

**A study of international students' life situation -
a case study of the international students in University
of Twente**

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Abstract

The research aims to understand the life situation of the international student at University of Twente. The international trend is getting more popular in the Netherlands. There are many international universities in the Netherlands, and University of Twente is one of most active ones. In order to get more competencies, the university tries to improve the situation of the international students when they come to the Netherlands.

A qualitative research has been investigated. Over 10 international students have been interviewed. Student Union and the University of Twente are actually doing their good job; however, there is always something to improve. After the interview and theory reviewed, conclusions are also made in the end, both for Student Union and the University of Twente. The conclusion aims to find out what workshops and efforts can be done to help the international students to adapt the life more easily. Based on the W-curve and the theory framework, the main conclusions are summarized:

- 1) Dutch language: It is recommended to learn basic Dutch even though the University is international and the major is an English program
- 2) Data/information gathering: It can be useful to know about the culture as much as possible before start the new life in the Netherlands
- 3) Time management: Managing the time wisely. It helps to join some club activities besides studying

Key Words: Cross-cultural adaptation, Culture shock

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Chapter I: Introduction

The chapter aims to clarify the reason that the research is conducted and also the milieu of the situation. Research goals will be explained by research questions. The basic introduction of Student Union is also exposed.

1.1 Motivation and Background

Globalization is an inevitable fact that has influences not only in business world but also in the education field. To keep national competitiveness and attract talents worldwide, more and more Dutch Universities have tried to create an international learning environment. A continuum of this practice is the implementation of Higher Education and then International Higher Education. However, a foreign student, like any other expatriate, may have problems adjusting to a new country. Therefore this study examines the factors that cause students life situation in adapting and adjusting to life in the Netherlands.

There have been some quantitative studies surveyed about the satisfaction and life adaptation here at the University Twente. Besides, there was also a research about the involvement of the international students in 2006. (Geugies, 2006) However, there is not any qualitative research about the international students at University of Twente. Hence, we will make a research about the international students' adaptation in Enschede.

Purpose of the study

1. To understand the situation of life adjustment and factors for international students in University of Twente (UT)
2. To understand the problem of life adjustment and their responses/strategy
3. To help the future international students understand the situation and adjust to the life at UT better

Questions of the research

- a) What difficulties do international students encounter during adjustment process?
- b) How do international students deal with cultural shock?
- c) What are the indicators of the level of adapted international students at UT?
- d) How can Student Union/University help the international students?

1.2 Student Union

Student Union focuses on providing high quality student facilities and highly qualified academic graduates to society. Both objectives are expressed in the mission statement of Student Union Organization stated below:

"To stimulate academic development and the welfare of students at the University of Twente."

Furthermore Student Union concentrates on supporting its affiliated associations and promoting contact between students and local, regional and national businesses.

Student Union also organizes several events like Create Tomorrow, the Skills Certificate and the Business Course. Besides all that she is responsible for the Xtra-card, run the UnionBar, the UnionShop and the Atrium. She is also responsible for the Pakkerij, the studentbuilding in the centre of Enschede, the Bastille and the Watersportcomplex.

In the year 1997, the campus and student facilities were under review. This review was prompted by a prominent desire to give an extra impulse to the roles and positions of students and student organizations at the University of Twente. Since 1997, students and employees of the university have been working on a new way of managing campus and student facilities.

In May 1998, this effort took shape in a vision on the future of campus and student facilities of the UT. In this vision, the Executive Board of the university indicated that it wanted to move towards a form of management of the campus facilities in which student government takes shape as part of a broad academic education and in which student government is granted as much responsibility as possible. The student government will manage three buildings: the Bastille, the

Pakkerij and the water sports terrain. In performing its duties, the student government will be supported by the Student Affairs service department, currently Student Services & Campus (DiSC). In May, the Executive Board decided to create a new form of student government: Student Union

After this decision was made by the Executive Board, the Intermediary Government Student Campus started in September 1998 with a threefold assignment: to take over the daily affairs of both the Council for Campus Facilities and the Campus Board, to prepare a proposal for the administrative, organizational and financial side of Student Union, and to combine the development of Student Union with the plans to renovate the Bastille. This process, which eventually resulted in the current Student Union, took into account the ideas and wishes of students and university employees. It took a lot of consultation with umbrella organizations and student associations before Student Union finally took shape in its current form.

The final plans for Student Union were sent to the Executive Board in January 1999

After the Executive Board approved the plans and the Central Student Council gave its consent, the bylaws could be recorded by a notary public. On July 2nd, 1999, Student Union Foundation was a reality.

As indicated, the Council for Campus Facilities (RCV) was the predecessor of Student Union. The RCV had fifteen seats, thirteen of which were occupied by students. They were elected by the student population. The students in the RCV hailed from three different political parties. By commission of the University Council, the RCV governed the campus, together with the Campus Board (CC). The CC consisted of two students, who worked for the board full-time. The CC prepared the policy that was decided on by the RCV at their monthly meetings. Their decisions were executed by Campus Facilities. This service department later merged with Student Affairs to form the Student Services & Campus (DiSC) department. The Student Affairs department was responsible for, among other things, student registrations, the student psychologists and the student counselors. The Campus Facilities department managed for example the arts and sports facilities. The latter service department was headed by the Manager of Campus Facilities, who

answered to both the Executive Board and the RCV. There were many bottlenecks in this structure and the introduction of Modernization of University Government Act made this type of government impossible. Governing bodies like the University Council and the RCV were discontinued and employee and student participation took its place.

Summary

The chapter explains the importance and background of this project. The condition of the international students' adaptation needs to be improved. Student Union can also discover which aspects of the service can be enhanced and what kinds of workshops can be necessary to organize. Therefore, literature reviewed is discussed in the next chapter to examine the condition of University of Twente.

Chapter II: Theory

This chapter aims to provide relevant literature regarding to international students' cross-cultural adaptation process. Yet it is important and fundamental to understand the nature of cross-cultural adaptation as the background knowledge for the problem solving. The researcher will briefly review theories related to the phenomena when people encounter a new culture.

People crossing culture boundaries are referred to as sojourners, which include immigrants, refugees, tourists, business executives and students. Plenty literatures have studied the phenomenon that happen to them when they first encounter a new culture, In the section, The researcher will review the past literature and theories to explain the situation international students may encounter. First part reviews the key concepts and stages of culture shock, Second part compares several similar terms such as adaptation, adjustment, acculturation and assimilation. Third part reviews different perspectives of cross-cultural adaptation process. Last part describes special issues that international students face during adaptation process.

2.1 Culture Shock

The term “culture shock” vividly illustrates how people react to a new culture. This well-known term was first put into words in 1960 by an anthropologist, Oberg, after observing the reactions of American workers in Brazil (cited in Pusch, 2004). He identified six key aspects of culture shock:

- (1) strain due to the effort required to make the necessary adaptation to the unfamiliar situations;
- (2) a sense of loss and feelings of deprivation about friends, status , profession and possessions;
- (3) a feeling of rejection that is rejected by and/or rejecting members of the new culture;
- (4) confusion in role, role expectations, values, feelings and self-identity;
- (5) surprise, anxiety, and even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural difference;
- (6) feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope in the alien situation.

It seems that “culture shock” implies a negative feeling or experience of an unpleasant surprise and shock. However, if managing effectively there can be positive result beyond stress and disoriented, such as a sense of well-being, heightened self-esteem, cognitive openness and flexibility, increased tolerance for ambiguity , enhanced confidence in self and others, and competence in social interactions (Cushner & Karim, 2004)

Oberg (1960, cited in Jandt, 2004) also proposed four stages in culture shock that referred to the progression of experiences throughout intercultural interactions. In 2004, Jandt reviewed several researchers and summarized a five-stage process.

The first stage is the initial contact, or is called “honeymoon stage” or initial euphoria”. In this stage, everything is new and exciting, For example, international students may view everything in the host countries fresh and enjoyable.

The second stage is the disintegration which includes losing familiar cues and feeling hostile with the difference experienced in the new culture. For example, international students may experience feelings of inadequacy and withdraw or become isolated due to his or her familiar ways of behaving are no longer appropriate or functional.

The third stage is reintegration which integrates new cues and increases ability to function in the new culture. However, international students may still feel angry or resentful toward the new culture for being different.

The fourth stage is gradual adjustment when one moves forwards to gradual autonomy and sees good and bad elements in both home and new cultures. International students may become more comfortable in the new culture as more things are predictable.

The fifth stage is reciprocal interdependence, which the person has achieved biculturalism through it may take years to this final stage or even not everyone could reach this stage.

2.2 Adaptation, Adjustment, Acculturation and Assimilation

There are several terms including adaptation, adjustment, acculturation and assimilation that look alike and sometimes even used interchangeably. These terms all describe changes occurring when individuals or groups have contact with a different culture (Hannigan, 1990). However, these terms without clear differentiation may cause some difficulties in understanding studies. As a result, following review tries to give a brief summary of their definitions.

Some researchers argue that adaptation is an umbrella term that encompasses other similar but narrower terms, such as culture shock, assimilation, adjustment and acculturation (Kim, 1995). In Hannigan's (1990) research, his review of adaptation definitions supported the above proposition. For example, Pruitt (1978) suggested that adaptation include two components, which are adjustment and assimilation. Also Ruben and Lealey (1979) defined adaptation as having three dimensions, which are psychological adjustment, culture shock and intercultural effectiveness. In the research, the term, cross-cultural adaptation would be used mainly.

After reviewing past definitions of several researchers, Hannigan (1990) summarized that adjustment could be conceptualized as a psychological process of achieving harmony between the individual and the environment. Furthermore, he proposed that adaptation encompasses cognitive attitudinal, behavioral, and psychological changes in an individual who lives in a new or foreign culture. And these changes result in the individual's movement from rough to feeling at home in the new environment.

Both adaptation and adjustment are usually used to describe individuals while acculturation and assimilation tend to refer to groups rather than individuals by some researchers (Hannigan, 1990). Acculturation was defined by Berry, Kim and Boski(1987) in relation to two dimensions (cited in Jandt, 2004). First dimension is the value placed on maintaining one's original cultural identity. Second dimension is the value given to maintaining relationships with other groups in one's own culture (see Figure 2.1)

		Value to maintain original cultural Identity	
		Yes	No
Value to maintain relationship with other group	Yes	Integration	Assimilation
	No	Separation/Segregation	Marginalization

Figure 2.1, Dimensions of Acculturation , Source: Jandt,2004

Assimilation involves the process of giving up original cultural identity and becoming part of a new society. Integration occurs when one has a positive relationship to a new society as well as to one's original culture. The words biculturalism and pluralism have also been used to describe integration. Separation or segregation occurs when one retains one's original culture without participating in the new culture. Marginalization refers to losing relationship with both the original and the new society.

In the study, the researcher would view adaptation as a broader concept that embraces adjustment in order to make the process of cross-cultural adaptation more complete. Further, this study investigates and interviews with international students individually, and the researcher would use adaptation instead of acculturation

2.3 Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Adaptation is a complex and dynamic process and an inevitable part of intercultural interactions. Through extensive review of related literature on cross-cultural process, Anderson (1994) divided them into the following four groups: the recuperation model, learning model, the combination of recovery and learning model and homeostatic model.

The first group is the recuperation model, which holds recovery from the shock to be the mechanism for accommodation to life in strange new lands. The most famous and pivot point is the culture shock that has been discussed in detail in previous part. In 1955, Lysgaard (cited in Pusch, 2004) first identified the “U-curve” of adaptation that people experienced entering a new culture. This view depicts an initial “high” occurring at cultural entry; followed by a bottoming out resulting from cultural confrontation; finally a climb up and out to cultural acceptance and adaptation (see Figure 2.2). Later in 1993, Zeller and Mosier expanded it into a “W-curve” which explains the up and down during the adaptation process. (Figure 2.3)

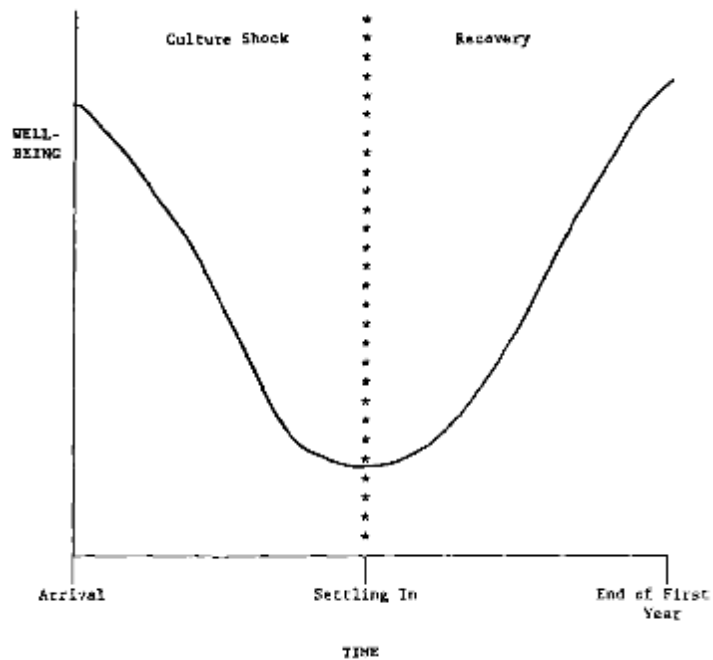


Figure 2.2 U-Curve of Adapting to a New Culture

Source: Zapf, 1991

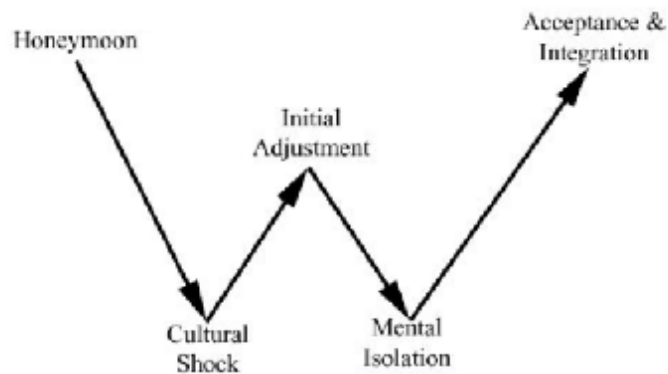


Figure 2.3. W-Curve of Adapting to a New Culture, Zeller and Mosier (1993)

There are five stages in the W-curve. First, the honeymoon starts before students first arrive on campus. It usually begins once a student has chosen and been accepted to a college and builds as students attend introduction weeks, get their housing assignments, and begin planning for school to start. Second, as culture shock, the newness of the college culture begins to wear off; freshmen begin to deal with the reality of all the adjustments they are going through. In the residence halls students are adapting to roommates, sharing a room, shared bathrooms, lots of neighbors, eating in a cafeteria, and the diversity that comes with meeting people from different backgrounds and cultures. Third, as initial adjustments are made, freshmen experience an upswing as they have successfully managed many of the issues that have come their way. Simply overcoming the culture shock stage brings about a sense of well being. They fall into a routine as they gain confidence in their ability to handle the academic and social environment of college. Forth, although the physical environment has become more familiar, new students will relapse into a sense of isolation as they make comparisons between their new culture and their more familiar home culture. At last, as students become more involved in campus opportunities, gain some history with new friends, get to know some faculty and staff members, they begin to feel a true connection to the campus community. They begin to have a more balanced and realistic view of the university, seeing and integrating the good experiences with the challenges. (Zeller and Mosier, 1993)

A modern variant is the view of psychological crisis as personality or identity crisis. This view suggests that during initial contact with a new culture, the sense of familiar oneself that provides the cues for one's behavior as well as one's sense of identity is torn away. Through working out of new identities incorporating both old and new selves will then lead to the recovery stage. Although these theories are foremost and insightful, the greatest criticism is that these are more descriptions of phases of adaptation than theoretical frameworks of how and why individuals move from one stage to the next (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Consequently, more researchers explored this field with other perspectives and proposed other models.

The second group is the learning model, which holds that in order to adapt, they must learn the parameters of the new sociocultural system and acquire the sociocultural skills. One school of this model encompassing communication theories that argues intercultural communication is the core of cultural adaptation. Therefore, cross-cultural adaptation is a process of learning the communication skills necessary for effective social interaction while communication failures are inevitable in a new culture (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; cited in Anderson, 1994). As devoted in communication and cross-cultural adaptation field, Kim (1995) continues to renew his communication model of the structure of cross-cultural adaptation. He proposed that in the mode several factors influence the adaptation, which includes personal and social communication, environment, predisposition and intercultural transformation. Another school of the learning model contains social learning theories that emphasis on the behavior learning itself. Cross-cultural adaptation is defined as learning both perceptual rules for interpreting one's environment and behavioral rules for comporting oneself within it (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Further, more learning theories frameworks were adopted to explain the adaptation process such as transformative learning theory (Taylor, 1994). Through the transformation of perspective, one alternates one's perspective to effectively understand and accommodate the demands of a new culture and develops an adaptive capacity.

The third group is the combination of recovery and learning model, which views cross-cultural adaptation as a step-by-step psychological journey that one learns to move from the fringes to the centre of a new culture. Bennett (1986, cited in Anderson, 1994) reviews cross-cultural adaptation as the progression in cognitive "sensitivity". As one's experience of cultural

difference becomes more sophisticated, one learns to become a more competent intercultural communicator. One may move from clear adaptation stage of “ethnocentric” where cultural difference are in denial, defense or minimization to a stage if “ethno-relative” where new culture are integrated with original culture.

The forth group is the homeostatic model which views cross-cultural adaptation as a dynamic and cyclical process of tension reduction. In other words, it is a process of reducing the internal imbalance (ex, tension, drive, need, uncertainty) when confronting with a new culture and resulting in subsiding into normal operate mode. The assumption is that one operates in a “steady-state” mode until dynamic events, upheavals, or disruptions pushes one out of equilibrium.

In summary of the four perspectives, Anderson (1994) further proposed six general principles that apply to cross-cultural adaptation:

- ✓ It involves adjustments
- ✓ It implies learning
- ✓ It implies a stranger-host relationship
- ✓ It is cyclical, continuous and interactive
- ✓ It is relative
- ✓ It implies personal development

Among these principles, cross-cultural adaptation embraces a more holistic view. Looking at international students’ adaptation process, the researcher found it contains not only adjustment or recovery from shock or imbalance, but also includes learning and personal development. In other words, international students learn and grow continuously throughout the adaptation process. This also serves the base knowledge for the cross-cultural training that aims to assist the learning process of adapting to a new culture for international students.

Anderson (1994) summarized the theory from the past and concluded the six principles. For instance, W-curve from Zeller and Moiser can be categories to the principle of “it is cyclical, continuous and interactive.” The physiological adjustment can be re-entry when they return to their own countries..

2.4 Cross-Cultural Adaptation of International Students

What characterize international students from other sojourners are the academic goal and school environment. During cross-cultural adaptation processes various challenges they may face, such as finding living accommodations, learning the academic culture and different education system, making new friends and developing a new social support system (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). However, the most salient challenge for international students is to make a successful intercultural transition as quickly as possible and still remain focused on their academic mission (Cushner & Karim, 2004). When failing in adapting to a new culture, international students may suffer both psychologically and physically, such as sleepiness, appetite disturbance, indigestion, physical exhaustion, homesickness, depression, disorientation, and feelings of isolation and alienation.

The adaptation problems vary among different international students and several factors have been indicated that influence their adaptation process, such as demographic factors, (ex, age, gender, marital status, country of origin), individual factors (ex, prior international experience, predictor knowledge, language competence students' goals, personality characteristics, such as self-efficacy, extroversion, sensitivity, flexibility, assertiveness), contextual factors (ex, availability of resources, social support network, size of community, racial and ethnic diversity on campus) (Kitsantas, 2004 ; Poyrazli & Kavabaugh, 2006) Those factors could also give insights to assist facilitate the cross-cultural adaptation process of international students. For example, host countries could provide social support network and international students could establish their goals and improve language ability.

Some researches (Cui & Van Den Berg, 1991; Stening & Hammer, 1992) use the term, effectiveness, to describe that a person can function effectively in other culture. Competence (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004) and success (Arthur & benett, 1995) are also commonly used. Therefore, to understand competencies/indicators for successful cross-cultural adaptation, a general review of literature on cross-cultural productivity will be conducted. In recent years, MPQ (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001) has received amount of attention in empirical research. The instrument is designed to measure a specific band of individual dispositions that are associated with different facets of intercultural competencies; it comprises five dimensions: Cultural Empathy (CE), Open-mindedness (O), Social Initiative (SI), Emotional Stability (ES) and Flexibility (F). CE reflects the ability and sensitivity to read the feelings and thoughts of people from other cultural background. O is defined as having an open and nonjudgmental attitude towards people with different social norms and values. SI shows the use of proactive strategies in social situations and taking initiatives in problem solving and interpersonal relations. ES represents the ability to handle stressful situations and regulate emotional reactions under difficult circumstances. F demonstrates the capacity to tolerate uncertainties, and the ability to learn from past experiences and to adjust one's behaviors where necessary (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001) A sample item for each of the five dimensions includes "Understands other people's feeling (CE)," "Is interested in other cultures (O)," "Makes contacts easily (SI)," "Forgets setbacks easily (ES)," and "Changes easily from one activity to another (F)." (Leong, 2007)

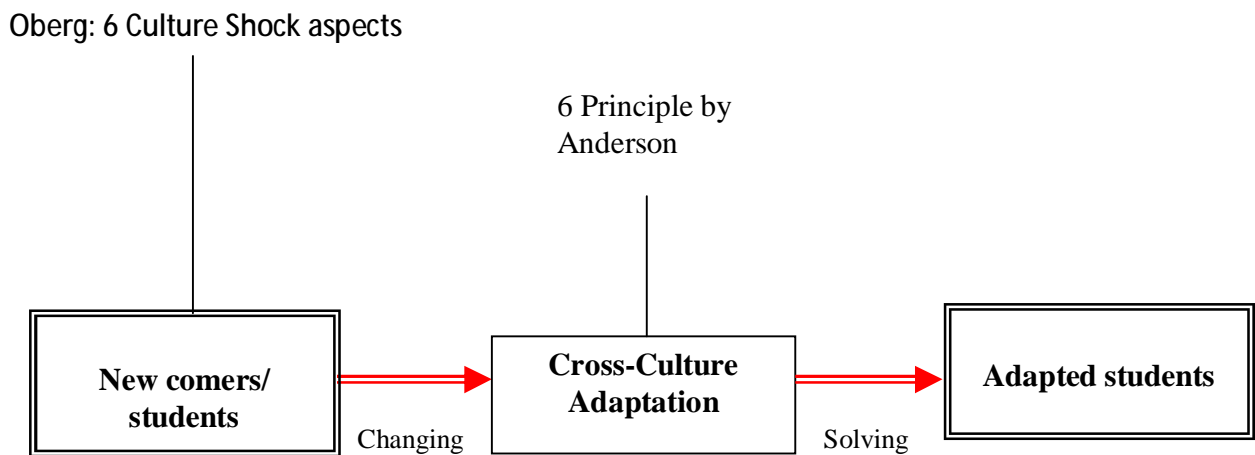
Summary

This chapter explains the theory background of this project. The research discusses the terms of adaptation, adjustment and cross-cultural adaptation and indicators of the adaptation, as well as the indicators. There a few theories introduced in the chapter, but the next chapter the researcher outlines the theory that will be used for the research.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter contains three sections of research methodology including research framework, research method and research participants. It also shows how the research is conducted theoretically.

3.1 Research Framework



Graph 3.1 Framework

The graph basically elaborates the theory framework of the thesis. In the beginning, we have new students coming from different culture backgrounds. With the six aspects/characteristics, we find out the situations of the new students suffering from culture shock. Furthermore, Anderson examine and summarized the past literature as four models/groups for their changing adaptation process, however, he did not think anyone of the model can completely explain cross-culture adaptation. At first, the sojourners would somehow go through culture shock, after the process of changing, they would either somehow get more used to the new life, or dropped off. Therefore, Anderson holds the six principles can apply to the adaptation. Later, we will have the new situation with (more) adapted lives.

For interview questions, based on the theory framework, we contemplated as follows. As for the background of the interviewees, different nationalities can have different levels of culture shock (Poyrazli & Kavabaugh, 2006). U curves was based on the end of one year, so we proposed the questions: *Where do you come from? How long have you been in the Netherlands?*

For process aspect, Oberg (1960) asserted that in the beginning people felt excited in the honeymoon stage, however, not everyone experienced all the stages. Moreover, based on the six aspects, the sojourners may suffer different frustrations. Therefore the researcher proposed the questions: *How did you feel when you arrived in the Netherlands?(ex, excited, loss or disappointed?) When you arrive here, what things you did not like/adapt very much? What is the biggest frustration you experienced here? How did you fix it?* Based on the U curve theory, the researcher proposed: *Was there any turning point for you to adapt the Dutch culture better?* Anderson (1994) proposed 6 principles to summarize the previous literature. Based on the principles, we proposed the questions: *Did you usually feel that you are an outsider? When? (Can you give me an example?) What are the difficulties do you have at the moment compared with in the beginning? Do you feel completely integrated or sometimes still separate?*

As for the practical suggestions, we try to find out what Student Union can help for the students and conclude their strategies. *Did you receive any help from your school or any local organizations? What do you think the University can do for you? Do you have some suggestions for the future students for adapting the Dutch life?*

According to the theory of Anderson(1994), four groups were analyzed to come out with six new principles, which is used in this research.

3.2 Research Methods

As qualitative approach gave detailed descriptions of the case being studied and provided analysis of themes or issues (Stake, 1995), the researcher chose qualitative approach in order to obtain through understanding of international students' adaptation process. Further, a case study approach was adopted an in-depth analysis of international students within one specific case to

serve an explorative study. In more detail, the resources of data were mainly acquired through semi- structure interview. The interviews were adopted as primary data resources. Process of data analysis is presented in the following steps. In the first step, all interview contents that recorded were transformed as transcripts. In the second step, similar concepts were put into one category. For example, similar concepts of excitement, fresh, worry, scare, loneliness and homesick were put into the same category of Honeymoon. . (See figure 3.1)

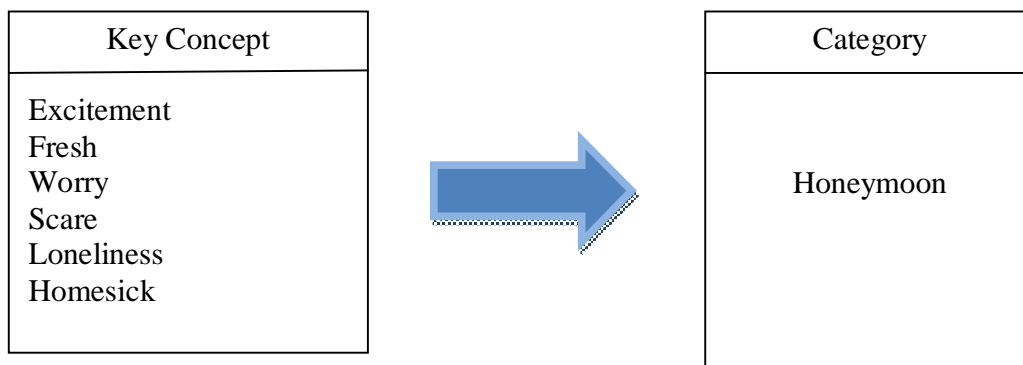


Figure 3.1 Induction of Category

In the next step, categories were further put into one theme. For example, categories of psychological experiences, difficulties and strategies during the adaptation process were put into one theme of adaptation process (See Figure 3.2).

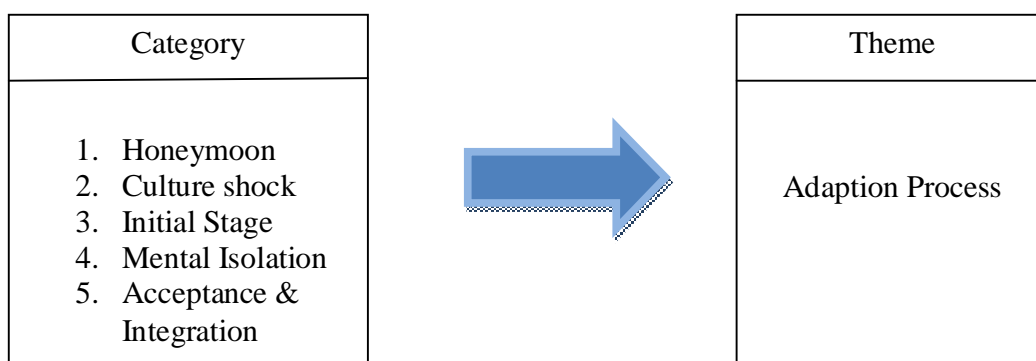


Figure 3.2 Induction of Theme

The next step was to combine key concepts, categories and themes together to form the list of coding (See Table 3.1). However, the second step to the last step was conducted several times during the process of data analysis to confirm the findings of this study. Some codes were modified after further examinations.

Theme	Category	Key Concepts
1 Adaptation Process	1-1 Honeymoon	1-1-1 Excitement
		1-1-2 Fresh
		1-1-3 Worry
		1-1-4 Scare
		1-1-5 Loneliness
		1-1-6 Homesick
	1-2 Cultural Shock	1-2-1 Language and Communication
		1-2-2 Food
		1-2-3 Accommodations
		1-2-4 Gender
		1-2-5 Weather

Table 3.1 Example of Coding List

3.3 Research Participants

The number of international students has been growing each year (see table 3.2) In 2002, there were only 186 international students pursuing their academic degrees as bachelor/master. In 2008, there were 950 international students, which was five times more than it was in 2002.

Total number of students enrolled UT

Total UT

	Total	Netherlands	Foreign	Percentage foreign
2002	6594	6408	186	2.8%
2003	7058	6782	276	3.9%
2004	7357	7013	344	4.7%
2005	7673	7186	487	6.3%
2006	7849	7242	607	7.7%
2007	8061	7295	766	9.5%
2008	8245	7295	950	11.5%

Total bachelor plus pre-malignant star (from 2006's without pre)

	Total	Netherlands	Foreign	Percentage foreign
2002	1990	1938	52	2.6%
2003	3077	3009	68	2.2%
2004	4175	4040	135	3.2%
2005	4821	4525	296	6.1%
2006	4806	4401	405	8.4%
2007	5202	4645	557	10.7%
2008	5409	4711	698	12.9%

Total Master (from 2006 incl pre-malignant's)

	Total	Netherlands	Foreign	Percentage foreign
2002	34	13	21	61.8%
2003	153	63	90	58.8%
2004	432	275	157	36.3%
2005	951	781	170	17.9%
2006	1894	1705	189	10.0%
2007	2362	2158	204	8.6%
2008	2631	2345	286	10.9%

Table 3.2 Resources: CSA

Research participants of the study comprised of 14 master international students, including 2 preliminary interview students and twelve formal interview students. The profile of research participants are presented as Table 3.3. Most participants were interviewed in English except 2 interviewees from China and Taiwan, which creates a relief atmosphere for them to express their opinions.

Participant	Gender	Nationality	Time in the Netherlands
A	Male	Africa	17 months
B	Male	Middle East	23 months
C	Male	Asia	11 months
D	Male	Asia	23 months
E	Female	East Europe	11 months
F	Male	Asia	6 months
G	Male	Asia	11 months
H	Male	East Europe	11 months
I	Female	East Europe	11 months
J	Female	East Europe	11 months
K	Female	Asia	18 months
L	Male	Europe	11 months

Table 3.2 Profiles of research Participants: International Students at UT.

In the beginning, the researcher contacted international students through email. However, the respondent rate was low, therefore, snowball sampling was used to increase the number of participants. The instruments used in this study were semi-structure outlines for international students. It was developed by the researcher and English outline questions were pre-interviewed by two international students before conducted. The interview time was about fifty minutes on average.

Summary

The researcher explained how the questionnaire was designed and how the participants were chosen. In addition, the major frame work of the project was also presented. Based on the mechanism of the framework, the results will be synthesized in the next chapter.

Chapter IV: Results

Based on the theory of W-curve (Zeller and Mosier, 1993), the researcher analyzes the results with five stages: honeymoon, culture shock, initial adjustment, mental isolation and acceptance & integration.

4.1 Honey Moon

Excitement and Fresh

When international students arrived in the Netherlands, many of them felt excited and fresh not only because it is a new country but everything was new. *“When I took the train from Amsterdam, I saw green and flat land and lots of bikes. I was shocked. I had been to other European countries, like Germany and UK, but they didn’t have many bikes. I did not know Holland is the kingdom of bikes. I was very shocked!”* (Student K) New environment attracted students. It is the honeymoon stage, the students feel excited and few (Oberg, 1960). *“It was nice when I came here. Everything was so new, and it was summer. I walked to campus and everything was so beautiful. I was excited.”* (Student D)

Worried and Scared

After excitement and freshness, the adaptation line goes down. There were still some worries and scares, especially when it’s the first time international students ever entered a new country. *“I was very hesitated to go when I was in my country. I didn’t know what is coming. I was scared. I do not know if I would have friends.”* (Student D) Someone who has never been abroad before was even more scared for the settling down here. *“I was worried about that I might not get my room when I arrived the campus. I even reserved a hotel.”* (Student A) It can be natural to feel a bit worried for the unseen life. *“I was a bit worried if I could handle the life here for the new learning environment and different style of life.”* (Student C)

Loneliness

As international students are the minority at UT, they do not have many friends (especially) of their originality. They didn't know anyone in the beginning so that they felt loneliness and tend to be together with similar backgrounds. Someone mentioned the accommodation can be especially lonely for them " *I feel lost when I came here. I had no place to go, no friends to talk to. I feel completely a foreign body, that's natural. The most depressive thing was my room, because I was alone for 24 hours/7 days a week. The room I had was very isolated. I had my private kitchen. I felt like in the prison. I had a roommate but somehow we are so incompatible in terms of culture. I had nothing to share with him; He had nothing to share with me.*" (Student J) Some would feel lonely without family around them. " *I do not know other countries. In my country, our relationship with family is so tight, if you are alone, you feel very VERY unsecure.*" (Student A) and another one " *I felt completely lost at the first week, because I do not have any friends yet, I do not have many families.*" (Student G)

Homesick

Not every international student had strong feeling of homesickness. The degree of homesickness depends on their previous experiences of leaving home. " *It's my first time to go broad. I miss the social life in my country. The way I grew up is was very close. I just needed somebody to talk to when I feel homesick. I couldn't call my family back home since sometimes the connection was not good back there.*" (Student A) If the student is married, it is especially homesick for them to the stay here. " *I feel homesick especially I'm married. I'm just married six months before came here. Sometimes I thought of them during the class and didn't listen much*" (Student F)

4.2 Culture Shock

Language and Communication

Many international students mentioned that language and communication are the major problems for them. Some do not get used to the Dutch way of communication. " *When I came here, I didn't dare to say whatever I thought on my mind. I felt oppressed when communicating with*

classmates. I was reserved.” (Student K) Besides, the language can be a barrier for studies as well. “When I was doing my group assignment with my group mates, they just suddenly started speaking Dutch, that’s very frustrating. I was there! And they tend to correct my part. It seems like that I’m a foreigner and my English is not good enough! He just corrected my assignment part but not other member’s part. I felt that’s stereotype.” (Student K) Another said “When I am in the group of Dutch people at school, its natural they speak Dutch. Sometime I have to drive the conversation to speak English.” (Student H) Some feel that communicating with Dutch was a hard time. They were not interested in their background “If you meet a Dutch person somewhere in the VestingBar. The conversation was always frustrating to me. Because they are very similar. They always ask the same questions. They hardly know the country you come from. They do not go into any interesting subjects.” (Student J) Moreover, Dutch language can cause inconvenience in the daily lives. One student said, “I lost ten kilos when I came here. Because I just ate bread and didn’t know what to eat. The problem was that the name of the food was in Dutch. I had to carry a dictionary and it was embarrassing.” (Student D) Another one said, “When I came to Volkspark and city centre, some people talked to me in Dutch and when I replied in English, they said NO and left. The think I know some Dutch but I couldn’t. (Student F) and still another one said, “English is popular here but much written information is only available in Dutch. Sometimes it’s difficult to find someone to ask in English, for example, waiting for a bus with Dutch information. I could even not know if the bus is not coming! I didn’t know what to buy in the supermarket as well, it’s all in Dutch. (Student C)

Food

It’s not surprising that international students from different countries had different tastes of food. Over half interviewed students mentioned that they were not used to Dutch food.” *I didn’t like they eat cold food for lunch. I am not used to it.” (Student K). “I was irritated people eating sandwiches for their lunch. For me, it was weird. (Student J) Drinking alcohol can also be problems. “It was drink at first, it was not very common in my country to drink beer daily. And also food. Because I’m use to eat big meals for lunch and dinner” (Student G). “They like fast food, sandwiches. They do not cook, maybe they cook but somehow I do not see that.” (Student H). “When I was in introduction week, they offered ham and bread and said enjoy your lunch. I*

said what? Is this lunch?? “(Student D) Some even had to order ingredients from the hometown. “I could not find the ingredient we eat. They do not have the ones I used to eat. I ordered the food from my country.” (Student E) Some have religious issues. “I’m a Muslim and I cannot eat pork and many kinds of other meat. I should find halal food to eat. I cannot buy food in the regular supermarket.” (Student F)

Accommodations

Two of the interviewed students mentioned about the difficulties regarding to the living condition. “I didn’t like Macandra in the beginning. It was dirty.” (Student H) Some think living outside with a family style is better. “I didn’t like the dormitory. Everything was fine but I felt a bit lonely. So I moved out to a student house which was more family style. I used to live with my family and I only need to eat with somebody together in the same table and discuss something with people. It doesn’t mean I have to talk all the time but sometime is enough.” (Student E)

Gender

The concepts of gender are different in many countries/cultures. ” Dutch guys want to behave somehow like very on equal terms, because Dutch women are very masculine. Dutch guys are not very used to let you first into the door. Treat you like a lady. They are used to treat you like partner; somebody similar. They frustrated me. It’s boring you know. Should I pay for my drink myself? Or he pays. It’s wrong for me. It must be clear that he shall pay. I do not want to be a partner. I want to be a lady after all.” (Student J) “Sometimes Dutch girls are too masculine and lost their female characters.” (Student A)

Weather

A few international students found the weather was also a problem in the beginning. “The quality of weather isn’t enough for me, so little sun. I need much more sun. I remember like in January, February, and March, maybe we had overall a week of sunny days. For me it’s not enough. I was going mad.” (Student J) “The weather was cold and bad compared with my country.” (Student I)

4.3 Initial Adjustment

Turning Point

Based on the W curve theory, we tried to find out the turning points of the international students when they started feeling adapted. Some students got more and more adapted here as time passed by. To some degree, they started fit in the culture and like it the life here. Here are some key events form them. One mentioned about the high academic self expectation. *“I cannot get high grades anyway. I just study as best as I can. I know the Dutch are snobbish people. They are not very friendly, some are very friendly, and some are not very friendly to me. Maybe when I realized their grading system and I knew I couldn’t get higher marks. You can say that it’s my turning point.”* (Student D) Another one mentioned the sport club with the friends coming from the same country. *“The turning point maybe that I play badminton in Rosingk on Sundays. And I have one friend from the city in my country. We both had the same background. We had the same place. He was the one who helped me feel more adapted. He came in August. He was the first one... most of my friends play in Rosingk. I can play badminton and I can meet my friends there”* (Student F) Still another mentioned the living with the Dutch.” *I think it was moving the first time to my friend’s house. I’m living with my friends, because before that I was living somewhere else, very nice people. And then I moved to my friend’s house and there I felt much more connected, living with the Dutch. Nice house, the house is very Dutch I’d like to say, very old fashioned, nice garden. So, moving to my friend’s was the point.”* (Student L)

Communication:

What if Dutch friends keep speaking in Dutch, how could you do? One student mentioned, ” *When they are speaking in Dutch after class, I would say, “what are you guys talking about?” then they would switch to English.”* (Student K)

4.4 Mental Isolation

Social support/Making Friends:

It's a bit surprising to me that many of the international student's interviewees did not mention that they received help or ask help from the Dutch friends. Only two mentioned about friends. *"I tried to ask my friends how they answer the questions for the exams. I also asked the lectures what went wrong and what the best thing is."* (Student F) The other said, *"I met a few good girl friends. We are in the same group. We met each other after study also. We went to dinner; to go to the cinema. I was really lucky."* (Student I) One interviewee Student thinks it is important to join the activities organized by the university/international office. She said, *"I would advise people to join all activities organized by student unions, International office. It will help, even though you do not find particular activity interesting, you still go. Do not skip anything."* (Student J) and a few students agreed by mere coincidence the importance of joining clubs/groups. This also matches the theory by a scholar, Light (2003) One said, *"For the past one year, I didn't join and sport or cultural activities, I think I should have joined some of them."* (Student G) Still another said, *"I had never been to a gym before in my country. I would have relaxed my way of study and go to the sport center. I may have joined some sport clubs."* (Student A). "in addition, one mentioned he wanted to experience and learned from more classmates. *"I would have chosen to find different group mates for the assignments. It can help me communicate and learn from different background students and may make more friends from that."* (Student C)

Academic

After the new students get familiar to the surrounding, academic can still be the problem for them. One of the main reasons that international students came here was to study. However, many suffered academic system adaptation problems. *"The first quarter of study was very difficult. I felt strange to this education system. I didn't know what to expect. You are given all kinds of rules and you do not know what to expect from people. For example, if you do not hand in the paper on time, would they expel you out the university or they would forgive you. I felt uncertainty and strange hood. Only after I passed first exam very well, only then I felt more or less settled down."* (Student J) *"The education system is really different. We have to read and learn much and write a lot when I came here."* (Student H) *"I had to read a lot and couldn't do it easily because of my English. Even I had to work at night."* (Student E) There are some distractions that the students cannot just focus on studying but ignore everything else.

“Sometimes I couldn’t focus on class and think of my family and wife in home town. And the exams were frustrating. I failed all my exams for my first quarter.” (Student F) “The education system was very different. I came from January and I had to study on my own and it was self-study course. It was not subject but it was the way. I didn’t know how to use the equipment. I couldn’t meet many classmates/friends.”(Student A) Student D had a bad experience because he is the only international student in his department. “One time I was late and when I went into the classroom, some Dutch student said “OH, NO!” because the teacher and the classmates had to turn back to English. I was not sure if they were joking, but I didn’t like that.” Student F said that he preferred the schedule of ITC, since they had fixed time schedule and he didn’t have to arrange his time by himself. He wasn’t used to it. Besides, Student D also mentioned about the time arrangement. It was difficult for him to arrange his time wisely. He wished he could have started his thesis earlier and he wouldn’t have to postpone his graduation and pay the extra tuition fee that is a burden for him.

4.5 Acceptance & Integration

Do As the Romans Do

Language and Dutch culture is difficult to know and learn. During the adaptation process, international students learned some new things such as learning the language etc. Not only learning new things, they also may need to change or adjust the behaviors in order to adapt. One student mentioned that she just started to behave like the Dutch! *“Now I feel comfortable to say anything on my mind even its negative. They do not care. They may be glad to hear what is really on your mind.” (Student K)*

Information gathering

One useful strategy for international students’ adaptation is to gather more information about the Dutch culture. As one student mentioned, *“My contact person at school, she sent me a book to my country before I came here, about how to live in the Netherlands. And I read it from cover to cover. It was very helpful. Actually I didn’t read that, it would be very surprising to me when I*

came here. Actually the book said that Dutch are very straightforward and you should not get offended.” (Student D)

Integrate into the culture:

The way of social interactions and culture difference also revealed some problems. “*When I was in the supermarket, in my country, we have a baggage person, but here, when I bought my food for the first time, I was standing there, we just stared at each other the clerk lady spoke first in Dutch and then in English that you need to put them into the baggage by yourself. I was so shocked.*” (Student D). “*It’s not convenient to shop here. The time in my country was more flexible. The shops are not open on Sundays and shops are all far away.*” (Student C) “*The Dutch always have parties and I cannot drink beer (Muslim). I do not feel comfortable in this kind of situation.*” (Student F) “*When I arrived here in the second quarter, I was the only international student. I could not go any workshop or activities for orientation. I didn’t know what to do for many procedures. And I didn’t like to ask my friends and because its exam week.*” (Student F) On the other hand, Student G was active at all kinds of ESN and Dutch activities and he also learned Dutch by himself indigently. That’s reason he adapted here much better. He had many Dutch friends. Student H gives dancing lessons in Enschede. He had strong sense of belonging to his group. He said, “*Salsa team is a big happy family. My good Dutch friends are all from dancing, not from UT. I dance when I feel down.*” Student F came in the second quarter and missed the introduction week. He said he would have come in the first quarter or third quarter. Therefore, introduction week can be a valuable chance to adapt here and make some new friends. If it’s possible, try not to miss the introduction week.

4.6 Indicators of the International Students’ life Adaptation

Cultural Empathy:

Sometimes it can be difficult for international students to think the from the Dutch’s background. “*People usually talk to each other when they do their business, for example, if I have a friend I do not even have to make an appointment to meet him, I just go by, and when I see people here,*

even my supervisor, I have to make an appointment like one month, last time I just wanted to talk him, he told me that his agenda is completely occupied.” (Student A) For some people it can be much easier to think in the Dutch’s shoes, and it can help to adapt more. *“Dutch guys want to behave somehow like very on equal terms, because the Dutch women are very masculine. Dutch guys are not very used to let you first into the door, treat you like a lady. They are used to treat you like a partner; somebody similar.”* (Student J) Students who feel less comfortable to understand other people’s feeling/custom can have adaptation problems.

Social Initiative:

As a proverb says, **“A friend in need is a friend indeed.”** However, not every students can make friends easily especially in a new cultural environment. *“I think there were some African students in the introduction week. I didn’t talk to them, it’s very difficult for me, and it’s my personal behavior. I think my feeling was that like, even though we all come from Africa, still we Do not have common back ground.”* (Student A) The intension to make friends can be very likely help the adaptation into the culture. People who love to and are able to make new contacts usually have less adaptation difficulties. *“Because there are some other international students, there will be a small gathering the day after, so I started making friend. And from the second and third days, I found so many international friends. (Student B) “Being alone or with many friends can be also an important indicator.*

Open-mindedness:

Some people come here just for study, while some people come here to study and experience cultural lives. Keen to learn different cultures can be the indicators, including the Dutch language willingness. *“There is one time I went ice skating, and I met a Dutch family there. And then surprisingly, they are half Dutch and half Indonesian, so they are really welcome to me, and they invited me for dinner, to the birthday of the grandfather. I come there, talk to the family and something like that. And I really like that, such a nice family, very warm, something like that. But it’s really hard to adapt there, I am really not to the Dutch language. I found it very hard to communicate with them. I do not have sufficient Dutch language ...it gives me uncomfortable*

feeling. That really gave me motivation to learn Dutch.” (Student G) “I wasn’t satisfied is that I wanted to learn Dutch language, but I wanted to learn it just to be more integrated here...to be more comfortable, to read signs, actually just not to spend time on stupid things I mean sit alone at home and do nothing.” (Student E)

Emotional Stability:

Emotional stability can be the most difficult one to achieve. I may also involve Emotional Quotient (EQ). In some cases, it’s just so easily to get annoyed by the unfamiliar foreign situations. *“Language was a problem for me...and there was one time I was shopping, and I was paying with cash, and the person said, do not let me wait! I was very mad.”* Besides that,...there are just so many new systems in the foreign land. *“.... the thesis. There are some parts that still not clear to me. I do not know what to do. I went to work in a company here. They just said that it’s a general topic; they didn’t tell me any specific questions. I have to look for the questions for myself. So sometimes I presented, I got rejected..I presented..I got rejected...its endless cycle. Sometimes I also did side track. I had to do some other stuff beside my thesis.”* (Student D)

Flexibility:

The students who are less tolerant and learning from the past experience can have more challenge. *“The shopping habits. Its inconvenience. For examples, the time of shopping is limited, the shops are not open on Sundays and far away. It will take some time. And the language is still a barrier. Of course English is fine here. But sometimes it’s Dutch written problem.”* (Student C) *“Also some ingredient, here people do not eat some food I used to eat. I ordered some food from my country, just for a short period of time to adapt for myself, but now I am okay, I even eat at Mensa. I eat there, but for the first time, it was difficult.”* (Student E)

Flexibility can be trained or learned from the previous experience, such as going abroad for work or study before. So it can be an indicator but also the ability the students can work on.

Summary:

This chapter analyzed the data with the theory of W-curve to find out the situation of the international students in each stage. The indicators of marginal students are also concluded. The conclusion and discussion in the next chapter will be based on the results.

Chapter V: Conclusion, Recommendations and Discussion

The chapter the researcher will summarize all the analyzed data to answer the research questions. Practical suggestions will also be added to the part. At last, the researcher will discuss some issues and further research directions would also be suggested.

5.1 Conclusions/ Answers to the questions

Before we make the conclusion, the researcher would like to go back to the research questions. After answering the questions, the recommendations would also be proposed for Student Union afterwards.

- A. What difficulties do international students encounter during adjustment process?
- B. How do international students deal with cultural shock?
- C. What are the indicators of the level of adapted international students at UT?
- D. How can Student Union/University help the international students?

For question A, most students have biggest trouble for language and communications. Hence many students think the Dutch language is the greatest barrier for them to adapt the life here. Besides, Academic pressure is also an important issue for them. And some also find food and weather difficult to adapt, while other people has little problem for the two minor aspects.

Quite a few students mentioned that they wanted to learn Dutch but they couldn't manage. For one thing, the University can provide more language course chances for the interested students. It can be also possible to make the Dutch language as study credits. Then the students can be more motivate to get credits while learning Dutch. In addition, the Student Union can even encourage the international students with tournaments or rewards. For example, the students who successfully attend a Dutch language test can get coupons for encouragement. In addition, they can also organize some Dutch public speaking, storytelling or vocabulary tournaments. By doing so can also stimulate the desire of the international students to learn Dutch.

For question B, many of the students choose to “*Do as the Romans do.*”, which means just do what they think they have to do with the local people. They do not have a specific strategy for dealing with that. Some did it by information gathering and receiving support from the university. However, what mentioned above, such as information gathering (books), is also from the university (some faculties), as the international students were less experienced to understand how to deal with the foreign situation. So how can Student Union/University help and lead them when they arrive is crucial for their adaptation status.

Providing information data to prospective students can help them adapt the Dutch life sooner and focus on the studying. One student mentioned that his contact person mailed the Dutch culture introduction book to his country before he took off. Other coming international students may not know how important of information gathering. The university may take it as a procedure and mail the Dutch culture books to every international student. This would make them read and get ready for the Dutch year, since based from the interviews, few people aware the importance of dealing with the cross-cultural adaptation problems.

For question C, some indicators can be more important, ex cultural empathy (the ability of thinking in other’s shoes), social initiative (the ability of making friends), Open-mindedness, emotional stability (the ability to forget bad memories), and flexibility. Moreover, from the researcher’s observation, the following indicators can be the most important: failure of courses from the first quarter and missing of the introduction week. Finding out the indicators can help understand competencies/indicators for successful cross-cultural adaptation of new international students. There are a few questionnaires that could be used to find out the indicators, ex, MPQ (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001). Student Union can do the survey when the new international students arrive to see which students can be less adapted here.

Moreover, the researcher also found other factors that may be the indicators from the interviewing. First, if the student doesn’t have many friends who come from the same country and speak the same language, they could be the highly potential chance to adapt here badly. One of the international students I interviewed, he was the only one from his country. He mentioned that it would be nice if he also has that kind of country association, like Chinese or Indonesian,

but he is the only one that it is impossible for organizing that. Second, if the students have never been abroad or not even living independently by themselves, chances are bigger that they would have adaptation problems. Some people from the interview mentioned that they have been aboard before, so the experience may help as well. Third, those who didn't (couldn't) join the introduction week, could also have more problems, especially those who came in quarter two or four. They can have fewer friends to talk to since they are rare and have more hard time to make new friends. Fourth, people who fail courses in the first quarter can be an indicator as well. Most students take study as the first priority, if they didn't pass in the beginning; they usually have adaptation problems both in academic field and other fields. Fifth, people who have married may also have more things to be concerned about. Sixth, if they are the only one student in their faculty/study, they may suffer more language problems (less English friendly). Therefore, they can also be a good indicator for the adaptation. Above are some other indicators for the university to help the international students.

For question D, we will make some suggestions for Student Union and University individually to improve the life situation of the international students. Light (2001) interviewed Harvard university students and found out what's the best strategy to make the most of college. He proposed some strategies: Learning time schedule (Time management) is the priority and the more important skill; joining the clubs can make students feel belonging to specific one group; communicating with different students from different places are the most valuable harvests they could have. Based on suggestions of Light and the previous chapter analysis, the researcher concluded some recommendations.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation to Student Union (SU)

For the following suggestions, the researcher will offer some directions based on the research and also suggest some possible solutions; however, it will take more actions for the authorities concerned to employ the possible policies.

Time arrangement is crucial for the international students. One interviewed student mentioned that the courses at UT are very flexible and they didn't know how to use their time properly. And if they do not have many close friends to talk to, they may just feel lonely and homesick. Therefore, try to balance the time for study and time for socializing with new (Dutch) friends can help the international students improve their adaptation and satisfaction. Workshops can be valuable for the issue to know the skill of managing time effectively. According W-curve, although the physical surroundings has become more familiar, new students can have a sense of isolation instead, hence, better time management can help the students arrange their time and join more extracurricular activities while having enough time to study for the courses. Therefore, organizing a "Time Management" workshop is recommended. To make more social contacts in the new environment for the stage of "Mental isolation" in an English friendly atmosphere, I will talk about in the next paragraph.

Joining a club can help international students adapt life here better. There are over fifty sport clubs and around ten art clubs at UT for varieties of choices. Nevertheless, TheaterSport Club, Prodeo, is the only club which runs an English group as well as Dutch ones. Joining extracurricular activities can help the students relax the study pressure, meet some (local) students and inspire them to use their time wisely. Some people may say they come for study and do not want to spend time on non-academic activities. However, based on the interviewee students' suggestions and Light (2001), they would have managed their time better to do some other sport activities.

It would be nice if the international students can get a list of clubs separating English groups and Dutch ones. International students may get a list of which clubs are especially English friendly and which are pure Dutch clubs where they may practice their Dutch languages. The list of English speaking clubs can be listed on the website of Sport center and Culture center. Besides, information booklets in introduction week shall also contain the choices for the international students to join English friendly clubs if they don't speak Dutch. For instance, Student Union can motivate the international students to join by supporting the English friendly environment. SU may sponsor the clubs who are willing to organize English speaking groups. Some Dutch students who are interested in practicing their English or making international friends can get

involved. For those clubs who do not want to join the “bilingual” programs are fine; they can keep it the same way. Student Union could endow those bigger or smaller clubs who may be interested in the international idea.

International activities can involve the country associations, such as Chinese, Turkey and Indonesian associations etc. One interviewed student said that if there were some of his nationality friends join the activity; chances are higher that he would join us well. For international activities, the country associations can also get involved. Maybe Student Union can make it financial support if the country associations cooperated. And the international country associations’ seniors may be gladder to help and recruit new members as well.

The organizations/clubs at University of Twente usually email and post/announce news only in Dutch. Student Union can do more surveillance or restriction for the information to the international students.

Recommendation to the University:

The faculties can try to maintain specific percent of enrolled international students. They could try to control at least 10% of international students in each major. One interviewed student was the only international student and suffered Dutch language problems in the courses. According to the researcher’s personal experience, the course tends to be more English friendly if there is more than one international student in the classroom.

Working with Dutch students for assignments may help international students communicate and understand Dutch ways better. Besides, it can also create the opportunities to make friends. In some faculty courses, there are too many students in a class; working in the same group may be the surest way to commune with the peers. The professors can help with this by arranging the groups for them. They may divide the international students into the groups evenly, but at least two non-Dutch speakers in the same group to prevent from being too minority. The professors may even ask in advance from TELETOP that who are willing to work with international students, so they won’t complain with the international students with the language trouble, while

those who are willing to make more contacts with the international peers can have the win-win situation. This is something the faculty can do to make it more international friendly.

University of Twente is an international university but some parts are not international enough. For instance, one interviewed student mentioned that the faculty could provide more help for the thesis project looking. For example, Erasmus University has a website for English internship looking. The faculties can make the TELETOP communication more English friendly and provide some English internship/thesis projects for non-Dutch speaking students.

The international students who fail in the very first quarter can be an obvious indicator that they do not adapt here well. Different styles of learning and teaching from the faculty also can be big problems for them. The professors can make appointments with those students to discuss and resolve problems. Also, they can arrange some classmates/seniors who are academically good for the international students' consultancy. They can even organize a volunteer group from the Dutch students to help with the international students, especially the ones who failed classes in the beginning.

It would be better that every international student have contact persons from each faculty. They may feel much safer when they arrived here and have person to ask around. Student A mentioned that, *"My contact person was very helpful. She helped me to get the room. She took me to the supermarket. How I could buy things and where to buy. There were no supermarket in small cities of my country and they are different. She spent the whole day with me."* It was very important for Student A to have a contact person as he is from a very different background and had never been abroad before. He was also lucky that he has a contact person that many non-scholarship international students didn't have. Also, Student A came in quarter three but he didn't have any regular courses but all self-study courses. The faculty should have coached him the system that he could have chosen some courses, so he could have met his classmates in person, but being alone doing self-study courses in the initial stage. Actually some students even had special treatment from the scholarship faculty program.

5.3 Discussion

After interviewing the international students based on the theory framework, I also found out additional information that could be interesting to discuss.

Those who do not arrive and start their life here in quarter one or three can be the high risk students who won't adapt here successfully. The faculty can offer more individual help when they come and keep a trace for longer adaptation situation.

There is also a religion issue. Student F is a Muslim and he mentioned that the school ITC had Halal restaurant. It would be nice that UT can also have a kantene for Muslim people.

Some suggested the university could help more for their accommodation in the introduction week. *“When we came here, we were put in a cabin for ten days. It's in a very bad condition. You lived with fifteen other people. The shower was outside as well as the restaurant. You had to brush your teeth in the cold weather. It was very disappointing.”*(Student I) This is the issue about Acasa. The new students had to join the introduction week before their rent started (usually 1st of September.) Moreover, one student even was asked to start the housing contract on the 1st of August. The student couldn't argue otherwise he just had to find the housing by himself when he was still abroad. These are some issues they didn't know who could talk to and improve.

For future research, I will also propose some possible topics. What is their social support when they encounter difficulties? Is that their family in their country, or is it their Dutch friends here? What kind of degree do those supports influence their adaptation here. For the future career, are the international students who had the cross-cultural experiences more competitive in their future career? In what kind of jobs/position are more important for the cultural competency?

Additionally, this project can be a preliminary study. So the questionnaire based on the result can also be valuable for researching.

Limitation

The research was conducted with the qualitative research. It could be biased with some sampling. Besides, it will take also a quantitative research to know the whole situation. In addition, because of the English language interviewing, some words are not totally understandable or too oral, the researcher analyzed the interviews with his understanding. This could also be biased.

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Appendix A. Draft Plan for the Interview Questions

Back ground:

- Where do you come from?
- How long have you been in the Netherlands?

Process (Culture Shock & Adaptation):

- How did you feel when you arrived in the first week in the Netherlands?(ex, excited, loss or disappointed?)
- When you arrive here, what things you did not like/adapt very much?
- How did you feel difference in introduction week and before the end of the first quartile?
- What is the biggest frustration you experienced here? Example? How did you fix it?
- Was there any turning point for you to adapt the Dutch culture better?
- Did you usually feel that you are an outsider? Did you try very hard to get into the Dutch life?
- What are the difficulties do you have at the moment compared with in the beginning? Do you feel completely integrated or sometimes still separate?
- What have you learned from the Dutch culture/ the experience here? What cultural things you may find it better than your country?

Difficulties & Solutions:

- Did you receive any help from your school or any local organizations?
- What do you think the University can do for you?
- What would you have done different if you have the chance to start it over again?

Appendix B. Transcriptions

Student(A)

Where do you come from again?

I come from Eritrea.

How long have you been here again? Its two..?

I came here on...One year and half... 25 of January

How did you feel when you first arrived here? What is your impression?

Okay. I think my case was a bit different from the normal international students. Like people..Because I have my relative in Rotterdam. My aunt. It was like before I came, I already contact with my family. So I do not even directly come to the University. She picked me up from the airport, SO my first impression was in her room, not the university. Its kind of... for me.. it was like.. it gave me a lot of confidence... I remember the first day I came to the University ..it was 4 or 5 days after I arrived. On 31st I came here. The point I want to make is like I think it was very difficult, even having all thisconfidence in Rotterdam..I was worrying that what am I going do if I Do not get the room for the first day..First I reserved a room in a hotel. They told me I could only get the room on the 1st of February. So I have to reserve for one day. That was the information I used to have before I came. But in practice, they just gave me the room when I arrived. Luckily.. I think all my moves ..they were kinda of fortune. Because on my first arrival, my contact person in the department , one gentle maybe, and she was also a very good person to me. whenever I did. She was actually the person who facilitated the room for me..like that, she made me able to get the room, One day before the class. She helped a lot.That day everything goes okay.

Did you feel insecure?

Yes, its very true. Because I was not even...actually I got some money from my aunt. But I would always think what of she is not here, like, it would be very difficult and very frustrating for sure, definitely , very frustrating. It was kind of also my first time to leave the country and my family. I Do not know other countries. In my country, our relationship with family is so tight, if you are alone, you feel very VERY insecure.

I think so many things are these problems. They exposure that.. I Do not even know. So many things when I first came here... Like machines..how to use the banking system... how to active these things in the supermarket, for example. And also being...sometimes you have feelings that segregating.. you think you are different from others. Like to have even more difficult for me is just go to a café or something take your lunch..things would be very difficult if I Do not meet that lady. The lady helped me a lot and she really understood how international people feel. She was my contact person.

How did you fix your problems?

On the first day I arrived here on campus, it was very cold and rainy. The weather was very strange for me, actually I come from a very sunny place. But these things are not something I Do not expect. When I plan to come here, I already saw the profile of the country. I know it would be rainy. But still when you face it practically, you have a strange feeling. But it was out of the normal...anyway. But the first day I came, that lady, Ms. MiK. I think She spent the whole day with me just fixed everything. Moving from here to there, because basically, I didn't know the campus. where to get one. And because I came on scholarship and all my facility from the University, like my money. And all the things. I need someone, somehow I should know where to go , where I have to get the money on the first day, I have to get the contract from Acasa on the first day. So the woman spent the whole day with me, and finally also she took me to the supermarket, Coop. she told me how I can buy things, where I can buy things. I've never been to a super market before.

How did you like the introduction week?

It was my first time. I was curious to know everything. I think the introduction week is very good.

Did u also meet some African friends from there?

Nope. I didn't know them. In the department, there was no African student. I was actually the first African student in my department. I think there were some African students in the introduction week. I didn't talk to them, its very difficult for me, its my personal behavior. I think my feeling was that like, even thought we all come from Africa, still we Do not have

common back ground. My point was like, having the same color, doesn't give me any comfort, special confirm. That's how I see, okay, people from Ethiopia, and Eretria, or perhaps Sudan, we have very close culture and religion, we at least know how their culture was, we Do not have similar culture but we know, so you can at least talk about something...you have some common background...I didn't do that at least maybe...

When you arrive here? Did you have something you didn't like very well? Or didn't adapt very well?

I think ..for me.. on my first time.. which was very difficult for me was their educational system of the university. The way they each. It was very different. It was totally different

What is the difference?

From my first arrival, I had no formal classes. Like Because I came from January. I had to take the classes on my own. Self study. So it was like just dropping in the pool and try to swim, because everything was new for me. That a lot of new things in the system.

When you were in college? Was it also about tele-communication?

Electrical Engineering. Of course its about tele-communication. Its not the subject but the way, I think for example, the facility in the university . I Do not even know how to use them. The equipments. Also the culture of being a student, and the teacher is a bit different than how they practice in my country. For example. Its not very common to treat your teacher as your friend. Its like your boss, there is a big hierarchy. Also its not very common to ask questions. Even if you have to ask, you should ask your questions carefully. Its like .from the first time..it was like a command, and action, kind of, the instructor asked you to do something and you just do. Very limited something. Your own information. its kinda of attitude.

Do you like the Dutch system better?

But that's what I understand later. My first arrival, I was waiting for some command, the instructor had to ask me something to do. I Do not even know how to choose the course and other stuff. If you understand what I mean. Everything was command in my country.

Do you think the study loading here was heavier ?

I think its equal as we used to be, only the time. They take three courses every quarter here, and we took six courses every semester. I think for me personally, they make me very much busier. Its shorter. Its time problem. Just relax so many months..... Maybe its my personal experience, I used to adapt the things in the subject also very slowly. Because the time is very long. I Do not how you know things at the first quarter. I just I always see my knowledge. I have been working with this. And I know this.. but here is like.. you should have a concrete knowledge in the very short time. This is my first experience and they are having a slight difference. My performance... Okay when I was reading in my country, I Do not read critically on my first time. I just read things and... after a month or something like that. When I first came here, after a month... I was studying because the way of giving a course..I know.. the instructor give you all the statistic things...open notes, and just study them...just study if you Do not understand.. That's what I think special that shocked me at the beginning. In my situation in the January. Actually there is a program coordinator, in the faculty, they first send me the program of the whole master program. Like what I have to do, the system I have, I was having a short introduction by email. I was not in the practical experience. And when I came here, I also had a very big expectation. My expectation was too high. That's what I couldn't find the good quality. When I see, the research is very good, but the teaching is not that much, I mean, I sometimes see them open courses in MIT or something like that from the internet. I was checking that profile of course. Its very far from MIT. But here is not about English study. And I was thinking like maybe because I was always complaining like that the lecture quality in my country. I was not satisfied. I was having a lot of expectation. This can be also more like my personal behavior. I prefer to listen than to read. I prefer to listen to people. I prefer to get some motives from the instructors. That's how I like things, and I usually like if I found motives from the instructors. I like the courses usually. I was having that kind of feeling that those people might have work very good research. Maybe after all I may found the lectures very practical and interesting. But not many.

Do you feel different right now compared with you were in the first week/ quarter or introduction week?

One of the things is the ways I see things in general are much more changed now. I have met so many different people and things and so many instructors. Ok for me, more than the educational or technical. I gain too much cultural experience. I am living in a flat with 11 people. Its like I encounter so many cultures in this year. The same place I stayed for one and half year. It was okay. But now Im moving out. I think its not expensive compared with the service I get. I have little things to do on the campus now. I am writing my thesis. I can do it anywhere. There are a lot of things changing. Of course my behaviors have changed too. The way I see things. I think its difficult to describe it. There were some things that grew up with you in your mind. These things, actually they depend on the place where you are, and it just keep them like that, when I came here, I can see things which grew up with me actually. And Practically I see myself has changed a lot. My attitude. Even if I want to preserve these thing, it wont work. It only works in the place I grew up.

If there was a turning point that you adapt the Dutch culture better? What could be your turning point?

Maybe to have some Dutch friends. .to know about the culture..Many of the Dutch I know are my classmates. I meet them in the class. Because my program was kind of disorganized, I came on January. I took courses on my own. So I hadn't met regular classmates. I Do not have many close Dutch friends. I feel I always think I want actually to see how actually the Dutch, how they behave... The people I met in my class were so nice. They always speak in English to me.

Did you hang out with them after class?

I think the best time to talk to them is having a break in the class. This thing was also more personal to me. I was not having many experiences with socializing with my friends even in my country. My friends were very limited. It was always difficult for me to make friend by the way. I was not much easy to talk to by the way. I think one thing I know when I was in my country, I couldn't continue to live with that way. I was so shy to talk to people. I cannot live like that. Its very difficult. One of the things I found here is being free. Like at least no one would...you are free.. everyone is I guess like you.

Have you been to Dutch parties?

No really. We only meet party on our flat. Like make some BBQ. There are also some small parties. Someone invite some friends from outside, I just join them and talk to them.

Did you try hard to make some Dutch friends?

No, I Do not think so. If you have to make friends, first you have to...Also we have to go to their places to meet them. You are always seeing their rooms. One of the things I want to move out is that I think there might be some change. Maybe there would be some different kinds of people..perhaps my attitude and also my behaviors may be changed. And also for six months, why Do not I experience something new

Can you talk about your biggest frustration?

Its my first time to go broad. I miss the social life in my country. I see unsecure, I Do not know but , the way I grew up was very close. My family my home, is not only the shelter from the natural things, also some special feelings in you feel your home. You feel very secure. Totally secure. This was true even when I was grown enough, when I was working, when I came back from the place I work I was seeing things, more secure. Of course there are some personal problems, there are always that, if you are around your family, and you feel secure, you get someone you can talk to. But sometimes I Do not even...

What do you do when you feel homesick?

There is nothing I can do. The connection there is not good from the telephone. I used to call them sometimes, there was no connection sometimes, it was difficult. The connection in the area my parents lived was not working sometimes, but now is okay, from the past two weeks, it was again fast, so I can call them. Its not very high quality connection, so we usually...its okay. I think that's the biggest thing I can remember.

Have you thought about learning Dutch?

Yeah. I took a basic Dutch course. I also try to speak Dutch with the company I work my thesis. They are very helpful if you try to speak Dutch with them.

Do you feel much more fit in the Dutch life here right now?

I really Do not think I know the Dutch life right now. People here I see here they only do their business, they just go, and the place where I come from is just opposite, people usually talk to each other when they do their business, for example, if I have a friend I Do not even have to make an appointment to meet him, I just go by, and when I see people here, even my supervisor, I have to make an appointment like one month, last time I just wanted to talk him, he told me that his agenda is completely occupied. Anyway, in all the matters, I see the people are like , they are scary like...but also, after I start working in the company, I also feel that, if you initiate to talk to them, they are also good at talking. They just talk, I think the company I started talking to them , they just sit with me and talk to me, they ask me my country and my culture. I think this is like, people in the campus are selected, a bit than other Dutch. Maybe the real Dutch are more like this. Maybe the actual Dutch can be racist...

What's your impression about the Dutch?

Sometimes Dutch girls are too famine actors. They look like boys. To me its like too much sometimes. Maybe its from the concept I used to have, I like their confidence, but...maybe its good for their confidence, but...

Did you have some help from the school?

My contact person followed me the whole day. Before I came here, she lives in Almelo. She programmed her time and took the same train in Almelo, we just met on the train on the first time. I just described what I wear. Basically, they are cooperative. If I ask anything, at least they tell me where I can get that service if they Do not have it. So they were too helpful. And also ... there is also program coordinator. She is just secretary. All you have to do is just how to cooperate with the system. They were also so cooperative, they showed me where were the library, before the introduction week, its from the faculty. They also gave me all the contact list, for which curses, to whom I have to contact, and of course there is the international office, they were had introduction week. All the formal procedures, actually we did in one day, like the housing, and the medical doctor.

What else do you think the University can do for you?

I think its fine. Its very natural for the first time, whatever they do, you would never fit in. for me , it s my first time, whatever they do, its my first time.

What would you have done different if you can start the year all over again?

Maybe I think, I regret is that the first class I took. I would have changed the way I took my courses. When I came here, they told me I had to take these courses. Its compulsory. But the fact is that I can take the course whenever I want, very flexible. I didn't know that. I would have changed. For examples, the two self learning courses, I would have taken in the first quarter. I would attend lectures, I wouldn't have to do the self studying in the begging. It was kind of difficult. I was like alone. There was no one I can talk to. Just in my room... reading....no classmates..no regular meetings with teachers. The education system was very different. I came from January and I had to study on my own and it was self-study course. It was not subject but it was the way. I didn't know how to use the equipment. I couldn't meet many classmates/friends.

One thing I forgot to mention you, when I started here, I have never been to a gym before, I think it took me 6 months to get proper motivation to study. And my first time all the things are very difficult. SO I think I would have very relaxed way of studying, if I have to could back and I would study very normal and go to the sport center.

I had never been to a gym before in my country. I would have relaxed my way of study and go to the sport center. I may have joined some sport clubs.

My contact person was very helpful. She helped me to get the room. She took me to the supermarket. How I could buy things and where to buy. There were no supermarket in small cities of my country and they are different. She spent the whole day with me.

Student (B)

How long have you been here?

I came here September, 2007. Its August 21st.

How did you feel when you came here?

Actually the first day ... I mean when I arrived. it was 4..5 o clock in the afternoon. So I just got the key from Acasa and went to my home in Kalslan. And then I came back to the Coop , the supermarket. I got some stuff, went back home, and I stayed the rest of that day at home. Just clean some stuff, and unpacking the stuff I have brought and try to know each corner the building was living in and I tried to call my family. I asked my Chinese neighbor. Actually the first person I saw was a Chinese girl, who was doing her PHD. Then I went to her room and asked her if she had phone or something. She said she didn't, but she told there was a Chinese guy who lived next to me, and I can ask that guy, and that guy had a computer program, not skype but something else I could call. That's the very first hour I was there. Also the girl she had a cell phone, she let me use her cell phone, but her cell phone was Chinese that I couldn't call my country. That's weird but I tried to but it didn't work. And then she told me maybe that guy could help me. That was the first day, The day after I was totally confused. Very weird feeling for me. I think what the fuck I was doing there. That's the thing I said because I had so many thing to do and I really had no idea how I gonna do them, I didn't have any computer. I couldn't use computer here, I even couldn't find my way on the campus and I got lost pretty often. On the first few days. But that was the first day, I just walked , it cost me one hour to go from Klaslan to Cubicus. There were so many other stuff, I found out I should do this, but I Do not know how to do it. Thats really disappointing. Just on the first day. I had this feeling about myself, when I was in such situation, I started,, okay.. lets work out things one by one. Lets do easier things.. okay I need to talk to someone from the international office or something, about im here now. Where is the class start..and such..so I watch to Cubicus and I talked to someone the day after I should come back. Because there are some other international students, there will be a small gathering the day after, so I started making friend. And from the second and third days, I found so many international friends. Many of them are not form my faculty study, and I didn't met them that often during that year. During the introduction week, the good thing about it was that you see

some others, and they had the same kind of problem, for example, you need to get a pair of shoes, and you have no idea where to go, I didn't have a bike, I didn't know how to go to city center, I didn't know how to come back, I Do not know which stores are trustful, because some of them were super expensive. When you put these all together, you see lots of problems. But it's the first day that was really disappointing. Terrible. But it became so quickly that it went so well. I started to hang out with the group. My year was different. I met only with students who only study in Cubicus. And it was like 10 students and we didn't have those kinds of big parties. Last year was way better. I was one of the tutors for our program. We were always drinking and went to bed at three am in the morning... It was super useful. Especially for Cubicus international. The international I always went was in Cubicus. I was there in International Bastille was only two or three times. I went to Cubicus international a hundred ones. That's the place I always go. I think they have different branches in different buildings. They are two ladies there and they were very helpful. I think everybody was...the help they gave..sometimes its not anything to do with your study, for example, just go them and say, I need to go get the ticket to Barcelona, they helped! For these things, I went to Bastille, I had to go there, because the second week, I had to go to a conference, it was the second or the third week. I couldn't get a ticket from Tehran. I should get a ticket from here I didn't know where to get a ticket and such, I just went there and asked them ...Okay.. let's check on the internet... She told me there is this company and go to the city center...to that place and get that place...

What is the biggest frustration you had?

I had so many things to do, but I didn't know what to do. I didn't have anyone, I couldn't have contact with anyone, some after you start making friends, and its better.

Do you feel you are an outsider here?

No. It's a long time I have been here. Some international students think Im Dutch if they Do not know me.

If you imagine you could stay the Dutch years again, what would you think you will do differently?

Maybe I would spend more time learning Dutch. Now I am trying to learn. But I stopped. I stopped for a while. And I practice for one month. I stopped which is a pity. But I Do not know I really had that much time to learn it.

Student (C)

How did you feel when you first came here?

Of course I expected the life here but I also felt a bit worried if I could handle the life here. I expected .. a new environment and different life. Its very far from my student life. It's the change of the mind. To go abroad to study...

How did you feel the introduction week?

The orientation information was important. But it took us so long to wait...maybe they concerned about too many students...but I think there would be a better way for that..too make it shorter..make the schedule more compact...because the introduction week in this February, it took them only two days to do the same things. We spent too much waiting..for example. Taking pictures...I waited for over one hour...they could have arranged us in groups. They didn't have to arrange whole team to follow...we had to wait for the previous group. They could stagger us into the morning and afternoon..make it more efficient. Everybody was new here. We had lots stuff to do..maybe they would have to call back home...and..settle down in the dorm. I think some activities were nice, but please make it more efficient. And there were some information unclear..maybe its because too many people..for example. We went out to eat, we were told its free, the first and second meal were free, but the last time we had to pay! Its not because we didn't have money, but.... The information should be more clear...and tell everyone in advance and let us decide. We didn't want to stay for meal since the whole day activities were exhausting.

Do you think the introduction week was helpful?

From my impression, the administration was helpful. If you Do not go there, we have to do all these by ourselves. For the culture, most of the people we met were international students, but few Dutch. We mostly talked to international students. For the Dutch culture, that's after we settled down and as time went by, we got to know more Dutch friends. The introduction was only 4 days... I thought the cultural activities were good in the introduction week anyway..the biking..and the raw fish. It was okay..it was good...you could understand what they had. It was like just basic information. Its too difficult to introduce us for only a few hours. It was not easy. But the short one was good. In introduction week, you could know many international students,

even some were not from the same faculty. Which is good, but for the understanding Dutch culture, they could have spent more time for us to contact with the Dutch. For example, shopping in the supermarket was an adventure! There were just some custom that we would never know by ourselves. What time do the shops close, and where to buy...what are the shops for... we couldn't know by ourselves...if its possible, they could find more seniors students to share their experiences. For those volunteers, maybe they can get paid...also...maybe its related to their courses...many of the seniors came here for one year or half year program....for example... I am leaving since my program is one year...if I will stay for longer, then I may want to join the volunteers. I think if you are staying, then you would feel like helping those new students...and of course there are other factors...I think there were a group of over 10 international students...but we only got two mentors. Two to three...the information wasn't clear... and the day we went to have our bank accents, the mentors were totally different..and also the mentors of city tours... it was different again...I thought they should have kept all the mentors same from the beginning to the end. Sometimes I had some questions and did not know who to ask..and also I was confused to me if the guy was also international student or a mentor. You stood there... and he also stood there, only if he came to talk to me, or I would think they are also new students. Did the University ask ESN to do that? What is the relationship of them? Student Union? University or ESN? They could attract more students to help. They could ask the country associations to help, like Indonesian and Turkey, they also big associations. For the group teams, of course Do not make all Indonesians all together. But you can mix them. For those who has more the same people, can divide to others. Just make the organization easy to handle with the country organizations. They would have more people to help, and even they could speak the same language with them. if they Do not speak the same language, its also better that they have more people to help. It should be around one mentor to four or five international students. There are many international students came from those big country associations. At least they can help. They can also involve the country association to the activity.

What things did you didn't like/adapt very much when you came here?

The shopping habits. Its inconvenience. For examples, the time of shopping is limited, the shops are not open on Sundays and far away. It will take some time. And the language is still a barrier. Of course English is fine here. But sometimes its Dutch written problem. For instance, when you

are waiting for the bus, you cannot read the Dutch language, you Do not even know if the bus is not coming. Sometimes you just cannot find some Dutch passengers. The language inconvenience...or you couldn't understand the announcements outside, and you couldn't get online to check it up all the time. ..One time I was in Amsterdam, I took the train to Schipol airport, and the train stopped and the plat form was cleared up and the police were everywhere. There was a open door for the police to came up. It was about half an hour. I asked people around me. But no one could speak Dutch and the atmosphere was terrible and I just heard the announcement that you couldn't move. There was another time I took the train to Deventer, few people were there, and the train just stopped. Everyone got off but I was sleeping. The train staff asked me to get off and said why you didn't hear that broadcast that the train wouldn't go farther, because it was in DUTCH. It couldn't go since the connection was off and I had to transfer via other station to Enschede. Also.. you Do not know what to buy in the super market...as time went by...the situation went better, because I would take pictures of the labels and check up at home. And the food I eat is kinda stable now.

What was the biggest frustration you have ever had?

The language...The language I learned was very formal, but here its just spoken language. I heard many strange English here and couldn't understand sometimes and I would start to doubt of my English. Is it too bad... but after a while, I found its not all my problems...some just spoke really randomly... I met an Italian the other day, and he knew he was taking to me in English, but I could only understand Hello, the rest was a mess... I was doubting if he was speaking English or Italian...Language was a problem for me..and there was one time I was shopping, and I was paying with cash, and the person said, Do not let me wait! I was very mad. I felt that it didn't take that long...maybe he did this to me because I was colored person. I hated his attitude.

Do you feel that you are an outsider sometimes?

Yes, I think even you speak their language, it will still take a long time to not to feel as an outsider.

Did you receive some help from the international office?

Yes. Their service was good. I could always get fast and satisfactory answers. Unlike some other organizations, they were always cold... I felt the international office that they had a nice attitude and helpful.

If you could start the Dutch year over again, what else things would you do?

I would try to know more international students. Maybe in my program, I had many group coordinators. I would try to find different classmates to work on assignments with. Maybe I would meet some good friends. Like my classmates, there are 17 classmates, but I haven't talked to many of them. They always left early and I never had a chance to talk to them. And I was also never with the same group with them.

Student (D)

How long have you been here?

Its my first time outside of my country. Everything is so new. I have been here since August 2007, so this is my 23rd month. It is so long.

How did you feel when you first came to the Netherlands, How did you feel the introduction week?

Actually, I feel very... Well before I left. When I was in my country, I felt very hesitated to go, its very strange. Because I was going to leave my family for two years. Two or Three years ago, I applied and I was excited, but when August came ,it was already there, I was leave tomorrow..oh...I had to go...I was very cared that if I could do my job..homesickness...the amount of work of study....it was gonna be a lot of work and I was scary because I didn't know what was coming. People are scared when they Do not know whats coming. That's my impression, but when I arrived here...of I had to get the bad feeling again...it was very nice,, everything was so new. It was also summer. So what I did first , I walked around university try to explore the buildings...you know..everything was so new. I found it very beautiful because in my country, its not very beautiful. Then I walked to the city, I walked! It took me one hour. It took me one hour and the main city was very small. Enschede is very small but you get lost. but I really find the place very nice, the building was nice, I was a bit excited and scared ! So its combination. I didn't know how they would teach, I Do not know if I would have friends, something like that, actually the first day of class, what I was worried was I could I form a group and I didn't know anyone. So good thing I got it. Oh there is another thing...During my time, 2007, I was the only international student in our program, but last year, we had 10 international students. And they were from Indonesia, china.. it was good. The introduction week was very nice. I decided to come earlier. The introduction week started on Monday but Saturday I already arrived. I want to see them, I Do not want to be shocked by the way. I was very shy and couldn't make any friends, I was just in my room for the first week. During the week, I didn't make any friends in my place, but fortunately during the introduction week, I met a friend from my country. That was very good. She is no longer here. She is in Eindhoven. She transferred.

So you met a friend from your country, but also some other international students?

Yes, there were many, but they were all from different programs. Actually we were only friends for one week, then after introduction, I didn't see them very often. Sometimes when we see, there was awkwardness. Of I met that guy from the introduction week, but I was shy to greet him or her.

When you came here? What things you didn't like/adapt very well?

The food, really, I lost 10 kilos, 20 pounds. Because I just ate bread. I didn't know what to eat. The problem was really the name of the food, it was Dutch. I had to carry a dictionary all the time. For me it was embarrassing. When I went to the student market, Coop. The coop was in the old place, it was so small. It was quite frustrating . sometimes there were things you did not do in my country. for example, when I was in Coop, I bought my food for my first time, in my country when you buy it, there is a baggage person who would the stuff you bought in my bag. They called this a baggage person. So when you pay, someone put it for you. Actually this lady after I paid everything, we just stared at each other, I thought she was going to put that in the bag, she spoke in Dutch and then English, you need to put the stuff by yourself to the bag. Actually the school, my contact person, she sent me a book, about how to live in the Netherlands, when I was still in my country and I read it from cover to cover and it was very helpful, actually if I hadn't read that, it would be very difficult. and everything would be very surprising. Especially the part of book said the Dutch are very straight forward and frank, you should not be offended. If in my country you do that, people would hate you. Here you should just swallow your pride and just say yes.

And the international office organized some workshops, did you go there?

I went there, during the introduction week, they said, okay, its lunch time. we went to the big white tent, when we started, there were just ham and bread and butter and chocolate. Enjoy your meal. What? Is this lunch? For me it was very important for the paper work, the visa, and take your Xray. Healthy things, and get the bank. I went out with the Dutch mentors and have a drink. There were like 5 or 6 with us..international people. That's just the only time I went out.... there were also some Dutch parties at Vesting Bar. And it was quite awkward when I saw then again

one month or two month later, I didn't greet them, I said to myself, the guy probably forgot me. We looked at each other and just a glance.

What the difference you have compared with what you had in the beginning?

I think I felt a little bit exhausted and pressure because I couldn't imagine. I took three courses in quarter one. Then I didn't not make so many friends and I had a bad experience. When I went to the class, I was the only international student and everybody had to speak English because of me, including the teacher and the teacher was not very good in me. Actually when she needed to explain difficult concepts, she spoke in Dutch and ask some students to translate to English. One time I went to the class late, when I opened the door, everybody said Oh NO. because they had to start speaking English again, I was a bit offended. I said to myself, Im sorry...I Do not know if they make as a joke, they were really frustrating, and I didn't like it. And after one quarter, I really worked hard, I really REALLY worked hard, but I was not..the grading system was not... didn't agree how I was graded. It really had a huge effect on me. I got less and less motivated. I said to myself, even how hard I study, people won't give me high marks. There was one teacher he said, of I give you an 8, that's very rare, if I give you a 9, then I might consider you a PHD student, if I give you a 10, I will never give out a 10, because 10 is professional, and the professional doesn't exist. Some teachers just Do not give high marks very often. I compared my marks with other classmates, some of them really worked hard. I didn't fail any exams though. I started my thesis in February, I didn't have any courses in quarter four but in quarter three I had one. But it was very...difficult. So many requirements. Every week you have to deliver...brabrabra...it was my most frustrating course, I really worked hard but I had six.

What is the biggest frustration you have ever had?

My number one frustration is the money. My objective to come here was really to save money. I had scholarship, but I spent too much, I Do not smoke marijuana. it was juts on food and cigarettes. It wakes me up every night. And the second biggest frustration would be that I really want good grades. That's my real thinking. The school let me study and SHEL also gave me the scholarship. Another thing here....when I came here, I didn't realize that I would be very VERY lonely. Actually for two years, I couldn't see my parents and we have problems in my family. My sister had an operation in the brain, she almost died. And Im here and I couldn't go there. I

was worried her and effected my study. How could you study well and know that your sister is dying. I also started to have a problem with my girl friend, because we were away for two years. These were all frustrations. You know, I thought I would have a good stay here. If I have to rank my stay here from 1 to 10, I would say 7. I wish I would have higher mark.

How would you think it could make it better?

I wish I have saved some money. Then I can use it for my family back home. And I am getting married. I want to use for myself. I Do not know if the condition can be fixed.

What would you do if you could start over again?

I think I would be more realistic with my goals, my grades. I expected too much. I didn't know the study here. I aimed too high. I know... for example, I cannot aim a 10 because people Do not get 10 here. Probably you can just aim 8 or 7. I should enjoy the stay here more. You Do not have to be very stressed you know.

If you would have saved some time? How would you use the time?

I would travel in Europe. Its only one time experience. I Do not know if I can come back again. You know what? For the two years, I only have been to Köln, Germany once. That's it. I wanted to go to other places. To France, to Belgium. Actually I planned to go before I came here.

Was there any turning point that you have adapted here better?

There was a single event. Actually I am just resigned. I just accepted what came to me. For example. The grade, I cannot get high grades anyway. I just study as best as I can. I know the Dutch are snobbish people. They are not very friendly, some are very friendly, some are not very friendly to me. Maybe when I realized their grading system and I knew I couldn't get higher marks. You can say that its my turning point. I would have joined some clubs. My worry was when I was in the college and in high school, I was in so many clubs, I was the president of central student government and I was an editing chief. that's why when I came here, I didn't want to join any clubs, I had enough. And I wanted to focus on my study.

Do you sometimes feel an outsider?

Yes. Especially in groups. You know what? The first person I met on the first day of the school. He has been my group mates every quarter. This guys, he is Dutch but isn't from UT, he is from Groningen. So he didn't have friends here and I didn't have friends here so we clicked. Sometimes we are with some other Dutch, and ...French...Indonesian because we are comfortable. Because I was also working with some other program students.

Do you think you tried very hard to get to the Dutch life?

If Dutch student life. No. I didn't go to the Dutch parties. I just felt outsider, you know. I only went to some international students parties mostly in Macandra. But I Do not party every night , only when I Do not feel so much...Sometimes its just frustrating.. you drink a lot..just sit there,...and people are smoking.. marijuana. I Do not like that..

What are the difference you have compared what you had in the beginning?

Like I told you, it's the money. The other things is the thesis. There are some parts that still not clear to me. I Do not know what to do. I went to work in a company here. They just said that it's a general topic, they didn't tell me any specific questions. I have to look for the questions for myself. So sometimes I presented, I got rejected..I presented..I got rejected...its endless cycle. Sometimes I also did side track. I had to do some other stuff beside my thesis.

What do you think they can do for you?

The Dutch they can study and finish their study in 5 or 10 years. But its not very strict like us, we have to finish this in two years or one year. If the university want to become an international university , they should help us with the finance.

What would you have done differently again if you can start the years over?

I would start planning my thesis earlier.

Do you have something else to add?

Service, I think service is very important. Service for international students I think. Can I mention this? The school should be more international friendly. Especially the document, they should be in English, everything , even in the library, the poster...if they really want..they should

help the international students for learning Dutch. The school should also help the international students financially especially when they are writing their thesis. Another thing would be...you know one thing I notice, Indonesian have their own group, Turkey..Chinese...have their own groups. but my country... well every international students can be one group.

Student (E)

When did you come here ? Did you go to the introduction week?

I came here just one day before the introduction week. I think the introduction week was okay. The best benefit I got from introduction week was managing some things. I did some documents, I bought my bikes, and I knew where to buy food, and so on... I communicated with people, but useful social contact was with my group mates. I communicated with them the most. What was useful one week before study, I started to speak in English. Its also one week psychological preparation, because for speaking in English , because you just arrived from my country and started...some courses, you need high level English. In some situation soft center, soft way of..., you are not obligated to read to write in English, but anyway you do this in introduction week, because you have to communicate with people , because it's the informal way ..more relaxed, so it helped.

When you came here, how did you feel?

I was happy. For me, I cannot say that I felt very comfortable, but it was only because of the English. I wanted to help myself more.... more fluently in English. But I lived during the introduction week with some of my group mates. We spoke Russian. During the introduction week, we lived not in the student dormitory , we lived in low cabin, we lived in a lot of people in one room, but it was only one week, for me , it was not difficult. Maybe ACASA or the program organizer managed for us. Because we go to the dormitory from the 1st of September, during one week, we had to live somewhere.

What was your impression here when you came here?

Actually, I liked the place, I liked the university. I know some people Do not like here, they use to live in big cities, but I also lived in the city bigger than Enschede. But for me, its something unimportant. I can live in the village if there is a library. I mean I came here I knew why I came here I wanted to receive my master diploma I wanted to research here, I wanted to improve my English. Actually for research I wanted to know who organize the research, how do they work with, how do they manage he information and so on....it was not my goal actually... You are satisfied if your expectation is...in some sense, in some cases..i found difference with such

things organized in my country for instance, but what I wanted to receive, improve my English and some knowledge how to do research, because there are a lot of literature...I am satisfied. I expected this, here they come, what else...the only thing I wasn't satisfied is that I wanted to learn Dutch language, but I wanted to learn it just to be more integrated here..to be more comfortable, to read signs, actually just not to spend time on stupid things I mean sit alone at home and do nothing. They only receive when the language exchange program. We still continue now. We decided to continue until I leave to my country. Actually I'm not very motivated to learn Dutch. Somehow it is going. I can read for instance, labels, how to count numbers. It was difficult to sign up the Dutch courses. For me, I couldn't get in. We tried three times to subscribe, my group wanted to go together but we couldn't manage it. We had some misunderstanding with the language center. I attended professional English courses and academic writing course....

Do you think if they provide more Dutch courses , it would be more helpful for you?

It would be helpful for me...the conversation Dutch. I Do not need academic specialized Dutch but just conversational , for shops, for newspapers, TV. It was difficult to sign up.

Do you have something that you didn't adapt very well?

Food. I found the ingredient for food I used to eat. In my country, we didn't eat too much frozen, or half prepared food. I mean, for 5 minutes, the food would be ready. We used mostly prepare by ourselves. Also some ingredient, here people Do not eat some food I used to eat. I ordered some food from my country, just for a short period of time to adapt for myself, but now I am okay, I even eat at Mensa. I eat there, but for the first time, it was difficult.

Did you experience something you didn't like very well?

I didn't like to live alone. I didn't like the student dormitory. I lived on campus. I moved out. Everything was okay. I had my own kitchen. Everything was fine but I felt a little bit alone. I found a room outside off the campus, I live with Dutch students. Actually I Do not communicate with them too much. They study , they work, some of them are ...i have TV. There is normal sofa, normal kitchen...like in a family . I have a garden and I can go there , and I can eat outside ..i can communicate... I have enough time...its like a family. You leave in the morning, and

back...in the evening...How are you...How are you...We eat more separately, actually I'm sometimes late on campus, and we eat different food. And I prepare in different ways. Sometimes I join their dinners, but I haven't cooked by myself yet. I will do it. I will prepare something from my country for them. When I prepare my food, they wondered what is this, what is that, we have different appetizers.

Are they all Dutch?

Yes, they are all Dutch. They are not Russian speakers. I want to have a living condition with a normal house. I Do not want to live in a military place. I just want to live a room in a normal house. A lot of people like to live alone. People like to be privacy integrated. I also have some privacy. I have my own room.

After the introduction week, or after a while, did you feel different?

I remember the only thing which has changed most was that I had to read a lot. I couldn't do it easily because of my English. That's the only thing. I even had to work at night sometimes. For me, it was unusual. I never worked at night. Its about all students. My group faced the same problem I think. More or less, some of us had better background, some people less, all have t study to manage. We found time go places, to go bowling , to eat some places....The only thing I think is to pick really issue is the food....to find what I like, and what I Do not like. And living condition..i wanted to findas a place.

What was your biggest frustration so far?

The housing is a bit depressing. That's why I moved out to live with people. I used to live with my family, I used to communicate, to eat with somebody in the same table. To watch movie to discuss with person... it doesn't matter all the time, but five minutes a day is enough.

Have adapted much better to the Dutch culture?

Actually I do not see much difference with the Dutch culture and my culture. There are for sure differences. The Netherlands is much more developed than my country , but personally, there is not much difference. I think if I go to Asia, there will be more struggle.

Do you feel that you are an outsider sometimes?

No. Actually when I went to the city for shopping, to buy something, not always the Dutch can recognize me, they started speaking Dutch to me. I Do not know why. Maybe I look like them, but I turned to English. For those who came to the same region countries, they recognize my pronunciation and sentence construction. But for those who Do not have the experience, they Do not know where I am from, they could just guess Im not from the Netherlands, but from which country, they couldn't tell.

Did you try hard to adapt the Dutch culture?

I even didn't try to now the Dutch friends. I communicated with those students who I had to manage something..assignments , for instance, the language exchange program, from ESN, I join sometimes, its not because I want to communicate with the Dutch. They have also German students, I have different goals. But only because there are Dutch students, I communicate with Dutch students, if German or Chinese, it doesn't matter.

What is the difficult you have, compared with what you had in the beginning?

Sometimes it was difficult for me to study in Spring. I mean its like psychological...during the year, now its easier for me, I know how to search for the literature, I know how to write, it is easier. It doesn't mean I do less, I do better. I think its not stressful.

Did you receive some help from the school?

Everything was organized. I had no need to go alone. I can go and sign up, that's all. Everything was organized. I only had to come and study. I didn't need any help.

What else do you think the University can do for the future student?

The language course. It would be nice to help better facilities, to help the academic English writing course in Autumn. When I came here last September, I couldn't sign up, it was too late. In Autumn it was full already. I had to wait until Spring, but it was too late. You had to know, you had to be accepted in the university , first of all, and then you can get the courses. Its like you come to and you cannot take it. If you need it, now its summer and I mean its really useful book. I register and got suggestion from the teacher. Actually now I gained some knowledge

during the year. And you really need the knowledge in the very beginning, if you finish it now, I have no courses, I have no need to write assignments for instance, just my master thesis.

If you could have started the Dutch year again, what would you do differently?

I would look for accommodation from the very beginning. Actually I started to, but I was not sure. But I had no time enough. For sure..if I start from the very beginning, I would find a place in the beginning.

Student (F)

When did you arrive?

I arrived last October. I started on the second quarter. So I skipped the introduction week. I didn't know anything about it. I supposed to come at the first quarter, but there was a problem about my visa.

What is the impression about the Netherlands when you came here?

This is Europe. I haven't been abroad. Mostly, it's a beautiful country, but compared with my country...I'm a little bit disappointed.

How about the impression about the UT or how did you feel when you arrived October?

Cold. I bought a week one week later. It was snowing. After a long time here, I felt homesick. Especially I have a wife, I'm married. If you are married...I married 6 months before I came here. I just made 6 months, and then I live here. The university...I prefer to study the system like ITC, you know, the way. The school is from the morning, but the UT is one quarter, I just take 3 courses, and then in one week, we only came to campus three days a week. I wasted a lot of time in my room and I didn't like to go out, that's why I feel not schedule on my study here, it's a little bit to adjusting my study to the way I study back to when I was in bachelor. I never liked that kind of study. I just enjoyed it. That's why all my courses in first quarter were failed. I'm not used to it. The questions they made, the way to answer. Most of my friends know it from the 1st quarter, I came on the 2nd quarter. I came at the cold weather and adapted ...mostly one the second quarter, the lectures were more advanced than before. Most of my friends are used to it on the first quarter, and I just used to it. My problem on the first quarter was I just had to used to it.

I cannot arrange my time, because when I have nothing to do, I do not study, I will think about my wife in my country. Thinking something else is not what I'm supposed to do while I'm studying here, because a lot of free time...evening in the class is not focus on some of the lectures, they are just talking and talking. I think I got better on the third quarter. I already feel comfortable for the system. In quarter four, I had two courses in the same day. I was thinking about coming home, so I was thinking in will go home the next few months. I spent more time

on..probably my biggest problem here is time on using here. Most of my time, I used on the internet.

When you came here, did you have some daily things you didn't like very well?

Food, probably. I'm a Muslim, I cannot eat pork. And I cannot eat any meat or any chicken here. I should try Halal food. In the city there is a Halal store, Ada supermarket. I can buy frozen food, Halal food. I cannot buy from a regular shop. I have to buy with the special code. Because in UT, they Do not have a separate Kantin, but in ITC, they have a separate Kantin for Halal food.

If you adapt the life here better, could you recall some turning point?

For me, I cannot enjoy the Dutch culture easily. Because they party a lot, they only have party, when they do party, they drink beers, I'm not allowed to drink beers. I Do not feel comfortable in this kind of situation. I prefer not to go the situation like that. Sometimes they occasion, I join. The turning point maybe that I play badminton in Rosingk on Sundays. And I have one friend from the city in my country. We both had the same background. We had the same place. He was the one who helped me feel more adapted. He came in August. He was the first one... most of my friends play in Rosingk. I can play badminton and I can meet my friends there.

What was your biggest frustration so far?

The exams. I tried to ask my friends how did they study and hw did they answer the questions. I also asked the lectures, what's wrong and what's the best thing, but the problem was I didn't spend much time on studying. Like I said, I spent lots of my time on internet.

Do you feel an outside sometimes?

Sometimes, when I go to some places, they only speak Dutch. When sometimes I go to Volkspark, they spoke Dutch. I just walked in, and sometimes people asked me in Dutch and I said I Do not speak Dutch. And they left. I also go to the center, city hall. Some people ask me in Dutch, I couldn't understand and they didn't talk to me anymore. When I walked around, they talked to me. I experienced this a lot. They think I know some Dutch. I want to study Dutch. But its not easy.

Do you feel completely adapted here or sometimes separate?

Just sometimes, because most of the Dutch they speak English, that doesn't matter. But other people I met in the city they didn't know how to speak English. But many they can speak English

What do you think the school can do for you?

Because I come here, the only student in October. If I come on first quarter, it would be better, because arranging visa is a bit disappointing. The process took a lot of time. The international did the visa for me, the international office was very helpful. A counselor when I came late for one day, would be better. And I didn't have to ask my friends and I came here during the exam week, my friends were all busy. It doesn't matter they are staff or students, as long as they are helpful. Some of other international students arrived at third quarter, they had good introduction. First and third, I think they have more service.

If you imagine that you can start the Dutch year all over again, what do you think you would do differently?

Probably I would come here on the first quarter; I didn't know many activities, the free Dutch courses...lectures, something like that. I cannot go there, because my friends already went there, I usually doing things with my friends. I didn't like to do things alone. Its not feeling good. I think its much better if I can change, its better for me if I took the first quarter, but the second, or the third. First and third is better. I wanted to come here as soon as possible, I just wanted to come here as soon as possible but I just realized its much better to come here at the first quarter.

Student (G)

How long have you been here?

I have been here since last August. Now more less, I have been here for 11 months.

Did you arrive here before the introduction week?

Yes, I arrived here right before the introduction week. I came a bit earlier. I felt completely lost in the first week. I Do not have any family, I Do not have any friend here. And then its hard to adapt the new city and the environment. That's how I feel in the first week, like lonely...Actually in introduction week, I got some interact with some people, but not as much as when I already pass the introduction week. Because I make it easier for myself, basically what they do in the introduction week, they create activities after that introduction week, I also make contact with the international students. I met them from the introduction week, I think its useful. Because there at first at least you feel safe, it makes you easier to communicate with, you can talk about the introduction week. After two or three months, I felt much adapted. After I get used to it....more like after one. The culture is very different, how do you say that...how things work here...

Do you have some things that you didn't adapt here very well?

Maybe it was drink. A first, its not very common in my country to drink beer during the day. Make it general, any particular alcohol. But I Do not think people here are very restricted. The other thing is the weather, other than that, I Do not think I have a problem. Yeah...also food. Because you used to very big meal for lunch, also for dinner. But people here they Do not eat big meals. Actually still now, I'm still in the facial process, so because I will stay here at least two years, so I think its very important to try to the habit, the cold food for example. So im trying to eat bread for my lunch. Its more effective, its not wasting too much time. The thing I found hard to adapt here is the cold weather. Its extremely cold. I have never seen snow before. I guess somehow officially we adapt to the weather.

If there is a turning point, what would be it?

I have my own story. There is one time I went ice skating, and I met a Dutch family there. And then surprisingly, they are half Dutch and half Indonesian, so they are really welcome to me, and they invited me for dinner, to the birthday of the grandfather. I come there, talk to the family and something like that. And I really like that, such a nice family, very warm, something like that. But its really hard to adapt there, I am really not to the Dutch language. I found its very hard to communicate with them. I Do not have sufficient Dutch language. Im feel a little bit...it gives me uncomfortable feeling. That really gave me motivation to learn Dutch. That's my turning point. That's when I tried to adapt their culture. There is one time I hung out with the family, the nephew, the really young person in the family, I completely lost. Not everyone speaks English. Then I spent quite a long time with them. I found it quite difficult. Because of the language barrier I promised myself that I want to speak Dutch. We come to the country, I think it would be nice to integrate the culture. ...we come to this land, so we have to respect the culture. At least try to adapt. That's the most exciting part being exposed to the culture.

How did you try to adapt the culture?

I hang out with the Dutch. We start from there and they would introduce me to other Dutch, they would introduce me to other Dutch family. I also meet the friends, go to their family. Dutch family looks like...it's a really nice experience.

Do you feel an outsider sometimes?

No, I Do not think so. I think people are very open, only have the first impassion, they build a wall, actually after you break the wall, they are very warm. So I Do not feel an outsider. They over treat you. of course it depends on personal experience. That's just my experience.

What else do you think the school could do for you/ the future students?

It would be nice to provide the consultation. I believe they already have that. For studying for example, at least you have someone to talk to.

What would be the best decision you have done for the past year?

At first time, I felt hesitated to interact with international students and also western people. I'm glad that I went out with the Dutch. I'm glad that I made that happen. Because without you

making initiate, it won't happen, it will stay the same position. I thought I wouldn't fit the culture here. And I decided to just be open and try. I'm glad that I made that decision.

What would you have done differently if you could start the year over again?

Maybe I would join more clubs. For the past one year, I didn't do any sports activities., and cultural activities. I think it would be very nice to at least join one of them.

Student (H)

How long have you been here?

I came here last September, 10 months.

What did you feel when you came here?

Different. Everything was different, people, buildings, university, everything was different. I was not afraid, I was not happy. It was just the time I have adapt.

When you arrived, did you have something you didn't like/adapt very well?

First like first or two weeks, I did not like Macandra. But now its okay. When you get to Macandra, its fine. Its more expensive than in my country.

Did you have something frustrating?

Maybe when I came here, the educational system is very different. You have to adapt that, to think differently, to read much, to read a lot and to write a lot. But it was in the beginning. But again, I'm used to that, so it's okay. And maybe sometimes Dutch language, I Do not understand Dutch language, and if im in the group of people, its natural they speak Dutch, when they are bored of English, they just switched to Dutch. Sometimes I just try to drive the conversation, and they have to speak in English. If I Do not say anything, definitely it would be Dutch, if I say something in English, of course they reply in English.

Do you feel that you fit in the Dutch well or sometimes still feel separate?

I think I adapt here well. I have a lot of activities. I know what to do ..also in the university..also outside university...its okay.

Was there any point that you adapted here better?

Just adaptational ...Sometimes up and sometimes down sometimes, I didn't really feel. I couldn't say this is the moment I start to feel better, or I start to feel worse.

Would you say that you feel like an outsider?

I can recall again two things. At university, I sometimes feel that. Different thinking between Dutch and non-Dutch. But in my dancing group, there is no problem at all, it's a one big happy family. That's why all my Dutch friends are from the dancing group.

What kind of the problem you have compared with what you had in the beginning?

I Do not know, maybe money. I mean that I'm studying on mu own money. So its very expensive, the biggest problem now. But I knew that before, so I cannot say tht something changed, its just...it also affected my academic performance. Because.. you have to think about that...probably have to look for a job. There is a moment I Do not know if I can afford the second year. I thought maybe I had to quit.

Did you receive from the international office/ the school?

Yeah. They tried to help somehow. I really Do not feel that. If I need like an answer or something, they answer me. Its not like they give us information that we Do not need it.

What else do you think they can do for the students?

Some students...There are some country associations, some Chinese, some Indonesians, but because there are a lot of Chinese students, if I am alone, its pointless to make it.

Student (I)

What is your impression about the Netherlands when you came here?

My first impression about the Netherlands was... If I take into account the weather condition, it was really bad. My impression was not that good. But also, we were put in a low cabin, the living places, where a lot of students lived together, we lived there for 8 days. It's a very bad condition in terms of you live like..15 other people, the shower was outside...as well as the restaurant, we had to wash our...you know wash our teeth in the cold weather...in the morning its not impressive at all, its very disappointing. We asked the housing department, but they refused, because the people who lived the place, they have left, but the housing department said that your contract begin at the fist of September, so we were not very pleased with their attitude, because the conditions are really bad and we couldn't stay there easily. My impression here about Twente was not so good. I felt better when I moved to the dormitory. Because I live with the same social community, because 3 of us from my country live in the same apartment, we share the facility, it was really comfortable for us. We have the same problems, culture shock, we share, we talk the same language. Its better...but in terms of stress from the studies, its not better of course, it started right away.

When you came here, did you have something you didn't like/adapt very well?

The weather. It was cold. When I arrived here, it was 40 degrees in my country, here it was 15. You can imagine the difference, it was really I couldn't adapt. The others things I couldn't remember now, because I was really involved in studies.

Have you adapted here much better now?

I have now Dutch friends. Maybe I was lucky, but I also heard people from this region were very nice, friendly to each other. And the girls who I met, we are in the group. We socialize very nice, we became friends. We meet each other after studies also. Like we Do not communicate through studies now, but out of study, we make for dinner, we go together, we go to the cinema sometimes.

What could be your turning point for you since you adapted here much better?

I think it was when I made groups with these girls. When we started working together, we communicated through emails, maybe when we went out off the class... first or second time, we had usually dinner very often. I think that was my turning point.

What was your biggest frustration so far?

Well...of course during the study, it was very intensive, every time before exams/ deadlines, I was very stressful. But the biggest frustration was quarter two, I had two difficult courses together, and it was also the time I heard very bad news from my family, my grandfather passed away, so it was very shocking to me, I cannot imagine they were hiding from me. And during that exam, during that exam, exactly the time I heard that, it was very frustrating if I can say that, very bad time in my life...in September before I lost my aunt, it was really shock for me in between, I couldn't concentrate on the exam...that I forced myself, thank god, I pass it..again I was blaming the bad things happen, I didn't satisfy how I passed...but then I couldn't do other way, it was very emotional pressure I got, it was the very bad moment for me.

Do you feel that you are an outsider sometimes?

No, not at all. I socialized with them...who I am.

Do you feel completely adapted or sometimes feel separate?

...Maybe the language, sometimes they are very...they understand I Do not understand Dutch. They tried to like 90% they not to speak Dutch when I am there they speak English, but sometimes.... its natural...it happens to me as well, turn to my own language. Sometimes that happens, maybe this is the only time I feel separate. Or sometimes they talk on the common things, like shows or TV shows that something I Do not understand. On the other hand, they tried to include me everywhere when I Do not understand, also cultural aspects they are...of course their life style is different than in my own country.

Did you receive some help from the international office/ school?

I received their help from the visa office before and after I came here. Before I came here, we had very nice person to communicate, here also I wanted to invite my boy friend from my

country, they helped me a lot, there were some problems, they even communicated the embassy in my country.

What do you think the school can have done for you?

I would improve the introduction week. I think most important things students came here, was to understand TELETOP. But during the introduction week, the communication was VERY VERY weak. After this week, I didn't know anything about TEETOP, but the main point was to introduce us the very important facility here which you need always during the year. During the introduction week, it was just parties, socializing, nothing else. There were some books, they mentioned of course, also in words, but its not enough. You need to have a class, another faculty, Behavioral Science, my friend study there, they got a special one lecture, they sat behind the computer and they explain how it works, I think its very important because it's a very different system than I had at home. Or maybe even power point presentation , something like that.

What would you have done differently if you have a chance to start the year all over again?

I would probably be less stressful. I would plan my time better. I would have spent more time on some social activities. I would try to also relax, other than studies. I managed to go to the fitness club a couple of times, but not very regularly. I would have joined some sports activities to relax. I wanted to to but it was difficult because of the pressure.

Do you have something to add?

I think what can be improved is the attitude of the University. Saying that you are an international office was not enough. What I didn't like here was that they didn't provide help or assistance for thesis writing, because they all said they were Dutch companies, you Do not speak Dutch, so you cannot go to that company. One teacher complained that, he is Dutch and he said that its an international university, we should provide any kinds of assistance to you, translation, interviews, or questionnaires, but its only one teacher. Sometimes the board here..writing is only Dutch. There is not much high way for international students ... I think there should be a special company, where international students can plan their thesis..t get data, they should have collaboration with the company. If you want to be an international university...Also if you want to subscribe in the Dutch courses, they are always booked, there is not much space to join. It was

difficult to access. Its about the attitude. Its an international University, its not obligatory to speak Dutch. Here should be a facility for you to translate the Dutch to English and English services. For example, for some people, the can do their thesis or exams in Dutch...

Student (J)

How long have you been here?

I've been here for 10 months.

What did you feel when you came here?

I remember I felt lost when I came here. I think that's quite a natural condition for newcomers. I had no place to go, no friends to talk to. I felt completely a foreign body, that's quite natural. I felt excited but it was not so new to me because I was in the Netherlands before. I went here for a conference. It was not my first foreign country to come to. Before I also studied in Lithuania, but generally I felt very comfortable. I felt safe, that's the most important. The feeling of being lost was dominating. The most depressive thing for me was my room, because I was alone for 24 hours/7 days a week, of course I went socializing...I went to different events...our classes began... The feeling of isolation was dominating. The room I had was very isolated. I had my private kitchen. I felt like in the prison. I had a roommate but somehow we were so incompatible in terms of culture. I had nothing to share with him; He had nothing to share with me. Besides, we got a very weird conflict also, well, culture difference. I had a big problem with him afterwards. So I was completely isolated, you can say.

What was the thing that you didn't like/adapt here very much?

I had to come through adaptation during like one or two months. The first quarter of study was very difficult. I felt strange to this education system. I didn't know what to expect. You are given all kinds of rules and you Do not know what to expect from people. For example, if you do not submit the paper on time, would they expel you out the university or they would forgive you. All kinds of such things brought a feeling of uncertainty and complete strange hood. I remember the first exam was extremely stressful. Not for the reason they were difficult themselves, but of this completely ignorance how I will be evaluated, I had no idea. It's hard to explain. We were warned that you had to do this, if you Do not pass, if you pass...the general system was missing. Only if you come to a new place, you realize how many unwritten rules exist and how important they are in your own system. Only after I passed the first exam very well, it was difficult, for the first time I passed everything quite well, only then I felt more or less settled down. I was no

longer a stranger, I knew how it goes. During this exam period, I also managed to communicate with the teachers more, I got teachers - how they are, are they friendly? Are they strict? Do they want to collaborate? Do they just want to kick you out off here? So this knowledge is crucial, its extremely important.

Do you also have other things you didn't like very well?

I was irritated people eating sandwiches for their lunch. For me, it was weird. On the other hand, this kind of choices I had, they are not serious, I had choices not to eat them. There are shops around, nobody forced you to eat them, and nobody forced you to pay if you Do not eat, so in this terms, its been quite comfortable, the housing was organized, all the basic needs you had were arranged by Student Union, the organization...I didn't have too much trouble.

What was your biggest frustration?

I think it's related to the Dutch. Because when I was here for a conference two years ago, I got a completely different picture of the Dutch people. It was in Utrecht, my impression was they were very welcoming, very friendly, very open minded, very warm-hearted people, because for me it's very important, that people I meet are generous and kind to you... And it's not a secret that this part of Holland is quite special, everybody knows it, then I felt something on emotional level, something is wrong here. I haven't had enough chance to communicate with the Dutch, but I know this is not the kind of people I want to see around. The frustration I got was from some daily routine conversations. For example, if you meet a Dutch person somewhere in the VestingBar. The conversation was always frustrating to me, because they are very similar. They always ask the same questions. They look very superficial. They hardly know the country you come from. They Do not go into any interesting subjects. They just leave it to the surface. For me, it's not a communication. Very shallow, maybe they wanted to be interesting, but somehow I didn't get any emotion from this. Also some private aspects like Dutch guys for example, I got frustration that they Do not seem interested in girls in general. Dutch guys want to behave somehow like very on equal terms, because the Dutch women are very masculine. Dutch guys are not very used to let you first into the door, treat you like a lady. They are used to treat you like a partner; somebody similar. They frustrated me. It's boring you know... Should I pay for

my drink myself? Or he pays? It's wrong for me. It must be clear that he shall pay. I Do not want to be a partner. I want to be a lady after all.

What is the difficult you have compared with what you had before?

The difference is that i feel more integrated. I somehow subscribed myself into different activities and people. Before I didn't go to Prodeo, I didn't go to Health city, I lived on the campus, I was very depressed. It became MUCH MUCH better... still I am frustrated in terms of communication, but not so much. ...The quality of weather isn't enough for me, so little sun. I need much more sun. I remember like in January, February, and March, maybe we had overall a week of sunny days. For me it's not enough. I was going mad. I cannot imagine the sky being black for so long.

Did you have some help from the international office/school?

I'm here in the condition which is different than other students. I'm here with a special scholarship. We were given special care. We were given maybe 300 Euro for our expenses, were provided with some books about Holland. We had separate meetings, separate from other new comers. From this treat, I feel comfortable of course. It's a faculty from management and governance. We have special people to take care of us anytime.

Do you have some tips for the coming students?

I would advise people to join all activities organized by student unions, International office. It will help, even though you Do not find particular activity interesting, you still go. Do not skip anything.

Student (K)

What is your impression when you first arrived here?

When I took the train from Amsterdam, I saw green and flat land and lots of bikes. I was shocked. I had been to other European countries, like Germany and UK, but they didn't have many bikes. I did not know Holland is the kingdom of bikes. I was very shocked! Now I feel comfortable to say anything on my mind even its negative. They Do not care. They may be glad to hear what is really on your mind.

What were the things you didn't adapt/ like very much?

When I came here, I didn't dare to say whatever I thought on my mind. I felt oppressed when communicating with classmates. I was reserved.

What else do you not adapt very well?

I didn't like they eat cold food for lunch. I am VERY VERY not used to it.... When I was doing my group assignment with my group mates, they just suddenly started speaking Dutch, that's very frustrating. I was there! And they tend to correct my part. It seems like that I'm a foreigner and My English is not good enough! Hey just corrected my assignment part but not other member's part. I felt that's stereotype. I van try to dissolve the problem. When they are speaking in Dutch after class, I would say, "what are you guys talking about?" then they would switch to English.

What do you think the school can do for you/ international students?

The school may offer hotline in English. Like students' program supervised by teachers. I think in person interview is better but in the Dutch system, when you get to see the person to talk, its already the next week. The problem is totally different the next week. Appointments can be annoying. Maybe it can be half day every day. You can ask not just personal questions but any questions. It should be anonymous. For example, there are lots of psychology students; they are willing to understand the international students as the volunteers. They can also provide a tutor / buddy system. They can take of the new international students. You can ask many questions. SAXION HBO has the system. But I Do not know exactly the responsibility of International

Office or other organizations. Who can I talk to when I have different kinds problems. Maybe they can have a data base or contact person to help us looking for a job. They could review our CV, and offer some opportunities, as well as some tips. And maybe they can make the responsibility of the international office more clear. What kind of services do they offer and how I can ask for all different kinds of questions.

Student (L)

How long have you been here?

Since September, so its nine months.

How did you feel when you arrived the Netherlands?

Very excited. Because I had very high expectation. I was really excited. Because I was under the impression that the Educational system in the Netherlands is much better than in Germany. That was my impression before I came here. I really like the practical approach...do a lot of practical stuff...practical work and they didn't have that kind of in Germany... I really wanted to learn the language too. I took a course from the university for 2 months, 3 months, something like that.

When you arrived here, what things you didn't like/adapt very well?

Nothing really. Because the Netherlands is just very much like, very similar. Some of the food they had was different, I liked them. I didn't like Enschede, way too small, nothing much going on. Lots of German people which is very annoying. Really, in my study is like 90 % German, and there were also few girls. I think at the university are few. If you go to the party in down town, its always 70% guys, that's my impression. There are pretty many things I didn't like. I think Enschede is just boring.

Do you have an example of the biggest frustration you have ever had here?

Yes. I was frustrated because if the study. It was not like I was expected. And it was boring. I didn't very much enjoy it, and it was frustrating. I thought it would be much more interesting and interactive. Not too much like lecturing, listening, writing, going home reading, I thought its more interactive and more practical.

Do you think you get more used to here now?

Actually, worse! In some concerns, it is worse, in some concerns, it is better. my frustration within my study got worse and worse. I got more frustration with it. But I adapt myself here and just living here, and meeting friends, meeting people, and learning a little bit if the language and being able tostuff like that.

Did you find or feel a turning point if you adapt/connect to the Dutch culture better?

I think it was moving the first time to my friend's house. I'm living with my friends, because before that I was living somewhere else, with very nice people. And then I moved to my friend's house and there I felt much more connected, living with the Dutch. Nice house, the house is very Dutch I'd like to say, very old fashioned, nice garden. So, moving to my friend's was the point. And maybe thinking about going back to Germany was also the turning point. Because it was such a change, I started over, I started thinking everything, I realized that I do not want to stay.

When you stay here, did you feel that you are an outsider?

Yes. I think usually the Dutch in Enschede really do not like German, because there are so many, if you do not speak the language, that's my experience... Here in Enschede, it's hard to connect people. There is an exception of course, but in general.

What is the difference you have compared with the ones you had in the beginning?

I just got more uncontained over time. It just got worse and worse, I doubt I wasn't in the right place. And the feeling increases over time. In the beginning, I thought it was the best decision I could have made. And that turns out not so great, and worse and worse, I thought about more and more going back, to one point, I decided to go back, now I'm just waiting. I think the number one reason to leave here is social interaction. I was expecting that I wouldn't miss Berlin so much, because I left Berlin before. \

Did you receive some help from the school?

I received some help from a German student organization. You can email them if you have some questions.

What do you think the university can do for you?

I know during the introduction week, there were some activities, to learn something of the culture. I didn't join, because I had to work until the first of September. I would have joined if I had a chance, and I think that would have helped me.

Do you have some suggestion for the future students?

Do not come, HAHAHA. I just started kidding. Do not live alone. I think try to leave with Dutch people. I think it is nice if you really want to adapt. Experience things, the Dutch way or something, its not like living with international students, its completely different experience. I think its just easier for adapting, I think if you want adapt, its so much easier to have a whole experience. In the beginning, it would be horrible, but after a while, you might learn the language better because you hear it all the time. I think for adaptation purpose, it's the best advice I can give to people, especially f you want to learn the language, it's the best way to go.