**7034HUM – Research Methods in Applied Linguistics**

**CW2: Written Project Proposal**

**Topic: Investigating cultural realities of International students in UKHE**

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**Introduction:**

The number of international students attending UK has grown dramatically in recent years. This trend is seen in the UK. This pattern has become more common. International students enrich the academic atmosphere and strengthen the UK's education leadership (Adams, 2020; De Wit et al., 2015). They also advance British universities. They also help build the environment. These individuals achieve this purpose by bringing a variety of cultural ideas and experiences to UK schools. International students are crucial to comprehending different cultures and highlighting global challenges. Their vibrant cultures can improve campus life and draw attention to previously mentioned issues.

Many factors contribute to the rise in overseas students in UK schools. Several elements contribute to the country's education success (Leask, B., & Carroll, J. 2011). The country's reputation for academic excellence, dedication to providing students with a quality educational experience, and large selection of study options to suit a variety of interests are some of these factors. The UK's dynamic cities and rich cultural past provide overseas students a fascinating and diversified environment to explore new ideas and civilizations (Rote, C. H. 2021). Because of this, international students have an advantage. One effect is the opportunity of fully immersing oneself in a foreign culture.

Hazelwood and Derrington (2007) and Ward and Bochner (2006) found that international students struggle to adapt to UK culture. This often happens. This is a challenge for international students. If they must face this difficulty, it could hurt their academic and physical health. Such an impact could be severe. Language obstacles, cultural differences, social isolation, loneliness, and other issues might make communication difficult (Stevens et al., 2012; Ward & Bochner, 2006). This area also includes culturally-related communication issues.

This study seeks to understand international students' acculturation, personal growth, and support networks in UK higher education institutions. To reach this goal, we must identify and assess the specific challenges overseas students have when adapting to UK culture. The research also examines how foreign students might grow as persons by engaging with people from different cultures. At the end of the study, researchers will assess how well processes and resources help students studying abroad, as well as how this influences academic advancement and health. They will also examine how this affects the technique.

This worldwide research will help us understand what factors affect the success and contentment of international students. The study's findings will also help improve institutional policies and practices for overseas students studying in the UK. These rules and practices will welcome and support these kids.

**Literature Review**

The presence of international students in UK institutions is vital because they offer a wide variety of viewpoints, cultural diversity, and international ties. Fostering their achievement and well-being requires an understanding of their experiences and difficulties. Traveling abroad or pursuing higher education has been suggested to have the potential to change cultures (Tarry, 2011). Academics contend that the goal of studying abroad should be to experience the host nation rather than to give up one's cultural background and fully integrate into the society in which overseas students are living for a little time (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008; Kingston & Forland, 2008).

For international students, navigating a new cultural context poses serious hurdles. Frameworks for comprehending their process of acculturation are provided by cultural adjustment models. Research indicates that international students encounter challenges while attempting to conform to the academic and cultural norms of the United Kingdom (Hazelwood & Derrington, 2007; Ward & Bochner, 2006). Language barriers are a major hindrance that affect social integration and academic achievement (De Wit et al., 2015). Stevens and colleagues (2012) found that rapid social change might cause social disorientation and stress, which can lower health and academic performance. This may lower academic achievement. The research was done, and the results were presented. When suddenly placed in a new context with unfamiliar habits and routines, people may experience stress and culture shock. This may upset and stress them. Stevens and colleagues (2012) found that this may harm their academic performance and health. Thus, this must be considered. Possible symptoms include homesickness, grief, and concern. These feelings are also possible. If they move to the UK, students from culturally different backgrounds may struggle to adjust to culture shock.

Some people establish unique identities and personalities via frequent interactions with people of other ethnicities. Because they can come from many origins. This allows unique personalities to evolve. Adams (2020) and De Wit et al. (2015) found that international students develop personally. The next paragraphs present both experiments' results. This effort has led to a more accepting attitude, a broader perspective, and improved cultural competency. Participating in cultural exchange events and learning about different cultures can make campus life more exciting and welcoming. This is done by gathering information. "The numerous viewpoints that international students bring to the table strengthen classroom discussions and promote a wider awareness of the various cultures that exist in the world," per Leung (2011). "International students bring all of these perspectives to the table." If students from all over the world, both local and international, reflect on their preconceived notions and share what they've learned, we'll all benefit from a more accepting and aware community.

International students need programmes and services to adjust to their new environment and succeed academically. This will help international students acclimatise and succeed academically. Adams (2020) states that orientation programmes, counselling services, and activities that reflect students' cultures can boost academic performance and well-being. Adams proposed this. Incalculable aid and social networks and peers help establish a sense of belonging. Stevens et al. (2012) hypothesised that students with strong social networks, both domestic and international, may feel less lonely and isolated. This applies regardless of whether the students are American or foreign.

Despite its fascinating and useful information, the current study has certain gaps. Even though the study provides intriguing and crucial information. Most studies ignore the challenges pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds face in the educational system. This is because these pupils' experiences are not fully understood. This is why. Discrimination against foreign students and its negative effects on their mental health and academic performance have received little research. Despite technology's significant impact on international students' lives, we don't know how it affects social integration, contacts with people from different cultures, and support networks. Few studies have critically assessed institutional procedures and their ability to meet international students' cultural expectations (De Wit et al., 2015). This is problematic since overseas students have diverse cultural expectations. Due to historical research gaps, this has occurred.

Studying the cultural reality of UK students is crucial. This is necessary to ensure the success and well-being of the growing number of international students enrolling in UK schools. The research acknowledges acculturation, cross-cultural growth, and support networks, but it has many limitations. This can be seen in focusing on a particular cultural group, questioning the negative effects of prejudice, acknowledging that technology is becoming more important, and investigating institutional processes. Students will gain from institutional governance, technology use, classroom diversity, and technology use. Diversity in the classroom benefits pupils too.

Colleges may offer multiple answers to questions about their international students due to their requirements. Based on their findings, Hazelwood and Derrington (2007) recommended that the educational institution utilise more comprehensive and consistent methods to help international students. This was their conclusion. Diversity and inclusivity are essential to welcoming and supporting international students. Therefore, these components must be implemented. Adams' 2020 article argues that educational institutions should lead programmes that promote diverse and inclusive policies and practices that identify and value people from all backgrounds. Paper by Adams was released in 2020. Cultural activities, foreign student clubs, and peer mentorship initiatives can help people form strong social bonds. Sharing expertise can help attain this goal. All of these actions can fulfil a function.

International students in UK higher education benefit the institution. These students' first-time university contributions include cultural diversity, worldwide connections, and cultural enrichment. Understanding people's struggles, experiences, and support networks is crucial to their success and well-being. Understanding this is crucial now. Higher education institutions must continue to develop and implement measures to help international students. This must be done. This technique aims to establish a welcoming classroom to help students develop as persons and think critically.

**Methodology:**

This research is undertaken by the qualitative approach, because qualitative research methods are most appropriate for examining cultural realities of international students in UK higher education. Qualitative research is perfect for understanding cultural realities of international students, how they struggle to adopt the culture of UK and how cross cultural experience contribute to the growth and development of these students as it allows in depth investigation. This approach works well for finding fresh perspectives, patterns, and trends in investigating cross-cultural realities of international students.

A significant portion of this research will come from secondary sources. Academic journals will be explored to gather articles, academic papers, and studies focused on cultural adaptation, challenges and experiences of international students within UK higher education (UKHE). Additionally, government reports from educational and cultural departments will be sourced to acquire data concerning policies and support system designed for international students.

In investigating cultural realities of international student many databases will be employed which offers a comprehensive array of academic, scholarly and institutional resources ensuring a robust analysis qualitative analysis of cultural realities among international students in UKHE. Databases that will be utilized to gather relevant information are ERIC (Educational resources Information Centre) that contains a vast collection of education related literature, JSTOR which provides access to scholarly articles including sociology and education which may offer insights to cultural challenges and experience of international students.

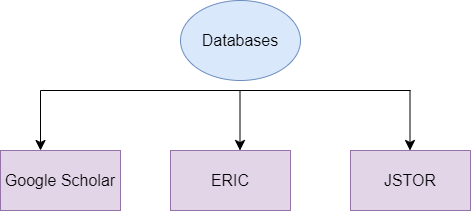


Figure: Databases chosen for research

In analysing the cultural realities of international students, thematic analysis acts as a methodological cornerstone. Secondary data from various sources will be collated and coded. Themes encompassing cultural adaptation, social support, academic challenges, institutional policies, cross-cultural experiences, and inclusively perception will be extracted and refined, providing comprehensive insight into the multifaceted experiences of international students (Caulfield, 2019).

**Evaluation of Frameworks**

Acculturation theory provides a lens for understanding how individuals adapt to new culture, the challenges they face and the strategies they utilize for coping and adjustment (Berry, 2005). Intercultural communication theory will be utilized as it helps in understanding the communication challenges faced by individuals from different cultures (Ting-Toomey, 2012). Cultural pedagogy framework will be employed as it emphasizes the importance of incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and experiences into teaching and learning to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all the students (Gay, 2010).

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**5. Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Reflection on feedback**

The presentation has undergone several revisions as a direct outcome of the comments and recommendations of my teachers and classmates. Coventry University organises a variety of multicultural events, such as Flamenco Week as well as Romani Week, when students participate in the celebration of many cultural aspects (Li, Z., 2022). Throughout the academic year, students engage in exhibits that explore the concept of internationalization. Notably, they have previously expressed appreciation for the East Winds Cinematic Festival, which stands as the only prominent film festival dedicated to East Asian cinema within the confines of London.

It has been enlightening to investigate the cultural reality of overseas students in the UK Higher Education (UKHE) system. I became aware of the richness and diversity of these students' cultural realities as I dug deeper into my research and interacted with many aspects of their experiences. The course of my research has been greatly influenced by the advice and insights given by educators and other scholars. Their feedback has helped me understand the complexity of international students' experiences, which has led to a more in-depth analysis of the difficulties, successes, and distinctive viewpoints they offer to the UKHE scene. This continuous investigation has brought to light the necessity of having a thorough grasp of cultural quirks, learning requirements, and support networks designed to improve international students' overall experience in UK higher education.

**Appendix 2: Action Plan**

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| STEP | ACTION | DATE |
| 1 | Done Discussion on Dissertation topic. | Oct-23 |
| 2 | Prepared the project proposal | Nov-23 |
| 3 | Build reflection and oral presentation | Nov-23 |
| 4 | Submitted project proposal in written document | Nov-23 |
| 5 | Reflect on provided feedback regarding written proposal | Dec-23 |
| 6 | Meet dissertation supervisor | Dec-23 |
| 7 | Got approval on ethical form | Dec-23 |
| 8 | Data collection and analysis | Jan-24 |
| 9 | Gathered founded data and analysis | Jan-24 |
| 10 | Meet Dissertation supervisor | Jan-24 |
| 11 | Generate literature review | Jan-24 |
| 12 | Write Methodology Chapter | Feb-24 |
| 13 | Generate results and discussion on it | Feb-24 |
| 14 | Meet dissertation Supervisor | Feb-24 |
| 15 | Generate Introduction | Mar-24 |
| 16 | Final draft dissertation preparation | Mar-24 |
| 17 | Generate reflection on basis of feedback | Mar-24 |
| 18 | Submit final dissertation | Apr-24 |

**Appendix 3: Methodological Framework**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Methodology | Focus | Description | Benefits |
| Acculturation Theory | Psychological, social, and cultural changes during adapting to a new culture | Identifies four strategies for acculturation - Integration, Assimilation, Separation, Marginalization. | Explains challenges faced by international students and their coping strategies. |
| Intercultural Communication Theory | Communication process between individuals from different cultures | Explores how cultural differences affect communication, leading to misunderstandings and conflict. | Helps understand the communication challenges faced by international students and promotes intercultural communication within the university. |
| Critical Pedagogy | Empowering individuals to challenge social and cultural inequalities | Focuses on critical thinking, questioning dominant narratives, and promoting social justice. | Analyzes existing support systems, empowers international students, and promotes intercultural understanding. |