AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF EXCHANGE STUDENTS IN PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA

By

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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

SIGNATURE: ____________________________________________________________

DATE: ______________________________________________________________
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ABSTRACT

This research study aims to investigate the exchange students’ experiences with living in a foreign environment. Twenty students took part in this study and were made up of two categories namely study abroad students and student interns. The twenty students who took part in this study were mostly from industrialized countries namely Germany, the United States of America, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden. Data were collected by means of individual semi-structured interviews as well as observational methods namely participant and simple observations.

The results indicate that if sojourners are to gain a better understanding the South African culture, it is important that they interact with the host nationals. Given that most of the students highlighted the issue of crime as their main concern, their knowledge on how to survive in a crime-ridden country like South Africa would be essential.

Key words: Adjustment; Culture; Culture Shock; Exchange Student; Sojourner; Study Abroad.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration by candidate</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter One: Overview of the study
- **1.1. Background to the study**
- **1.2. Motivation for the study**
- **1.3. Aim of the study**
- **1.4. Objectives of the study**
- **1.5. Research questions**
- **1.6. Key terms**
  - **1.6.1. Study abroad**
  - **1.6.2. Intern**
- **1.7. Outline of the chapters**
- **1.8. Summary**

## Chapter Two: Research Methodology
- **2.1. Introduction**
- **2.2. Research design**
  - **2.2.1. Qualitative research**
  - **2.2.2. Exploratory study**
- **2.3. Data Collection**
  - **2.3.1. Individual semi-structured interviews**
    - **2.3.1.1. The interview process**
    - **2.3.1.2. Language issues**
    - **2.3.1.3. Recording of the interviews**
  - **2.3.2. Observations**
    - **2.3.2.1. Simple observation**
    - **2.3.2.2. Participant observation**
  - **2.3.3. Triangulation**
- **2.4. Target population and sampling**
  - **2.4.1. Target population**
  - **2.4.2. Non-probability sampling**
    - **2.4.2.1. Purposive sampling**
    - **2.4.2.2. Snowball sampling**
  - **2.4.3. Interviewing**
- **2.5. Data analysis**
- **2.6. Reliability and validity**
2.6.1 Triangulation 15
2.6.2 Trustworthiness 15
   2.6.2.1 Credibility 15
   2.6.2.2 Transferability 15
   2.6.2.3 Dependability 16
   2.6.2.4 Confirmability 16

2.7 Ethical considerations 16
   2.7.1 Informed consent 17
   2.7.2 Incurring physical and psychological harm 18
   2.7.3 Coercing and deceiving research subjects 18
   2.7.4 Anonymity and violation of privacy 18

2.8 Limitations of the study 19
2.9 Summary 19

Chapter Three: Culture 20
3.1 Introduction 20
3.2 The concept of culture 20
3.3 Features of culture 20
   3.3.1 Culture is shared 21
   3.3.2 Culture is learned 21
   3.3.3 Culture is mostly integrated 21
   3.3.4 Culture is generally adaptive 22
   3.3.5 Culture is universal 22
3.4 Functions of culture 22
   3.4.1 Culture serves the identity meaning function 23
   3.4.2 Culture serves the group inclusion function 23
   3.4.3 Culture serves as an intergroup boundary regulation function 23
   3.4.4 Culture serves the ecological adaptation function 23
   3.4.5 Culture serves the cultural communication function 24
3.5 Elements of culture 24
   3.5.1 Values 24
   3.5.2 Beliefs 24
   3.5.3 Attitudes 24
   3.5.4 Worldview 25
   3.5.5 Norms 25
   3.5.6 Social organization 26
   3.5.7 Time 26
   3.5.8 Space 26
   3.5.9 Food and feeding habits 26
   3.5.10 Patterns of thought 27
3.6 Ethnocentrism 27
3.7 Cultural Relativism 27
3.8 Summary 27
Chapter Four: Adjustment

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Clarification of the concepts
   4.2.1 Sojourner
   4.2.2 Culture Shock
   4.2.3 Adjustment

4.3 The challenges that come with living in a foreign environment
   4.3.1 Language and communication
   4.3.2 Ethnocentrism
   4.3.3 Level of knowledge
   4.3.4 Forming enclaves
   4.3.5 Culture Shock
   4.3.6 Difficulties in obtaining basic needs and services

4.4 Strategies for adjusting to a foreign environment
   4.4.1 Be culturally prepared
   4.4.2 Learn local communication complexities
   4.4.3 Mix with host nationals
   4.4.4 Learn to manage stress
   4.4.5 Be adventurous
   4.4.6 Be tolerant and open towards other cultures
   4.4.7 The basic necessities have to be met

4.5 Factors influencing the adjustment process of an individual
   4.5.1 Culture distance
   4.5.2 Language
   4.5.3 Positive attitude towards the host environment
   4.5.4 Personality
   4.5.5 Interactions with host nationals

4.6 Summary

Chapter Five: The Exchange Students in Port Elizabeth

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Reasons for coming to South Africa
   5.2.1 Curious to know more about the South African culture
   5.2.2 Attracted by the weather
   5.2.3 Improving one’s English language skills
   5.2.4 A chance to meet new people
   5.2.5 To take advantage of the activities that are on offer
   5.2.6 Attracted by South Africa’s nature and wildlife
   5.2.7 Favourable exchange rate

5.3 The exchange student’s experiences with living in South Africa
   5.3.1 Academic experiences
   5.3.2 Having to adapt to the slow pace of life
5.3.3 Experiences with accommodation 46
5.3.4 Impressed by the weather 46
5.3.5 Things are relatively cheap 46
5.3.6 It is hard to interact with the local people 47
5.3.7 Learning to be security-conscious 47
5.3.8 Surprised by the poverty and racism 48
5.4. The exchange student’s impressions of South Africa 48
  5.4.1 Impressions of South Africa as a country 48
  5.4.2 Impressions of the South African people 49
5.5 Summary 49

Chapter Six: Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research 50

6.1 Introduction 50
6.2 Positive and negative experiences with living in South Africa
  6.2.1 Positive experiences 50
    6.2.1.1 Things are relatively cheaper 50
    6.2.1.2 Having the opportunity to experience the weather 50
  6.2.2 Negative experiences 51
    6.2.2.1 Finding it hard to learn in English 51
    6.2.2.2 Do not like the idea of being security-conscious 51
    6.2.2.3 Having to adjust to the slow pace of life 51
6.3 Strategy to cope with the South African environment 51
6.4 The possibility of full integration into South African society 52
6.5 Conclusion 52
6.6 Suggestions for further research 52

References 53

List of tables
  Table 1: Problems faced by foreign students 2
  Table 2: Summary of the participant’s profile 13

List of appendices
  Appendix A: Interview Guide 59
  Appendix B: Consent Form 62
  Appendix C: Ethics Clearance Letter 66
CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In the past, an individual would refer to a neighbour as someone who was similar to oneself in terms of culture. This is not the case these days simply because of the increase in the movement of people across national and ethnic boundaries (Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001:4). This is largely attributed to the rapid changes in the global economy, technology, transportation and immigration policies which have resulted in the world becoming a small intersecting community (Ting-Toomey, 1999:3).

This certainly holds true with international education, however, there is the tendency to assume that international education began after the Second World War. It is worth mentioning that international education has an ancient tradition which stretches as far back as the reign of Emperor Asoka the Great, of Asia Minor. It was during this period that the University of Taxila was established. It became a major international institution that required that its graduates travel abroad after completing their courses. Over the next thousand years, countries such as Egypt, Greece, China and Japan began fostering international education (Furnham and Bochner, 1982:161; Ward et al, 2001:143).

Initially, international education was regarded as a tool of foreign policy but this changed after the Second World War when a growing number of students were going abroad to undertake higher education. As a result of the damages caused by the war, international education programmes were driven by a number of objectives. Some of these objectives included the promotion of understanding and goodwill amongst the peoples of the world and assisting in the reconstruction and economic development of countries that had been affected by the war or whose educational infrastructure was at a rudimentary stage (Sewell and Davidsen, 1961:3; Ward et al, 2001:144).
As more students decided to undertake their education abroad, more research was needed to understand this phenomenon. Most studies have tended to focus on students coming from less developed countries (Sewell and Davidsen, 1961:4). This is due to the fact that they are the largest student population to undertake their studies outside their countries of origin. Research done on these students has tended to focus on their adjustment in developed countries and the challenges they face on a daily basis.

This research study, however, will focus on students coming from developed countries and their experiences with adjusting to a developing country like South Africa. It is hoped that this study will shed light on some of the positive and negative experiences that come with living in a foreign environment.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The theme surrounding the research literature is that life has never meant to be easy for sojourners living in a foreign environment. The challenges that come with living in a foreign environment cannot be underestimated. I can take an example of my situation when I first arrived in South Africa nine years ago. I was faced with a number of problems and some of these included finding the right accommodation as well as homesickness. Table 1 gives an illustration of some of the problems that international students face when living in a foreign environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF PROBLEMS</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too much contact with people from the other country</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in teaching/learning methods</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative matters</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness of teaching staff to help foreign students</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance concerning academic programme</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough time to travel</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial matters</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a place to concentrate on studies</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with host country students</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


If these problems are not addressed they could have an impact on the psych-socio and academic well-being of the student. This has been illustrated in a study done amongst Iranian students living in Scotland. In this study it was found that
factors such as academic, psycho-social and cultural problems affected the student’s adjustment. If international students are dissatisfied with their sojourn experience, they are unlikely to adjust to the host country easily (Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005:489). It is for this reason that Furukawa (1997 cited in Yeh, 2001:66) recommends that the adjustment of international students should be paid close attention.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to explore the positive and negative experiences that come with living in a foreign environment.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To explore the positive and negative experiences that come with living in a foreign environment.
- To explore the strategies that the students have put in place to cope with the environment.
- To explore whether the possibility of full integration in a foreign society does exist

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To meet the aim and objectives of the study, an attempt will be made to answer the following questions:

a. What are the challenges that come with living in a foreign environment?

b. What strategies have the students developed to cope with the environment they find themselves in?

c. Are they fully integrated in the society in which they find themselves in?
1.6 KEY TERMS

The exchange students in this research study were made up of study abroad students and student interns. The two terms will be clarified here.

1.6.1 STUDY ABROAD

According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/StudyAbroad), study abroad can be defined as “the act of a student pursuing educational opportunities abroad”. When an exchange student studies abroad, the credits awarded for classes attended can be transferred to the higher education institutions in their respective home countries. There are a number of reasons why students choose to study abroad. These include learning the language of the host country as well as to gain an understanding of the world around them.

1.6.2 INTERN

According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intern), an intern can be defined as “one who works in a temporary position with an emphasis on on-the-job training rather than employment”. Interns can be college or university students, high school students or postgraduate adults seeking skills for a new career. Interns can be paid, unpaid or partially paid. The focus in this research study will be partially on international student internship. There are a number of reasons why students prefer to do their internship abroad. These include gaining international experience and improving one’s second language skills.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter one begins by offering a background on international education. Chapter two will focus on the methodology that was utilized in the research study. In chapter three, culture as a central concept to the study will be discussed. Chapter four offers a discussion on the literature dealing with adjustment. Chapter five focuses on the results that emanated from the data analysis. Chapter six offers a summary, conclusion as well as recommendations for further research.
1.8 SUMMARY

The first chapter gives a brief background on international education. It has a history that stretches as far back as the reign of Emperor Asoka the Great of Asia Minor. It was in Asia Minor that the University of Taxila was recognized as a major international institution. It sent its graduates to travel abroad after they had completed their studies. Over the centuries, countries such as Egypt and China set up international education programmes. Initially, international education was regarded as a tool of foreign policy but this changed after the Second World War. As a result of the damages brought about by the war, it was then decided that international education would be used as a tool to promote understanding and goodwill amongst people of the world as well as assisting in bringing about economic development in countries affected by the war. Post World War Two saw an increase in the number of students undertaking their studies outside their countries of origin. This was particularly the case for students coming from less developed nations. Research tended to focus on their experiences with living in more developed nations. This research study, on the other hand, focuses on students from the developed countries. The next chapter will focus on the methodologies used in this study.
CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the methodology of the research process. Methodology is concerned with the “how” of social science research (Mouton and Marais, 1996:15). Huysamen (2001:163) maintains that for knowledge expansion to be justifiable and accountable, the methodology applied for this purpose should be able to make justifiable and accountable conclusions. Most of the time knowledge comes from personal experiences. Neuman (2003:2) argues that this method of acquiring knowledge is flawed. He adds that social research is less likely to produce errors given the fact that it is “more structured, organized and systematic” (Neuman, 2003:2).

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a “plan or blueprint according to which data are to be collected to investigate the research hypothesis or question in the most economic manner” (Huysamen, 2001:10). Mouton (1996:107) further adds that research design is the set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing a problem. The function of the research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate the approximate research decisions to be made for the maximising of the validity of the eventual results (Mouton, 1996:107).

The research design for this study is qualitative in nature. It utilizes qualitative methods namely individual semi-structured interviews and observations. The study further takes an exploratory approach.

2.2.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Studies done on foreign students’ experiences abroad tend to be quantified. Many interculturalists recognise that it is difficult to fully quantify one’s experience abroad (Jackson, 2005:165). It is for this reason that the researcher decided on following the qualitative approach. This approach emphasises on viewing social action from an insider’s perspective (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:270). Qualitative
researchers maintain that social action cannot be understood without considering its context (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:45). The context of a social action is vital when understanding human behaviour. The only way to understand social action is by entering into the natural setting. The natural setting gives insight into what is most likely to be discovered or uncovered (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:45).

2.2.2 EXPLORATORY STUDY

Exploratory researchers argue that research should aim at breaking new ground (Glicken, 2003:14). For this to happen, the researcher has to follow an open and flexible research strategy (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:80). Given that the exchange students come from developed countries, the researcher is under the assumption that their sojourn experience will be similar to that of students coming from developing countries. The researcher hopes that by taking an exploratory approach, this study will yield new insight.

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

The following qualitative methods were employed in this study namely individual semi-structured interviews and observations. In order to obtain multiple perspectives of the same phenomenon, triangulation was used.

2.3.1 INDIVIDUAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Within the qualitative approach, interviews are the most frequently used methods of data gathering (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:289). There are a number of advantages to using interviews. Firstly, interviews bring to our attention an individual's thoughts, feelings and actions and this in turn provides us with their subjective reality (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004:52). Secondly, interviewees are eager to talk to an interviewer rather than completing a questionnaire. Thirdly, interviewers can visit the interviewees at their homes or workplaces (Huysamen, 2001:144-7), and observe the circumstances under which they live or work.
Interviews can take the form of structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The researcher made use of the semi-structured interview. The interviews were held on an individual basis. The researcher would like to highlight that English was a challenge for the students coming from Europe in particular. In spite of this, they insisted that they did not need a translator. One of the benefits of using this type of interview is that the interviewer can adapt the formulation as well as the terminology of questions to fit the background and educational level of respondents. Furthermore, the interviewer is in the position to clear up any misunderstanding on the part of the interviewee (Huysamen, 2001:145-6).

2.3.1.1 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

As mentioned in the previous section, the interviews were held on an individual basis. Appointments were made prior to the interview. The researcher had the opportunity of visiting the homes of the participants; however, three of the participants declined having the interviews done in their homes. It was then decided that the three participants will have their interview done at the researcher’s home. Before conducting any interview, it is always important to begin by introducing yourself (Neuman, 2003:294). In the researcher’s case, he began by introducing himself as well as explaining the purpose of the study. The participants were further told of what was expected from them in the interview. For instance, they were made aware of the fact that if they did not understand the questions posed to them they need not hesitate to ask.

2.3.1.2 LANGUAGE ISSUES

The researcher would like to reiterate that there were a number of occasions when the students from Europe had difficulties expressing themselves in English. Although the researcher had initially suggested that there be a translator for these interviews, the students refused and insisted that they be interviewed in English. The students felt that if they continued to interact more with people speaking the language, it could improve their language proficiency.
2.3.1.3 RECORDING OF THE INTERVIEWS

The researcher had initially planned on using a tape recorder. The advantage of using a tape recorder is that it helps the researcher to recall events (Neuman, 2003:386). The problem, however, was that the researcher did not have the means to purchase a tape recorder. To overcome this problem, it was decided that the majority of the interviews be written down verbatim. In some instances, tenses were modified to a minimum degree in keeping with the accepted academic practice, however, care needed to be taken to maintain the authenticity of the interview (Zhang, 2002:129).

The interviews were administered using an interview guide (see Appendix A). The advantage of using an interview guide is that it allows individual perspectives and experiences to emerge. It, furthermore, allows the interviewer to build a conversation within a particular subject area (Patton, 1990: 283). This made it convenient for both the interviewer and the interviewee.

2.3.2 OBSERVATIONS

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006:99), “Observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry”. A whole lot can be learned from observing social phenomena; however, it is often detailed and tedious in the sense that it is impossible to observe everything directly (Neuman, 2003:381; Patton, 1990:25). There are a number of things that an observer has to consider namely the exterior physical signs, expressive movements, physical location, language behaviour and time duration (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:293). There are two types of observation namely simple and participant observation. These will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.3.2.1 SIMPLE OBSERVATION

A researcher should not only focus on the verbal aspects of communication but also take into consideration the non-verbal aspects as well. Neuman (2003:382) stresses that social information, feelings and attitudes can be expressed through non-verbal communication which would include gestures, facial expressions and posture. The researcher took note of these during his observation exercise. There
are some advantages with using simple observation. Firstly, the behaviour studied can be recorded first hand. Secondly, it is the only data-collecting procedure that can be used with babies and toddlers (Huysamen, 2001:140). However, there are a number of drawbacks to using simple observation. The first drawback is that if the observer is seen to be a stranger to the interviewee it could influence the behaviour of the observer and this poses difficulties for the observer concerned. Secondly, the observer’s prejudices can influence the observation exercise (Huysamen, 2001:140).

2.3.2.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

This type of observation involves “getting one’s hands dirty” when entering the field (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:270). With participant observation, the researcher gets to the opportunity to experience the same phenomena as those being studied (Huysamen, 2001:169). This involves participating in the activities of those being studied so as to gain an insider’s perspective. However, it is worth highlighting some of the dilemmas that the researcher is faced with when it comes to this type of observation. The participant observer may find himself getting involved in illegal activities that could jeopardise his position. In such situations, it is important for the participant observer to decide when or where to draw the line (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:293; Huysamen, 2001:170).

The researcher can give an example of a dilemma that he was faced with when he played the role of participant observer. During the participant observation exercise, some of the participants were found drinking alcohol and using illegal substances. As an adherent of the Christian faith, the researcher distanced himself from such activities but also for fear that it could endanger his role in the research process.

2.3.3 TRIANGULATION

After highlighting some of the advantages and disadvantages of both types of observation, the researcher felt that a multiple perspective of the same phenomenon needed to be taken. Thus, the method of triangulation was used for this purpose. This method will be discussed in more detail under the section reliability and validity.
2.4 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING

2.4.1 TARGET POPULATION

The term target population refers to the specific pool of cases that a researcher wants to study (Neuman, 2003:216). In this research study, the target population would be the exchange students living in the Summerstrand area of Port Elizabeth. They consist of both study abroad students and student interns. There are a number of reasons for choosing this area. Firstly, most of the exchange students are found living within this particular area. Secondly, it is in close proximity to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and this could perhaps be one of the reasons why they prefer living in the area. Thirdly, it was also convenient for the researcher who lives within this same area.

2.4.2 NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING

Non-probability sampling is commonly used in qualitative research. With non-probability sampling, a qualitative researcher does not use the sample to generalize his or her findings (Bailey, 1982:97). Rather the focus is on how the sample illuminates social life (Neuman, 2003:211). There are a variety of non-probability sampling techniques but for the purposes of this study, two types of sampling techniques will be focused on and these are purposive and snowball sampling.

2.4.2.1 PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

With purposive sampling, the researcher must use his or her own judgment about which respondents to choose (Bailey, 1982:99). Babbie and Mouton’s (2001:287) guidelines state that “a general rule of thumb indication for a South African master’s level of study is between five and twenty or twenty-five respondents”. The researcher intends to select a sample of twenty interviewees that consists of both males and females. In this study, the interviewees will be chosen under the following criteria:

- They should be study abroad students or student interns
They should specifically come from an industrial nation, in other words, any part of Europe or North America.

- They must be living in the Summerstrand area of Port Elizabeth.
- They must be living in South Africa for a period of three to twelve months.

Most of the informants selected fitted the above criteria. Twenty students were selected and they came from as far as Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United States of America. Six of the students were student interns and the rest were study abroad students. Gender was of less significance in this study.

2.4.2.2 SNOWBALL SAMPLING

In this study, the researcher made use of the snowball sampling technique. With this technique, a researcher approaches a few individuals from the relevant population to identify friends or acquaintances from the same population to be included in the sample (Huysamen, 2001:44). Babbie and Mouton (2001:167) maintain that this type of sampling is appropriate when the members of a specific population are difficult to locate.

2.4.3 INTERVIEWING

Most of the interviews took place in the accommodation of the participants. The interviews were conducted from 8 September to 7 October 2008. The interviews took twenty to sixty minutes to complete. In the following page, Table 2 offers a summary of the participants’ profiles. For ethical purposes, no names have been used.
TABLE 2: PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT NUMBER</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</th>
<th>FIRST TIME TO BE IN SOUTH AFRICA?</th>
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<td>ONE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>GERMANY</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWO</td>
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<td>GERMANY</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>THREE</td>
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<td>NINE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>THE NETHERLANDS</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>TEN</td>
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<td>THE NETHERLANDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELEVEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWELVE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>GERMANY</td>
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<tr>
<td>THIRTEEN</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>GERMANY</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOURTEEN</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIFTEEN</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>BELGIUM</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIXTEEN</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>GERMANY</td>
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<td>SEVENTEEN</td>
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<td>EIGHTEEN</td>
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<td>NINTEEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWENTY</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>USA</td>
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</table>

Eleven males and nine females participated in the study. Eight of the participants are from Germany, five are from the USA, four are from Sweden, two from the
Netherlands and one from Belgium. For all of them it is their first time to visit South Africa.

2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Mouton (2001:108), data analysis involves “breaking up” the data into themes, patterns, trends and relationships that can be managed. However, analysing data can be a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating exercise (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:154). The purpose behind data analysis is to establish the relationships that exist between concepts, constructs or variables and to ascertain whether any patterns or trends can be identified or isolated (Mouton, 2001:108).

In order to analyse the raw data, the qualitative data method of content analysis was utilized. According to Palmquist (1993, in Babbie and Mouton, 2001:492), content analysis is divided into two types, namely conceptual and relational analysis. Conceptual analysis has to do with establishing themes whereas relational analysis has to do with finding relationships between the elements of one’s data rather than the elements themselves. Conceptual analysis was used to analyse and interpret the data. The process of conceptual analysis comprises of eight steps and these are:

- deciding on the level of analysis
- deciding how many concepts to code for
- deciding whether to code for the existence or frequency of a concept
- deciding on how to distinguish among concepts
- developing rules for the coding of texts
- deciding what to do with irrelevant information
- coding texts
- analysing results
2.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In as far as reliability and validity is concerned, the principles that apply in qualitative research differ to that of quantitative research. In quantitative research, there is emphasis on objectivity. In place of objectivity, qualitative research emphasises on triangulation and trustworthiness. These two principles will be discussed in more detail below.

2.6.1 TRIANGULATION

In spite of the fact that the method of triangulation was mentioned in the previous section, it was not elaborated upon in more detail. Babbie and Mouton (2003:275) consider triangulation “to be one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research”. The limitations of each method in a research project can, to a certain extent, be compensated for by utilizing different methods (Mouton and Marais, 1996:86).

2.6.2 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In order to enhance trustworthiness in research, there are four aspects that need to be taken into account. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These four aspects will be discussed in more detail.

2.6.2.1 CREDIBILITY

In order to establish credibility, the researcher will have to examine whether the statements given by the interviewees correspond with their actions. This entails using triangulation to ask different questions, seek different sources and use different methods (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:277). In this study, the interviews were triangulated with the observation methods.

2.6.2.2 TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability refers to the fact that findings generated from the research can be applied to other contexts. However, it is worth noting that unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers accept that knowledge gained in one context will not necessarily have relevance to other contexts (Babbie and Mouton,
2001:277). In this study, it was found that the exchange student’s experiences with adjusting to a foreign environment differed from the information given in the literature.

2.6.2.3 DEPENDABILITY

With dependability, qualitative researchers have to provide evidence that if an inquiry is to be repeated with similar respondents in a similar context, its findings would be similar (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:278). In this study, the researcher triangulated the information given in the interview with the observation notes taken during the observation exercise.

2.6.2.4 CONFIRMABILITY

With confirmability, the emphasis is on trying to give a balanced account from the viewpoint of those being studied. In order for the researcher’s truth to sound plausible, his work has to be convincing enough to reveal that his experiences do correspond with the empirical data (Neuman, 2003:185). This has to do with whether the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the inquiry (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:278). In order to avoid being influenced by the views given in the literature review, the researcher tried to remain neutral and unbiased throughout the research process.

2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Unlike some of the natural sciences, the social sciences focus on human beings. Social researchers need to recognise that they do not have a free hand when it comes to what research procedures can be performed on humans (Huysamen, 2001:178). Boundaries have to be set when it comes to doing research involving humans. In order to respect the dignity of all humans taking part in a research study, ethical principles have been put in place to ensure that the research process runs smoothly. In order to avoid any problems from surfacing in the future, it is important to apply for an ethics clearance before carrying out a research study after which it has to be approved by an ethics committee. The researcher did apply for an ethics clearance and it was approved by the Nelson
Mandela Metropolitan University Research Ethics (Human) Committee via the Faculty of Arts Research, Technology and Innovation Committee (see Appendix C). In order to ensure that the research process runs smoothly, the following issues need to be taken into consideration.

2.7.1 **INFORMED CONSENT**

Much of the time subjects are unaware that they are taking part in a research project. They often find that they are deceived into participating in the research without their consent. This was the case in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study of 1929 when poor uneducated African-American men were deceived into taking part in a study that had to do with syphilis. In this study it was found that the men had died simply as a result of being untreated. The purpose of having an informed statement is to make the participants aware of what they are getting involved in and what their rights are (Neuman, 2003:124). Huysamen (2001:180) stressed that it is important for consent to be obtained simply because the participants could be subjected to physical and psychological discomfort.

Consent was obtained from the twenty informants (see Appendix B). This was to lessen the chance that a con artist in the guise of a researcher will defraud or abuse subjects (Neuman, 2003:125). Huysamen (2001:180) stresses that informed consent has to entail the following:

- The purpose of the proposed research
- The importance of the research
- The qualifications and experiences of the researcher
- The possibility of any discomfort, whether physical or psychological in nature
- Their freedom to refuse participation and to withdraw from the study at any point in time.

It is hoped that this will reduce the likelihood of fraudulently obtaining information for personal advantage (Neuman, 2003:125).
2.7.2 INCURRING PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM

Neuman (2003:120) maintains that social research can harm a research participant in several ways. Harm can include physical, psychological or even legal harm. Much of the time, researchers fail to consider this and in the process act unethically. In order to avoid incurring harm upon one’s research subjects, it is important that this be formalized at all times (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:522). In order to assure the participants that no harm will be incurred upon them, they signed the consent form (see Appendix B).

2.7.3 COERCING OR DECEIVING RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The coercion or deception of research subjects was also highlighted in the consent form (see Appendix B). Babbie and Mouton (2001:525) stress that it is important for the researcher to identify himself to those being studied. Neuman (2003:124) further added that it is important for social researchers never to force anyone to participate in research. Deception is acceptable only if there is a specific methodological purpose for it (Neuman, 2003:124). To ensure that the participants were not coerced in any manner, a preamble letter was read to them beforehand.

2.7.4 ANONYMITY AND VIOLATION OF PRIVACY

It is worth noting that research subjects have the right to remain anonymous. With anonymity, a field researcher gives a fictitious name and location and alters some characteristics while providing a social picture of a particular individual (Neuman, 2003:126). Mouton (2001:243) maintains that this right should be respected. In order to ensure that the participants’ identities were protected, pseudonyms were used.

It is also important that the participants be told of their right to privacy as stated in the consent form (see Appendix B). Social researchers fail to recognise that when they are probing into the beliefs, backgrounds and behaviours of the informants that in a way reveals their intimate private details; they are in fact invading one’s privacy (Neuman, 2003:126).
2.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was not without limitations. One of these limitations was that it focused only on the perspectives coming from the exchange students. It did not focus on the perspectives coming from the other international students. Moreover, the study was limited to the Summerstrand area. The researcher did not go as far as Humewood or South End where some of the exchange students could be found. Despite these limitations, this study helped to shed light to some of the experiences that come with living in a foreign environment.

2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology utilized in this research study. Studies that focus on foreign students’ experiences with living abroad are often quantified. The one problem with following the quantitative approach is that it fails to give an insider’s perspective in attempting to understand the challenges that foreign students are faced with on a daily basis. It is for this reason that the qualitative approach was chosen for this study. In order to enhance the quality of the research study, the following data collecting methods have been utilized namely the individual semi-structured interviews and observations. In the hope that this research will yield new insight, an exploratory approach has been followed. The data collected has been analysed using content analysis. The chapter also considered the necessary ethical measures needed to conduct the research. Yet this study was not without limitations. Some of the limitations with this study were that it only focused on exchange students and it was limited to the Summerstrand area. Before understanding the sort of impact culture has on an individual’s adjustment process in a foreign country, the following chapter will discuss culture as a general concept.
CHAPTER THREE

CULTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that culture plays a significant role in the adaptation of people to a foreign environment. However, it is often found that people tend to misuse the concept of culture. The purpose of this chapter is to help clarify the concept culture.

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

At present, there is no single definition of culture that has been agreed upon. According to Jahoda (referred to in Mauer and Retief, 1987 cited in Boguslavsky, 2007:10), culture is “the most elusive term in the generally rather fluid vocabulary of the social sciences”. In spite of this, the culture concept can be traced as far back as the nineteenth century. One of the first people to be credited for coming up with the culture concept was a British anthropologist by the name of Sir Edward Burnett Tylor. He defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Havilland, 1994:304).

Ever since Tylor came up with his definition of culture, modern anthropologists grew dissatisfied with some of the terminology used in his concept. As a result, they came up with their own definitions of culture that ranged from the external architecture and landscape to the set of principles and values to which a large group of members in a community ascribed to (Ting-Toomey, 1999:9). In spite of these varied definitions, they still do not explain what culture entails. The following section sheds light to this problem.

3.3 FEATURES OF CULTURE

As mentioned in the previous section, there is no single definition of culture that has been agreed upon. To overcome this problem, it is worth noting the common features of culture.
3.3.1 CULTURE IS SHARED

In order for a thought or action to be considered cultural, it has to be shared by a particular group of people. If that thought or action represents a personal habit, then it cannot be regarded as being cultural (Pauw, 2008:4). When people share a common culture, they are able to predict how others are most likely to behave in a given circumstance (Haviland, 1994:304). Although culture is commonly shared, this does not mean that cultural understandings are shared equally by all members of a society (Scupin and DeCorse, 2001:221). It is important to make note of the fact that within cultures there are subcultures.

Gudykunst (1998:43) defines subcultures as “groups within a culture whose members share many of the values of the cultures, but also have some values that differ from the larger culture”. Examples of subcultures would be social class subcultures, a medical subculture, a business subculture and so forth.

3.3.2 CULTURE IS LEARNED

In the previous section, it was mentioned that all people share a culture. However, not all cultures are the same. This is due to the fact that within cultures there are subcultures. In order for a person to be a member of a society, he or she has to learn its culture. Learning a culture takes place in the following forms namely situational learning, social learning and symbolic learning (Pauw, 2008:4).

The process that all humans go through to acquire their culture is known as enculturation. Enculturation is defined as “the process whereby culture is transmitted from one generation to the next” (Haviland, 1994:308). From this definition, it can be said that culture is not genetically predetermined; rather it is passed on from parent to offspring.

3.3.3 CULTURE IS MOSTLY INTEGRATED

When it is said that culture is integrated, it means that the elements that make up a culture have to be interdependent to form a whole. When elements of a culture are integrated into a whole, it promotes a sense of harmony (Haviland, 1994:313). For instance, amongst the Kapauku Papuans of New Guinea, it was found that if a
man had lots of pigs, he needed to practice polygyny that entailed marrying more than one wife. The purpose behind this practice was that the women would care for the pigs.

3.3.4 CULTURE IS GENERALLY ADAPTIVE

When it is said that culture is generally adaptive, it certainly means that is only adaptive to a specific physical and social environment. As long as culture represents an adjustment to the physical environment and to biological demands, it may also represent an adjustment to the social environment (Pauw, 2008:5). However, if a particular cultural behaviour is carried to an extreme, it could reduce the chance of survival for a particular society (Ember and Ember, 1996:201).

For instance, in New Guinea certain tribes maintain that physical contact with women should be limited due to the fact that they are viewed as unclean and dangerous. If this cultural practice were to be adapted in another society, the chances are that it will not survive for long.

3.3.5 CULTURE IS UNIVERSAL

Culture is a universal feature that is found in all societies in the world. All societies have essential behavioural characteristics that are needed to survive on a daily basis. Scupin and DeCorse (2001:234) refer to George Murdock's list of cultural universals and these include language, cooking, family, folklore, art, education and so forth. The fact that these cultural universals exist underlie the reality that humans are of one biological family and species.

3.4 FUNCTIONS OF CULTURE

Although culture is a universal feature found in all societies, it serves a number of functions that differ from culture to culture. Ting-Toomey (1999:12-15) makes note of five functions which include identity meaning, group inclusion, intergroup boundary regulation, ecological adaptation and cultural communication.
3.4.1 CULTURE SERVES THE IDENTITY MEANING FUNCTION

According to Harris and Moran (1987:190), people are provided with an identity by culture. Culture further provides a frame of reference by which to answer the fundamental question which is, “Who am I?” (Ting-Toomey, 1999:12). The identities provided by culture are expressed in the form of traditions, customs, values, and behaviours (Abrams, O’Connor and Giles, 2002:225).

3.4.2 CULTURE SERVES THE GROUP INCLUSION FUNCTION

When interacting with people of a dissimilar membership group, there is a tendency that it will lead to uncertainty. This is attributed to the fact that culture influences our communication with strangers (Gudykunst, 1998:70). Culture further creates a comfort zone in which we experience in-group inclusion and in-group/out group differences (Ting-Toomey, 1999:13).

3.4.3 CULTURE SERVES AS AN INTERGROUP BOUNDARY REGULATION FUNCTION

Culture is shaping our in-group and out-group attitudes when we deal with people who are culturally dissimilar to us (Ting-Toomey, 1999:13). In a study conducted by Gudykunst and Nishida (1986 cited in Gudykunst and Bond, 1996:140), it was found that in Japan collectivists perceive ingroup communication to be more intimate than outgroup communication. Similarly, in a study conducted by Triandis (1994:113-5), it was found that people tend to hold favourable attitudes towards in-group interactions while they hold unfavourable attitudes toward out-group interactions.

3.4.4 CULTURE SERVES THE ECOLOGICAL ADAPTATION FUNCTION

Culture is not a static system but rather a dynamic system that changes with the people. Culture changes when people have to adapt their needs and their particular ways to the changing environment (Ting-Toomey, 1999:14). In the case of sojourners, they are forced to change their habits in order to cope in the environment.
3.4.5 CULTURE SERVES THE CULTURAL COMMUNICATION FUNCTION

Ruben (1983:141) stated that culture is directly and indirectly the product of communication. Porter and Samovar (1988:24) added that to be able to understand intercultural communication, it is also important to understand how culture influences communication.

3.5 ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

All cultures have elements that are material and non-material. Material culture refers to the tangible products such as money, weapons and clothing styles whereas non-material culture refers to the non-tangible products such as values, norms and beliefs (Scupin and DeCorse, 2001:222). These elements express one’s cultural identity.

3.5.1 VALUES

Values are the standards by which members of a society define what is good or bad, holy or unholy, beautiful or ugly (Scupin and DeCorse, 2001:222). There are two types of values namely cultural values and normative values. Cultural values are those values that tend to permeate a culture whereas normative values are those values that express themselves within a culture by prescribing behaviours that members are expected to perform (Porter and Samovar, 1988:25)

3.5.2 BELIEFS

Beliefs are cultural conventions involving true or false assumptions and specific descriptions of the nature of the universe and humanity’s place in it (Scupin and DeCorse, 2001:222). Porter and Samovar (1988:25) added that the intensity of a belief is related to how certain people are of that belief.

3.5.3 ATTITUDES

An attitude can be defined “as a learned tendency to respond in a consistent manner with respect to a given object of orientation” (Porter and Samovar, 1988:26). Attitudes are based on beliefs and values that are influenced by the
cultural environment in which people find themselves in. (Porter and Samovar, 1988:26).

3.5.4 WORLDVIEW

According to Scupin and DeCorse (2001:222), a worldview “consists of various beliefs about the nature of reality and provides people with more or less consistent orientation toward the world”. It is important to note that a worldview is complex and as such, it is often difficult to isolate during an intercultural interaction. A worldview further influences a culture at a very deep and profound level; however, its effects are often quite subtle and are not revealed in such obvious and often superficial ways such as dress, gestures and vocabulary (Porter and Samovar, 1988:26).

3.5.5 NORMS

Norms are the rules and expectations about how group members should behave and they are often regarded as the building blocks of culture (Taylor, Peplau and Sears, 2006:10). Norms differ from culture to culture. There are three types of norms namely folkways, mores and laws.

a. FOLKWAYS

Folkways are norms that “help ensure that social life proceeds smoothly by providing guidelines for an individual’s behaviour and expectations of other people’s behaviour” (Scupin and DeCorse, 2001:223).

b. MORES

Mores are regarded as being more severe than folkways. It is often found that those who attempt to violate norms are usually severely punished. These take the form of ostracism, vicious gossip, public ridicule, exile, losing one’s job, physical beating, imprisonment and so forth (Scupin and DeCorse, 2001:224). These can also take either a prescriptive or proscriptive form (Cunningham et al, 1998:32). It is worth noting that the punishments for violating mores vary from society to society.
c. **LAWS**

Laws are formal norms that have been enacted by the state to regulate human conduct (Cunningham, Boult and Popenoe, 1998:32).

### 3.5.6 SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Cultures fix human and organizational relationships by age, sex, status and degree of kindred, as well as wealth, power, and wisdom (Harris and Moran, 1987:192). It is often found that the manner in which a culture organizes itself and its institutions also affects how members of the culture perceive the world and how they communicate (Porter and Samovar, 1988:26).

### 3.5.7 TIME

Attitudes toward time differ from culture to culture. For instance, in a study done by Levine and Bartlett (1984, cited in Triandis, 1994:134), it was found that people in large cities were more time-conscious than people in small towns.

### 3.5.8 SPACE

Different cultures have different ways in how to relate to one another spatially (Porter and Samovar, 1988:29). For instance, in some Asian cultures, students are expected not to sit close to their teachers nor stand near their bosses (Samovar and Porter, 1991:215).

### 3.5.9 FOOD AND FEEDING HABITS

Cultures have different views on what we eat, how we eat, with whom we eat and when we eat. In the religious traditions of Judaism, for instance, pigs have been viewed as abominable animals not suited for human consumption (Scupin and DeCorse, 2001:225). On the issue regarding how we eat, cultures have different feeding habits that range from hands and chopsticks to full sets of cutlery (Harris and Moran, 1987:197).
3.5.10 PATTERNS OF THOUGHT

Most people tend to assume that people think the same way yet this is not the case. Porter and Samovar (1988:28) remind us to be aware of the cultural differences when considering people’s thought patterns. In practice it means that a culture’s thought pattern affects the way individuals in that culture communicate as well as the way in which each person responds to individuals from another culture (Porter and Samovar, 1988:28).

3.6 ETHNOCENTRISM

In all societies, there is often the tendency to evaluate other cultures according to one’s own standards and regarding one’s own culture as better than those of others. This constitutes to ethnocentrism. Triandis (1994:249) regards ethnocentrism as a barrier to good intercultural relations.

3.7 CULTURAL RELATIVISM

When it comes to interacting with people different from ourselves, it has been suggested that one must adopt an attitude of cultural relativism. This is due to the fact that people are very sensitive about criticisms of their culture (Brislin, 1994:24). According to Scupin and DeCorse, (2001:225) cultural relativism is the view that cultural traditions must be understood within the context of a particular society’s solutions to problems and opportunities. It is through cultural relativism that one is able to get a better understanding that all cultures are unique.

3.8 SUMMARY

Culture is a difficult concept to define. This is because there is no common definition that has been agreed upon. In spite of this, all cultures do have the following features and that is, they are shared; they are learned; they are mostly integrated; they are generally adaptive and lastly culture is universal. Cultures further serve the function of identity formation; group inclusion; intergroup boundary regulation; ecological function and cultural communication. Although all societies have culture, there is the tendency to assume that we are one universal family. However, the one problem with having such an approach is that cultural
practices differ from one society to the next. In the process, there is the tendency to judge other cultures according to one's own cultural values and this constitutes ethnocentrism. In order to avoid developing such tendencies in the future, it is important for one to adopt an attitude of cultural relativism. This entails being empathic when interacting with people from different cultures. It is important to consider that culture influences our thought patterns and our worldview. This especially holds true for sojourners adjusting to a foreign environment. The next chapter focuses specifically on adjustment.
CHAPTER FOUR
ADJUSTMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a discussion on adjustment. It begins by offering clarity on some of the concepts used in the sojourner literature after which there will be a discussion on the challenges that come with adjusting to a foreign environment. It will offer some strategies on how to cope with the environment as well as discuss previous studies done on adjustment.

4.2 CLARIFICATION OF THE CONCEPTS

The chapter begins by offering clarity into some of the concepts commonly used in the adjustment literature. These concepts will be used frequently in this research study.

4.2.1 SOJOURNER

Although this term was first mentioned a few times in the first chapter, it was not given much clarity. According to Jandt (1998:311), a sojourner can be defined as someone “who lives in a country for a limited period of time”. The acculturation experience of sojourners is usually voluntary and for a specific purpose (Berry and Sam, 1996:306). Groups that fall under this category include students, trainees, technical assistants, tourists, businessmen, military personnel, missionaries, foreign service officials, professors and so forth (Brein and David, 1971:215).

Sewell and Davidsen (1956, cited in Brein and David, 1971:219) made note of the fact that there are four kinds of sojourners that adopt the following characteristic patterns whilst living in a foreign environment:

1) Detached Observers whose motives for the sojourn are usually technical and clearly defined. They form friendships with fellow sojourners rather than with host nationals.

2) Promoters who are committed to their home culture but become reluctant participants in the foreign culture as a result of their role perceptions.
3) Enthusiastic Participants who are aware of the temporary nature of their sojourn and actively participate in the host culture.

4) The Settlers are described as showing little attachment to their home country.

4.2.2 CULTURE SHOCK

The first person to be credited for coming up with the term “culture shock” was an anthropologist by the name of Cora DuBois. She described culture shock as the disorienting experience that anthropologists faced when they entered a different culture (LaBrack and Berardo, 2007:2). The one problem with DuBois’ definition is that it only focuses on anthropologists. Another anthropologist named Dr Kalvero Oberg decided on expanding DuBois’ definition to include all travellers entering a foreign environment. Kalvero Oberg defines culture shock “as the consequence of strain and anxiety resulting from contact with a new culture and the feelings of loss, confusion and impotence resulting from loss of accustomed cultural cues and social rules” (1954 in Winkelman, 1994:121).

4.2.3 ADJUSTMENT

According to Ting-Toomey (1999:235), the term adjustment refers to the short-term and medium-term adaptation process of sojourners abroad. The one thing to take into account is the fact that there is no such thing as a perfect adjustment. This is due to the fact that adjustment is an individual process. There is no simple formula that will apply equally to everyone. Individuals will find that they have to deal with problems along the way but in the end it all depends upon how they are handled (Hunt, 1966:177).

4.3 THE CHALLENGES THAT COME WITH ADJUSTING TO A FOREIGN ENVIRONMENT

When individuals enter into a foreign culture, they are bound to be met with challenges. They will find that the things they learned in their culture will not apply in the environment they are in (Brislin, 1981:155). The challenges that come with adjusting to a foreign environment need to be discussed further.
4.3.1 LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

When sojourners are in a foreign environment, one of the challenges that they face is language. Language is an integral part of culture. A number of studies have shown that language skills are necessary for adjusting to a foreign environment. For instance, in a study done by Leong and Chou (1994 cited in Begley, 2006:389), it was found that some long-term sojourners and immigrants in the United States experienced social isolation due to the fact that they could not speak English.

Not only are having language skills vital for adjusting to a foreign environment. Learning a wide range of non-verbal communication patterns is equally important. There is often so much emphasis on the verbal aspects of communication that little time is taken to focus on the non-verbal aspects of communication as well. It is worth considering that the meanings attached to gestures, for instance, differ from culture to culture. If sojourners do not take the time to learn the non-verbal cues of communication, it is likely that misunderstandings will occur (Harris and Moran, 1987:191; Gallois and Callan, 1997:7). In order to overcome the problems related to adjustment, it is important for a sojourner to have good communication skills (Brewster Smith, 1955:233).

4.3.2 ETHNOCENTRISM

Every sojourner is likely to develop ethnocentric tendencies whilst living in a foreign environment. The problem with having an ethnocentric attitude is that it becomes a barrier to meaningful relationships and intercultural understandings (Begley, 2006:389). Ethnocentric tendencies also inhibit sojourners from coping with new social norms, values and language forms (Church, 1982:554). In as far as intercultural communication is concerned; ethnocentrism increases one’s anxiety when it comes to interacting with strangers (Gudykunst, 2002:107).

4.3.3 LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE

Learning to live in a foreign environment is a challenging task that all sojourners experience when living in a foreign environment. Some of these challenges include learning how to find housing, how to shop and so on. All these issues
mentioned require the knowledge needed to cope with the environment. Too often, travellers entering into a foreign environment take this for granted but once they enter into the environment, they are most likely to feel isolated and alienated in the process (Trager, 1992:47).

For instance, in a study amongst Indonesian students living in Canada, Sodjakusumah (1994 in Everts and Sodjakusumah, 1996:2) found that before arriving in the country, the students did not have the sufficient cultural knowledge to be able to cope with the Canadian environment.

### 4.3.4 FORMING ENCLAVES

One of the problems that all sojourners face when living in a foreign environment is the failure to interact with members of the host culture. This is due to the fact that sojourners view their sojourn as a “job” which has to be finished in the shortest possible time (Siu, 1952:34). As a result, they fail to take their sojourn experience as a learning opportunity. In the process, they form enclaves amongst themselves. Enclaves serve the following functions for sojourners namely to reduce anxiety, feelings of powerlessness and social stresses (Coates, 2004:4).

One of the problems with forming enclaves is that they reinforce negative stereotypes of the host culture (Ferraro, 2002:152). Once members of enclaves return to their respective countries they will continue to see the host culture as being unreceptive to strangers (Yeh, Miller, Alexander, Klein, Tseng, Workneh and Chu, 1973:360). In a study done by Carey (1960 cited in Church, 1982:551), it was found that students from less developed countries were more likely to form enclaves than students from developed countries.

### 4.3.5 CULTURE SHOCK

All sojourners living in a foreign environment will most likely experience culture shock in one form or another. This is because the challenges that come with adjusting to a foreign environment are numerous and therefore experiencing culture shock is simply no exception. Some of the common symptoms of culture shock include anxiety, helplessness, irritability and so forth (Church, 1982:540; Ferraro, 2002:144). The circumstances that provoke an individual’s reactions to
culture shock are dependent on a variety of factors. These include previous experience with other cultures and cross-cultural adaptation, the degree of the degree of preparation, availability of social support networks and an individual's psychological characteristics (Winkelman, 1994:121).

When sojourners are experiencing severe culture shock, they do not have the motivation to want to learn the host culture. If the level of culture shock is too high, travellers may find that they are unable to meet the challenges of adapting to a foreign environment, and therefore they would either want to leave the culture or withdraw from it psychologically (Ferraro, 2002:146; Gallois and Callan, 1997:18). In the case of expatriate workers, for instance, it was found that they returned early from their overseas assignments. Once they returned home, they faced a number of problems such as finding a new niche in the corporate structure and this had added costs for the firm that sent them in the first place (Ferraro, 2002:146-7; Briody and Chrisman, 1991:264). In spite of this, Winkelman (1994:121) stresses that all sojourners have to view culture shock as a normal experience that comes with living in a foreign environment.

**4.3.6 DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES**

In order to adapt to an environment, all humans need to ensure that the basic necessities such as food and water are met. This is not always easy especially when humans find themselves living in a foreign environment. Some of the difficulties sojourners face include getting suitable accommodation as well as obtaining the desired food for personal or religious reasons (Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005:485). If these basic necessities are not met, then it is difficult to adapt to a foreign environment.

**4.4 STRATEGIES FOR ADJUSTING TO A FOREIGN ENVIRONMENT**

In order to deal with the challenges that come with living in a foreign environment, it is important for sojourners to take note of the strategies that are needed to cope with the environment.
4.4.1 BE CULTURALLY PREPARED

It is important to acquire the appropriate knowledge before and during the sojourn. There are a number of ways of learning about the host cultures and these include local people, newspapers, tourist information, libraries and one's own observations (Ferraro, 2002:150). Sojourners tend to assume that when they enter into a foreign environment, their communicative behaviour would be appropriate; however, they do not consider that this will lead them to problems. Thus, it is necessary to be realistic of some of the problems that will inevitably be encountered when living in a foreign environment (Begley, 2006:390; Winkelman, 1994:122).

4.4.2 LEARN LOCAL COMMUNICATION COMPLEXITIES

Language reflects communication. Whilst a sojourner is living in the foreign environment, he or she must take the time to learn some phrases used in the local language such as greetings, polite remarks and so on (Brislin, 1994:23). In order to be able to learn the host language, one can further take advantage of audio tapes, courses as well as books in order to enhance one's communication skills before and after departure (Harris and Moran, 1987:212). Begley (2006:390) maintains that "Language skills are crucial to learning and adapting to another culture".

Although language skills are vital for understanding a culture, one further needs to learn the non-verbal aspects of communication (Winkelman, 1994:124). Many psychologists affirm to the idea that more information can be conveyed through non-verbal signals than through words or phrases (Brislin, 1994:23).

4.4.3 MIX WITH HOST NATIONALS

Researchers consider positive social interaction with host nationals to be a necessary condition for adjustment (Church, 1982:551). In a study done by Morris (1960 cited in Brein and David, 1971:222), it was found that the more interactions foreigners had with the American people, the more positive their sojourn experience was. Brislin (1981:274) argued that many of the problems related to adjustment are as a result of not taking the time to interact with local people.
4.4.4 LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS

Stress is brought about by culture shock. There are a number of ways of managing stress. Some of these include taking exercises, reading books and newspapers from home, talking and interacting with home nationals as well as making use of spiritual techniques such as yoga (Ferraro, 2002:152; Winkelman, 1994:125).

4.4.5 BE ADVENTUROUS

Sojourners tend to treat their experience as something that will pass with time. This is due to the fact that they do not take the time to explore the world around them. In order to treat the sojourn as a worthwhile experience, one has to be willing to experiment and learn new things (Ferraro, 2002:153). Harris and Moran (1987:213) argue that the willingness to take risk is the beginning of wisdom.

4.4.6 BE TOLERANT AND OPEN TOWARDS OTHER CULTURES

All sojourners are likely to develop ethnocentric tendencies when living in a foreign environment. One thing to take note of is the fact that people are very sensitive about the criticisms of their culture (Brislin, 1994:24). To be able to enhance one’s relationship with their host, one has to make a conscious effort to be empathetic (Ferraro, 2002:152). Being empathetic does not mean being sympathetic, rather it has to do with entering into another person’s shoes (Kabagarama, 1997:47-8).

4.4.7 THE BASIC NECESSITIES HAVE TO BE MET

As mentioned earlier, sojourners often have difficulties obtaining the basic necessities needed to survive when living in a foreign environment. This is due to the fact that they have not acquired the necessary cultural skills needed to be able to cope with the challenges of living in a foreign environment. Having access to basic necessities is essential in enhancing one’s self-esteem (Winkelman, 1994:124). This further makes it easier to deal with the challenges faced with living in a foreign environment.
4.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS OF AN INDIVIDUAL

Studies have been conducted in an attempt to explain how certain factors could influence an individual's adjustment to a foreign environment.

4.5.1 CULTURAL DISTANCE

Studies have shown that cultural distance is an important factor in determining an individual's adjustment to a foreign environment. According to Ting-Toomey (1999:238), cultural distance refers to “the degree of psychological adjustment that needed to bridge the dissimilarities between the culture of origin and the culture of entry”. There is the assumption that adjustment will be more difficult for visitors who come from cultures that are very different from the host culture (Church, 1982:547). For instance, in a study conducted amongst foreign students adjusting to the United States, it was found that European students had less difficulties adjusting to the United States than those from Africa or Asia (Triandis, 1994:237).

4.5.2 LANGUAGE

A number of studies have shown that a relationship does exist between language and adjustment. In order to adjust to a foreign environment, Begley (2006:389) suggests that learning to speak the host nationals' language is essential when adjusting to a foreign environment. For instance, in a study conducted amongst American students living in France, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1959:255) found that having knowledge of the French language made adjustment easier for the students.

4.5.3 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE HOST ENVIRONMENT

Studies have shown that having a positive attitude toward the host environment is necessary when adjusting to a foreign environment. Maintaining a positive attitude has to do with taking advantage of some of the opportunities that are available whilst living abroad (Harris and Moran, 1987:213). The one drawback is that when
people are in a foreign country, they are not always mobile. As a result, they fail to enjoy their sojourn experience abroad (Brislin, 1981:66).

4.5.4 PERSONALITY

Studies have shown that a relationship does exist between one’s personality and the adjustment process. If a sojourner is both ethnocentric and closed minded, it could inhibit him from coping effectively with the foreign environment (Church, 1982:554). To be able to adjust in a foreign environment, one needs to be both empathetic and open-minded. This entails being culturally sensitive to the customs and traditions of the host culture (Harris and Moran, 1987:213).

4.5.5 INTERACTIONS WITH HOST NATIONALS

A number of studies have shown that interactions with host nationals are essential to adjusting in a foreign environment. Harris and Morris (1987:213) suggest that in order to learn more about the culture of the country to which one is going to, one has to interact with the country’s people before departure and upon arrival. However, not everyone who enters into a foreign environment gets the opportunity to interact with the host nationals. For instance, in a study conducted amongst a group of European, African and Asian students in the United States, Becker (1968:433) found that European students found it easier to interact with Americans than their African and Asian counterparts. She argued that this was due to the cultural similarities between the European and American cultures.

4.6 SUMMARY

In view of what has been stated in the literature, adjustment is a complex process. All sojourners are likely to encounter challenges along the way. If the sojourn is viewed positively, it is likely that adjustment will be made easier for the sojourner than if the sojourn is viewed negatively. However, there are times when sojourners do not have the necessary resources and this makes adjustment difficult at times. Chapter Five provides a discussion on some of the findings that were made during the period that the data was being analysed.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE EXCHANGE STUDENTS IN PORT ELIZABETH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings that emanated from the research study. In what follows, a brief description will be provided of each interviewee regarding prior visits to Africa and/or South Africa, what they are doing in Port Elizabeth and why they came to Port Elizabeth.

a. INTERVIEW ONE

Participant One hailed from Germany. This was her first time to be in South Africa. The other African country she had been to, besides South Africa, was Tunisia. She was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. During the interview, she indicated that South Africa was her first choice; however, she did not offer any specific reason as to why she made South Africa her first choice.

b. INTERVIEW TWO

Participant Two hailed from Germany. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He indicated that the other African country he had been to besides South Africa was Tunisia. He was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He had intended to go to either India or Ireland but after he had heard about South Africa’s low exchange rate, he then changed his mind.

c. INTERVIEW THREE

Participant Three hailed from Sweden. In the interview, he indicated that South Africa was his first choice. He added that he had never been to any other African country. Unlike the two other participants, Participant Three was not on an exchange programme with Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Instead, he was on an internship with a non-governmental organization that had partnership links with his home university. He thought of going to Canada at first but later changed his mind after he had noticed some cultural similarities between his country Sweden and Canada, however, he did not offer any specific examples.
d. **INTERVIEW FOUR**

Participant Four hailed from Sweden. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He was not affiliated with the university. He, like his counterpart, was on an internship with a non-governmental organization. Although he had mentioned that South Africa was his first choice, he did not offer any specific reason for this.

e. **INTERVIEW FIVE**

Participant Five hailed from Germany. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He had never travelled to any other African country besides South Africa. He was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Although he had mentioned that South Africa was his first choice, he offered no reason for this.

f. **INTERVIEW SIX**

Participant Six hailed from Germany. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He had never travelled to any other African country besides South Africa. He was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He had intended to go to Spain but later changed his mind after he had heard about South Africa’s attractive weather. However, he did not offer any specific reason as to why he made Spain his first choice.

g. **INTERVIEW SEVEN**

Participant Seven hailed from Germany. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He had never travelled to any other African country besides South Africa. The reason he chose Port Elizabeth was that he was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. In the interview, he indicated that before he thought of coming to South Africa, he intended to go to either India or Indonesia. He did not offer any specific reason as to why he made South Africa his first choice.
h. **INTERVIEW EIGHT**

Participant Eight hailed from Sweden. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He mentioned that he had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. He was on an internship with a non-governmental organization. In spite of the fact that he made mention of South Africa being his first choice, he offered no specific reason for this.

i. **INTERVIEW NINE**

Participant Nine hailed from the Netherlands. She indicated that this was her first time to be in South Africa. She had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. She was on a teaching internship with a primary school. She had initially thought of doing her internship in Curacao; however, she then changed her mind after she had found that many of her friends went there.

j. **INTERVIEW TEN**

Participant Ten hailed from the Netherlands. This was her first time to be in South Africa. She had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. Like her counterpart, she was on a teacher internship with a primary school. She also considered doing her internship in Curacao; however, she had changed her mind after she had found that many of her friends went there.

k. **INTERVIEW ELEVEN**

Participant Eleven hailed from Sweden. He mentioned that this was his first time to be in South Africa. The other African country he had been to besides South Africa was Egypt. He initially thought of going to Indonesia at first but then changed his mind. He did not offer any specific reason for this.

l. **INTERVIEW TWELVE**

Participant Twelve hailed from Germany. This was her first time in South Africa. The other African countries she had been to were Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique. She was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan University. She indicated that South Africa was her first choice because she was mesmerised by the country’s history and culture.

m. INTERVIEW THIRTEEN

Participant Thirteen hailed from Germany. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He mentioned that the other African country he had been to was Tunisia. He was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He indicated that South Africa was his first choice. The reason that he gave was that he wanted to learn more about the country’s history.

n. INTERVIEW FOURTEEN

Participant Fourteen hailed from the United States of America. This was her first time to be in South Africa. She had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. She was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. She initially thought of going to New Zealand but then changed her mind after she had heard about South Africa’s culture.

o. INTERVIEW FIFTEEN

Participant Fifteen hailed from Belgium. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. He was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He initially thought of going to China but he then changed his mind after he had heard about South Africa’s rich cultural heritage.

p. INTERVIEW SIXTEEN

Participant Sixteen hailed from Germany. This was his first time to be in South Africa. He had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. He was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He had intended to go to Ireland but then opted for South Africa instead. He did not offer any specific reason for this.
q. **INTERVIEW SEVENTEEN**

Participant Seventeen hailed from the United States of America. This was her first time to be in South Africa. She had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. She was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. She had intended to go to either Europe or Australia but then changed her mind after she had discovered that it was not any different from the American culture.

r. **INTERVIEW EIGHTEEN**

Participant Eighteen hailed from the United States of America. This was her first time to be in South Africa. She had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. She was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. She had intended to go to England but then changed her mind after she had discovered that it was not any different from the American culture.

s. **INTERVIEW NINETEEN**

Participant Nineteen hailed from the United States. This was her first time to be in South Africa. She had never been to any other African country besides South Africa. She was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Before she came to South Africa, she had intended to go to either Europe or Australia. However, she changed her mind after she had discovered that it was not any different from the American culture.

t. **INTERVIEW TWENTY**

Participant Twenty hailed from the United States. This was her first time to be in South Africa. The other African country she had been to was Lesotho. She was on an exchange programme with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. She had intended to go to South America but did not offer any reason as to why she chose South Africa.
5.2 REASONS FOR COMING TO SOUTH AFRICA AND PORT ELIZABETH

The informants provided a number of reasons why they came to South Africa and Port Elizabeth in particular.

5.2.1 CURIOUS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN CULTURE

The informants mentioned that before they arrived in South Africa, they heard a great deal about South Africa’s culture from friends and family members who had visited the country. They were curious to know more about the country’s cultural heritage. This was what brought them to South Africa.

5.2.2 ATTRACTED BY THE WEATHER

The informants mentioned that the weather in Port Elizabeth was what attracted them to come to South Africa. They came to hear about it from friends and family members who visited the city. This further led them to choose Port Elizabeth not only as a place to do their study but also to experience the weather first hand.

5.2.3 IMPROVING ONE’S ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

This was highlighted mostly by the informants who came from Europe. They admitted that they came from countries where English was not the main language spoken. These students felt that coming to South Africa would give them the opportunity to improve on their English language skills given that English is one of the languages spoken in South Africa.

5.2.4 A CHANCE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE

The students felt that coming to South Africa would give them the chance to meet new people. Some of the students mentioned that before they had arrived in the country, they heard that the South African people were generally friendly to visitors. This was what attracted them to come to South Africa.
5.2.5 TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE ON OFFER

Activities that the country offered namely surfing, skydiving, scuba-diving and so on, attracted the students to come to South Africa. They felt that they did not want to miss on the some of the opportunities that the country had to offer.

5.2.6 ATTRACTED BY SOUTH AFRICA’S NATURE AND WILDLIFE

The students mentioned that they had heard a great deal about South Africa’s nature and wildlife from friends and family members and this was what attracted them to come to South Africa.

5.2.7 FAVOURABLE EXCHANGE RATE

The low exchange rate was a further attraction to come to South Africa. Having a low exchange rate would further translate to more spending power and at the same time things would be relatively much cheaper for the informants.

5.3 THE EXCHANGE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES WITH LIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA

5.3.1 ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

Before getting into more detail, it is important to make note of the fact that questions regarding academic experiences were directed to study abroad students only. When it came to the question regarding differences between the academic life at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and their home university, the answers tended to vary. Some mentioned that the grading system in South Africa was different to the one they were accustomed to in their respective countries. For instance, an American student, talks of her experience of a time she received her test mark: “...the one thing that struck me about studying in this country was the fact that the grading system here is different from the system to which I am used to back home. For instance, there was a time I got my test paper back and found that I got 80% for it which in this country is considered excellent but back home it is considered a B”.
Others mentioned the challenges of having to learn in English. This was particularly highlighted by the students who came from Europe. There have been a few cases whereby lecturers have used terminology that students couldn’t translate in their language. This was expressed in a sentiment given by a German student: “You find that some lecturers use terms that you often can’t find a German translation for and this often makes it difficult for me to understand sometimes”. Similarly, a Belgian student mentioned the fact that as a student studying Business Studies, he found it hard to get accustomed to the English terminology that was used: “You see I am actually doing a business course. There are certain business terms in English that you cannot find in French. This has often made it difficult to me to understand some of the content at times”. Apart from the challenge of learning in English, some of the students mentioned that they were also faced with the challenge of expressing themselves in English when writing assignments and essays. This sentiment was expressed by a German student: “I find it hard to learn in English. For instance, when I try writing an assignment or an essay, there are moments I find it difficult to express myself in English simply because I do not have the adequate vocabulary”.

Some of the exchange students mentioned the fact that they were hoping that they would spend much of the time having fun but found that they have had to work hard due to the number of tests and assignments they had received. This was expressed in a sentiment given by a Belgian student: “I expected that I will have fun all the time but that has not been the case. There is a lot of work that you have to do here”. Some have further expressed the sentiment that they have not been accustomed to writing tests. This was expressed in a sentiment given by a German student: “...I am not used to writing tests. Back in Germany, you only just write one exam and finish but here it seems that I have to keep on working hard all the time. When do I get the chance to have some fun?”

5.3.2 HAVING TO ADAPT TO THE SLOW PACE OF LIFE

Most of the students admitted that they found it hard to adapt to the slow pace of life in South Africa. This was due to the fact they have been used to the idea that everything must be fast paced. This was expressed in one of the sentiments given by a German student: “…I think that life in this country is a bit slow. You sort of get
the sense that people are more relaxed when it comes to time. There is no sense of hurrying here compared to Germany”.

5.3.3 EXPERIENCES WITH ACCOMMODATION

Most of the students mentioned that they did not have difficulties acquiring accommodation. This was due to the fact that their home universities made arrangements prior to their arrival. They further mentioned that they did not experience too many problems whilst living in their respective places.

The students were asked whether they shared their accommodation with only their fellow nationals and most said no. They further mentioned that they shared it with people from countries as far as Norway, Kenya and Botswana. They mentioned that they did not mind this as it would give them the opportunity to learn from other cultures. When they were further asked about whether any tensions did exist between the cultures, most said no once again. Most of the students interviewed mentioned that they were generally content with the accommodation they had received.

5.3.4 IMPRESSED BY THE WEATHER

The students admitted that they were impressed by the weather. They did not expect to find such good weather. Some of the students expressed the fact that the weather made them feel like they were on a holiday.

5.3.5 THINGS ARE RELATIVELY CHEAP

Due to the low exchange rate most of the students admitted that things were relatively cheaper for them. They further highlighted some of the advantages with having a low exchange rate: “...I tend to find that whilst I am in South Africa, I am able to spend a whole more money than back in Germany”; “…things are four times less expensive in South Africa”; “I have found it cheaper to go out more often” and “I am spending more money on beer here than in Sweden”.
5.3.6 IT IS HARD TO INTERACT WITH THE LOCAL PEOPLE

Most of the students mentioned that they found it hard to interact with the local people. Some expressed the fact it was because they spent much of their time with either fellow nationals or other international students as demonstrated in the following quote: “...most of the time, I restrict myself to international students and this has not given me the opportunity to interact with the local people which I should be doing”. Others felt that they did not have the time to interact with the local people as expressed in a statement given by one of the students: “…I often find that I am too preoccupied with my internship for me to go out and make friends with the locals”. One student from Germany mentioned the fact that he found it hard to interact because he felt that his English was not good: “…I somehow find it hard to interact with local people because my English is not so good. I am always afraid that I’ll make a lot of mistakes”. In as far as interaction with local people is concerned; the students mentioned that it has been restricted to shopkeepers, colleagues in the case of student interns and university staff and students.

In spite of this, the students made note of the fact that they were willing to take the bold step of interacting with the local people. They added that without interacting with the local people, they would not be able to gain a better understanding of the country’s culture.

5.3.7 LEARNING TO BE SECURITY-CONSCIOUS

Most of the students mentioned that throughout their stay, they have had to learn to be security-conscious. Some even admitted that they were not accustomed to this in their respective countries. This was a sentiment expressed by a German student: “I am not so used to the idea of having to be conscious of my security because it is not heavily stressed back in Germany. In this country, however, it is a big issue”. Some further admitted that they were not able to go out as often as they could at night for fear that they might be attacked. This was a sentiment expressed by another German student: “Back in Germany, it is easy to walk in the dark on your own but in South Africa, this does not seem to be the case. You always have to watch your back here”.
5.3.8 SURPRISED BY THE POVERTY AND RACISM

The students admitted that they were surprised by the poverty in this country. This was expressed in a sentiment given by a Swedish student “...the one thing that struck me most about being in this country is the fact that you do see the poverty and this is not common in Sweden. Of course, poverty does exist back home but not to the same extent as here”. One student from Germany added that “...I did not expect to see people looking for food in the bins. This was quite shocking to me”.

Although the students were relatively unaffected by racism, they admitted that it still existed. For instance, one Swedish student gave an account of a time when he went to a club that was occupied by mostly white people: “I went to this club one other time and I found that it was occupied by mostly whites. I can recall a certain time when a white individual came up to me and said, ‘you should be grateful that you are white for we do not allow blacks here’”.

5.4 THE EXCHANGE STUDENTS’ IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA

5.4.1 IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA AS A COUNTRY

Some of the students admitted that before they arrived in South Africa, they did not expect the country to be as developed as they had anticipated it to be. This was expressed in one of the sentiments given by a German student: “I was not expecting it to be too developed. I also expected that I would find poor people begging in the streets as well as a few industrial areas but that all changed once I arrived here”.

The students admitted that they did not experience much culture shock, due to some of the cultural similarities between South Africa and their respective countries. One student further made the comment that living in South Africa felt “like being in another European country”.

In spite of this, there were certain aspects of the South African culture that they did not become accustomed to. For instance, some were shocked to find that South Africa could be so diverse in terms of its culture. This was expressed in
some of the statements given by the students: “...I did not expect to find so many religions here and this is what you don’t get to find back in Sweden” and “...I did not expect to find people speaking different languages here. This is kind of strange given that I am an American and English is only spoken there”.

5.4.2 IMPRESSIONS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PEOPLE

The students did not have any negative things to say about the South African people. They were often described as being “friendly”, “kind” and “outgoing”. Some of the students admitted that they were surprised to find that South Africans could be empathetic to foreigners. This was expressed in the following sentiments: “...I am surprised to find that people in this country can be so friendly to foreigners. This is not the case back in Germany” and “...the South African people are far friendlier to strangers than the Swedish”.

5.5 SUMMARY

The results indicate that the weather and the curiosity to learn about the South African culture were some of the reasons that attracted the students to come to South Africa. With regard to their experiences with living in South Africa, the students admitted that they were not accustomed to being security-conscious as well as the slow pace of life in the country. Despite this, they were happy about the fact that they had greater spending power due to the low exchange rate in the country. The next chapter will provide answers to the objectives stated in page 3 after which an overall conclusion will be drawn. Recommendations as well as suggestions for further research will be made.
CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will attempt to provide answers to the objectives stated for this study. Thereafter a conclusion will be drawn and recommendations for further research will be made.

The objectives for the study were as follows:

- To explore the positive and negative experiences that come with living in a foreign environment.
- To explore the strategies that the students have put in place to cope with the environment.
- To explore whether the possibility of full integration in a foreign society does exist

6.2 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH LIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA

6.2.1 POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

6.2.1.1 THINGS ARE RELATIVELY CHEAPER

The informants came from countries that had strong economies. This further meant that life would be relatively easier for them in as far as the exchange rate is concerned. A low exchange rate meant that things would be relatively cheap for them. At the same time, it also meant that they had greater spending power. They were able to buy things that in their respective countries they were not able to.

6.2.1.2 HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE THE WEATHER

The informants mentioned that one of the reasons for coming to South Africa was to experience the weather. They were generally impressed by what they had
seen. Some of the informants admitted that the weather made them feel as though they were on a holiday.

6.2.2 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

6.2.2.1 FINDING IT HARD TO LEARN IN ENGLISH

The students from Europe expressed the sentiment that they found it hard to learn in English. This was due to the fact that they came from countries where English was not the medium used in their universities. They further expressed the fact that lecturers often used certain terminology that they could not find a proper translation for in their respective languages. Moreover, they admitted to having difficulties in expressing themselves in English especially when it came to writing assignments and tests.

6.2.2.2 DO NOT LIKE THE IDEA OF BEING SECURITY-CONSCIOUS

The informants admitted that they came from countries where they were not accustomed to the idea of being security-conscious all the time. They admitted that it made them feel insecure because of the fact that they did not know where and when they were going to be hit by crime.

6.2.2.3 HAVING TO ADJUST TO THE SLOW PACE OF LIFE

Most of the informants came from countries where the pace of doing things was fast. They were generally disappointed by the fact that the pace of having things done in this country was slow. This applied mostly to service delivery. The informants admitted that they became accustomed to having a slow service delivery.

6.3 STRATEGY TO COPE WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT

Only one strategy was identified and this pertained to the issue of crime. The informants learnt that being security-conscious was important especially if they were to survive in the South African environment. Although some admitted that they hated the idea, it was the only way they could survive in the environment. During the course of their stay in South Africa, the students learnt that being in
groups as well as being watchful of their property was the only way they were going to manage to survive in South Africa.

6.4 THE POSSIBILITY OF FULL INTEGRATION INTO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

The informants admitted that the possibility of full integration into the South African society did exist except that they were held back by being with fellow nationals or other international students. This further did not give them the opportunity to learn more about the South African culture.

6.5 CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the following conclusion can be drawn. The informants were generally positive about their experiences with adjusting to the South African environment. They felt that they had learnt a great deal about the South African culture. However, they were largely concerned with the crime in the country. Although none of the informants were affected by the crime, they added that during their course of their stay in South Africa, they have learnt to be take safety precautions at all times.

6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Most studies of this nature have tended to focus on students coming from developing countries and their experiences with adjusting to life in the developed world. This study, on the other hand, tended to focus on the perspectives of students coming from the developed countries. The one problem with this study is that it did not reflect the views and sentiments of students coming from the rest of Africa. In the future, one might consider doing the following. Firstly, a comparative study on the experiences of students from European and African countries to be able to get a better perspective on some of the positive and negative challenges with living in South Africa. Another suggestion would be to do a study on the experiences of Asian students in South Africa.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE FOREIGN UNIVERSITY STUDENT

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION
   1.1. What is your country of origin?
   1.2. Is this your first time to be in South Africa? If not, when did you first visit South Africa?
   1.3. Have you travelled to any other African country besides South Africa?
   1.4. How did you get to hear about South Africa?
   1.5. What was the main reason for choosing South Africa?
   1.6. Apart from coming here to study/to do your internship, what were the other reasons for choosing South Africa?
   1.7. Was South Africa the first choice you had in mind? If not, what other places came to mind when choosing places to study/to do your internship?
   1.8. Given that South Africa is divided into nine provinces, why did you particularly choose the city of Port Elizabeth?

2. IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA
   2.1. What were your expectations of South African life before your arrival?
   2.2. What were your first impressions about South Africa upon arrival?
   2.3. How would you describe your first weeks in South Africa?
   2.4. What cultural differences do exist between your country of origin and South Africa?
   2.5. Now that you have mentioned some of these differences, then tell me, what are some of the incidences or situations that have left you culturally in shock whilst living in South Africa? How have you learned to cope with them?

3. ACCOMMODATION
   3.1. Did you get enough information regarding where you were going to stay before you arrived? If not, why?
   3.2. Did you have any difficulties acquiring accommodation once you had arrived in this country? If so, what were some of the difficulties you encountered?
   3.3. Would you say that you are happy with the accommodation that you have received so far? If not, why?
3.4 Are all your housemates from the same country as you? If not have you encountered any animosity from any of your housemates? If so, could you describe some of your experiences where this has been the case?

4 ACADEMICS (PLEASE NOTE: NOT APPLICABLE TO STUDENT INTERNS)
4.1 How would you describe the academic life in South Africa to that of your own country?
4.2 Given that the medium of instruction at this university is English, do you find that to be a barrier when it comes to your studies overall?
4.3 Do you feel that there is a difference in the style of interaction between lecturers and students in South Africa compared to your home country?
4.4 Have you found it easy to adjust to the academic life in this country? If not, what have been some of the problems you have encountered and how have you learned to deal with them?

5. INTERACTIONS WITH THE LOCAL PEOPLE
5.1 How would you describe the local people? Does your description apply equally to all racial groups in this country?
5.2 Would you say that it is easy to make friends with the local people? If not, why and is there any willingness on your part to make friends with the local people? If not, then once again, why?
5.3 Have you experienced any form of hostility, in other words, racial prejudice, discrimination or xenophobia from South Africans from any racial group?

6. ACCESS TO BASIC AND SOCIAL AMENITIES
6.1 How would you describe the cost of living of this country to your own country?
6.2 Is shopping for food and other amenities in this country any different from your country? What are some of the differences, if any?
6.3 Are you involved in any activity of some sort? How would you compare the activities in this country to your own country?
6.4 How you describe the night life in this country to that of your own country?
7. SATISFACTION WITH SOUTH AFRICA

7.1 Before we conclude our interview, I just want to find out quickly from you, how would you describe your experience with living in South Africa so far?
# APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the research project</th>
<th>AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference number (for official use)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal investigator</td>
<td>STEWART MARTIN MAGANGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>12 SHARWOOD STREET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Code</td>
<td>SUMMERSTRAND PORT ELIZABETH 6001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact telephone number (private numbers not advisable)</td>
<td>0761526139</td>
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## A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT
(Person legally competent to give consent on behalf of the participant)

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I, the participant and the undersigned
I.D. number
Address (of participant)

## A.1 I HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:
1., the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project that is being undertaken by

STEWARD MARTIN MAGANGA

of the Department of

SOCILOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

in the Faculty of

ARTS

of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

2. The following aspects have been explained to me, the participant:

2.1 Aim: The investigator is aiming:

- To explore the positive and negative experiences of living in South Africa as identified by the students. The information will be used to: fulfil the requirements of the Master Of Arts degree

2.2 Procedures: I understand that

- As a principal investigator, I will not coerce or deceive the research participants in any manner.
- No harm, either physical or psychological, will be incurred on the participant.
- The names of the research participants will be kept anonymous.

2.3 Confidentiality: My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigator.

2.4 Voluntary participation/refusal/discontinuation:
My participation is voluntary

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My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care/employment/lifestyle

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</table>

3. The information above was explained to me, the participant by

**STEWART MARTIN MAGANGA**

in

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Afrikaans</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Xhosa</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
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and I am in command of this language

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.

4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation.

5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to me.

A.2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT
| Signed/confirmed at |  
|---------------------|------------------|
| on 20               |                  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature or right thumb print of participant</th>
<th>Signature of witness</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full name of witness</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
22 October 2008

SM Maganga
12 Sharwood Street
Summerstrand
Port Elizabeth
6001

Dear Mr Maganga

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITY STUDENT IN PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA

Your above-entitled application for ethics clearance served at the RTI Higher Degrees sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts Research, Technology and Innovation Committee.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The Ethics clearance reference number is **H/08/ART/SA-004**, and is valid for three years, from 22 October 2008 – 22 October 2011. Please inform the RTI-HDC, via your promoter, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time. An annual affirmation to the effect that the protocols in use are still those for which approval was granted will be required from you. You will be reminded timeously of this responsibility.

We wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely
Ms Jannet Nxati
FACULTY OFFICER

cc: Promoter/Supervisor
    HoD
    School Representative: Faculty RTI