Adaptive personality and residence abroad: Neophilia & self-efficacy

Prof. Jane Jackson & Ms. Tongle Sun
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
jjackson@cuhk.edu.hk & tonglesuncuhk@gmail.com
Focus of study

The acculturation of 92 inbound international exchange students (L2 speakers of English) at a university in Hong Kong.

Research Questions

1. What factors impact their acculturation/L2 socialization?
2. What are the pedagogical implications?

Instrumentation

- Pre- and Post- sojourn int’l exchange surveys
- Protocol for semi-structured interviews (15 participants)

SPSS & NVivo 12 Database
Profile of Cohort (N = 92)

62 F; 30 M; Average age: 21.5 yrs
Diverse areas of study

Home country: PRC (20); France (11); the Netherlands (9); Korea (6); Sweden (5); Switzerland (5); Finland (4); Italy (4); Others (26)

Adjustment challenges

- Language barrier: 66.7%
- Unfamiliar teaching styles: 33.4%
- Difficult courses: 26.7%
- Heavy workload: 20.0%
- Intercultural communication: 13.3%
- Class participation: 13.3%
Influential elements

Positive:
• Adaptive, novelty-seeking personality (neophilia)
• High tolerance of ambiguity
• Strong self-efficacy
• A positive mindset

Negative:
• Rigid personality
• Low tolerance of ambiguity
• Fear of cultural difference
• Negative self-image/orientation

Pedagogical implications
• Arrange more in-depth orientations;
• Encourage Faculty to better integrate local and non-local students in class;
• Promote the use of tasks that cater to diverse learning styles and personalities;
• Encourage Faculty to view inbound students as valuable resources.