

Educational Needs of Foreign Secondary Students and its Impediment in Malaysia: Teacher's Perspective

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Abstract

The enrollment of the international students in secondary school education in Malaysia has increased significantly in the last few years. This qualitative study involved the observation of the international students' skills by their teacher in terms of academic and socio-cultural obstacles. The method of data collection employed was face to face semi-structured interviews. Findings showed that international students experienced academic obstacles, challenges, cultural modification and social isolation. Academic obstacles and challenges that they faced include communication with teacher and classmates. Therefore, international students should be helped with their problem of social isolation by involving them in various group activities. Culturally, international students had to adjust to the different methods of thinking and learning in Malaysia. In order to overcome these challenges, students have to accept the resources and assistance from the teacher.

Keywords: teaching, obstacles, academic, social, culture, challenges, international, foreign, students

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Introduction

Malaysia is regarded as very committed in providing education to its people in order to achieve the aim of ensuring completion of secondary schooling until higher education (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and, 2012).

Teaching has existed since ancient time. It has also been mentioned in many books that education is indispensable and have contributed in the development of culture and civilization during the Renaissance. During this time, the teaching was focussed on goals that we are no longer concerned any more. Most of them were concerned in the human's problem of teaching the powerful elite or in organizing the clergymen (Hazelkorn, 2015). However, today education has become an industry and has a different aim altogether. In many countries, international students represent a huge economic investment and international relations between countries (Institute of International, 2010).

However, several international students face a lot of challenges as they endeavor to achieve higher education outside their countries (Özturgut & Murphy, 2009).

Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to analyse the current situation of the international students in Malaysia and the barriers that they experienced, since this country affects their education negatively especially with regards to academic, social and culture. The study also hopes to discover the obstacles which the international students face during their study in Malaysia.

Therefore, this study is founded on the current situation of the international students' behaviors and reactions.

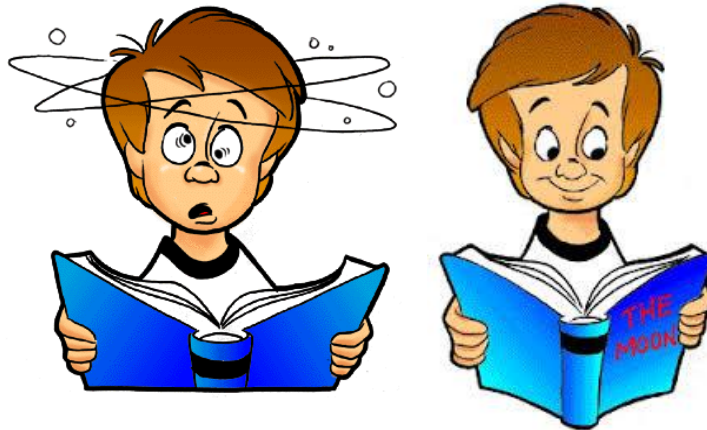


Figure 1: (a) Confused student, (b) Assimilated student

Literature Review

There are several elements impacting students to select international education. For example, lack of learning a higher education specially in Asia (Padlee, Kamaruddin, & Baharun, 2010). Several studies discover the challenges and the obstacles which were faced the international students during their study in high school. These challenges and obstacles involved languages, academic, culture, complications during communication and misunderstanding. It can also include feeling of isolation, anxiety, social experiences, loneliness, lacking of accommodation and adapting to one's daily life (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011). The main reason why the international students stay away from their classmates is because they are not getting along with the new culture and that is the basic obstacle which make the students do not interact with the local students (Choo & Singh, 2013). Cultural familiarity unintentionally impacts the quality of communication between international and national students inside and outside the classroom walls (Brown, 2009).

According to (Perumal all names et al.), it was reported that the challenges of the intercultural communication was faced the international students during studying in Malaysia. Language and culture may influence the interaction among foreign students, since they faced challenges with their classmates outside and inside the class.

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In many phases, international students see the isolation and loneliness during their studying. A study that involved 900 international students found that they lived at a fundamental level of stress, that is perceived as cultural shock, perceived discrimination and miscommunication (Russell, Rosenthal, & Thomson, 2010). The author Russell added that the teacher has to think how to help the international students. The teacher has to focus on the changing in the environment in order to be remove the differences that the international students face such as origin culture language, race, age and level of education. additionally, teacher should concentrates firstly on the academic setting like language, because language is regarded as one of the greatest academic matters which assists international students alot.

The role of self-efficacy and social care on international students' adjustment is significance because international students meet numerous cultural and academic challenges especially when they are in Malaysia since it a multi-ethnic and multicultural country. Considering these, astudy examined the relationship between self-efficacy, social support, and psychological adjustment of international students in Malaysia (Yusoff, 2011).

Method

The purpose of this study was to grasp the issue of alteration which the international students faced when studying in Malaysia. This study used qualitative research method because it focuses on the influence of culture, social, and academic obstacles.

Participants

One teacher was identified as the participant of the study to share the international students' needs when they were studying in Malaysia. Therefore, the interview was based on his perspective and his experience with the students. The obvious role of the teacher allowed the researcher to achieve and complete the goals of the research rapidly.

Data Collection

The type of data collection involved in this study was face to face semi-structured interview. The purpose of interview is to grasp the teacher's perspective rather than generalizing according to students' behavior. The

significance of interview method is to provide opportunities to the researcher to discover the obstacles. The interview involved a teachers at ISKL international school of Kuala Lumpur with The interview took around 3 hours of audiotaped. The questions of the interview were linked to the students' needs and obstacles that the students experienced. Some questions were asked because of specific answers so the interviewer inspire new questions through the teacher's answer. The interview was conducted in English language, and was transcribed immediately after the interview finished. The reflection and notes of the researcher were organized to compare with the analysis of the interview transcripts.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was basically inductive and directed by the researcher, while individual interview was transcribed and reviewed again. The information was coded through the procedure of open coding, and also analyzed the themes and categories of the interview transcribe. These themes and categories were generated from the data.

Findings and Discussion

Findings revealed that the international students faced various challenges in Malaysia. They have to adapt to the community which they are in and get used to the new environment that they were engaged in. This adaptation should be applied to schools, members of society and the society as a whole. Findings of the study indicate five, which are teacher interaction, language obstruction, isolation from local students, miscommunication and reaction against international student. The five categories then were collapsed into 3 themes of this study namely, academic, social, and cultural obstacles as it can be seen in figure (2).

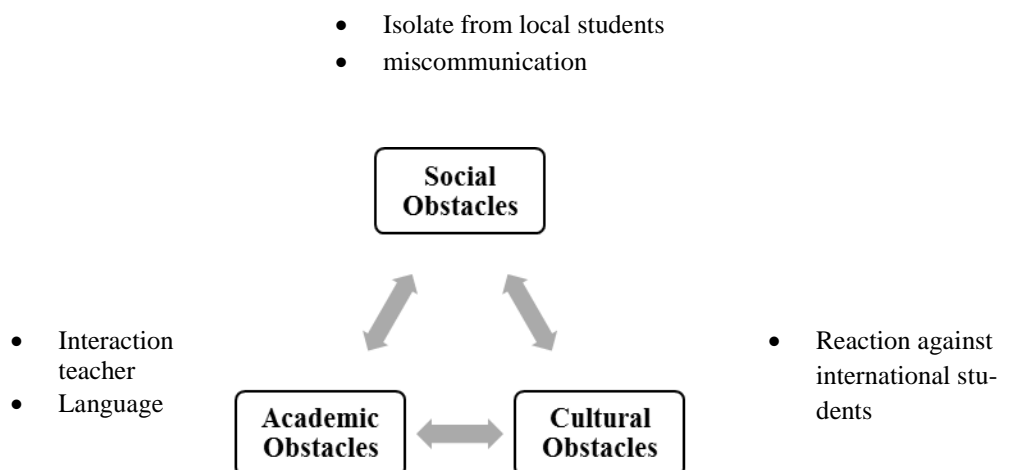


Figure (2) Research Findings

Academic Obstacles

Teacher was concerned to clarify the key elements of the obstacles which the students faced. The teacher also provided the interviewer more explanation about their needs. Additionally, the teacher mentioned that the students suffered but they did not complain about their language difficulties during their communication with the teacher.

Social Obstacles

International students faced many difficulties not only in school but also in social life, since they dealt and adjust living in a different community. In fact, the tradition generally differs from one country to another, which is why the international students miscommunicate with their classmates. Different tradition also make the students unfamiliar with the new environment. They were afraid to behave like they always do in their country, because certain behaviours have different meanings in other countries. Students felt lonely because they did not make friends, especially since many local students acted strangely towards them international students. Particularly by avoiding or not including the international students in their group activities and discussions.

Cultural Obstacles

The teacher mentioned that there were various religions and races in the classroom so the international students may have difficulty to engage with a new culture because each country has its own culture. As being in a new culture, perhaps the students need to adjust to various values and learn to understand them in order to fit in the new environment and culture.

Conclusion

This study discovered that the adaptation which the international students should apply during their residency in Malaysia based on the the three obstacles. The adaptation includes social, academic and cultural adjustment.

The method of the study was qualitative and it involved one female teacher from Malaysia. The obstacles and challenges pushed the international students to find solutions to their problems. This strategy requires time, effort and a lot of support from various parties. In fact, the school needs to concentrate on the challenges and the obstacles faced by foreign students and provide more support to them.

To study abroad has several challenges, and the teacher's experience is a main source of evidence in this issue since she was able to observe the situation of the international students. The study recommends that schools should provide students the support and the services that may enable them to identify and overcome their challenges and obstacles. This could also assist other international students to avoid being in similar situation. The school plays a key role in supporting the students, since it has the ability to prevent them from facing any social, cultural and academic problems of adjustment.

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