Cross-Cultural Communication and Adaptation Steps of Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students

by

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore and describe opinions, expectations and feelings of undergraduates TaiwanICDF students regarding cross-cultural communication and the steps they had been taking since they came to Taiwan to achieve their adaptation while using the language. For the study several definitions and theories/practices were explained in order to find how adaptation and communication between different cultures relate to each other. Therefore, an interview schedule, which comprised of 12 questions, was developed to get the opinions, expectations and feelings of those students. In total, 20 undergraduate students were asked for qualitative information; however 19 were included in the study. Those students have a scholarship from TaiwanICDF, and also came from African, Central American, and The Caribbean countries. After the interview was applied, the researcher found that no matter where the students came from they experienced similar feelings, and have similar opinions and expectations about their adaptation process and communication issues. Therefore this research has several conclusions and recommendations regarding the findings and the developed research questions.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, adaptation steps, acculturation, undergraduate TaiwanICDF students.
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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose, research questions, and the significance of the study, also the delimitations and definitions of terms. Those sections aim to explain the interest of the researcher on cross cultural communication and adaptation steps of undergraduate International Cooperation and Development Found (TaiwanICDF) students.

Background of the Study

Wagner (2004) noted in “Globalization and Higher Education” that in globalization economic, cultural and political processes have an impact on research and higher education. As globalization is encircling our living condition, it is also demanding more and better professionals, thus companies are determined to use the new talents in their benefits (Brown, 2003). Recently, jobs are demanding for candidates with higher educational level (The White House, 2014); therefore higher education and job opportunities are interrelated to each other. As remarkable changes are happening rapidly, and, also, needs of people, Brown (2003) stated that middle class families are more concern on better higher education, and get better knowledge and skills advantages for getting better job opportunities. For this reason, students are taking new risks in going to study in different parts of the world in order to develop professional competencies. The Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) were developed in order to decrease the poverty level of the world by the United Nations in 2000. So the MDGs are demanding more and more well-prepared professionals to help to accomplish those goals, because in a globalized environment there are different ways to deal with a problem. On the other hand, globalization is making traditional markets get mature, and emerging markets to expand themselves (Peters & Laljani, 2008), and for this reason people are getting interested on study abroad in order to get a global perspective. Currently, engineering, logistics environment, education, nursing, cosmetology and hairdressing, and, vehicle maintenance and repair, have become more popular among study abroad students (People’s Daily Online, 2009).

The potential of any kind of education program is to reduce the gap between people and promote equality on opportunities, and also to benefit the world (The spencer foundation, 2010). In consequence, international agencies such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United State Agency for International Development (USAID), International Cooperation and Development Found (TaiwanICDF), among other agencies, give
opportunities to developing countries citizens to study undergraduate, master, and PhD degrees by giving scholarship to study abroad; or even specializations on certain areas that might help to develop their own countries. As a result, the opportunity to study abroad has increased. On the other hand, the interest of people for studying abroad has been influenced by the need of contributing to solve complex problems of the world (Ashman, 2013), such as economic crisis, water crisis, animal extinction issues, climate change, among others. In order to reduce these problems, students need a global perspective that will be gained by studying abroad (Ashman, 2013).

A lot of countries in Asia provide different types of programs to international students; Taiwan is one of these countries. The Ministry of Education of the Republic of China (2014) “considers international cooperation and collaboration a cornerstone of its efforts to embrace internationalization, especially for institutions of higher education”, therefore the number of international students in Taiwan has increased from 26,488 in 2006 to 64,558 in 2012.

Official Development Assistance (ODA), or foreign aid, is defined as “voluntary transfer of resources from one country to another” (Foreign aid, n.d.), but it also includes technical cooperation. Different entities, nowadays, exist to support the foreign aid as the United Nations, Regional Development Banks, and other institutions, as the World Trade Organization and the European Union. Those institutions help less developed countries to achieve their Millennium Development Goals.

As part of those institutions, TaiwanICDF is an organization that was founded on July 1, 1996, and its mission is to “work for Humanity, Sustainable Development and Economic Progress” (Lee, 2014, p.165). TaiwanICDF is a bilateral organization that assists countries in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe financially and technically. This organization enhances these countries by its four core programs; (1) banking and finance to reduce poverty and develop their living conditions; (2) technical cooperation in agriculture, healthcare, private sector development, information and communication technology, and environment protection to increase their economic growth; (3) international human resource development by upgrading the society to advance economically and socially, but also to pool potential human resources given them scholarships; and (4) international humanitarian assistance by providing emergency aid and reconstruction assistance to nations that are affected by natural disasters (Lee, 2014).
The objective of the international education and training program of TaiwanICDF is “to help the partner countries to cultivate and develop a talented pool of human resources” (TaiwanICDF, 2014a). To achieve this objective, TaiwanICDF gives professional workshops, scholarships on higher education, and cooperate on training projects in association with international organizations. TaiwanICDF started providing higher education scholarships since 1998; see Table 1.1 and Table 1.2, respectively; and nowadays is working with 17 universities within Taiwan, which offer 28 different programs in different trends, to attract international students (TaiwanICDF, 2014b).

Table 1.1.
TaiwanICDF Alumni 1998 - 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>103</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
<td><strong>655</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>788</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* TaiwanICDF 2014.

Table 1.2.
Current TaiwanICDF Students 2011-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>103</td>
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<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>289</strong></td>
<td><strong>187</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>489</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* TaiwanICDF 2014.d
The scholarships conditions are to fill the online TaiwanICDF application, documents proving the nationality of the applicant such as passport or identification card, English translation of the highest level diploma and grades, a copy of the English proficiency certificate of the applicant, such as TOEIC or TOEFL; TaiwanICDF medical report, two letters of reference, and any other documents that can be requested (TaiwanICDF, 2014c). Therefore, the opportunity for studying in Taiwan is equal for all of the applicants, and for this reason a lot of international students come to study their undergraduate, master or PhD degrees with TaiwanICDF scholarships. Taiwan is prepare and is willing to help developing countries with education; therefore TaiwanICDF is providing “each year, scholarships to around 182 new students” (TaiwanICDF, 2014a).

Problem Statement

Opportunities to study abroad provided by international institutions are welcome by different citizens; however the cross cultural adaptation is not taking into account till the citizens arrive to the new country. Even the opportunities are excellent for every student, some factors might affect them. One of them is the adaptation to a foreign country. Since those students come from different part of the world, the culture in the host country is different. Because of culture differences, getting adapt to a different environment might be a problem for them. For this reason, when expatriates start to live in a different environment, they look for similar or familiar customs (InterNations, 2014).

Matsumoto and Yoo (2006) gave a definition of culture, which is “a meaning and information system shared by a group and transmitted across generations” (p. 235); consequently, “culture is learned through perception” (Chaney & Martin, 2007, p. 6). However, perceptions, even in the same culture, are not the same for every individual. Therefore, for persons from different cultural background are even more different, making intercultural communication a difficult process. Chaney and Martin (2007) suggested that as culture involve norms, rules and roles, so this will affect the coding and the decoding of messages. For this reason, this is the first impact on undergraduate TaiwanICDF students while adapting to a Taiwanese culture.

Culture shock, expressed as the feeling of being insecure, anxious and being lost, is commonly view as a normal process of adaptation to a new culture (Adler, 1975; Arensberg & Niehoff, 1964; Foster, 1962; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Lundstedt 1963; Oberg, 1960, as cited in Lynn, 2011). Consequently, most international students face it while living in
Taiwan due to the differences in values, behaviors, customs, laws, language, among other issues. Stroebe, van Vliet, Hewstone and Willis (2002) suggested that international students have adjustment difficulties that are associated to culture shock, so it will affect physically and psychologically TaiwanICDF students.

Park (1938) stated that “the social function of communication seem to be to bring about and maintain understanding and cultural solidarity among individuals” (p. 187). So culture, according to Singelis and Brown (1995), affects the individual psychologically, and consequently the way the individual communicates. As different cultures communicate with each other, this will bring to the acculturation process confusion and conflicts (Park, 1938) due to language, traditions and experiences. For example, Taiwanese can understand English; however their proficiency level is very low in comparison with China, the Philippines and South Korea. According to Pan (2013) high school students’ score was 582 points in the English proficiency test, which was higher than college and universities students, whose average was 504 points in 2012. On the other hand, some undergraduate TaiwanICDF students from Africa and The Caribbean are native English speakers, but Latin-American countries got low proficiency English level (McHugh, 2013). However, the Latin-American students that come to study to Taiwan, as a requirement to get the scholarship, and as mention before, a moderate level should be proven. Depending on the university and the programs offered by them, a score for English is settled and required. In most cases, more than 800 points in TOEIC or more than 80 points in TOEFL is required. When comparing the English level of Taiwanese and the English level of foreigners this means there is a big gap of almost 300 points.

For this reason, some Taiwanese lack of confidence for speaking English due to different reasons that involve culture issues and methods of teaching at schools. In one classroom can have up to forty to sixty students (Lin & Warden, 1998), making the learning process less effective or the attention from the professor to the students unequal. Taiwanese culture involves the Confucian culture, so for them [“Silence is gold, a real man should be good at thinking, but weak at speaking, keep your mouth shut but your eyes open, keep silent unless you can burst on the scene like a bombshell”] (Lin & Warden, 1998), and for this reason Taiwanese lack of confidence whenever they want to speak or when they should speak.

Ruben and Kealey (1979) expressed that “communication determines the individual’s ability to interact”, so “intercultural communication is the absence of cultural adaptation” (as
Taiwanese population has their own communication principles, and foreigner students are not aware of it when they arrive in Taiwan, so intercultural communication will become an issue for both, Taiwanese and foreigner population. As Taiwanese are learning English to communicate with foreign population, these undergraduate TaiwanICDF students are also required to study Chinese language in order to communicate with the Taiwanese population and to show respect for the culture. Due to the quantity and non-alphabetic system of the Chinese language, Chinese is a challenging language to learn (Luo, 2013). Consequently, those students experience two types of language anxiety; learning anxiety and survival anxiety (Schein, 2002); therefore learning a new language can affect negatively the acquisition of a foreign language (Liu, 2006). Because of the anxiety feelings of not getting Mandarin-Chinese, those undergraduates are still talking in English while communicating with locals, or still gathering with their own cultural background.

Since there is a relation between language and culture, the process of adaptation to the Taiwanese culture of these students might be affected depending on the area that those students are living. In the capital city the communication might be better, because English understanding is better, but in the central and south Taiwan communication problems will be more common.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

A lot of studies have been conducted to study acculturation, or the adaptation of foreign students, especially Asian, African and Latin American in other cultures, such as in the United States, Australia, England, among other countries (Chirkov et.al., 2008, Constantine et al., 2004; Carlson & Widaman, 1988); however, undergraduate students have not been studied related to cultural shock based on cross-cultural communication and their adaptation in Taiwan.

For this reason, the purpose of this study is to explore and describe the opinions, expectations, and feelings of TaiwanICDF undergraduate students about their communication problems and the steps they took, or keep taking, to get adapted to the Taiwanese culture. In consequence, based on the background of the study and to fulfill the research purpose, the following research questions were developed:
1. How undergraduate students of TaiwanICDF do perceive they deal with the culture shock issue?
2. What steps do they perceived they took to adapt themselves to the new culture?
3. Is language perceived by them to be a problem for living or studying in Taiwan?
4. How do they perceive they handled communication problems?

**Significance of the Study**

The study contributes not only the students but also TaiwanICDF and Taiwanese population. Taiwanese population is very open to foreigners; however the language barrier is a constraint to communicate with each other. Consequently, the study suggests not only comprehension from the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students, but also from the population.

On the other hand, it also provides future undergraduate TaiwanICDF students some ideas about the daily experiences when they arrive in Taiwan. These experiences will enhance newly arriving students to learn more about the Taiwanese culture before landing. Those experiences will give these new students reasons to learn the language a little bit faster to communicate better than the predecessors, who are having problems while communicating with the Taiwanese population in certain situations, such as in the traditional market, hospital, and other situations.

The ICDF managers are the closest contact to those students from TaiwanICDF; hence, the study will help those managers to understand more clearly the expectations, opinions and feelings from the actual students, so that ICDF managers and TaiwanICDF can find options to improve the communication issues for new undergraduate students to help them to adapt quicker.

**Delimitations**

The study focuses on cross-cultural communication and its impact on the adaptation steps of undergraduate TaiwanICDF students from Africa, Central America, and the Caribbean countries.

These undergraduate TaiwanICDF students are currently studying in Taipei, and have got a TaiwanICDF scholarship. The study focuses on students that got the scholarship in 2012 and 2013. For the study was required that those students which came in 2013 have at least six months living, continuously, within Taiwan.
Basic Assumptions

As the study involved undergraduate students over Taipei that came on 2012 and 2013, differences on the acceptance of the Taiwanese culture between them were perceived.

The first assumption is that students that came in 2012 are now more adjusted to the Taiwanese culture, and their daily problems with communication are not as frequent as the students that came in 2013.

The second assumption is that between students from different background, but not Chinese speakers, who are studying in Taipei, encounter similar communication problems since they came to Taiwan.

Definition of Terms

- **Adaptation steps:** The psychological adaptation is defined as “the ongoing process, anchored in the emotions and intellect, by which humans sustain in the mental and emotional states of being and in their interactions with their social and cultural environments” (Miller-Kane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, 2003). Adding to the definition of adaptation steps, steps are defined as “a measure or action, especially one of a series taken in order to deal with or achieve a particular thing” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014), and define as “one of sequence of separate consecutive stages in the progression towards some goal” (Collins Dictionary, 2014). Consequently, according to the definitions, adaptation steps in this study is refer to the actions the students are taking to get more comfortable with the social environment in Taiwan, and how they handle communication issues according to their experiences. Adaptation also has to be aware of time and willingness for acceptance the new culture.

- **Culture shock:** is a term that cannot be defined so easy, because it involves subjective behavior. Oberg (1960), who first introduced the term of culture shock, defined it as “a “disease” suffered by individuals living in a new cultural environment” (as cited in Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004). Pedersen (1994) defined it as “the process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment”. In 2006, Oberg defined culture shock as the “precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse”. Consequently, in this study, culture shock is referred to unsimilar issues experienced by the students.
- **Intercultural communication:** This term is divided into two concepts; communication and intercultural. Communication is defined by Samovar, Porter & McDaniel (2009) as “a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their internal states with other people through the use of symbols”. Intercultural is considered as the singularity and the irreplaceable characteristic of an individual within a social environment (Fleuri, 2003). Therefore, cultural communication, or intercultural communication, within this study is used as the communication between different cultures, and the problems that it might involve.

- **Perception:** is defined as “the conscious recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli that serve as a basis for understanding, learning, and knowing or for motivation a particular action or reaction” (Mosby’s Medical Dictionary, 2009). In the study perception comprises the opinions, expectations, and feelings of the sample regarding to communication issues in their daily life.
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents relevant literature, such as definitions, concepts, theories or practices which help the researcher to explain cross-cultural communication and adaptation steps of undergraduate TaiwanICDF students. The chapter is divided into three main sections which are related to the variables of the topic. Within the first main section is described several definitions and their relationships about cross-cultural communication. The second section aims to explain definitions and it relationships about adaptation steps. In the last section is presented the main theories that the study followed.

Cross-cultural Communication

Definition of Culture

According to Grimson (2000), culture is a controversial concept that through time has been defined by anthropologists as something that distinguishes one human being from another human being like a life style of living of a group of individuals, conduct patterns, values and its definitions, knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, morals and customs. However, culture, also, has to deal with changes such as boundaries and mixtures, internal variations of behaviors, integration, and coherence among them.

In consequence, culture is share across subgroups in a society, and it comprises cognitive, intellectual, psychomotor, effective and rationale components (Vargas Hernández, 2007), which are described by Hofstede (2001) as cultural dimensions. He, Hofstede, developed five dimensions based on the cultural values for particular countries, in order to understand their culture (Cullen & Parboteeah, 2013; Hofstede, 2001, 1991):

1. Power distance: “expectations regarding equality among people.”
2. Uncertainty avoidance: “typical reactions to situations considered different and dangerous.”
3. Individualism: “relationship between individuals and the group in society.”
5. Long-term orientation: “basic orientation toward time.”

Channey and Martin (2007) defined three important dimensions of a culture, which are the following, see Figure 2.1:
1. Language: the way to create a relation with others while communicating similar values and beliefs.

2. Physical: is the environment in which people interact to each other and its cultural activities.

3. Psychological: is the sharing of knowledge, beliefs, and mental activities within a culture.

The figure explains that in order to a culture exist, these three dimensions have to interact with each other; if one is missing there can be an incomplete interaction or misunderstandings while interacting. These dimensions contribute to each scenario a part of them so the culture scheme can be completed.

**Definition of Inter-culture**

Within the culture exists two very important terms; multi-culture and inter-culture. Multi-culture is considered by Moreira (2001), and Silva (2003, 2001) as the coexistence within different cultural background in a same social environment (as cited in Fleuri, 2003). On the other hand inter-culture is considered as the singularity and the irreplaceable characteristic of an individual within a social environment (Fleuri, 2003).
So, inter-culture takes place, as different from culture and multi-culture, when exist an approach to interchange information, ideas, thoughts, or feelings with someone, who comes from a cultural background different from yours (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2011). In consequence, when two persons or even a group from different parts of the world get in contact both have to recognized that there is a presence of another culture, because of different languages, manners, thoughts, religion, race, and other differences.

**Definition of Communication**

Communication has different definitions. Following the definition in the previous section, Samovar, Porter & McDaniel (2009) defined it as “a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their internal states with other people through the use of symbols.” (p.16). Rogers (1995) explained that communication takes place between unlike individuals, as a simple context. But communication not only encircles a person but it also involves process and environment.

Communication comes from the Latin communicem, which is the noun of action from the past participle stem of communicare, which means to share or to divide out (Communication, n.d.). So, according to De Valenzuela (1992), communication is “any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person’s needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge or affective states. Communication might be intentional or unintentional and may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or non-linguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes”.

The process of communication is very easy to understand when it is just applied in the same culture, and it involves sender, receiver, message, channel, response or feedback. The sender refers to the person or persons, who have the need to transmit something. The message is the verbal or nonverbal information that the sender wants to be transmitted via a channel. The channel is the way by which the message is transmitted, such as oral conversation, a conference call, a telegram, among others. The receiver is the target of the sender, which means is the person, who the sender wants to transmit a message to. The response and feedback are different concepts, but one lead to another. The response is the way the receiver acts after decoding the message from the sender, and the feedback is how the message is effective to the receiver; but depending on it, the sender can modify or amplify it (Samovar et.at, 2011).
Cross-Cultural (Intercultural) Communication

Now that the concepts of culture and communication are expressed, many authors think that both concepts are interrelated with each other. To explain what that means, Smith (1966) explained that “Culture is a code we learned and shared, and learning and sharing require communication. Communication requires coding and symbols that must be learned and shared” (as cited in Chaney & Martin, 2007, p.1-2); as represented in Figure 2.1. Culture cannot be known without communication, and communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports (Jandt, 2000, p.22). Because of this closest relationship between culture and communication, the process of communication not only supports same culture interaction but different cultures, too.

Samovar et.al (2011) agreed that communication has a purpose, such as persuade, inform or entertain someone. Communication is used with an intention, and it is only worthy when interacting with someone; nonetheless, information processing, personality, social relations, habits, norms, rules, roles, networks, language and environment are native characteristics from an individual; therefore those factors play an important role while communicating.

In a context from the same culture, see Figure 2.2, communication is easier because the environment is the same, even with problems as noise, one can understand a person with the same language and culture, and this makes the communication effective. However, misunderstandings may take place, too, but not regarding cultural issues.

![Diagram of communication process]

*Figure 2.2. Communication process between two persons with a same cultural background.*

*Source:* Adapted from *International dimensions of organizational behavior: Communicating across cultures* by N. Adler and A. Gundersen, 2007, p. 74. Copyright 2008 by Thomson Learning, Inc.
On the other hand, the process in cross-cultural communication is quite the same, but in this involved environment, language, gestures, perception, and the culture itself, making the process more complex, see Figure 2.3. Not everyone in a different culture has the same level in speaking a foreign language, or understanding a different culture.

![Diagram of Communication Process](image)

**Figure 2.3.** Communication process between two persons with different cultural background.  
*Source 1:* Adapted from *International dimensions of organizational behavior: Communicating across cultures*, by N. Adler and A. Gundersen, 2007, p. 74. Copyright 2008 by Thomson Learning, Inc.  

Samovar et al. (2009) defined cross-cultural communication as the process by which people with different “cultural perceptions and symbol systems are different enough to alter the communication event.” However, its biggest problem is the cross-cultural miscommunication that occurs when the person from the second culture does not receive the intended message of the sender (Adler & Gundersen, 2007). In the intercultural communication process participates perception, patterns of cognition, verbal behaviors, non-verbal behaviors, and the influence of context (Samovar, et.al, 2011):

1. Perceptions: Mosby’s Medical Dictionary defines perception (2009) as “the conscious recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli that serve as a basis for understanding, learning, and knowing or for motivation a particular action or reaction”. According to Rowland (1906) is defined as “the consciousness of particular
material things present to sense”. Giving these definitions, Samovar et.al (2009) explained that culture modifies what is seen, heard, tasted, and smelled.

2. Patterns of cognition: is the way on how a person resolves a problem, and the influence of the culture on the person affects the way to recognize and solve a problem. Nisbett (2003) found that “Northeast Asians, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans, employ holistic thinking patterns, whereas Westerners use a linear cause-and-effect model” (as cited in Samovar et.al, 2011). Subsequently, Samovar et.al (2011) agreed that the patterns used in a culture might be a problem while interacting with another culture.

3. Verbal behaviors: as mention before, Jandt (2000) established that culture without communication cannot exist, and communication is present when the culture is understood. This means that communication and culture depend on each other, because if communication does not exist culture cannot be transmitted to future generations. Consequently, language also is part of the culture, in which is developed symbols in common within a culture to give meaning to objects, events, emotions, experiences, and places (Samovar et.al, 2011).

4. Non-verbal behaviors: as the verbal is the noisy part of a communication, non-verbal expressions are necessary in order to bring better meaning to words. Gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture and movement, touch, dress, silence, space and time, objects and artifacts form part of non-verbal behaviors. As each culture defines its own language code, also it does for non-verbal code culture (Samovar et.al, 2011).

5. Influence of context: culture modifies not only verbal and non-verbal behaviors, but context, too. This means that it modifies also the way of interaction in physical and social situations. While intercultural communication, it is necessary the awareness of it, in order to not disrespect any culture (Samovar et.al, 2011).

The combination of these elements from culture and communication creates a culture shock to foreigners, in this case to undergraduates TaiwanICDF students that come to Taiwan to study. The awareness about the language, the interchange of experiences, and culture are unperceived by the new scholars before coming to Taiwan. Once the students come to Taiwan, their concern is how to ask for something to eat, to drink, to wear, and how to communicate; however, this is not simple to these scholars because of the differences in language, even though they are concerned about the type of food, the behavior of the population, among others. At this point, culture shock takes place.
Oberg (1960) defined culture shock as the anxiety of people resulting from the uncertainty of what to do in a different culture. Pedersen (1994) conceptualized it as “the process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment.” Samovar and Porter (2004), and, Chaney and Martin (2007), who have similar definitions, converged culture shock definition as the experienced trauma of not understanding the verbal and non-verbal communication of the host culture, its customs, and its value system. Even though culture shock is conceptualized and defined, the reaction is subjective and each person feels it in different ways, and tries to adapt in different ways, too. However, every expatriate is always aware about the feeling of being ridiculous, and what he or she knows about how to behave is not helping him or her in the new environment.

Oberg (1960) explained his concept of culture shock by developing a theory, which described the six negatives aspects of culture shock. These negative aspects are: “(1) strain resulting from the effort of psychological adaptation, (2) a sense of loss or deprivation referring to the removal of former friends, status, role, and/or possessions, (3) rejection by or rejection of the new culture, (4) confusion in the role definition, role expectations, feelings, and self-identity, (5) unexpected anxiety, disgust, indignation regarding cultural differences between the old and new ways, and (6) feeling of helplessness as a result of not coping well in the new environment.” (p. 2)

The process of communication takes a very important part within a culture. Communication is the method by which population within a country interact with others. However, the globalization and the foreign aid are pushing some changes within a culture. These changes are making host culture interact closely with foreigner visitors, such as students, workers, travelers, etc. But the changes are not only for the host population but for the foreigners, who should adapt to and understand the new culture. Undergraduate students, as any other foreigner that spends a long time in another culture, suffer from culture shock, and language shock, but they can overcome those issues by opening their mind, and by becoming involved in the host culture.

Adaptation Steps

Definition of Adaptation

Adaptation is a broad term that comprises culture shock, assimilation, adjustment, and acculturation (Begley, 1994; Kim, 1995, as cited in Chang, 2008). It also is understood as
changes from individual living in a foreign country caused by the demands of the environment (Berry, 1997). Hazuda, Stern and Hoffner (1988) defined it as “the process of adjusting and adapting to a new and different culture” (Chaney & Martin, 2007, p. 8). Acculturation, according to Valencia and Johnson (2008), is the process by which individuals adapt to cultural environmental changes. For this reason, adaptation is “a complex and dynamic process, and an inevitable part of intercultural interactions” (Chang, 2008, p.8). Graves (1967) developed the psychological acculturation term, which is the experienced changes because of the interaction with people from other cultures (as cited in Berry, 1990). As both definitions are interrelated, for this study, the terms of adaptation and acculturation will be treated as similar definitions, which mean it will be referred as the psychological and physiological changes caused from living in a different cultural environment.

**Intercultural Adaptation**

Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, p.149) stated that “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (as cited in Berry, 1997). Consequently, studies in “cross-cultural psychology has demonstrated links between cultural context and individual behavioral development” (Berry, 1997, p. 5). This means that the acceptance of a culture will determine the level of adaptation of the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students. Berry (1990; 1997) defined the acculturation strategies; assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Sam, 2000; Pham & Harris, 2001; Chaney & Martin, 2007; Jian, 2012), see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.4.

Table 2.1.

*Definitions of the Dimensions of Acculturation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Happens when the individual values more the new culture forgetting her or his own culture, and looks for constantly interaction with members of different cultural backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>The individual interacts daily with other cultures without modifying and maintaining the own culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalization</td>
<td>Happens when the individual loses its own culture but also does not acquire and has little interest on the host culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>The individual has less or none interaction with other cultures, because he or she puts more value to his or her own cultural background.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figure 2.4 integrates the degree of adaptation perceived by the foreigner population. The question “is it considered to be of value to maintain one’s identity and characteristics?” is referring to the degree that the foreigner is willing to change its identity and accept the host culture as its own. The second question “is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society?” refers to the degree of importance for a foreigner to maintain a relationship with the host culture and the facilities that the host population might give them.

**Definition of Adaptation Steps**

When expatriates enter to a new culture environment, they keep their own culture and keep acting as they were living in a place where their culture was the same (Noesjirwan &
Freestone, 1979). However, entering to a new culture environment, where customs, beliefs, laws, values, among others are different, will modify the way international population perceive things and, in consequence, their behavior; as explained in Table 2.1 and showed in Figure 2.4.

However, after leaving for some time in this new environment a certain strategy of acculturation will be follow depending on the view and desires of the individual (Chaney & Martin, 2007), see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.4. Adler (1975) added that also the individual is more aware about the new culture and will try to develop skills and knowledge that will help him or her to move on. But, acculturation can be different depending on the individual level and population level, which involves ecological, cultural, social, and institutional aspects.

Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health (2003) state that psychological adaptations is “the ongoing process, anchored in the emotions and intellect, by which humans sustain in the mental and emotional states of being and in their interactions with their social and cultural environments”. Oxford Dictionaries (2014) defines steps as “a measure or action, especially one of a series taken in order to deal with or achieve a particular thing”, and Collins Dictionary (2014) define it as “one of sequence of separate consecutive stages in the progression towards some goal”.

Individuals act, think and perceive things differently, which means that “there are not standard formulas for overcoming culture shock” (Da Cunha, 1980) and get adapted easily. According to Berry (1997) these individuals and groups apply different approaches to get adapted and accept the host culture. For taking some steps to adapt to a new place, it is important to take into account why and for how long the individuals will be interacting with the host culture (Berry 1997). Ho (1995) suggested that the level of adaptation to a new place depends on the age and that there is any sequence of steps to follow for getting adapted. This is also supported by Zapf (1991), who suggested that expatriates confronts different experiences and that they are giving a personal meaning; however this meaning will have a good or a bad impact on the expatriates, causing them disorientation, frustration or being afraid.

As mentioned before, those steps for getting adapted have to be influenced by the culture in the host country. Expatriates must get adapted to a new environment, such a population density, dietary changes, exposure to new diseases, loss of economic status or new job opportunities, new friends, new language acquisition, alteration of value systems, among
other deeper changes (Berry, 1997). Therefore, the steps to get adapted will vary depending on the different situations an individual might be passing through.

Berry (1997) found in others authors work that adaption in “older youth do often experience substantial problems, particularly during adolescence”. As this study is reviewing undergraduate students, this fact is really important to figure out which steps these students are taking to get adapted to their new environment. In adaptation steps process studies have found that females present more problems than males, and the level of education that these students bring with them will help them to take better decisions for a good adaptation.

As an example of the explanations about adaption steps, Anderson (1971) described the experience of 15 American scholars in India. All of them experienced culture shock, and problems to get adapted to their new environment. Therefore, they recorded their dreams in order to compare them and analyze them. She found that they passed through an “identity crisis that accompanies the mixed cultural affiliation which is a part of these processes of adaptation to culture shock” (Anderson, 1971). The second example is the experience of 31 foreign-born teachers in the United States studied by Joan F. Fee in 2010. Those teachers presented culture shock regarding many things in their new environment; such as housing, transportation, social security, doctors, stores, appropriate clothing, among other. One step to resolve this was their “appreciation of practical help and social support” (Fee, 2010). A second steps was to look for primary arrival professors to get some help. The third step they took was asking for help to the school district and the university; but most of them were required but the new teachers. A fourth step was to look for their master’s cohort. Victor Savicki (2010) studied the sociocultural adaption of 59 U.S university students and he found that one of the steps they follow was to help to each other while encountering bad experiences, also to look for some support of the university and counselors to get adapted. Doyle (2009) suggested that students should be aware of the episodes and be mature to encounter them; also to respect the differences between cultures. Ulla K. Bunz (1997) explained in her findings that for getting adapted it is necessary to “find out about the new culture, learn the basics of the language, observe carefully, tolerate differences, and develop flexibility”; also for her an important step was to gain new experiences and memories.

Therefore, adaptation steps in this study is referred to the actions that the students are taking to get more comfortable with the social environment in Taiwan, and how they handle
communication issues according to their experiences in order to get cultural adapted to Taiwan.

**Theories of Cross-Cultural Communication and Adaptation Steps**

Furnham and Bochner (1982) found that the most common problems of students while living abroad are “language problems, accommodation difficulties, racial discrimination, separation reactions, dietary adjustments, financial stress, misunderstandings and loneliness.” (as cited in Lewthawai’ta, 1996). For that reason, the process of acculturation, as mentioned before, is not easy and will depend on the willingness of the TaiwanICDF undergraduate students. The explanations of the process of communication within two different cultures and culture shock issues gives a better understanding about the steps that undergraduate students normally follow to get over depression or anxiety feelings during the first six months within Taiwan. Also, this study gives some understanding about how these students are dealing with communication problems regarding the language in their daily life.

The six negatives aspects explained in the theory of Oberg are seen as normal and expected reactions of people, in general, and form part in the adaptation process within culture differences (Furnham, 1993). These reactions mean that every person has to deal with these feelings to get adapted to a different culture, and do not matter if is a student, businessman, professor or just a traveler. The feeling of anxiety and insecurity of people are very common, because it is easy to feel that, as a foreigner, they not belong to the host culture that everybody is looking at them, that they do not have any relative or friend in the host country, and, in consequence, they lack of the “social importance” that they have in their own country. Culture shock is a personal experience; however, “as the situations changes in expected directions”, people, in general, needs to build “new perspectives on self, others, and the environment that “fit” with the new situations.” (Pedersen, 1994, preface)

So Searle and Ward (1990) suggested that cross-cultural transition needs the combination of psychological and socio-cultural variables; the psychological variable refers to “the feelings of well-being and satisfaction”, and the socio-cultural variable refers to “the ability to fit in or negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture.” That means that the changes will impact emotionally, psychologically, behavioral, cognitively and physiological on individuals (Pedersen, 1994). But those changes depend on the individual, so the psychological adjustment is based on the personality, social support and life change variable, while sociocultural adaptation is based on culture distance, the frequency of communication with
the host population, and the cultural knowledge (Ward et al., 1998). For that reason, the students will reflect the steps they have been taking since they came to Taiwan to feel they are part of the Taiwanese culture regarding their level of depression and the social difficulties (Ward & Searle, 1991).

Zapf (1991) suggested some strategies for counselors that help those expatriates passing through a hard time and are trying to get adapted to a new environment. The first step is to recognize that the students, or any other expatriate, are experiencing culture shock and that this process is common and unavoidable. As a part of this recognition, and second step, Kealy (1978) found that the student should be able to recognize strange patterns that he or she is getting involve to; such as drinking problem, avoiding people, being unable to control their emotions, writing to their families or friends back home, constantly complaining about the new society or culture, adopting negatives attitudes towards locals, among others. A third step that is discussed by Zapf (1991) is to talk to people who already experienced the same before and look from them support. The fourth step is concerning about the language, which plays an important role in the adjustment process; therefore the need of assisting to a language program is recommended. Consequently, it is essential for the students to recognize which situations are they feeling overwhelmed and try to analyze those situations.

Wilson et al. (1995) suggested five different steps to help to get adapted or to overcome culture shock. The first step is to get enough information about the host country, such as language, value system, norms, customs, etc. As a second step, he suggested to learn, before landing the new country, the basics of the new language; “the better the language skills, the more likely an easy adjustment” (Bunz, 1997). The following step was to learn from personal experiences and ask for explanations of the different outcomes. The fourth step was to be tolerant to the new culture, population and the way they normally do their things. And, as a final step, was to be open-minded and enjoy new things.

Samovar et.al (2009) stated that “the requirement to understand cultural differences and communicate across cultural borders has increased exponentially” (p. 4). Therefore, language, for Smith (1972), is comprised of three general functions; communicative, integrative, and expressive. As part of the culture shock, the language shock is important, because it occurs when a person cannot express themselves due to language issues with others in a different culture (Smalley, 1963). Because of that, Herman (1961) suggested that the choice of language might shed light on problems of motivations associated with the
learning of a new language. He also explained that people speak native language when they are in public places, because it is easy to be derogated or humiliated (Herman, 1961, p 193). According to Wei (1994, p.6), “language choice is an ‘orderly’ social behavior, rather than a random matter of momentary inclination”. For those reasons students, in this case, feel that they need to build something new to release the anxiety and insecurity, such as academic status, friends, or something that make them confident. As a consequence, students decide to gather with others that speak their native language. So, for the third research question, the researcher will address the communication problems in the daily life when those students have to speak with the Taiwanese population.

According to the definition of communication of De Valenzuela (1992), Venable (2011) stated the seven C’s of effective communication, even though they were developed for the marketing field (Cutlip & Center, 1952), they can be used in informal ways of communication, making the communication process valuable and respectful in any field; clarity (the use of the correct and simplest words), completeness (take into account who, what, when, why, where and how questions so that the receiver understand a complete idea), conciseness (do not give more information as the necessary), concreteness (use some facts that may reinforce what you want to explain or say, to minimize misunderstandings), correctness (try to use correct grammar and be accurate), courtesy (use correct level of voice and expressions), and consideration (always be respectful to those to whom you are communicating).
CHAPTER III RESEARCH DESIGN

The following chapter is comprised of seven sections that propose the procedures to be taken in order to achieve the purpose of the study; research framework, research method and instrument development, participants, research procedure, data collection process, data analysis and, reliability and validity.

Research Framework

The theories explained in the section above give different views of how the communication process influences the adaptation steps that might be taken for the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students in order to communicate with the Taiwanese population.

Based on “Six negative aspects of culture shock theory,” by K. Oberg (1960); “Psychological and sociocultural adaptation theory,” by Searle and Ward (1990); “Steps to overcome culture shock,” by Zapf (1991) and Wilson et al. (1995); “language shock theory,” by Smalley (1963); and “7 Cs of communication,” by S.M. Cutlip and A.H. Center (1952), the following theoretical or conceptual framework was developed in order to explain the communication process and adaptation steps of the different cultures of TaiwanICDF students while interacting with Taiwanese population within Taiwan, see Figure 3.1.

The cross-cultural environment in Taiwan involves national population and foreign population, and it should be a way that both populations interact with each other; therefore culture and the communication affect that interaction. The interaction between these two cultures must follow the process of communication for them to create a network that helps to understand the demands of each other. Each culture has their own characteristics, and when different cultures interact, several problems might be encounter for non-native speakers and native speakers while coding and decoding messages.

Culture A, being TaiwanICDF undergraduate students, has a different cultural background, and to get in contact with the local population first they have to get adapted. However, before acculturate to Taiwanese culture, Culture A has to deal with different aspects, such as psychological aspects (depression, the feeling of being lost, etc.), sociocultural aspects (interaction with locals, accept the cultural differences, etc.), culture shock (traditions, food, dressing way, etc.), and language shock issues (anxiety or fear while talking the local language).
As those students are dealing with these issues by their own, they are developing certain steps in order to get adapted or acculturated to the Taiwanese culture. Hence, once these students accept and understand more and more the host culture, communication for them with the locals will be easier, because they can understand how to express themselves effectively following the structure of Taiwanese communication. As the communication process is two ways and the Culture A adapts to the local culture, Culture B will be able to answer or give feedback. In consequence, cross-cultural communication can be achieved.

![Conceptual framework of adaptation steps and communication between different cultures](image)

*Figure 3.1.* Conceptual framework of adaptation steps and communication between different cultures.

**Research Method and Instrument Development**

For fulfilling the purpose of this study, the method adapted a qualitative approach to collect, analyze, and finalize the data. So for the study, a series of questions were developed and comprised an interview schedule. An interview schedule is used for doing a structured interview, which is comprised of questions in a structured order and has its own specific instructions for delivering the interview questions (Fowler, 2004).

This instrument, which is asking for qualitative information from the students, had 12 questions based on the research questions and the theoretical framework; see Table 3.1 followed by the Table 3.2. The content of the interview schedule was developed following the research questions and the theories or practices used within this study, and with the supervision of three experts; an expert on the developing of interview schedule and two
experts on cross-cultural issues. The instrument, after being approved from the experts mentioned, was validated by four TaiwanICDF managers for undergraduate programs. The reliability for the interview schedule was obtained by the suggestions and revision of the experts. The expert was chosen because of the “highly technical knowledge” (Slocum, 2005, p. 121). On the other hand, the validity of the developed instrument was established through an interview with TaiwanICDF managers who discussed each question in depth, because of their experiences with international TaiwanICDF students. After the discussion, the TaiwanICDF managers gave the researcher some recommendations and approved the content; and gave the consent to do the interview to the undergraduate students.

Table 3.1.

Research Questions based on Theories/Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Theories or Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How undergraduate students of TaiwanICDF do perceive they deal with the culture shock issues?</td>
<td>The six negative aspects of culture shock of Oberg (1960).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is language perceived by them to be a problem for living or studying in Taiwan?</td>
<td>Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center (effective public relations, 1952): 7 Cs of communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3.2.

*Interview Questions based on Research Questions (Based on Interview Schedule Order)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When you came to Taiwan, what problems did you encounter in adjusting?</td>
<td>1. How undergraduate students of TaiwanICDF perceived dealing with the culture shock issues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do these problems affect you personally and in what way?</td>
<td>2. What steps do they perceived they took to adapt themselves to the new culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you feel that you are currently over the culture shock?</td>
<td>3. How did you handle communication problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What did you do to get over the feeling of homesickness, or any other feeling of sadness?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How did you handle daily communication problems when you first came to Taiwan? For example, ordering food or drinks, taking a taxi, going to hospitals or clinics, the feeling of being lost.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Now that you have been living a while in Taiwan, is communication still a problem for you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Have you taken any Chinese language course, so you can communicate with the population?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are you taking any Chinese course in your university?</td>
<td>4. Is communication perceived by them to be a problem for living or studying in Taiwan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do you like Chinese language?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How many hours per week do you take those classes and how many hours do you practice by yourself?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Do you practice your Chinese speaking skill with your native language speakers’ friends?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Do you think that your Chinese learning or courses are helpful to communicate and adapt yourself to Taiwan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participants**

This study followed a qualitative approach to understand the feelings and opinions of undergraduate TaiwanICDF students about their living experiences while communicating and what they have done or still doing to get adapted to a new country like Taiwan. The target group for this study was students of the undergraduate level, who came in the year 2012 and 2013 to study for their first, second or third degree in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan. The 2013 students had lived at least six months, continuously, within Taiwan. Black and Mendenhall (1991) suggested a time line in months that individuals faced in the U-Curve, in which they proposed the stage and approximately the time a person might take to overcome it. Since getting adapted to a new culture varies from person to person (Berkeley International Office,
A lot of diverse students come to Taiwan to study; however, the target of those students for this study was focused on students that came from African, Latin American, and the Caribbean countries. Latin American students came especially from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Costa Rica was not part of the students chosen for this study since TaiwanICDF have no governmental relationship with the Costa Rican government. The whole sample was 20 students in total for this study; five students from Africa, eight students from Latin America, and seven students from the Caribbean; as shown in Table 3.3. For some personal reason and unconformity of being part of the study one of the participants, after the interview and the member check validation, asked the researcher not to be included in the study, because the student was feeling insecure about the participation. Consequently, based on the time limitation, the researcher included 19 students for finishing the study.

Table 3.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants Code*</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year of Arrival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF-1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-5</td>
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<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC-1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC-2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Saint Vincent and The Grenadines</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC-3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Saint Vincent and The Grenadines</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>TC-4</td>
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<td>Belize</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC-5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC-6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC-7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: AF, CA, TC refers to the area they came from, AF refers to African countries, CA to Central American countries, and TC to The Caribbean countries. The Number after the dash refers to the number of the interviewee.
Research Procedure

There are many ways for getting a research topic, such as observation, by the request of companies, or even by personal experiences. The researcher, as a TaiwanICDF student, was selected and sponsored to study a master in Taiwan. As well as some of the interviewee students, the researcher came from a Central American country encountering many cultural differences and communication barriers. Therefore, the researcher was interested on how people in their youth and needed to live in a foreign country for several years was coping to a host culture and how they were dealing with communication issues.

First, the research topic on cross cultural communication and adaptation steps of undergraduate TaiwanICDF students was identified. After identifying the research topic, literature was reviewed for a better understanding of the concept of the main variables and the relationship among them.

From the literature review was identified many theories and practices from different authors that support the relation among the involved variables of this study, so according to the found information, a conceptual framework was developed for a graphical understanding of the involved terms within the study.

The researcher decided to utilize qualitative approach. Consequently, an interview schedule was developed following the research questions and theories or practices, which were identified and explained in the literature review. For collecting the data, the interview schedule was probed to undergraduate TaiwanICDF students in order to collect their opinions and feelings regarding the main topic.

The data analysis of the collected data was done in several steps; at first the recordings of the audio were transcribed. Secondly, those transcripts were sent to the students in order to valid the information. After obtaining the approval of the students, each transcript was analyzed and categorized by subtopics and main topics. Thirdly, and as a part of answering the research questions, the transcripts were used to support what was found in the literature review.

The findings and conclusions/recommendations were developed based on the analysis of the data. The Figure 3.2 was developed for a graphical understanding of the research procedure followed during this study.
Figure 3.2. Research procedure.

**Data Collection Process**

**Interview Procedure**

The interview procedure is explained in the following paragraphs. The first step to collect the data was to build up the questions for the interview schedule based on the research questions and the theories or practices of cross-cultural communication and adaptation explained in the literature review section. After comprising the interview schedule, it was revised by three experts and validated by TaiwanICDF managers.

With the interview schedule ready, the criteria for choosing the undergraduate students was settled, as described in the section of the participants, and was decided the way to look for the participants. In most qualitative studies chain referral sampling, also known as snowball sampling, is well used, because of its facility in getting participants according to the research purpose. Referral sampling, or snowball sampling, is a method by which one participant might refer one or more participants, who also meets the research criteria settled by the researcher (Morgan, 2008).

Because of the diversity of the students and the number of universities around Taipei, referral sampling was primarily used in order to find those students who met the criteria explained in the participants section. The researcher asked to friends regarding the research
topic, and they referred some of their friends or classmates, who were interested on the topic and to be part of the study. After the referral, the researcher talked to referred sample in order to confirm if they were suitable for the study, based on the criteria settled in the participants section, and their willingness to participate during the process.

The execution of the interview schedule involved one-to-one interview, which is a technique, generally used in social and health sciences, which collects data about the perceptions, understandings and experiences regarding a particular issue of the interviewee (Ryan et al., 2009). The on-to-one interview was chosen because it gives people the confidence to express him/her-self about a certain issue, because it just involves the interviewer and the interviewee. However, practical problems with a one-to-one interview were faced, such as the scheduled time for the meeting, got a quiet space to perform the interview, among other minor problems. On the other hand, this kind of interview made the researcher get constructive information about the research topic of this study, because of the facility to interact with a single person about their perceptions, feelings, experiences, and problems from their daily life situation since they came to Taiwan.

Several interviews were done for the Caribbean, for the African, and for the Central American students. A convenient place and time for each student was scheduled. The number of students interviewed during a day varied, and each session lasted between 15 to 25 minutes. At the day of the interview the proceeding for the process of the interview was explained to the each student, and a request of their confirmation about their willingness to participate was re-asked to each of them; additionally the researcher also asked for their permission to record their participation for its analysis. As well during the interview the help of an assistant was needed to handle with minor problems, such as receiving the coming student and taking notes during the interviews. The taken notes helped the researcher to make a cross-checking with the transcripts.

The assistant employed in this study, studies mass communication and journalism at Ming Chuang University. He was picked because he has been studying in Taiwan since four years ago. As he is also a scholarship recipient, he understands the situation and the problem statement of this study.

All of the participations were audio recorded, and were analyzed in depth according to the interview schedule. For the cross-checking process the transcripts were compared with the notes taken by the assistant during each session. After that first validation with the assistant,
the transcripts were sent to each student for their validation of their participation. The students returned their file. Some of them included more information and other approved the file.

**Data Analysis**

The analysis of qualitative data depends on the purpose of the researcher. For this study, the researcher used interview as a method for obtaining the data; therefore several steps were taken in order to analyze the obtained data. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) suggest different steps in order to analyze qualitative data. The first step they suggested is to get familiar with the data. After, they suggested categorizing the data obtained from the interview schedule by research question or topic, time period or event, which will lead to have a solid understanding of the similarities or differences on the responses. The last step they suggested is to make a holistic interpretation of all the findings within the process.

For the analysis of the data the steps suggested by Taylor-Powell and Renner were used. Therefore the researcher listened to the recordings many times and made the transcripts that were useful for the purpose of the study. After writing the transcripts, the transcripts were sent to the students and validated by them.

With their approval of the transcript, the researcher started to analyze the data finding the similarities that were organized into categories. These similarities corresponded to each variable on the developed conceptual framework. For example, excitement, depression, feeling lost, etc., were put into psychological variables category. As each variable respond to a research question and a theory or practice, the categories were arranged into a main topic. For example, psychological experiences were put into first adaptation perception; see Table 3.4 as an example.

Table 3.4.

*Example of Categorization of Variables, Categories, Subcategories and Key Points*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation Process</td>
<td>1.1 First Adaptation</td>
<td>1.1.1 Psychological</td>
<td>1.1.1.1 Loneliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>1.1.1.2 Frustration</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1.1.1.3 Homesick</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1.1.1.4 Low Personal Growth.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.1.5 Shock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For a holistic view and to give an answer to each research question, the answers of the participants were used to support the literature review. The opinions of the participants were used in order to exemplify the findings for each research question, and their relation with the theories described in the literature review.

To maintain the privacy of the participant, for each of them a code was developed and given. The code contained the following components: initials from the area they come from (AF – Africa, CA – Central America, and TC – The Caribbean), and the number of the participant; for example: CA-1, refer to Table 3.3 in page 29.

**Reliability and Validity**

Each process of this study was reliable and valid; in consequence the whole process is reliable and valid, see Figure 3.2. Identify the topic, review literature regarding the topic, and developing the framework for this study is reliable because of the ability of the researcher by searching papers related to the identified topic in scholar databases; while the validity is measured because the reviewed paper on those database are already validated; however the review of different expert was used in order to make the content consistent and precise.

The instrument development was developed under the supervision of three experts. These experts followed the same process to check the interview schedule. At first they had to review the research questions and the theories or practices used to develop the interview questions. After having the suggestions and validation of the panel of expert, the instrument was validated again by TaiwanICDF managers in order to proceed with the collection of data stage.

For the data collection, each interview was held in a public place and the same interview schedule was used. The researcher used the same interview schedule to interview the sample included within this study. The reason for using the same questions for all the participants is that the researcher attached to the expert review and not take the risk on asking different questions that would not match to the purpose and the research questions of the study. The interview schedule and its guideline were presented before starting the interview to each participant. At the same time, to make the study reliable, which means credible, neutral or confirmable, consistent or dependable, and applicable and transferable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), the assistant was taking notes about what each student was saying during the interview.
After collecting the data, the analysis of data was held. In consequence, to make it reliable, each interview was transcribed following the response to each questions and grouped by region, see Table 3.3 in page 29. On the other hand, its validity was due to the member check, which is a way to enhance credibility to the study, since the researcher asked the interviewees to revise their own participation (Mertens, 2005). Each participant was given a code in order to use their data for discussing the findings.

For the whole process reliability and validity was due to the ability of the researcher on following the same process to find literature review and the review of the research content with the supervision of experts.

In the following table, see Table 3.5 in page 36, it is presented the summary of the reliability and validity of each process followed by the researcher in order to build a good proposal structure for future researchers.
Table 3.5.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument and Data Analysis within the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrument Development</td>
<td>It was developed by the researcher under the supervision of several reviews of experts.</td>
<td>It was validated by different experts and TaiwanICDF managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of Data</td>
<td>Each interview is conducted by using the same type of environment and instrument to record data. Also, it followed credible, neutral or confirmable, consistent or dependable, and applicable and transferable data collection by the notes taken by the assistant. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)</td>
<td>It gained its validity by using the same instrument content for each interview review by the experts, because the researcher attached to the expert reviews and the research questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Data</td>
<td>Each record was analyzed by following the process described in page 33 and 34,</td>
<td>It was validated by the relations of the transcripts and the notes taken by the assistant following the research questions of this study; also by the approval of the participants by member-checking method. Each participant was given a code in order to use their data, and each participant data was included to answer each question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter is divided into four sections; adaptation process of the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students, communication and language issues perceived by the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students, how the language becomes an important aspect in communication and adaptation process for undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students, and the discussions of the research findings.

Adaptation Process of the Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students

The adaptation process of the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students is presented in three categories, which at the same time are divided into different subcategories; see Table 4.1 on page 38. The first category is the first adaptation perception that is divided in psychological experiences, socio-cultural perceptions and physiological experiences. The second category is culture shock, which is divided into two categories; difficulties and positive changes. The third category is the strategies for adaptation followed by the students; family and friends, social gatherings, food, adventure, and other are the subcategories for this category.

First Adaptation Perception in the Adaptation Process

As mentioned in the paragraph above, the first adaptation perception is subdivided into three subcategories. These subcategories represent the emotions, perceptions and physical wellbeing of the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students.

This category was named as the first adaptation perception because the students chosen for this study have a year of difference while living in Taiwan, since some of them came in 2012 and others in 2013. Therefore, in order to compare and to find similarities or differences between their feelings, opinions and perceptions, the students were asked to express their very first feelings, opinions and perceptions when they first came to Taiwan. This category is really important since it explained and supported part of the literature reviewed in chapter two.
Table 4.1.

**Summary of Adaptation Process Theme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation Process</td>
<td>1.1 First Adaptation</td>
<td>1.1.1 Psychological Experiences</td>
<td>1.1.1.1 Loneliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process Perception</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.1.2 Frustration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.1.3 Homesick</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.1.4 Low Personal Growth.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.1.5 Shock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Culture Shock</td>
<td>1.2.1 Difficulties</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.1.1 Life style</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.1.2 Do what Romans do</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.1.3 Personal conflicts</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.2.1.4 Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.2 Positive Changes</td>
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<td>1.2.2.1 Embrace the culture</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.2.2 Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.2.3 Own culture maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Strategies for Adaptation</td>
<td>1.3.1 Family and Friends</td>
<td>1.3.1.1 Communication</td>
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<td>1.3.1.2 Goodies</td>
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<td>1.3.2 Social Gatherings</td>
<td>1.3.2.1 Interaction</td>
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<td>1.3.2.2 Bound creation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3.3 Others</td>
<td>1.3.3.1 Adventure</td>
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<td>1.3.3.2 Clean minds</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1.3.3.3 Food</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Psychological experiences.**

The feelings of the students towards entering Taiwan for the first time are mostly negative. The psychological experiences include isolation, frustration, homesick, low personal growth, shock, see Table 4.2.
Table 4.2.

**Coding for Psychological Experiences of the Category First Adaptation Perception**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Adaptation Process</td>
<td>1.1 First Adaptation Perception</td>
<td>1.1.1 Psychological Experiences</td>
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<td>1.1.1.4 Low Personal Growth.</td>
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<td>1.1.1.5 Shock</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. **Loneliness, frustration and shock.**

The students when first arriving Taiwan; and start interacting with the local society varies from person to person; however the negative emotions persist in many of them. 15 students experience different feelings, because of many reasons, but the impact for them is negative. The statements of the students are the following:

“... I go stressed out... feel far apart. I always was scare of getting lost, so I remind indoors most of the time.” (AF-1)

“I think for me it affected my emotions, my mood. It makes me feel withdrawn from the society and feel lonely...” (AF-4)

“...is very frustrating, because you are not able to do what you want to do really... sometimes you get demotivated... if you try people don’t understand, people maybe laugh at you, so is like discouraging.” (CA-1)

“...I think at the beginning you are not really like it doesn’t sink in, like you are gonna be staying be staying here right at the beginning, so you don’t see it a big issue...” (CA-5)

“...I didn’t feel comfortable... affected my attitude toward other people, because you know you are not doing good, your mood is not the best, so it is really hard to get along with other in general...” (CA-7)

“...when I go places usually alone people will always stare at me, and in my country is really rude to stare at people, when they do that is really rude and they never look away... sometimes is easy just to go out and not feel uncomfortable, but other times is not, I go out and I feel very uncomfortable, so it has made me really like sensitive to that kind of thing of being watched all the time and aware...” (TC-5)
2. *Homesick.*

Many international students, as they are going to be in Taiwan for a long time, they feel very homesick during the first six months of experiencing the lifestyle of Taiwan. Homesick mostly is perceived by them by missing their families, friends, and country. Some of the students stated the following:

“...like back home my mom will look for me, I will just come and then eat whatever I have to eat, but here after school I am on my own, as an individual adult. I have to care for myself....” (AF-2)

“Many ways, psychological ways, nothing comfortable, or nothing like adapting to the place you have been ever before, you have never hear about it before... you could feel that you miss like your place, your people, and so on.” (CA-7)

“...as the time went by I started to miss the littlest thing from home...so whatever I can get that reminds me from home I will try to do it.” (TC-5)

3. *Low personal growth.*

For western culture is very important to feel the sense of independence, to feel as an adult and that you are able to solve things by yourself. Additionally, in western culture is encouraged, by family and professors, to question others with respect. Therefore some of the students feel that living in Taiwan is delaying their personal growth. The students support this subcategory with the following statements:

“Taiwan doesn’t offer a lot of personal growth. Many will disagree because they’ve never grown talent until they got here.... I grew up in a competitive environment and unfortunately coming here is making my potential “depreciate”.” (CA-8)

“...I am not used to that because in my country you are encourage to give your own opinion, you are encourage to think for yourself, so when you are here and they tell you do this, and you say why, don’t ask why just do it... they expect us to be like their children, ...I haven’t been treated like a child since maybe I was 16... not used to having teachers not really trust me... even the fact we don’t pick our courses.” (TC-4)

“...I think they expect us to change quickly and adapt to everything quickly.” (TC-6)

“...for some things you wanna feel a sense of independence, and then when you first come here is the first thing they take away from you... I just coped with it with a laughter I guess, because to me a lot of the things that I see here simple things,
actually I just laugh about it, because back home is so different…they just have a typical Taiwanese frame and they just try to fit you in that…” (TC-7)

**Summary.**

The psychological experiences that most prevail during the interview were feelings of stress, loneliness, withdrawn, and shock. Most of the students also agreed that persisted the feeling of homesickness. Some of the students, as psychological experiences, determined that are not having or not perceiving personal growth.

**Socio-cultural perceptions.**

Adding to the psychological experiences also the students have perceived socio-cultural differences, which have impacted their personality and the way they perform while interacting with the host population, see Table 4.3.

Table 4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation Process 1.1 First Adaptation Perception 1.1.2 Socio-cultural Perceptions 1.1.2.1 Food 1.1.2.2 Weather 1.1.2.3 Language Barrier 1.1.2.4 Cultural Differences 1.1.2.5 Living Standards 1.1.2.6 Aspect</td>
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</table>

1. **Food and weather.**

Food and weather play a very important role while trying to cope with the local environment within a new country. Therefore, every student has experienced problems with the food and weather. The students answered the following:

“Food was the most difficult thing to adjust to, I cannot say I’ve fully adjusted to it now however I have tried a lot of the foods…. My religion restriction for consuming pork and its products.” (AF-1)

“I found very hard to adapt myself to the food… I couldn’t eat Taiwanese food, so I started to eat a lot of junk food.” (CA-3)

“The weather, just the weather… I wasn’t prepared for that, and the humidity... the winter was ok, I think the summer was the hardest, because was too hot. The weather issue made me uncomfortable all the time…. I was paying more attention to Oh my
God I’m sweating, Oh my God I don’t wanna go out because is too hot, I wanna be inside.” (CA-4)

“...Food basically, I didn’t feel comfortable with the weather because it was too hot, when I was walking in the streets is like I was in the beach when I wasn’t.” (CA-7)

“For me I am a vegetarian, so it is a big issue... I have certain diet habits.” (TC-4)

2. Language barrier.

Definitely for these students, the language was and is a big obstacle that since the beginning they have encountered. Being the principal way of communication; and trying to interact with locals, the language barrier for some of the students is very important.

“...like going outside, find something like going to a supermarket to find something and they don’t have and then you ask people and they just turn and you don’t know what to say and you are kind of lost.” (AF-2)

“The main difficult for me was the language because I felt that it was hard for me to do normal basic daily life stuff, like buying food, or taking bus or taking the MRT or whatever...even if you try people don’t understand, people maybe they laugh at you...” (CA-1)

“...as long I knew enough Chinese to survive, to order food that was it for me... that how they do it because you can’t speak Chinese, you just point out a picture and I will like Ok, That!” (TC-7)

3. Cultural differences and aspect.

Some of the students when fist arrived Taiwan were making comparisons from Taiwan and their home country; consequently, they found cultural differences. These differences are perceived differently from the students.

“...if they don’t know you they will never walk to you, they just go their way... until they need something from you. Where I came from, like you hardly see people wearing short things even the own weather, when I came here I saw those in their 50s wearing it, and you know it looks normal to them, to me it is not normal... Another surprising thing was seeing some very old Taiwanese in their 80s still doing business and working hard for survival however in my country those in their 80s and 90s usually stay at home relaxing. Another thing is the value attached to dogs in Taiwan... some of them carry dogs like their own babies. I was so funny when I first saw a Taiwanese
man holding his woman’s handbag freely without being embarrassed; men in my country hardly do that for their women.” (AF-3)

“Mostly the differences between cultures is positive, because people here are much nicer, is more safe to go around the streets here, but then there’s also a little differences, like for example the toilet if you don’t know how to use them.” (CA-2)

“…one of the things that surprise me the most was how safe Taiwan is… because in my country is really like a bad sign if you are still outside alone walking, so I have to change my mind like it not like that anymore. Taipei is such as cosmopolitan city where there is always something to do or someone to meet...” (CA-5)

“In my case there wasn’t really any issue, because all of my roommates we come from basically the same culture and traditions, if I was sleeping with Taiwanese people, basically my room will be too much clothing hanging in the dorm and I wouldn’t love that at all... you are constantly around Latinos and really you cannot have a culture shock when there are many people from your same culture. …when I go to the bank the guard, he was a very old man, and I was like I’m gonna speak to him in English to see if he speaks, and he really could speak English, and he was the person with the best English proficiency in the bank, so I was really impressed.” (CA-8)

“... this hierarchical type of structure where you are not supposed to talk to adults about certain issues, or they kind of dismiss you. I’m not use to that because in my country you are encourage to give your own opinion, to think for yourself, so when you are here and they tell you do this and you say why, don’t ask why just do it... the model of MingChuang is to treat every student as if we were their own child, and I haven’t been treated like a child since maybe I was 16, so I’m not used to that at all, not used to having the teachers not really trust me, not having people not really like adults not really trust you, I don’t like it at all... the environment here and the environment in my country is so different.” (TC-4)

“...people will always stare at me, and in my country is really rude to stare at people, when they do that is really rude and they never look away... things will still bother me. I just try to be ok with that.” (TC-5)

“I even call message in Taiwan here, which is being black, but I feel this issue with the culture, but I’m getting over it...when I go to them and they see me approach they will be afraid, they will feel overwhelm or scare...” (TC-6)
4. **Living standards.**

In western culture the privacy and own space is really important to feel independence and to feel that something belongs to them. Some of the students feel that they lack of this, and therefore, they have been forced to modify their living standards.

“So trying to synchronize a life style with theirs in order to settle in was a little bit challenging.... So it wouldn’t help wondering so much about my new life...” (AF-4)

“...sharing space is fine to some extent, but we live with three other people and their things...the concept of privacy can become blurry.” (CA-5)

“...I have the chance to change my personality, certainly adapt my living standards a lot; standards of hygiene, everything, because everything here is different, so you just have to adapt or go crazy.” (TC-4)

“...feel a sense of independence, an then when you come here that is the first thing they take from you. Definitely living in the dorms has been a bad thing for me, I never actually, I’ve been a person I love my privacy but at the same time I love my space. I can deal with other people, what it feel this being in the dorms forces me to do is to be diplomatic, like I have to be diplomatic 24-7, just to keep some sense of sanity in my room and you don’t want to disrespect anyone else’s space, but at the same time you can’t heal, you want more space... I come from a place where every house, well, most houses have a yard, it is not every apartment and the you have a little cubicle for yourself and you sleep ther...maybe I wanna go sleep early maybe at 10 o’clock, so I can wake up at 8, and having your roommate with their laptops on, laughing, maybe someone skyping, and stuff, you know, you just have to deal with this things, and they affects you eventually, everything accumulates.” (TC-7)

**Summary.**

The socio-cultural perceptions of the students are very influential in the way they are trying to adapt since the environment where they are living is changing the way they are performing during their bachelor life. The students have different perceptions about socio-cultural issues, most of them have negative perceptions, but others are more open to the new experiences.
Physiological experiences.

Students, but in a minor proportion, presented complaints about their health issue. For presenting them a high adaptation, the students need to feel that they are having good health, see table 4.4.

Table 4.4.
Coding for Physiological Experiences of the Category First Adaptation Perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation Process</td>
<td>1.1 First Adaptation Perception</td>
<td>1.1.3 Physiological Experiences</td>
<td>1.1.3.1 Weight</td>
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<td>1.1.3.2 Sickness</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1.1.3.3 Sleeping arrangements</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Weight and sickness.

Some of the students from different regions presented some difficulties and unconformities about their health, which has been impacted by socio-cultural differences among their cultures and the culture from Taiwan, including food and weather, mostly.

“...I couldn’t eat Taiwanese food, so I started to eat a lot of junk food, so I gained a lot of weight, and basically my health is not good as it was at home.” (CA-3)
“...and the humidity I woke up with allergies in the morning, it was very hard for me to adapt to that” (CA-4)
“...I was really, really, really sick, every week was something different that I was getting sick of” (CA-5)
“Every time I got sick, I used medicine brought from my own country so I didn’t need to attend a hospital.” (CA-8)
“... I need food so sustain myself, I cannot go for very long without eating, or else I will get sick.” (TC-2)

2. Sleeping arrangements.

For students, in western countries, the sleeping arrangement is very important. Some of the students agree on having problems about their sleeping arrangements because of different reasons.

“...they have their own habits and rules for themselves, so is mostly getting alone with each other.” (CA-2)
“I think for me was sleeping arrangement...” (TC-6)
“...maybe I wanna go sleep early maybe at 10 o’clock, so I can wake up at 8, and having your roommate with their laptops on, laughing, maybe someone skyping, and stuff, you just have to deal with things.” (TC-7)

Summary.

Good sleeping arrangement and health issues, including sickness and weight, are an important matter to the students since their performance during their daily life might be affected.

Culture Shock in the Adaptation Process

The second category during the adaptation process is culture shock, which at the same time at this research is divided into two subcategories. Some of the students have perceived the culture shock as difficult, but others have experienced positives effects from the culture shock.

Difficulties.

After arriving in Taiwan, the students have perceived many issues as difficult in order to get used to the living style, the culture, and behaviors within Taiwan. These difficulties were represented as life style, do what Romans do, personal conflicts and schedule, see Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Coding for Difficulties of the Category Culture Shock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation Process</td>
<td>1.2 Culture Shock</td>
<td>1.2.1 Difficulties</td>
<td>1.2.1.1 Life style</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1.2.1.2 Do what Romans do</td>
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<td>1.2.1.3 Personal conflicts</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1.2.1.4 Schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Life style and schedule.

The students feel that they have been experiencing a different life style compared to what they were used to in their own countries, causing them to modify their commodities and to reduce their life style. Additionally, the fact of modifying their life style, they needed also to get used to a new schedule in order to communicate with their families and friends back home.
“...find a schedule that I can cook, and even that was even a problem with the school, because they don’t allow the kind of food we are used to...” (AF-2)

“Sharing space is fine to and extent... it gets crowded to the point where it feels we don’t have enough storage room.” (CA-5)

“I think for me was sleeping arrangement...I had to adjust myself when I can call my mom or when I can call or text my friends; they are sleeping or in their work, and until today is still difficult” (TC-6)

“...I come from a place where every house, well, most of houses have a yard... and then you have this little cubicle for yourself and you sleep there... we actually have yards and stuff, and you already are accustom to space...” (TC-7)

2. Personal conflicts and do what Romans do.

As time pass, the students feel that living within this environment has modified their personalities creating conflicts between the person they were and the new attitudes towards a same issue.

“...I was in the MRT station and someone just entered and felt down, people just look at him and just passed; at first I felt bad about it, but now I do as Romans do; when I hit someone I don’t even say sorry, I just move. It has become part of me” (CA-5)

“... you have to change some of your aspects personally, because there just no way to deal with any of this...” (CA-1)

“...it has made me really like sensitive to that kind of stuff of being watched all the time and aware.” (TC-5)

“...here in Taiwan I think they expect us to change quickly and adapt to everything quickly” (TC-6)

“...I do feel affecting me personally in every right with every goal that I’m trying to take om, I do feel sticking a lot out of me...” (TC-7)

Summary.

Change drastically the life style of the students that they were used to without a previous trial, made them pass difficulties during the first period they lived in Taiwan. Most of the difficulties were related to the space they are living, and the schedule to communicate with their families and friends back home. As they have to encounter this kind of living difficulties, their personalities also changed.
Positive changes.

Positive changes have been also experienced by the undergraduates while interacting with the host culture, and population; however a very important fact that prevailed in them is that even though they like the culture they still have their own culture. Embracing the culture, support and own culture maintenance were the key concepts found for this subcategory, see Table 4.6.

Table 4.6.
Coding for Positive Changes of the Category Culture Shock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation Process</td>
<td>1.2 Culture Shock</td>
<td>1.2.2 Positive Changes</td>
<td>1.2.2.1 Embrace the Culture Changes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.2.2 Support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1.2.2.3 Own Culture Maintenance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Embrace the culture and own culture maintenance.

Although some students have suffered from difficulties in the adaptation process, some of them have been acquiring in a positive way the Taiwanese culture. Some of them are being open-minded or not having previous expectations about the culture itself in order to not suffer a big culture shock when interacting with the locals.

“...all become easy with openness to experience, open-mindedness, expanding one’s cultural and religious boundaries, in order to broaden your horizon about the human society.” (AF-4)

“I do keep doing some stuff let’s say in “Guatemala” way, but there are another things that I have introduce to my daily life.” (CA-4)

“... I tried to be the most open-minded or not have any real expectations of how living here was going to be, so that the transition will be easier.” (CA-5)

“I’ve been embracing the culture a little bit too much though.” (TC-6)

2. Support.

Being in a totally different environment alone has been difficult for these students. Hence, the support from their family and friends back home, as also new friends within Taiwan, who have become like family for them, is very crucial to move on and continue their way. Also the feeling that they have developed of being family for others, and provide support to their new family made them feel good.
“...most of the time are more like my Latin American friends the ones who made me feel more at home” (CA-4)
“... I started getting sick a lot... but then you realize that the friends that you have here also become your families, because if they wouldn’t be for them I don’t know...” (CA-5)
“...I just developed a good relationship with my friends, I think they have supported me all this time...” (CA-6)
“I have friends here that kind of support me here and I can support them any time possible.” (TC-6)

Summary.

Positive changes have been part of the exchange experience for these undergraduates TaiwanICDF students. Trying to be open-minded in order to accept and fit in the host culture without modifying some part of their culture has given the students the opportunity to gain new experiences for their daily life. An important, and an additional issue, is the support that those student look in other foreigner students in order to cope better in Taiwan by maintaining their own roots.

Strategies for Adaptation followed by Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students in the Adaptation Process

After describing some of the personal experiences and some of the feelings towards those experiences, see Table 4.1 to Table 4.5, the students have been forced to came up with strategies for adapt to Taiwan rapidly. This category has been divided into three subcategories; family and friends, social gatherings and others.

Famie and friends.

African, Central American and The Caribbean students have demonstrated by their opinions that family and friends back home are very important to them. Consequently, the communication with them was found in every student. The goodies sent from their houses are used as a strategy to get out of the daily food in Taiwan, and therefore the students ask their families to send something representative from their own countries, see Table 4.7.
Table 4.7.

Coding for Family and Friends of the Category Strategies for Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation</td>
<td>1.3 Strategies for</td>
<td>1.3.1 Family and</td>
<td>1.3.1.1 Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1.3.1.2 Goodies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Communication.**

Communication within this subcategory will not referred to the process of communication from a person to person, but for the constant interaction with families and friends back home of these students. The use of technology has improved a lot in the ways by which the students get in touch with their love ones. Facebook, skype and cellphone (including applications such as WhatsApp or Line) are being used by the students.

“...I try to make constant calls back home” (AF-5)
“...I talk to them almost every day by skype or facetime” (CA-2)
“... I do keep constant communication with my family and friends from back home either by messages or skype, etc....” (CA-5)
“... I talk to my parents on skype all the time...” (TC-3)

2. **Goodies.**

As in the previous section is mentioned, the students the most that they missed is the food from their own country. In Taiwan is very difficult to get those goodies or similar products or exactly the same products from their countries; so some of them request their family members to send something from their country.

“...Sometimes my mom send me like candies from my country or packages of beans, so I got that for going” (CA-2)
“... I ask my family to send me goodies from El Salvador now and then” (CA-5)
“...I got her to send me some like food from my country, some beans or something, so when I’m really homesick I will open it and eat it.” (TC-4)

**Summary**

An important strategy that the students most use to cope with their experiences within Taiwan is to have constant communication with their families or friends from back home. In Taiwan is really difficult to find some of the products that these students are used to eat, to
cook, or to drink, therefore the help of their families for sending them goodies from their own country motivate them and release somehow their sadness.

**Social gatherings.**

For the subcategory social gathering, the constant interaction persisted between the interviewed students and their own country mates groups. Also some of them are eager to make some bounds and interact with locals, see Table 4.8.

Table 4.8  
*Coding for Social Gatherings of the Category Strategies for Adaptation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation</td>
<td>1.3 Strategies for</td>
<td>1.3.2 Social gatherings</td>
<td>1.3.2.1 Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3.2.2 Bound Creation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1. Interaction and bound creation.**

The interaction for the students is a strategic way to help them, and at the same time to help other students passing through the same experiences as them.

“...I have made some local friends...I interact with them and they have taught me and shown me a lot of things in the local society.” (AF-4)

“... I have very, very good friends... Taiwanese people were like very gentle with me ... but most of the time are more like my Latin American friends the ones who made me feel more at home.” (CA-4)

“... the embassy organized like a reunion for all the Honduran residents living here” (CA-7)

Therefore, bound with not only the international students is created, but also with national students as the following statements describe:

“Interacting with all international students, like getting to know what culture is better and then having a friend experience while interacting with people...” (AF-2)

“I remembered I used to let other people, other foreigners, know about my country, like how it is, where is it, like what you do, the things I used to eat.” (CA-7)

“...talk to my friends about how we miss home together and stuff like that” (TC-5)
Summary.

Nevertheless, mostly of these interviewed students gathered with their own cultural background which means Latins with Latins, Caribbean with Caribbean, and African with African. Although some regionalism exists, they still have some interaction between the groups mentioned and the locals. As a result of those interactions and bounds, the students agree that being surrounded by friends they feel better and is easy to deal with their feelings.

Others.

This subcategory comprises the activities the students are taking in order to feel less sadness, homesick or stress. As they come from different background, their ages are different, their interests are different, too; in consequence, the steps taken were very diverse, however three key concepts were identified; adventure, clean mind, and food, see Table 4.9.

Table 4.9
Coding for Others of the Category Strategies for Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adventure</td>
<td>1.3 Strategies for</td>
<td>1.3.3 Others</td>
<td>1.3.3.1 Adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3.3.2 Clean Mind</td>
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<td>1.3.3.3 Food</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Adventure.

For some of the students that are eager to be by their own, to try new things, the key concept of adventure is the best word that describes the steps they are taking. As some of the students defined themselves as open-minded persons, this openness is giving them the opportunity to try local things.

“I started enjoying the people and some of the food, like 牛肉麵, fried chicken...” (AF-2)

“I tried to embrace new experiences and culture. Taipei is such a cosmopolitan city where there is always something to do or someone to meet, so you don’t even have time to feel homesick when you are exploring.” (CA-7)

“...sometimes I go to Tamsui or somewhere I can see the see and I feel better...” (TC-4)
2. **Clean mind.**

Some of the students feel that their steps are more related to the internal state or connection with their minds or souls. Some of the thoughts are the following:

“As soon as school starts, I had so many things to concentrate on, so at least I will spend more time on books…” (AF-1)

“I think maybe keeping distracting from being sad... like try to go out, to take a walk, to clean or something, to study or whatever...” (CA-1)

“... also speaking Spanish... when we go to the church everybody speaks in Spanish, so that make us feel like really good.” (CA-3)

“...I understood what I was doing and I understood that I would be away from home for a long time, as such I adjusted mentally to suit.” (TC-2)

3. **Food.**

As mentioned in previous tables and sections, food is very important for these students since they presented a big issue regarding the differences in taste of Taiwanese food. The gathering with country mates is very crucial for doing some traditional food that will remind them to their home countries.

“... I remember I used to gather with many Latin American guys, and we used like to prepare food, like, do something like back home.” (CA-7)

“When my country mates have a little gathering y try to go, because they will cook something from home...” (TC-5)

“...I just went with some friends that know how to cook the food from home, and I just talk with them to teach me how to cook... it was expensive to keep funding that because Taiwan don’t really have a lot of products from our country, but it’s worthwhile...” (TC-7)

**Summary.**

Different steps will be followed by different people according to their level of homesick or any feeling of sadness. The category “others” gives a very broad scope of the different strategies or steps that those undergraduate students are trying to follow in order to feel less the culture shock and try to adapt themselves to live in a host country like Taiwan.
Cross-Cultural Communication and Language Issues

The communication and language issues are related to how the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students are performing while interacting with the host population, also it includes the effort of the students while learning, practicing and using the language with the host population and their country mates. Therefore this section is divided into two categories; communication patterns and language anxiety, see Table 4.10.

Table 4.10.
Summary of Cross-Cultural Communication and Language Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Communication</td>
<td>2.1 Practice</td>
<td>2.1.1 Chinese Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.2 Self-practice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.3 Chinese Native Speakers and Internationals with good level of Chinese</td>
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<td></td>
<td>language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.4 Interest</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Use</td>
<td>2.2.1 International community</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2.2.2 Local interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.3 Alternatives of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Language</td>
<td>3.1 Language</td>
<td>3.1.1 Love-hate relationship with Chinese language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>3.1.2 Difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.3 Help from others with Chinese Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.4 Negative feelings towards learning/using Chinese language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>3.1.5 Benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication Patterns

The communication patterns are referred as the forms that the students use and practice the language for a better communication with the host population. This theme was divided into practice category and use category. Within this theme was described how the students are pushing themselves to study the language and to use it.

Practice.

TaiwanICDF is providing the students the opportunity to study the language. Some of the students are receiving these classes but some others are not. The Chinese courses provided by TaiwanICDF, but also from their universities, are very important for them in order to make a better connection with the host population. Therefore, within the category practice, Chinese
course, self-practice, Chinese native speakers and internationals with good level of Chinese language, and interest were found as the most common concepts, see table 4.11

Table 4.11

**Coding for Practice of the Theme Communication Patterns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2. Communication Patterns</td>
<td>2.1 Practice</td>
<td>2.1.1 Chinese Courses</td>
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<td>2.1.2 Self-practice</td>
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<td>2.1.3 Chinese Native Speakers and Internationals with good level of Chinese language</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2.1.4 Interest</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. **Chinese courses and self-practice.**

The concepts of Chinese courses and self-practice are interrelated since one leads to another. The majority of the students are taking two types of courses, which include TaiwanICDF and courses of the universities. Also most of the students considered that even though they were taking these courses, the courses time is not enough in order to build a basic and consistent knowledge from the Chinese language.

The amount of hours of Chinese courses depends on the university where the students are enrolled. For the African group the range of hours they were receiving goes from three hours to eight hours per week.

“For the classes are eight hours per week and we have extra 2 hours with TAs.” (AF-3)

The Central American and The Caribbean students have similar amounts of hours per week. They are receiving also classes from TaiwanICDF and their universities, which goes from three to six hours per week.

“For example, ICDF give us just one class a week of three hours plus the Chinese class of Ming Chuang are other three hours, in total 6 hours.” (CA-6)

“I took a short course..., which was once a week for three hours at my university.” (TC-2)

After the classes, the self-practice will also helped the students to improve their language skills. Nevertheless, the undergraduate students do not practice it a lot, or if they practice they still considered is not enough to build a stable communication with the host population. Some
of them considered that those Chinese courses do not give them the necessary skills to have a conversation outside the class environment.

“During my first year I concentrate mostly in Chinese... for the first year all weekends I will practice my Chinese character. However in my second year I have a lot to do, so the amount of time I spent on studying Chinese decreased... I will say just school hours and maybe if I have like test I will practice.” (AF-1)

“...by myself I barely practice.” (CA-8; CA-3, CA-4)

“...and to practice by myself weekly like three hours, which is not a lot.” (CA-8, CA-5)

“... You can’t just expect to give someone a little training once a week and expect to use the language... the classes that we get aren’t specifically enough, but also the major factor that we have to balance our school and learning this language...” (TC-7)

2. Chinese native speakers and internationals with good level of Chinese language.

The students agree that practicing their Chinese skills is better with Chinese native speakers or with some international students that have a very high level in the language. Practicing with them gave the students more opportunities to know more characters, slangs, and improve their listening skills.

“All my roommates are Chinese and they can’t speak English very well...So as time I have been living here speaking Chinese all the time and hearing Chinese... so is kind of the most of the time I do understand what they are saying better than when I was living with international students...” (AF-2)

“I like practicing my Chinese with Taiwanese roommates...” (CA-2)

“...I do it with a Taiwanese friend, he kind off helps me and corrects me.” (CA-3)

“Sometimes with my project manager” (CA-4) “Usually I practice Chinese with strangers and when dating someone” (CA-8)

“...If I start practicing with people who don’t know Chinese, my Chinese that I do know will suffer, pronunciation will suffer, vocabulary suffer, because they don’t know and I don’t know; I’ll be practicing the wrong things, so I only speak the native speakers” (TC-4)
3. **Interest.**

The interest of the students developed for certain things will lead them to practice their Chinese skills with the local population. Some of them use the Chinese they know because they want to buy something or communicate something to the locals. Others practice for knowing more about the local society, and to understand more the beliefs of the host society.

“... I go to night markets to do something or buy something... and use some words like “便宜”...” (AF-2)

“If you want to go to the hospital is not the same when you try to explain to the doctor that there is a part of your body that hurts in English than in Chinese” (CA-4)

“...I wanna go into the morning market, there are a lot of people selling fruits and vegetables and stuff, but what I didn’t know, is that the people of Taiwan actually have their own local language, there is Taiwanese dialect, and when I went in there I try speaking Chinese and they took me for a foreigner and everything and apparently after when I came back up and I show my Taiwanese friends I buy this for this money, and the say like no they really didn’t give you a good price and they started teaching me ways to how to say in Taiwanese language, Taiwanese dialect, how to ask how much something is worth...” (TC-4)

**Summary.**

Practice the language will depend on the interest of students on learning and using the language for their own benefit. Some of the students complain about the hours they are receiving from TaiwanICDF and universities, but also they are not self-motivated to practice by themselves. Others, who are more interested on learning the language and benefit from it, are practicing their Chinese skills with people who know better the language. Some of them liked to practice it with locals and when going to local markets. Some are not motivated to keep practicing and still using the basics.

**Use.**

One of the student stated that “for me communicating in any language is to be able to be efficient and send the message” (TC-7); therefore using the Chinese they already learn will give them some advantage for understand the cultural background of the people, to get what they want to have, to feel independence. On the other hand, many of these students are not
using the language properly, because of some of the reasons explained in the Table 4.11; see Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Communication Patterns</td>
<td>2. Use</td>
<td>2.2.1 International Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.2 Local Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.3 Alternatives for Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. International community.

As mentioned in Table 4.7, social gatherings, as a coping strategy, play a big role not only for adaptation but for communication. The students agreed that with the international community they only use their native language or English. They use Chinese with the international community just to express certain feelings or to study for a test or homework, but not as a method for communication in their daily life.

“Not really, but I do occasionally crack some jokes with friends in Chinese. I hardly speak Chinese in my normal conversations with my country mates.” (AF-4; AF-3, CA8, TC-3, TC-5, TC-6)

“...we never have a real conversation in Chinese; we are always speaking in Spanish” (CA-1; AF-5, CA-3, CA-4, CA-7)

“...is not like I sit and practice... if I have a test I will ask my... friends...” (CA-6; CA-1, CA-2, CA-5)

“...I only speak with native speakers” (TC-4; TC-3, TC-7)

2. Local interaction and alternative for communication.

Interacting with the local society is very difficult with the level these students have; however they still try to use the language to get in touch with them. Sometimes, as stated in Table 4.2, the language barrier constrains them to interact freely with the locals. Consequently, most of them are using some alternatives to get in touch with the population and get whatever they want. Body language and gestures are used as alternatives to express what these students want to say.

“I think I know a little bit which is how I can handle basic communication” (CA-7)
“...when I go out ...I always speak English first...if they can’t understand then I start to use my hands to show them, and if they still not understand and I know the word in Chinese I will use it.” (TC-5)

“... normally I go to them with a smile in my face and speak to them nicely and calmly, and if they don’t understand I will use my magical power; I will just do this point point point” (TC-6)

**Summary.**

Communication with society, no matter which society you are in, is necessary. For the students interacting with their country mates or with the international community is easy, since they can use their native languages or English, which in this case is the common language for everyone living in Taiwan. But the students can not only interact with the international community but with locals. As language is the principle barrier for these students, they have been developing strategies in order to communicate with the locals; some of them use the language, some use body language, and some use technology to express what they want.

**Language Anxiety**

The perception that the students have regarding the language is significant, since these will give them the motivation to continue learning, practicing and using the language. Language anxiety is defined as the level of the students for communicating and their perception of the language (Schein, 2002). Be language anxious will determine the perception of these students, because they have to learn more each day and they need to survive with the level of Chinese language they have acquire; therefore, is necessary to understand how the students perceive the language.

**Language perception.**

People develop thoughts regarding something, and, at the same time, feelings are also developed. Those thoughts and feelings are referred as perception. The students, even though their age, are capable to develop their own concept of things. As they are living here for so long and they need to use the local language, they perceived the language as shown in Table 4.13.
### Table 4.13

**Coding for Language Perception of the Theme Language Anxiety**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Language Anxiety</td>
<td>3.1 Language</td>
<td>3.1.1 Love-hate Relationship with Chinese Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>3.1.2 Difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.3 Help from others with Chinese Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.4 Negative Feelings towards learning/using Chinese Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.5 Benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Love-hate relationship with Chinese language.**

All of the students like the language and they want to learn it. Some are amazed by the grammar of the language, and some are amazed by the history of the characters.

“I like the Chinese language, I think is easy in the part of the verbs because there is not past tense or any other tense... once you begin to learn the characters you realize that combining one character with other you can make another word and so you learn the story of one word, so making it like that is a little bit fun” (CA-2)

“I do like it, because I feel its kind of simple but complex at the same time, and I feel like is a language like it has, I don’t know, like it has so much history.” (CA-5)

“I think I have a love-hate relation with Chinese, because I love but I say at the same time how complex it is... it has a lot of complex things that you just fine in mind love the and it attracts you” (TC-7)

2. **Negatives feelings towards leaning/using Chinese language and difficulties.**

Even there exists a high approval or acceptance for the language for some of them, some of them they do not like the language at all; however, they need to study it because they are living in this environment.

“...I don’t like the language, and I don’t feel the connection with the language, the tones are really difficult for me, and when I’m speaking I’m afraid I’m saying something different that what I actually want....” (CA-6)

“...Chinese is complicated language; it takes some time, some effort to master it” (CA-7)

“...I don’t really like the sounds, I don’t mean he difficulty....” (TC-4)
Consequently, it represents a difficulty for some of them that have not developed a positive perception for the language.

“…I like it, but Chinese doesn’t like me, always mix-up the tones.” (AF-3)
“…the problem to learn another language you have to be like willing to practice, and I’m a bit shy to like speaking, so I think that’s like a major setback….” (TC-3)
“…the people of Taiwan actually have their own local language… we can bully you this way …the major fact that you are translating word directly from English into Chinese…keeping us in that English mentality, thinking in English while we are learning, you are not letting us scape that.” (TC-7)

3. Help from others with Chinese language.

Going in an environment, where the language is a barrier and it is totally different from their native language, some of the students agreed that they needed to depend from others in order to do their daily life things until they could get the basics of the language.

“…I was supported by of the Gambians that at least have basic knowledge in Chinese” (AF-5)
“My very beginning I invited some Taiwanese friends to come with me wherever I had to do something, and they will translate for me...” (CA-6)
“Sometimes I get someone to write whatever I want and when I get to a place of interest, I show them the text and they know what to do” (CA-8)


Even most of the students answered that Chinese is a very complex and difficult language to master in short time, the students agreed that they need to learn the language because it will give them many benefits not only while living within Taiwan, but also for their future.

“Because is an advantage, it will give an edge in the future and is something that you need… and as par I’m in Taiwan I need the language.” (AF-5)
“when you are learning a language you are not only learning to communicate but you are learning a culture and you are also learning how Taiwanese people think...” (CA-5)
“I don’t have any problems when I go out...” (TC-4)
“…I think if you know it your life would be easier and you will know more of the culture” (TC-5)
Summary.

Learning a new language like Chinese is very complex for western people since it has different syntax, different writing style, different pronunciation, and other characteristics. The students have developed certain feelings towards learning the language, some positives and some negatives. The positives are that they really like the language even though its complexity. The negatives are that they feel that there is no connection between them and the language, but as TaiwanICDF requires them to pass a test they have been forced to study it. Consequently, those students, positive or negatives feelings, have developed certain strategies to get the language; some ask their friends to help them out, and others try by themselves. Some of them see the benefit on learning a new language, and Chinese according to their perspective will give them a positive advantage in their career, and also it will give them the opportunity to learn more about Taiwan.

Cross-Cultural Communication and Adaptation Role for Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students

After reviewing the tables in the two sections before, adaptation process of the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students, and cross-cultural communication and language issues, in this section is discussed how language is important when communication and adaptation interact.

The students chosen for this study came from a similar backgrounds but very different from cultural background of Taiwan. As these students are going to live for four years within Taiwan, and some of them are not able to go back home during this long journey, the communication and the adaptation issues is a real matter to them. Matters, as culture shock and language while living abroad, made the students develop perceptions and/or feelings regarding the culture and language, came up with different coping strategies and language alternatives, which are really important for getting adapted to a new environment, in this case Taiwan.

At this point, the students were asked if acquiring the Chinese language have an impact on their communication and adaptation process while living in Taiwan. The students have different perceptions about the language; see Table 4.9 and Table 4.11; however the majority of the students agreed that learning the language will definitely help them on their adapting process. The language will help them because they will accurately ask for what they are
really asking, they also will learn more about the culture of Taiwan, about the way of
tinking of the population, and will increase their life style.

The researcher found that even most of the students come from different backgrounds and
cultures, and also have different native languages, see Table 3.3; most of them think that
living in Taipei is easier, since most of the host population is learning English or have a
partial or good understanding of English in order to communicate with the foreigner
population as they are. Therefore some of the students shared:

“I think is possible if you want not to learn Chinese and just speak English all the
time, I think you can...” (CA-1)
“I think you can survive without any Chinese, but sometimes is going to be little hard,
but you can survive if you speak English, I think you can.” (CA-3)
“... at least in Taipei, I don’t know in other places in Taiwan.” (CA-6)
“I will survive, but I will still have problems...What I see here in Taipei is that a lot of
people speak English, so it makes easier for foreigners to communicate but you still
encounter with a lot of problems, but you still can survive.” (CA-7)
“I think you can survive without speaking Chinese, but you are useless if you don’t
know the language in this country.” (CA-8)
“Yeah, it seems you can survive in Taipei... you can’t survive outside of Taipei” (TC-
3)
“In Taipei you can speak English, because most of people in Taipei speak English,
because seeing that here is the capital city, the residents here they learn English so
they can communicate with foreigners” (TC-6)

Even some of the responses above cited about learning the language is not necessary,
most of the students did not recommend it since they are guests within this environment.
Every student has different opinions about why you should learn the language.

Some of the students recommended learn the language, “in order to have effective
communication...” (TC-6), because it will enhance the connection with the locals and culture.

“...because you miss a lot of the things in here, from the culture, from the people,
from you experiences...” (CA-1)
“...when you are learning a language, you are not only learning to communicate but
you are learning a culture and you are also leaning hoe Taiwanese people think.”
(CA-5)
“... I think if you know it, your life will be easier, and you will know more of the culture” (TC-5)

Some other students suggest that it is required learn the language for their own benefit and to get adapted easier to the culture environment.

“...It would be easier to if you can speak Chinese.” (AF-1)
“...communication is the basis for everything we do in our life. Without communication almost everything would seem impossible. So yes, the language will speed up my adaptation.” (AF-4)
“Your adaptation process then becomes something that just flows naturally when you learn or already know the language” (CA-5)
“...because without it you can’t interact with most of the people and even when you are going on the street, you want something you are not sure how to get it, everything is to know the language is the easier way, I could only survive with this” (TC-4)

Other students consider that they are guests in Taiwan, and not learning the language is very disrespectful for the locals because they feel they are not able to understand the locals when speaking to them, and also when the students need to answer something.

“...I don’t really believe that you should be in a country and not really try to learn the language, because I kind feel it like kind of offensive for the people.” (CA-1)
“...they are going to feel more comfortable in their native language, so this can help to create a bound between me and them. I think everyone is more comfortable talking their own language, so if you are in Taiwan I think is important to learn...” (CA-4)
“...sometimes I feel do like I’m offending people when they are speaking to me in Chinese and I can’t understand, I can’t respond, I feel so bad, sometimes, and they try to speak to me in English. Is just horrible experience.” (TC-5)

After reviewing their opinions, the researcher found out that using the host language, in this case Chinese language; will depend on each student since their opinions varies between them. Nevertheless, the researcher found that most of the students considered that learning the language, even if they know a little bit, will help them with their adaptation process. Also, as the students come to Taiwan to study for four years, it will be inevitable the acquirement of Chinese language even though most of them agree learning it is very difficult and takes long time to learn it.
Discussions of Research Findings

Based on the research findings, several deliberations are offered by the comparison of the finding and the existing literature about cross-cultural communication and adaptation process steps.

Adaptation Process of the Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students

The results of the findings show that for each student the adaptation process is, in some instances, similar to each other; however there exists some differences because of the region they came from.

The students during their first stage of adaptation experienced different transitional experiences within the psychological and the socio-cultural issues, which supports the theory of Searle and Ward (1990).

The students experienced different problems such as language problem, accommodation difficulties, racial discrimination (in some of the cases), dietary adjustments and loneliness, see Table 4.1 to Table 4.3. These experiences supported Furnham and Bochner (1982) when they reported the most common difficulties of students living abroad.

Even though the students come from different backgrounds and regions, the researcher can state that the experiences lived by these students within Taiwan are similar and affected them emotionally, physically and socio-culturally. Therefore, the theory from Searle and Ward (1990) as the theory of Furnham and Bochner (1982), even though those theories were discovered long time ago, they still support and state accurately what those students were living at their arrival.

One of the most important theorists about culture shock is Oberg. Oberg (1960) stated six aspects in which the researcher can categorize the experiences of the students. The six aspects (Furnham, 1993) remain as follow:

1. “Strain due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations.”
2. “A sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession, and possessions.”
3. “Being rejected by and or rejecting members of the new culture.”
4. “Confusion in role, role expectation, values, feeling and self-identity.”
5. “Surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences.”

6. “Feeling of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment.”

These six aspects also were found in the feelings, opinions and experiences of these 19 interviewed students; see Table 4.1 to Table 4.5.

After living positive as negative experiences, the students were motivated to develop certain strategies, which were helpful for them in order to get adapted to their new living environment. The strategies followed by the students depended on how affected the student was. Strategies will depend on the individual, since is the individual who knows what he/she is passing through, and how he/she and how long will it take to overcome the culture shock or any feeling of sadness. Zapf (1991) and Wilson et al. (1995) developed certain steps that even the students are not aware of these studies, unconsciously they followed some of the steps; see Table 4.6 to Table 4.8.

**Cross-Cultural Communication and Language Issues**

According to Samovar et al. (2011), communication must have a purpose, and also Samovar et al (2009) stated that cross-cultural communication is when people from different cultural background interact with each other and this interaction alters the communication event. As found in the previous sections in this chapter, the students expressed that they tried to interact with the host population using Chinese language, but most of the students feel very shy, frustrated, nervous, among other feelings, while using the language since they are not fluent in the language or get demotivated because Taiwanese population does not understand them or laugh about them.

Language shock, theory developed by Smalley (1963), which is when any individual is not capable of expressing him or herself due to language issues. Most of the students even though they are trying and practicing, as shown in Table 4.9 and Table 4.10, feel that they could not completely communicate what they really want, and in consequence they still use English as their primary language. Another important fact is that the students keep choosing their native language or English to communicate with the international community and the local community, as Herman (1961) stated.
Cross-Cultural Communication and Adaptation Role for Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students

Getting adapted to a new environment, where everything is new is very difficult. International students and expatriates have been studying for long time regarding their interaction with the new environment. In most of the cases similar findings were found, that support the theories review in chapter two.

In this study the interaction between communication and adaptation steps of the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students was studied in order to understand how important the language is. Communication is the principal way for human beings to interact, and for that reason language constitutes the first problem, because in it involves culture, symbols, syntax, and other characteristics, which determine the level of interaction of these students.

In order human express a concrete idea, emotion, feeling, etc., it is important to respect some of the characteristics of communication as Cutlip and Center (1952) suggested. Those characteristic are clarity, completeness, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, courtesy, and consideration. Every language has the same characteristics; nonetheless culture will modify those characteristics in order to give the language a value. For this reason, on the Table 4.9 to Table 4.11, the students from each region have their own communication pattern.

In this regard, the students develop a process of communication that also varies from person to person since they show differences in their own perception of the language. The researcher can determine a love-hate, and even love-hate-love, in the acquisition of the language supported by the theory of language anxiety proposed by Schein (2002). As the students express they like the language and they need it to survive they expressed their love for the language, but at the same time they hate it since the complexity of the language. However, some of the students after hating the language because of its complexity, they love it again since learning Chinese language challenge them and the way the words in Chinese are built makes them feel fascinated.

For getting adapted to a new culture, or country, it is important to understand the differences between the different places. Once these differences are discovered, it is necessary to build strategies and start learning more about the new environment without judging. In consequence, the students agreed it is important to learn the language, in order to show respect to the host country, the people, and the culture itself. Also most of them agreed
that it is necessary to learn the language, or even the basics, to help themselves to cope to whatever they are encountering within the new environment.

As a last discussion, Pedersen (1994, preface) stated that people in general need to build “new perspective on self, other, and the environment that “fit” with the new situations”. This statement means, and also the students agreed, that is necessary to move on, and to be as much open-minded as necessary, in order to star fitting in the host country. For some of the students took more time, but since they are living in Taiwan for four years, the adjustment process should be done step by step, but faster.

For every person that starts a new live, while living abroad for studies or work and takes more than one year living in a new environment, adaptation plays an important role in the life style of the expatriate, foreigner or international students. Each of these persons comes to Taiwan with a different point of view, culture, language, etc. Many scholars, as reviewed in chapter two, discussed that adaptation is necessary for a good interaction with the host culture. Therefore, intercultural adaptation and cross-cultural communication will modify host and guests cultures, but mostly guests are the ones that need to adapt to the new environment.
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Have the opportunity to get a scholarship from international agencies such as TaiwanICDF and study abroad is a big opportunity for international students. Nonetheless, cultural differences are not being aware before coming to the new environment. Therefore, the adaptation process and cross-cultural communication is perceived by the international students as a barrier and difficult to get used to it as fast as the environment pushed them.

Across the study, the researcher has been mentioning that there is a closed relationship between language and culture, and the level the students have from Chinese will help them to adapt and to understand more about the culture, until the point they feel Taiwan is their home.

To understand and describe the opinions, expectations and feeling of undergraduate TaiwanICDF students were interviewed about their communication problems and about the steps taken to get adapted to the Taiwanese culture. The study followed a qualitative approach and an interview schedule was developed. 20 undergraduate students from different regions were interviewed to collect different perspective about the proposed topic, but 19 were involved in the analysis. Based on the results of this study, the researcher provided the following conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions

The conclusions are divided into three categories, in which are included the four research questions developed in the first chapter. Each category explained in depth the conclusions to give the reader a better understanding, and as a summary the Table 5.1, on page 74, comprised the research questions and its conclusions The sections followed the same order as in chapter four; adaptation process of the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students, cross-cultural communication and language issues, and cross-cultural communication and adaptation role for undergraduate TaiwanICDF students.

Adaptation Process of the Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students

The conclusion of adaptation process as mentioned before is divided into three categories, which responded to the first two research questions; how do undergraduate TaiwanICDF students perceive they deal with the culture shock issue, and what steps do they perceived they took to adapt themselves to the new culture?
The undergraduate TaiwanICDF students have diverse experiences.

The students experienced a lot of feelings that did not let them perceive the best of the cultural exchange. Most of the students were experiencing language problems, racial problems, dietary changes, and feelings of rejection for the new culture. Those negatives thoughts, feelings and physical changes affected negatively their mood. These different experiences also determined that the common problems of the students while living abroad from Furnham and Bochner (cited in Lewthawait, 1996) are accurate, and that the students actually passed through tough moments. However, it is important to mention that some of the students were able to change themselves in order adapt quicker, or at least to realized that they were living in a different country, with different people, and different cultural background. The students, as every human being, were concerned about their dietary changes, because their food and Taiwanese food is totally different. As a result some of the student experienced lost or gain of weight, in consequence they became sick. After reviewing their experiences, the researcher can conclude that the most difficult for these students were food, language, try to become part of the society, and modify certain personal habits, such as sleeping arrangement, living standards, among others.

The undergraduate TaiwanICDF students experienced culture shock.

While living in a new environment, there are some differences that nobody can change. So living in Taiwan, where mostly cultural differences exist, provoked in these students negatives reactions towards the culture and people. Those negative reactions made them change their personality not entirely negatively but they felt it in that way. However, not all of the students took their experiences as bad experiences. As each person is different and thinks differently, the perceptions are also different. Some of the students, in fact the minority, try to embrace the culture in a positive way by experiencing new things, such as food; but try to not modify their own culture. As a result, for some of the students the culture represent the most difficult since they were comparing it and not doing something to embrace it or to accept the fact that they actually were living in a different environment.

The undergraduate TaiwanICDF students followed their own adaptation strategies to cope to the host culture.

Each person is different; consequently the adaptation steps followed by these students in order to cope to Taiwan also are different. However, between them exist certain similarities
of what they did to cope to the cultural differences, and also the researcher can state that by regions the strategies were similar. All of them enjoyed the gatherings with their country mates in order to do something related to their country like cooking food from their own countries. Also, all of them confirmed that talking to their families and friends back home is very important to them. Some of them need their families send some goodies from back home, in order to release their homesickness.

There is not a list of what kind of steps a person should follow to get rid of homesickness or any sad feeling, but according to Zapf (1991) and Wilson et al. (1995) there are some directions that will help them to cope. Even though these are just recommendations, most of them indirectly followed their “steps”.

**Cross-cultural Communication and Language Issues**

The cross-cultural communication and language issues divided into two categories, which responded to the third and fourth research question from chapter one; how do they perceived they handled communication problems, and is communication perceived by them to be a problem for living or studying in Taiwan?

The undergraduate TaiwanICDF students followed different communication patterns.

The students suggested that the classes provided by the university and by TaiwanICDF do not give them the necessary tools to interact fluently with the local society. Therefore, they have been missing many things of the culture and the people. However, even though the classes are not enough, none of them practice by themselves the necessary in order to improve or demand more classes of Chinese language, which is a disadvantage for them.

On the other hand, when they want to practice the language they prefer to do it with local or native speakers of Chinese language. Some of them have friends that have been living within Taiwan for many years, or have study Chinese language for one year intensively, and therefore they have acquired a very good level, as the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students perceived. Their perception is that their Chinese is nothing comparing to those students and that they are in a big disadvantage with the language. Hence, the perception of these undergraduate TaiwanICDF students that Chinese is a difficult language decreased the probability to communicate frequently with the population using Chinese language.
One interesting result is that they have been learning some new thing by their own, since they feel interest for something in particular, and they want to increase their life standards. They perceived that by knowing more Chinese they will be able to increase their life standards; however this is paradoxical since those students confirm that their practice is not enough, and they use the language mixed with English or just English.

Other interesting thing is that as a language choice they keep talking their own native language or English to communicate with the international community or with their country mates. As a result from this, the acquirement of the Chinese language and practice is not high. While interacting with local they try to use the “baby” Chinese they know, however they feel discourage by the local, because locals do not understand their pronunciation or tones. In consequence, they use English as primer resource, then body language, and at least try to say the word or sentence in Chinese.

The undergraduate TaiwanICDF students experienced language anxiety while communicating with the host population.

Leaning a new language with different writing style, with so much history, with so many tones, is very difficult to master in short time. However, the students know that by learning it, their life expectancies will be better, but at the same time they are afraid of learning the language, since for them is very complex. Even there exists some anxiety feelings from the students, they perceived the language as interesting and they are willing to learn it, however not all of them are trying to learn it sincerely. Because one of the requirements of TaiwanICDF is to pass the Chinese proficient test, some of them feel anxious to get the Chinese language faster, but at the same time they are not getting it.

As the language anxiety is high for them, the students experienced the language shock, which is when the person cannot express itself due to language issues. As a result from this language shock, most of the students are depending on friends, native speakers or with acceptable level in Chinese language, for doing their own daily thing, making them not put much effort on learning the language.

Also as they still gathering with their country mates or English speaker students, the effort on practicing Chinese is really low, therefore this also will delay the communication process between the undergraduate students and the Taiwanese population.
Cross-cultural Communication and Adaptation Role for Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students

This section was not divided into any category since it responded directly to the third research question; is language perceived by them to be a problem for learning or studying in Taiwan?

The undergraduate TaiwanICDF students highly recommend the learning of the Chinese language to speed up their cross-cultural adaptation.

The lack of confidence of the Taiwanese population and the deficient level of English as in the 2012 information is stated at chapter one, might make that foreign students pass through several problems in communicating in their daily life, because of their non-Chinese knowledge. Therefore, all the students suggest and recommend, and even encourage, learning the language as part of their daily life.

By learning the language, the communication process will be easier and will speed up the adaptation process of these undergraduate students. Communicating is being efficient in order to transmit a message and that any person can understand it without any variations. Besides, sending the correct message, with the correct intonation, and using the 7 C’s of Cutlip and Center (1952), knowing the language will increase the interaction and respect for the host country.
Table 5.1.  
Summary of Conclusions for the Proposed Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How undergraduate students of TaiwanICDF do perceive they deal with the culture shock issue?</td>
<td>The students developed different strategies to deal with the culture shock. The students experienced diverse issues, some good and some uncomfortable experiences. As every student is different, some develop their own reactions, such as change their own personality, reject the culture, embrace the culture but maintaining their own cultural background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What steps do they perceived they took to adapt themselves to the new culture?</td>
<td>The students are diverse, therefore they coping strategies are diverse. However o all of them the contact with their family and friends back home is the most important strategy since they perceive support from them to continue in their journey. Also some of the students enjoy being surrounded by their own country mates and speak their own language. Others enjoy doing different activities, such as going to the church, cooking food from their own country, doing exercises, or traveling around Taipei and Taiwan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Is language perceived by them to be a problem for living or studying in Taiwan?</td>
<td>All the students agree is not a problem while living in the capital city of Taiwan. In addition they encourage learning the language to enhance their coping process and show respect to the local society. The students developed a love-hate relationship regarding the language, and some are motivated and other pushed to keep learning the language. In consequence, language anxiety is experience by the students since they need the language to interact with the local society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. How they perceived they handled communication problems?</td>
<td>The Chinese courses varies from university to university, hence the students have different levels in Chinese language. In consequence, the students have been using communication patterns that allow them to communicate and interact with the local society such as breaking the Chinese language, using body language or pointing things. Also they are not practicing enough to get the Chinese language.</td>
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Recommendations

The recommendations are listed by the population interested in this study as well for future research. The populations of interest for this study are the undergraduate TaiwanICDF students, TaiwanICDF agency, general population, and the implications for human resource practitioners.

For Undergraduate TaiwanICDF Students

The recommendations listed below were developed in order to reduce the gaps found in chapter four. The researcher recommends the current students and future students the following:

Current students.

1. Keep being open-minded to any culture difference, since it has been found that the students keep comparing their own culture with the host culture, as reflected in the subcategory socio-cultural perceptions.
2. Respect the cultural differences and do not complaint about things, since you are a guest in this country, as the students are passing through different psychological experiences.
3. As the students are facing difficulties while living in Taiwan regarding their cultural differences, the researcher suggest them to do not expect local people change just because many foreigners are coming to live in Taiwan, and show respect for the culture they are sharing.
4. People are different in many aspects, and in different culture environment takes time to learn new things and people, therefore being patient and tolerant is highly recommended.
5. As university is providing Chinese courses and they students are not practicing their Chinese skill often, the researcher highly recommend the students to keep learning the language, since they are living in this environment and people and culture will not change for them.
6. Use in every opportunity the language while communicating with locals by that they will know more vocabulary, more characters, and better speaking and listening skills, since they are using the same basic daily life communication patterns.
Future students.

1. Before coming to Taiwan, gather some information about the country they are going to, so they can understand the cultural differences and language. This recommendation is based on the cultural shock and the first adaptation findings that were experienced by the interviewees.

2. Contact with people of their own country to know their previous experiences in order to help themselves to get prepared for the new adventure, since the senior students are living here for many years and are familiar with many things about the culture and part of the language.

3. Since people is different, as well as own perception, the researcher recommends to the new students to not be afraid to try new things in order to build an own perspective and not to follow others perspectives, since it can be biased.

4. As interviewee students suggested for themselves to keep studying the language, since they perceived that doing so will improve their quality of live; hence the researcher recommends to the new students to try to learn the language and practice it as much as they can, since they are going to live here for four years.

For TaiwanICDF

For TaiwanICDF, as an agency, they are trying to give the best to the students. However, the students feel that with the Chinese classes that TaiwanICDF is providing are not enough to be proficient at the language, as mentioned in the theme communication patterns. Since TaiwanICDF policy of passing the Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language they should provide more hours for classes.

As the students also are not being encourage to keep practicing, even though they know the benefits the language might bring to them, the classes must imposed to the students. By imposing the classes, the students will feel forced and motivated to study the language; however, it is important to balance the classes for these students because they need also to study their own bachelor degree, which might take most of their time. By forcing them to taken the Chinese classes, it is important to make them understand why they should learn the language and the benefits it might bring to their future. By explaining the benefits of the language and making them feel that the language is necessary, the students might get more interested on the language. Some of them are interested and some understand the future
benefits of it, but there still some that even liking the language they feel they cannot succeed on it. Therefore, developing strategies to build interest on the language must be developed.

Each student develops their own level of Chinese; some get easier languages, therefore different levels must be open or individual classes must be imposed to them. There are a lot of Chinese teachers that need to do practice hours, and TaiwanICDF can pay them a little amount to teach the foreign students. By doing so, the control over the language acquisition is easier, as also the attendance of the students. This method will make the students study hard and be aware that TaiwanICDF is pushing them to learn the language for their own benefit. The process of the students regarding the Chinese learning, as mentioned in chapter four, will help not only TaiwanICDF, but also the students, because their process will be evaluated by the teachers. In consequence, TaiwanICDF can take some actions to evaluate the changes during the process of the students while learning the language and determine in which stage TaiwanICDF can put more effort to help the students.

**For General Population**

For general population is difficult to make recommendations, since this research has just studied the undergraduate level and generalizations about foreign population cannot be done. However, as Taiwan is attracting more and more foreigners to visit Taiwan, and to study or invest in Taiwan, some racial behaviors should be punished. This recommendation is based on the perception of some of the students, in their majority African and The Caribbean students, as shown in chapter four.

Also, Taiwan has their own culture, and that is respectable, but when people from other country come to live and interact with the locals, also open-mindedness from Taiwanese population is highly recommended.

**For Future Research**

As mention in chapter one very few studies have been done regarding the undergraduate level for studying abroad. In addition, there is not enough data or studies done for western countries, such as Central American, African and The Caribbean countries, while studying in Asian countries, and more directly in Taiwan.

The language is very different in Asian countries and in western countries, and therefore this a very big opportunity to study it. There are a lot of studies regarding this topic, but they are written in Chinese, Japanese or Korean language; therefore the opportunity of students
that do not have a high proficiency level on those languages cannot take those studies creating a bias on what it is found.

The researcher also recommends for future studies the comparison between regions, the age difference, the gender, religion, among other variables. In addition, it will be interesting to compare the adaptation process and cross-cultural communication between students living in other regions of Taiwan, and analyze the differences.

**Implications for Human Resource Development Practitioners**

As human resource professional this study has many implications regarding cross-cultural communication and adaptation steps. Even this study only considered undergraduate TaiwanICDF students; this topic affects students in any level (undergraduate, master or doctorate degree), as working expatriates.

The first implication is regarding to adaptation. The adaptation process for everyone is different and as human resource practitioners an individual training cannot be developed. In consequence, is very important to generalize every aspect in order to cover the most possible while imparting the training to the concern people. The most important part is that those who take the training should not be left alone during their process.

Regarding cross-cultural communication, it is a little bit complex but not impossible. Chinese is a complex language and takes time, effort and willingness to master it. Learning a complex language, which will be used for long term, should be taught considering the level of the students. Also, all the Chinese courses in every university, no matter the degree that the students are studying, should follow the same structure and activities, so the TaiwanICDF students can interact with each other.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A INTERVIEW SCHEDULE GUIDELINE

I would like to thank you the time and disposal of being part of my research. I am a master student at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). This study is related to cross-cultural communication and adaptation steps of undergraduate TaiwanICDF students within Taiwan.

In the following section will be described the steps to be taken in order to be part of the study:

1. The interview schedule is comprised by 12 questions asking for personal opinion related to cross-cultural communication and adaptation steps when you first came to Taiwan.
2. The questions follow an order and are related to different theories about cross cultural communication and adaptation steps.
3. Read the 12 questions carefully and ask any questions if you had.
4. After reading the interview questions, please be kind and inform the researcher about you interest on participating on the study.
5. The session will be audio recorded and an assistant will take notes about your feelings, opinions and expectations of your living style in Taiwan.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. When you came to Taiwan, what problems did you encounter in adjusting?</td>
<td>1. How undergraduate students of TaiwanICDF perceived dealing with the culture shock issues?</td>
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<td>2. Do these problems affect you personally and in what way?</td>
<td>2. What steps do they perceived they took to adapt themselves to the new culture?</td>
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<td>3. Do you feel that you are currently over the culture shock?</td>
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<td>4. What did you do to get over the feeling of homesickness, or any other feeling of sadness?</td>
<td>3. How did you handle communication problems?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How did you handle daily communication problems when you first came to Taiwan? For example, ordering food or drinks, taking a taxi, going to hospitals or clinics, the feeling of being lost.</td>
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<td>6. Have you taken any Chinese language course, so you can communicate with the population?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Now that you have been living a while in Taiwan, is communication still a problem for you?</td>
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<td>8. Do you like Chinese language?</td>
<td>4. Is communication perceived by them to be a problem for living or studying in Taiwan?</td>
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<td>9. Are you taking any Chinese course in your university?</td>
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<td>10. How many hours per week do you take those classes and how many hours do you practice by yourself?</td>
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<td>11. Do you practice your Chinese speaking skill with your Spanish speakers’ friends?</td>
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<td>12. Do you think you can “survive” without learning Chinese language?</td>
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APPENDIX B  EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT

1. **When you came to Taiwan, what problems did you encounter in adjusting?**

   For my own case I’ve been experiencing several challenges from communication to culture and weather differences, especially within the local society. The way people behave is totally different from where we come from in some cases; what might be a big issue here might not be so back home. So trying to synchronize a life style with theirs in order to settle in was a little bit challenging, but I think it all become easy with openness to experience, open mindedness, expanding one’s cultural and religious boundaries, in order to broaden your horizon about the human society. So with that I think it will become easy. Try to be open to situations, try to see things the way others do and try to learn their culture and their beliefs. That way, things that appeared to be strange to you become normal when you get to understand why they do what they do.

2. **Do these problems affect you personally and in what way?**

   I think for me it affects my emotions, my mood. It makes me feel withdrawn from the society and feel lonely, and this makes me think a lot about my home, think about my previous life, and think about my life in the next 4 years. I ask myself, how can I overcome these problems, how am I going to settle in, how my life will be after 4 years. All of these thoughts come to my mind regarding this situation. I think I can say we are but the product of our thoughts, what we think we become. So it wouldn’t help wondering so much about my new life, I just have to be positive and try to accept the things the way they are, only then can I overcome my fears.

3. **Do you feel that you are currently over the culture shock?**

   It is not easy to get used to an entirely new culture but, I think I am getting over it. I think the main problem lies in understanding; things seem to be weird when you don’t understand them. So always in the initial state you will feel so much shock, because you don’t understand most of the things you see or hear. So when something doesn’t make sense to you it could seem funny and creepy but when you know the meaning of it, then what you feel is a completely different thing.

4. **What did you do to get over the feeling of homesickness, or any other feeling of sadness?**

   Well like I said, in the first instance, I had to be open to experience; I had to put aside the culture and religious difference. I had to be open minded in order to know how to mingle with the local society. I go out, and I have made some local friends, most of whom I met at the gym. I interact with them and they have taught me and shown me a lot of things in the local society. I learned a lot through friendships and this eventually made feel a lot more comfortable.
5. How did you handle daily communication problems when you first came to Taiwan? For example, ordering food or drinks, taking a taxi, going to hospitals or clinics, the feeling of being lost.

This wasn’t a big issue for me, because when I came here I met some Gambians who have been here for some years already. They could speak a little bit of Chinese and they were familiar with the environment, so they showed me around during my few days. This helped a lot but I still had to try on my own which wasn’t easy in most cases.

6. Now that you have been living a while in Taiwan, is communication still a problem for you?

Yes, to some extent. I think is because of the fact that I know very little Chinese vocabulary. However, I can understand some basic conversations and I can also express myself to some extent with the little vocabulary I know, sometimes mixed with English.

7. Have you taken any Chinese language course, so you can communicate with the population?

Yes, I currently enrolled in a Chinese language program.

8. Are you taking any Chinese course in your university?

Yes, I am.

9. Do you like Chinese language?

Yes, I like it, but it is not easy to learn.

10. How many hours per week do you take those classes and how many hours do you practice by yourself?

I take 8 hours of class per week and I have extra 2 hours with TAs for practice per week. I spend at least one hour everyday to study on my own.

11. Do you practice your Chinese speaking skill with your native language speakers’ friends?

Not really, but I do occasionally crack jokes with friends in Chinese. I hardly speak Chinese in my normal conversions with country mates.

12. Do you think that your Chinese learning or courses are helpful to communicate and adapt yourself to Taiwan?

It is going to be really difficult to you survive without being able to speak the language of the society I live in, because communication is the basis for everything we do in our daily life. Without communication almost everything would seem impossible. So yes, I the language will speed up my adaptation.