

Foreign Students in the United States

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Abstract. This paper talks about foreign students in the United States why do they go there, phases they go through to absorb the Culture shock, some of their concerns, some of the considerations and preparations they have to make before going to the United States. With the flow of many foreign students who go to the United States for educational purposes it is very important for them to know and get some information about that society and the educational system there. This might reduce the culture shock and help them understand the American society therefore this paper discusses some problems they might face and reviews researches that are done on foreign students in the United States.

Key words: foreign students, United States, education.

Introduction

As a result of progressive advancement in technology and transportation facilities, traveling abroad is made more economical and convenient. Not only do people travel for pleasure or business, some leave their homelands for educational purposes. Consequently, international students are increasing in the United States to get an advanced education.

Statement of the problem

The purpose of this study is to discuss the status of foreign students who go to the United States as to their purposes of going there, problems they might face, and preparation they should make before going there.

Study questions

- Why do foreign students including Arab students go to the United States?
- What are the stages of adjustment foreign students go through?

Significance of the study

Since foreign students including go to the United States to get their education and to gain new experience. It is very important to them to know some information about the country that they are going to live and study in. It is very essential to them to know that they are going to face many cultural differences such as language, habits, life style, values, and advancement in education, science, and technology.

Therefore, this study discusses some of these concepts. In addition, the study sheds some light on some problems foreign students might face and offers some solutions and suggestions to deal better with the new changes.

Material and Methods

Descriptive analysis method is used in this study by reviewing the literature, which discusses the status of foreign students and their cultural problems in the United States.

Results and Discussion

Why do foreign students go to the United States

The United States has been well served by its higher education system that, historically, was the product of two philosophies: commitment to the discovery and furtherance of knowledge and fulfillment of the needs of the people. The interaction of these twin philosophies has been tempered by four movements public control of higher

education institutions through boards of trustees; open admissions for high school graduates the university in service to the community; and the increasing importance of federally funded research. Only in its ability to influence foreign policy formation has American higher education proven itself to be less effective than in the other areas (Curris, 2010: 97-98).

Students look for an education in the United States for many reasons. Motivation often varies with students academic interests. Those studying agricultural, engineering, physical science, and medical science tended to be most attracted by the presumed superiority of American educational resources.

In a national survey, some students reported being motivated by an eagerness to acquire new skills. They may view study abroad as an opportunity for personal advancement and enhanced social capital on their return.

Some of them are task-centered individuals. For many of these students, the acquisition of a degree may acquire what seems to many of their advisers and teachers of disproportionate importance. Some task-centered students may see the relevance of such skills to the welfare of their country; others may be little involved with idealistic notions of their nation's welfare.

Also, a chief motive for a year's study in the U. S. may be to perfect their English; not at all to acquire either skills or an advanced degree. The fluent command of English plus American contacts may be far more important and realistic for returning students than achievement in formal studies (DuBois, 1956: 48-50).

Spaulding and Flack (1976) concluded that the major reasons foreign students come to the United States are to get an advanced education or training not available at home, to gain prestige with a degree from a U.S. institution, to take advantage of available scholarship funds, to escape unsettled political or economic conditions, and to learn about the United States. When a student from Mexico City who is studying film at New York University decided he wanted to be a filmmaker he decided to come to the United States to study. "If I could have stayed in Mexico, I would have," he said, "but there is only one film school there, and it is not a good one." Therefore, he enrolled in the program at New York University. A group of Malaysian students are studying computer science at a Midwestern university because their government has a training contract with that school.

Several students from El Salvador studying at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have continued into graduate programs to avoid returning to the political unrest at home (Pyle, 1986: 87; Zhao, 2021: 1-20). Another example is that an Austrian student may have lost his family during the war. He may have found economic and professional opportunities limited at home; he may view darkly the political future of his homeland, he may estimate that if he can once reach the United States, his opportunities for upward economic and social mobility will be enhanced. It seems to be true that many unmarried women students from widely diverse countries hope that marriage to an American citizen may result from a study sojourn here.

Each individual's desire to study in the States may be assumed to be a complex bundle of formal but honestly held reasons, of privately held objectives, and of unconscious needs. No single and simple factor is operative in the heterogeneous impulses that move men and women to study beyond the boundaries of their homelands. There is perhaps some virtue in recognizing that many legitimate reasons, objectives, and motives are operative both within a single individual and among different individuals (DuBois, 1956: 51).

While it is considered of vital importance that the student meet the people of the United States, learn to know U.S. culture, and observe democracy in action, these matters

are correlates of scholastic training and advancement and are always integral aspects of the total educational experience (Sasnett, 1962).

Stages of Adjustment

Often arrival adjustments between the student's sets and the American actualities begins to take place. The steps suggested here have been assigned neither value judgments nor time spans. The time required for an individual to pass through a series of adjustment will be a function of many complex, interlocking factors. Similarly, the quality of adjustment made can be decided only in a comparable way. The adjustive processes that are suggested here occur in four phases: the spectator; the adaptive; the "coming to terms;" and the "pre-departure."

The Spectator Phase

The spectator phase is characterized by psychological detachment from the new experience. Things happen to the visitor, which he notes as expected, strange, or novel. While the experience may be interesting, exciting, confusing, or even humiliating, the visitor is protected from serious distress or major influence since he is not yet personally involved in the new scene. This period may last until the first task or the first role as a participant in the American scene is undertaken. During the spectator phase the stresses of adjustment are assumed to exist primarily in the more superficial aspects of the personality. For example, considerable nervous fatigue may result from the frustration involved in neither fully understanding nor being able to express oneself in an unfamiliar language, or from efforts to catch the cues essential to courteous behavior in a strange society.

The Adaptive Phase

The adaptive phase is characterized by active involvement in the problem of adjustment of the life of the host country.

Adjustive stresses become prominent and the visitor tries out his repertory of adjustive strategies and tactics. This is the time during which the individual first begins to participate in American culture, when he or she enters upon the set tasks that require adaptation to American institutions, and when he or she becomes emotionally engaged in the network of values, customs, and habits available in this country. During this time, the adjustment stresses, whether minor or major in intensity, are felt more acutely.

The "Coming to Terms" Phase

The "coming to terms" phase sets in when the adaptive issues raised for the individual during the preceding phase are brought into an equilibrium. This period may be characterized by either marked positive or negative attitudes or by objective judgments of the host country. If the equilibrium is charged with negative effect toward the host country, overt criticisms and verbal aggressiveness may be more freely expressed than in the earlier phases. A foreign student who finds his or her sojourn in the United States threatening to personal equilibrium or damaging to self-esteem will react with one or more of the familiar ego-defense mechanisms. He or she may become more overtly aggressive or may react with depression and withdrawal and often seek out the buttressing support of a group of fellow-nationals. The foreign student may engage in compensating but not necessarily adaptive strivings in which the foreign student redouble: his or her work efforts. In some cases, the student may struggle to identify with the very source of the threat and become more American than the Americans."

The Pre-departure Phase

The pre-departure phase sets in shortly before the individual leaves the host country. The significance of returning home gets a new ascendancy in the awareness of the individual. The foreign student may look toward home with expectancy or

apprehension, and may try to fix the way by renewing contacts with the homeland if they have been allowed to lapse during the sojourn abroad. It may also be assumed that during this phase the foreign student sees the host country and the sojourn period with a somewhat altered perspective. It is worth mentioning that one perceptive person once remarked, "If you live in a country three months, you love it; if you live in it for a year, you hate it; if you live in it two years, you are used to it" (DuBois, 1956: 59).

Concerns of Foreign Students

Perhaps the most consistent generalizations about foreign students in the United States are those of Iowa State University sociologist Motako Lee (1981), who surveyed two thousand foreign students about their most important and best satisfied needs.

Lee developed a profile of the students most likely to have a satisfying educational experience in the United States: a Latin American or European graduate assistant who has good English skills, an American roommate, and a job waiting at home. In general, Lee found that foreign students place much greater importance on their academic goals, their lack of practical work experience, and uncertainty about careers; these were matters of great concern. Many foreign students--for instance, those from the Middle East--will have difficulties studying in the U.S. system. They usually have been trained to do independent library research or to write logical essays. They have only experienced the lecture method of teaching and have been asked to memorize facts in preparation for exams once or twice a year. Many of these students are not used to quizzes, frequent exams, assignments, and term papers. That is because the education systems that they come from stress memorization and knowledge is seen as a body of facts that students memorize. If students get this knowledge, or some of it, they are considered educated.

However, Americans conceive of knowledge as a constant discovery involving an ongoing search, a creative process requiring a different style of pedagogy (Pyle, 1986: 97).

Zhou et al. (2008: 63-75), discussed the Historical perspectives on culture shock they stated that the long established literature on migration includes many large-scale cross-national studies concerned with mental health. More recent studies on student sojourners tend to be smaller. Systematic research on overseas students only appeared after the 1950s, when there was a flood of research on their social and psychological problems (Zhou, 2008: 63-75).

They further said in describing and analysing students' adaptation problems, researchers have been influenced by the traditional perspectives on migration and mental health. In the past, two general explanations were proposed to account for the association between migration and psychological problems. The first argued that there were predisposing factors that could lead to selective migration, such as various characteristics of individuals, grief and bereavement (movement as response to loss and possibly resulting in further loss), fatalism (abandonment of control or, in contrast, a reactive attempt to seize control), and selective expectations of enhancement of life quality (that might be more or less realistic). The second argued that mental health changes might be a consequence of migration experiences, including negative life events, lack of social support networks and the impact of value differences (Zhou, 2008: 63-75).

In a similar situation Zhou and Todman (2008: 221-243), conducted a study on Chinese students who come to study in the UK and their UK teachers have to adapt to cultural differences in their experience of and expectations about teaching and learning traditions and practices. Qualitative and quantitative data were obtained for Chinese postgraduate students and the staff teaching them in two Scottish universities to investigate the extent of their shared perceptions and their reciprocal adaptations.

Students, especially those coming in groups, tended to deal with problems among themselves, which resulted in their teachers having limited awareness of their students' difficulties. Several themes that emerged in relation to reciprocal adaptation are discussed (Zhou and Todman, 2008: 221-243).

Research on foreign students in the United States of America:

Perraton (2017) did a study on foreign students in the twentieth century. The study reviewed the development of international student mobility in the twentieth century as exemplified by Britain, France, Russia or the Soviet Union, and the United States. It summarises data on international student numbers and describes the development of policy at an institutional and national level in these four countries. Conclusions are drawn and related to current policy debates (Perraton, 2017: 161-186).

Zhou et al. (2008: 63-75), reviewed Theoretical concepts of culture shock and adaptation as applied to the pedagogical adaptation of student sojourners in an unfamiliar culture.

The historical development of 'traditional' theories of culture shock led to the emergence of contemporary theoretical approaches, such as 'culture learning', 'stress and coping' and 'social identification'. These approaches can be accommodated within a broad theoretical framework based on the affective, behavioral and cognitive aspects of shock and adaptation. This 'cultural synergy' framework offers a more comprehensive understanding of the processes involved. Implications for future research, policy and practice are explored (Zhou et al., 2008: 63-75). Rao (2014: 274-281) stated that of late, over half the Ph.D.'s awarded in economics in the United States have gone to foreigners. At the same time, time to completion of a Ph.D. has risen. The presence of many foreign students in graduate economics programs may provide some insight for this longer duration. Rao explored this relationship and offered an explanation for the large number of foreign students studying in the United States (Rao, 2014: 274-281).

Cieboter (2015: 360-365) conducted a study in 1969 the purpose of this study was to examine the interrelationships between the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, grade-point averages (GPA), geographic area of origin, and college major field, for 218 foreign students enrolled in a graduate school in the United States.

It was established that both GRE scores and GPA differed significantly within the foreign student group, on the basis of geographic area of origin and college major field. It was also found that the GRE could not be used as a predictor of GPA (Cieboter, 2015: 360-365).

In an original article by Higher education in Europe Journal there are questions of what foreign students expect from higher education institution of the host country raised, i.e. and how, if at all, their institute is accommodating the specific needs of foreign students in terms of education that relates to development problems at home, are analyzed in the this article, in the context of higher education in the United States.

The article based on a speech given by Harold L. Enarson, President of Ohio State University, at the 1979 Conference on International Education: "International Education-The Global Context, The U.S. Role". The conference, which was organized by the Institute of International Education was held from 26 to 28 February 1979 in Washington D.C., and was attended by over 800 academic, business, and governmental leaders. The aim of the conference was to help give direction and unity to efforts on behalf of international education for the decade ahead (Higher education in Europe, 1979a: 20-23).

In addition, the journal of Higher education in Europe reported that there is a report of the Institute of International Education, entitled "Open Doors 1975/6 - 1976/7", is

devoted to the problem, of foreign students in United States colleges and universities (Higher education in Europe, 1979b: 23-25).

Brown and Ratcliff (2006: 11-21), plead for multicultural education at all levels of education in the United States but particularly at the level of higher education. For them, earlier conceptions of multiculturalism have not worked, be they assimilation, transitional multiculturalism and finally, what the authors call residual multiculturalism or what might also be called tokenism or the attempt to be overly all-inclusive in terms of emphasis of the particular. The authors propose a variety of multiculturalism that while emphasizing the core values of cultures serves as a unifying factor in a culture of difference. The latter must be incorporated into curricula, but not in a particularistic fashion; rather, the myriad groups must be interwoven into the very fabric of the university experience (Brown and Ratcliff, 2006: 11-21).

In analyzing international student mobility, there is a question, which is important from the point of view both of the individuals concerned and of society: what is the value of study abroad? The article deals with the evaluation of student experience in programs of undergraduate studies abroad within the context of higher education in the United States (Higher education in Europe, 2006).

The article is based on a paper written by W. Frank Hull IV, Associate Research Educator, office of the Chancellor, University of California, Santa Barbara, which was presented at the US International Studies Association in February 1978, in a session entitled taking the Measures of Undergraduate Study Abroad, Research and Evaluation (Higher education in Europe, 1978: 44-46).

Conclusion

We are on the threshold of significant changes in education and working conditions, which causes an urgent need for lifelong learning. We are obliged to give our society a system of higher education that would provide students with favorable conditions for finding the most fruitful application of acquired knowledge. The modern world is characterized by the intensive development of contacts between different countries. The flow of young people from one country to another who want to get a higher education is increasing. Preparatory faculties are the initial link in the system of training foreign specialists in U.S. higher education institutions. The organization of the content of students' training and management of their cognitive activity are the two most important issues, the solution of which leads to the successful scientific organization of the educational process at the preparatory faculties for foreign citizens. The analysis of the contingent of students shows that they are representatives of different education systems. The level of cognitive activity acquired by foreign citizens in their homeland, in many respects does not correspond to the level of knowledge of high school graduates in the U.S. In addition, there are significant differences in the methods of teaching in the U.S. and foreign education systems. One of the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of content management of foreign citizens at the preparatory faculties is a competent set of academic groups. Completion of groups at the moment takes place as students arrive (only the terms of arrival and future specialty are taken into account). Modern pedagogy requires a study of the initial level of cognitive activity of students both in terms of specific knowledge of the subject, preceded by new knowledge, and in terms of the formation of cognitive actions, the absence of which will not successfully implement the curriculum.

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