

## Lived Experiences of Foreign Student Nurses on Socio-cultural Adjustment: Basis for a Holistic Adjustment Program

Melanie Reboldera Adolfo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Department of Nursing, School of Health Sciences/St. Paul University Philippines, Philippines)

<sup>2</sup>(Department of Nursing, College of Applied Medical Sciences/King Faisal University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

Corresponding Author: Melanie Reboldera Adolfo1

---

**Abstract:** Internationalization and globalization are happening all over the world. Along with these, internationalization of higher education is also observed. Many students go out of their country for studies, which is evident among Southeast Asian Nations. In the Philippines, especially at St. Paul University Philippines, many foreign students study in various fields. With this scenario, the lived experiences of these foreign students on their socio-cultural adjustment should be understood which will enable to cater to their needs effectively. The aim of this interpretative phenomenology study is to explicate the lived experiences of foreign student nurses on socio-cultural adjustment. Considering data saturation, the researcher interviewed seven (7) foreign student nurses who are studying in the university for at least five months. An interview guide with open-ended questions was used to elicit the experiences of the students. Field notes and audit trail were also used during the study. The data were analyzed using van Manen's (1990) phenomenological approach. Based on the findings of the study, there were four major themes including Plethora of Experiences, Transitioning, Mastering Study Experience and Hoping for Best Education. The proposed intervention is the Holistic Adjustment Program that will help the foreign students adjust to their new academic environment. Co-created meaning of sociocultural adjustment based on the lived experiences of the foreign student nurses is described as a cognitive and behavioral process that they went through to be able to function effectively in their new environment

---

Date of Submission: 13-11-2018

Date of acceptance: 28-11-2018

---

### I. Introduction

Globalization and internationalization are the trends nowadays. Presently, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) integration is pushed forward more than ever by the member countries. With this, HEIs are challenged to produce competent, efficient and effective graduates who are able to participate and join the globalized world increasing the mobility of students. And this trend is happening at St. Paul University Philippines (SPUP) especially in the bachelor's program.

With the increase of foreign students in the campus, it is important to know the different needs of the foreign students, particularly their socio-cultural adjustment needs. This will help the university in catering to them effectively.

Studies were done to explore and understand the socio-cultural adjustment and academic experiences of the foreign students. However, these studies are limited and very recent which means that the phenomenon has not been investigated comprehensively. Among the studies that the researcher reviewed, 62% explored the international experiences of foreign student nurses while 38% investigated academic adjustment of international students. Nineteen percent of these studies directly examined the international education experiences of the foreign student nurses while 15% examined clinical placements. Only 4% of the studies, dealt with academic adjustment of foreign student nurses. Furthermore, there were only two studies done in the Philippines.

The first learning experience of successful international students is learning to adjust to a new academic environment (Mesidor, 2016) which includes independent learning, new academic system and relationship with instructors (Chen & Chen, 2009), academic interactions, development of individual strategies to adapt and gaining graduate experiences (Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011).

Some other difficulties or challenges were also faced by the international students such as language barrier (Foster, Le, & Nguyen 2014; Zhang, H. 2013, Zhang, W., 2009; Zhang, Y., 2016), unfamiliar teaching and learning approaches (Foster, Le, & Nguyen 2014; Zhang, 2013; Zhang, Y., 2016), and involvement in university community (Zhang, 2013). Financial difficulties (Cheung, 2013), developing and maintaining a relationship (Zhang, Y., 2016), and outsider feeling (Zhang, Y., 2016) are also concerns.

Coping strategies of international students were also examined. Some of them coped by acceptance and integration, venting emotion, social support (Foster, Le, & Nguyen 2014) and self-effort (Zhang, H., 2013; Zhang, W., 2009).

Studying abroad has positive and negative outcomes. According to Davey, Grant & Anoopkumar-Dukie (2013), it can negatively influence the grades of the international students due to the need to adjust in a new environment. This, however, is negated by Korobova & Starobin, (2015) in his study findings that the mean grades of international students are slightly higher than the domestic students.

High academic success can be achieved in a supportive campus environment (Korobova & Starobin, 2015). Banjong (2015) posited that students can improve their academic performance by using offered university resources. Yusoff & Chelliah, (2010) also claimed that academic achievement is a result of psychological and sociocultural adjustment among international students.

This study aims to investigate the lived experiences of the foreign student nurses, present a co-created meaning of socio-cultural adjustment and propose a socio-cultural adjustment program to address the needs of the foreign students.

## **II. Material And Methods.**

This phenomenological study was carried out on foreign student nurses of St. Paul University Philippines from October 2017 to November 2017. There were 7 participants (both male and females) between the age group 17-47 years from Indonesia and Nigeria.

**Study Design:** Interpretative phenomenological study

**Study Location:** St. Paul University, Philippines

**Study Duration:** October 2017 to November 2017

**Sample size:** 7 participants

### **Subjects & selection method:**

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of the study. Considering data saturation, the researcher interviewed seven (7) foreign student nurses who are currently enrolled and studying in the undergraduate or graduate program in the university for at least five months. Boyd (2001) indicated that two to ten participants are enough to reach data saturation.

The researcher chose to use pseudo names to represent the participants of this study:

P1 (Participant 1) is 24 years old, single and is studying in the university for 2 years. She is a graduate of the diploma program in Indonesia and is presently pursuing Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She speaks Bahasa, English, and Tagalog.

P2 (Participant 2) is 27 years old, married and is studying at the university for 15 months. She is a professor in Indonesia for three years now and is pursuing Master of Science in Nursing. She speaks Bahasa, English, and Tagalog. She usually uses English in the Philippines for communication.

P3 (Participant 3) is 30 years old, single and is studying at the university for 15 months already. She works as coordinator of critical nursing under the professional program in their school. She is an Indonesian studying Master of Science in Nursing. Her first language is Manado and usually uses English in the Philippines for communication. She came to SPUP in 2014 to accompany students for their immersion program.

P4 (Participant 4) is 19 years old, single and is studying at the university since December 2014. She is a Nigerian pursuing Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Her first language is English. She studied in Pangasinan for few months before transferring to SPUP.

P5 (Participant 5) is 47 years old, a nun and is studying in the university since April 2012. She is a graduate of the diploma program in Indonesia and bachelor program in SPUP. She is currently pursuing Master of Arts in Nursing. She usually uses English to communicate.

P6 (Participant 6) is 39 years old, a nun and is studying at the university since March 2016. She is an Indonesian taking up Master of Arts in Nursing. She usually uses English in the Philippines for communication.

P7 (Participant 7) is 17 years old, single and is studying in the university for 7 months now. He is a Nigerian, studying Bachelor of Science in Nursing. He speaks English.

### **Inclusion criteria:**

1. Foreign student
2. Currently enrolled and studying or once enrolled and studied at St. Paul University Philippines in the undergraduate or graduate program
3. Have studied or have stayed in the university for at least 5 months.

### **Procedure methodology**

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the President of St. Paul University Philippines, Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB) of St. Paul University Philippines and School of Nursing and the Dean of Allied Health Sciences. Informed consent was also obtained from the participants of the study. Interview guide, audio recorder and field notes were used during the interview. Transcriptions were done by the researcher as suggested by Morse and Field (1995 as cited by Burns & Grove, 2013).

In order to explore the lived experience of the foreign students studying nursing science, the researcher adopted van Manen's phenomenological approach (1990 as cited by Edmonds, 2008) which uses six different guides necessary to conduct human science research which could happen intermittently or simultaneously.

### **Turning to the nature of the phenomenon**

#### **Investigating experience**

#### **Reflecting on the essential themes**

#### **Writing and rewriting**

#### **Maintaining focus to the phenomenon**

#### **Balancing parts and whole**

To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the interview guide were validated by experts in the university. The researcher also developed an unconditional positive regard to the participants to show dependability. The statements of the participants were treated as a sincere narration of their experiences. The researcher asked clarifications and did member checking with the participants to safeguard credibility. To ensure transferability, the researcher followed proper protocols and guidelines in conducting the study while audit trail was also used to ensure confirmability.

### **Philosophical Underpinning**

Phenomenology encompasses both a philosophy and a range of research approaches (Finlay, 2009). It is concerned with experiential meaning, seeking fresh, complex, vivid descriptions of a "phenomenon" as it is lived. It aims to capture subjective "insider" meaning and what it feels like for the participants. The experience is looked with fresh eyes and described in all its density and richness. Phenomenological research engages in a transformative relational process.

Heideggerian phenomenology is based on the idea that the understanding of individuals happens within their culture, the social and historical context in which they live. Heidegger (1962) introduced and emphasized the concept of *dasein* and situatedness of individuals' *dasein* in relation to different contexts.

Interpretative (hermeneutic) phenomenology is used in the present study. It is concerned with the interpretation of the structures of experience and with how things are understood by the people who live through it and by those who study them (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). The interpretative process requires entering in a hermeneutic circle that reveals a blend of meanings articulated by the researcher and participants (Heidegger, 1962 as cited by Wojnar and Swanson 2007). Understanding a phenomenon using interpretative phenomenology warrants co-creation of meaning. It involves the experience and perspective of the researcher. The meaning is never fixed but is always emergent, contextual and historical (Finlay, 2009).

## **III. Result**

There are four emergent themes in the study. First is the Plethora of Experiences which is composed of five subthemes. Second is Transitioning which has three subthemes. Third is Mastering Study Experience which comprised of two subthemes and, finally, Hoping for Best Education which has three subthemes. The themes are arranged as such since the researcher believes that hoping for best education is the focus of everything else during the study experience. A Socio-cultural Adjustment Model is presented and a Socio-cultural Adjustment Program is designed to help the foreign student nurses to adjust in their new environment.

### **I. The Emergent Themes**

#### **Major Theme 1: Plethora of Experiences**

This theme has five other subthemes including Spectrum of Emotions, The Classroom Challenge, Challenge of Interaction, Challenge of New Environment and Financial Constraints. It is about the different experiences of the foreign student nurses on the first months of their stay in the university. Varied emotions evoked by the prospect of studying outside their country, academic difficulties, social and financial concerns, cultural difficulties and differences in the host country were mentioned by the students.

Initially, the participants experienced mixed emotions brought about by the prospect of studying in another country. They also have strong feelings about leaving home and that they are not confident in coming because they were not able to prepare.

P2 stated, "I'm excited but I am scared because I know because different culture different country."

P6 recalled, "I don't have prepare for English, I'm afraid first time, before, I was telling my sister, sister I want to study English before I go Philippine because they also know about my plan come here, its ok you can do it, you go, go until there you can prepare yourself. But I'm feel not confident."

All the participants also experienced academic difficulties which are rooted in communication problem. Most of the FSN said that they have difficulty speaking in English. Understanding English is also a problem even to a native speaker of English due to different pronunciation. Writing is also a concern. These problems are compounded by the use of Tagalog during discussions. Furthermore, difficulty in explaining ideas was also mentioned by the participants.

P7 revealed, "you know sometimes I don't understand everything. When the teacher talk, his phonation is different from mine."

P1 recounted, "But then last sem ma'am, we conducted a seminar, I had difficulty explaining. I still don't know how to speak in English well".

P3 also mentioned, "even in discussion they will talk in Tagalog or dialect and I just [smiles] they are talking. I feel like an Alien [laughs]."

The BSN students also mentioned the differences in the method of instructions and their clinical experiences. In the clinical, the BSN students were closely monitored but the MSN students were not.

P1 informed, "we don't do PBL ma'am, we are traditional, but sometimes we have group activity then we will present one-by-one. What I observed is, here, it is more organized because we have our duty with our clinical instructor from our school but in Indonesia, our clinical instructor is from the hospital that's why it is not organized."

P2 related, "if masters there (referring to Indonesia), there is CI also right, they always check it, the students, and then even the report, yes, but if in here, maybe limited the CI, and many many students they cannot observe everybody."

Additionally, the foreign student nurses mentioned some concerns in their interaction with their teachers and classmates.

P4 stated, "In St. Paul, actually it's not all teachers but most teachers some are racists and it's not good." She also said, "When the teacher relate to the students joking like that and I'm left apart, I feel so bad inside me. I'm just keeping quiet but I think it's high time for me to speak because it's getting worse and weaken me each day."

Some participants also mentioned differences in weather, physical structure and culture including food. The students claimed that they can't adjust to the food.

P2 also observed, "Oh my God why it's so different, traffic also even in Jakarta, traffic but oh like old building because we are modern already. I cannot adjust [laughs] yes because the food very maasim, I don't like sour."

Furthermore, majority of the participants mentioned teacher- student relation. Some commented that the relationship between the student and the teacher is more open compared to what they used to. They observed that teachers have a close relationship with the students.

P6 also exclaimed, "Here the student can send message with teacher. Private also can be, but in my place, ah ---! When we meet with teacher, pray because afraid."

Some participants also mentioned monetary related concerns.

P3 also said, "Maybe the first is the tuition. I understand for us foreigner, mahal (expensive) but sometimes I see that that there is an item that we are not using. It's quite mahal, it's too big even scholarship by the institution but we have also to think each one that we can give maybe more mura (cheaper) like that."

## **Major Theme 2. Transitioning**

This theme has three other subthemes including Turning Point, Bridging Gaps and Caring Environment. It is about the adjustment process of the FSN. It starts with their realization of the need to adjust, the development of coping mechanisms and support given by the host institution.

P4 stated, "So I try to adjust and I believe that I am not in my country I am in another country so I have to adjust."

P3 related, "And that's why we have to ask to the teacher and then our friend, our classmates, because we have difficulties."

P3 stated, "If teacher, sometimes they know that there are foreign students so they will come after the class, You can come to me if you don't understand what I said."

### Major Theme 3: Mastering Study Abroad Experience

The theme has two subthemes: Knowing and Understand Culture and Growing while Learning. It includes knowing and understanding the hosts' culture and personal growth.

Some participants related that their stay in the university is not really difficult. One of them implied that she understood the Pilipino culture better.

P1 also said that she know something about Filipino culture already saying, "I don't really know much but I know some. If we go to their house, they are very hospitable ma'am)."

Based on the statements, all of the participants grew one way or another. Most of them mentioned that they became more focused in their studies and some indicated that their personal attitude and beliefs changed.

P2 said, "Because I am an only child sometimes with new environment, I will very shy but now I can open, I can talk with other people even I don't know her or him." She also stated, "here is not change my personal values but strengthened we have to be more aware with the other culture, habits to give comprehensive nursing care to patients."

### Major Theme 4.Hoping for the best education

This theme has three subthemes including Looking for standard Education, Witnessing Paulinian Education and Enhancing Study Experience. It's about the different reasons, observations and effects of the study of the foreign student nurses in the university. Suggestions were also included to enhance the educational experience.

There are different reasons why the students studied in the university including recommendations by alumni, wanting to learn and experiencing other culture and fulfilling agreements between universities.

P7 said "I heard about St. Paul University Philippines that they are good and I wish to be a doctor but I need to pass through a process that's actually my first degree, I choose here because of the standard."

As the FSN in the university study, they observed ,witnessed and experienced the tranquility and welcoming aura of the university.

P6 stated, "And then I feel very live spirit from St. Paul for SPUP, and then I see also spirit of Paulinian very strong, I feel that power, teacher also for another people and then SPUP also I see and then every Paulinian here are very welcome, make comfortable for foreigner. First I have interest at SPUP about environment, sometime I arrive there, I still hear pray Angelus."

Moreover, before coming to the country, the students did some preparations. Some enrolled in English before and after coming to SPUP, read about Philippines and SPUP, prepared their documents and convinced family members for the study.

P1 recalled, "I took English course mam before I came here. My first two months, I took English course again and Tagalog, here."

In the end, different strategies were also suggested by the foreign student nurses to enhance the study experience.

P7 recommended, "we want them to treat us not like that we are unique but they should treat us in a way that they appreciate us for coming to the school. Foreigners can call me to study. But one they should understand them better."

### Socio-cultural Adjustment Model



Figure 1: Socio-cultural Adjustment Model

Structuring the co-created meaning of socio-cultural adjustment from the descriptions of the participants, is defined as a cognitive and behavioral process that the foreign students go through to be able to function effectively in their new academic environment. It is a continuous process which takes place throughout the academic endeavor.

The model presents a linear progression of the phases of socio-cultural adjustment of foreign students integrating the themes as a result of this study. Initially, the students experience the different emotions and challenges of being in a new environment. The students experience culture shock as they try to integrate with the academic community. The challenges and emotions caused them to realize that they need to adjust in the university thereby developing coping strategies. These coping strategies are affected by personnel support and student services available in the university. As the students used the coping strategies, they will be able to know and understand the host's culture helping them to function better in the new environment. In this phase, the students are also able to demonstrate personal growth. Finally, all are about the idea of having the best education.

### **Holistic Adjustment Program**

The proposed Holistic Adjustment Program explores the student services that would help the foreign student nurses adjust in their new environment. It will include collaborative activities with the different units of the university.

The proposed holistic adjustment program aims to:

1. Provide foreign students with knowledge and resources to successfully manage study experience and meet academic goals;
2. Promote unity in diversity and engagement in the university; and
3. Advocate university policies, programs, procedures and academic requirements that enrich and facilitate study experience.

### **IV. Discussion**

From the moment the students decided to study in another country, they started to feel a spectrum of emotions. These emotions range from positive to negative and at times a mixture of both. The majority of them are apprehensive because of difficulties in using English and not being able to study and practice English prior to the study program.

The feelings of excitement on the start of the study program is known as honeymoon stage of cultural transition (University of Illinois, 2015). This is the time when the students are interested in their new environment and look forward to the study. Accordingly, students are excited and anticipate going to an international education experience (Pross, 2000). Furthermore, Gatwiri (2015) claimed that students have both positive and negative feelings during their arrival.

Communication problem was found to be the main reason for academic difficulties. It includes speaking, understanding and writing in English and understanding Tagalog. This concern is evident to both native and non-native English speakers. Kuo (2011) found out that graduate foreign students could not understand class lectures because of its speed and because of the professors' accent. This means that all foreign students should undergo English preparation prior to enrollment in any respective program in the university.

Language barrier is a major difficulty of foreign students (Junious, Malecha, Tart, & Young, 2010; Gardner, 2005; Leong, 2015; Bordahl, 2003; Cheung, 2013; Foster, Le, & Nguyen, 2014; Zhang, H., 2013, Zhang, W., 2009; Zhang, Y., 2016 & Abdullah & Sulaiman, 2014; Sicat, 2011; Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2014). It is thought to be the largest determinant of foreign students' problems (Gatwiri, 2015).

Aside from English, understanding Tagalog also posed an academic difficulty among the foreign student nurses. Some students have difficulty understanding their lessons because of the use of Tagalog in the discussions. Though the Philippines uses English as a medium of instruction, sometimes the teachers also use Tagalog during discussion so that the lessons will be understood clearly by the students. With this, it could be deduced that coming to the country should also include preparation in terms of Tagalog language. Teachers and students should also be made aware that there are foreign students in the classroom and should endeavor to discuss in English and encourage the students to do it as well.

Sicat (2011) revealed that it takes time for foreign students to get used to the accent of Filipino English speaking teachers. In relation, Leong (2015), exclaimed that language barrier affects academic success.

Students have also to adjust to the instruction in the university both in the classroom and clinical. In the classroom, one participant mentioned that they are not PBL (Problem Based Learning) in their previous school but traditional. This means that some of them are used to teacher-centered classroom setting which is very different from student-centered classroom setting in the university. Therefore, for bachelor program, every foreign student should undergo PBL orientation program regardless of the semester they arrived in the university as unfamiliar teaching and learning approaches were perceived as reasons for academic difficulties (Zhang, W., 2009). New academic system is perceived as one of the three major academic adjustments of foreign students (Chen & Chen, 2009).

In the clinical, there are a quite number of differences mentioned by the participants. They expressed that the level of monitoring in bachelor and master programme are different. There is close monitoring for BSN students and less monitoring for MSN students. The close monitoring is expected for the bachelor's program as

they are still learning the skills necessary in delivering comprehensive quality care. In SPUP, the masters students are not closely monitored during their practicum as they are already professionals compared to the bachelor's program. However, as explained by one participant, they want close monitoring as well like in Indonesia. This is for them to be able to work diligently with the CI for their requirements. This means that it should not be assumed that, as professionals, they know what they are doing. It should be considered that they are unfamiliar with the documentation process as well as the beliefs, culture and nursing policies in the country. Zhou, Frey & Bang (2011) found out that academic challenges due to culture difference exist regardless of background.

Discrimination and racism are also mentioned by the foreign students. This means that stereotypical perceptions are still evident in the society and foreign students are likely to experience it as part of the minority. The students were marginalized because of not having a good understanding of their background.

This findings is supported by the study conducted by Wu, Garza & Guzman's (2014) study, where prejudice and discrimination were also noted in the academic and social lives of the students. In the same manner, Zhou, Frey & Bang, (2011) agreed that prejudice was being experienced by foreign students.

The FSN experienced difficulty in interacting with their classmates which could have caused strong feelings against Filipino classmates to develop. This means that Filipino students are not very open to interacting with the foreign students. This does not mean, however, that all their classmates are doing it on purpose but it could be that they have difficulty in understanding the foreign students' language and accent. With this, Filipino students should be oriented to foreign classmates and the academic community should strengthen interaction among students. It is important to note, though, that these difficulties in the interactions were only expressed by the BSN students.

Adolescents want to belong to a society to fit in (McLeod, 2013). This means that peers are important in their lives. Having friends, feeling welcome and accepted are valuable to the social experience of the teens (Drolet & Arcand, 2013). The experiences of being left out and ignored by others are thought to impact mental health and learning ability of foreign students as well (Zhou, Frey & Bang, 2011).

As the excitement of being in a new environment wears off, crisis/frustration happens. This is the time when the student begins to comprehend and compare her own culture with the host's culture. The students experience culture shock or the emotional and physical discomfort experienced when dealing with new environment and culture (University of Illinois, 2015). Cultural shock factors includes food, lifestyle, social norms (Gatwiri, 2015).

Both the graduate school and bachelor's program students expressed some financial concerns. Though it is perceived that the foreign students who are studying in the country are well off, especially in the bachelor's program, they still have difficulties in terms of paying on time because of inaccessibility of the money or not being able to withdraw. On the other hand, the masters students are also very much aware of the high tuition fee though they are scholars. This findings is supported by Cheung, 2013. Sicut (2011) found out that some students have just enough money for their boarding and school fees while others enjoy some economic freedom. The author explains that this is related to the economy of the country where they came from.

Transition starts with the realization of the foreign students that they need to adjust, to the development of coping strategies including institutional support. The transition is the passage from one condition to another (Chick & Meleis, 1986).

Moving to another country is a situational trigger (Meleis, 2015). It is the witnessing of the differences and experiencing the difficulties between the original and host culture that triggers the adjustment process. The transition experiences of student nurses were associated with their perceived ability to handle the study abroad program (Moorefield, 2012). Learning motivations and attitude are important in academic adjustment (Zhou, Frey & Bang, 2011).

Most of the students tackled their problems head-on. They used active ways to address their concerns such as reading for a number of hours, scheduling study time and translating topics and concepts which are known as problem-focused strategies (Centre for Studies on Human Stress, 2017.). Some participants also used emotion-focused strategies to handle the feelings brought about the situation such as talking to a friend and complaining.

These findings are similar to the study conducted by Zhang, W. (2009), claiming that foreign students adopted a three-step strategy. Accordingly, independent hard work was thought to be a major approach. The other strategies were seeking help from friends and approaching professors for help which could also be deemed as social support. Good relationships with faculty and peers are important for students' involvement in the university and their academic adjustment (Zhou, Frey & Bang, 2011) and success (Zhang, H. 2013). It is believed that positive professor-student relationship affects academic adjustment of students (Zhou, Frey & Bang, 2011).

Study abroad programs changes the perception and beliefs of the students. The students learned and increased their awareness of the social and cultural differences of the host's culture (Koskinen et. al., 2009;

Smith-Miller et al., 2010; Charles, et al., 2014). Zhang, Y. (2016) found out that studying abroad makes the foreign students become a responsible adult.

Meleis (2015) believes that individuals have the capacity to learn and enact new roles. Responses are shaped by interactions with other people. Mastery of the new role of being a foreign student and the new environment is manifested by seeking and utilizing appropriate resources. It is also demonstrated by being able to live and function and develop and maintain relationships in the new environment.

The foreign students have different reasons for studying in SPUP including personal, familial or linkages. Nonetheless, all these reasons point towards standard education. This proves that standard education is a major deciding factor in choosing a university to study. Zhang, H. (2013), found out that traditional focus on educational excellence continued to play a dominant role. Edmonds (2008), claimed that enhancing education is one of the factors that motivate students to study abroad. Reasons for choosing a university to study include good reputation and cooperation programs (Zhu, 2012).

The FSN described St. Paul as a calming and welcoming environment. This fulfills the quality policy of SPUP which is the provision of quality, Catholic Paulinian education in a caring environment ("SPUP," n.d.). SPUP is committed to the formation of self-directed Catholic Filipino men and women as they geared towards the Paulinian Core Values of Christ-centeredness, Commission, Community, Charism and Charity.

Majority of the FSN said that they studied English and read about the culture through the internet in preparation for studying abroad. This shows that they anticipated the communication difficulty and culture difference. These findings are supported by a study conducted by Sealey & Hathorn (2014), explaining that foreign students try to prepare prior to departure by researching the culture or customs of the host country. They understand that this is a need.

There are different suggestions that the foreign students expressed to enhance the study experience. These include recommendations for academics, activities, communication and equality in interaction. As claimed by Junious, Malecha, Tart, & Young (2010), foreign student nurses want to be valued and accepted by the educational institution, nursing faculty, and their classmates. Interaction is important for the foreign student nurse's educational experience satisfaction (Korobova & Starobin, 2015).

## V. Conclusion

Sociocultural adjustment is a cognitive and behavioral process that the foreign students go through to be able to function effectively in their new academic environment. This adjustment process is complex. It has different aspects to consider including psychological, social, cultural, emotional, cultural and financial. As a student adjust, his/her perceptions of things and behaviors also change. The ability to adjust nevertheless is dependent on the individual's determination and the support that they receive from the host institution. All this adjustment, however, is geared towards academics which is the major reason for the study. Therefore, the host university should make sure to cater to the needs of the foreign students through an establishment of a program.

## References

- [1]. Abdullah, S.S., & Sulaiman, H. (2014). Academic Adaptation: The Experience of Malay Muslim Postgraduate Students. Retrieved from [http://www.ukm.my/jurfpnd/JPM%2039\(1\)%202014/8AcademicAdaptation.pdf](http://www.ukm.my/jurfpnd/JPM%2039(1)%202014/8AcademicAdaptation.pdf)
- [2]. Banjong, D. N. (2015). International students' enhanced academic performance: Effects of campus resources. *Journal of International Students*, 5(2), 132-142. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1771697661?accountid=33657>
- [3]. Bordahl, B. (2003). *Norwegian student nurses and clinical studies abroad* (Order No. 1416340). Available from Nursing & Allied Health Database. (305222327). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305222327?accountid=33657>
- [4]. Boyd, C.O. (2012). Phenomenology the method. In P.L. Munhall (Ed.), *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective*. (pp.). Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- [5]. Burns, N., & Grove, S. (2013). *Burns & Grove's understanding nursing research: Building an evidence-based practice*. Singapore. Elsevier.
- [6]. Center for Studies on Human Stress, (2017). Coping strategies. Retrieved from <https://humanstress.ca/stress/trick-your-stress/steps-to-instant-stress-management/>
- [7]. Charles, L., Maltby, H., Abrams, S., Shea, J., Brand, G., & Nicol, P. (2014). Expanding worldview: Australian nursing students' experience of cultural immersion in India. *Contemporary Nurse: A Journal For The Australian Nursing Profession*, 48(1), 67-75 9p. doi:10.5172/conu.2014.48.1.67
- [8]. Chen, Y-F., & Chen H-J., (2009). A study on international student adjustment from academic, social and cultural viewpoints in Taiwan. Retrieved from <http://www.kyu.edu.tw/teacpage/teacpage98/98%E5%B9%B4%E5%BA%A6%E8%AB%96%E6%96%87%E6%88%90%E6%9C%E9%9B%BB%E5%AD%90%E6%AA%94%5C98-233.pdf>
- [9]. Cheung, A. (2013). Language, academic, socio-cultural and financial adjustments of mainland Chinese students studying in Hongkong. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 27(3), 221-241. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09513541311306459>
- [10]. Chick, N., & Meleis, A.I., (1986). Transitions: A nursing Concern. Retrieved from <https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=nrs>
- [11]. Davey, A., Grant, G., & Anoopkumar-Dukie, S. (2013). Academic performance and personal experience of local, international, and collaborative exchange students enrolled in an Australian Pharmacy Program. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*: Volume 77, Issue 7, Article 148. <http://www.ajpe.org/doi/abs/10.5688/ajpe777148>



- [12]. Drolet, M., & Arcand, I. (2013). Positive Development, Sense of belonging and Support of Peers among early Adolescents: Perspectives of Different Actors. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268388644\\_Positive\\_Development\\_Sense\\_of\\_Belonging\\_and\\_Support\\_of\\_Peers\\_among\\_Early\\_Adolescents\\_Perspectives\\_of\\_Different\\_Actors](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268388644_Positive_Development_Sense_of_Belonging_and_Support_of_Peers_among_Early_Adolescents_Perspectives_of_Different_Actors)
- [13]. Edmonds, M. L. (2008). *The lived experience of student nurses who study abroad: A phenomenological inquiry* (Order No. 3351388). Available from Nursing & Allied Health Database. (304812807). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304812807?accountid=33657>
- [14]. Finlay, L. (2009) Debating phenomenological research methods. Retrieved from [http://www.psyking.net/HTMLobj-3824/Debating\\_Phenomenological\\_Research\\_Methods.pdf](http://www.psyking.net/HTMLobj-3824/Debating_Phenomenological_Research_Methods.pdf)
- [15]. Foster, S., Le, T., & Nguyen, H. (2014). Academic adaptation of Thai graduate students in Australia. Retrieved from [http://tesoL.org.au/files/files/415\\_ACTA\\_2014\\_FosterSiriruck.pdf](http://tesoL.org.au/files/files/415_ACTA_2014_FosterSiriruck.pdf)
- [16]. Gardner, J. (2005). Understanding factors influencing foreign-born students' success in nursing school: A case study of East Indian student nurses and recommendations. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 12(1), 12-7. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/219363692?accountid=33657>
- [17]. Gatwiri, G. (2015). The influence of language difficulties on the wellbeing of international students: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. Retrieved from <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/authors/2648/glory-gatwiri>
- [18]. Junious, D., Malecha, A., Tart, K., & Young, A. (2010). Stress and perceived faculty support among foreign-born baccalaureate student nurses. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 49(5), 261-70. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20100217-02>
- [19]. Korobova, N., & Starobin, S. (2015). A comparative study of student engagement, satisfaction, and academic success among international and American students. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1052833.pdf>
- [20]. Koskinen, L., Campbell, B., Aarts, C., Chassé, F., Hemingway, A., Juhansoo, T., & ... Nordstrom, P. M. (2009). Enhancing cultural competence: Trans-Atlantic experiences of European and Canadian nursing students. *International Journal Of Nursing Practice*, 15(6), 502-509. doi:10.1111/j.1440-172X.2009.01776.x
- [21]. Kuo-Ya-Hui. (2011). Language challenges faced by international graduate students in the United States. Retrieved from [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1958387](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1958387)
- [22]. Leong, P. (2015). Coming to America: Assessing the patterns of acculturation, friendship formation, and the academic experiences of international students at a U.S. college. *Journal of International Students*, 5(4), 459-474. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1695740363?accountid=33657>
- [23]. Mcleod, S., (2013). Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html>
- [24]. Meleis, A. (2015). Transitions Theory. In M. C. Smith & M.E. Parker (Eds.), *Nursing Theories and Nursing Practice* (pp. 361-378). Philadelphia. F.A. Davis Company.
- [25]. Mesidor, J. K., & Sly, K. F. (2016). Factors that contribute to the adjustment of international students. *Journal of International Students*, 6(1), 262-282. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1783941920?accountid=33657>
- [26]. Moorefield, G. (2012). *Studying abroad in a third world country: Baccalaureate nursing and non-student nurses and their transformations* (Order No. 3523272). Available from Nursing & Allied Health Database. (1038141040). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1038141040?accountid=33657>
- [27]. Pross, E. A. (2000). *International education experiences of baccalaureate student nurses* (Order No. 9992474). Available from Nursing & Allied Health Database. (304668141). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304668141?accountid=33657>
- [28]. Sealey, L. J., & Hathorn, D. (2014). The lived experience of Honduran and USA student nurses working together in a study abroad program. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(48), 1-20. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1640563785?accountid=33657>
- [29]. Sicat, R. (2011). Foreign students' cultural adjustment and coping strategies. Retrieved from <http://www.ipedr.com/vol5/no2/74-H10195.pdf>
- [30]. Smith-Miller, C. A., Leak, A., Harlan, C. A., Dieckmann, J., & Sherwood, G. (2010). "Leaving the Comfort of the Familiar": Fostering Workplace Cultural Awareness Through Short-Term Global Experiences. *Nursing Forum*, 45(1), 18-28. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6198.2009.00163.x
- [31]. SPUP (n.d.) Vision-Mission and quality Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.spup.edu.ph/content?type=visionmission&unit=university>
- [32]. University of Illinois, Counselling Center, (2015). Cultural Transition and Adaptation. Retrieved from <https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/outreach-consultation-prevention/cultural-diversity-outreach/international-students/cultural>
- [33]. Wojnar, D., & Swanson, K. (2007). Phenomenology: an exploration. Retrieved from [http://nursing.unc.edu/files/2012/11/ccm3\\_032563.pdf](http://nursing.unc.edu/files/2012/11/ccm3_032563.pdf)
- [34]. Wu, H., Garza, E., & Guzman, N., (2014). International Student's Challenge and Adjustment to College. Retrieved from <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/edri/2015/202753/>
- [35]. Yusoff, Y. M., & Chelliah, S. (2010). Adjustment in international students in Malaysian public university. *International Journal of Innovation, Management, and Technology*, 1(3), 275. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7763/IJIMT.2010.V1.51>
- [36]. Zhang, H., (2013) Academic adaptation and cross-cultural learning experiences of Chinese students at American universities. A narrative inquiry. Retrieved from [https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/downloads/neu:2551?datastream\\_id=content](https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/downloads/neu:2551?datastream_id=content)
- [37]. Zhang, W. (2009). Academic adaptation experiences of Chinese graduate students at J.F. Oberlin University. Retrieved from <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/31162/1/AcademicadaptationexperiencesofChineseexgraduatexstudents.pdf>
- [38]. Zhang, Y. (2016). International students in transition: Voices of Chinese doctoral students in a U.S. research university. *Journal of International Students*, 6(1), 175-194. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1783941954?accountid=33657>
- [39]. Zhou, Y., Frey, C., & Bang, H. (2011). Understanding on international graduate students' academic adaptation to a U.S. graduate School. *International Education*, 41(1), 76-94,99-100. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/911991616?accountid=33657>
- [40]. Zhu, J. (2012). Academic Adjustment of Chinese Students at German Universities. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/zhu.pdf

Melanie Adolfo.. "Lived Experiences of Foreign Student Nurses on Socio-cultural Adjustment: Basis for a Holistic Adjustment Program" *IOSR Journal of Nursing and Health Science (IOSR-JNHS)*, vol. 7, no.6, 2018, pp. 92-100.