

# **Acculturative Stress and self-reported English Fluency in International Students in Ireland: A Quantitative Study.**

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## ABSTRACT

International education is estimated to be a €1 billion sector for the Irish economy (IHE, 2012). Global mobility has given the opportunity for cultural exchanges, but has also caused cultural adjustment problems such as “cultural shock” or acculturative stress which is defined as the disorientation that often accompanies cross-cultural transitions (Berry, 1997).

Berry (1997; 2005; 2006) believes that the cultural distance between the two societies is of great importance in the study of the acculturation process. Inglehart and Welzel’s cultural map of the world represents countries within cultural zones (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004).

The aim of this dissertation was to find out whether the international students coming from more culturally different countries suffer more acculturative stress than those coming from a country closer in culture to Ireland. The present research results suggest that Asian international students suffer higher levels of acculturative stress when compared with European international students.

Therefore the aim of this research was to find out whether there was a relationship between the level of self-reported English fluency and the levels of acculturative stress. It was found that higher levels of self-reported English language fluency will predict lower levels of acculturative stress.

The present study adds empirical evidence to support Berry’s (1997) theoretical framework on acculturation. The study also supports Inglehart’s framework on world cultural values differences (2004).

*Keywords: Acculturative stress, English proficiency, Cultural distance,*

*International students*

# ACCULTURATIVE STRESS AND SELF-REPORTED ENGLISH FLUENCY IN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN IRELAND: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY.

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## **CHAPTER ONE:**

# **INTRODUCTION: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN IRELAND.**

## **Chapter one**

### **Introduction: International students in Ireland.**

International education is estimated to be a €1 billion sector for the Irish economy. The number of international students registered in Irish higher education in 2012 was around 32,000. The interest of this study arises from the growing number of international students choosing Ireland as their destination. According to the International Students in Irish Higher Education (IHE) Ireland is facing strong global competition from countries such as the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. To promote Ireland as a destination for international students, it is of crucial importance to understand how well international students adjust (IHE, 2012).

Globalisation has brought an increase in cultural interaction between people around the world. Knowledge and science are now more available (Cohen, Kennedy & Perrier, 2013, p.34). Global mobility has given the opportunity for cultural exchanges, but has also caused cultural adjustment problems such as “cultural shock” which is the term used to refer to the feeling of disorientation and anxiety suffered by sojourners, people who stay in a country temporarily such as international students, in cross-cultural transitions (Armes & Ward, 1989).

Acculturation is understood as “the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2005, pp. 698)”. These adaptations can take place easily or they can sometimes create conflict (Berry et al., 2006).

People behave according to their cultural influences and expectations. Studies in cross-cultural psychology have claimed that the cultural context where individuals have developed has an important impact on the way they act (Berry et al., 2006).

Acculturation can be also affected by social and demographic changes in the host country. For example, heterogeneous and more culturally mixed societies may lead to less acculturative stress and less homesickness for immigrants. Immigrants in culturally mixed societies may feel less pressure to assimilate the dominant cultural values and customs (van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013).

**CHAPER TWO:**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Inglehart-Welzel cultural map of the world.**

Political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, using the World Values Survey, created a map of the world where the different countries are positioned based not on geographical proximity but on their scores for the two value dimensions: Survival vs. self-expression and Traditional vs. secular-rational (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004).

The World Values Survey, formed by social Scientists from all over the world, has been measuring changing cultural values and beliefs since 1980. Their goal is to understand changes in values and their impact on social and political life (World Values Survey, 2015).

Inglehart is concerned with comparing different culture values. He believes that the concepts of individualism and collectivism are basic for the understanding of the “deep structure” of culture differences. Individualism is believed to be more relevant in industrialized rich Western societies where personal freedom, individual choice and self-actualisation are strongly encouraged. In collectivist societies, such as poor countries in Africa, in Asia and ex-communist countries, people are seen as components of social units with a common goal. Membership is a central aspect of their identity and satisfaction in life comes with the maintenance of social rules and stability. Emotional expression is discouraged in order to maintain social harmony (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004, p. 7).

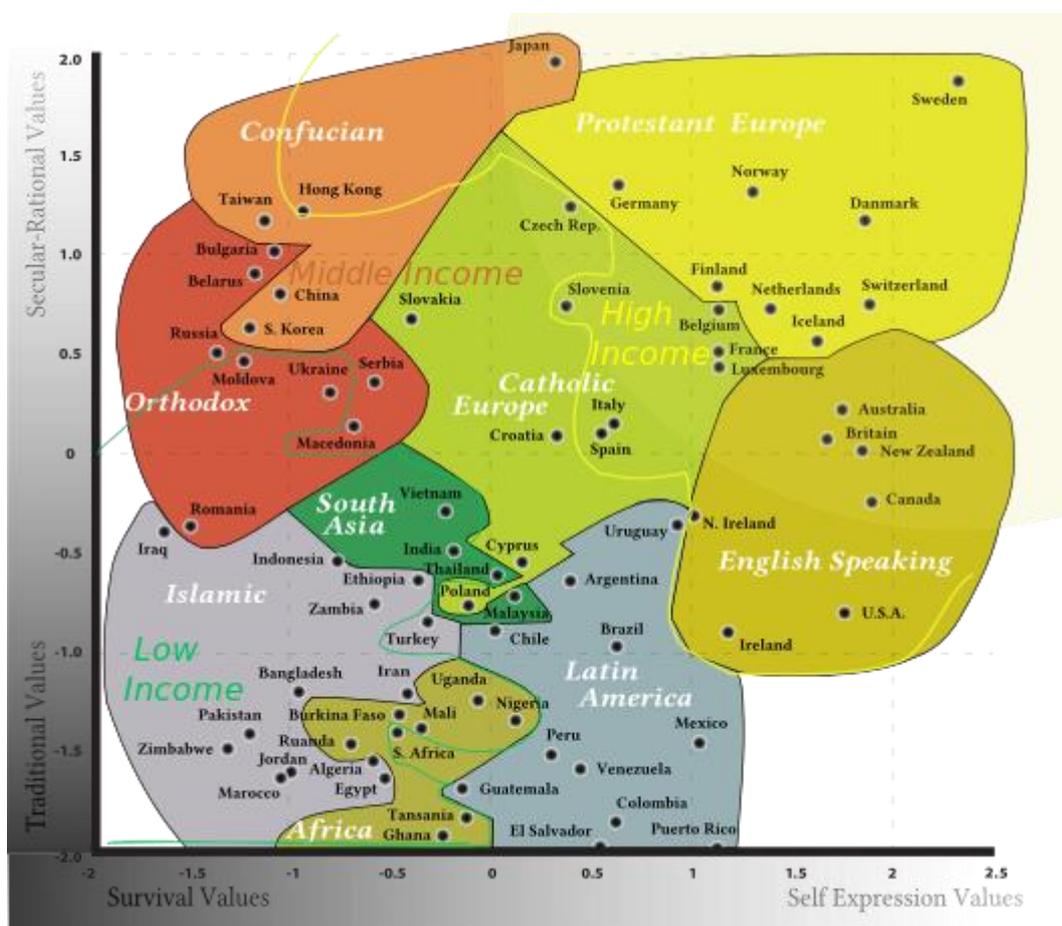
The dichotomy individualism vs collectivism is visible in Inglehart’s value dimension of Survival vs Self-expression. This dimension refers to the extent to which people prioritise their individual choices and goals over their survival needs. Inglehart (2004) argues that when

countries experience economic prosperity people's survival is granted. They stop worrying about material scarcity, at the same time; they feel liberated from cultural restrains which are more likely to remain under control during conditions of poverty (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004, p. 3). This argument can be found in Inglehart's Modernization Theory: the current rising levels of existential security leads to a shift from traditional values to secular-rational values, and from survival values to self-expression values. High-income countries (e.g. Natives from European countries in the current study) rank high on both dimensions, falling into the upper-right region of Inglehart-Welzel's cultural map of the world. Low and lower-middle-income countries (e.g. Natives from Asian countries group in the current study) score low on both dimensions, falling into the lower-left region of the map (MoldovanPress, 2010).

Economic development has a major influence in shaping societies' value system, regardless of their cultural heritage. However, Inglehart does not deny the influence of other factors such as religion. He believes that, despite economic forces, religious and philosophical heritage also shape how a particular society develops culturally (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004, p. 27).

As the figure below shows; Inglehart-Welzel cultural map of the world displays groups of countries situated next to each other or far away depending of economic development, religion and cultural heritage. These groups of countries are positioned on the map depending on their scores in the World Value Survey in the two dimensions: Survival vs Self-expression and Traditional vs. secular-rational. The cultural zones are: the Confucian-influenced societies (China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan) which have relatively high secular values, the historically Roman Catholic societies (e.g., Italy, Portugal, and Spain) which display

relatively traditional values. The historically Protestant societies (e.g., West Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) rank higher on self-expression compared to Catholic societies. English speaking countries, like Ireland, score high in self-expression values. Latin America and South Asian countries are in the middle of the map. Orthodox countries score high in both survival and secular-rational values. Finally, African and Islamic countries score high in both survival and traditional values (MoldovanPress, 2010).

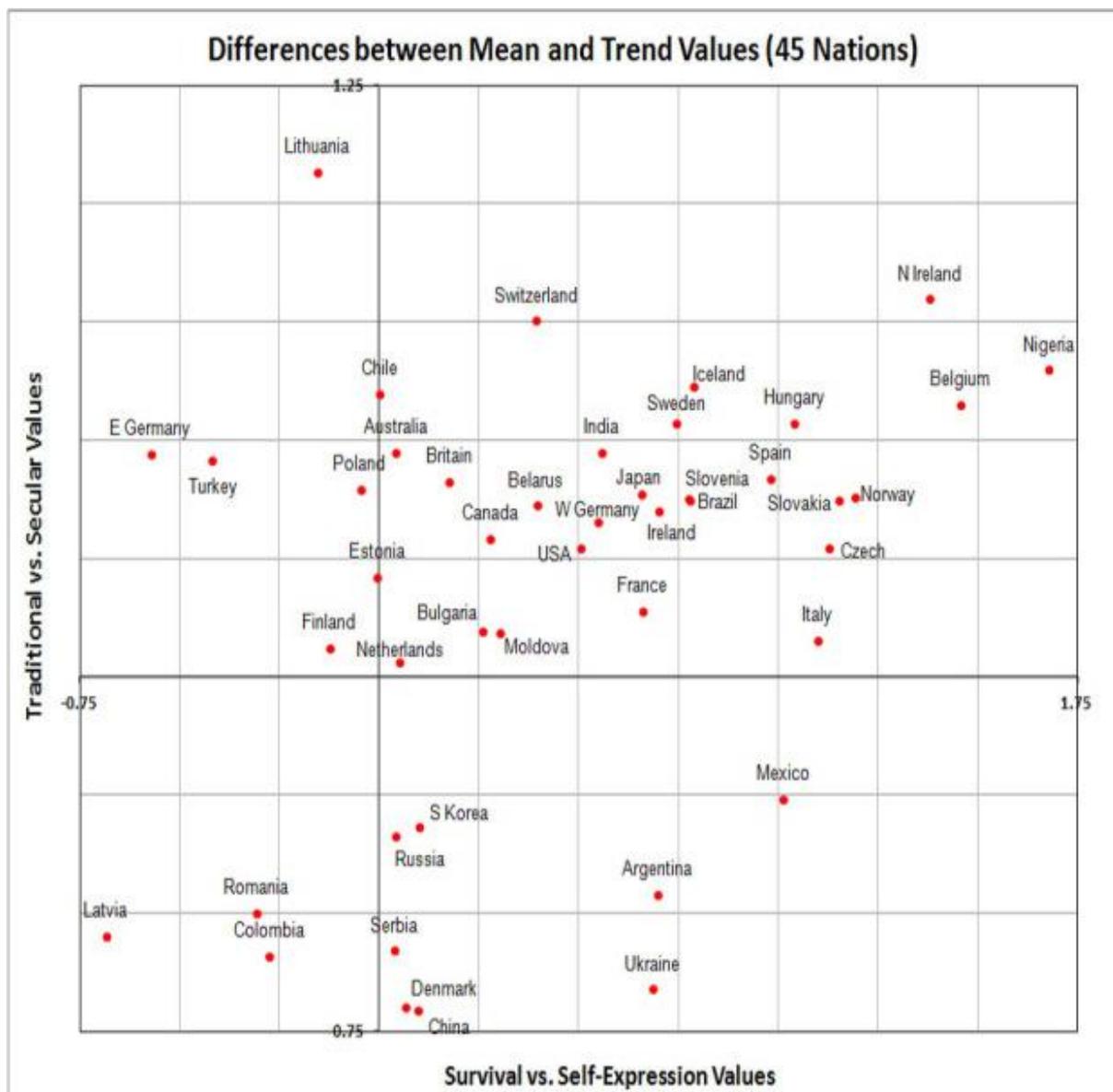


<Figure 1> Inglehart-Welzel cultural map of the world (World Values Survey, 2015).

The World Values Survey and the European Values Survey has confirmed Inglehart's argument. They have confirmed that self-expression values are more spread among rich

countries. They have found that countries which experience economic growth switch from acceptance of survival values to a focus on self-expression values (as seen in table 1 below). In Societies in the self-expression pole, citizens are more against discrimination. They are more tolerant to diversity, gender equality, foreigners and homosexuality. Hard work, materialistic values and relative intolerance toward outgroups are more characteristic of societies in the survival pole (Inglehart & Osyerman, 2004, p. 17).

<Table 1> Table expressing countries movement away from survival values. Modernization Theory. Model of cultural change. Inglehart-Welzel cultural map of the world (MoldovanPress, 2010).



### **Acculturative Stress. Berry's theoretical framework of Acculturation**

Berry's model of Acculturation is the most widely cited and investigated model on acculturation by social scientists (van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013).

Berry (1997) wonders if people's behaviour is shaped by their culture or, in different words, what happens when people from one cultural context try to adapt to a new cultural context. Would these individuals persist in their behaviour or would they change it to a more appropriate one in the new society? Berry believes that people in their trying to adapt to a new society would experience the phenomenon of Acculturation. Acculturation is understood as the process of cultural and psychological change that follows intercultural contact (i.e. adaptation to a foreign culture) while psychological acculturation refers to the psychological changes which precede the experience of acculturation. Although acculturation can affect the host culture, it tends to cause more changes in the group of individuals who move to a new culture rather than in the original population.

Berry believes that immigrants go through a process of change in six areas: language, cognitive styles, personality, identity, attitudes, and acculturative stress (van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013).

Psychological adaptation to acculturation requires "culture shedding", or unlearning behaviours which are no longer appropriate and the learning of new behavioural repertoire adapted to the new context (Berry, 1997).

Ward and Kennedy (1993) see the process of adapting during cross-cultural transitions as more complex than Berry does. As well as Berry (1997) they differentiate between sociocultural adjustment, which refers to the extent to which migrants can "fit in or negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture", and psychological adjustment, which is related to

“feelings of well-being and satisfaction” (Ward & Kennedy, 1993, pp.131). However they believe that psychological adaptation to acculturation requires three processes: “culture shedding”, “culture learning”, and “culture conflict”. Migrants need to learn the skills required in the new culture. The degree of dissimilarity between the origin culture and the new one is of great importance in the adjustment of the migrants. The more dissimilar the two cultures are, the greater the likelihood of culture conflict (Ward & Kennedy, 1993).

Berry (1997) talks about culture conflict too. He argues that some individuals experience “culture shock” or acculturative stress which is defined as the disorientation that often accompanies cross-cultural transitions. Acculturative stress can therefore be understood as the level of conflict experienced or the level of stress reaction in response to the experience of having to deal with two cultures at the same time (Berry, 1997).

Oberg (1960) designed a U-curve model using the variables of culture shock and length of residence in a host country. He believes that the longer one stays in a host culture, the better a migrant would adjust to the host country’s culture. Lysgaard (1995), similarly to Oberg, believes that the process of adjustment by international students can be displayed as a U-curve: for the first six months students experience curiosity about the host culture; in a second stage they experience some difficulties when trying to adapt. In a third stage the students begin to feel more adapted again. The students feel culture shock from the sixth month of residence. However, Brown and Holloway’s ethnographic study (2008), which examined adjustment among international students in universities of the South of England, did not find that the initial stage of intercultural adjustment was characterised by a feeling of excitement as suggested by the U-model. They found that although such feelings were present, they were overwhelmed by culture shock.

Acculturation theory states that there are various situational and personal factors which affect the process of psychological acculturation. Among the situational factors, Berry points out voluntariness in the migration, motivation, the cultural characteristics of society of origin, characteristics of society of settlement and the “cultural distance” between the two cultures. Cultural distance refers to how dissimilar two cultures are in language, religion, values etc. (Berry, 1997).

Although Inglehart’s (2004) theory of global cultural difference does not focus on acculturation but rather on general changing values and beliefs in the world, his theory is similar to Ward and Kennedy(1993) and Berry’s (1997) in respects to the concept of “cultural distance”.

Among personal characteristics of the immigrants prior to acculturation, factors such as age, gender, level of education, motivations, and expectations can moderate the process of adaptation (Berry, 1997). Research has suggested that the older the person that moves to a new country, the higher the risk of suffering acculturative stress. Studies have also suggested that females present more risk than men. However Yeh and Inose (2003) did not find a difference in acculturation levels between females and males. Research on educational level and acculturation has claimed that having higher education is predictive of lower stress (Berry, 1997). The experience of stress can be influenced by factors arising during the process of acculturation, very important factors that may change with time are: improvements in learning the host language, establishment of friendships and recreational opportunities (Berry, 1997).

A key factor in the process of acculturation is the migrant’s sense of cultural identity. Cultural identity can be understood as the sum of two independent dimensions: an identity with respect to their culture of origin and an identity related with the host culture (Phinney

1990). The migrant deals with two issues: the wish to maintain their heritage culture and their look for involvement within the society of settlement. According to Berry (2006) there are four different ways in which individuals may deal with the dilemma which he called 'acculturation strategies': assimilation, separation, marginalisation, and integration. Assimilation refers to the situation where the individual has a preference for involvement in the larger society rather than in maintaining his culture. Separation involves cultural maintenance and avoidance of involvement with the host culture. Marginalisation refers to the lack of interest in either the host or the original culture. Finally, Integration represents the situation when the migrant seeks an involvement in the new culture while maintaining the culture of origin (Berry et al., 2006). Individuals who pursue a Marginalisation strategy achieve worse outcomes than those who prefer Assimilation or Separation. The last two strategies lead to intermediate levels of stress and adaptation. Berry believes that immigrant youths settle better in a host culture when they are encouraged to retain their own cultural identity and at the same time they are allowed to establish close ties with the larger national society. Integration strategies help lead to a more adaptive outcome for both the migrant and the culture of settlement (Berry, 2005). When people choose the option of assimilation, the phenomenon of "melting pot" occurs, but when people are forced to choose this option, Berry believes that society becomes more like a "pressure cooker" (Berry, 1997). National policies should not force culture shedding, which leads to assimilation, or ghettoization-segregation. The optimal policies should promote an appreciation of the benefits of pluralism and multiculturalism (Berry, 1997).

Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) believe that there are seven factors that contribute to acculturative stress: perceived discrimination and alienation, homesickness, perceived hate, fear and insecurity, culture shock, difficulties in adjusting, guilt, and a category which includes additional experiences that do not fit to in any of the previous factors. To measure

those factors the authors developed the Acculturative stress scale for international students (ASSIS).

### **Review of studies on Acculturative stress**

Research on international students has been conducted since the 1950's when students began to increase their presence in universities abroad. These early studies tended to focus on the pathological effects of migration. In the 1980's, a more developmental perspective was taken into account. Researches began to focus on acculturation, and coping strategies for adjustment from a sociological perspective (Andre de Araujo, 2011).

The following literature review on acculturation divides research studies by the topic chosen: personality and cross-cultural identity; social participation, communication, and English language competency; and finally race, ethnicity and culture.

### **Acculturation, Personality and Cross-Cultural Identity**

Every international student has their unique personality and coping strategies for dealing with stress. The following review is focused on research studies that tried to identify which personality factors are related to adaptive coping strategies. Such strategies could help international students in the process of adjustment to a host culture.

International students face adjustment challenges. Coordinating two different cultures and languages is complex and can create considerable stress. Tong, Huang and McIntyre (2006), concerned with international students in distress, provided educators with strategies to assist international students. They argued that international students need to develop a secure "cross-cultural identity" that balances their own values, beliefs and customs and the new culture ones. Students should see their own culture and the host culture as complementary rather than in competition. International students are better culturally adapted when they

develop the ability to be a “cultural chameleon” while still maintaining pride in their language and culture (Tong, Huang & McIntyre, 2006).

Wei, Heppener, Mallen, Ku, Liao and Wu (2007) studied Chinese International students living in the United States. They focused on three factors: acculturative stress, maladaptive perfectionism, and length of time in the United States. Maladaptive perfectionism is understood as perceived failure to meet one’s standards of performance. The researchers wanted to see if there was an interaction of these factors with depression. The authors found that acculturative stress was positively associated with depression. High maladaptive perfectionism appeared to exacerbate the negative impact of acculturative stress on depression. However, acculturative stress and depression were associated with maladaptive perfectionism but only for those who had been in the United States for a longer period of time. Wei et al suggested that Chinese culture does not value the expression and sharing of stress experiences. Looking for help or counselling implies personal failure and it is seen as weaknesses (Wei et al., 2007).

A quantitative research article by Poyrazli, Thukral and Duru in the US (2010) addresses the issue of race-ethnicity, personality and acculturative stress. They conducted a study with 613 participants, who completed the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students by Sandhu and Asradabi (ASSIS), the Big Five Inventory (BFI) by Jonh, Donahue, and Kentle and a demographic questionnaire. The aim of the study was to identify which personality factors could be related to acculturative stress. Poyrazli et al found that only one personality factor, neuroticism, was correlated with acculturative stress. They believe that students with high levels of neuroticism experience more negative emotions and have not effective coping mechanisms to deal with stressful cross-cultural situations. High levels of neuroticism was associated with a lack of social support, while openness was associated with homesickness,

perhaps because extrovert people are more unsatisfied with the lack of interaction with people from the host culture (Poyrazli, Thukral & Duru, 2010).

Many university advisers often encourage international students to maintain an optimistic attitude and develop a sense of resilience to cope with acculturative stress. To prevent stress due to cultural shock, students are advised to rely on personal and multicultural strengths. Students are advised to join students clubs, practice their English, make cross-cultural friendships and learn cultural norms and host country traditions (Yakunina, E., Weigold, I., Weigold, A., Hercegovac, S. & Elsayed, 2013).

Yakunina et al (2013) research paper seeks to find out whether a culturally open attitude could reduce acculturative stress and promote optimal adjustment to the new culture. The purpose of the study was to test whether three strength-based strategies: a personal growth initiative, hardiness or optimistic attitude and a universal-diverse orientation promoted a good adjustment among international students. Resilience is a personality characteristic which has been shown to have a positive impact in moderating the effects of stress and helping in the adjustment to stressful situations. The results of Yakunina's et al research show that international students who demonstrated attitudes of personal growth, resilience and openness have reduced their acculturative stress. A greater universal –diverse orientation helped to experience less cultural conflicts. Curiosity, openness to diverse cultures, and contact with students from diverse cultural backgrounds leads to a better adjustment (Yakunina et al, 2013).

## **Acculturation, social participation, communication, and English language competency**

The following research review is focused on studies which tried to discover the relationship between acculturation and some factors such as social relationships, communication and English language skills of international students.

Yeh et al (2003) study in North America found that the level of English is negatively related to the level of acculturative stress among international students.

Berry (2006) has emphasized the importance of social support and social networks in reducing acculturative stress and facilitating adjustment to college. Learning a second language is not simply acquiring vocabulary or grammar, but rather learning symbolic elements of a different ethno linguistic community. Students have to find harmony between aspects of the new culture and their own. Rubinfeld, Sinclair and Clement found that adaptation to a foreign culture could be best facilitated if the students are motivated to learn a second language (Rubinfeld et al, 2007).

Wei, Tsai, Chao, Du and Lin (2012) believe that self-confidence in English ability, rather than actual English ability could be a factor for the successful adjustment of East Asian international students in the United States. Those students had assigned an American advisor to help them in adapting to college. Although their results cannot be generalised to international students from other countries, their conclusions are very interesting. Wei et al found that acculturative stress was significantly associated with psychological stress only when students had a perceived lower English proficiency and had a strong working alliance with their advisor. When students had a stronger advisory alliance but perceived a lower proficiency in English, acculturative stress was significantly and positively associated with psychological distress. Asian students' desire to honor their advisor through academic achievement was negatively influenced by their lack of confidence in their level of English.

Another limitation of the study is that it only focused on the advisor perspective (Wei et al., 2012).

Zhang (2012) emphasizes the role of English language competency during the acculturation process. The author believes that acculturation experience could affect students' psychological well-being. He studied acculturative stress, perceived social support and depression among Chinese international students in Syracuse University. Zhang's study reveals that students with less acculturative stress experience a better adjustment and lower level of depression. However, Zhang found that social support was a moderator between acculturative stress and depression only when students experienced a high level of acculturative stress (Zhang, 2012).

Researchers believe that to adapt to a new culture, it is basically being able to establish meaningful relationships within the host culture. Social interactions and participation in social activities are mediated by students' ability to communicate. Language has an enormous role in organizing and making sense of human relationships (Gomez, Urzua & Glass, 2014).

Gomez's et al study (2014) was designed to find out whether there was a relationship between the sociolinguistic acculturation, leisure participation, leisure constraints, social networks, and international student's adjustment to college. The findings illustrated that the availability of social networks, participation in on-campus events and facilitation of social support has a strong effect on facilitating adaptation. The results also emphasised the connection between second language competence and social adjustment (Gomez et al., 2014).

### **Acculturative stress, race, ethnicity, and culture**

Several studies have studied the association of acculturative stress and race, ethnicity, and cultural identity of international students.

Constantine, Okazabi and Utsey (2004) argued that college students coming from collectivistic cultures such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America experience more difficulties than European students in adapting to life in the USA which is a country where individualism, independence, and self-reliance are generally positively valued. Of the three groups of students, the group of African students exhibited higher levels of acculturative stress and suffer from more racial prejudice than Asian and Latin American students (Constantine et al., 2004). Constantine's et al, similarly to Berry, believes that the values held by migrants and the host society values are very important in the process of acculturation. Berry (1997) believes that the cultural characteristics of the societies of origin and settlement, as well as the cultural distance between the two societies, are of great importance in the study of the acculturation process. Inglehart's world value map is very helpful for the understanding of the cultural differences and similarities between countries (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004).

The sharing of values between domestic and international students can help in the process of adaptation. However, Constantine believes that ethnicity is also a factor to take into account (Constantine et al., 2004).

Similarly to Constantine, Poyrazli, Thukral and Duru (2010) studied the impact of socio-race and racism to which international students may be exposed. They demonstrate that race and ethnicity are associated with the level of acculturative stress that an international student could suffer. They compared European students with African, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Middle Eastern students in The USA. They conclude that African students have the highest

levels of acculturative stress followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders, Middle Eastern, and Latino students. European students are least likely to experience acculturative stress. The authors believe that Caucasian Europeans are more easily accepted by individuals in the host culture because of several factors. Firstly, European culture is more similar to U.S. culture so that European students may have fewer difficulties in adjusting to the host culture. Secondly European students find it easier to form social relationships which could help to reduce their level of acculturative stress (Poyrazli et al., 2010).

Poyrazly's et al (2010) and Constantine's studies (2004) conclusions are consistent with previous studies such as the one conducted by Yeh and Inose in the USA (2003). The researchers found that European international students experienced less acculturative stress than those coming from Asia, Central/Latin America, and Africa. The more differences between the origin and the host culture, the higher the possibility that they will experience homesickness (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

In relation to the age of the international students, Poyrazly et al found that there is a significant negative correlation between openness to experience and age. Their results suggested that older students are less likely to be open and welcome new ideas and values when compared with younger students (Poyrazli, Thukral & Duru, 2010).

In relation to "cultural distance" and "linguistic shock" research reveals that international students who had greater cultural differences with the host culture experienced more intense experience of "cultural shock". However a 2014 study by Patron (2014) on international students in Australia concludes that despite cultural similarity between international students and locals there is no guarantee that international students would not experience loneliness. North American, Canadian and English students in Australia can experience cultural shock even though they share language with Australian students. Patron believes that they in spite

of their shared language and cultural values just “do not speak the same language” and “do not understand each other culturally” (Patron, 2014).

### **Literature review conclusion**

The number of international students choosing Ireland as their destination is growing (IHE, 2012). With the arrival of international students, cultural adjustment problems such as “cultural shock” or acculturative stress need to be addressed (Armes & Ward, 1989). Characteristics of society of settlement and the “cultural distance” between the two cultures are factors related to acculturative stress that international students may suffer. Cultural distance refers to how dissimilar two cultures are in language, religion, values etc. (Berry, 1997). Countries can be close to each other not by geographical proximity but on their scores for the two value dimensions: Survival vs. self-expression and Traditional vs. secular-rational (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004).

Language has an enormous role in organizing and making sense of human relationships (Gomez, Urzua & Glass, 2014). Zhang (2012) emphasizes the role of English language competency during the acculturation process.

On the other hand, Wei, Tsai, Chao, Du and Lin (2012) believes that self-confidence in English ability, rather than actual English ability helps in the adjustment of East Asian international students in the United States (Wei et al., 2012). The results of Wei’s study support the present research project hypothesis that higher levels of self-reported English language proficiency will predict lower levels of acculturative stress.

Constantine, Okazabi and Utsey argue that the USA is a country where individualism and independence are positively valued. Students coming from collectivistic cultures such as

Africa, Asia, and Latin America experience more difficulties than European students in adapting to life in the USA (Constantine et al., 2004).

African students in the USA had the highest levels of acculturative stress followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders, Middle Eastern, and Latino students. European students were least likely to experience acculturative stress (Poyrazli et al., 2010).

Constantine's et al (2004) and Poyrazli's et al (2010) research results support the present research project hypothesis that European international students will have lower levels of acculturative stress than Asian international students. However, Patron's study (2014) results do not support the present study hypotheses. He concludes that despite cultural similarity between international students and locals there was no guarantee that international students would not experience loneliness. North American, Canadian and English students in Australia could experience cultural shock even though they shared a language with Australian students.

### **Research objectives of the present study**

As the review research studies were not carried out in Ireland, it is the aim of this study is to find out whether the international students coming from more culturally different countries suffer from higher acculturative stress than those coming from a country closer in culture to Ireland.

Therefore the aim of this research is to find out whether international students who have higher levels of self-reported English fluency experience lower levels of acculturative stress than those international students who express lower levels of self-reported English fluency.

In order to meet the present study's objectives Berry's theory on Acculturation and Inglehart's Modernization Theory have been combined. Although Inglehart's (2004) theory

of global cultural difference does not focus on acculturation but rather on general changing values and beliefs in the world, his theory is similar to Berry's (1997; 2005; 2006) and it is also parallel to Ward and Kennedy's (1993) and Constantine's (2004) work with respect to the concept of "cultural distance". The researchers believe that the cultural characteristics of the societies of origin and settlement, as well as the cultural distance between the two societies are of great importance in the study of the acculturation process. On the other hand, Inglehart's world value map shows the cultural differences and similarities between countries (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004). The combination between Inglehart's and Berry's theories is an original contribution by this present research project which purpose is to analyse the following hypotheses:

It is hypothesized that European international students will have lower levels of acculturative stress than Asian international students.

It is also hypothesized that higher levels of self-reported English language fluency will predict lower levels of acculturative stress.

For the study's purpose the participants are grouped depending on cultural zones in Inglehart-Welzel's cultural map of the world. The study compares the level of acculturative stress between students from Catholic countries (countries which are proximal to Ireland in the world value map) and a group composed of students from China, Korea and Middle- east countries (countries which are far from Ireland in the world value map) (World Values Survey, 2015).

The present study will help in understanding the adjustment of international students moving between their culture and Ireland.

**CHAPTER THREE:**

**METHODOLOGY**

## **Chapter three: Research Methodology**

### **Design**

Quantitative survey design is used for the dissertation using a questionnaire and research design of quasi-experimental correlation approach. The topics of acculturation and self-reported English proficiency have been widely studied. The level of acculturation and self-reported English fluency has been intensively measured. The choice of quantitative methodology is based on the fact that the study seeks the generalisation and comparison of its results. Qualitative studies are more suitable for exploring new areas of study (Clark-Carter, 2009, pp.26). Survey research is the method for collecting data.

### **Materials**

The materials for data collection for this dissertation have been chosen to suit this research project which is a quantitative research design.

### **The Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) by Sanshu and Asradabi (1994)**

The chosen suitable method for data collection in this dissertation was the Sandhu and Asradabi (1994) questionnaire the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) (Appendix I). The questionnaire chosen had been used in previous research and previously tested for reliability and validity. The Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) is a 36-items scale in Likert format, designed to measure the acculturative stress of international students. The scale is scored on a 5-point Likert scale; (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The total scores range goes from 36 to 180 on this scale. Low scores range goes from 36 to 72, 73 to 144 are moderate scores, and over 145 are considered high scores. A reliability test was

conducted on ASSIS and the Cronbach alpha was reported as 0.89 with higher scores indicative of greater acculturative stress perceived by the subjects. The overall mean for this study is 81.90 (SD=26.30) n=121.

The ASSIS includes 7 subscales: perceived discrimination, homesickness, perceived hate, fear, stress due to change/culture shock, and guilt. A nonspecific subscale includes important factors that do not fall under one particular factor (Rajab, A. et al, 2014).

The questionnaire includes items like “people show hatred toward me verbally” or “I feel guilty that I am living a different lifestyle here”.

### **The Self-reported Fluency of English Scale (SRFES)**

The SRFES assessed participants’ perception of their English fluency. It consists of three questions: ‘what is your present level of English fluency?’; ‘How comfortable are you communicating in English?’ and ‘How often do you communicate in English? The total scores range goes from 3 to 15 on this scale. Higher scores are indicative of greater fluency reported by the subjects.

For this study the mean is 11.31(SD=1.83) n=122. The SRFES uses a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach’s alpha 0.78. This method of measuring and assessing English language fluency has been confirmed as being effective (Yeh, & Inose, 2003).

### **Socio-demographic questionnaire**

Socio-demographic variables chosen to be measured were inserted in the questionnaire, i.e., age, gender, nationality, and length of residence in Ireland.

The questionnaire document was reviewed and approved by the Head of Social Science Research Projects and the Supervisor for this dissertation. Scores for participants

participating in data collection were used further in the research analysis and results section of this dissertation.

Full questionnaire can be seen in the appendix III.

### **Participants and procedure**

Convenient sample technique was used to choose the participants. The participants were International undergraduate and graduate college students from third level education colleges in Dublin. Of the 122 number of participants 53 were males and 69 were females. Age range goes from 18 to 30. Demographic features were: European international (students from France, Spain and Italy) students were 73, and 48 Asian international students (China, Korea, Oman, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia). The variable “length of residence in Ireland” was controlled. All the participant had been living in Ireland for Two to four months at the time the data was collected. Participation in the study was voluntary and completely confidential, which was clearly communicated to the students prior to handing out questionnaires. For difference in age between participants, data was collected from students in classes from first, second and third year, full-time and part-time. Questionnaires were handed out in class and outside of the classroom to students in both evening and day time classes.

Analysis will aim to find the level of acculturative stress in international students and the differences seen between students from countries more culturally close to Ireland and those more culturally different. Analysis will also aim to find the relationship between the level of acculturative stress and the level of self-reported English fluency, as well as the gender of the participants.

In the discussion section of this dissertation, the findings will be further discussed, argued and compared to findings from literature reviewed.

SPSS version (IBM Corp., 2013) was used for data analysis.

### **Ethical note**

DBS strict ethical guidelines have been followed while writing the dissertation. The research proposal was reviewed and approved by DBS ethics committee. The questionnaires used in the research were reviewed by the Research Project Supervisor Dr Anna Wolniak and Head of Social Science Research Projects Dr Bernadette Quinn prior to data collection. The researcher was present while the data was being collected. The completion of the questionnaire took 10 minutes approximately. Lecturers were contacted prior to handing out the questionnaires in their class. The students were asked consent to participate in the study. It was communicated that it was voluntary to participate in the study. The students were given the opportunity to refuse or withdraw. Further communication was given that the research study was fully confidential no names would be mentioned in the study and no information would be shared outside of this particular research study. No students taking part in this research study were under the age 18. The participants and lecturers were thanked for their collaboration and they were given the opportunity to obtain further information about the research topic.

**CHAPTER FOUR:**

**RESULTS**

## Chapter 4: Results

The Hypotheses in this dissertation aim firstly to find out whether the international students coming from more culturally different countries suffer more acculturative stress than those coming from a country closer in culture to Ireland.

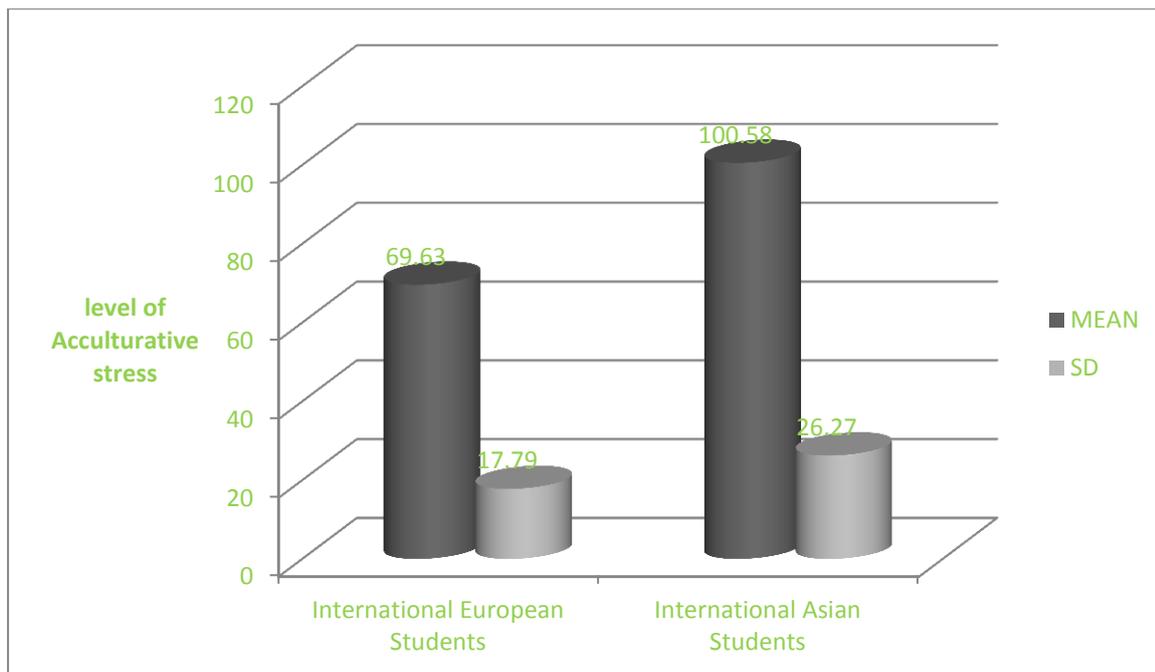
Secondly the aim of this research is to find out whether international students who have higher levels of self-reported English fluency experience lower levels of acculturative stress than those international students who express lower levels of self-reported English fluency.

### *Descriptive Statistics:*

The mean score measured using the The Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) was 81.90  $n=122$ . The mean for European International students was 69.63 ( $SD=17.79$ )  $n=73$ . The scale ranges from 36 to 180. The mean score for Asian International students was 100.58( $SD=26.27$ )  $n=43$ .

The mean for males was 82.47 ( $n=53$ ) ( $SD=27.09$ ) and the mean for females was 81.47 ( $n=68$ ) ( $SD=25.85$ ).

For this study the mean score measured by The Self-reported Fluency of English Scale (SRFES) was 11.31( $SD=1.83$ )  $n=122$ . The scale ranges from 3 to 15. The mean for European international students was 11.25( $n=73$ ) and for Asian international students was 11.39( $n=48$ ).



<Figure 2> Figure displaying differences between International European and International Asian students on Acculturative Stress Level.

As seen in the figure above, International European students score on acculturative stress significantly lower than International Asian students.

### *Inferential statistics:*

**Hypothesis 1:** European international students will have lower levels of acculturative stress than Asian international students.

An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the level of Acculturative Stress scores for European International students and Asian International students. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of acculturative stress between European international students and Asian international students  $t(119)=-7.153$ ,  $p < .01$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected with a 99% confidence level.

## **Results for Gender**

The mean for males was 82.47 (n=53) (SD=27.09) and the mean for females was 81.47 (n=68) (SD=25.85). Independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare mean scores on gender. The results will show findings from analysis on gender differences in level of acculturative stress. It showed that there was no significant difference in mean scores between males and females  $t(119) = .206, p < .05. = 10.14$ ).

## **Results for the seven different subscales of the ASSIS**

Furthermore analysis was conducted for the seven subscales of the ASSIS: Perceived Discrimination, Homesickness, Perceived Hate, Fear, Stress due to change/Culture shock, Guilt and Miscellaneous.

### ***Perceived Discrimination***

The mean for International European students was 15.28 (SD=4.62), the mean for International Asian students was 22.95 (SD=6.21). An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the level of Perceived Discrimination for European International students and Asian International students. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of Perceived Discrimination between European international students and Asian international students  $t(119)=-7.319, p < .01$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected with a 99% confidence level.

### ***Homesickness***

The mean for International European students was 10.44(SD=3.70), the mean for International Asian students was 12.29(SD=4.25). An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the level of Homesickness for European International students and Asian International students. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference

in mean scores on the level of Homesickness between European international students and Asian international students  $t(119)=-2.462, p>.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

### ***Perceived Hate***

The mean for International European students was 8.75 (SD=3.24), the mean for International Asian students was 13.35 (SD=4.36). An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the level of Perceived Hate for European International students and Asian International students. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of Perceived Hate between European international students and Asian international students  $t(120)=-6.258, p< .01$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected with a 99% confidence level.

### ***Fear***

The mean for International European students was 6.67 (SD=2.35), the mean for International Asian students was 10.89 (SD=4.09). An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the level of Fear for European International students and Asian International students. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of fear between European international students and Asian international students  $t(120)=-6.482, p< .01$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected with a 99% confidence level.

### ***Stress due to change/Culture shock***

The mean for International European students was 6.06 (SD=1.72), the mean for International Asian students was 8.54 (SD=2.78). An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the level of Stress due to change/Culture shock for European International students and Asian International students. It was found that there was a

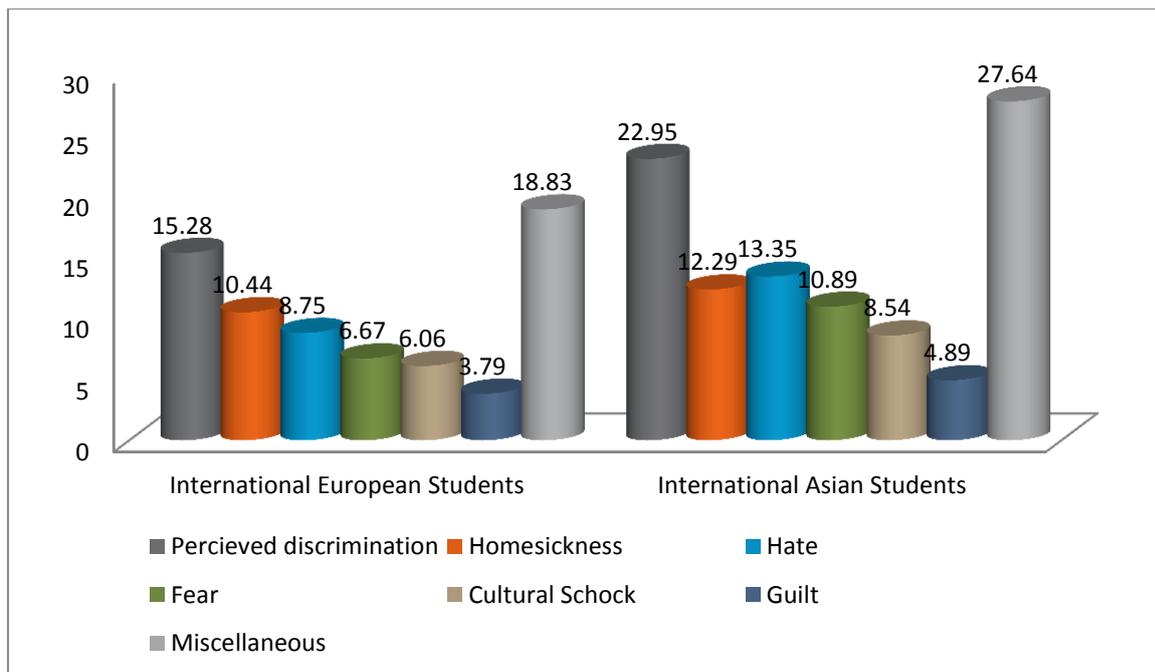
statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of Stress due to change/Culture shock between European international students and Asian international students  $t(120)=-5.513$ ,  $p < .01$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected with a 99% confidence level.

### ***Guilt***

The mean for International European students was 3.79 (SD=1.64), the mean for International Asian students was 4.89 (SD=2.00). An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the level of Guilt for European International students and Asian International students. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of guilt between European international students and Asian international students  $t(120)=-3.169$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected with a 95 % confidence level.

### ***Miscellaneous***

The mean for International European students was 18.83 (SD=5.71), the mean for International Asian students was 27.64 (SD=7.75).An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the level of Miscellaneous for European International students and Asian International students. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of Miscellaneous between European international students and Asian international students  $t(120)=-6.771$ ,  $p < .01$ .Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected with a 99% confidence level.



<Figure 3> Independent Samples T-test table displaying differences between International European and International Asian students on the seven subscales of ASSIS.

The figure above expresses the differences between the International European students' scores and International Asian students' scores on the seven subscales of ASSIS. The differences between the two groups in the subscales perceived discrimination, fear, cultural shock, and hate are especially significant.

**Hypothesis 2:** higher levels of self-reported English language fluency will predict lower levels of acculturative stress.

A Spearman's rho correlation analysis, which is designed for analysing correlation using ranked data, was computed to assess the relationship between the level of Acculturative stress (predictor) and the level of Self-reported English Proficiency (criterion). The results indicated that there was a small significant negative correlation between total score from the Acculturative Stress and Self-reported English Proficiency ( $r=-0.199$ ,  $N = 121$ , sig. (2-tailed)

= 0.26,  $p < .05$ ) with high levels of Acculturative Stress associated with lower levels of Self-reported English Proficiency.

### **Summary of the results**

For the first hypothesis: European international students will have lower levels of acculturative stress than Asian international students; it was found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of acculturative stress between European international students and Asian international students.

The findings from analysis on gender differences in level of acculturative stress showed that there was no significant difference in mean scores between males and females.

Analysis on the subscales of the ASSIS: Perceived Discrimination, Perceived Hate, Fear, Stress due to change/Culture shock, Guilt and Miscellaneous found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of acculturative stress between European and Asian international students. Analysis on the scale for Homesickness found no differences between International European and International Asian students.

For the second Hypothesis: higher levels of self-reported English language fluency will predict lower levels of acculturative stress. The results indicated that there was a small significant negative correlation between total score from the Acculturative Stress and Self-reported English fluency.

**CHAPTER FIVE:**

**DISCUSSION**

## **Chapter five: Discussion**

The main goal of this research was to examine whether the international students coming from more culturally different countries suffer more acculturative stress than those coming from a country closer in culture to Ireland.

Therefore the aim of this study was to find out whether international students who have high levels of self-reported English fluency experience lower levels of acculturative stress than those international students who express lower levels of self-reported English fluency.

### ***Level of Acculturative stress***

It was found that International students in this study, who had been living in Ireland for between two and four months when the data was collected, suffer a moderate level of acculturative stress. This result does not support Oberg's (1960) U-curve model or Lysgaard's (1995) study on acculturation: they both believe that international student's first stage of adjustment (up to the sixth month of residency in the host country) is not mainly characterised by stress but feelings of excitement and curiosity about the host culture. They argue that international students suffer difficulties in adapting to the host country during the second stage (from the sixth month of residency in the host country) (Lysgaard, 1995).

The present study's results suggest that, despite the fact that international students could feel excited about the new experience of living in a new country, they express feelings of moderate levels of acculturative stress during the first months of residency in the host country. This study's result is in line with Brown and Holloway's ethnographic study (2008) which examined adjustment among international students in universities in the South of England. The researchers did not find that the initial stage of intercultural adjustment was characterised by feeling of excitement as suggested by the U-model. They found that

although such feelings were present, they were overwhelmed by culture shock (Brown & Holloway, 2008).

This current study showed that there is no significant difference in acculturative stress levels between male and female. This study's finding is parallel to Yeh's et al (2003) research. However, this result does not support Berry's (1997) conclusion on gender differences on the level of acculturative stress.

One of the main predictions of this present study was that European international students have lower levels of acculturative stress than Asian international students; as it was expected, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of acculturative stress between European international students and Asian international students, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis that there would be no difference between Asian and European international students in level of acculturative stress. The mean for Asian international students was significantly higher than the mean for European international students.

The present study adds empirical evidence to support Berry's (1997) theoretical framework on acculturation. Berry (1997; 2005; 2006) believes that the cultural characteristics of the societies of origin and settlement, as well as the cultural distance between the two societies are of great importance in the study of the acculturation process. The present findings support the value of Inglehart's world culture map in reflecting cultural differences and similarities between countries (Inglehart & Osyerman, 2004).

The present research results suggest that Asian international students suffer higher levels of acculturative stress when compared with European international students; this is line with Yeh and Inose study in the USA (2003). They argue that European international students experienced less acculturative stress than those coming from Asia, Central//Latin America,

and Africa. Poyrazli, et al. (2010) conclude that as European culture is more similar to U.S. culture, European students have fewer difficulties in adjusting to the host culture and they are least likely to experience acculturative stress. So perhaps, as Poyrazli (2010) suggests, sharing values with the host culture helps in the process of adapting to the host country.

Self-expression values are more spread among rich countries (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004). Ireland, like other countries which have recently experienced economic growth, has shifted from acceptance of survival values to a focus on individualism, autonomy, and self-expression values. International students coming from a culturally closer country to Ireland, like Catholic European countries, have it easier to adapt than those students from more culturally distant countries such as Asian countries, where collectivism and survival values are more embedded while individualism and self-expression are discouraged (Constantine et al., 2004; Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004).

The results after analysis on the seven subscales of the ASSIS show that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores on the level of acculturative stress between European and Asian international students in subscales Perceived Discrimination, Homesickness, Perceived Hate, Fear, Stress due to change/Culture shock, Guilt and Miscellaneous. These present findings suggest that race and ethnicity are associated with the level of acculturative stress (Constantine et al., 2004). So perhaps, as suggested by Constantine et al. (2004) Caucasian European students more easily accepted in a European country like Ireland while international Asian students are more likely to feel more uncomfortable and to perceive a negative attitude of the local people.

Analysis on the scale for Homesickness found no differences between International European and Asian students. This finding is in opposition to Yeh and Inose's study (2003). They suggest that European international students in the USA experience less homesickness

than Asian students due to the similarity between European and American culture. They argue that the more differences between two cultures, the higher the possibility of suffering homesickness (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Following this argument, European international students in Ireland could be expected to score significantly lower on the homesickness scale than Asian international students. However in this study there were no significant differences between the two groups. The present students have the limitation of having a smaller group of Asian international students. Perhaps the results could be influenced by the fact that the number of participants is small. An alternative explanation could be that despite their cultural differences (Inglehart & Osyserman, 2004), all international students feel homesickness to a similar degree regardless of the cultural distance between their own and the host culture.

Another explanation for the result of no differences in level of homesickness between the two groups could be that contemporary Ireland is an example of heterogeneous and culturally mixed society. According to van Oudenhoven and Ward (2013) this cultural mixture may lead to less homesickness for immigrants.

### ***Self-reported English language and acculturation***

For the second Hypothesis: higher levels of self-reported English language fluency will predict lower levels of acculturative stress. The results allowed accept the alternative hypothesis. The correlation analysis indicated that there was a small, significant negative correlation between total score from the Acculturative Stress and Self-reported English fluency. This result support Yeh et al. (2003) study in North America which found that the level of English is negatively related to the level of acculturative stress among international students. The present finding suggests that perhaps having confidence in ones' level of English fluency can help in reducing ones' level of acculturative stress when moving to an English speaking country like Ireland (Yeh et al., 2003). This is probably because self-

confidence in English ability, rather than actual English ability could be a factor for the successful adjustment, as suggested by Wei et al. (2012). Wei et al. study's on Asian students in the USA found that acculturative stress was significantly associated with psychological stress only when students had a perceived lower English proficiency (Wei et al., 2012). Perhaps to adapt to a new culture, international students need to be able to establish meaningful relationships within the host culture. Social interactions and participation in social activities are mediated by students' ability to communicate (Gomez et al., 2014). As Berry (2006) emphasizes, social support and social networks facilitate the reduction of acculturative stress and promote adjustment to college. It could be that confidence in ones' ability to speak the host language, facilitate the establishment of social relationships which could help international students to adapt successfully in a host country (Wei et al. 2012).

### **Limitations and suggestions for future research**

Despite the fact that the present study may contribute to existing literature, this research has several limitations. The findings of the present study should be carefully interpreted because it focused on particular groups of international students. Thus, the generalisation of the findings is limited. Future studies could benefit from including other large groups of international students living in Ireland not included in the present study such as Western European and African international students.

This research was limited to a small sample of International students. In future research, it will be important to use a larger sample size. Additionally, the sample could include a wider age range than the present study.

The data was collected for the present study at one time point. The students in this study had been living in Ireland for between two and four months. Future studies can be longitudinal studies to look at how the level of acculturative stress changes with time.

Another interesting opportunity for future research would be to explore how students' motivations to learn English relate to acculturation. Moreover, more studies are needed to pay attention to how perceived English fluency might interact with the effect of social support, school club membership and interaction with local students.

### **Conclusions**

Despite limitations, this study provides tests of hypotheses focusing on acculturative stress in international students in Ireland. The results confirmed that International students in this study suffer a moderate level of acculturative stress. The present research results found that Asian international students suffer higher levels of acculturative stress when compared with European international students. This is perhaps because international European students find Irish culture more similar to their own culture than Asian international students do. This study's findings illustrated also that high levels of acculturative stress is significantly associated with lower levels of English proficiency.

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## Appendix I

### E-Thesis Submission Form

Dear Student,

Please complete all fields listed below as applicable. Leave fields that do not apply blank. Sign this cover sheet by typing your name in the appropriate field at the bottom of this page and submit to your supervisor as a separate MSWord document alongside your thesis on CD-Rom.

If you have any questions concerning this submission form, please contact the library at [Esource@dbs.ie](mailto:Esource@dbs.ie).

<b>Thesis information</b> (enter details in the fields below)	<b>Explanatory comment</b>
Title:	Acculturative Stress and self-reported English Fluency in International Students in Ireland: A Quantitative Study.
Alternative Title:	Other titles for the work, e.g. translations or abbreviations.
Author:	Jean-Paul, Myriam
Student Number:	1478193
Supervisor(s):	Dr Anna Wolniak
Subject keywords:	Acculturative stress, English proficiency, Cultural distance, International students
Awarding Institution:	Name of the relevant institution awarding your qualification (HETAC, LJMU, University of Wales, etc.).

Author Affiliation:	School of Arts
Qualification Name:	BA (Hons) Social Science
Publisher	Name of the publisher if the thesis or any version of it has been/will be formally published.
Sponsors	Name of your sponsor if applicable (e.g. a corporate organisation that funded you financially or otherwise)
Date of Award	Transcripts-of-results release date in format: 2015-04
[yes / no]	Is your thesis compliant with 3 <sup>rd</sup> party copyright requirements (refer to Copyright Guide to learn more about copyright)?
Opt-out Application Form [yes / no]	Include this application on the CD-Rom if you do not want your thesis archived by the Library (see E-Thesis Submission Guide).
Restriction-of-Access Application Form [yes / no]	Include this application on the CD-Rom if your thesis should be restricted for open access via the Library for a defined period of time (see E-Thesis Submission Guide).
Supplementary material	Specify what kind of (if any) material accompanies your thesis (e.g. ppt., audio/video file etc.). Submit this material on the CD-Rom as a separate file.

Student signature: Myriam Jean-Paul

Date: 14/04/2015

## Appendix II

### **Deposit Agreement**

Please read this deposit agreement carefully. It contains important information that may apply to you and/or your work(s).

This agreement is BETWEEN: Dublin Business School (“The College”) AND:  
The Author (“Depositor”)

For the purposes of this Deposit Agreement, the expression “Work(s)” shall mean the document(s) being deposited including abstract, text, images and related data and stored in an electronic format. This Deposit Agreement applies to all Work(s) submitted to the open access institutional repository (the “Repository”) of the Dublin Business School Library at Dublin Business School, Dublin. By submitting your Work(s) to the Repository, you accept and agree to all of the provisions of this Deposit Agreement.

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2.2 Except for the rights and licences expressly granted herein, no other licences are granted by implication, estoppel or otherwise.

### **3. ADDITIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COLLEGE**

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3.2 While every care will be taken to preserve the Work(s), the College shall not be liable for loss or damage to the Work(s) or associated data while it is stored within the Repository.

### **4. DEPOSITOR DECLARATION**

The Depositor hereby declares and warrants to the College that:

- (a) it is the owner of the copyright in the whole Work(s) (including content and layout) or is duly authorised by the owner(s), or other holder(s) of these rights;
- (b) it has all necessary authority to enter into this Deposit Agreement and to grant the rights and licences clearly contemplated by this Deposit Agreement;
- (c) the Work(s) is/are original and does not, to the best of the Depositor's knowledge, information and belief, infringe the copyright or other rights of any other person or party, nor does it/do they contain libellous or defamatory material; and
- (d) neither the execution and delivery of this Deposit Agreement nor the performance by the Depositor of any of its obligations hereunder, nor the consummation of any of the transactions contemplated hereby will to the best of the Depositor's knowledge,

information and belief, violate or conflict with any agreement to which the Depositor is a party or may otherwise be bound.

## **5. GENERAL**

5.1 Any questions in relation to this Deposit Agreement should be directed to the library [Esource@dbs.ie](mailto:Esource@dbs.ie).

5.2 This Deposit Agreement shall be governed by the laws of Ireland.

Please sign this deposit agreement electronically and return it to the Library [Esource@dbs.ie](mailto:Esource@dbs.ie) for filing, and keep a copy for your own file.

Signature: Myriam Jean-Paul

Date: 14/04/2015

DBS School: School of Arts

Contact details: [myriamjeanpaul@live.ie](mailto:myriamjeanpaul@live.ie)

## Appendix III

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Dear Participant,

Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking your valuable time to fill this questionnaire. I am a Social Science Degree student at DBS about to complete my final year. All final year students enrolled in this programme are required to submit a final year research project. This study is concerned about how international students adapt in Ireland.

Please answer each section as honestly as you can, do not spend too long thinking about each question as there are no right or wrong answers. Any information that you give will remain anonymous, you are not required to write your name anywhere on this survey. All of the information you will provide is crucial and valuable in this research and some of it may be personal, therefore I would like to assure you that the data are anonymous and they will be handled with extreme caution and retained in a strict and confidential environment.

I hope you find this interesting, and I would like to thank you in advance for your time and co-operation.

If you require any further information concerning this research, please contact me at the email address below Myriam Jean-Paul. Email: [myriamjeanpaul@live.ie](mailto:myriamjeanpaul@live.ie) or my supervisor, Dr Anna Wolniak at [anna.wolniak@dbs.ie](mailto:anna.wolniak@dbs.ie)

#### Please complete the following demographic information.

- What is your age: [18-30] [31-43] [44-65+]
- What is your gender: Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_
- What is your nationality? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long have you been living in Ireland? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Please tick the appropriate box.

- What is your present level of English fluency? Very high [ ] high [ ] average [ ] low [ ] very low [ ]
- How comfortable are you communicating in English? Very comfortable [ ] comfortable [ ] fine [ ]  
Not comfortable [ ] very uncomfortable [ ]
- How often do you communicate in English? Always [ ] usually [ ] often [ ] seldom [ ] never [ ]

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with them by circling the appropriate number to the right of the statement as follows:

1 = strongly agree

2 = agree

3 = not sure

4 = disagree

5 = strongly disagree

- |    |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | Homesickness bothers me.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2  | I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new foods.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3  | I am treated differently in social situations.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4  | Others are sarcastic toward my cultural values.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5  | I feel nervous to communicate in English.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6  | I feel sad living in unfamiliar surroundings.                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7  | I fear for my personal safety because of my different cultural background. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8  | I feel intimidated to participate in social activities.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9  | Others are biased toward me.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | I feel guilty to leave my family and friends behind.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | Many opportunities are denied to me.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | I feel angry that my people are considered inferior here.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13	Multiple pressures are placed upon me after migration.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I feel that I receive unequal treatment.	1	2	3	4	5
15	People show hatred toward me nonverbally.	1	2	3	4	5
16	It hurts when people don't understand my cultural values.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I am denied what I deserve.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I frequently relocate for fear of others.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I feel low because of my cultural background.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Others don't appreciate my cultural values.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I miss the people and country of my origin.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new cultural values.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I feel that my people are discriminated against.	1	2	3	4	5
24	People show hatred toward me through actions.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I feel that my status in this society is low due to my cultural background.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I am treated differently because of my race.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I feel insecure here.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I don't feel a sense of belonging (community).	1	2	3	4	5
29	I am treated differently because of my colour.	1	2	3	4	5

- 30 I feel sad to consider my people's problems. 1 2 3 4 5
- 31 I generally keep a low profile due to fear. 1 2 3 4 5
- 32 I feel some people don't associate with me because of my ethnicity. 1 2 3 4 5
- 33 People show hatred toward me verbally. 1 2 3 4 5
- 34 I feel guilty that I am living a different lifestyle here. 1 2 3 4 5
- 35 I feel sad leaving my relatives behind. 1 2 3 4 5
- 36 I worry about my future for not being able to decide whether to stay  
here or to go back. 1 2 3 4 5

If you are concerned with or affected by any of the raised issues please do not hesitate to contact the following organisations: Acting International Student Services Officer. Lucia Zhang

Tel: 01-4170603 Email: [intlservices@dbs.ie](mailto:intlservices@dbs.ie)

COS - Irish Council for International Students, 41 Morehampton Road, Dublin 4, Ireland

Tel: 353-1-660-5233 || Fax: 353-1-668-2320 || E-mail: [office@icosirl.ie](mailto:office@icosirl.ie)

I would once again like to thank you for taking part in this study and would remind you that all information given here will remain anonymous. If you would like to know more about this study, please do not hesitate in contacting me at the email address printed on the front of this booklet.

Myriam Jean-Paul