cultural shock," and it typically have many characteristics (confusion, disorientation, even anxiety). In contrast, integration competencies relate to the flexibility needed to successfully integrate into a new cultural setting. These skills are essential for travellers or foreigners living abroad, and also companies doing business internationally.

It's important to recognize cultural differences when going overseas in order to foster respect between tourists and locals. Consider Japan, which is well-known for having a unique culture that can be particularly difficult for visitors. It could take some time for someone from more independent Western cultures to get used to Japan's rigorous social codes (nonverbal communication, respect, humility...).

In a similar vein, businesses that operate in other countries need to acquire cultural competences in order to succeed. To effectively negotiate the corporate environment, multinational firms operating in countries like China and India - where relational and hierarchical dynamics are crucial to company operations- need to be aware of these subtleties. Failing to do so may have many consequences (miscommunications, missed opportunities, possible conflicts...), all of which might negatively affect how businesses operate.

Thus, cultural competency training initiatives are becoming more and more crucial. The comprehension of various cultural characteristics, - (like communication styles), and negotiating tactics that participants get from these programs is essential for their effective integration into unfamiliar environments. Furthermore, these skills are necessary for both good contributions to the community's economy as well as for personal development.

Societies may foster more inclusive settings that benefit both immigrants and natives by encouraging a greater knowledge of cultural differences and the significance of integration abilities. This strategy improves interactions (business operations, personal interaction...) on a social and economic level, and also the entire experience of traveling abroad.

Recommendations

1. To help expats integrate better, place language study programs to help them become fluent in the language of their new nation.
2. Train foreign workers on intercultural communication: to provide with the tools to deal with a variety of communication differences.
3. Hold cultural orientation seminars: address the customs and beliefs of the new country.
4. Create support systems: get social support from local populations.
5. Support regulations that acknowledge the importance of cultural integration.
6. Qualitative research: study the emotional components of culture shock (examine the personal experiences)
7. Examine how integrating expatriates affects the local economy.
8. Longitudinal studies (long-term effects of cultural integration)
9. Make integration strategies according to the diverse needs of expatriates.
10. Reevaluate global mobility policies (ensure comprehensive support for cultural integration)

Summary

Cultural shock and integration competencies in foreign culture

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The influence of cultural shock and the growth of integration skills in foreign cultures are examined in this thesis, with a focus on the importance of communication styles and language competency in enabling effective cultural adaptation. The study takes a quantitative approach, gathering information from people who have firsthand experience working or living in cross-cultural settings using a survey. Finding the critical elements influencing the efficacy and ease of cultural assimilation is the aim of this study (determine the value of language proficiency, comprehending social norms, analysing how different communication styles affect everyday interactions amongst expatriates...).

The survey design (data collecting methods, statistical analysis strategies) are all covered in depth in the methodology section. The findings suggest that while communication style variations present considerable obstacles to successful interpersonal relationships, a greater level of language competency greatly improves cultural integration.

The assessment highlights the useful ramifications for foreigners living abroad and international mobility initiatives while discussing these findings in light of existing literature on cultural adaptation. To improve the integration process for expatriates, recommendations are made for the creation of focused support systems (workshops on intercultural communication, thorough language training...).

This study contributes to the broader understanding of cultural shock and integration competencies, offering evidence-based strategies to improve the expatriate experience in foreign cultures.

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