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A CASE STUDY OF THE ADAPTATIONAL PATTERNS OF ASIAN GRADUATE STUDENTS IN EDUCATION AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

By

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY OF THE ADAPTATIONAL PATTERNS OF ASIAN GRADUATE STUDENTS IN EDUCATION AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

by Charles Christopher Ford

The purpose of the study was to investigate how graduate students from other nations (specifically, the developing nations of the Asian region) react to their academic environments in the United States. This case study involved fifteen students from the countries of the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia who were pursuing advanced degrees at Michigan State University's College of Education during the 1969 academic year.

A typology of three adaptational styles was developed on the basis of intensive interviews with these students over a two month period.

These were: Style I, Negative-anxious - Those students who were highly and openly dissatisfied over their educational experiences here and were highly critical of the faculty and University for these conditions;

Style II, Negative-accommodating - Those students who were generally dissatisfied with their educational experiences here but who tended to accept these conditions that they perceived as being inevitable;

Style III, Positive - Those students who were generally satisifed with their educational experiences here (two sub-categories emerged here: a) those who were satisfied because they felt that they could readily use that which they were learning here, and b) those satisfied because they intended to remain in the United States).

Three of these students were categorized within Style I, two were between Styles I and II, five were in Style II, and five were judged to be in Style III.

The major variables (determinants) of the adaptational styles that emerged in this study were a) the students perception of the "relevance" of that which he was learning here (eleven of the students had strong reservations about the relevance of what they were learning to their own career objectives), b) whether or not they had a job waiting for them in their home country, (those with jobs waiting tended to adapt negatively), c) their interaction patterns with members of the faculty (those with satisfactory interaction patterns tended to adapt positively), d) and their interaction patterns with the graduate students (with results similar to c).

On the basis of these results, four hypotheses for further investigation were suggested.

1. If the student has waiting for him a job that he wants to return to (especially one involving planning or development) he is more likely to view as low the relevance of his educational experiences in this country and to adapt in a negative way to the university environment.

2. If the student doesn't have a job waiting for him that he wants to return to he is more apt to view as moderate or high the relevance of that which he is learning and to adapt in either a mixed or positive pattern.

3. The greater their opportunity for intense and meaningful interaction with faculty and other graduate students (especially encounters related to academic concerns which involve their own career goals) the lesser the tendency for these students to react to the college environment in a "negative-anxious" style.

4. The greater their opportunity for gaining access to an "internal system" of the College (e.g., via assistantships) the lesser the tendency for these students to react to their educational experiences here in a "negative-anxious" style.

A detailed recommendation for an interdisciplinary seminar focused on the problems of education in developing nations was set forth. The seminar would serve as a focal point of interaction for graduate students in education (and other fields) and faculty members who have a serious interest in this area. The major purpose of such a seminar would be to serve as a resource and consultation base where dissertation efforts could be generated, supported, and reinforced.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a case study of fifteen graduate students from the Asian region studying at Michigan State University's College of Education. The focus of this exploratory study is on the questions: (1) how do students from other nations perceive the relevance of their education and training at an American University and (2) how do these students adapt to the environments of the College and the University? This first chapter includes a discussion and review of some of the issues involved; a statement of the problem being explored; and an explanation of the methods and procedures that have been followed in carrying out this particular case study.

BACKGROUND

Scope of the Study

Since the end of World War II the subject of the foreign student in the United States has been a source of increasing interest and concern for both the educator and the social scientist alike. In 1952, when the Social Science Research Council brought together a group of distinguished

social scientists to form the Committee on Cross-Cultural Education to begin a series of intensive studies on this subject, there were approximately 30,000 foreign students in the United States. Now, seventeen years later, that number has almost quadrupled to a figure approaching 120,000. Of these, approximately fifty per cent are from the Asian region (including the Middle East) with another twenty-five per cent coming from Africa and Latin America, (Open Doors, 1968). At Michigan State University, the setting for this particular study, the foreign student population has increased from 247 in 1952 to over 1,200 today with more than 700 of these students coming from the Asian region. In the College of Education of this University there were 55 students from what can be termed "developing countries" as of September 1968 with 43 of these being from the Asian Region.[1] It is these students (or, more precisely, those still enrolled as of June 1969) that are the subject of this study.

Cross-Cultural Education as a Research Area

The first publication in conjunction with the above-mentioned Committee on Cross-Cultural Education was a pamphlet by Guy S. Metraux entitled, Exchange of Persons: The Evolution of Cross-Cultural Education. At the time of this publication in 1952 Metraux, in his summary, could little

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[1] See the Foreign Student Directory - Michigan State University (limited circulation) 1968.

more than regret the lack of research on cross-cultural learning and he concluded that " . . . cross-cultural education is much more difficult to analyze and understand in all its implications than are social institutions which are generally shaped by the majority of the members of a society." (p. 23.)

Since 1952 there has been a virtual flood of research and articles on cross-cultural education and on the foreign student in particular. In an article entitled "Can the Developing Nations Afford American Higher Education," (1967) William Overton reported that upon reviewing the literature on international education exchange through 1967 he found some 200 items on the foreign student alone (p. 428). He reports, however, that few of these actually dealt with cross-cultural education in terms of the application of learnings across cultures. In fact, the bulk of the studies that have been done on the foreign student in the United States have involved non-academic questions centering on such issues as "felt national status" of the foreign student; his attitudes towards the United States; his social relations in the States; and his general adjustment to American cultural patterns. Those studies which have focused on academic issues have usually aimed at comparing the academic success of foreign students with their American counterparts, or on such related issues as their language problems and admission difficulties.

There have been very few attempts to assess the academic experiences of the foreign student (and especially of those from the developing nations as a distinct category) in terms of the actual or perceived relevance of what they are learning in the United States to what they will be doing once they return to their own country, or in terms of their patterns of adaptation to the environment of the American university.

It is commonly presumed that most foreign students will return to the society and culture of their origin and there utilize what they have learned in the United States. Evidence suggests, however, that this presumption is often wrong on two counts: first, many of the foreign students educated in this country do not go back (e.g., of the 390 Koreans who earned doctorate degrees in the United States, only 64 have returned)[2] and, second, those that do return often have considerable difficulty in utilizing many of those skills and understandings which they have acquired within a social-political-economic milieu which is so very different from that of their own society.

Both of these situations hinge, to an extent, on the issue of relevance and the related issue of transfer. In this regard one might ask: How relevant, to begin with, is the bulk of the education and training being given to students

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[2]See Nuri Eren, "Supply, Demand, and the Brain Drain," Saturday Review, August 2, 1969, p. 10.

from foreign and especially developing countries in those colleges and universities of this country that are extensively engaged in the education and training of these students; and, to what extent have these colleges and universities made positive efforts to assist these students in the task of transference--of recognizing the application of their learnings in this country to the conditions which they will be confronting in their home nation?

That there is a high correlation between the issues of relevance of learnings in this country (and/or the ability to transfer these learnings to one's home country) with incidents of professional or occupational maladjustment once these students return home as well as the continuing tendency for many foreign students to pursue their professional careers in the United States would seem to be a safe assumption. If and to the extent that these assumptions are true an answer of "no" might be suggested for Overton's question: "Can the developing nations afford American higher education?"

The University and the Foreign Student: Challenge and Opportunity

The question of the appropriateness of education and training from the perspective of the foreign student in an American university was the subject of a report put forward by an International Study Group of the Association of

State Universities and Land Grant Colleges in 1961. The position then taken was that a modification of educational offerings was urgent in order to prepare foreign students for constructive work upon their return home. The report stated that, by and large, the study programs then available to foreign students were rooted in traditional American patterns and reflected social, economic, and scientific needs in a highly industrialized economy with large-scale business, organized labor, a free-market, and a democratic government that are far different from the economic patterns in their homelands. The group asserted that the knowledges and skills acquired in this country must somehow be adapted for application in a social and economic environment quite different from that of the United States. This study group was apparently suggesting a pattern of education for foreign students involving a combined program of technical training and liberal arts education which "will have to transcend both the present limited aims of technical assistance as the government defines it, and also the smug departmental isolation that often dominates the university world."[3]

In another sense, the challenge of the foreign student to the American university, and especially to its professional schools, can be viewed as an opportunity--an

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[3]Report of International Study Group II, Steps Needed to Improve or Develop Programs to Meet the Needs of Foreign Students and Trainees, Centennial Convocation, Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, November 1961, p. 346.

opportunity for the schools to re-examine the nature of the training that is offered and also the generalizability of the concepts on which this training is founded in the light of the American University's ever-expanding international dimension.

Confronted in this situation with having to ask just how cross-culturally valid most of our practices about education and learning really are, the professional school finds itself having to re-examine and re-validate many of its own principles and practices. The dilemma as well as the opportunity which this gives rise to was well-expressed by Kenneth Benne in an address to an interprofessional conference on the education of foreign students. Benne was contemplating the nature of the teaching and learning processes appropriate to developing effective professional change agents when he observed:

> Bringing into conscious focus the use of university resources in training people to effect radical change leads us to look at teaching and learning processes in a different light. Students from other countries, especially those where social change is a dramatic necessity and where these governments and ours are interested in effecting changes, dramatize issues which we have only partly faced in our own country and in the training of our own professionals. In a sense, we are interested to know how universities can assume responsibility, not only for the original acquisition of learning, but for the effective transfer and application of that learning in situations of practice. Our professional training institutions have assumed that responsibility in only limited degree, probably because we could, with some assurance, assume that others would take up the job of the

> continuing growth of professionally trained persons and their adaptation to the hospital or social agency or school setting in which they worked.
>
> We cannot assume this in the case of many foreign students, so their prescence among us dramatizes the problem of the extent of university responsibilities in the full cycle of learning, which includes the transfer and application of learnings by students in a given setting, as well as to help them develop the knowledges, skills, and technologies for which we have ordinarily assumed responsibility? (Sanders: 86.)

The Foreign Student and the University - the Search for Relevance

These questions which Benne suggests relative to the challenges posed by the foreign student at American universities are of basic concern, but the more immediate concern of this study is the challenge to the foreign student himself as he confronts the issue of personal relevance within his graduate work in professional education.

A useful distinction that might be used in discussing this question of learning from the student's perspective is that of the difference between reception learning and meaningful learning that has been made by David Ausubel. The distinction, briefly, is as follows:

> Reception learning is that which is presented to the student in relatively final form; he is required to internalize it only for the purpose of the immediate situation--the academic course.
>
> Meaningful learning is that which is used when a problem arises which is novel or unique to the specified

> learning presented; he is not only required to internalize it in the learning situation, but he must also use it in some other situation. (Spencer: 14.)

It can probably be safely said that foreign students in American universities have primarily been required to perform the former task-reception learning. To do this the student must often learn a second language, receptively learn a subject matter field in that language, and then emit appropriate verbal characteristics of behavior in English and thereby indicate that he has learned the appropriate content and quality of the assigned subject. The second step, that of providing for "meaningful learning," is a problem in all educational encounters but particularly where the foreign student is involved. Generally speaking, his purpose in learning the material is not to obtain a satisfactory American grade point average, but to take this knowledge back to his country and operate with it. Thus receptively learned material must be put into practice or the reception has been a waste of time. He must, therefore, not only receive it internally and disgorge it in this second language but, to be effective, he must also internalize it in his native language and then be responsible for somehow accommodating this new material to his native cultural patterns and concepts. His showing of this knowledge in the United States is purely American--an exercise in fitting it into the professional world for which the

United States curriculum was established. It is often not possible for him to demonstrate the applied nature of this knowledge within the cultural contexts of his own country. In the first place the student's instructor probably will not ask him to do so; and secondly, even if he should, it seems unlikely that the average instructor would know the appropriate application of the material to the student's culture himself.

In the hard sciences and professions, such as engineering, chemistry, and medicine, this problem of transfer is diminished to a large extent, but it does remain at the forefront in the softer curricular fields and this includes most aspects of education. For the student from a developing nation studying education in this country we might ask, for example: How transferable are principles of counselling and guidance as currently practiced in the United States to the student from Thailand? How adaptable is knowledge about educational administration in the United States, or Michigan, to the Indonesian student who will be returning to the central ministry of education in Jakarta? And, how adaptable is an understanding of the history of American education to the student from Turkey who will be trying to help chart the development of education in his country?

That there are potential elements of transfer and adaptation in each of the examples cited is not to be denied;

the point to be made here is that this task of transfer is left largely to the student. He is given little assistance in the application of knowledge learned here to his own environment and furthermore, the evaluation procedure, which should be a device to assist the student in applying his knowledge, also falls short as far as the foreign student is concerned. What, it might be asked, is the use of determining the academic success of the foreign student in his understanding, for example, the parochiaid issue in Michigan if he will never in his own work utilize such knowledge? If application is a criterion, then perhaps application and transfer need to be taught directly. It hardly seems that the university can expect it to happen automatically.

And not only should the evaluation procedures within the classroom setting be questioned and re-examined from this perspective, but also the evaluation or requirements established for the degree itself. At Michigan State University the question of the general comprehensive examinations in education for all doctoral candidates comes to mind. The usefulness of these examinations from the perspective of the American student is currently an issue of much debate within that College. It might be suggested here that the arguments against their use as evaluation devices could be multiplied four-fold where the student from a developing

nation is concerned. The most cogent argument in this respect might be that to the degree that the foreign student is successful on these exams might be an indication of the time that he had to devote to studying principles, issues, and perhaps peculiarities of American education--time which may have been better spent studying education from the vantage point of the needs and issues within his own country. It might be further suggested that these examinations and similar criteria become doubly dysfunctional if they cause the foreign student to re-appraise his professional situation and career prospects along the line that "I've become very expert in matters of American education but less so in terms of the conditions in my own country, so perhaps I would be better off staying in the United States." If and when this should happen the American university and colleges of education in particular must re-appraise their commitment to "internationalism" in terms of how, in reality, they are actually fostering international understanding, international co-operation, and international development.

It would be wrong, however, to overgeneralize this situation and suggest that these problems of relevance and transfer are of equal concern to all foreign students or even to all students from developing nations. Whereas one foreign student might be dismayed and frustrated by the seeming irrelevance of having to study American educational

practices which are far removed from the realities of his home country, another student from the same country or a neighboring country might be quite content with the same subject matter. There are many complex factors which contribute to a student's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his educational experiences in this country. These include his personal and professional goals; his degree of attachment to his own country; the occupational opportunities at the professional level in his country; the length of his sojourn in the United States, and others.

This study, then, will attempt to examine the issues of relevance and transfer as perceived by a group of Asian graduate students in the field of professional education. With the above mentioned variables in mind, an attempt will be made to discern for which of these students, and to what extent, the question of relevance is indeed an issue as it is defined here. Closely related to this is the question of adaptation: How do these students adapt to the environment of the American university and what relationship, if any, seems to exist between these patterns of adaptation and their attitudes toward the relevance of their educational experiences in this setting.

The next section further clarifies the problem and further defines the terms relevance, adaptation, and environment as they are used in this study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stated simply and specifically, this study is an attempt to provide:

> An assessment of the professional preparation of graduate students from the Asian region at Michigan State University's College of Education in terms of:
>
> a) How do they view the relevance of that which they are learning?
>
> b) How do they adapt to the environments of the University and the College of Education?

Definition of Terms: Within the context of this study the terms relevance, adaptation, and environment should be interpreted as follows:

> Relevance - a question of "fit"; of "how good" is the fit between what an individual perceives as his career and professional goals and what the environment is able to provide to help fulfill these needs.
>
> Adaptation - the process of striving to fulfill needs (achieve relevance) by either: 1) changing one's needs so that they can be met by the available environment; 2) changing the environment so that it can meet the individual's needs; or 3) leaving the environment for one which is more hospitable to one's needs.
>
> Environment - those parts of a total system of components that are selectively perceived by an individual; each individual therefore defines his own environment.

The foreign student has three environments with which he must cope in his adaptive processes: the University, the United States, and his home country. It is assumed that how he adapts to and within each of these will depend to a large extent on his quest for relevance--of what his

personal and career needs are and how he expects to fulfill these needs. For example, if the student should determine that his career need is to become a professional educator in the United States (due perhaps to a lack of adequate employment opportunities in his home country) he can be expected to interpret and to adapt quite differently to the environment of the University and of the United States than the student who is committed to a professional career within his own country. This latter student would tend to define his home country as his prime environment and his needs and his search for relevance would be shaped accordingly. It is assumed here that the adaptation process--in terms of his educational experiences in this country--is more complex and demanding to this student who wants to return home than to the one who is defining his needs in terms of a career in the United States, and thus it is with the former student that this study is primarily concerned.

As students from what have been commonly classified as being among the developing nations of the world, many of these future educators can be expected to be involved in work which is markedly different from that which their American contemporaries will be engaged in. Most of those students that do return with advanced degrees can be expected to be thrust into positions of leadership where they will be responsible for sharing in the planning and implementation

of educational programs which are unique to their own nation and tempered by its particular level of development. Such roles and responsibilities will require skills and understandings quite unlike those of the American educator in either his role as teacher or as administrator. How do such foreign graduate students proceed to acquire these understandings and skills in an American university setting which is more geared to the needs of the American professional educator?

It seems that the foreign student in this situation might have to ask these questions of himself:

> Can the material and skills that I am learning here be related to the conditions in my own country--are they relevant?
>
> How do I transfer that which appears to have some relevance to the conditions in my own country--Which elements do we use? Which do we discard? How do we introduce them?
>
> If I cannot see any relevance, or if I cannot see how I can use these understandings and skills in my home country, why am I staying here? At which point he may further ask:
>
> - Should I quit?
> - Should I stay merely for the sake of having a degree?
> - Should I forget about "relevance" for my own country and cast my lot instead with a professional career in the United States?
> - Should I "stick it out" because I am expected to "stick it out" and accept the notion that an American university is not and cannot be expected to concern itself with individual problems of "relevance."

In a general sense, then, the purpose of this study is to try and determine if and to what extent questions of this sort are being asked and, more importantly, how they are being answered by these students. Of further interest are the various and complex factors which determine and shape these questions and responses. These include variables related to his home country, his family, his personality, and his prospects for occupational security and satisfaction.

Purpose of the Study

Stated more specifically, the purpose of this study will be to:

A. Estimate the extent to which the graduate students from the Asian region at Michigan State University's College of Education are concerned about the relevance of their education and training here in the light of their career interests and goals.

B. Characterize and describe the adaptational styles of these students within the environments of the University and the College of Education in relation to:

   1. their perception of the relevance of their educational experiences here;

   2. and such other variables as:

      - their region of origin;

      - the cultural distance between their country and the United States;

      - their country's level of development;

- their age and family status;
- whether or not they have a job waiting at home;
- their interaction patterns in the United States.

C. Suggest possible hypotheses for further investigation based upon which of the variables under consideration seem to be most clearly related to the various adaptational styles that these students tend to follow.

D. Suggest possible implications for the nature and content of program offerings to these students by the College of Education on the basis of the patterns which emerge in this exploratory study.

Significance of the Problem

The issues being explored here are of a qualitative nature--that of the "quality" (i.e., meaningful, useful, relevant) of the education and training which is being provided in our professional schools of education to graduate students from developing nations. The significance and ramifications of these issues were well expressed by former Secretary of State Dean Rusk in an address before the National Conference on International Social and Economic Development when he remarked:

> I should like to suggest to all of us, whether in government or in private fields, that when we are talking about education, and particularly when we are talking about bringing young people from other countries to the United States for training, that the emphasis had better be on the quality of the job, rather than the number of those who might somehow be involved.
>
> Two halves don't make a whole in that matter. Two ill-prepared or half-prepared young people going back to

> their country cannot make the contribution which one well-prepared person can make. And if you have six young people who come here for training, who go back disappointed or frustrated, or with a sense of failure, there may be six young people who had better not have come in the first place.
>
> And so I would urge both those of us in Government and those in private organizations to take this business of playing with the lives of people with the greatest of seriousness. And if we involve young people from abroad in this process of education by any effort of ours, we do so determined to do it right, whatever the numbers involved. (Mimeo: 1961.)

How many of the foreign students being trained in this nation's colleges of education are going home " . . . half-prepared . . . disappointed . . . frustrated, or with a sense of failure?" What is the extent of these attitudes and this situation among the students from developing nations currently studying at Michigan State University's College of Education? Why do they feel the way they do? What can be done about the deficiencies or situations which seem to contribute to these conditions?

Certainly these questions are less easy to quantify and less easy to get answers to than the questions that have been posed in much of the research centering upon the academic experiences of the foreign student in this country. Rather than asking "how well they are doing" in terms of their grade point averages or their ability to speak English, this study will in essence be asking "how well is the College doing" in terms of providing these students with what is to them a meaningful and relevant educational experience.

Hopefully, then, this study might reveal to this College and to educators elsewhere who are involved with and interested in the professional training of students from developing countries some first hand information as to how some of these students feel about their educational experiences in this particular setting and why they feel the way they do. It is also hoped that from within this study some suggestions or implications might emerge as to how the academic programs for these students might be altered or improved so as to be brought more in line with their personal needs and career orientations.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Nature of the Study

This is an exploratory study. Not enough is known about the subject being investigated here--perceptions of relevance and patterns of adaptation of foreign students--to allow for the application of sophisticated and tested measures of investigation. In the absence of sufficient knowledge in this area relatively coarse instruments of investigation must be resorted to in order to identify the parameters of the problem. It is anticipated that at a later point questionnaires might be developed which would permit a wider ranging survey-type study. However, because of the present methodological deficiencies and limitations,

the decision was made to use a case method approach for this initial exploration.

Population

The population of this study was limited to graduate students from the Asian region in the field of education at Michigan State University. A total of fifteen students were involved and they were categorized as originating from the Middle East (including Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia); South Asia (India and Pakistan); and Southeast Asia (including Indonesia, Taiwan, and Thailand). Eleven of these were studying for doctoral degrees with the rest working at the masters level. Only students who had been enrolled at Michigan State for at least nine months were included in the sample. Originally the plan of the study called for including all of the graduate students from "developing" nations who had been here for a nine month period. The records of the College of Education indicated that 55 such students had been enrolled during this past year; however this number was greatly reduced by the time that this study got under way, due mainly to graduation. Because very few of the remaining students in the desired study population were from Africa or Latin America it was decided to limit the study to those students from the Asian region who were still on campus. However, the notion that these students

are all from what are generally regarded as "developing" nations remained a vital consideration in this study and as perhaps the only real measure of commonality.

Interviewing

Because of the small size of the population and because of the exploratory nature of the study, the major research technique employed was the focused interview. Also, because of the sensitivity of this research area, it was felt that the written questionnaire would have been an inadequate device at this early stage of investigation. It is doubtful that a questionnaire format would have elicited accurate or meaningful responses to such sensitive question areas as: career goals, interaction with faculty and other students and attitudes towards course offerings.

Generally speaking, the focused interview technique that was used in this study can be characterized as a compromise between the rigidity of the directed interview and the looseness of the non-directive method. Robert Merton has attributed the following characteristics to the focused interview approach: 9) it takes place with persons known to have been involved in a particular situation as either observers or as participators; 2) it refers to situations which have been analyzed prior to the interview; 3) it proceeds on the basis of an interview guide which outlines

the major areas of inquiry; 4) it is focused on the substantive experiences--attitudes and emotional responses--regarding the particular concrete situation under study." (541-542.)

An interview schedule of approximately sixty items was developed to serve as a guide in the interview process. The majority of the items were open-ended and consequently the interview schedule served more as a checking device, to see that pertinent areas were covered, than as a structure or format for the interview session. In cases where the respondent was reluctant to "open-up" it was necessary to ask virtually every item individually. On the other hand, there were a few instances in which only three or four questions had to be asked directly by the interviewer before the respondent had addressed himself in one way or another to each of the areas under investigation. The interviews ranged in time from one hour and fifteen minutes up to five hours, with the average interview lasting approximately two and one-half hours. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in the appendix of this study.

Pilot Interviews

Because of the small size of the available population only two interviews were conducted on a pilot basis to test for respondent reaction and to give the interviewer

(myself) an opportunity for practice with this technique. One Nigerian and one Indian student cooperated with the author in this early stage and both gave valuable advice and suggestions which were incorporated into the interview schedule and which aided the author throughout the study. The Indian student was also a part of the final study population.

Interview Procedure

The interviews were conducted over a one month period--usually on week days and never more than one a day. The subjects were not notified by letter in advance. At the beginning of each week I would call about five of the students, identify myself as a fellow graduate student in the College of Education, explain the nature of my study and the fact that I was doing it as a dissertation, and ask them if they would be willing to sit down and talk with me for a couple of hours at a time and at a place of their convenience.

Everyone that I was able to contact agreed to the interview. Only two interviews were held in the same place. Usually the student would suggest that I come to his home or room for the interview. I found this flexibility in terms of the place of the interview to be an important factor in giving the respondent an opportunity to suggest a setting

which would be familiar to him and in which he would feel most comfortable.

The interviews were recorded openly and in longhand. When I found that I had difficulty in getting down in writing all that I wanted, I would say such things as "I like the way you expressed that; would you repeat it so that I can be sure to get it all down just as you said it?" This and similar phrases seemed to work quite effectively.

A number of the subjects were known to the author through common classes and through contacts previous to the study. Generally, I found that these students were much more open in their responses and much less likely to be suspicious of my motives or intent in carrying out the study. I could not, however, discern any significant differences or tendencies on the part of the respondent to report a positive or negative reaction to his education experiences here on the basis of his familiarity with me alone. I did find, however, that those who seemed most dissatisfied with their experiences here tended to have the most to say and this is perhaps not very surprising in view of the general nature of the investigation.

Limitations of the Study

There are always limitations in a case study of this nature. The most regrettable one in this particular instance has to be the small size of the population; the

reasons for which have been discussed already. One compensation for the small sample size, however, was the fact that it allowed the researcher to go into more depth with the individual subjects than would have been the case if the sample had been considerably larger.

The second major limitation was the absence of a more refined instrumentation than what the focused-interview approach was able to provide by itself. Hopefully, such instruments can be developed in the future and it is also hoped that this exploratory study will suggest elements which can be incorporated into such a questionnaire or some other similar device. The author was reassured, however, about the advisability of limiting himself to informal interviews at this early stage of investigation by the Indonesian student who remarked at the close of a four hour interview:

> I appreciate that you are using a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach--this is one of the reasons that I agreed to be interviewed. I am not a number but a human. A human is not a thing but a potential. I consider my rationality to be but a part of my being; I wanted you to see the rest of me.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

In Chapter I the primary concern has been to provide background, define the problem and its importance, and to describe the methodology and procedures that have been utilized in carrying out this study.

Chapter II is a survey of the literature related to the foreign student in the United States. Special attention is given to previous studies which have dealt with academic adjustment and with the interaction patterns of foreign students in American universities as well as to the small amount of literature which relates to the issues of relevance and adaptation as they apply to the foreign student studying in this country.

Chapter III is the presentation and interpretation of the interview results. The subject's responses are categorized according to the major variables being explored and are presented in some detail in order to preserve the richness of the data and to give the reader an opportunity to make interpretations of his own.

Chapter IV is a summary of the findings accompanied with some tentative conclusions, hypotheses, and suggestions for further investigation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There has been a vast amount of literature produced on the subject of the foreign student in the United States but very little of this has dealt directly with the questions of "relevance" and "adaptation" from the perspective of the foreign student himself. There are a number of studies, however, which do deal with the related issues of student interaction, personal goals, and academic adjustment which are also considered in this study. These, along with some of the recognized major contributions to the literature on foreign students, will be reviewed in this chapter.

Of all the works that have been done on the foreign student in this country there are a few that stand forth as landmarks in this particular area of cross-cultural studies and which are also of direct relevance to this investigation. Among these are DuBois' survey study, Foreign Students and Higher Education in the United States, Morris', The Two Way Mirror, Useem and Useem's, Western Educated Man in India, and the individual nationality studies of Lambert and

Bressler on Indian students, Beals and Humphrey on Mexican students, and Davidson and Sewell on Scandinavian students.

The DuBois study (1956) dealt with the social and psychological factors related to foreign student adjustment. Among other things, DuBois postulated four stages of adjustment that the foreign student goes through during his sojourn. These are:

1) The spectator phase - which is early in the student's sojourn and is characterized by psychological detachment from the new experience; a time when the student still has a tourist attitude of enjoying the new environment without having to meet many of its demands.

2) The adaptive phase - characterized by active involvement in the problem of adjustment, when the student must master the skills required by the host culture in general and by the academic environment in particular. It is the phase of the most acute strain and stress, of unresolved conflict when the so-called culture shock may be most acute.

3) The coming-to-terms-stage - in which an equilibrium is reached in the struggle for adjustment. Regardless of whether attitudes toward the host culture and the self are positive, negative, or objective, this stage is characterized by relative stability.

4) The pre-departure stage - which concludes the sojourn; at this stage the expectations of return to the home country dominate the student's feelings and attitudes. The tenor of this period again may be negative or positive, depending on the nature of the adjustment and of life expectations upon return. (pp. 66-77.)

It was DuBois' conclusion that the extent to which the foreign visitor manages to enhance his self-esteem is the most important single factor in determining the emotional

texture, and frequently the academic success, of the sojourn. She identifies several major factors which are damaging to self-esteem: 1) lack of communication; 2) unfavorable attitude of the host culture toward the student's country; 3) inability to achieve expected educational goals; 4) inconsistency of experience, and 5) financial stringencies (pp. 114-121).

The stages of adjustment hypothesis that were suggested by DuBois have come to be referred to as the "U curve phenomenon" because of its peak, depression, peak pattern. Most of the studies that have been done on the adjustment patterns of foreign students allude to and support the notion of a U curve process in the stages of adjustment. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) have carried this one step further by suggesting an extension of the U curve to a "W curve," since the cycle of adjustment in the host country is followed by a cycle of readjustment upon the foreign student's return home (pp. 33-47).

The U curve phenomenon (and the W curve, its natural extension) has also been well documented by anthropologists, Peace Corps workers and others who have worked in another culture and it follows the "culture shock syndrome" that has been described by Foster (1962). This study does not address itself to this phenomenon because it was not possible to build within it a time dimension. However, if the U

curve phenomenon is an accurate description of psychological adaptation and adjustment it would seem that most of the students who comprised the population of this study would be at either the "coming-to-terms phase" or the "pre-departure phase" since only students who had been here for at least nine months were included. It is also questionable as to whether the U curve phenomenon is still operable in instances where a student is making his second sojourn in this country as was the case in a number of instances in this study.

Morris (1960) approached the question of foreign student adjustment through the perspective of "felt national status." The investigation was designed to determine how much the image of their native countries, which they believed Americans held, influenced foreign students in their reactions to their American experiences. This study was undertaken on the basis of exploratory work which strongly suggested that the status and self-esteem problems characteristic of students from "under-developed" countries made them relatively prone to ambivalent and therefore unstable attitudes of global acceptance or rejection. Morris' data refined and corrected this impression as he concluded that the fact of low accorded national status alone did not make any significant difference in attitudes about the United States or their general experiences here. Several of the

items used by Morris were also used in this study and the reactions which they evoked seem to support the conclusions of Morris.

Western Educated Man in India: A Study of his Social Role and Influence (1955) is a highly regarded study by the Useem's on the effects of foreign study on the character of the individual Indian, the uses of educational training acquired overseas in India and the effect of foreign education on cross-cultural relations. They found that although professional improvement was the primary objective of the students, fewer than ten per cent of the returned students were being used in the field for which they were trained, and that their attempts to introduce Western technology were limited. They also made a number of observations and recommendations which bear directly upon the focus of this study; among these are:

a. If transfer of Western technical knowledge to India is the objective, individuals must be selected who are not only capable of absorbing the education of the West but who will also have the opportunity to apply this knowledge after their return . . . there must be a sustaining social structure within which he can fit. (p. 189.)

b. As to type of training . . . if the foreign student is older and is either on leave from a position or knows exactly where he will be employed upon his return, then specialized training, oriented toward the cultivation of specific skills applicable to the Indian position he'll be returning to are called for. . . .
. . . . . .
. . . if the foreign student is younger or has not begun his career . . . then a broad training which places emphasis upon methodology, underlying principles and practical experience is to be preferred. (p. 209.)

> c. . . . Indian students who are well trained in methodology and principles are better prepared to work in India than those not so trained. They are able to strip away the cultural patterns surrounding their acquired skills and to apply them to Indian conditions. Courses that provide a body of facts about American conditions and those which instruct the student to collect in the library comparable facts about India offer far less that is useful than do courses in methods and principles. (p. 210.)

Lambert and Bressler in Indian Students on an American Campus (1956), maintained that the major determinants of Indian students' experiences in the United States were in India; that it was the cultural characteristics of the student himself which determine the way he interprets his experiences in the United States. They argued that if these students are to learn to understand Americans they must be encouraged to participate in, rather than just observe American life. Among their conclusions were: 1) the American visit does not become explicit until the student returns to his home country and resumes his life in his own occupation, family and community; 2) although easing the cultural adjustment in coming in contact with a new culture was a worthy humanitarian goal, there was no substantial evidence that ease or difficulty of physical adjustment, comfort, or discomfort was substantially related to subsequent adjustment here in the United States or after return to India. The authors also concluded that some of the traditional

applied courses in engineering, architecture, and agriculture can and should be refashioned to more adequately meet the unique needs of students from underdeveloped countries.

Beals and Humphrey's No Frontier to Learning: The Mexican Student in the United States (1957) focused on the formative socio-cultural influences on the Mexican student in his own country, the aspects of American culture that influence him in the United States and the ways in which his U. S. experience affects his life after he returns to Mexico. It was found that nearly all the Mexican students who come to the United States are atypical of Mexicans: their ideologies were found to be very similar to those of American students. Few, however, seem to consider remaining in the United States. Among the authors' findings were: 1) there is a strong indication that the returned students are substantially different from other Mexicans and that these differences are partly related to the duration of the student's stay in this country, their age at the time, and the degree to which they participate in American life; 2) that study in the United States seems to be most productive for students well-trained in their field; and 3) that students who were not well-trained do not play as important roles nor gain the prestige they expected on their return home.

Davidsen and Sewell, Scandinavian Students on an American Campus (1961) carried out a study of the academic and social adjustment of forty Scandinavian students at the University of Wisconsin. The results of this study suggest that:

> Participation in American life leads to favorable impressions of the United States and that the more favorable the impressions, the more one participates; good academic adjustment not only stimulates participation, but also is in some measure the result of participation, and both, in turn, result in more favorable impressions of America and a greater willingness to see American culture traits adopted in the home country. Finally all of these reciprocal influences are reflected in a high level of satisfaction with the sojourn experience. (p. 164.)

While each of these studies contributes to the general theory and knowledge related to the adjustment and attitude formation of foreign students in the United States, they do not direct themselves explicitly to the issues which are more germane to this particular study. M. Brewster Smith, who was serving as coordinator of the Committee on Cross-Cultural Education which sponsored several of the above studies, reviewed the literature which that group and others had produced on the subject and pointed out the gap in this area as he concluded, among other things, that there was a need for further research into "problems of academic, professional, and technical learning and transfer of learning. . . ."

> . . . These were only touched on unsystematically in the studies sponsored by the Committee on Cross-Cultural Education. No research outside the committee's program has dealt with them, in spite of their practical experience, close relationship to program goals, and theoretical interest. Under what sojourn conditions is learning achieved most effectively, in a form most transferable to return conditions, and what variable conditions of the return situation facilitate and impede transfer? (1956:61.)

Smith made this statement in 1956 and it appears that there has been very little actual research since then that is directed at closing this information gap. There have been a few efforts approaching this direction and these include some recent doctoral dissertations as well as the publication of a conference held in 1961 entitled The Professional Education of Students from Other Lands; but by and large the issues of relevance, adaptation and transfer--the central considerations in this study--continue to be ignored by researchers. Richard Spencer (1967) reviewed the literature on the academic performance of foreign students and placed the question of measuring and evaluating foreign student performance in its proper perspective:

> Since we expect them (foreign students) to succeed in Western-oriented culture, in educational institutions designed to train Americans for success in American culture, insist upon Western attitude and socialization changes, we are in fact saying that the foreign students are considered successful to the degree that they become more like us. To operate in their home cultures, upon return, the foreign students are placed in an anxiety provoking situation. To act professionally

> (i.e., according to what they learned in the United States), they must act as Americans. They cannot separate out the content material from the cultural overtones in which it was learned. Their content fields are American and their application of it is an American concept in and of itself. They have, in effect, been trained to be acultured in their own culture. They are neither fish nor foul; not quite American and not quite native. Have we done them justice? (p. 18.)

There are, however, a few studies which have been completed, along with one major one now under way at the University of Wisconsin, which do deal at least indirectly with the questions that Spencer raises and with some of the issues being explored in this study.

At Indiana University, Shinouda (1966) completed a follow-up study of 75 doctoral graduates from Southeast Asia and the Middle East who had received their degrees in education from Indiana. Among the major findings of this study, which was based upon written responses to mailed questionnaires, were that:

a. The recipients identified course work, dissertation projects, and student-professor relationships (in that order) as the most valuable aspects of the doctoral program. Other valuable aspects mentioned were: 1) educational conferences, 2) field trips, 3) teaching experiences, 4) periodic visitations to other institutions.

b. The majority of the respondents expressed agreement with the following issues: 1) the School of Education provides too few informal professional and social contacts among graduate students, 2) the doctoral program should place more emphasis upon training in research methods,

> 3) doctoral programs for foreign students should be more flexible in keeping with various national needs, 4) doctoral candidates preparing for college teaching should have more experience in observing and participating in the college teaching-learning situation. (p. 203.)

Shinouda reports that the graduates in his sample strongly disagreed on the item that there should be two sets of standards, one for Americans and one for foreign students. Shinouda concluded that: 1) the professional outcome of the educational experience of these students was positive and the education acquired was regarded by them as contributing to their professional, social and personal development and (but) 2) there is a need for certain revisions in the programs along the lines on which agreement was expressed by the graduates (p. 207).

In a study carried out at Stanford University, Selby and Woods (1966) interviewed a group of 18 non-European foreign students and used questionnaires with a larger sample to investigate the foreign students' perception of the "internal system" of the university. They wanted to find out: which demands of the system impinge upon him most closely; how does he organize his efforts to meet the demands of the system; what price does he have to pay because of his adaptive patterns, and how decisive an influence do the exigencies of the academic milieu at the university have upon the entire process of foreign student adjustment? Their

findings, which have been influential in the development of the present study, were:

> . . . the student from a non-European culture in a high-pressure university finds himself utterly preoccupied with his academic problems to the exclusion of most other considerations. The structure of academic life precludes social activities of a leisurely kind as well as wide social contact with American students. Student morale rises and falls with the academic seasons and, in fact, the academic pressures pre-empt his attention and energy. He perceives the demands of the academic system, which he sees in all their rigor, but he is prevented from arriving at an accommodation to these demands because he is denied the "inside knowledge" of what his American counterparts are doing. His contact with the social structure of the university's foreign and American students, with community representatives and with faculty, intensify the demands that are placed on him, strengthen his motivation for success, and intensify his drive to attain this success through literal interpretation of the "rules" as stated by the faculty and university administration. (p. 153.)

At the University of Wisconsin Wilkening (1965) carried out a study entitled Factors Associated with Adjustment of Foreign Students Studying Extension Education at Selected Land Grant Institutions which surveyed 80 students at five universities (including Michigan State). Both questionnaires and interviews were used in this study in which Wilkening found that:

> 93% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the progress they were making toward their stated objectives for their study tour but that they were almost unanimous in their desire for more practical experience and a better understanding of extension activities at the county level. (p. 196.)

Currently, at Wisconsin, an investigation entitled "The Foreign Student Adaptation Project" is under way. It

is an interdisciplinary venture headed by Milton H. Miller, M. D. The major objective of this project is:

> to study cross-cultural adaptation of foreign students who have come to the United States, and to examine the relationship of these patterns to the attainment of educational, professional and personal goals, areas of stress, and processes of personality and attitude change. It is assumed that by identifying the cultural, social and psychological concomitants of adaptational styles, that standardized measures and techniques for prediction and preventive intervention can be developed. (mimeo, undated.)

The objectives and tentative outline of the Wisconsin project suggest that it will be covering many of the same questions that this case study is concerned with and that, hopefully, it will produce some sophisticated measures for examining these areas.

The study or report which is perhaps most closely related to the topic of this dissertation is a paper presented by Robert Beck of the University of Minnesota entitled "Professional Training in Education for Foreign Students in the United States." This paper was presented at the previously referred to conference on the professional education of foreign students (Sanders, 1963). This study was based upon questionnaires and interviews with then current as well as formerly enrolled students at Minnesota's College of Education. Beck focused on the problems of learning for foreign students from the perspective of what he defines as cultural distance. His general conclusion was that:

> The greater the social and cultural distance between what is taken for granted in the home setting and what is taken for granted in the host culture and society, the more assistance is required to permit the foreign student the objectivity (conditions for rationality) requisite for detached, analytical judgment. (p. 106.)

Beck also presents a lengthy discussion of the academic problems of the foreign student as seen by their professors and as perceived by themselves. He concludes that while different approaches are often required where the foreign student is concerned, these should not lead to nor be interpreted as a form of double standards but rather as a posture of flexibility. Among Beck's observations and recommendations are:

a. Foreign students perform better when speaking or writing of conditions in their own country..

b. Upper division undergraduate courses should be given graduate credits to foreign students who are deficient in these areas.

c. Courses in history of education--American and Western World--allow the foreign student to better envision where their own schools fit in such a continuum.

d. Comparative education courses are valuable to the foreign student in broadening his perspective and in pointing out the difference between centralized and decentralized systems and selective and non-selective public education. (pp. 126-127.)

SUMMARY

In spite of the vast amount of literature that has been produced on the foreign student in the United States,

there continues to be a noticeable lack of solid research relating to the relevance (actual or perceived) of their training and education in this country or on their patterns of adaptation within their academic environments here.

Among the studies which have treated these topics in at least an indirect way are those by DuBois, who postulated a stage of adjustment hypothesis; the Useems' on the role and influences of the returned student in India; and a number of studies sponsored by the Social Science Research Council (including those by Beals and Humphrey, Lambert and Bressler, and Morris).

More recently these topics were given extensive treatment at a conference related to the professional training of foreign students, the results of which were edited by Irwin Sanders. And currently underway at the University of Wisconsin is a major study which deals directly with the subject of the adaptational styles of foreign students.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter includes a discussion, and examples, of three different adaptational styles which seemed to be characteristic of the students in this study. Some of the forces which tend to shape or determine these styles are discussed; these include: the student's perception of the relevance of his educational experiences here in this country; whether or not he has a job waiting for him at home; his family status; and his patterns of interaction with members of the faculty and with other graduate students studying in his academic area.

ADAPTATIONAL STYLES

The interviews held with these fifteen graduate students from the Asian region revealed a variety of behavior and attitude patterns on their part related directly to the educational settings of this College and University. While the patterns each of these individuals exhibits is unique and therefore would--to be totally accurate--require fifteen separate descriptions, there does seem to be enough similarity

between the adaptation patterns of some of these students to allow for the development of a typology of three different adaptational styles (in terms of their orientations toward their academic environment here).

A Typology of Adaptational Styles

The three classifications that have been used here to delimit these adaptational styles are negative-anxious, negative-accommodating, and positive. As was indicated above, and as will become obvious later, most, if not all, of these students displayed mixed patterns of adaptation to their environments here. However, because these mixes were not usually evenly proportioned--that is, because they tend to exhibit either more negative or more positive patterns as the case may be--it has been possible to develop some tentative groupings based upon the directions in which these individual students tend to orient themselves. The characteristics of these three types of adaptational styles are:

> Style I - Negative-anxious: Students in this category tend to be highly dissatisfied with their experiences within the academic environment here. This category includes those students who have decided to quit or who are constantly on the border between staying and leaving, as well as those who are continuing on despite a great deal of personal unhappiness and dissatisfaction over their experiences here. These students seem to be highly critical of the content of their academic programs and of their relationships (or lack of) with members of the faculty. They tend to be very highly oriented

toward their own nations and express grave concern over the utility and application to their home setting of what they are learning in this country.

Style II - Negative-accommodating: Those students most characteristic of this adaptational style share many of the attitudes and concerns of the students who are highly negative (Style I). The difference is that they are less apt to place the blame for these conditions of which they are critical on the University or the faculty but rather tend to accept these conditions as being among the realities of life. They adapt accordingly by trying to make the best of the situation as they perceive it. They also (as in Style I) tend to be highly oriented towards and concerned about their own country and its development (and their future roles within that process) but seem generally less apt to condemn the College or the University for not providing more experiences geared directly towards these interests. They are earnest about their quest for relevance but tend to remain flexible, if not submissive, when frustrated in their search.

Style III - Positive: The students in this category expressed a relatively high degree of satisfaction with their academic experiences here. There are actually two groups within this category:

a. those students who believe that what they are learning here is readily transferable to their home country. It seems that this group is more likely to include those students who are returning to college teaching positions in the same area that they have been studying here.

b. those students who, for one reason or another, have decided to remain in the United States and to pursue their professional careers within the environment of this country and who therefore are less inclined to challenge the contents of their education here in terms of its applicability to their country of origin.

The fifteen students in this study seem to fall into the three adaptational style categories that have been delimited here as follows:

Student Number	Adaptational Style
1	1
2	1-2
3	1-2
4	2
5	3 (a-b)
6	3 (b)
7	3 (b)
8	3 (b)
9	2
10	2
11	1
12	3 (a)
13	3 (a)
14	2
15	1

As this chart indicates, three of the above students revealed patterns of adaptation which did not lend themselves neatly to a single categorization. Students 2 and 3 were both negative-anxious and yet at the same time displayed consistent attitudes of a willingness to accommodate. Student number 5 displayed elements of both a and b within Style III. Overall, of the fifteen students, nine have been classified as belonging to Styles I and II (or a combination thereof) which are representative of negative (dissatisfied) adaptational patterns. Only six of these students in this study fell within Style III (positive).

Examples of Adaptational Styles

Below are some of the comments made by these students which led to and which are illustrative of this classification system.[1]

Style I - Negative-Anxious (including combination of I and II).

A student from the Middle East who was here as part of a Michigan State University-United States Government project to assist his country's Ministry of Education in developing its research and planning capabilities was the most extreme case in this category:

> It was obvious that they were just not prepared for us here. Our instructions had defined the work that we would be doing when we returned, but it is obvious that the courses here and the degree requirements just don't match up . . . It appears that the only path to follow is to just do what is offered here, regardless of your needs, your instructions, or your future job. . . But this is not for me--I quit. (1)

At another point in the interview this same student elaborated on these concerns and also expressed his opinion as to where he thought the responsibility for doing something about correcting these deficiencies lay:

> I wonder if the theoretical information that we are receiving here will really help me . . . My job will be decision-making, evaluation, introducing change; to learn how to make the best out of investments in education . . . Isn't there some way that I could be prepared along these lines? Well I think that there

---

[1]The students are identified by number only in order to preserve anonymity. Reference is made, however, to the student's region of origin and occasionally to his home country itself in instances where there were several students from the same country.

> is and that it is the Project's responsibility to set this up for me--to plan a program for me . . . I am not interested in getting a degree but in being able to do a job when I get home. Here all they seem to think of is credits and degrees. I don't want to be an incompetent with a degree; I want to be competent--degree or not! (1)

A Southeast Asian student who wanted to quit but who was "sticking it out" commented:

> I feel as though I'd like to quit everyday. I can't wait to get home. I know that sometimes Indians and Filipinos don't want to go back and therefore they feel very comfortable staying here. . . . But I also understand that the responsibility that the foreign student accepts is that he will study, and that if I quit I will lose face. (11)

At another point, on being asked whether or not he would want to return to this country to study a second time this student replied:

> No, I wouldn't come here again if I had the chance. I'm sure that ninety-nine per cent would say yes, but this depends on their background--who and what they were in their own country. As for me, I was much happier at home than I have been here. (11)

And a second student student from the Middle East who was categorized as I - II was highly dismayed that his expectations had not been met. He commented:

> My instructions call for me to get training and courses related to every aspect of educational planning . . . but I am not getting this, at least not more than five per cent. I am taking the same courses as the others (American students) in what might be called classical American education; there has been no emphasis related to my own field.
>
> There have been some courses in education which I've taken that are supposed to be close--international

> education courses, you know, but they have been a waste of time for me. I would have been better off reading a few articles on economic development or something of the sort. (3)

This same student commented about his colleague who had left upon completion of his master's, rather than continuing on for the doctorate as his program called for:

> We told ____ (who left) many times that he should suffer it out and get his Ph.D. He says that they have not been honest but I cannot blame them. If I were in the position of the faculty I would probably do the same thing--they are very busy and it is impossible for them to give 100 per cent of their effort to this one project. . . . When _____ gets home they will think that he is crazy for giving up this opportunity. (3)

Another student who was also considered to be a "borderline" case between adaptational Styles I and II, had his frustrations but he had his hopes also as he looked forward to the return from overseas of a faculty member whom he had heard was a specialist in his area:

> Within the comparative education courses I am disappointed at the lack of an economic orientation. I believe that in terms of development that an understanding of economics is of first priority.
>
> My main interest is in educational planning. I want to know the basic strategies and the underlying theories. I understand that there are some people within the department who are strong in this area but they haven't been here this past year so I haven't had a chance to do any coursework with them. (2)

Style II - Negative-Accommodating

Representative of Style II, which had four students, are the below comments which reflect the belief that the

responsibility for meeting individual career needs and concerns rests more with the individual himself than with the host institution.

A student from Southeast Asia commented:

> I am very interested in books on change and strategies of economic planning. I want courses that deal with this but I am not getting it . . . I cannot say that I am disappointed. I believe it is important but what does MSU think . . . I am only one student. (14)

The comments of this student from South Asia reflects the frustration and feeling of loneliness which seems characteristic of this group:

> I am mainly interested in the sociology of development but I have found that if I want to pursue this here that I must do so on my own. The sociology of education courses here do not deal with this, my chairman is interested in school finances . . . all I have to satisfy my own interests is the library . . . I have been unable to find a professor who is interested in these things and who is willing to help me . . . without the library I'd be lost. (10)

The other student in this group from South Asia reveals the aggressiveness of his own quest for relevance as well as an understanding on his part of the dilemmas facing some of his colleagues in the following two comments:

> I found something in every course--even those which others say are a waste of time . . . Every person can find something and it is the individuals responsibility to make use of every opportunity. One must ask questions but most foreign students feel shy--they are always afraid that they will be ridiculed or that the U. S. student will consider that he is silly. (9)

> I think that the United States should prevent the foreign student from settling here; they must be sent home where they are needed . . . but then you really can't blame them. In India or Pakistan a Ph.D. might get $150 a month and what does he get here? (9)

The student from the Middle East in this group commented:

> The foreign student must always view what he learns from his point of view: the relevance gap is his responsibility. Whenever the professor is talking I must interpret from my point of view. I don't care if I get a C-, as long as I get something of value out of my efforts. (4)

And the accommodating stance of the members of this group is reflected in the following remarks by the Southeast Asian student in this group:

> Only those who really belong in this country can judge . . . I don't belong here so I don't feel that I can really say much about education in this country. I can learn from the worst course; even if you hate me I will learn from you.

Style III - Positive

Six of the students in this sample were classified as falling within the positive adaptational style category. This category had two different elements within it: a. those who felt that they could readily use at home what they were learning in this country, and b. those who intended (or wanted) to remain in the United States and who thus determined their career objectives on the basis of the environment of the United States.

The students from India in this study were most representative of this latter element. One of these students exclaimed:

> The U. S. educational system is more flexible and gives one more choice . . . I love it . . . it has made a career for me. It has allowed me to be mobile, moving upward all the time.

> In India I could never have become a Ph.D. student . . . Here I have been able to change my field several times, I could never have changed like this in India.
>
> In this country I have had a chance to study about educational systems from all over the world and if I had the choice to make again I would choose the U. S. system. (6)

And another Indian student who was applying for United States citizenship explained:

> The "brain drain" just doesn't apply in the Indian situation. We have too many brains; there is too much of a disproportion between available brains and available material resources. The brains will be useless unless there are resources by which they can be put to use. Today there are 3,000 Indian Ph.D.'s in the United States and India is better off because of it; we are sending home money to our families and India needs foreign exchange more than she needs us. (8)

One of the Southeast Asian students who was characterized under element a of this group offered this analogy as he expressed his attitudes on the subject:

> I am not very concerned about the problems of transfer and adaptation . . . it is something like learning how to play tennis on an asphalt court and then shifting to a grass surface. The game is basically the same except that you might not charge as fast lest you slip. (12)

The dilemma of the student from a Middle Eastern country (a-b) who appeared to want to remain here with her family was largely the product of political considerations:

> I have been thinking of developing a social studies text for use in my country, but I could end up making a great investment in time and effort only to have it censored by the Government . . . it is the political situation that makes most students from _____ reluctant to go back. I have been happy with my experiences within the College of Education. The professors here seem to understand the difficulties of the foreign student and their doors seem to be always open to us. (5)

And these final two comments by Indian students shed much light on the forces which push (or pull) students into this particular adaptational pattern:

> I see myself as a researcher. Research in education has a low priority in India because of so many needs of a more pressing nature. Therefore if I want to do what I enjoy, and if I want to ever make any money I had better stay in the United States. It isn't a question of patriotism, I just don't feel that I could ever really do much for India. (8)

> Is a country perpetuating a class system by taking and sending people overseas to study agriculture and who must return to a position in agriculture with little chance of advancement . . .? Directly I was being educated for an occupational role but indirectly I was being educated to a philosophy of mobility, simply by observing what is possible within this country. (6)

RELEVANCE

Clearly related to adaptational style is the issue of perceived relevance of educational experiences received here in this country. Relevance, as used here, refers to the individuals perception of goodness of fit between a person's goals (in this instance, his career and professional objectives) and what the environment has to offer; whereas adaptation, as used here, refers to how the individual reacts to his environment in terms of this pursuit of relevance.

A particular perception of relevance does not necessarily produce a corresponding adaptational style. For example (and as several of the students described in Style II illustrate), an individual can regard as very low the

relevance of his educational experiences here and still compromises usually being the product of cultural and personality traits.

When these same fifteen students were categorized in terms of the ways in which they seemed to view the relevance of their educational experiences here in this country, the results were noticeably different from those of the adaptation categories. Whereas with adaptation a content analysis of their remarks suggested totals of nine negative (anxious-accommodating combinations), and six positive; on the issue of relevance these same individuals seemed to fall into a pattern of six-low relevance and five medium-relevance, with only four of these students seeming to consider the relevance of their education here to be high.

Examples of Positions on Relevance

Below are some of the comments of these students which reflect their attitudes towards the relevance of their educational experiences here at this University, and at this College of Education in particular.

Low Relevance

One of the students from the Middle East who displayed a great deal of concern about the relevance or application of what he was learning to conditions in his own country elaborated as follows:

> The problems that you have solved in education and which are no longer of crucial importance to you are now of the most crucial importance to us. Money, financing, school buildings are our big problems. You are more concerned with such qualitative issues as "special ed" problems or remedial reading--but our problems are just so much more basic than these. While you might spend as much as $1,800 per student per year in some school districts, we spend only $18. How can we begin to compare? The issues of development are not going to be solved by following traditional American patterns. We must unearth new ways and these new ways are not being discussed here. (1)

The student from Southeast Asia was concerned mainly about the "relevance" of certain courses which he had to take in order to prepare for the general comprehensive examination in Education. He apparently recognized that there was, within the University, course offerings which would be more relevant to his own career needs but he was up against the pressures of time and the priorities imposed by degree requirements.

> If I didn't have to take such courses as ed. administration and crucial issues of American ed. I would have been taking courses related to Asia and my own country and these would have better prepared me for my career work; and, furthermore, I believe that they would have given me the equivalent of the American student studying about education in this country. I would not deny that this can benefit me as well, but given the shortness of time and my own priorities I become very frustrated about this. (15)

A student from South Asia took some courses which he thought would be relevant to his interests in development but was disappointed:

> I would like a course on education and community development. I did take sociology of education and

> thought that I might get this sort of thing there but all that I got from that course was some definitions--nothing practical. (10)

A note of irony appears in the comment by this Southeast Asian student in this sample who was one of those concerned about low relevance but who seemed to be adapting in Style II (mixed) fashion as he appeared to be able to meet frustrations with a calm spirit of acceptance:

> Most of the courses that I have had I can understand rationally, but in terms of my future job they are irrelevant . . . I know about modular scheduling, team teaching and so on; these may be fine for the U.S. but they are too soon for my country--the problem there is not how but if we must first deal with the problems of expanding education to all.
>
> I wanted to join a course on Education in Asia that is offered once a year but I was unable to get in. (14)

Medium Relevance

One of the students from Southeast Asia who was classified as adapting in a positive style seemed to be more skeptical on issues which touched upon problems of transfer and relevance:

> Counselling strategies are very different in my country and the United States and I must be aware of this . . . It seems that Americans know what you have to do and then you do it; whereas in my country you might know what to do but you don't necessarily do it . . . Our values are not oriented towards ambition; our feeling is that we are not going to live too long so let's enjoy ourselves now. Outlooks such as this cannot be approached upon the basis of the counselling strategies that are practiced in this country. (12)

A student from the Middle East showed some concern over the relevance issue but tempered this with the view that his education here provided a foundation for broader understanding:

> Some of the courses are very interesting here but whether or not they are going to really help me once I get home I can't be sure . . . All of the information that I have been getting here has been about education in the U.S.; nothing so far about education systems in other parts of the world and this is what I need . . . But it must be the same everywhere--Harvard, Stanford, etc.-- . . . I see the courses here as opening the way to further education--as providing a foundation to become self-directed. (4)

And finally another student from the Middle East (who was actually classified as low) in replying to a question as to whether or not he would recommend another student from his country to study here carefully qualified his concern over the relevance issue by saying:

> Yes, I would recommend a student to study in the U.S. if the program were appropriate--that is, purely technical matters; if there is too much cultural content--no. (2)

High Relevance

Only four of the students in this sample considered their educational experiences here to be highly relevant to their personal career objectives. Surprisingly enough, one of these was the Southeast Asian student who was categorized as seeming to have adapted quite negatively to the environment as a whole. In terms of relevance his personal position was that:

> I haven't thought about separate courses for educational planning in developing countries. I am more interested in looking at U.S. education and seeing how it is done here . . . If I study about a country that has the same problems I learn nothing . . . If I study about U. S. ed, even though the situation is very different from my country, at least it is something new and maybe when I get back home I can use some of these ideas. (11)

And the position of one of the South Asian students who was majoring in psychology and which seemed quite representative of the rest of this group was

> In educational psychology there is no provincialism; principles of growth, change, and behavior are universal--they can be applied anywhere. (7)

FACTORS AFFECTING ADAPTATIONAL PATTERNS

Within the data of this study there emerged a number of elements which suggested themselves as possible variables related closely to adaptational styles. These elements included occupational opportunity in the home country, family status, and interaction patterns with members of the faculty (especially their academic advisors) and with other graduate students. Other variables which seem logically important but which this study did not focus on (because of the limitations imposed by the data) include individual personality factors, the cultural distance between the student's country of origin and the United States, and his home country's overall level of development.

Perhaps the best measure of occupational opportunity, where the individual is concerned, is whether or not he

himself feels that he has an opportunity for a job--a job that he will be satisfied with. A variable, then, for occupational opportunity in the home country that emerged in this study, was whether or not the student reported that he had a job waiting for him that he wanted to return to.

There were ten students in this study who reported that they had definite jobs waiting for them and all but one of these were categorized within adaptational Styles I and II (representing various degrees of dissatisfaction with their educational experiences here). The only exception among these ten was a student in educational psychology who was returning to a college teaching position. The other five, all of whom did not have jobs waiting for them, were categorized as belonging to Style III, which represents expressions of relative satisfaction with their educational experience here. On the basis of these patterns two tentative hypothesis might be suggested:

1. Students from developing countries who are studying in the United States and who have held positions (especially of an administrative or planning capacity) in their home country and who are planning to return to that of a similar position are apt to perceive as low the relevance of their educational experiences at MSU and are likely to adapt with some degree of negativeness (i.e., Style I or II) to the environment of that university.

2. Students who have not held occupational positions or who were not satisfied with the positions that they did hold (or their prospects for a better

> position) are apt to perceive as relatively high the relevance of their educational experiences here and are likely to adapt positively (Style III) to the environment of the university.

These two hypotheses assume that the contents of the students educational experiences here are geared more to the needs of a modern American society than to the needs of a developing nation. Also, no value judgments are intended by the use of the terms negative and positive as they refer to adaptational style. For whether a reaction is in fact negative or positive depends upon the environment which it refers to; that is, a negative reaction to the environment of an American university on the part of one of these students can be a positive reaction in terms of his home country if it means that he is challenging the utility of what he is learning in this country and is determined to devote the majority of his efforts towards acquiring understandings and skills that will be effective within the environment of his own nation. In the same sense, the "positive reactions" of the student who fits into the second hypothesis can have quite "negative" consequences for his country of origin.

Comments on Occupational Opportunities

In the examples of adaptational styles given earlier in this chapter the students often referred to their concern

over being prepared for positions that they were returning to. Below are some more comments in which they make their attitudes toward their future work and professional careers very explicit.

For the student from the Middle East who decided to leave after getting his M.A. the question of future job responsibilities seemed to be of major importance:

> Today I have an M.A. in educational administration, but I am not in any way prepared to carry out the duties which I will be expected to carry out once I get home . . . if I decided to go on for the Ph.D. it is obvious to me that it would just be more of the same--a waste of time. (1)

A student from Southeast Asia who was majoring in educational media was anxious over the fact that he would probably be asked to set up some sort of instructional media or educational T.V. center when he returned. He was disappointed because all of his course work had been theory oriented and that he had received very few opportunities to actually work with media equipment. He commented:

> I was promised a job upon return before I left home . . . I am very concerned about my ability to live up to their expectations. If it wasn't for that I might have given up my search for relevance and just stayed here. (15)

A student from South Asia expressed his dilemma this way:

> In my country my job was as Coordinator of training programs for what is essentially a community development project . . . I was instructed to major in educational administration here but I have found

> that my needs are of a much more inter-disciplinary nature with most of the emphasis on sociology and economics. There really isn't any coursework here that is directly related to the type of work that I'll be doing at home. (10)

An Indian student, who considered as dim his prospects for ever finding a job in India that he could be satisfied with, declared:

> I came to the United States as an immigrant and I want to stay because of the opportunities here. With the situation in India as it is my "God given" abilities simply could not be used, either to my own advantage or to the advantage of others. (8)

And another Indian student who was very international in his outlook indicated how his professional concerns affected his adaptational style when he commented:

> I am motivated by the fact that I will someday be a Ph.D. and I will have to meet the responsibilities associated with that title . . . I am frightened by the idea of sitting around a table with a group of colleagues and not being able to contribute as an equal--of being unfamiliar with certain works in my field . . . I am very aware of the competition. (6)

Within this sample there were not enough variations to allow for any significant inferences about the importance of family status as a determinant of adaptational style. Five of the students were single, eight were married and had their wives and children with them, and only two were married with their wives remaining back in their home country. Both of those students whose wives were not with them were categorized as seeming to fit adaptational Style II, which

suggests that they had distinct reservations about their academic environment here but seemed to be coping with that aspect of their lives nevertheless.

If the adaptational styles categorization that has been used here had included the total environment of these students (e.g., social life, free time activities, preoccupations, etc.) the fact that their wives were not with them would have had a significant bearing in terms of characterizing their adaptation to the total environment. The following two quotes are from students whose wives were not with them:

> I have many personal problems here but the biggest one is that my wife is not with me. We were married only seven days before I left and I have been trying ever since to save enough money for her to join me . . . but now my grant has terminated and I can hardly support myself let alone a wife in this country. . . I think so much about this that it is almost impossible to concentrate on my studies anymore. (9)

And the Southeast Asian student in this sample whose wife had given birth to their first child since he arrived here said:

> Here no one really knows me or cares about me . . . I miss my wife and my son so much--that for me is happiness . . . the only important moment that I have each week is when a letter from my wife arrives. (14)

Interaction Pattern with Faculty

An admittedly arbitrary classification was also made of these fifteen students in terms of their relationships

(interaction patterns) with their advisors and other faculty members. The assumption was that a satisfactory relationship with members of the faculty would correlate with a positive reaction to the environment of the university, and that the opposite would be true when the student perceived of his relationships with faculty members as being unsatisfactory. The results seem to bear this assumption out. Ten of the students were judged as seeming to be generally dissatisfied (i.e., more dissatisfied than satisfied) with their relations with members of the faculty, and of these ten, nine fell within adaptational Style I and II (negative). The other five students were classified as being generally satisfied with their relations with their advisor and other faculty members and each of these was classified in adaptational Style III (positive).

This relatively wide dissatisfication should not be too surprising in that it is generally difficult to find an American graduate student these days who is highly satisfied with the nature and quality of his interaction with members of the faculty as they compete with many others for the time and attention of the faculty. The difference, however, is that the American student is generally more aggressive in this struggle for time and attention; he is usually more adept, by virtue of familiarity, at gaining access to the informal system of the academic setting. He

tends, therefore, to have a better understanding than the foreign student of where, when, and how to get the information and attention which is an important part of survival in the environment of a graduate school.

The comments that follow are illustrative of these conditions as well as of some of the attitudes that these students possess regarding their experiences with their academic advisors and with other members of the faculty.

Examples of Interaction Patterns with Faculty

A student from the Middle East who was obviously dissatisfied over his relationship with his advisor commented:

> I came here one year ago and I have seen my advisor only twice--and the initiative didn't come from him. I have selected my courses myself. No one has really given me any help. (3)

Another student from the Middle East who saw his advisor more often but who was equally dissatisfied with the results of these encounters said:

> My advisor is never prepared for me. When I ask about courses he just picks up the schedule, scans it, and says "try that." The courses have been irrelevant . . . I felt my advisor let me down. He was the only person I could depend upon and when he began giving me bad advice as to which courses to take I began to lose trust in him. (4)

A student from South Asia was dissatisfied with his advisor but did not feel that he could do anything about it.

> I have not been satisfied with my advisor . . . My advisor was assigned to me--this should be my

> choice. Yes, you can change but how can I--I would be doomed . . . My advisor would be insulted. . . A foreign student just doesn't dare to do the things that an American student would do. (9)

For the student from the Middle East who decided to leave, it appears that his relationship with his advisor may have helped him in making that decision.

> I seldom see my advisor and when I do he looks at me suspiciously. When I first went to him he said "I don't know what your wishes are; I don't know anything about education in Turkey; how am I supposed to help you.
>
> Well I didn't ask him to be my advisor, I was assigned to him. Maybe I expect too much but I thought he would be prepared for me, prepared to help me. (1)

Another student from the Middle East sheds some light on the reasons for some of their difficulties in adapting to the student-advisor relationship:

> We are not accustomed to using advisors and counsellors since we do not have them in our country. When we go to our advisor and if he does not encourage us we will just not go back. We do not know what is culturally acceptable in this situation--what and how much to tell him. They must encourage us and let us know. (3)

A more positive reaction to his relationship with his advisor was offered by this student from Southeast Asia.

> My advisor has been very helpful--he has been to Nigeria. I think that you can say in general that professors who have worked abroad are more understanding of the foreign student. I have had many problems: passport, sickness, and he has always been willing to help me. (15)

These reactions seem to corroborate the findings of Richard Miller who carried out a study of foreign student

advisors at Michigan State and a number of other universities and concluded that while these advisors are generally satisfied with their ability to deal with problems involving visas, financial aids, and the like; they feel that they are "least effective in functions involving the academic advising of foreign students" (Miller: 1968).

Attitudes Towards Professors with Knowledge of Their Country

In response to a question as to whether or not they preferred professors who have extensive knowledge of the conditions in their home country there were the anticipated positive responses as well as a few unexpected (to this author) observations:

These two replies are representative of the more positive responses:

> During the two years that I was at Kansas State I didn't meet any faculty members who knew about Indonesia . . . Here there are several people who know a lot about my country and they seem to have a better idea as to what I need in terms of the conditions in my country.
>
> You feel comfortable if someone knows your background. It is definitely easier to talk to people who have been exposed to other cultures. (7)

Quite different observations were offered by these two students from South Asia:

> There really isn't much difference between the professor who knows your country and one who doesn't. In fact if he knows your country he might try to dictate to you--tell you what to do--what you should study and how you should apply it . . . If he doesn't know anything about your country you can just listen to all that he has to say and then decide for yourself what to concentrate on. (9)

And a student from India made this observation:

> Many of the faculty know about India--but when they handle this knowledge in public they twist it around and spice it up so as to draw attention to themselves. I hate them when they do this. They are not being intellectually honest. They are "selling" according to the tastes of the American public. (6)

The comment of another student from India suggests the close correlation that seems to exist between faculty relationships and adaptational styles:

> I avoid those profs who are up tight about the brain drain--this is my business--they apply generalizations; how can they know my background and everything else about me necessary to place value judgments on me? How do they know what the job opportunities are in my particular community and environment . . . It is fortunate that I can always find professors who see the situation differently, and that is how I select. (8)

Attitudes towards Student-Professor Interactions in the Classroom

These students also provided some interesting insights as to how they reacted to their professors within the classroom situation. The following four comments reflect some of these reactions:

> I like it when the professor just suggests something and then lets us contribute. This makes us individuals--in traditional societies this is impossible. I believe the discussion method is very important, it gives the individual a chance to say what he believes. (14)

> In my courses I take a passive role because I have felt that my questions and interests might be irrelevant to the needs and interests of the rest of the class . . . I was reluctant to monopolize their time with my concerns. (10)

> I like the open interaction between professor and student that I find here; this fosters critical thinking and therefore issues are approached from several points of view. (2)
>
> There are some professors with open-minds who see that I can possibly contribute a new perspective to an issue of concern to American education--a cross-cultural perspective, perhaps, and they seem to welcome my contribution.
>
> Others, however, seem to have the attitude that "Oh these foreign students just don't understand our culture and our problems and therefore they are just wasting our time with their viewpoints. (9)

More directly related to the issue of student-faculty interaction, especially where the student's advisor is concerned, is the comment of this student:

> I really wonder if there is ever any intimate interaction between student and professor in such a large university as this. (15)

Many an American graduate student has probably wondered the same thing, of course, but again the differences where he is concerned is that he need not be so dependent upon members of the faculty in coping with the environments of the university and the college for they can say--in the words of the song--"we have each other." The same is not always true for the foreign student, however. The next section is concerned with that topic--the interaction patterns of the foreign student with other graduate students in his academic area.

Interaction With Other Graduate Students

Another sojourn variable which seems to be an important determinant of adaptational styles (as defined here) is the nature and quality of the foreign student's interaction with other graduate students in his academic area. This variable is clearly related to the preceding variable--interaction with faculty--in that it also involves the notion of access to the informal systems of the graduate school environment. The informal system in this instance can include the cubby-hole type offices provided graduate assistants, coffee-room conversations, and such outside activities as informal gatherings at each others homes and at local drinking establishments.

The previously mentioned study by Selby and Woods at Stanford focused on this question of student access to such informal systems and remarked:

> The foreign student sees himself as being cast out upon a society that he cannot know, cast off from the association of his fellows, driven by the demands of examinations, assignments, quizzes and prescribed readings. . . . (p. 144.)

Selby and Woods likened the plight of the foreign student in an American university to that of the new worker described by George Homans in his "Bank Wiring Room Study" (1950) in that the foreign student, like the new worker, must depend upon his fellow workers to find out what in fact has to be done. Homans called this the "internal system"; he says that whereas the management will tell him (the worker)

about productive goals, work methods, incentive pay and competition, it is his fellow workers who will have to tell him how in fact each of these functions. This information that his fellow workers offer usually is a very different picture from that which the management has of these same operations. Selby and Woods drew upon Homans and characterized the foreign students in their case study in this way:

> If we think of the foreign students as new employees and the American students as the workers, we can see that the accommodations and agreements that make up the "internal system" are not available to the foreign students. The foreign students are not privy to the agreements made by American students and are instead working on a different system. (p. 146.)

As for this study at Michigan State, it was difficult to draw meaningful conclusions, on the basis of the data available, as to the effect that interaction with other students has on shaping adaptational styles. The interview results do suggest that some of these students have gained access to such an "internal system" within the College of Education at this University, but that the majority of these students are not incorporated into the sort of internal system that Homans has described.

Within this sample, three patterns of interaction seem to be present: for some of these students interaction is virtually limited to other students from their own country (at least in so far as their academic lives are concerned);

others, by virtue of having graduate assistantships, find themselves interacting more with other American students in their academic areas; and still others seem to be very much alone in this regard. Below are some of the comments which illustrate these three patterns of interaction (or lack of it) with other students in the same academic area.

Interaction Patterns With Other Foreign Students

In instances where there were relatively large communities of students from the same country within the University, there is a tendency for these students to rely upon each other for information and feedback related to their academic lives.

A student from the Middle East explains why he relied on other foreign students for his information:

> I get a lot of my advice from other foreign students. While the American student might say to me "take this one, it is easy" or "don't take that one, it is too hard"; the foreign students will tell each other about how much reading is required or other problems related to language. (4)

The comments of this Indian student touch upon the cultural forces which help to shape his particular interaction patterns:

> In India I could always turn to someone in my group for help with my schoolwork. . . . But here I cannot get such help. There is a difficulty in access. . . . Americans are so busy . . . and the cultural norms are so different . . . It is easier for me to interact with other Indians. (6)

Yet even when the student has a number of colleagues from his own contry studying with him there can be difficulties, as this student points out:

> I don't know too many American graduate students. I am reserved and busy . . . I pick my friends very carefully. When I was single and studying for my masters here at __U. I met many more Americans. Now I have too many colleagues here. Not only does this close us off from others but we get involved with problems of status and competition--especially troublesome are the younger, "first-timers" with their high and unrealistic expectations. (2)

And finally there is the Middle Eastern student in this category who was quite frank as to why he did not prefer to associate extensively with some of his American colleagues:

> Some of the students in my classes make such easy generalizations about the countries that we are studying about that I just cannot accept them as graduate students. They express so much self-superiority in these generalizations. (3)

Interaction Patterns with American Students

Very few of these students were in a network which included many American students who were also working in their area. One of the exceptions was this student who describes the difference that being part of such a network made:

> My first year I did not have an assistantship and therefore did not have a desk or office to go to and therefore had no real opportunity to interact with other grad students . . . you are lost without a desk to go to . . . You are out of the system and therefore you do not have daily interaction with colleagues and faculty.

> This year I have an assistantship and a desk and I even come in nights and on weekends just for a chance to talk with other grad students. It gives me a great deal of stimulation to be able to interact regularly on this basis. (6)

Another student who held an assistantship with the educational psychology department said:

> I've been given an assistantship by the psychology department and this has really made things better for me. It has given me a lot of experience in my area; a convenient place to work and study; and the opportunity to interact with my colleagues. (7)

But more common are the stories of those who tried to become a part of such a system by way of an assistantship and were unsuccessful:

> The foreign student here never has a chance to do anything in terms of research or teaching. Several times I have inquired but I am always told that "all the money we have is for American students" . . . We don't want the money--only the experience. So they tell us "if you want to do research go to the library." The library! huh . . . so you go and do a paper for a professor and what sort of feedback do you get . . "A" or "B" and nothing else, not even a comment--what good is that? (4)

The saddest stories came from those students who do not feel that they are a part of any system (as far as their academic lives are concerned) and find that they must cope alone within the challenging environment of the graduate school.

A student from South Asia commented:

> It is very hard to get help from an American student. Some will give help but most are quite negative. If we have trouble understanding a lecture and afterwards ask an American student for help he will usually say "I don't know" and just walk away--very few will help you. (9)

A student from Southeast Asia viewed the difficulties of not having access to such a system from another perspective:

> I never have the slightest idea as to who the instructor is or what he is like until I walk into the classroom. This has hurt me . . . I should have tried to find out more about the professor and how he taught the course . . .But this is difficult for me to find out. I have no one to ask such questions to. (15)

A student from the Middle East reported:

> I often want to talk to my classmates, to ask them about courses or examinations. But they are always in a hurry, once class is over they just disappear. It is very difficult to get to know them. (5)

An Indian student observed:

> I think that the educational system here helps to perpetuate individualistic attitudes . . . Americans seem to lack a spirit of universality . . . Striving for grades is all-important here. In India students are generally willing to help each other, but not here. This pattern interferes with friendships. It is easier to make friends with people outside of your own classes. (7)

A Southeast Asian student in this study told of an incident which suggests some of the inevitable difficulties of cross-cultural interaction, even amongst people who are supposed to have superior educations:

> One student asked me . . . "How is it that you can learn our culture and not change?" How can he ask that? My feeling is that "you should be a good American and I should be a good Indonesian--then maybe we can communicate better. (14)

And this same student reflected well the loneliness of the students in this group when he commented:

> I really get no help from others; my motivation and background are so different--what I feel is important I cannot say to others. I get no chances to talk with faculty or other students about the things that I want to discuss. (14)

SUMMARY

The fifteen graduate students in education from the Asian region who participated in this study have been characterized as reacting to their academic environments in this country in what seem to be three distinct adaptational styles. These styles have been described in this chapter as: 1) negative-anxious, openly dissatisfied with their educational experiences here; 2) negative-accommodating, relatively dissatisfied with their educational experiences here but willing to accept this situation as a fact of life; and 3) positive, relatively satisfied with their educational experiences here (this category was further divided into two sub-sections).

The interview results suggested a number of variables which appear to be related to the formation of these adaptational styles. The possible variables discussed in this chapter were: the student's perception of the relevance of what he was learning here; whether or not he had a job waiting for him in his home country; his family status;

his interaction patterns with members of the faculty; and his interaction patterns with other graduate students. The following table indicates where each of these students seemed to fall in relation to these areas. (See page 78.)

STUDENT	RELEVANCE	FAMILY STATUS	JOB STATUS	FACULTY INTER-ACTION	STUDENT INTER-ACTION	ADAPTA-TIONAL STYLE
1	Lo	Sgl	yes	-	0	1
2	Lo	M-W	yes	-	0	1-2
3	Lo	M-W	yes	-	0	1-2
4	Md	M-W	yes	-	-	2
5	Hi	M-W	no	+	+	3
6	Md	M-W	no	+	+	3
7	Hi	M-W	no	+	+	3
8	Hi	Sgl	no	+	+	3
9	Md	M-WO	yes	-	-	2
10	Lo	M-W	yes	-	-	2
11	Hi	Sgl	yes	-	0	1
12	Md	Sgl	mixed	+	+	3
13	Md	Sgl	no	+	0	3
14	Lo	M-WO	yes	-	-	2
15	Lo	M-W	yes	-	-	1

Explanation of symbols:

M-W married with wife here.
M-WO married but wife is at home.

Job Status: whether or not he has a job waiting for him at home that he wants to return to (and continue within).

Faculty Interaction:

+ indicates relative satisfaction in this area.
- indicates relative dissatisfaction in this area.

Student Interaction: this applies to interaction with other graduate students in relation to academic matters.

0 indicates that interaction is mainly restricted to fellow students from one's own country.
+ indicates heavy interaction other (American and foreign) graduate students in own area.
- indicates that student reports very little interaction with any other students in this regard.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

An exploratory study of this type does not lend itself easily to precise summary statements. Some general observations can be put forward, however, in terms of the two areas of focus that were singled out within the "purpose of the study" statement that appeared in the first chapter. The first of these was:

a. How do these students view the relevance of that which they are learning in this College and University?

Relevance, as used in this study, refers to the goodness of fit between what a person perceives as his own needs or objectives (career and professional concerns in this case) and what the environment has to offer. The individuals in this study were fifteen graduate students in education from the Asian region and their immediate environment was Michigan State University, and its College of Education in particular. It should be noted again, as it was in chapter one, that the "environment" referred to here represents only those elements of the environment which the individual perceives or chooses to expose himself to.

Three categories were used to classify these students in terms of their perceptions of relevance: low relevance - those students who found little positive correlation between their academic objectives (i.e., interests, concerns) and their academic environments here; medium relevance - those students who were concerned about the relevance of many of their educational experiences here, but who also were willing to accept much of what they were learning as being of at least indirect value to their personal and career objectives; high relevance - those who considered the bulk of what they were learning here to be highly relevant to their personal career objectives.

On the basis of statements made by these students (examples of which appear in chapter three) admittedly arbitrary decisions as to these classifications of relevance were made: six of these students seemed to view as low the relevance of their educational experiences within this College and University; five seemed to hold perceptions of medium relevance; and only four seemed to view as high the relevance of their educational experiences here.

The second major area singled out in the "purpose of the study statement" was:

b. How do these students adapt to the environment of the College of Education (and the University)?

Closely related to perceptions of relevance were the "adaptational styles" which these students assumed.

Adaptation, as used in this study, refers to the process of reacting to and interacting within a given environment (in this case, the students perception of the environments of the College of Education and the University). Therefore, whereas relevance refers to how the student views or feels about his environment in terms of how well it meets his personal objectives, adaptation refers to what he does about each of these factors (i.e., does he change his objectives; does he change the environment; or does he actually leave for a more hospitable environment such as his home culture?).

On the basis of the interview results with these students, three different adaptational styles have been proposed. Briefly, these are:

Style I - Negative-Anxious: students who express open dissatisfaction over their educational experiences in this country to the point that they actually leave or threaten to leave and, if they remain, they tend to be highly critical of the conditions and content of their academic experiences and remain anxious over these concerns.

Style II - Negative-Accommodating: students who are dissatisfied with their educational experiences here but who are more likely to accommodate and to accept the conditions for what they are.

Style III - Positive: includes students who are generally satisfied with their educational experiences here and who feel that they can readily use in their home country that which they are learning in this environment (type a) as well as those students who are satisfied because they intend to remain in the United States (type b).

These three adaptational styles are defined in greater detail in chapter three along with various quotations from the students in the study population which are representative of elements of each of these styles.

Factors Affecting Perceptions of Relevance and Adaptational Styles

While perception of relevance and adaptational styles are closely related the two do not necessarily go hand in hand. Whereas eleven of the students had serious reservations about much of what they were learning in terms of its application to their own national and cultural setting (and consequently of its relevance to their personal career and professional objectives) only three of the fifteen students were openly negative (in terms of adaptation) about their educational experiences here. An interesting question that remains unanswered, therefore, is why, of the eleven students who viewed as relativey low the relevance of their educational experiences here, did three of them react to the environment of the College in an openly negative way while the other seven reacted in an accommodating fashion, and, in two cases, a positive style?

After dismissing the possible variable of regional differences because it allowed for too many exceptions, the variables of occupational opportunity in the home country, family status in the United States (i.e., with or without

families), and interaction patterns with faculty and other graduate students were considered. Three other variables which may be very important in determining adaptational styles but which this study was unable to consider are: the home country's level of development (economic, social, political); the "cultural distance" between the student's home country and the United States; and (perhaps most important) individual personality characteristics.

In relation to the variable of occupational opportunity as it effects adaptational styles, two possible hypotheses were suggested on the basis of the study data. The essence of these are:

1. If the student has waiting for him a job that he wants to return to (especially one involving planning or development work) he is more likely to view as low the relevance of his educational experiences in this country and to adapt in a negative way to the university environment.

2. If the student doesn't have a job waiting for him that he wants to return to he is more apt to view as moderate or high the relevance of that which he is learning and to adapt in either a mixed or positive pattern.

Not enough data was available to draw any conclusions about the effects of family status or interaction patterns with other students and with faculty as determinants of adaptational styles. In regard to the latter, however, the reported experiences and stated feelings of the students in this study suggest that there is probably a high and positive correlation between the intensity and quality of these

interactions and a positive style of adaptation (see p. 78). Accordingly, two tentative and closely related hypotheses might be suggested as a basis for further investigation into these areas:

3. The greater their opportunity for intense and meaningful interaction with faculty and other graduate students (especially encounters related to academic concerns which involve their own personal objectives) the lesser the tendency for these students to react to the college environment in a "negative-anxious" style.

4. The greater their opportunity for gaining access to an "internal system" of the College (e.g., via assistantships) the lesser the tendency for these students to react to their educational experiences here in a "negative-anxious" style.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The major function of an exploratory study of this nature is to define some of the elements of a "problem"--to explore its parameters and to suggest potential areas for more detailed investigation. Several such elements have been examined within this study and referred to already in this chapter. At the risk of being repetitive a number of areas which might readily lend themselves to further and meaningful investigation could include the following:

1. A further refinement of the typology of adaptational styles that has been presented here: Are these "Styles" representative of most students from developing nations pursuing advanced professional study in the United States? How widespread are reactions similar to those in Styles I and II? Are the proportions of students within these two categories increasing? What about those in Style III?

2. What are the crucial factors which predispose (i.e., background variables) a student to adapt in one of these styles? Possibilities might include:

   a. Occupational opportunities in home country;

   b. Home country's level of development;

   c. The "cultural distance" between the home and host country;

   d. Attachment (personal) to home country;

   e. Family position, wealth, religion, etc.;

   f. Individual personality factors.

3. What are the crucial factors which affect a student's adaptational style while he is studying in the United States (i.e., sojourn variables); possibilities might include:

   a. The content and nature of the material and skills that he is being exposed to (are they relevant?);

   b. The quality and intensity of his interactions with members of the faculty (his academic adviser; within the classroom);

   c. The quality and intensity of his interactions with other graduate students in his area (i.e., interactions of an academic/professional nature);

   d. His family status while in the United States (i.e., is he single, or did he leave his wife and family at home?)

There are of course other causes--some minor, some major--which contribute to the formation of a particular adaptational style; however, these possible factors have been singled out here because of the frequency with which they suggested themselves within the interview sessions.

Due to severe time limitations in the carrying out of this study, it was not possible to build within it a time dimension. Future research in this area should take into account the changing nature of the student's perceptions of relevance throughout his sojourn experience as well as any changes in his adaptational patterns.

Also of great importance in a study of this nature is the question of how realistic the expectations of these students are to begin with and what is the source of these expectations. Such expectations are of obvious importance in the shaping of adaptational patterns.

And, of course, the whole issue of adaptational styles is not limited in application to the foreign student. This same theoretical orientation could provide an interesting base for exploring how other groups of students react to and within the environment of the university (or a similar setting).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The question of adaptational styles is of special interest to the social scientist per se. Of more pressing concern for the educator has to be: What are the implications of these conditions in terms of the educational objectives of these students?

The situation here seems to be this: At any given time there are approximately sixty students enrolled in Michigan State University's College of Education from what are usually referred to as "the developing nations." This particular study was limited to those students who had been enrolled for at least a year; were on campus during the summer of 1969; and were from the "Asian region." This group may or may not be representative of the total population of the graduate students from "developing nations" in this College, but there does seem to be a strong chance that they are. If they are, the following conclusions might be suggested:

Of the students from "developing nations" studying at the graduate level at Michigan State University's College of Education, evidence suggests that:

1. A substantial number of these students might be adapting to the environment of the College with strong to mixed attitudes of negativeness towards their educational experiences here;

2. A substantial number of these students might have serious reservations about the relevance of what they are learning here to their own professional careers (and therefore to the needs of their home countries' as well, in most cases);

3. There is a need for more course work directly related to the problems and issues of education in the countries of the developing world, especially for courses with a planning orientation;

4. There is a need for establishing a way whereby these students can have frequent and meaningful

(i.e., professional/academic) interactions with faculty members who have concerns and interests which are related to or similar to their own;

5. There is a need for establishing a way whereby these students can have frequent and more meaningful contact with other graduate students who have concerns and interests similar to their own.

That Michigan State University and its College of Education should be, and indeed is concerned about these issues and conditions relative to its foreign student population seems hardly a matter of debate. The strongest traditions of this University have been built upon the notion of providing the people whom it serves with a "relevant" and "meaningful," form of education. As the University has served Michigan and the nation in this regard, so also is it concerned with serving other nations and the students of those nations as she continuously expands her international dimension.

The word "relevance," unfortunately, has become almost a dirty word in University circles these days as its use immediately conjures up images of the demands of the S D S and the Black Student Movement. Without entering into the issue of the validity of the claims of these groups it can be suggested here that any"relevance gap" which those students encounter as members of a modern American society would almost certainly appear miniscule besides the "relevance gap" that is continuously encountered by many of the students in this study (see chapter III).

Strangely enough, however, the appeals for relevance as voiced by this group remain largely inaudible. One Nigerian student (not in this study) offered a possible explanation to me by suggesting that this condition is a result of receiving all of their previous education within systems which are even less relevant than what they are exposed to here (and having taught in a British school in Borneo for two years I am well aware of what he was referring to!) There is another reason, however, and it seems especially unfortunate in this day and age. It's essence was captured in the remark on an Indonesian student in this study when he commented, "I am but one student, and I am but a guest. How can I complain?"

Well today it is unlikely that he is just one student with unusual concerns, but is instead a part of a growing group of similar students with similar concerns. Nor is he merely a guest in the sense that he should have less say in the shaping of his own academic life while in this country than any American student. He is, rather, a partner--a partner in furthering international development and understanding--and it is as a partner that he should be treated.

Richard Niehoff, Assistant Dean for International Programs at Michigan State University, in a communique to the Dean for International Programs, touched upon some of the same issues that have been treated in this study and

suggested some steps that might be taken for meeting some of these concerns. Niehoff recommended that a determination be made of "the extent to which the colleges of this University have made any specific accommodations to the problems of foreign graduate students" and that there should also be a determination of:

> the feasibility of establishing a credit or non-credit seminar in each college especially designed to provide an opportunity for foreign graduate students to discuss problems of adapting the materials presented in their several programs of study to the needs of their countries. The "seminar" would have the important by-product of indicating to these students the view that MSU is interested in their use of the training being provided for their home countries. . . . Students from different countries could be brought together to discuss developments in their countries . . . faculty members having experience in those countries might be related to such groups.[1]

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the "Niehoff Proposal" as a stepping off point I would like to set forth a similar proposal and delineate some possible elements within such a seminar program which I feel would serve to better meet the needs of the graduate students from "developing nations" studying at Michigan State University's College of Education (and especially those students who fit into "adaptational Styles" I and II as they have been outlined in this study):

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[1]Richard Niehoff to Glenn Taggert. March 1968. (With permission of the author.)

PROPOSAL

An interdisciplinary seminar similar to the one proposed by Niehoff should be set up within the College of Education on a "credit" and continuing basis.

a. Such a seminar should be open to all interested students from "developing nations" and to other students who also have a serious interest in this area (an effort should be made to recruit students from outside the College of Education as well--e.g., from anthropology, economics, political science, etc.);

b. Such a seminar should have a faculty coordinator to serve in a resource and organizational capacity (but not a planning capacity, necessarily, as this should by and large be assumed by the students themselves);

c. On the basis of the interests of the participants in a given seminar, members of the faculty from within and outside of the College of Education should be invited to serve as resource personnel;

d. The seminar should be problem or issue oriented according to the particular concerns and interests of a given group of participants;

e. Funds should be available for bringing in non-MSU personnel when there is such a need or interest;

f. The seminar should operate on a "pass-fail" basis with all active participants receiving an automatic pass;

g. The seminar should operate continuously with participants able to repeat for up to 9 or 12 credits;

h. The possibility should be explored for having participation in this seminar serve as a partial or complete alternative to the General Professional Examinations in Education;

i. A major function of this seminar should be to generate dissertation projects for the participants as well as to serve as a sounding board and resource center once dissertation or similar projects get under way;

j. Team arrangements for such dissertation efforts should be encouraged. While dissertation research would in most cases be carried out in the student's home country, "pilot-type" research efforts within the United States should also be encouraged as a preliminary step;

k. Among the funding arrangements that might be considered is an allocation of some of the money which the doctoral student currently pays for dissertation fees ($500-1100 per student) in the light of the fact that they will be centralizing faculty resource personnel for this purpose;

l. Outside funding arrangements, especially for support of research activities should also be explored--including private foundations and the Agency for International Development.

Explicitly, the rationale for such a program, in the light of the findings of this study, include:

1. Such a program would greatly increase the potential for the individual student to integrate and apply in a "relevant" situation that which he is learning within the University environment;

2. Such a program would give these students an opportunity for "meaningful" (i.e., as it relates to their professional concerns and objectives) interaction with various members of the faculty (esp. faculty whom they would probably not have come in extensive contact with otherwise);

3. Such a program would give these students continuing opportunities for extensive interaction with other students holding similar and related interests; it would in a sense make them part of an "internal system" which would have the by-product of meeting many of their psychological needs as well as their career objectives.

The program that has been suggested here is proposed for discussion purposes. Many elements of it could be dropped and certainly many could be added before a satisfactory final

product emerged. I have discussed with several of the students that I interviewed the outlines of such a possible program and they generally expressed much enthusiasm over the idea. They stressed the importance, however, of granting credit for the time spent and also of the need to develop an alternative to the General Comprehensive Examinations which are such a nebulous barrier and continuing source of frustration for so many of these students.

Certainly participation in such a seminar for an extended period could be as valuable to these students as the time which they currently find themselves spending in preparation for the general comprehensive examinations. And certainly their desire for "credit" for this time and effort spent should not be considered as utilitarian for, like it or not, the name of the game continues to be "degree," (both in the United States and abroad) in terms of professional advancement and it would be a sad state of affairs if the struggle for the "degree" had to preclude the "quest for relevance."

APPENDIX

Interview Schedule

1. What is your major?
2. How long have you been at MSU?
3. How did you happen to choose education as a career?
4. Why did you want to study in the U. S.?
5. Are you married? Children? (Here or home?)
6. How old are you now?
7. What were you doing just before you came to MSU?
8. What does your ministry expect you to get at MSU (in terms of training)? Are you getting this?
9. Have you ever thought of staying in the U.S.?
10. What sort of work do you intend to do after you graduate?
11. When you begin work, what kind of problems do you feel that you will have to deal with most frequently?
12. Do you think that your training will be good enough for you to be able to do all of the things which you might be expected to do in your work?
13. What are the most important courses that you have taken this year? What makes them important?
14. What courses have been least important? Why?
15. What things about your work this year have given you the most trouble?

16. What was your single biggest problem during your first months in school?

17. How did this problem work out?

18. Do you have a set pattern for studying?

19. How many hours a day do you study?

20. How have your grades been so far - GPA?

21. Which is most important to you: your own reading? class lectures:

22. Who has been helping you the most in deciding what courses to take?

23. Have you been able to discuss such things with faculty members as often as you'd like?

24. Do you do much studying with or discuss the classwork with other students in your own area?

25. Are these usually students from your own country? other foreign students? or American students?

26. Do you get much help from other students in deciding how much work to do and what things to concentrate on?

27. Have you taken any courses outside of your own area? What?

28. Have you ever attended any of the special lectures or symposiums that are sometimes held on campus? Which ones?

29. What do you feel are some of the greatest strengths of the educational system in your country?

30. Some of the weaknesses?

31. Have you always felt this way or have some of these opinions developed since you have been in the United States?

32. These weaknesses: Do you think they can be changed?

33. Do you think that it will be difficult to introduce such changes?

34. Do you think that having a course in how to introduce change would help you?

35. Have you had any such courses at MSU? Why or why not?

36. What do you think are some of the greatest strengths of the U.S. educational system?

37. Some of the weaknesses?

38. Have you had a chance to visit any secondary or elementary schools and to observe actual classes in action?

39. What did you think of them?

40. Are there any specific educational practices which you have seen or read about in the U.S. that you might want to try and introduce into your own school or country?

41. Have you done many things with Americans outside of school?

42. If you were in a position to introduce some new courses or to make some other changes in the academic program here, what would you recommend?

43. What about the comprehensive examinations? Are you satisfied with these as they are?

44. How do you feel about the grades that are given in your regular course work?

45. How do the other students that you associate most with feel about them?

46. Would you prefer a system in which all of the grades were on a pass/fail basis? Why?

47. How would you feel if you flunked out of graduate school?

48. Have you ever felt like just quitting? Why and why didn't you?

49. Why is the degree important to you?

50. Do you feel that grad students get enough opportunities to teach or to do research with a professor?

51. How important do you think that this kind of experience is?

52. What sort of teaching practice or research have you had?

53. The undergraduate have supervised teaching experiences in local schools. Would you want to have such an experience for yourself?

54. How do you think most Americans feel about your country?

55. What about the faculty members that you have been in contact with? How do they seem to feel about your country?

56. Do you prefer faculty members who have some knowledge of the educational system in your country or doesn't it make any difference?

57. Some people say that foreign students often try to take advantage of the fact that they are foreign and that they sometimes get higher grades than they have earned because of this. How do you feel about this?

58. When people ask you questions about your country or just talk about it, is there anything that is often said that makes you annoyed or angry?

59. What do you like best about the United States?

60. Least?

61. Finally, if when you return to your country you should be in a position to recommend a student for graduate study overseas, would you advise him to study in the U.S.? Why?

62.* At Michigan State? Why?

*As was indicated in chapter one, this interview schedule served more as a check list in actual use and was only referred to periodically during the interview sessions to assure that certain areas were being covered.

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