

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA  
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

MASTER'S THESIS

**THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS OF BUSINESS STUDENTS ABROAD:  
THE CASE OF INCOMING STUDENTS AT FELU**

Ljubljana, May 2016

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## **AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT**

The undersigned Mendi Marc, a student at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, (hereinafter: FELU), declare that I am the author of the master's thesis entitled The adjustment process of business students abroad: the case of incoming students at FELU, written under supervision of assoc. prof. Robert Kaše, PhD.

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## INTRODUCTION

Owing to the rapid rise of global economy, companies are required to send their employees to work on international assignments in a foreign country (Firth, Bradley, & Kwang Hyun, 2014). Internationalization of business environment results in constantly increasing number of employees who travel across cultural borders on regular basis (Griffith et al., 2012).

Employees who are send on expatriation are expected to look for new business opportunities, conquer new business knowledge or even to share their existing knowledge and experience in a subsidiary (Firth, Chen, Kirkman, & Kim, 2014; Takeuchi, 2010). Moreover, managers are often sent on expatriation when global business is expanded and developed with mergers, acquisitions or strategic alliances. Global managers are in these cases responsible to implement globalization strategies and realize business benefits that arise from integration of different business processes. Expatriate managers who are expected to integrate different business processes need to find a way to join cultural values, which are often not easily joined. Therefore, expatriates who are send to international assignment need to address and successfully deal with differences that arise not only from different national cultures but also from different corporate cultures (Trompenaars & Nijhoff Asser, 2010).

Although international assignments have become frequent and necessary for companies, there are still a great number of assignments that are not successfully finished (Takeuchi, Lepak, Marinova, & Yun, 2007; Gabel-Shemueli & Dolan, 2011). Therefore, there is a growing need to attract and develop talented expatriates, who are able to successfully accomplish international tasks (Cole & McNulty, 2011). Unsuccessfully accomplished international assignments do not create only financial costs but may also lead to business disruption and human capital loses. Nevertheless, unrealized business opportunities, poor client relations, problems with local unions and damaged reputation could also be results of failed international assignments (Farh, Bartol, Shapiro, & Shin, 2010). Since unsuccessfully finished international assignments can be extremely costly, it is very important to understand, why some expatriates have so many difficulties with adjusting to a foreign environment (Takeuchi, 2010). The key issue that firms need to address is to understand better what differentiates successful and unsuccessful expatriate assignment.

The increased dynamics in globalization also results in another constantly growing number of expatriates which are international students. Studying abroad has become very common for students, who generally asses their study abroad experience as valuable and positive in several aspects (Van Hoof & Verbeteen, 2005). Students who engage in international study may acquire or improve a number of skills that are extremely valued in corporations, as a result of an international study experience. Besides foreign language skills there are also other visible benefits stemming from this kind of expatriation (Di Pietro, 2013). Firstly, exposure to foreign cultures increases cross cultural intelligence and cultural sensitivity, both of which are very important in nowadays's diverse workforce. Companies constatly look for applicants

who are able to communicate and interact with individuals of different countries and cultures. Doorbar (2003) study shows that employers consider candidates with international study experience to have strong interpersonal skills. Moreover, expatriate students are more open to change. All this facts allow them to rapidly adapt to new situations and expatriate students could be viable solutions for international companies seeking for suitable candidates for international assignments.

My research will be conducted in collaboration with foreign students that decided to carry a part of their studies abroad and chose their host school to be Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana (hereinafter: FELU).

The wider scope of masters' thesis is from the field of management dealing with cross cultural management, specifically with expatriation and adjustment process of expatriates. My research model will be based on Black's adjustment model (Black & Stephens, 1989), although it will be adapted for the study context.

The majority of scholars claimed that adjustment process occurs in four phases, in a shape of U-curve (Oberg, 1960; Black, 1988). Therefore, the main research question, I would like to answer is whether international students also go through these phases and what is the trajectory of their adjustment process. In addition, I will also try to identify moderators that could affect the adjustment process.

The main purpose of my master's thesis is to deepen the understanding of expatriates adjustment and moderators that influence trajectories of adjustment process. With this, I will be able to provide valuable insights for whereas schools or companies, dealing with expatriates.

In order to improve and enhance student's cross-cultural adjustment, it is crucial to deepen the understanding of the phases students go through and raise awareness about the influencing moderators. I also believe international involvement is very important for all business schools and providing quality services to international students is one of their pursuing goals. In addition providing crucial support to incoming international students would certainly improve students' perception of faculty's quality of service and consequently increase Faculty's international reputation. Finally, since international students share similar experience of international involvement as other corporate expatriates, all insights about adjustment process could also be valuable for companies.

Moderators will be divided into those which do not change throughout the time (cultural awareness, personality, language ability, previous international experience, existing knowledge of foreign culture, prior logistic support from the parent faculty, self-efficacy and similarity between home and host culture) and those which are considered dynamic and change through out the time (logistic support provided by host faculty, number of influencing

interactions and relations with other exchange students, students of their own nationality, host country nationalities, relation with tutor, emotional and informational support received from exchange students and host country nationalities).

There are two main research questions I will try to answer on with my research:

What is the most common trajectory of student's adjustment process?

What are moderators that have either positive or negative effect on student's adjustment process?

My master's thesis consists of five chapters. In the first chapter I will define expatriate adjustment process and its phases. In the second chapter I will focus on the most important moderators, which influence all stages of adjustment process. Third chapter will be a presentation of international study programs as a contextual part of research. I will also concentrate on student's motivation for the international study and the affects aligned with studying abroad. Methodology of my master's thesis will be presented in the fourth chapter. This chapter introduces the descriptive statistics, measures and results. Finally, in the fifth chapter I will discuss my findings, the theoretical and practical contributions of my master's thesis. I will also present its limitations and try to give recommendations for improvement.

## **1 THE EXPATRIATE'S ADJUSTMENT PROCESS**

The first chapter of the master's thesis is devoted to defining the construct of culture, expatriate's adjustment, its phases, dimensions and facets. In order to define the constructs mentioned above, I will present and discuss the main theoretical findings proposed by several scholars.

### **1.1 Culture and its dimensions**

In order to get a more profound understanding of the concept of cross-cultural adjustment, I believe it is important to firstly introduce the concept of culture.

Hofstede (2001, p.9) defines culture as a collective mental programming, which is visible in symbols, values, heroes and traditions. Consequently, culture is what separates the representatives of one culture from another. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) on the other hand believe that culture distinguishes people in very predictable and specific ways. According to them culture is the way of thinking and it is composed of different values and beliefs.

Moreover, according to Hofstede (2001, 2009) each culture is composed out of six cultural dimensions. These dimensions are: power distance, individualism versus collectivism,

masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation versus short term normative orientation and indulgence versus restraint.

### **1.1.1 Power distance**

The following dimension describes us the degree to which the less powerful members of society are willing to accept and expect that power in society is not distributed equally. The main problem described with this dimension is the fact how a society accepts and handles inequalities among people. Societies that exhibit higher degrees of power distance are more willing to accept a strict hierarchical order in which every individual has a place and there is no need of further explanation and justification of his role. If society exhibits lower power distance, people are reluctant towards equality and expect explanation and justification of inequalities.

### **1.1.2 Individualism versus Collectivism**

Societies that exhibit higher degrees of individualism are defined as societies in which individuals do not knit strong social ties, but rather take care of only themselves and their close relatives. On the other hand in collectivistic societies people prefer to engage in strong social nets, where people are willing to take care and look after one another. People with stronger collectivistic dimension expect loyalty and help from other members of their social net.

### **1.1.3 Masculinity versus Femininity**

Societies who tend to line to masculinity side of this dimension are prone to achievement, heroism and expect their work and success to be rewarded with material possessions. Representatives of these societies are very competitive. On the other hand femininity societies believe and stand for cooperation, caring for the weak ones, and modesty.

### **1.1.4 Uncertainty Avoidance**

The following dimension describes the degree to which individuals that represent a certain society feel comfortable or uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. The main question of this dimension is, whereas we can try to control the future or is all useless and we should let things develop their own way. If a society exhibits higher degrees of uncertainty avoidance members of this society are more intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. On the other hand members of societies who tend to be less intolerant express a more relaxed behavior. In this cultures practice counts more than principles.



### **1.1.5 Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation**

The main issue of the following dimension lies in linking the past and the future. Cultures that score high on this dimension developed approach by which they encourage efforts and challenges of nowadays as a way to prepare for the future. On the other hand, societies scoring low on this dimension maintain time-honoured traditions and look at changes with suspicion.

### **1.1.6 Indulgence versus Restraint**

Societies that line towards indulgence dimension allow many free gratifications of human drive which results in allowing an individual to enjoy life and have fun. Restrained societies on the other hand tend to suppress gratification of basic human needs and try to regulate human behavior by establishing strict social norms.

## **1.2 The adjustment process of expatriates**

The most common definition of adjustment process proposed by several scholars refers to the extent of psychological comfort that individual experiences towards a foreign environment (Black, 1988; Black & Stephens, 1989; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). In other words it is also the degree of fit and familiarity that expatriate has with different aspects of foreign culture, such as food, climate, shopping and housing conditions (Black, 1988),

For this reason, the concept of general expatriates adjustment most often refers to the term of cross-cultural adjustment. As Hemmasi and Downes (2013) noticed, cross-cultural adjustment could also be referred as adaptation, acculturation or assimilation.

Trompenaars and Nijhoff Asser (2010) on the other hand, claimed that individuals, who come from different cultures, perceive the world differently. Cross cultural interaction exposes their existing beliefs and puts a question mark on applied patterns of behavior. Consequently, cross cultural interaction can result in a feeling of frustration and disorientation of an individual.

When a person is required to function in a novel, foreign environment cross-cultural adjustment process occurs. Trompenaars and Nijhoff Asser (2010) also explained that, when a person is immersed in a new culture, his beliefs, values and worldview are challenged. Since different cultures have their own desired and acknowledged patterns of behavior, expatriates are forced to adjust their existing way of thinking and behaving.

Lin (2004) on the other hand claims that cross-cultural adaptation does not necessarily mean that the individual completely changes his behavior according to new culture and its

standards. It only requires a sufficient adjustment that enables a smooth stay in a foreign country.

The concept »expatriate adjustment« was conceptualized, operationalized, and confirmed by Black and colleagues as a three-dimensional concept. Black (1988) and Black and Stephens (1989) believe that there are three main facets regarding the cross-cultural adjustment process. They differentiated between general, work and interaction adjustment.

### **1.3 Phases of the adjustment process**

Lysgaard (1955) was the first scholar who determined that adjustment occurs in a sequence of events, which can be generalized to a curvilinear trend in U-shaped curve. Moreover, other scholars (Oberg, 1960; Black, 1988; Black & Stephens, 1989) also claimed that adjustment process occurs in four following phases in form of U-curve.

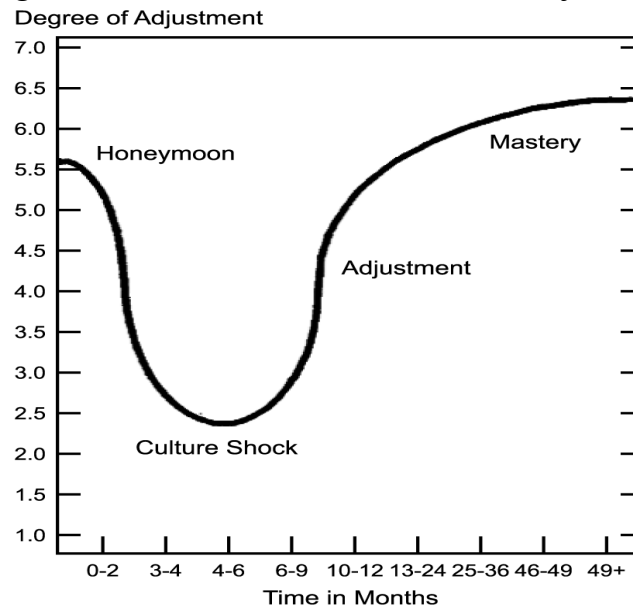
The first phase, also known as the honeymoon phase, occurs in the first weeks after arrival to novel country. In the honeymoon phase expatriates are still under the fascinating impression of everything new. They very likely have not discovered yet, that their behaviors are inappropriate in a new culture and that they will need to adjust their current habits. The honeymoon effect is consequently combined out of the newness of the foreign culture and unawareness that existing behavior is inconsistent with norms and values of host culture.

In the second phase, expatriate has already received the negative feedback regarding his behavior, but still does not know what desired and appropriate behaviors are. In this phase it is quite common, that expatriate experiences cultural shock. Oberg (1960) defined cultural shock as a feeling of anxiety which occurs because individual does not recognize signs and symbols that are an integral part of the communication mode in the novel culture. These signs and symbols consist of thousands of gestures, from how to shake hands, address someone or even what does shopping looks like. Cultural shock is also result of homesickness and feeling of rejection (Smalley, 1963). Adler (1987) on the other hand claimed that cultural shock is actually crisis of personality and identity. He stressed, that in order to adjust, expatriates need to change their personality. Moreover, Adler (1987) emphasized importance of interactions between individual and environment. He believed that new culture and environment itself are not the main leverages of the upset but the cause for expatriate's feeling of disability sees as a result of interaction between individual and his contact with foreign environment.

When expatriates learn more about new, appropriate behaviors, language and customs of a foreign culture, third phase occurs. Expatriates behavior is not yet completely proficient, but they already know their »way around«. This phase is called adjustment phase.

In the last phase, expatriate's adjustment is mostly complete. Expatriate has already acquired appropriate behaviors and knows how to deal with cultural differences without the feeling of anxiety (Black, 1988).

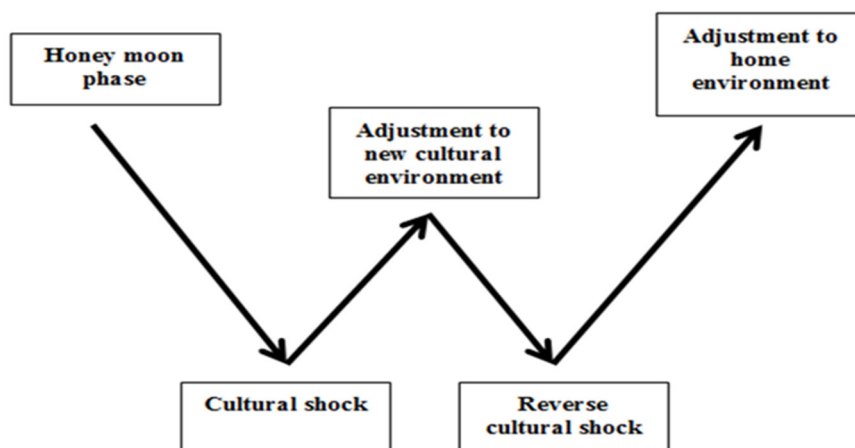
*Figure 1. The U-Curve of Cross-Cultural Adjustment*



Source: J. S. Black & M. Mendenhall, *The U-Curve Adjustment Hypothesis Revisited: A Review and Theoretical Framework*, 1991.

Lysgaard's model (1955) of the U-curve is known as the classical model of adjustment process, but later on, authors such as Zeller and Mosier (1993) started to add a new dimension, known as a reverse cultural shock. Reverse cultural shock happens after the mastery stage, when expatriates return to their home country. Raschio (1987) summarized the main problems correlated with re-entry experienced by international students, as problems of entering a new society and getting used to a different lifestyle, personal conflict arising from awareness of changes in themselves and most importantly physical and cultural differences between foreign and parent country.

*Figure 2. The W-Curve Adjustment Process*



Source: J.W. Zeller & R. Mosier, *Culture Shock and the First Year Experience*, 1993.

## **1.4 Black's dimensions of adjustment**

In order to measure student's adjustment, I will adapt Black's adjustment questionnaire (Black, 1988), which was designed to measure employee's degree of adjustment on their international assignments. Black (1988) defined three main dimensions of adjustment in work role transitions. These three primary dimensions are: degree, mode and facet.

Degree of adjustment is a concept that could be perceived in a subjective or objective manner. If we discuss degree of adjustment in a subjective way, we intent to measure degree to which expatriate feels comfortable in his new work role. Objectively, degree of adjustment is perceived as degree to which expatriate can successfully cope with new work responsibilities, which is also demonstrated through his work performance. The degree of adjustment in the objective manner was most commonly measured trough self-reported questionnaires about general, work and interaction facets of adjustment, described in previous section.

Mode of adjustment is according to Black (1988) and Nicholson (1984) defined as a manner in which expatriate adjusts his behavior according to his new role. Expatriates can focus on two main modifications. They can either change their identity and existing behavior, their new working role or even both.

Nicholson (1984) divided four different modes of adjustment: replication, absorption, determination and exploration. Replication mode is the mode in which expatriate changes only few patterns of his usual behavior in order to be in accordance with his new role and expectations regarding his responsibilities. When expatriate uses mode of absorption, his strategy is to make as little modifications of his new working role and instead rather focuses on modifying his identity and usual behavior. The determination mode is according to Nicholson mode, where individual does not change his identity or ways of acting, but rather moderates his new working role. The last mode of adjustment, exploration, is when expatriate modifies both, his identity and also his new working role.

## **1.5 Facets of adjustment**

Black (1988) and Black and Stephens (1989) suggest that there are three main facets of adjustment: general, work and interaction.

General adjustment refers to degree of psychological comfort that expatriate feels regarding the host cultural environment. The main components of cultural environment are weather conditions, food and living conditions.

Work adjustment is aligned with degree of psychological comfort that expatriate has to the new work role, working standards, values, and expectations about his work performance. To

summarize, work adjustment is about how comfortable expatriates feel regarding their new working roles and new responsibilities.

Finally, interaction adjustment is about psychological comfort related to interpersonal communication and interactions with host country nationals. Does expatriate feels comfortable when he communicates and socializes with locals? Feeling comfortable in interactions with host country nationals is crucial for several reasons. One of the most recognized motives for this is the provision of informational and emotional support by host country nationals.

## **2 MODERATORS INFLUENCING EXPATRIATE'S ADJUSTMENT PROCESS**

In the following two sections I will present the most important moderators, which were confirmed to have an influence on expatriate's adjustment process. Moderators are also known as adjustment facilitating or adjustment inhibiting factors.

Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall (1992) argued that there are three main categories of factors, which seem to have an impact on adjustment. Therefor, the main variables influencing cross-cultural adjustment are: individual, organizational and contextual factors.

Individual antecedents are: the individual's desire to adjust (Tung, 1981), prior international experience (Black, 1988), a person's social relation skills orientation (Ross, 2008), and individual's self-confidence (Jones, 1986).

Organizational factors are according to Black (1988) related to working variables such as role clarity, role novelty, role discretion, role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload, factors related to organizational support (co-workers, supervisors, parent company support) and factors related to cross-cultural preparation.

Finally, contextual factors include the duration of expatriation and organization's logistic support (Black & Stephens, 1989). Waxin and Panaccio (2005) noticed that one of the moderators influencing cross-cultural adjustment is also the expatriate's nationality and country of origin.

Similar to Black et al. (1992), Hechanova, Beehr and Christiansen (2003) divided influencing variables into four categories: individual, work related, environmental and family related. On the other hand, Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer and Luk (2005) in their study confirmed five variables, which influence cross-cultural adjustment. These variables are: anticipatory, individual, job, organization and nonworking.

In order to get a more profound understanding of cross-cultural adaptation it is important to introduce and discuss social learning perspective of adjustment. Bandura (1977) was the first scholar who examined the cross-cultural learning process and found that social learning theory (hereinafter: SLT) is also relevant to cross-cultural adjustment. The core of this theory lies in conclusion that learning is a process of observation and reproduction of behaviors and is strongly related to the degree of individuals' motivation.

Bandura (1977) stated that individuals generally tend to learn with the use of two distinctive methods. Firstly, their learning could be based on the consequences of their actions. Secondly, they could also learn and modify their patterns of behavior according to their observations of other people's behaviors. As Bandura claimed, there are four main components compound in SLT: attention, retention, reproduction and incentives. Attention is the first component of SLT and it is necessary, because if someone wants to learn something, this new potential knowledge or behavior must draw person's attention. The second component, retention, is the state when person encodes and memorizes new behaviors. Reproduction is the third component that usually follows and involves the translation of symbolic representations into active behaviors. Finally, incentives usually correlate with different motivational processes.

When we discuss incentives regarding cross-cultural adjustment it is important to distinguish between two expectancies. The first type is the individual self-efficacy, which Bandura (1977) described as the degree to which a person believes in himself and in success in execution of his behaviors. Higher levels of self-efficacy result in more persistent behaviors and consequently, individuals are more willing to learn and imitate new patterns of behavior.

Cultural self-efficacy is as Chen, Kirkman, Kim, Farh and Tangirala (2010) believe a person's confidence that they are able to effectively function in a culturally diverse environment. The second type of expectancies is according to Bandura (1977) outcome expectancies. Outcome expectancies are person's beliefs that his behavior will result in desired outcomes. If we put Bandura's SLT in cross-cultural context, we can observe, that when a person is exposed to new environment, he needs to adjust his existing behavior according to new culture expectations. Indeed, person needs to learn and embrace new patterns of behavior in all main phases of adjustment process, starting at honeymoon phase and ending in mastery phase. The framework of SLT also leads to better understanding of individuals' factors that influence adjustment process (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). They also claimed that individuals' characteristics such as fluency in communication, desire to establish new relationships, tolerance for ambiguity and ethnocentricity might be correlated to adjustment process.

When looking at expatriate's adjustment, we should keep in mind that, adjustment is a process that happens in time. Consequently, I believe, it is important to look at the moderators, from two different perspectives. In my study, I will examine two main moderator types according to their influence throughout the time. Firstly, the preliminary moderators are those that do not change over time as for example level of knowledge of English language, previous

international experience, pre-departure training self-efficacy, cross cultural intelligence and personality traits. Secondly, the dynamic moderators that might change through out entire process of adjustment as for example emotional and logistic support from host organization or number of interactions with host country nationalities.

## **2.1 Time-invariant moderators**

### **2.1.1 Organizational factors**

#### **2.1.1.1 Pre departure training**

According to Waxin and Panaccio (2005) cross-cultural training is more necessary for those who do not have much existing international experience. Mendenhall and Oddou (1986) defined cross-cultural training as teaching individuals from one culture how to interact correctly and effectively with representatives of another culture.

Tung (1981) was the first one who specified five different training programs: didactic training, culture assimilator, language training, sensitivity training and field experience. She believes that cross-cultural training should be adapted in accordance with two main factors: cultural distance and new working role. The greater is the dissimilarity between two cultures, the bigger is the cultural distance and consequently, more extended pre-departure training should be considered. On the other hand, new working role is related to the number of social interactions, that expatriate will be having with host country nationals. If number of expected interactions is high, this requires more extensive pre-departure training.

Black and Mendenhall (1990) believe, cross-cultural training has a positive impact on a person's feeling of self-confidence and is crucial for development of cultural specific and appropriate behaviors. They also claimed that cross-cultural training enables expatriates to grow and sustained better social relations with host country's nationals.

Waxin and Panaccio (2005) conducted a research regarding cross-cultural training and concluded that, cross-cultural training facilitates all of the existing facets of expatriates' adjustment, especially when we want to facilitate general and interaction adjustment. Many organizations are of opinion that linguistic training is the only important aspect of pre departure preparation. Finally, pre departure training programs require additional financial founding, that organizations tend to minimize. Putting cross-cultural training in the masters' thesis context it is unrealistic to expect business schools will finance complex pre departure training for outgoing students. Although providing general information about host country and partner institution could be incorporated in shorter training programs such as didactic training or cultural assimilator.

As I already mention, pre departure training programs carry vast financial costs and that why it is not realistic to expect incoming students were engaged in such programs. Although, we could assume, that there are some students who possess specific knowledge about the Slovenian culture, either they self-learned about it, either parent faculty equipped them with relevant information. In order to provide answer to the question whereas possessing knowledge about Slovenian culture before arrival could positively impact the adjustment process, I will ask students to assess the degree to which they knew Slovenian culture in terms of language, diet, eating habits, habits and customs of local people, religious orientation, working practice, the educational system, level of development of the Slovenia, living conditions, cultural values, legal, economic system, arts, crafts and rules for expressing non-verbal behavior.

However, we should take into consideration, that better language ability and better understanding of foreign culture could be a result of pre departure logistic and informational support. In my master's thesis I will assess degree to which students knew Slovenian culture before their arrival and look for the possible correlations between existing stock of knowledge about Slovenian culture and trajectory of adjustment.

#### **2.1.1.2 Organizational support from parent organization**

According to Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley (1999), organizational support factors are positive predictors of successful adjustment. They found supportive organizational cultures positively related to effective incorporation in foreign cultures. Prior logistic support is most commonly provided by parent organization. Parent organization should be prime initial source of information about new environment and destination country. It is also responsible for support on housing issues, relocation, schooling of children and spousal employment (Guzzo, Noonan, & Elron, 1994). As Shaffer et al. (1999) claimed, home-office support and pre-departure training are helping expatriates to foster their success in accomplishment of international tasks. According to Kraimer, Wayne and Jaworski (2001) logistic support enables expatriates' more quality life in host country. Moreover, they also found that logistic support from parent organization is positively related to both, general and interaction adjustment.

#### **2.1.2 Individual factors**

Black (1990) divided individual factors to following categories: self-efficacy, relation skills and perception skills. He concluded that higher relational and perceptual skills such as willingness to communicate, cultural flexibility and social orientation, are acting as facilitating factors in person's adjustment process. Other authors, on the other hand emphasize distinct individual factors such as language ability, previous international experience, cross cultural awareness and cross cultural intelligence (Shaffer et al., 1999; Church, 1982; Takeuchi, 2010; Chen et al., 2010).



### 2.1.2.1 Personal characteristics

According to several authors, personal characteristics also play crucial role in adjusting process. For instance, individuals with adventurous and entrepreneurial personalities are more inclined to expatriation (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bollino, 2012). On the other hand, ethnocentricity that is defined as believing that your culture is superior to other cultures is a characteristic which can cause maladjustment (Church, 1982). Individual's open mindedness and self-confidence also seem to enhance higher degrees of adjustment (Black, 1988).

Selmer and Luring (2010) found that younger self-initiated expatriates are motivated for expatriation mostly by career opportunities and money. These expatriates are usually less risk adverse than older ones and usually have rather adventurous personality. Shaffer et al. (2012) claimed individuals with strong personal and familial ties are less likely to be interested in self-initiated expatriation. On the other hand, they believe individuals who are willing to take personal challenges in order to develop, are also more likely to become expatriates.

Van Vianen, De Pater, Kristof-Brown and Johnson (2004) believe cross cultural adjustment strongly relates to different values, since values are what differences cultures. Expatriates who show the ability and motivation to open to new values, behaviors and are keen to learn about different cultural values are more likely to adjust better. Schwartz (1992) described values as desirable goals that act as motivators in person's lives. He also believes personal values are trans-situational and drive people's attitude and their evaluation of other people and events. He also developed a theory about cross-cultural universals. Cross-cultural universals differ according to two dimensions: openness to change versus conservation and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence, along with ten specific values. These specific values are: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence and universalism.

One of the most commonly used measurements of personality traits is The Big Five test. The researchers responsible for completing findings on big five personality traits Costa, McCrae, Norman and Goldberg have discovered that most personality traits can be combined into five broad dimensions, never mind the language and cultural diversity. These five dimensions or factors have been defined as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The Big Five test uses bipolar adjectives which are correlated to specific dimension. Relating to findings of Caligiuri, Tarique and Jacobs (2001) and Van Vianen et al. (2004) openness to experience and sociability or extraversion are two main personal characteristics that are positively correlated to cross cultural adjustment.

Therefore, I will focus only on two dimensions proposed by The Big Five personality traits that are extraversion and openness to experience.

Extraversion trait is characterized by enthusiastic, energetic, sociable individuals. Extraverts enjoy interacting with other people, like to talk and often connect with external world. They do not engage in deep activities but rather focus on broadness of activities. On the other hand, introverts are less involved in social events and like to spend more time alone. They are also more reserved and need less motivation than extraverts.

Openness to experience, on the other side, is common for individuals who are intellectually curious, open to emotion and are more likely to engage in situations that are novel and different. They like to explore new things, also different cultures, are creative and tolerant.

#### 2.1.2.2 Previous international experience

Several authors claimed previous international experience is antecedent variable that has a positive impact on expatriate's adjustment process. They also believe international experience is a multidimensional concept and we need to differentiate between work and non-work domains. Work domain is related to existing work experience, while non-work domains are considered as travelling experience or studying in foreign country. Travelling to foreign countries reflects in cultural knowledge about different customs, norms and habits of other nations and is gained through observation of the host country inhabitants' behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, international experience has a time component, so it is important to take into the consideration the length of it (Goodman, Lawrence, Ancona, & Tushman, 2001). According to Selmer (2002) we need to differentiate between culture-specific and non-specific experience. If expatriate has existing international experience from country he is currently at, this is considered culture-specific experience. This form of experience is more valuable in comparison with existing experience from other countries. As Hechanova et al. (2003) claimed previous international experiences are one of facilitating factors of two facets of adjustment: interaction and work. Although Black (1988) suggests that not all expatriates with previous overseas experiences are always capable to transfer and use their existing cultural knowledge once they come to a novel country.

Since international experiences are considered as a multidimensional concept, I will try to evaluate the existing international experiences students have according to the duration, cultural specificity and the purpose of going abroad (travelling, studying, working).

#### 2.1.2.3 Cross-cultural awareness and Cultural Intelligence

Expatriates' adjustment is strongly associated with its ability to work in a multicultural environment. One of the most important competencies which play an important role in adjustment is cross-cultural awareness (Campinha-Bacote, 2002). Cross cultural awareness is strongly related to the concept of cross-cultural intelligence, yet their definitions are not exactly the same. Since both concepts are strongly related, I will combine the main findings of them and therefore present them in the same subchapter.

Baker (2008) describes cross-cultural awareness as the conscious understanding of foreign cultures and respect for traditions and norms prevailing in it. As Quape and Cantatore (2005) and Fraser and Zarkada-Frase (2002) claimed, cross-cultural awareness plays an important role especially in communication with people from other cultures, represents the core of cross-cultural communication and enables people to recognize that their existing picture of the world is not the only one. Moreover, it allows that people are aware of how different are the perspectives of situations, when people look at it through their culture lenses. Individuals who score high on cross-cultural awareness, try to look for answers of what is the meaning of particular behavior in culture. It also means that individual is respectful towards different cultural norms, habits and expectations. According to Baker (2008) cross-cultural awareness could increase when individual explores new culture, learns about its language, and analyzes different information gained from mass media such as movies, music and online media arriving from specific culture. Moreover he should be interested in getting to know cultural arts and crafts, so he gets all of the important information about the foreign culture.

Ang and Van Dyne (2008) defined cultural intelligence (hereinafter: CQ) as a multidimensional concept, composed out of four dimensions: cognitive CQ (stock of knowledge that individual has about economic and political environment in a specific culture), meta-cognitive CQ (the ability to perceive different cultural information and use these information as a working knowledge), behavioral CQ (ability to learn and use accepted and desired patterns of behavior of particular culture) and finally motivational CQ (individual's degree of intrinsic interest and self-efficacy in getting to know different cultures). When we consider cultural intelligence in terms of adjustment process, we have to distinguish between cognitive, meta-cognitive and behavioral dimensions that most commonly represent person's cross-cultural competency, whereas motivational dimension reflects person's cross-cultural motivation (Ang et al. 2007).

Ang and Van Dyne (2008) also presented four capabilities of cultural intelligence: CQ Drive (high level of interest, internal drive and motivation to adapt to different cultural environments), CQ Knowledge (understanding about similarities and differences among cultures), CQ Strategy (being able to plane in light of their cultural understanding) and CQ Action (knowing when to adapt and when not to adapt when engaging cross-culturally). Livermore (2013, p.7) similarly defines cultural intelligence as the capability to be effective across different cultural contexts-including national, ethnic, generational, organizational and other contexts. According to his findings, cultural intelligent people are not defined as people with knowledge about random cultural facts of different existing cultures, but rather as individuals who possess general understanding of cultural similarities and differences. People with CQ knowledge are according to him capable of understanding how culture influences person's thinking and behaving and that is what enables them to function better in cultural diverse environment.

Livermore (2013) also believes, that it is possible to improve cultural knowledge. He suggests that most convenient way to do that is by getting to know the main characteristics of ten cultural clusters. Cultural cluster is defined as a large cultural group that shares the same core patterns of thinking and behaving (Livermore, 2013, p.7). Countries and people coming from the same cultural cluster share common historical background, religion, cultural values, speak similar languages and are geographically close. Cultural clusters are not an exact division of all of the different cultures around the world but still, they fairly represent a quick overview of all global cultures (Livermore, 2013).

Cultural clusters were firstly introduced with the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (hereinafter: GLOBE) project, in which an international group of researchers examined cross-cultural leadership. With this research 62 different countries were categorized into ten geographic clusters (Cornelius & Ed, n. d.)

These clusters are:

- a. Anglo Cultures England, Australia, South Africa (white sample), Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, United States;
- b. Arab Cultures Algeria, Qatar, Morocco, Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman;
- c. Confucian Asia Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, China, Japan, Vietnam;
- d. Eastern Europe Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Serbia, Greece, Slovenia, Albania, Russia;
- e. Germanic Europe *Dutch-speaking* (Netherlands, Belgium and Dutch-speaking France), *German-speaking* (Austria, German-speaking Switzerland, Germany, South Tyrol, Liechtenstein);
- f. Latin America Costa Rica, Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina;
- g. Latin Europe France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland (French and Italian-speaking);
- h. Nordic Europe Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway;
- i. Southern Asia India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Turkey, Iran;
- j. Sub-Sahara Africa Namibia. Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa (Black Sample), Nigeria.

Each cultural cluster carries core information about people living in that cluster. Therefore, understanding main similarities and differences about ten cultural clusters is helpful in terms of handling different intercultural situations. The core of each cluster lies in its cultural value dimension.

By combining Hofstede's (1986) and McClelland (1985) findings, GLOBE leadership project researchers used nine cultural value definitions that are common for specific cultural cluster.

The nine cultural value dimensions are following: individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, cooperative-competitive, time orientation, context and being-doing.

However, stereotyping people on the basis of these clusters could be dangerous, since billions of people cannot be simply categorized into ten general clusters. Therefore, use of cultural clusters in terms of improving CQ knowledge is recommended, but cultural clusters need to be used with conscience, since they can only provide a general foundation for development of CQ knowledge (Livermore, 2013).

Ang and Van Dyne (2008) also discussed the four factors of cultural intelligence and found that there are correlations between scores of CQ motivation and CQ strategy and three facets of adjustment. According to their findings expatriates who score higher rates on CQ-motivation (are motivated to experience new cultures and believe are capable of good communication and interaction with foreigners) tend to cope better with adjustment to different cultural situations. Moreover, individuals who score high on CQ-behavior usually have better verbal and non-verbal capabilities, which help them in their communication with people from different cultural backgrounds and consequently feel better adjusted.

Since cultural intelligence is importantly associated with ability to adjust to new environment, I will look for the correlations between cultural intelligence of students and their adjustment. CQ will be measured with the 20-item, Four Factor Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by Ang and Van Dyne (2008).

#### 2.1.2.4 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the degree to which individuals believe they can be successful in execution of their behaviors. Moreover, individuals with higher self-efficacy are more persistent and more willing to learn and adapt to new roles and expectations of a host country. High self-efficacy could lead to higher willingness to experiment and try new behaviors. If an individual is more persistent in his willingness to learn and embrace new behaviors, he will have a better chance in exhibiting appropriate and desired behaviors. According to proposed findings, it can be summarized that high self-efficacy of individuals' has a facilitating effect on cross-cultural adjustment (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Chen et al., 2010).

#### 2.1.2.5 Language ability

Selmer (2006) believes fluency in communication is one of the essential skills for expatriates. Being able to communicate in foreign language is extremely beneficial for smooth integration. Moreover it is essential for development of social ties with other expatriates and also HCNs. According to study conducted by Hechanova et al. (2003) language ability is positively related to interaction adjustment, but not to general and work domain. Ability to communicate in foreign language is fundamental in terms of creating social ties and

relationship in host country. Shaffer and Harrison (1998) also stress the importance of language fluency for expatriates. They found positive correlations between language ability and enhanced international adjustment. According to them, fluent communication in foreign language also helps to increase satisfaction and lower premature departures and turnovers of expatriates. Not being able to communicate fluently in foreign language could result in feeling of isolation, frustration and dissatisfaction (Neal, 1998).

In terms of business expatriation, English language is language that is most commonly used for communication. International study programs primarily offer English language courses for foreign students. On the other hand, some cultures are so distinct that oral communication in other foreign language such as English could be very challenging and often misinterpreted. Language and culture are strongly related, since they are interrelated and inseparable (Hall, 1973, p.97). Culture affects language in terms of linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic components, as for example sounds and signs, tone, volume, speed, nonverbal gestures, movements and grimaces (Selmer, 2006). Western business expatriates, who are assigned in China, have to face several difficulties in communication with Chinese colleagues, since Chinese communication is strongly influenced by its culture. It often appears as reserved, evasive and deceptive to people coming from Western clusters. Language barrier is particular high in situations where two cultures are very different and distinct. Moreover, some cultures may not even share the same alphabet. Consequently, learning Mandarin could benefit Western expatriates in many aspects. Not only does it help them to facilitate communication with coworkers and superiors, but it also demonstrates a positive and respectful attitude towards Chinese culture. It also enables one to be polite and shows the willingness to learn about the foreign culture (Selmer, 2006).

Several authors claimed that language ability and its positive correlation with interaction adjustment is fundamental for successful integration in novel environment. They believe interaction adjustment is also correlated with general and work adjustment, since they both rely on interpersonal interactions (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001; Bell & Harrison, 1996). Therefore, parent organizations should examine the extent to which expatriates will need to engage in interactions with locals and assess their current level current of language ability. Where intensity of interaction is presumed to be high, the need for language training increases proportionally.

Due to this assumptions and finding, I decided to look for correlations between the current level of English language proficiency that students believe to achieve and their adjustment. I will ask students to self-assess their current levels of English proficiency in three different aspects: understanding, speaking and writing.

#### 2.1.2.6 Cultural similarity

Hofstede (2001) categorized six factors arising from specific culture: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation versus short term normative orientation and last but not least indulgence versus restraint. These factors vary from one culture to another but yet some cultures score familiar on certain factors. According to these findings we could add that some cultures are more similar than others. People coming from similar cultures could feel more comfortable when they are exposed to cultures that are close and familiar to theirs. If one perceives that novel culture significantly differs from its parent culture, it is more likely to expect maladjustment. On the other hand, if one perceives lower levels of discrepancy between parent and host culture, his adjustment will more likely turn out successful (Shaffer et al. 1999).

In the context of my study, I used Hofstede's cultural factors to divide students' nationalities into three groups according to extend of discrepancy between scores of different countries on bases of six factors. According to scores on six factors for specific country in comparison with Slovenian scores, I divided countries into three groups: countries with negligible differences, countries with lower differences and countries with massive differences regarding Slovenian scores.

## 2.2 Time-variant moderators

Farh et al. (2010) underlined the importance of network ties, expatriates establish with different people on their expatriation. They believe network ties are crucial sources of informational and emotional support. Due to this reason, expatriates should acknowledge, of how important is to establish and maintain reliable social relationships (Van Vianen & De Pater, 2003; Liu & Shaffer, 2005). Most scholars believe social ties are particularly important because expatriates could use them as resources of both, informational and emotional support (Liu & Shaffer, 2005; Farh et al., 2010). With term informational support, we understand all the possible provided information regarding housing, shopping, culture, and other general information about host country and work. Emotional support, is on the other hand related to helping expatriates go through overwhelming emotional situations. Generally, expatriates tend to reach out for support if they feel support is needed, relevant and available.

### 2.2.1 Interactions with host country nationals

Motivation to seek support from host country nationals is often present due to the uncertainty and unfamiliarity expatriates encounter in host environment. According to U-curve theory, the uncertainty reaches its peak upon the arrival (Black, 1988). Wang and Kanugo (2004) differentiate between two types of uncertainty, informational and social uncertainty. Informational uncertainty refers to lack of knowledge and general information about the host

country, living conditions and work. Social uncertainty, on the other hand arises from feeling of social isolation and loss of existing social ties. Host country nationals possess stock of knowledge on adequate behaviors and are potential sources of informational support (Farh et al. 2010). Most commonly, expatriates perceive host country nationals as psychologically distant and culturally dissimilar. This consequently reduces potential to reach for support among them. There are also certain cases, when expatriates possess motivation and ability to approach culturally diverse actors. This is more common for expatriates who score high on cross cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003). On the other hand, Farh et al. (2010) believe that expatriates more likely reach out for support from host country nationals, because they perceive them as actors who dispose more country-specific information. Since host country nationals have more information and expertise of host environment, their help is most often given in forms of informational support at early stages of adjustment process (Johnson, Kristof-Brown, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2003). Farh et al. (2010) described knowledge about host country as host country expertise and propose that, expatriates who experience higher levels of informational uncertainty will more likely seek support from host country nationals. Nebus (2006) also claimed that expatriates will most probably ask for support individuals, who seem to be knowledgeable and are perceived as host country expertise. Kraimer et al. (2001) highlighted the fact that frequency of interactions with host country nationals could often encourage development of sympathy and positive feelings towards foreign culture. According to them, frequent interactions also mean one will be able to gather valuable information which will help him reduce stress associated with exposure to new environment.

### **2.2.2 Interactions with peers/colleagues**

As Farh et al. (2010) propose expatriates are more motivated to seek emotional support if they experience higher levels of social uncertainty. Black (1988) believes that lost and non-presence of social ties and networks in foreign environment could result in feelings of loneliness and isolation. When discussing factors influencing the selection of support actors, the concept of adjustment empathy should be introduced. According to Cohen, Underwood and Gottlieb (2000) expatriates are more motivated to seek support among individuals who share or have shared similar experience. Sharing common experience and understanding the stress related to cross-cultural adjustment, is what adjustment empathy is about. If expatriate believes person understands his position and stress related to adjustment process, he will more likely be motivated to interact and connect with that person. As Zellars and Perrewe (2001) claimed, empathy is very important in terms of emotional support. Usually empathy-based support arrives from peers or colleagues who are coping or have coped with similar challenges associated with moving to foreign country. Nevertheless, peers and colleagues that are culturally similar are also more accessible in terms of language (Farh et al., 2010). According to them, it is more reasonable to expect strong social ties among peers and colleagues who share the same or similar cultural background.



### **2.2.3 Organizational support provided by host organization**

According to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) three main organizational factors influencing the adjustment process are: supervisor, coworker and logistic support.

As Black et al. (1991) suggest host organization should arrange organizational support and training programs that are continued on the new location. Host organizations are also responsible for loosen first conflicts that are predictable for early stages of arrival. Providing a mentor, who could be a representative of a host country or someone who already has similar international experiences, is one of the methods that do not require heavy financial investments. The role of the mentor is especially dedicated to provision of informational support (Shaffer et al, 1999). Kraimer et al. (2001), on the other hand examined the role of supervisors at host location and concluded, that supervisors support is important especially in terms of stress management caused by relocation of expatriate. They also believe, support provided by foreign organization is even more crucial than organizational support from parent facility. Ayman (1997) and Black et al. (1991) believe host organizations are also important sources of information and should provide logistic support to expatriates such as general information about life, the continued language course, organization of different socialization events with purpose of establishing opportunities for interactions with host county nationals. Kraimer et al. (2001) underlined the importance of personal exchange relationship between expatriates and his supervisor. According to them, supervisor's role should go beyond supervision and evaluation of expatriate's work and should serve as informational and emotional assistance. In case of international students, there is a common practice of providing a tutor, who serves as a mentor. On the location mentoring was found to be positively related to successful socialization of expatriates, since mentors should serve as providers of support on both, informational and emotional level (Feldman & Bolino, 1999).

## **3 INTERNATIONAL STUDY AS AN EXPATRIATE EXPERIENCE: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

With the rise of globally connected world, there is also a trend among students to peruse international study programs. Study abroad programs represent education programs that take place in foreign country outside the home country boundaries. These programs provide students with opportunity to gain academic education and experience in foreign country. Students who conquer international experiences trough study process are more likely to develop higher levels of cultural awareness. International experience equips them with knowledge and skills necessary, in case they are keen on perusing international career in the future.

Globalization has not left its mark only in economics, but it also manifests itself through the internationalization of higher education. In Europe, the major changes in internationalization took place in 1980's with development of international study programs such as Socrates and

Leonardo (Jackson, 2008). Mazzarol and Hosie (1999) also claim that 80's were the groundbreaking years in the internationalization of higher education, since 80's are when the reforms promoting international study programs first appeared. Universities were in favor of new international forms of study programs, primarily because they saw their opportunity to gain additional financial incomes.

In late 80's the Council of Ministers of the European Community agreed in introducing the Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, which is nowadays known as Erasmus. Consequently, international education in Europe is most commonly manifested through this mobility program. The main objective of Erasmus is to promote mobility of students among boundaries of European Union and creating European university network (Council of the European Communities, 1987).

Students who decide to participate in Erasmus program can apply for a scholarship at their parent university. Home university later decides, who is the most suitable candidate for the exchange on the basis of its current academic achievements and interviews, where they investigate students' motivation to study abroad (Parey & Waldinger, 2010). Erasmus nowadays represents one of the biggest and most recognizable mobility programs in Europe. Its main focus remains on acceleration development of international students' mobility, emphasizing collaboration among European Universities and raising the quality of higher educational programs. Erasmus is not only designed to encourage student mobility but also the mobility of staff, especially professors who have a desire for teaching abroad (Center Republike Slovenije za mobilnost in evropske programe izobraževanja in usposabljanja, 2012). European Commission in July 2013 released that the number of Erasmus students topped 3 million, since first launching the scheme in 1987. According to European Commission report, Erasmus is not just a funding scheme for student and staff exchanges but it also supports joint projects, summer schools and networks, with the main goal of improving how education is delivered, so that it meets the needs of the labor market and society as a whole (European Commission, 2013). The main goal of Erasmus, supporting the mobility of students is rising every year. The Bologna goal by the year 2020 is that at least 20% of all graduates from the European Higher Education Area spent a period of time studying or working abroad. Particular branch of the Erasmus program is also Erasmus Mundus. Erasmus Mundus was also founded by the European Union, since it promotes the exchange of students and teachers between European countries and countries of the rest of the world, as for example Asian countries, South Africa and South America (European Commission, 2013).

Besides Erasmus, students are also able to choose among other mobility programs, such as for example Central European Exchange program for University Students (hereinafter: CEEPUS), which is designed for students which are residents of countries that are not members of European Union. Program relies on the network established among different Universities. The established networks serve the purpose of promoting students and staff mobility between different countries.

Other forms of mobility programs are also different bilateral agreements. Bilateral agreements are contracts concluded between individual countries or institutions of higher education so they could be divided into interstate agreements and interuniversity agreements. On the basis of concluded agreements, students are allowed to go on an exchange in a foreign country. Bilateral agreements are most common for study exchanges beyond the borders of Europe. Students are in this case exempted from payment of tuition fees.

Faculty of Economics Ljubljana University is recognized both domestically as well as internationally as a provider of quality academic programs. The qualities of its services are reinforced with two, internationally recognized accreditations: European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation and American Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation. According to FELU's mission, the main strive is to develop people, who will be capable of working in a globally competitive environment. Its vision is to rank among the best business and economic schools in the global perspective.

Moreover, two of its strategic goals are devoted to achievement of internationally comparable research excellence and increased internationalization of key activities. As a result of it, FELU is strongly engaged in internationalization. In order to achieve its vision, FELU has engaged in several world-wide partnerships, which give its students the opportunity to choose among 193 exchange agreements with universities in 44 different countries around the world. Not only it provides its students with several possibilities to study abroad, it also offers 15 full time international study programs in English to foreign students. Every year, more than 600 foreign students are engaged in different forms of studying at FELU. Besides full time academic programs, FELU also gives the opportunity to incoming, exchange students to attend about 80 courses taught in English. In recent years higher education is due to the global exposure faced with the concept of providing as quality services to its stakeholders as possible. Therefore, FELU aims towards providing quality services to all of its students (Faculty of Economics - Internationalization, 2015).

International and exchange students arriving to FELU will perceive the quality of their study abroad experience also on the basis of informational and logistic support they have received by the host faculty. Therefore, quality of FELU's services could be enhanced by the efforts of offering as much information about the new environment, study obligations and expectations. In my research, I will investigate the quality and usefulness of support provided to international students by the FELU and the correlation of it with the adjustment process itself.

### **3.1 Motivation for international study**

International study or studying abroad is defined as any educational program that takes place outside your country of origin. As Kitsantas and Meyers (2001) claim international study is a

convenient way to increase student's cross cultural awareness, their value of diversity and help them develop a deeper global perspective.

As Hopkinks (1999) stated study abroad programs provide students with a healthy dose of experimental learning. Foreign environments provide constant opportunities for learning by-doing and students could benefit from this experience in several aspects from personal growth, social benefits to career and intercultural improvement. Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao, & Lynch (2007) investigated the role of motivational factors for studying abroad. They discovered the main motivation factors are self-development factor and preservation factor. Students, who have high motivation in terms of Self-development, usually decide for international study programs because they want to peruse good education and improve their potential for career opportunities abroad. Preservation factor, on the other hand, reflects the student's goals of avoiding disadvantageous conditions in their parent country. Research conducted by Van Hoof and Verbeteen (2005) showed that the three most important reasons for which students decide to study abroad are good opportunity to live in another culture, good opportunity to travel and sympathy for the country of where exchange took place.

Moreover, students who enrol in international study programs become more competitive in the job market and develop language proficiency (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001).

### **3.2 Benefits of studying abroad**

International students with their foreign study experience benefit in several aspects such as academic, cultural development and personal growth. Studying abroad has also a significant impact on future career choices, since students are more likely to acquire additional linguistic and professional skills (Dwyer, 2004).

Williams (2005) claims, that nowadays students need strong communication skills, which are necessary to compete in global working environment. In her study she came to conclusion that study abroad helps students to increase both foreign language and intercultural communication skills. Moreover she believes that studying aboard is beneficial in terms of developing certain personal skills, such as perservance, adabtility and sensitivity. Similarly, Williams (2005) argued that adabtility and sensitivity are basis of intercultural communication skills.

Researchers who have examined benefits of studying aboard, have agreed on conclusions that studying aboard is beneficial in areas of students' cultural and personal development. Students who study abroad often increase their international knowledge and international awareness, improve their intercultural communication skills and self-confidence (Williams, 2005; McCabe, 2001).

According to Lee, Therriault and Linderholm (2012) studying abroad promotes and helps to increase student's cultural awareness. Moreover, they believe international students gain the ability to better resolve complex tasks, since they come across different cultural information, which help them engage in culture specific creative thinking. Their research showed that international students are capable of generating more creative and unique ideas as result of improved creative thinking abilities. Students' creative thinking is in fact an answer to demands arising from culturally diverse environments. To summarize their main findings, different cultural experiences result in creative thinking which is not important only for innovative ideas but also plays an important role in other learning process.

Hadis (2005) in his study found that students who study abroad show increases in global-mindedness, general awareness of global problematics and have more interest in world affairs. These students also develop higher sense of empathy and appreciation for foreign cultures.

Another study conducted by Van Hoof and Verbeteen (2005) showed that students who engaged in studying abroad felt that international education is very important in terms of individual growth and that it mostly served them to become more mature, responsible and compassionate. They also felt that studying and living abroad enabled them to learn about other cultures, cultural differences and most importantly about themselves.

To summarize the main positive outcomes of studying abroad in forms of gained intercultural competencies, Lee et al. (2012) use three forms of intercultural development:

- a. cognitive development that is shown through higher appreciation of cultural differences,
- b. psychological (intrapersonal) development, that enables students to more easily and comfortably engage in relationship and interactions with diverse individuals,
- c. interpersonal development that empowers students with desire to seek out diverse interactions with individuals who are different and culturally distant.

Parey and Waldinger (2010) investigated the correlation between studying abroad and international labor market mobility in case of Erasmus students. Their results showed that students who went on exchange and studied abroad were about 6 percentage points more likely to engage in international career in their later professional life. They concluded that even short term exchange programs could lead to important labor mobility choices in future.

While examining existing literature on study abroad outcomes, we can see that there are many positive outcomes that arise from international study experiences. On the other hand, studying abroad is not always just fun and exciting. In the next subchapter, I will look at the main challenges students need to address once they come aboard. I will also present some theoretical findings about the adjustment process of international students.

### 3.3 Adjustment process of students

International students not only need to adjust to a new culture, but also to different educational system, which could be very distinct from their home system. In order to be successful in their study abroad obligations, they need to embrace new ways of acting according to cultural norms of foreign country. Moreover, they sometimes need to be able to communicate in the language spoken in host country (Poyrazli, Thukral, & Duru, 2010).

Some international students are well adjusted to a new environment, while others are not able to get acculturated to new culture and report about high levels of stress that usually results from lack of social support, communication problems and feeling of homesickness.

According to Poyrazli et al. (2010) there are several factors that influence adjustment process of international students. They discuss and underline following variables: students personality, cultural conditioning, history, family, coping skills and knowledge.

Many authors (Rothstein, Paunonen, Rush, & King, 1994) agree that several personality traits are related to academic achievement. Verbal skills, openness and agreeableness were according to Rothstein et al. (1994) demonstrated to be positively related to academic achievement. Geramian, Mashayekhi, & Ninggal (2012) conducted research on sample of international students about their personality profile. The results showed international student's rate high in agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and neuroticism.

Black and Mendenhall (1990) conducted a review of theoretical findings on cross-cultural adjustment process and U-curve adjustment hypothesis. According to their review, majority of authors who examined cross cultural adjustment have reported that U-curve pattern of adjustment was exhibited by international students. Black and Mendenhall (1990) claimed that most of the findings from examination of adjustment process are questionable due to lack of statistical evidence of differences in adjustment at different times. Authors who examined adjustment process of students often used retrospective recollections methods. Black and Mendenhall (1990) believe these results are questionable, since adjustment process happens over time and it would be more accurately examined in longitudinal studies.

On the other hand, they also reviewed some articles that do not provide support for U-curve pattern of adjustment process. According to their review, Selby and Woods (1966) found that adjustment process of students does not resemble U-curve but it shapes according to the students moral, which relies and changes according to different intervals of academic year. For example, students' moral severely declines during the examination periods. Adler (1987) also examined the adjustment process of foreign students and concluded that students firstly experience euphoric mood, then they fall into crisis, which is result of the cultural shock, and slight recovery follows, afterword's. At the end of the term, students again experience

negative mood and recover slightly during vacation period. Students again declined at the begging of the new term and were up again at the end of their second term.

As we can see, there is still no general agreement about shape of adjustment process of students. Another consideration that should be taken into account according to Black and Mendenhall (1990) is the fact, that several articles supporting U-curve hypothesis did not offer any statistical analysis or reports on statistical test of the data. Consequently, we cannot absolutely accept, neither rejects U-curve hypothesis; although, the majority of research conducted in this area found the presence of U-curve pattern.

### **3.4 Challenges of studying abroad**

Students engaged in international studies need to cope with challenges that are familiar to those experienced by corporate expatriates. Students have to deal with different stressors such as foreign language, different customs, climate, food and different expectations regarding their new role. Beside all of the above mentioned challenges, authors additionally emphasize stressors that are characterized specifically for students who carry part of studies outside their country boundaries.

Pederson (1991) for example, speaks about acculturative stress, resulting from contact with new foreign culture. Mori (2000) believes international students need to cope with additional stress because of new cultural demands, which force them to learn new appropriate behaviors without the usual familial support. The additional stress for international students could result in feelings of disorientation, homesickness and anxiety.

Another variable that needs to be taken into consideration is race-ethnicity of international students, since several researchers found correlations between racial-ethnic groups of students and level of acculturative stress they have reported. Research among international students studying in the USA, conducted by Poyrazli et al. (2010) showed, that Africa, Asian and Middle Eastern students reported about higher levels of acculturative stress, whereas European students reported lower levels of stress.

Authors who examined adjustment process of students most often emphasize following stressors: foreign culture, new and unknown academic environment, foreign language and stressor related to social interactions (Kwon, 2009; Sam, 2001).

According to Gu and Maley (2008), students who study aboard, experience cognitive and psychological difficulties, mainly because they are unfamiliar with foreign language and are exposed to a new academic environment. Academic environment is composed out of different teaching methods and specific ways of studying that are typical for specific culture. Different cultures promote different forms of learning. Learning in some cultures may be generally focused on the practical aspects, while in others, the dominant mode of studying is such, that

students are expected to engage in theoretical learning. Students coming from cultures that promote theoretical learning could experience psychological difficulties and emotional tension if they are expected to engage in practical ways of studying.

Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005) believe housing is often a major concern for students when they go abroad, for instance, not all of the host universities offer the possibility of living in dorms. In this particular cases housing arrangements need to be done by students themselves.

Sam (2001) on the basis of his research conducted among international students came to conclusion that financial issues also present a major stressor for exchange students. Moreover, he discovered that students are sensitive in the terms of relationship that host country shows towards their parent culture and themselves. International students often feel less worthy in comparison with home country students, since their language abilities are weaker and study results are less promising.

Nevertheless, several studies showed that, students who more often interact with host country nationals claim to be more easily adjusted to new culture and study obligations. International students create social ties and friendships not only with host country nationals but also with peers from university that could be either students coming from their parent country or other foreign students.

Several studies in the area of social relations, that were conducted on samples of international students showed, that international students most commonly establish friendships with students coming from their parent country. The second most common social ties are made with other foreign students and most uncommon form of friendship is established with peers from host country. The motivation for international students to most commonly engage in relationships with peers coming from their parent country is rather logical and predictable since they share the same culture and are able communicate in their mother tongue (Sam, 2001).

#### **4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY ON ADJUSTMENT OF STUDENTS ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE AT FELU**

In the following section I will focus on the empirical research, where I have investigated the adjustment process of incoming international students at the FELU in a practical manner. I will also present the hypothesis designed, in order to get a deeper understanding about correlations among the adjustment process and different influencing moderators.

My research and hypothesis were designed according to the main findings proposed by existing literature on expatriate's adjustment. More importantly, I have incorporated the perspective about internationalization of higher education and the universities' growing need of offering and providing high quality services to the foreign students.



As I have already mentioned in the theoretical part of my masters thesis, most scholars believe expatriates adjustment process occurs in four phases also described as U-curved process. Therefore the main research question will be focused on monitoring and investigating the three main facets of adjustment: general, study and interaction facets on regular monthly intervals.

In the end of every month, a survey was administrated to international students who expressed the interest of being a part of my research. With the following surveys, I was able to monitor their current degree of adjustment and dynamic moderators in different months of their life abroad.

They were asked to rate their current adjustment on a seven point Likart scale and by following each student separately trough out the months, I was able to get a general picture about the phases and the shape of their adjustment process.

The first research question is: “What is the shape of student’s adjustment process?”

Furthermore, I also tried to get a general answer and draw basic conclusions about moderators, which have positive or negative impacts on adjustment process itself.

I looked at the moderators separately, and divided them into two groups. First group of moderators were moderators that are stable, meaning that do not significantly change over the time. These moderators were: quality and usefulness of information about the exchange by home school before departure, logistic support by parent school before departure, previous international experience, cultural knowledge about the host country, cultural intelligence/cross cultural awareness, foreign language proficiency, personality characteristics, self-efficacy and cultural similarity. These moderators are relatively stable and therefore, I questioned students about these moderators only in the first survey which was given to them right after their arrival to Slovenia.

The next three surveys were designed in order to follow up student’s adjustment trough out the months and also to monitor the second group of moderators. These moderators were dynamic and were changing trough out the time. The second group is composed out of following moderators: number and frequency of relations and interactions students have established with host country nationals, other foreign students, Slovenian students, students that come from the same country as them and their tutor.

Number and frequency of interactions with people are important sources of informational and emotional support and therefore, I have decided to ask students about their perception of support they had received from different groups of people trough out the time.

Finally, I have also investigated the quality of support provided to students by the FELU and look at the possible correlations between the success or failure of their adjustment according to this variable.

In relation to the last two paragraphs my second research question is:

“What are the moderators, that have whereas positive or negative impact on the adjustment process?”

## **4.1 Methodology**

My master's thesis consists out of theoretical and empirical part. In the theoretical part, I will use the descriptive method of scientific research. In descriptive research I will use the existing literature in order to discuss important findings in the field of cross-cultural adjustment. As a work method of my empirical research, I will use four-wave survey, designed to monitor the adjustment process throughout the time. The focus of surveys will also be to follow and monitor moderators that influence the adjustment process over the time. The collected data will be statistically analyzed by the method of ANOVA and Post hoc tests.

### **4.1.1 Data collecting procedure and sample**

I began empirical part of research by developing the initial questionnaire, translation and back-translation of the questionnaire, sampling and data collection. The questionnaire was after being translated and back-translated evaluated. After the procedure of translation and back-translation it was administrated to new coming international students at their orientation day. The similar procedure was done for the follow up questionnaires that have been administrated to students in the next following months.

The initial questionnaire was designed to collect general information about international students as for example: gender, nationality and moreover to evaluate the initial non-changing moderators such as: previous international experience, cross cultural awareness, language proficiency, self-efficacy, knowledge about Slovenian culture, personal characteristics and finally informational and logistic support provided by parent Faculty before departure.

The first questionnaire was administrated in hard copy to approximately 130 international students on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 on the orientation day organized by International Office of the faculty. Orientation day took place one day after their arrival to Slovenia at the faculty of Economics in Ljubljana.

Students were firstly presented with the context and the main goal of the research. Those who decided to participate were informed and reminded that the nature of research also requires participation in the following three surveys. Otherwise the responses on the first questionnaire

could not be used as data for the research. Since adjustment is a process that develops through time, it was necessary to follow each student through the time he spends abroad. According to this, I had to follow up each student separately in order to get an insight on his/hers' progress of adjustment. For this reason students were asked to trust us their email address, so the following surveys could be administered to them in the next months. Moreover the email address was used as an individual code, so I was able to track each student separately through out the time.

The response rate for the first questionnaire was 85%. 110 international students fully completed the initial questionnaire.

In the end of October 2014, all of these students were asked to complete the first "follow up" questionnaire which was distributed to them online. All others respondents who did not reply in a week time were sent a reminder, asking them to reply in the week time. The response rate on the second questionnaire was 47 %. 52 students submitted complete questionnaires.

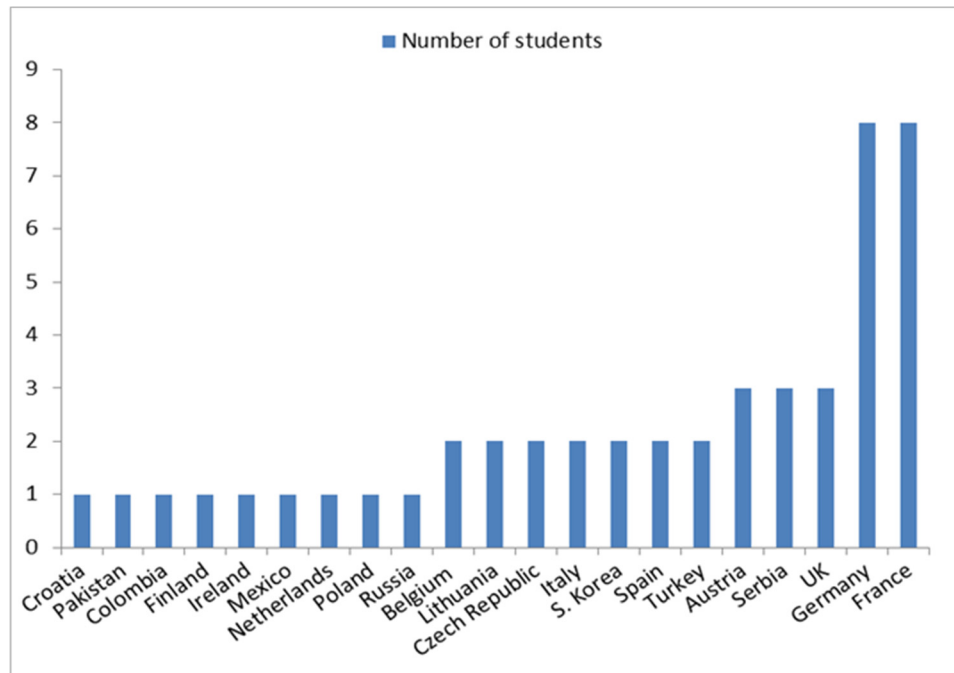
The third questionnaire followed in the end of November 2014. It was distributed only to those who have fulfilled the first follow up questionnaire. The response rate of the third questionnaire was 92 %. 48 students submitted complete questionnaires.

The last questionnaire was distributed to students in the beginning of January, since I have predicted that holiday season in the end of December could lead to lower response rate. The questionnaire was submitted to those who have answered to whereas just the first follow up questionnaire or to both of them. The response rate was 67%, 35 students submitted complete surveys.

For those who have not answered to all of the surveys whereas they have missed the second or the third follow up survey, I used average values to fill up their missing values.

In final, 48 international students were monitored through out their adjustment process, which leads to conclusion that response rate was in final 44%. In terms of nationalities, students involved in research originally came from 21 different countries. The descriptive statistics about the sample of students included in research are presented in the following figure.

Figure 3. Countries of origin



#### 4.1.2 Measures

In the following section, I will describe how moderators were operationalized and measured in questionnaires.

##### 4.1.2.1 Existing stock of knowledge about the host culture:

The following moderator was measured with questions designed to assess the degree to which students already know Slovenian culture. As for example, they were asked to rate their current knowledge about the Slovenian language, diet and eating habits, religious orientation of locals, working practice, legal and economic system, arts and crafts on a seven point Likart scale.

##### 4.1.2.2 Logistic support:

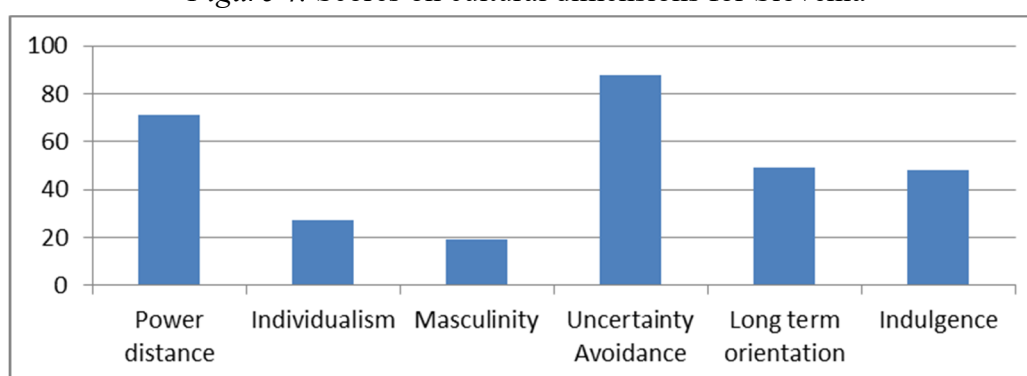
This moderator was operationalized by two questions in the first-initial questionnaire, one relating to the usefulness of information students' have received about exchange by their parent school and the logistic support (providing general information about Slovenia, partner institution, housing issues and help with the paperwork) that they have received by parent school before departure. They were asked to rate the usefulness of information and logistic support on a 5 item scale, from useless to very useful.

#### 4.1.2.3 Cultural similarity:

In the initial questionnaire, students were asked about their nationality. I used Hofstede's cultural dimensions to evaluate the degree of similarity or differences according to the six factors retrieved on the first of December 2015 from website: <http://geert-hofstede.com/>. The website provides information about the scores for individual country in the section of country comparison and I used this website as a source of information about the scores for the following countries beside Slovenia: Belgium, Croatia, Serbia, Ireland, Lithuania, Colombia, Netherlands, South Korea, Finland, Spain, Austria, Turkey, Czech Republic, Mexico, France, Italy, Poland, Germany, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Belgium and Russia.

Bellow there is an example of scores for Slovenia:

*Figure 4. Scores on cultural dimensions for Slovenia*



Source: *The Hofstede centre, 2015.*

Slovenia scores 71 on the first dimension, which explains that people expect and respect hierarchical order in which everybody has its defined place. In the second dimension Slovenia scores 27, that is considered rather low, and means that people are not individualistically orientated but are more collectivistic. This dimension encourages loyalty and commitment between members of society. Slovenia scores the lowest on the third dimension which describes the degree of Masculinity in society, which means, that Slovenia is considered as a Feminine society. Feminine societies favor free time, flexibility and are focused on well-being. Slovenia scores the highest on dimension of Uncertainty avoidance, which means that people tend to avoid uncertainty. Societies like this maintain conservative rules and rigid behavior. People value hard working and have an inner urge to be busy all the time. Security also plays an important role in this society. Moreover, Slovenia scores 49 on Long term orientation dimension and therefore no clear preference can be determined regarding this dimension. Similarly, Slovenia receives score of 48 on the final dimension- Indulgence, thus, no preference could be indicated (The Hofstede centre, 2015).

I used Slovenia as the main country of comparison and compared scores of other countries on the six cultural dimensions. I calculated the differences between all of the dimensions and based on the calculated differences divided countries into three main groups:

- a. groups of countries with negligible or little differences with respect to Slovenia: Croatia, Serbia, Ireland, Lithuania, Colombia and Netherlands;
- b. group of countries with moderate differences with respect to Slovenia: North Korea, Finland, Spain, Austria, Turkey and Czech Republic;
- c. group of countries with large to extensive differences with respect to Slovenia: Mexico, France, Italy, Poland, Germany, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Belgium and Russia.

#### 4.1.2.4 English language proficiency

International students, who come to study to Faculty of Economics, can attend courses that are held in English. Therefore, I believe, English language is the language used for majority of communication either in the study area or in the area of social interactions.

The following moderator was operationalized with offered descriptions of three levels of English language proficiency divided in speaking, understanding and writing. Students could identify and evaluate their English language proficiency based on three levels, where first level stands for the lowest rates of language proficiency. Oppositely, third level is characterized for students who believe they master the language. When combining the three areas of language proficiency, I took the dominant level of language proficiency, chosen from individual student.

#### 4.1.2.5 Previous international experience

Present moderator was operationalized with questions relating the scope of existing international experience. Students were questioned about the number of countries they have already visited, number of visited continents and the duration of previous living, studying or working abroad.

According to collected answers I have designed criteria, by which I could classify students into groups regarding their existing international experience:

- a. students with no or very little previous international experience,
- b. students with moderate previous international experience,
- c. students with plenty of previous international experience.

Table 1. Previous international experience

<b>Criteria</b>				
<b>GROUP</b>	<b>Number of visited countries</b>	<b>Number of visited continents</b>	<b>Living/working/studying abroad</b>	<b>Duration of staying abroad</b>
1. Students with no or very little previous international experience.	< 5	< 2	NO	< 3 MONTHS
2. Students with moderate previous international experience.	6 < 10	3 < 4	YES	3 < 4 MONTHS
3. Student with plenty of previous international experience.	> 11	> 5	YES	> 5 MONTHS

Students were classified to groups, according to their individual scores.

#### 4.1.2.6 Cultural intelligence

In order to measure cultural intelligence I have used 20-item, Four Factor Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS). This scale was based on extension of the conceptual work of Earley and Ang (2003) designed by Linn van Dyne from Michigan State University in 2008. Scale includes the four-factors of cultural Intelligence: CQ-strategy, CQ-knowledge, CQ-motivation and CQ-behavior that are each represented with a set of questions (<http://www.linnvandyne.com/shortmeasure.html>). Students were asked to select the answers that best described their capabilities on a seven point scale.

#### 4.1.2.7 Self-efficacy

Due to rationalization of time used for answering on questionnaire, I used shortened version of questionnaire designed to measure self-efficacy, developed by German authors Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem, called The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). This scale uses 10 questions about self-efficacy. Responses are measured on a 4-point scale. The final composite score is therefor in range from 10 to 40, where 40 represent the highest possible score on self-efficacy.

#### 4.1.2.8 Personal characteristics

In order to measure students personal characteristic I used the 15 item Big Five Inventory of personality dimensions, focusing on two dimensions related to cross cultural adjustment: extraversion and openness to new experience. The Big Five personality constructs represent a powerful frame of reference in psychological reasoning about the structure of interindividual differences in personality dimensions (John & Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1997). Typically, questionnaires measuring Big Five dimensions usually take some time, and therefore I have used a brief version that is still reasonably reliable (Lang, John, Lüdtkke, Schupp, & Wagner, 2011).

#### 4.1.2.9 Number and frequency of interactions

In all of the follow up questionnaires, I was asking students about the number and frequency of interactions they had with Slovenian colleagues/peers, students of their own nationality, students of other nationalities (except Slovenian), host country nationals and tutor.

#### 4.1.2.10 Emotional and informational support

Similarly, to the number and frequency of interactions with all of the involved actors, I have asked students to evaluate the value of informational and emotional support received from all of parties they have interacted with in the last month.

#### 4.1.2.11 Organizational and logistic support

All of the follow up questionnaires also included question, where students were asked to evaluate the logistic and informational support they have received from the host Faculty in terms of providing general information about life in Slovenia, planning social events, information about courses and housing issues.

## 4.2 Results

Firstly, I will present findings on the shape of adjustment process, which will answer my first research question. In general results show that in average students trajectory of adjustment is in shape of a rising curve, meaning degree of adjustment improves over the time spend abroad. I interpreted three facets of adjustment separately, since, students that could have reported higher degrees of adjustment in particular facet; on the other hand expressed lower degrees of adjustment in the other two.

Therefore, I will present my findings about the shape of adjustment separately, according to the three facets: general facet, study facet and interaction facet.

### 4.2.1 Results about trajectories of students' adjustment

#### 4.2.1.1 General facet

International students in general expressed similar rates of adjustment. The results are quite concentrated with the exception of only few students who deviate from the pattern.

On average, students' adjustment process regarding general facet is not a U-curve but a rising curve. Yet, I would like to emphasize that there are 13 students that actually have a shape of adjustment that suggest a V-curve which resembles to the U-curve proposed by majority of scholars. If we look at international students separately we can see, that results are not unique



and we can identify three strong groups of students according to the trajectory of their adjustment:

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> group: Shape of a rising curve represented by 18 students;
- b. 2<sup>nd</sup> group:  $\vee$  - shape curve represented by 13 students;
- c. 3<sup>rd</sup> group:  $\wedge$  - shape curve represented by 12 students.

Five students had a shape of a horizontal line and 3 students had a shape of a decreasing curve. These students were not assigned to any of the three groups mentioned above.

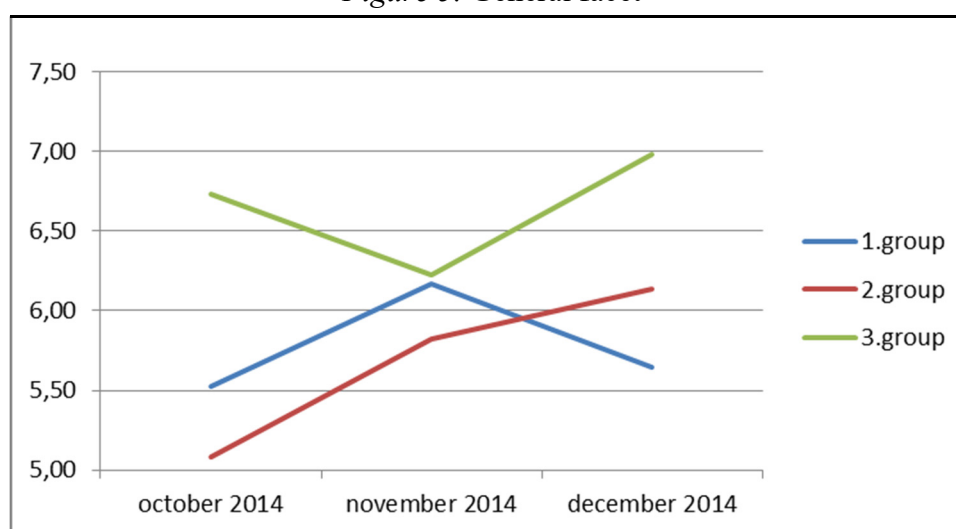
Table 2 presents average values for the main groups of students in particular month of observation.

Table 2. Average values for general facet

GROUP	October	November	December	Number of students
1.group	5,53	6,17	5,65	13
2.group	5,08	5,82	6,14	18
3.group	6,74	6,23	6,99	12

In the following figure, there are results about trajectories of adjustment regarding the three strongest groups identified when analysing general facet.

Figure 5. General facet



#### 4.2.1.2 Study facet

In general, students regarding the study facet did not confirm the usual shape of a U-curve, but averagely show a shape of a rising curve. Study facet also provided us with three strong, unique groups of students. Only 6 students had a V-curve shape of adjustment. The majority of students had a shape of a rising curve. There were 21 students who showed this shape,

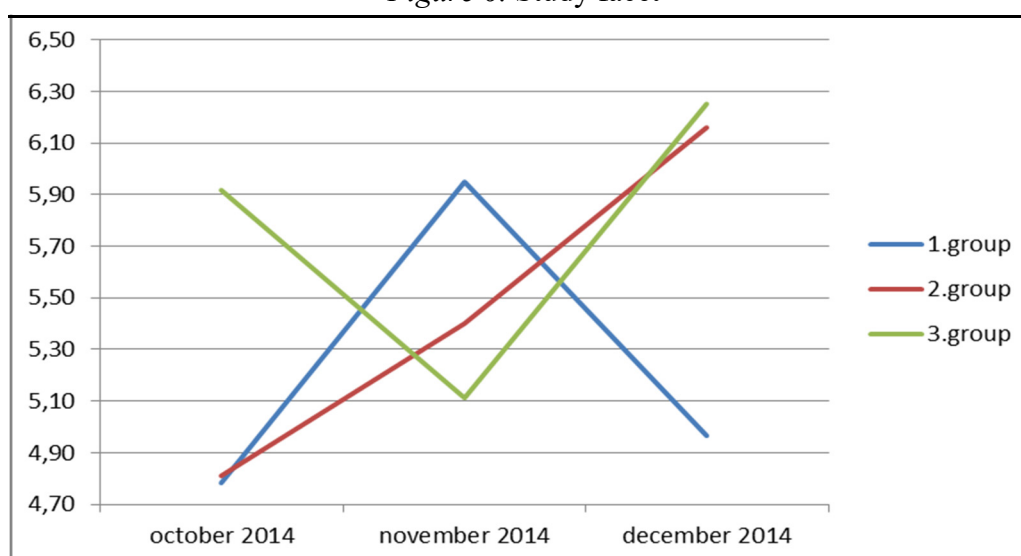
which stands for approximately 44% of all students involved in the examination. 16 students had a  $\wedge$  - shape curve of adjustment.

Table 3: Average values for study facet:

GROUP	October	November	December	Number of students
1.group	4,78	5,95	4,97	16
2.group	4,81	5,4	6,16	21
3.group	5,92	5,11	6,25	6

Figure 6 presents average values for three strongest identified trajectories of adjustment in study facet:

Figure 6. Study facet



#### 4.2.1.3 Interaction facet

As disclosed from results gained in research, interaction facet was on the most diffuse facets regarding the trajectory of adjustment. Students in this field showed very different forms of adjustment. But yet, the majority of students had adjustment shaped as a rising curve, approximately, 38 % of all students had a shape of a rising curve. Interestingly, 8 students that represent 17% of all population had either a shape of a horizontal line either their level of adjustment dropped in the last period of observation.

Table 4. Average values for interaction facet

GROUP	October	November	December	Number of students
1.group	4,31	5,81	4,67	13
2.group	4,47	5,49	5,94	17
3.group	5,51	4,26	5,43	12

Figure 7. Interaction facet

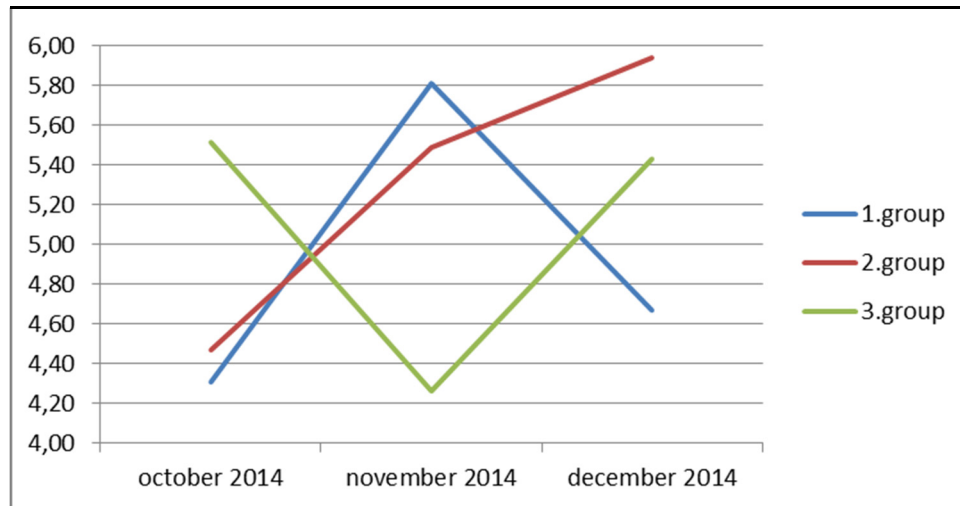
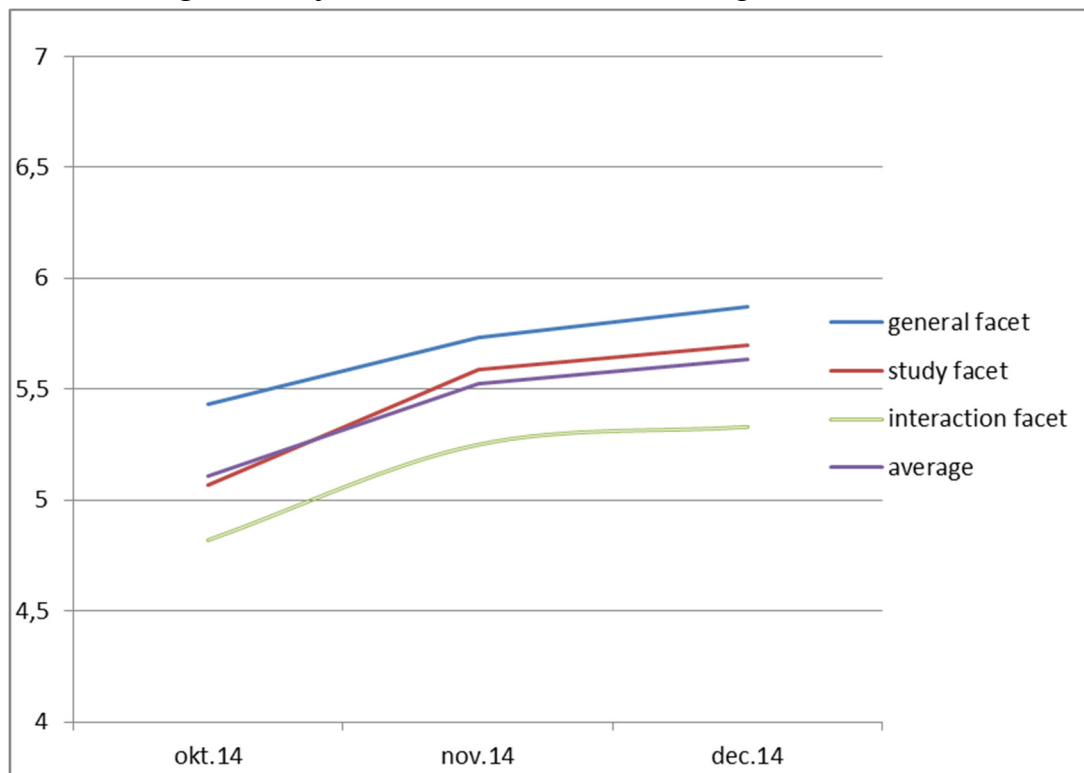


Figure 8. Adjustment of all student-combining the three facets



If combine together all average values for all international students regarding the three facets discussed above, I can conclude, that the average adjustment process has a trajectory of a rising curve. In the first month of the survey, the average value of adjustment according to all of three facets was 5.07 out of 7.00, in the second month, the average value increased to 5.59 and in the last month the value of average adjustment reached the highest point at 5.70 out of 7.00. These results indicate, that in general student' adjustment to the novel environment improves over the time spend abroad.

In average students have reached the highest rates of adjustment in general life meaning they felt most comfortable to the general living conditions, weather conditions and food in Slovenia. The lowest rates of adjustment were expressed in the area of interaction, meaning international students in average felt the least adjusted to the social life related to interpersonal communication and interactions with host country nationals.

#### **4.2.2 Results about moderators influencing the adjustment process**

Secondly, I will present finding regarding my second research question, about the correlation between different moderators and the adjustment process. I divided moderators in two groups, ones that are stable and do not significantly change and those that are more likely to change over the time. Time-invariant moderators were measured in the first survey, which took place at students' arrival to Slovenia. Time-variant moderators on the other hand, were measured in all of the following three surveys.

##### **4.2.2.1 Classification of students into groups**

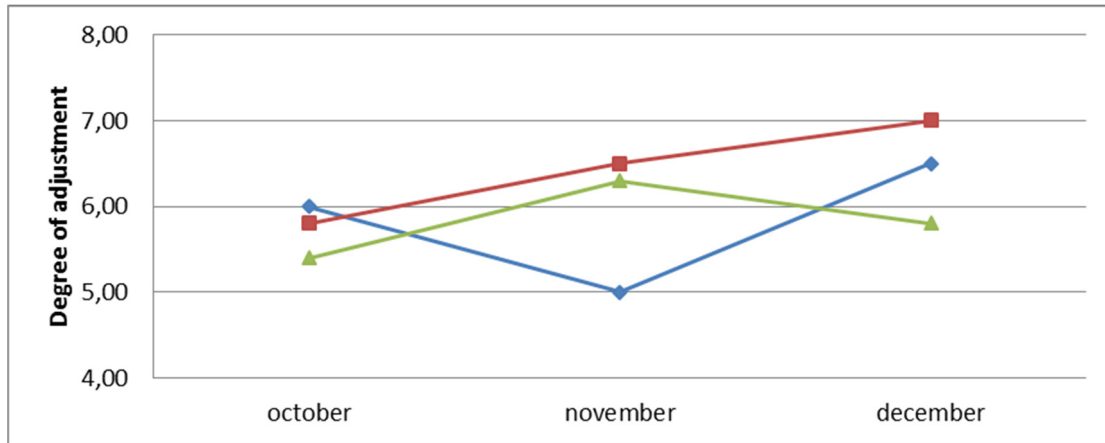
Looking at the student's particular shapes of adjustment, I have noticed that regarding the three facets there were three main geometrical shapes of adjustment. The most common shape was the shape of a rising curve, the other two most common shapes were the V-shape and the  $\wedge$ -shape of adjustment. According to these findings, I decided to divide students into three main groups, and look if there is a statistically significant difference in moderators between these three groups.

I would like to emphasize, that one student could have different shapes of adjustment in different facets. Therefore, I formed groups for each facet separately, that include representatives of a certain shape of adjustment. In all of the three facets, there were few students, which did not fell in a particular group. Such students were excluded from the further analyses, since the number of them was too little to form a comparable population.

The three groups were formed according to the geometrical shape of the adjustment. There were three main geometrical shapes that could be described as:

- a. Group 1:  $\wedge$  - shape, which shows a peek in adjustment in the second period of observation, followed by a decrease in the last period;
- b. Group 2: Shape of a rising curve;
- c. Group 3: V - shape or shape where there is a decrease in adjustment in the second period, followed by increase in the last period.

Figure 9. Trajectories of adjustment



#### 4.2.2.2 Research about the correlation between moderators and adjustment process

In the further analyses I have looked if there are significant differences between the set groups. If the analyses revealed there are significant differences between groups, I could claim that moderators actually have influence on the trajectory of adjustment. Statistical data processing was performed in the program SPSS 20.0. I used ANOVA (analysis of variance) and post hoc tests (LSD) to analyze statistical variations between individual groups. ANOVA, also known as the analysis of variance is a statistical model used to analyze the differences or similarities among and between three or more groups. ANOVA with its F-test compares the averages of the variance between the groups of samples and the averages of the variance within samples. Analysis of variance is regarded as highly robust method. Statistical significance was taken at 5% alpha error and 10 % alpha error was taken as marginal.

Table 5. ANOVA and post hoc test for study facet

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
English language proficiency	Group 1	16	2,00	0,516	5,036	0,011	group 1- group 2 (sig= 0,004)
	Group 2	21	2,52	0,511			
	Group 3	6	2,50	0,548			group 1- group 3 (sig= 0,051)
	Total	43	2,33	0,566			

table continues

Table 5. ANOVA and post hoc test for study facet (continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
Informational support-slo students	Group 1	37	3,05	1,079	2,418	0,094	group 2 - group 3 (sig= 0,042)
	Group 2	56	3,34	0,959			
	Group 3	15	2,73	1,033			
	Total	108	3,16	1,025			
Nb.of interactions-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	37	3,68	1,582	3,846	0,024	group 1 - group 2 (sig= 0,008)
	Group 2	56	4,45	1,249			
	Group 3	15	4,33	0,900			
	Total	108	4,17	1,371			
Frequency of interactions-HCN'S	Group 1	37	2,86	1,475	3,046	0,052	group 1 - group 3 (sig= 0,021)
	Group 2	56	2,93	1,126			
	Group 3	15	3,73	0,704			group 2 - group 3 (sig= 0,025)
	Total	108	3,02	1,238			

Table 5 displays the results of ANOVA and post hoc (LSD) test for the study facet at the confidence interval  $\alpha=0,90$  ( $p\text{-value}=0,1$ ). Table includes only moderators with statistically significant differences. Other tested moderators can be found in Appendix C.

The results reveal that there is a significant statistical difference between the set groups according to four moderators, which were analyzed as in depended variables:

- English language proficiency,
- informational support provided by Slovenian students,
- number of interactions international students had with colleagues of other nationalities,
- frequency of interactions international students had with host country nationals.

On the bases of the results obtained in the analyses all other moderators included in research do not reveal to be significantly different among the three groups, since the  $p\text{-value}$  is higher than 0.1. Therefore, I could not assume there are correlations between other moderators (rather than moderators mentioned above) and the shape of adjustment process in the study facet.

The  $p\text{-value}$  for moderator English language proficiency is 0.011, and the post hoc test reveals there is a significant difference between the group 1 and 2 ( $\text{sig}=0.004$ ) and the group 1 and 3 ( $\text{sig}=0.051$ ).  $P\text{-value}$  for informational support provided by Slovenian students is 0.094, where post hoc test confirms there is significant difference between group 2 and 3 ( $\text{sig}=0.042$ ). Moreover, ANOVA test showed there is statistically significant difference between the groups according to the moderator described as the number of interactions international students had

with colleagues of other nationalities ( $p=0.024$ ), where post hoc test confirmed this fact and explained there is a significant difference between the group 1 and 2 ( $\text{sig}=0.008$ ). Finally, ANOVA test revealed the significant difference among groups according to depended variable measured in frequency of interactions international students had with host country nationals at  $p\text{-value}=0.052$ . Additionally, post hoc test confirmed this fact and explained that the significant difference lies between group 1 and 3 ( $\text{sig}=0.021$ ) and 2 and 3 ( $\text{sig}=0.025$ ).

Table 6. ANOVA and post hoc test for general facet

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
Previous international experience	Group 1	12	2,33	0,779	2,684	0,081	Group 1-group 2 (sig= 0,027)
	Group 2	18	1,68	0,686			
	Group 3	13	1,85	0,899			
	Total	43	1,91	0,811			
Emotional support-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	26	2,77	1,275	4,128	0,019	group 1-group 2 (sig= 0,006)
	Group 2	48	3,67	0,953			
	Group 3	35	3,17	1,723			group 2-group 3 (sig= 0,094)
	Total	109	3,29	1,356			

Table 6 displays the results of ANOVA and post hoc (LSD) test for the general facet at the confidence interval  $\alpha=0,90$  ( $p\text{-value}=0,1$ ). Table includes only moderators with statistically significant differences. Other tested moderators can be found in Appendix E.

The results reveal that there is a significant statistical difference between the set groups according to two moderators, which were analyzed as depended variables:

- a. previous international experience,
- b. emotional support received from colleagues of their own nationality.

The ANOVA results on the general facet did not confirm as many correlations between trajectories of adjustment and moderators as within the study facet. There were only two identified moderators that revealed statistically significant differences among groups of students. Previous international experience with  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.081 revealed there is a difference between the set groups. The further post hoc test confirmed that the significant difference lies in between group 1 and 2 with  $\text{sig}=0.027$ . Interestingly, students with  $\wedge$ -trajectory of adjustment expressed the highest average scores on previous international experiences. This would lead to conclusion that previous international experience are not facilitating moderator as anticipated. However, if we look at average scores on adjustment in general facet, students who represent the  $\wedge$ -trajectory group report highest average scores

through all three months of observation. This means that although students, who report a fall in degree of adjustment in the last period of observation, could in average still feel better adjusted than those who's degree of adjustment increases over the time.

Additionally, ANOVA confirmed the significant difference between groups according to the moderator described as emotional support received from colleagues of their own nationality with p-value 0.019. Post hoc test confirmed and revealed that the significant difference could be found between group 1 and 2 (sig=0.006), and group 2 and 3 (sig=0.094).

Table 7. ANOVA and post hoc test for interaction facet

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
Informational support-slo students	Group 1	30	3,00	1,114	3,697	0,028	group 1-group 2 (sig= 0,032)
	Group 2	45	3,60	1,009			
	Group 3	25	2,92	1,470			group 2-group 3 (sig= 0,022)
	Total	100	3,25	1,201			
Emotional support-slo students	Group 1	30	2,47	1,306	5,706	0,005	group 1-group 2 (sig= 0,026)
	Group 2	45	3,18	1,154			
	Group 3	25	2,12	1,641			group 2-group 3 (sig= 0,002)
	Total	100	2,70	1,396			
Nb.of interactions-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	30	3,83	1,783	3,555	0,032	group 1-group 2 (sig= 0,012)
	Group 2	45	4,64	0,609			
	Group 3	25	4,08	1,681			group 2-group 3 (sig= 0,096)
	Total	100	4,26	1,383			
Informational support-colleagues of their nationalities	Group 1	30	3,10	1,470	2,704	0,072	Group 1-group 2 (sig= 0,030)
	Group 2	45	3,76	,830			
	Group 3	25	3,28	1,595			
	Total	100	3,44	1,282			
Emotional support-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	30	2,87	1,548	3,676	0,029	Group 1-group 2 (sig= 0,008)
	Group 2	45	3,69	0,874			
	Group 3	25	3,28	1,568			
	Total	100	3,34	1,327			

table contiues



Table 7. ANOVA and post hoc test for interaction facet (continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
Nb.of interactions-HCN'S	Group 1	30	2,93	1,552	3,599	0,031	Group 2-group 3 (sig= 0,009)
	Group 2	45	3,27	1,268			
	Group 3	25	2,32	1,492			
	Total	100	2,93	1,451			
Emotional support-TUTOR	Group 1	30	1,03	2,399	4,265	0,017	group 1-group 2 (sig= 0,077)
	Group 2	45	2,04	2,393			
	Group 3	25	0,36	2,413			group 2-group 3 (sig= 0,006)
	Total	100	1,32	2,478			

Table 7 displays the results of ANOVA and post hoc (LSD) test for the interaction facet at the confidence interval  $\alpha=0.90$  ( $p\text{-value}=0.1$ ). Table includes only moderators with statistically significant differences. Other tested moderators can be found in Appendix D. The results reveal that there is a significant statistical difference between groups according to the following moderators:

- informational support provided by Slovenian students,
- emotional support provided by Slovenian students,
- number of interactions students had with colleagues of other nationalities,
- informational support provided by colleagues of other nationalities,
- emotional support provided by colleagues of other nationalities,
- number of interactions students had with host country nationals,
- emotional support received from tutor.

As the results reveal, the most of correlations between adjustment trajectory and moderators were confirmed in interaction facet. The  $p\text{-value}$  for moderator informational support provided by Slovenian students is 0.028, and the post hoc test adds there is a significant difference between the group 1 and 2 ( $\text{sig}=0.032$ ), and the group 2 and 3 ( $\text{sig}=0.022$ ).  $P\text{-value}$  for emotional support provided by Slovenian students is 0.005, where post hoc test confirms there is significant difference between group 1 and 2 ( $\text{sig}=0.026$ ), and group 2 and 3 ( $\text{sig}=0.002$ ). Similarly, ANOVA showed there is statistically significant difference between the groups according to number of interactions students had with colleagues of other nationalities ( $p=0.032$ ), where post hoc test confirmed this fact and explained there is a significant difference between the group 1 and 2 ( $\text{sig}=0.012$ ), and group 2 and 3 ( $\text{sig}=0.096$ ). Moreover, informational and emotional support provided by colleagues of other nationalities also seem to have influence on the trajectory of adjustment, where the  $p\text{-value}$  for the first

was 0.072 and the second one 0.029. ANOVA revealed significant difference among the groups according to similar depended variable, which was measured in number of interactions students had with host country nationals. P-value for this moderator is 0.031. Additionally, post hoc test confirmed this fact and explained that significant difference lies between group 2 and 3 (sig=0.009). More importantly, p-value for emotional support provided from tutor was 0.017 and this was additionally confirmed with post hoc test, which explained that there is a significant difference between group 1 and 2 (sig=0.077), and group 2 and 3 (sig=0.006).

On the bases of the demonstrated results, we can assume that interaction facet is the most susceptible to the influence of different moderators, especially those related to interactions.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Findings and implications**

The results obtained in the questionnaires regarding the first research question about the trajectory of adjustment were not consistent with main theoretical findings offered by existing literature.

Students in general did not have U-curve trajectory of adjustment. I believe there are several reasons explaining this fact. As first and the most obvious one, I would like to highlight the fact that my period of observation was short. As it can be seen from the Figure 1, where Black's model of adjustment is presented, the period of observation in that particular case lasted 49 months. To extend the period of observation for so long, was not an option in my case. The majority of students who come to Faculty stay here for one semester, that lasts from September till January. Therefore, it was not possible to follow and monitor students for such an extended period. Since the interval of living abroad is in case of students much shorter, it would be more rational to follow and ask students about degree of their adjustment and moderators more frequently and not only in the end of every month. Oscillation in the degree of adjustment would probably be more commonly reported, but due to the fact that students were not given the opportunity to report on their adjustment frequently enough, could not be detected.

However, it would be extremely difficult to maintain a sufficiently large group of students who would be prepared to answer on questionnaires several times a month. Therefore, I needed to remain realistic about the given number of questionnaires. Since the response rate has constantly declined, and I did not want to risk the possibility of not being able to maintain sufficiently large group of students. Moreover, I believe that results do confirm the general fact, that adjustment constantly improves over the time spend abroad.

The second fact for which I think it had an impact on result not being consistent with main theoretical findings, is the small sample size and problem of missing values. Since response

rate was constantly decreasing I have decided to use answers of all students who have answered to at least two out of three follow up questionnaires. In case one student did not answer on one of follow up questionnaire, I used average values of other students to fill up his missing values. As Takeuchi (2010) states relatively low response rates hinder international studies on adjustment process and this was also a case in my research.

Finally, why I think results do not demonstrate U-curve shape of adjustment, I would like to highlight the fact, that Black's research which introduced and enacted the U-curve trajectory of adjustment took place in early 90's. The globalization and technology in the last decade made an enormous leap forward. Since cultural shock according to Smalley (1963) also results of homesickness and feeling of rejection, nowadays modern technology could significantly contribute to mitigating cultural shock. The technology available nowadays, enables us to stay connected with families and friends in every corner of the world. Moreover, information about specific countries and its cultures are available in every step. I believe all this factors do influence the early cultural shock and diminish its consequences.

However, the results demonstrated a constant grow in degree of adjustment in all of the three facets. I find this rather logical, since adjustment is a dynamic process, which changes trough out the time and grows proportionally with gained experience. Insights about trajectories of adjustment indicate that the first month after the arrival to foreign country is actually the most stressful when students and also other expatriates should be given the most attention.

I believe this research offered us some important insights about the most common trajectories of students' adjustment that are important not only for international students but also for other expatriates. In average the trajectory of adjustment improves over the time spent abroad which means it can be moderated. It is important to understand, there are very different paths of adjustment each individual goes through and with deeper understanding and consideration of influencing moderators we can indeed manipulate the success rate of one's adjustment to the novel environment.

The further results obtained in analyses demonstrate moderate statistical evidence about the influence moderators have on adjustment process. Regarding study facet four moderatos were confirmed to influence particular trajectory of adjustment.

Firstly, statistical analyses confirmed the correlation between English language proficiency and different trajectories of adjustment. I believe there is a logical rationale behind this, since study courses for international students are held in English language. If student is fluent in language surly feels more confident and follows the courses with less difficulties. Moreover, understanding and memorizing learning material is essential for student's adaptation to new responsibilities.

If I ask myself, what is the most important factor that could influence adjustment to the study facet, the first thought goes to the ability to communicate, understand and conquer knowledge, which in our case happens in English language. Therefore, it is quite predictable to assume that students who have higher levels of English language proficiency can feel better adjusted to their study responsibilities.

In line with this results, I would like to propose to all parent institutions to offer English (or other used foreign language) courses to expatriates. Companies who send their employees on expatriation usually offer pre departure language training that should on my opinion continue once they start living in a new country.

Moreover, informational support received from Slovenian colleagues could be generally perceived as the most valuable support, since firsthand information about courses, teachers, and other manners related to study obligations are indeed mostly in domain of Slovenian students, who already dispose certain experience with studying at FELU.

Numbers of interactions international students have with colleagues of other nationalities is also a logical and predictable factor related to adjustment to study facet. Colleagues of other nationalities are important sources of informational and emotional support, since they share a common experience in facing the challenge of studying in another country. Finally, frequency of interactions international students had with host country nationals, was another moderator that seemed to have an influence on the trajectory of students' adjustment regarding the study facet.

As anticipated, previous international experience do seem to correlate with the degree and trajectory of adjustment. Moreover, emotional support was once again confirmed as a moderator that indeed has an impact on the adjustment process. In this particular case, the emotional support related to trajectory of adjustment was provided by students from their own nationality.

Not surprisingly results also confirmed the correlation between number and quality of interactions, and emotional and informational support received by three different populations: colleagues of other nationalities, Slovenian students, host country nationals and different trajectories of adjustment. Analyses confirmed the statistical difference between groups on the following moderators: informational support provided by Slovenian students, number of interactions with colleagues of other nationalities and frequency of interactions with host country nationals.

In my opinion interactions are even more important, when discussing adjustment process of students. As for example, corporate expatriates often have less free time that could be devoted to socializing. Students on the other hand, with exception of exam period, do have more time available to spend with friends and colleagues. More importantly, studying and the same

Faculty leads to sharing a common experience and searching for support among companions is quite predictable.

Consistent with both results obtained with analyses and theoretical findings, I would like to stress the importance of interactions for successful adjustment. Surly interactions are influenced by several subjective factors, but I still believe host Faculties and companies could give more attention to the area of establishing opportunities for international students and other expatriates to build and engage in social ties. Providing friendly environment and organizing social events for expatriates could simplify the establishment of strong social connections that are crucial for successful adaptation.

Results of statistical analyses relating to general facet of adjustment confirmed fewest correlations between moderators and different trajectories of adjustment. Moderators that seem to influence trajectory of adjustment are previous international experience and emotional support received from colleagues of their own nationality.

Black (1988) and Black and Stephens (1989) suggested general adjustment is about degree of psychological comfort, that expatriate feels regarding the host cultural environment. The main components of cultural environment are weather conditions, food and living conditions. Interestingly, results did not confirm the correlation between the existing stock of knowledge one has about the novel culture and the trajectory of adjustment, which is on my opinion result of generally rather low scores on this moderator. Students in overall score low on the existing stock of knowledge about Slovenian culture. Most students did not have primary knowledge regarding Slovenia and its culture. Consequently, I could assume that parent faculties did not provide student s with sufficient informational support. Averagely, students score 22.3 points out of maximum 55 points, which means students knew Slovenian culture around 40.6% at their arrival.

However, I should stress the perceived fact, that this was measured at the very early stage, right after students arrival to Slovenia. Very likely knowledge of Slovenian culture increased trough out the time, and it would be more appropriate to measure this variable more frequently. However, consistent with findings about poor knowledge about the host country, I would like to imply to parent institutions to give more attention to provision of useful information about the outgoing country and general facts about the novel environment. When we consider corporate expatriates, pre departure training programs should also aim at providing the expatriates with knowledge about the host country. A lot of evidence indicates that corporations still do not pay enough attention to prepare their corporate expatriates with information about the host country (Briscoe & Schuller, 2004).

On the other hand, previous international experience does seem to influence the trajectory of adjustment. Interestingly, students who's' degree of adjustment decreased in the last period of observation, seemed to have the most previous international experience. This finding does not

agree with main theoretical findings, which on the other hand emphasize the fact that previous international experience act as a facilitating moderator in adjustment process. However, I have calculated the average scores of student who represented three main trajectories of adjustment and found that group of students who's' degree of adjustment decreased in the last period actually expressed the highest degrees of adjustment in all three months of observation. The decrease in degree of adjustment in the last period of observation could be a result of exam period, which is according to several studies about international students one of the most stressful periods students go through.

Previous international experience is a subject that could not be influenced by institutions such as host faculty and multinational organization. On the other hand, it could be an important indicator of more probable success of adjusting to novel environment, when companies or faculties need to decide about the most appropriate candidate for expatriation.

Furthermore, the importance of interactions was once more confirmed. Seeking emotional support from colleagues of their own nationality was confirmed to be variable that statistically differs among different groups of students. This could also arise from the fact that some nationalities had more representatives of their culture.

I additionally looked how groups of students in general facet were formed, meaning, which nationalities represented each of the three groups. Some nationalities had more than one representative in all of the groups. For example, there were six Germans included in analyses, and four of them had the same geometrical shape of adjustment and were more importantly representatives of the third group. Italians had two representatives and both Italian students were part of group two. Moreover there were four French students included in analyses and interestingly, all four Frenches were included in all of three groups, meaning they had all different trajectories of adjustment. However, some students did not have any colleagues that came from their parent country and therefore could not get any emotional and informational support from them. Such students were for example a Columbian and Mexican who interestingly had the same geometrical shape of adjustment and were part of group two.

According to Farh et al. (2010), it is more reasonable to expect strong social ties among peers and colleagues who share the same or similar cultural background. This fact was confirmed and my suggestion once more appeals to host institutions, to keep in mind the importance of promoting social events that could motivate international students and other expatriates to more easily engage in social interactions with other colleagues.

Interaction facet demonstrated promising results of analyses. Statistical differences among groups of students were confirmed according to seven variables. Not surprisingly all of the seven moderators were related to interaction area. These moderators were: informational and emotional support received from Slovenian students, number of interactions with colleagues of other nationalities, informational and emotional support received from colleagues of other

nationalities, number of interactions with host country nationals and last but not least emotional support provided by tutor.

The demonstrated result should be a clear signal for host organizations to pay extra attention when choosing and providing suitable mentors or in our case tutors, who should be responsible for providing informational and emotional support to expatriates. Tutors are often the very first sources of information for incoming students and could play important role in facilitating the first contact and exposure to the new environment. Therefore, I believe Faculty needs to inform tutors, who volunteered to help new coming students, of the importance of their role in the process of adjustment. Moreover, tutors should be aware of the fact, how important is their task. Perhaps, it would be sensible to create a pool of student volunteers with existing international experience that would be available for providing assistance to newcomers. Additionally, I believe mentorship program could also be used as effective method for enhancing corporate expatriate's adjustments, since it does not require heavy financial burdens.

Finally, I would like to discuss, why I believe some moderators did not prove to have a significant influence on the adjustment process. Following moderators considered as depended variables did not demonstrate to have a statistically significant effect on the shape of adjustment:

- a. knowledge of host culture,
- b. prior logistic support,
- c. similarity between parent and host culture,
- d. there is a correlation between cultural intelligence,
- e. self-efficacy,
- f. openness and extraversion.

On my opinion results could turn out differently, if there was a larger sample of students involved in analyses. Several authors claim that small samples can moderate the correlations and consequently results do not reach statistical significance (Field, 2009; Takeuchi, 2010). If my sample was larger, it would be more likely, that I would be able to confirm correlations between number of moderators and trajectories of adjustment.

Finally, I find important to specifically look at answers regarding organizational and logistic support provided by Faculty of Economics. Although this moderator did not prove to have a statistically significant influence on the trajectory of adjustment, I still believe it plays an important and viable role in the process of adjustment. In average students assessed organizational and logistic support provided by Faculty of Economics as somewhat valuable. Logistic and organizational support was measured on a five-point scale, varying from not valuable at all to extremely valuable. The results obtained from questionnaires imply and indicate that there is still remaining some room for improvement in this area.

I appeal that Faculty tries to implement some extra activities to their existing routines handling with foreign, incoming students. I suggest that staff responsible for incoming students vents the existing practice and gives more attention to the fact, that they provide all necessary information in order to assist students in a friendly way. I also propose that Faculty organizes activities and events, where students are given the opportunity to get a better insight of what the Slovenian culture looks like. Moreover, Faculty should consider organizing regular social events that would encourage development of social bonds between students and host country nationals.

In relation to proposals mentioned above, I believe corporate organizations could also improve their practice of selection of the candidates suitable for expatriate assignments. Measurement of cultural intelligence, self-efficacy, cultural awareness and personal characteristics should become a common practice in the selection process, since these are all predictors of successful adaptation.

## **5.2 Limitations**

There were certain limitations identified once I have started with my empirical research. The main challenge was, that in order to get an insight about the adjustment process of international students, I had to submit follow up questionnaires and make sure I will be able to convince students to answer not only to the initial, but also on follow up questionnaires, on monthly bases. Luckily, Office of international affairs gave me the opportunity to present main goals and purpose of the research to new coming students in person. I believe this was crucial since a great number of students replied to my first-initial questionnaire. Unfortunately the response rate decreased with the follow up surveys and small sample size is on my opinion the main limitation in this master's thesis.

A viable solution would be to try to enlarge sample by contacting other Faculties that offer international study programs and asked them for participation. I believe bigger sample size would provide more accurate findings. As another limitation, I would like to stress the fact that since I needed to follow up each student separately, I had to use a code for each of them. Since the follow up surveys were forwarded via link to participants emails, I decided to use students' email address as a code. Unfortunately, some email addresses that were given in the first questionnaire were unrecognizable. Therefore, I may have lost a number of students that would be willing to participate in research. This fact also contributed to the smaller sample size.

Once I have started collecting data from students, I realized it would be sensible to measure degree of students' adjustment more frequently. Since results obtained from follow up questionnaires did not confirm the generally expected theoretical finding about the trajectory of adjustment I realized, I probably not have given students the opportunity to report about facing the cultural shock. Cultural shock might have happened before the first follow up



survey was administrated and therefore the results obtained from analyses cannot be entirely accurate. However, it would be rather unrealistic to expect students to answer on even more questionnaires. In addition to the limitations mentioned above, I have noticed certain imperfections when performing the statistical analyses. Perhaps students would need to be divided into groups by using different criteria. Moreover, groups are not entirely comparable since number of students varies in each group.

I have also realized, it would be more sensible to shorten the list of investigated moderators and more profoundly focus on the moderators that could be influenced by host institution. With this I would provide questionnaires that would be less time consuming and get a better insight on the possible improvements in terms of providing informational and logistic support by host faculty. Consequently, I would more easily provide useful and concrete recommendations for Faculty of economics when dealing with international students.

## **CONCLUSION**

Globalization effected many aspects of our lives. It has changed the way people perceive the world and blurred the boundaries between countries. Expatriation was always present, but it has reached its peak in the recent years. Globalization, not only has effected business area and caused that international assignment became common for many companies, but also lead to accelerated internationalization of education programs. For instance, few decades ago, people would found inconceivable that international mobility of students will be of such magnitude. Nowadays, students are given the opportunity to engage in many study mobility programs, and carry a part of their study abroad. As all other corporate expatriates international students also need to face and deal with challenges of living abroad.

As many researchers observed, some expatriates deal with them more successfully than others. This fact encouraged me to investigate what are moderators that influence ones' degree and trajectory of adjustment. Therefore, the main purpose of my master's thesis was to deepen the understanding of moderators that could influence degree and trajectory of students' adjustment. I also tried to examine students' phases of adjustment. I believe host institutions play a crucial role in providing informational and logistic support to incoming students and other corporate expatriates, that surly enhances degree of adjustment. Since Faculty of Economics Ljubljana finds international involvement important, I believe insights gained during research, are useful sources of information for improving the quality of services provided to international students. Additionally, providing higher level quality of service, could lead to accelerated international reputation of the Faculty. Moreover, I believe that results of my empirical study can also help other Business schools, to gain crucial knowledge in the field concerned.

Based on the results obtained in empirical study, I gained some insightful information about the adjustment process of international students. Interestingly, the results did not demonstrate

that trajectory of students' adjustment resembles U-curve, but showed that most common trajectory of students' adjustment is a rising curve. This insight indicates that the first month after the arrival to foreign country is actually the most stressful and students should be provided with most attention. My proposal is that host organizations implement activities and offer events where expatriates are given the opportunity to get a better insight about the main cultural components. Moreover, Faculties and also companies should consider organizing regular social events that would encourage development of social bonds between expatriates and host country nationals.

Additionally, results regarding the moderators influencing the trajectory of adjustment also demonstrated some interesting insights. Previous international experience does seem to influence adjustment process. Expatriates with extensive international experience will less likely face difficulties in their adjustment.

Besides previous international experience, being fluent in English language also seems to affect the trajectory of adjustment. Parent schools and companies should be responsible to rationally assess the level of knowledge of expatriates' English language that is necessary for successfully accomplishing study responsibilities. English language does not play a vital role only in the field of study obligations but is also necessary for smooth communication when engaging in social interactions. As such, host institutions could consider offering continuing language programs to international students.

Last but not least, I would like to emphasize the importance of interactions in the context of obtained results. Interactions do seem to highly influence students' trajectory of adjustment. Interactions are important sources of both emotional and informational support for international students. Moreover, results demonstrated that support provided by mentor also enhances students' adjustment. Providing suitable mentor to incoming students is a method that does not require high financial investment. Mentor or in our case tutor is a student who volunteered to assist new coming students with support that contributes to higher degrees of adjustment. Although, this method is already being used by FELU, I still believe there is some room for improvement. Some students in fact assessed support provided by tutor as poor and therefore, I recommend that Faculty wisely chooses mentors for incoming students. Moreover, tutors should be aware of the fact, how important is their task. Perhaps, it would be sensible to create a pool of student volunteers with existing international experience that would be available for providing assistance to newcomers.

Finally, as one of the possibilities for future research, I would propose a longitudinal research, where students are monitored on more frequent intervals. More attention should be given to questions about the moderators which may be directly affected by host institutions.

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## **APPENDIXES**



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## APPENDIX A: Adjustment process questionnaire (initial)

Dear Survey Participant:

Thank you for taking part in this research. Along with answers of business students in other countries your input will help us better understand adjustment process of students studying abroad. Your participation is highly valued.

This is the initial questionnaire, which will be followed by three shorter ones in about month intervals, so that we will be able to explore your adjustment process in time. For the success of this study it is essential that you participate in all three follow up questionnaires.

Your responses are completely confidential and under no circumstances will you be identified. The findings will only be used in aggregate. The data will be stored on secured computers only accessed by the research team.

There are no right or wrong answers. Simply answer as honestly as possible so that we can get an accurate understanding of the collective data.

Thank you in advance.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

(we need this to track your adjustment process in time)

1. **How do you evaluate the usefulness of information, which you have received about exchange by your home school, before your departure** (fill in the appropriate box)?

	1	2	3	4	5	
useless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	very useful

2. **How do you evaluate the logistic support (providing general information about Slovenia, partner institution, housing issues and help to do the paperwork), that you have received by your home school before your departure?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
useless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	very useful

3. **Please indicate the scope of your previous international experience.**

Please write down the number of countries you have already visited in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of those were located on other continents? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever lived, worked or studied abroad? (includes internships, au pair, volunteer work etc).

Yes

No

If yes, please write down the total duration of your stay abroad in months. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Assess the degree to which you knew the culture of Slovenia before arrival in the following categories (fill in for each category).

	Not at all	Little	Some	A lot	Almost all
A.) Language (grammar, vocabulary)	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
B.) Diet and eating habits	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
C.) Habits and customs of the locals	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
D.) Religious orientation of locals	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
E.) Working practice	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
F.) The educational system	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
G.) Level of development of the country and living conditions	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
H.) Cultural values of host country	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I.) Legal and economic system	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
L.) Arts and crafts about host country	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
M.) Rules for expressing non-verbal behavior.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

5. Please choose the response that best describes you in the items below.

I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural background.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree
-------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	----------------

I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Strongly agree

I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I change my non-verbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

6. Below there are different levels of English language proficiency listed. Select the levels that apply to your levels of speaking, understanding and writing in English.

### Speaking

- ☐ 1st LEVEL: I can simply communicate on general topics. I can use simple phrases and sentences. I can handle short social conversations but usually I cannot understand enough to communicate independently.
- ☐ 2nd LEVEL: I can deal with the most of the situations that require the use of English language. My speaking is quite liquid and spontaneous. I can be involved in discussions on general topics; I can restore a story and explain my viewpoint on a problem. I know how to defend its position.
- ☐ 3rd LEVEL: I can easily engage in a conversation and debate. I can clearly and fully describe a complex content. I can fluently and accurately express fine shades of a meaning.

### Understanding

- ☐ 1st LEVEL: I can understand phrases that are related to the simplest things (personal, family data). I can read short, daily text.
- ☐ 2nd LEVEL: I can understand extended speech. I can read articles and reports. I can understand contemporary literary prose. I understand the majority of films in English.
- ☐ 3rd LEVEL: I can easily read all kinds of written texts as well abstract and complex texts. I have no difficulty in understanding the language even when talking pace is fast.

### Writing

- ☐ 1st LEVEL: I can write letters and other simple texts (notices) which relate to current needs. I can write postcard, fill in personal information and hotel forms.

- ( ) 2nd LEVEL: I can write letters in which I describe experiences and impressions. I can write clear text on topics that interest me.
- ( ) 3rd LEVEL: I can form clear and appropriate style of text. I am able to write complex letters, reports, articles and reviews of professional or literary works.

**Below you will find 15 pairs of adjectives. For each adjective pair, please circle one point which you feel describes your personality. The closer to one number, the better that adjective describes you. Describe yourself as you see yourself at this moment.**

Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hardworking
Outgoing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Shy
Nervous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	At ease
Creative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uncreative
Headstrong	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Gentle
Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Irresponsible
Quiet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Talkative
Unagitated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Tense
Unartistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Artistic
Agreeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagreeable
Weak willed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Self-disciplined
Extraverted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Introverted
Anxious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Calm
Imaginative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Down to earth
Vengeful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Forgiving

7. **Below there are several statements. Please indicate the extent to which each of these statements applies to you?**

	Not at all true	Hardly true	Moderately true	Exactly true
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough	( )	( )	( )	( )
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I	( )	( )	( )	( )

	Not at all true	Hardly true	Moderately true	Exactly true
want.				
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	( )	( )	( )	( )
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	( )	( )	( )	( )
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations	( )	( )	( )	( )
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort	( )	( )	( )	( )
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	( )	( )	( )	( )
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions	( )	( )	( )	( )
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	( )	( )	( )	( )
I can usually handle whatever comes my way.	( )	( )	( )	( )

8. Please indicate your gender (encircle).      **Male**      **Female**

9. Write down the country in which you study? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Please write down your nationality \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!

## **APPENDIX B: Adjustment process questionnaire (follow up 1)**

Dear Survey Participant:

Thank you for your continued interest in this research. This is the first follow up questionnaire. Please report on you adjustment in the period between the initial questionnaire and now.

Please do not forget to write down your student registration code as this is the only way we can track your adjustment in time.

Again, we would like to stress that your responses are completely confidential and under no circumstances will you be identified. The findings will only be used in aggregate.

There are no right or wrong answers. Simply answer as honestly as possible so that we can get an accurate understanding of the collective data.

Thank you again.

The research team

Student registration number: \_\_\_\_\_

(we need this to track your adjustment process in time)

**1. Please indicate the degree to which you feel adjusted to the following elements at the moment.**

How adjusted are you to your study and responsibilities?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
not adjusted at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	completely adjusted

How adjusted are you to working and cooperating with other foreign students?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
not adjusted at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	completely adjusted

How adjusted are you to the transportation system in Slovenia (Ljubljana)?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
not adjusted at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	completely adjusted

How adjusted are you to the food in Slovenia (Ljubljana)?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
not adjusted at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	completely adjusted

How adjusted are you to the weather in Slovenia (Ljubljana)?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
not adjusted at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	completely adjusted

How adjusted are you to interacting with Slovenian inhabitants in general?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not adjusted at all	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	completely adjusted
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How adjusted are you to shopping in Slovenia (Ljubljana)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not adjusted at all	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	completely adjusted
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How adjusted are you to generally living in Slovenia (Ljubljana)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not adjusted at all	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	completely adjusted
---------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	---------------------

How adjusted are you to the entertainment available in Slovenia (Ljubljana)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not adjusted at all	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	completely adjusted
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**2. How much have you in the last month interacted (talked to, collaborated etc.) with Slovenian students?**

Please provide an estimation of the number of **Slovenian students** that you interacted with (encircle).

<b>None.</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>More than 15</b>
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How frequently have you interacted with your **Slovenian** colleagues (encircle)?

<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Several times a day</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Once per week</b>	<b>Once per month</b>
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Please evaluate how valuable were interactions with your **Slovenian colleagues** in terms of providing informational support to you (e.g., advice, suggestions).

<b>Not valuable at all.</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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Please evaluate how useful were interactions with your **Slovenian colleagues** in terms of providing emotional support to you (i.e., empathy, love, trust, caring, sharing emotions and experiences)

<b>Not valuable at all.</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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**3. How much have you in the last month interacted with students of your nationality?**

Please provide an estimation of the number of **colleagues of your nationality** that you interacted with (encircle).

<b>None.</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>More than 15</b>
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How frequently have you interacted **with colleagues of your nationality** (encircle)?

<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Several times a day</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Once per week</b>	<b>Once per month</b>
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Please evaluate how valuable were interactions with **colleagues of your nationality** in terms of providing informational support to you (e.g., advice, suggestions).

<b>Not valuable at all.</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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Please evaluate how useful were interactions with **colleagues of your nationality** in terms of providing emotional support to you (i.e., empathy, love, trust, caring, sharing emotions and experiences)

<b>Not valuable at all.</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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**4. How much have you in the last month interacted students of other nationalities (except your own and Slovenian)?**

Please provide an estimation of the number of **colleagues of other nationalities** that you interacted with (encircle).

<b>None.</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>More than 15</b>
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How frequently have you interacted with **colleagues of other nationalities** (encircle)?

<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Several times a day</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Once per week</b>	<b>Once per month</b>
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Please evaluate how valuable were interactions with **colleagues of other nationalities** in terms of providing informational support to you (e.g., advice, suggestions).

<b>Not valuable at all.</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
-----------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	------------------------	---------------------------

Please evaluate how useful were interactions with **colleagues of other nationalities** in terms of providing emotional support to you (i.e., empathy, love, trust, caring, sharing emotions and experiences)

<b>Not valuable at all.</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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**5. How much have you in the last month interacted with other Slovenian people?**

Please provide an estimation of the number of other Slovenian people that you interacted with (encircle).

<b>None.</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>More than 15</b>
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How frequently have you interacted with other Slovenian people (encircle)?

<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Several times a day</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Once per week</b>	<b>Once per month</b>
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Please evaluate how valuable were interactions with other Slovenian people in terms of providing informational support to you (e.g., advice, suggestions).

<b>Not valuable at all.</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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Please evaluate how useful were interactions with other Slovenian people in terms of providing emotional support to you (i.e., empathy, love, trust, caring, sharing emotions and experiences)

<b>Not valuable at all</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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**6. How much have you in the last month interacted with tutor?**

How frequently have you interacted with tutor in the last month (encircle)?

<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Several times a day</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Once per week</b>	<b>Once per month</b>
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Please evaluate how useful were interactions with tutor in terms of providing emotional support to you (i.e., empathy, love, trust, caring, sharing emotions and experiences)

<b>Not valuable at all</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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Please evaluate how valuable were interactions with tutor in terms of providing informational support to you (e.g., advice, suggestions).

<b>Not valuable at all</b>	<b>Marginally valuable</b>	<b>Somewhat valuable</b>	<b>Highly valuable</b>	<b>Extremely valuable</b>
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How do you evaluate organizational and logistic support (providing general information about life in Slovenia, planning social events, information about courses, housing) provided to you by host Faculty in the last month?



Not valuable at all	Marginally valuable	Somewhat valuable	Highly valuable	Extremely valuable
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7. How do you generally feel about your experience of living and studying in Slovenia (Ljubljana) at the moment? Please encircle the face that best describes your feelings.



## APPENDIX C: ANOVA and POST HOC results for study facet (statistically non-significant)

Table 1. ANOVA and POST HOC results for study facet (statistically non-significant)

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
Predeparture informational support	Group 1	16	3,00	1,033	0,901	0,414	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	21	3,29	1,102			
	Group 3	6	3,67	1,033			
	Total	43	3,23	1,065			
Predeparture logistic support	Group 1	16	2,88	1,147	0,357	0,702	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	21	2,90	1,179			
	Group 3	6	3,33	1,366			
	Total	43	2,95	1,174			
Previous international experience	Group 1	16	2,19	0,750	1,512	0,233	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	21	1,76	0,768			
	Group 3	6	2,17	0,983			
	Total	43	1,98	0,801			
Knowledge about slovenian culture	Group 1	16	20,75	8,668	0,474	0,626	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	21	23,52	8,400			
	Group 3	6	22,67	9,331			
	Total	43	22,37	8,513			
Cross cultural intelligence	Group 1	16	5,24	0,850	0,840	0,439	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	21	5,09	0,783			
	Group 3	6	5,59	1,053			
	Total	43	5,22	0,843			
Personal characteristics-extraversion	Group 1	16	8,25	5,410	1,438	0,249	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	21	8,43	4,578			
	Group 3	6	12,00	4,517			
	Total	43	8,86	4,950			

table continues

Table 1. ANOVA and POST HOC results for study facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
Personal characteristics- openes	Group 1	16	8,13	5,201	1,776	0,182	group 2- group 3
	Group 2	21	7,00	3,406			
	Group 3	6	10,50	1,975			(sig= 0,069)
	Total	43	7,91	4,128			
Self efficacy	Group 1	16	2,90	0,490	0,546	0,584	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	21	3,04	0,451			
	Group 3	6	2,88	0,279			
	Total	43	2,97	0,444			
Cultural similarity	Group 1	16	2,56	0,512	0,613	0,547	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	21	2,29	0,845			
	Group 3	6	2,33	1,033			
	Total	43	2,40	0,760			
Nb.of interactions- slo students	Group 1	37	3,00	1,054	0,452	0,638	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	2,86	0,923			
	Group 3	15	2,73	1,033			
	Total	108	2,89	0,980			
Frequency of interactions- slo students	Group 1	37	3,19	0,995	0,980	0,379	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	3,48	1,009			
	Group 3	15	3,40	0,910			
	Total	108	3,37	0,991			
Emotional support- slo students	Group 1	37	2,76	1,383	0,408	0,666	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	2,66	1,164			
	Group 3	15	2,40	1,502			
	Total	108	2,66	1,284			
Nb.of interactions- colleagues of their own country	Group 1	37	2,81	1,351	0,798	0,453	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	2,71	1,022			
	Group 3	15	3,13	0,990			
	Total	108	2,81	1,139			
Frequency of interactions- colleagues of their own country	Group 1	46	2,09	1,589	1,754	0,177	group 1 - group 2
	Group 2	61	2,57	1,147			
	Group 3	18	2,28	1,274			(sig= 0,066)
	Total	125	2,35	1,352			
Informational support- colleagues of their own country	Group 1	37	3,65	1,438	0,742	0,479	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	3,45	0,952			
	Group 3	15	3,80	0,775			
	Total	108	3,56	1,121			

table continues

Table 1. ANOVA and POST HOC results for study facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
Emotional support-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	37	3,16	1,444	0,875	0,420	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	3,29	1,232			
	Group 3	15	3,67	0,617			
	Total	108	3,30	1,247			
Frequency of interactions-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	37	2,51	1,216	0,193	0,825	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	2,39	0,985			
	Group 3	15	2,53	0,915			
	Total	108	2,45	1,054			
Informational support-colleagues of ther nationalities	Group 1	37	3,22	1,397	1,329	0,269	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	3,52	1,160			
	Group 3	15	3,80	1,146			
	Total	108	3,45	1,248			
Emotional support-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	37	3,14	1,512	1,185	0,310	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	3,36	1,182			
	Group 3	15	3,73	0,961			
	Total	108	3,33	1,283			
Nb.of interactions-HCN'S	Group 1	37	2,70	1,450	0,453	0,637	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	2,98	1,433			
	Group 3	15	2,80	1,207			
	Total	108	2,86	1,404			
Informational support-HCN'S	Group 1	37	2,84	1,500	0,185	0,832	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	2,95	1,182			
	Group 3	15	2,73	1,280			
	Total	108	2,88	1,302			
Emotional support-HCN'S	Group 1	37	2,43	1,573	0,111	0,895	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	2,46	1,401			
	Group 3	15	2,27	1,280			
	Total	108	2,43	1,435			
Frequency of interactions-TUTOR	Group 1	37	2,57	2,102	0,028	0,972	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	2,54	1,809			
	Group 3	15	2,67	1,759			
	Total	108	2,56	1,891			
Emotional support-TUTTOR	Group 1	37	0,95	2,571	0,200	0,819	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	1,29	2,606			
	Group 3	15	1,13	2,134			
	Total	108	1,15	2,517			

table continues

Table 1. ANOVA and POST HOC results for study facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically significant difference)
Informational support-TUTOR	Group 1	37	0,89	2,569	0,888	0,415	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	0,70	2,486			
	Group 3	15	1,67	2,410			
	Total	108	0,90	2,502			
Organizational and logistic support-host Faculty	Group 1	37	2,92	1,588	0,787	0,458	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	56	3,29	1,261			
	Group 3	15	3,13	1,246			
	Total	108	3,14	1,377			

#### Appendix D: ANOVA and POST HOC results for interaction facet (statistically non-significant)

Table 2. ANOVA and POST HOC results for interaction facet (statistically non-significant)

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically non-significant difference)
Predeparture informational support	Group 1	13	3,31	1,251	0,083	0,920	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	3,17	0,985			
	Group 3	9	3,33	1,414			
	Total	40	3,25	1,149			
Predeparture logistic support	Group 1	13	2,54	1,198	1,716	0,194	Group 1- group 3 (sig= 0,074)
	Group 2	18	3,06	1,162			
	Group 3	9	3,56	1,590			
	Total	40	3,00	1,301			
Previous international experience	Group 1	13	2,00	0,816	0,925	0,406	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	1,89	0,758			
	Group 3	9	1,56	0,726			
	Total	40	1,85	0,770			

table continues

Table 2. ANOVA and POST HOC results for interaction facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically non-significant difference)
Knowledge about slovenian culture	Group 1	13	25,08	9,587	0,981	0,384	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	21,22	8,537			
	Group 3	9	20,56	7,568			
	Total	40	22,33	8,695			
Cross cultural inteligenice	Group 1	13	5,14	0,948	0,982	0,384	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	5,37	0,879			
	Group 3	9	4,88	0,720			
	Total	40	5,18	0,870			
English language proefficiency	Group 1	13	2,15	0,689	2,202	0,125	group 1- group 2
	Group 2	18	2,50	0,514			(sig= 0,091)
	Group 3	9	2,11	0,333			group 2- group 3
	Total	40	2,30	0,564			(sig= 0,090)
Personal characteristics-extraversion	Group 1	13	9,31	5,234	0,885	0,421	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	7,50	3,618			
	Group 3	9	9,56	5,126			
	Total	40	8,55	4,523			
Personal characteristics-openess	Group 1	13	7,85	4,758	0,494	0,614	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	6,61	3,238			
	Group 3	9	7,78	3,383			
	Total	40	7,28	3,776			
Self efficacy	Group 1	13	2,87	0,534	0,878	0,424	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	3,08	0,444			
	Group 3	9	3,02	0,282			
	Total	40	3,00	0,446			
Cultural similarity	Group 1	13	2,46	0,776	1,230	0,304	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	2,11	0,758			
	Group 3	9	2,56	0,882			
	Total	40	2,33	0,797			
Nb.of interactions-slo students	Group 1	30	3,10	0,995	1,644	0,199	Group 1- group 2  (sig= 0,088)
	Group 2	45	2,98	1,011			
	Group 3	25	2,52	1,782			
	Total	100	2,90	1,251			

table continues

Table 2. ANOVA and POST HOC results for interaction facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically non-significant difference)
Frequency of interactions-slo students	Group 1	30	3,27	0,980	1,685	0,191	Group 2- group 3 (sig= 0,073)
	Group 2	45	3,53	1,100			
	Group 3	25	3,00	1,500			
	Total	100	3,32	1,188			
Nb.of interactions-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	30	3,13	1,252	0,644	0,528	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	45	2,84	1,065			
	Group 3	25	2,80	1,500			
	Total	100	2,92	1,236			
Frequency of interactions-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	36	2,36	1,355	0,031	0,969	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	53	2,38	1,390			
	Group 3	27	2,30	1,409			
	Total	116	2,35	1,372			
Informational support-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	30	3,70	0,794	1,093	0,339	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	45	3,53	1,140			
	Group 3	25	3,24	1,508			
	Total	100	3,51	1,159			
Emotional support-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	30	3,23	1,135	0,037	0,964	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	45	3,24	1,264			
	Group 3	25	3,32	1,492			
	Total	100	3,26	1,276			
Frequency of interactions-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	30	2,53	1,279	1,045	0,356	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	45	2,58	0,839			
	Group 3	25	2,20	1,225			
	Total	100	2,47	1,087			
Frequency of interactions-HCN'S	Group 1	30	3,07	1,484	0,960	0,387	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	45	2,84	0,928			
	Group 3	25	3,28	1,542			
	Total	100	3,02	1,279			
Informational support-HCN'S	Group 1	30	2,90	1,470	0,890	0,414	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	45	3,11	1,027			
	Group 3	25	2,68	1,547			
	Total	100	2,94	1,309			

table continues

Table 2. ANOVA and POST HOC results for interaction facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically non-significant difference)
Emotional support-HCN'S	Group 1	30	2,37	1,520	2,023	0,138	Group 2- group 3 (sig= 0,052)
	Group 2	45	2,76	1,384			
	Group 3	25	2,04	1,513			
	Total	100	2,46	1,473			
Frequency of interactions-TUTOR	Group 1	30	3,03	2,125	1,858	0,161	Group 1- group 3 (sig= 0,057)
	Group 2	45	2,58	1,515			
	Group 3	25	2,08	1,956			
	Total	100	2,59	1,843			
Informational support-TUTOR	Group 1	30	0,87	2,446	1,730	0,183	Group 2- group 3 (sig= 0,072)
	Group 2	45	1,47	2,380			
	Group 3	25	0,36	2,531			
	Total	100	1,01	2,456			
Organizational and logistic support-host Faculty	Group 1	30	2,73	1,574	1,909	0,154	Group 1- group 2 (sig= 0,055)
	Group 2	45	3,36	1,069			
	Group 3	25	3,04	1,541			
	Total	100	3,09	1,371			

#### Appendix E: ANOVA and POST HOC results for general facet (statistically non-significant)

Table 3. ANOVA and POST HOC results for general facet (statistically non-significant)

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically non-significant difference)
Predeparture informational support	Group 1	12	3,50	0,674	1,637	0,207	Group 2- group 3 (sig= 0,091)
	Group 2	18	3,06	1,211			
	Group 3	13	3,69	0,947			
	Total	43	3,37	1,024			
Predeparture logistic support	Group 1	12	2,58	0,996	1,929	0,159	Group 1- group 3 (sig= 0,057)
	Group 2	18	3,06	1,211			
	Group 3	13	3,54	1,391			
	Total	43	3,07	1,242			

table continues

Table 3. ANOVA and POST HOC results for general facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically non-significant difference)
Knowledge about slovenian culture	Group 1	12	25,33	10,697	1,327	0,277	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	20,22	7,377			
	Group 3	13	22,54	7,423			
	Total	43	22,35	8,499			
Cross cultural intelligence	Group 1	12	5,23	0,817	0,046	0,956	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	5,24	0,770			
	Group 3	13	5,32	1,012			
	Total	43	5,26	0,842			
English language proefficiency	Group 1	12	2,17	0,718	1,048	0,360	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	2,44	0,511			
	Group 3	13	2,23	0,439			
	Total	43	2,30	0,558			
Personal characteristics-extraversion	Group 1	12	8,50	4,543	0,932	0,402	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	8,28	4,561			
	Group 3	13	10,54	5,364			
	Total	43	9,02	4,803			
Personal characteristics-openess	Group 1	12	8,08	4,907	0,482	0,621	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	7,22	3,979			
	Group 3	13	8,69	3,706			
	Total	43	7,91	4,128			
Self efficacy	Group 1	12	2,86	0,502	1,132	0,333	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	3,10	0,455			
	Group 3	13	3,05	0,360			
	Total	43	3,02	0,444			
Cultural similarity	Group 1	12	2,50	0,674	0,360	0,700	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	18	2,39	0,778			
	Group 3	13	2,23	0,927			
	Total	43	2,37	0,787			
Nb.of interactions-slo students	Group 1	26	3,12	0,909	1,689	0,190	Group 1- group 3 (sig= 0,076)
	Group 2	48	2,90	1,016			
	Group 3	35	2,57	1,501			
	Total	109	2,84	1,180			
Frequency of interactions-slo students	Group 1	26	3,23	0,908	1,003	0,370	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	3,48	1,052			
	Group 3	35	3,14	1,332			
	Total	109	3,31	1,120			

table continues



Table 3. ANOVA and POST HOC results for general facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically non-significant difference)
Informational support-slo students	Group 1	26	3,12	1,143	0,738	0,481	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	3,38	1,024			
	Group 3	35	3,09	1,401			
	Total	109	3,22	1,181			
Emotional support-slo students	Group 1	26	2,81	1,470	0,163	0,850	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	2,71	1,148			
	Group 3	35	2,60	1,684			
	Total	109	2,70	1,404			
Nb.of interactions-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	26	2,96	0,999	0,172	0,842	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	2,90	0,973			
	Group 3	35	2,77	1,816			
	Total	109	2,87	1,299			
Frequency of interactions-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	34	2,15	1,480	1,322	0,270	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	52	2,56	1,056			
	Group 3	39	2,15	1,647			
	Total	125	2,32	1,383			
Informational support-colleagues of their own country	Group 1	26	3,62	1,098	0,764	0,468	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	3,65	0,911			
	Group 3	35	3,31	1,728			
	Total	109	3,53	1,266			
Nb.of interactions-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	26	4,35	0,797	0,283	0,754	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	4,21	1,414			
	Group 3	35	4,06	1,939			
	Total	109	4,19	1,487			
Frequency of interactions-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	26	2,77	0,908	2,121	0,125	Group 1- group 3 (sig= 0,049)
	Group 2	48	2,31	0,993			
	Group 3	35	2,17	1,485			
	Total	109	2,38	1,169			
Informational support-colleagues of ther nationalities	Group 1	26	3,42	0,987	0,005	0,995	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	3,44	1,183			
	Group 3	35	3,46	1,837			
	Total	109	3,44	1,377			
Emotional support-colleagues of other nationalities	Group 1	26	3,31	1,192	0,005	0,995	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	3,33	1,226			
	Group 3	35	3,34	1,781			
	Total	109	3,33	1,408			

table continues

Table 3. ANOVA and POST HOC results for general facet (statistically non-significant)  
(continued)

continued

Depended variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F-statistics	Significance	Results of post hoc test (statistically non-significant difference)
Nb.of interactions-HCN'S	Group 1	26	3,00	1,265	0,188	0,829	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	2,77	1,356			
	Group 3	35	2,83	1,932			
	Total	109	2,84	1,535			
Frequency of interactions-HCN'S	Group 1	26	2,88	1,177	0,153	0,859	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	3,00	1,238			
	Group 3	35	3,09	1,738			
	Total	109	3,00	1,394			
Informational support-HCN'S	Group 1	26	2,69	1,258	0,128	0,880	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	2,85	1,238			
	Group 3	35	2,86	1,768			
	Total	109	2,82	1,422			
Emotional support-HCN'S	Group 1	26	2,23	1,210	0,599	0,551	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	2,56	1,472			
	Group 3	35	2,26	1,721			
	Total	109	2,39	1,496			
Frequency of interactions-TUTOR	Group 1	26	3,00	1,697	1,788	0,172	Group 1- group 2 (sig= 0,062)
	Group 2	48	2,13	1,770			
	Group 3	35	2,37	2,211			
	Total	109	2,41	1,921			
Emotional support-TUTOR	Group 1	26	1,69	2,259	1,211	0,302	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	0,83	2,596			
	Group 3	35	0,77	2,647			
	Total	109	1,02	2,542			
Informational support-TUTOR	Group 1	26	1,42	2,436	0,989	0,375	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	0,58	2,500			
	Group 3	35	0,66	2,754			
	Total	109	0,81	2,569			
Organizational and logistic support-host Faculty	Group 1	26	2,88	1,423	1,317	0,272	no statistical difference between groups
	Group 2	48	3,38	1,282			
	Group 3	35	2,94	1,714			
	Total	109	3,12	1,470			