

Anticipated reentry adjustments of returning international students  
at Iowa State University

by

Elaine Beryl Turner

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural readjustment, reentry crisis, and reverse culture shock are all labels for the process of reentry--re-adapting to the home environment after an extended stay in another culture (Adler, 1981). It is the experience of facing previously familiar surroundings after living in a different environment for a significant period of time. Reentry adjustment or crisis is experienced by all sojourners whether tourist, student, international manager, peace corps volunteer, college professor or foreign student.

Reentry has received much less attention than acculturation - cultural adjustment in a foreign culture, even though sojourners and scholars have suggested that readjusting to one's home culture may be more difficult than adjusting to the foreign culture (Brislin & Pedersen, 1976). Although the period of reentry is the *raison d'être* of the academic sojourn, an extensive survey of the literature between 1950 and 1980 revealed only about 20 reports that dealt explicitly with the post-sojourn experience (Bochner, Lin & McLeod, 1979).

International (foreign) students are a growth "industry" in higher education in the United States. A significant demographic phenomenon since World War II has been both the magnitude of and the increase in students from other countries to the United States (Jenkins, 1983). In 1988-89, 366,650 international students were studying in American colleges and universities, constituting about 8% of the total enrollment in post secondary education. With so many foreign students studying in the United States, the primary concern of administrators, faculty and staff working with foreign students should be the identification of factors that facilitate successful readjustment upon return home (Abrams, 1982). It can be assumed that foreign students, living for a certain period of time in a different culture, go through a process of adjustment and value changes. This study explored the anticipated readjustment

problems of foreign students whom it is anticipated will return home after the completion of their educational studies in the United States. The study dealt with adjustment problems and conflicts they may encounter with regards to aspects of self, friends, family, co-workers, and the home and community environment.

Results of several studies lead to suggestions that for the returnee, the changes in reentry relationships are a source of difficulty. Family relationships were cited as problematic for returning foreign students (Glaser & Habers, 1974). Conflicts between cultural values, symbols, behaviors and rules of the host and home cultures are perhaps the most agreed upon cause of culture shock and reentry shock (Uehara, 1986). While the recognition of these conflicts by the returnee is one cause of reentry shock, a second cause is the pressure that can be exerted by those from the home culture. Freedman (1986) explained that in order to feel comfortable, individuals have the need to predict the behavior of others. The behavior of returnees would more likely that not have changed and become unpredictable. Family and friends therefore exert pressure on the returnee to, once again, behave in predictable ways. The returnees anxiety becomes intensified, because they can no longer predict the behavior of those from the home culture (Freedman, 1986).

Klineberg and Hull's study (1979) reports strong evidence that international students who are abroad for two or more years demonstrate a consistent change in their attitudes during their stay, albeit not necessarily of an overwhelming magnitude. Generally, it seems, change is in the direction of liberal (meaning less rigid, or more open-minded), attitudes with regard to such matters as religion relations with the opposite sex, etc.

Orr's study (1971), which reviewed completed follow-up research on international students who studied in American colleges and universities, examined: (1) personal changes resulting from the exchange experience, (2) readjustment to the home country, (3) returnees' use of American-learned skills, and (4) knowledge

and the effectiveness of returnees as agents of cultural exchange to discover patterns and influencing factors in foreign students' experiences after their return home. The major findings of this review were that most returnees considered themselves changed as a result of the experience. They had become more flexible, more insightful, more sensitive to others, gained self-confidence and social responsibility, better work habits and more self-discipline. In their home countries, many returnees experienced difficulties in readjustment.

#### Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the degree to which returnees are aware of potential readjustment problems (conflicts) with self, family, friends, co-workers, work and home environment.
2. To identify the effects that length of stay abroad, and contact with the home country have on the returnees' perceptions of reentry adjustment.
3. To identify the effects that one's country, or geographical area of residence has on their perception of reentry adjustment.
4. To better understand reentry adjustment experiences of international students.

#### Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to junior and senior international students at Iowa State University.
2. The applicability of the data collected will only be related to surveyed international students at Iowa State University where the data were collected, and no generalizations can be made to any other population.

### Assumptions of the Study

1. The respondents will be returning to their home country after their studies at Iowa State University.
2. The respondents will respond completely, honestly and openly about their opinions and perceptions of potential change and readjustment problems.
3. The instrument will be interpreted consistently by all respondents.

### Definition of Terms

- Reentry Adjustment:** the period of adjustment that occurs when you return home after leaving abroad.
- Foreign Student:** also referred to as an international student. Anyone who is enrolled in courses at institutions of higher education in the United States and who is not a citizen or an immigrant (permanent resident) (Zikopoulos, 1987).

## CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature relevant to this research project. Reentry into one's home country following an extended stay in another culture is generally assumed to be both problematic and painful. Despite the exponential growth in research and general articles about cross-cultural training programs, there is a paucity of literature to help us understand the phenomenon of reentry. The problem of reentry has been slow to gain attention in part because it is a hidden problem. Those affected make up a small minority of the communities and often of the companies or organizations which they re-enter. They therefore do not surface as a problem group (Wallach & Metcalf, 1980). After all, why would anyone have difficulties returning to familiar situations and familiar faces? There is the prevailing belief that "One should be able to adjust easily to one's own culture,"--a kind of thinking which works against acknowledgement of the problem.

### An Overview of Reentry

The process of reentry has been described in several different ways, but most researchers contend that the reentry process is a difficult and stressful period for the returnee. Reentry is the process that occurs when the individual attempts to return to the social system of which he/she was once a part (Jansson, 1975). Uehara (1986) describes reentry shock as a period when the sojourner experiences "psychosocial difficulties" (sometimes associated with physical problems) upon returning home after living abroad for sometime. According to Gama and Pedersen (1977) reentry is assumed to start when the sojourner is physically returned to the home environment, and to end at sometime when the returnee is "readjusted." Koester (1983) contends that this is conceptually inadequate since reentry can not be defined by external temporal boundaries, and that the locus of the process is internal.



The process of reentry may begin when the sojourner is still in the foreign culture, but anticipates the return; the sojourner is "psychologically" returning to the home country. Freedman (1986) explained that reentry shock results when sojourners return home and discover that they can not pick up where they left off. They discover that their family, friends and associates have changed and no longer fit the mental image that the sojourners had of them. Several studies indicate that the return to the primary culture can be as critical and difficult as the earlier adaptation to the new culture. Those who adjusted best and were the most successful overseas usually experience the greatest amount of difficulty with the reverse culture shock (reentry). The most significant factor that helps explain this phenomenon, is that few returnees anticipate reverse culture shock. When we anticipate a stressful event, we cope with it much better. We rehearse our reactions, think through the course of adjustment, and consider alternative ways to deal with the stressful event. We are prepared both physically and emotionally for the worst that could happen (Weaver, 1987).

#### Models of Reentry

While there is very little empirical research on cross-cultural reentry in general, and even less on foreign students returning home following study in the United States, nevertheless, several models or concepts have emerged from the study of cross-cultural experience in general, and have been cited in the literature on reentry (Brabant, Palmer & Gramling, 1990).

### Culture Shock

Culture shock, as defined by Oberg (1960) is "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse." Adler (1975) argues that this definition of culture shock infers a problem with adaptation and adjustment. He suggests that culture shock is "a set of emotional reactions" (p. 13) and, as such, constitutes "an important aspect of cultural learning, self-development, and personal growth" (p. 14). Many researchers view culture shock as a stress reaction where salient psychological and physical rewards are generally uncertain and difficult to predict. Sojourners remain anxious, confused, and sometimes apathetic or angry until they have had time to understand and predict the behavior of others (Furnham, 1989).

### The Two-Way Mirror

The two-way mirror hypothesis assumes that the sojourner's perception of the host country reflects the way he/she believes its people perceive his/her home country (Ibrahim, 1970). Presumably, adaptation is enhanced if perception is positive, a finding supported by Davis (1971).

### The U-Curve Hypothesis

Some researchers have found support for what has been described as a U-curve of adjustment (Lysgaard, 1955), which describes the sojourners level of adjustment as a function of time in the new culture. The U-curve depicts the initial optimism and elation in the host culture, the subsequent dip or "trough" in the level of adjustment, followed by a gradual recovery to higher adjustment levels (Church, 1982). Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) extended the U-curve concept to include an analogous pattern of readjustment to the home culture called the W-curve. Again, on return there is an initial albeit superficial, adjustment followed by depression with

eventual reintegration (Brabant, Palmer & Gramling, 1990). Some researchers are critical of the W-curve hypothesis by reporting that their investigations could find no evidence for a W-curve (Adler, 1981; Klineberg & Hull; 1979 , from Brislin, 1981).

Oberg (1958, in Hogan, 1983) developed a more comprehensive model explaining the total process of culture shock and reverse culture shock with the following stages:

1. Incubation : the sojourner is fascinated by the new culture and may even be euphoric.
2. Hostility and/or Depression : the sojourner must face the crises resulting from even the smallest dissonances in daily activities, such as bathing and eating. Every one seems rude and totally unreasonable.
3. Adjustment : the traveler either begins to understand the foreign culture and regains his/her sense of humor or becomes stuck in extreme dissatisfaction with the host culture.
4. Biculturalism : the host culture is seen as having both positive and negative aspects; the sojourner behaves within the cultural norms of the alien social system.
5. Reverse Culture Shock : the returnee must re-engage with his/her education or profession, peers and family. An unsuccessful reentry may pass from euphoria to alienation and rejection leading to either geographic or psychological expatriation (Pedersen, 1976; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

### Report of Pertinent Studies and Results

This section of the review of literature contains reports of selected studies. These studies are appropriate sources of information because they sought similar information for purposes similar to the study being conducted. Four selected studies are reported here.

### The Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities

Gama and Pedersen (1977) surveyed 31 Brazilian LASPAU (Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities) scholars who had returned from graduate study in the United States. An interview guide was developed to standardize the interview for collecting data. Description of incidents and problems experienced after returning to Brazil and the coping skills used to deal with the incidents were obtained through personal taped interviews done with each subject. The interview covered 14 potential problem areas. The family and professional problems they experienced as they tried to readjust to life in their country were investigated as well as the intensity of these problems and the adequacy of coping as perceived by the respondent. The results indicated that there was less conflict and problems related to family life than professional problems. Women seemed to find it harder to cope with family expectations, found their value conflicts to be more of a problem, and were less adequate in coping with family supervision. In general, a large majority of the returnees mentioned that they found it difficult to adjust to their professional life.

### The University of Hawaii - East-West Center

The study was conducted at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. The aim of the Center is "to promote better relations between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific...". The participants in this study were all graduate students who had completed their academic program and were about to return to their country of origin. All terminating students are required to attend a pre-departure camp. The program includes speakers who give presentations on various aspects of the reentry experience, and group discussions at which the students are encouraged to "work through" their imminent transition. (Bochner et al., 1980) conducted this

study with 15 Asian students. Twelve of the students had completed a Master's degree, and three had earned a Ph.D. A one-page questionnaire was given to the participants immediately after they had arrived at the camp, and before the start of the main proceedings.

The study explored the prospective attitudes of sojourners all of whom were on the point of returning home. Participants were asked to anticipate three events that would make them happy, and three events that would make them unhappy after their return. Results indicate that 89% of the statements were about interpersonal events and referred to a job, peer group, and family relations. Two indices indicate a substantial amount of anticipated role conflict in the job and peer domains.

#### Hiroshima International School

Returnees, or Japanese parents and children who live overseas and then return to Japan, often have anxieties about their ability to both cope with life abroad and to successfully readjust to Japanese life upon their return. The issues of returning are particularly acute for children, who face difficulties of reintegrating into both their peer group and the Japanese educational system. In the study conducted by Enloe and Lewin (1987), 21 returnee families, with a total of 40 children, were investigated. In general, it was found that most parents felt they had successfully integrated abroad and readjusted to Japan. Children were evaluated as being even more successful at integrating abroad, but almost all had a series of problems readjusting to Japan. It was found, though, that the problem of cultural identity seems to linger as a continuing issue for returnee children.

#### American Student Reentry Adjustment Study

This study investigated reentry adjustment experiences of American students after an extended sojourn abroad. Fifty-eight overseas sojourners were compared to 74 domestic travelers and findings indicated that the returnees from abroad

experienced much greater reentry adjustment problems. The result support previous studies which document the existence of the reentry adjustment phenomenon.

Results revealed that changes in the individual's value structure are an important factor that is associated with reentry adjustment. This study underscores previous research which states that the reentry transitional period includes positive and growthful aspects for the returnee (Uehara, 1986).

### Issues and Concerns of Reentry

Not all sojourners experience reentry problems. Regardless of individual personalities, there appears to be certain reentry dilemmas common to all sojourn groups e.g. peace corps, missionary returnees, students and scholars etc. Some common reentry problems that cut across all sojourn groups are as follow:

1. As previously mentioned, few individuals anticipate reentry problems; in fact, the very unexpectedness of those problems serves to exacerbate them.
2. Sojourners are rarely aware of behavioral or attitudinal changes in themselves which occurred as a result of the overseas experience. These changes can range from minor adaptations to major cognitive and behavioral changes (determined in part by the amount of time spent overseas).
3. Sojourners must become aware of social, economic and political changes in their home country. Again, the degree of change is determined in part by the length of time a sojourner is absent from home. However, recent events indicate that radical changes (political coups, environmental devastations, etc.) can occur in short periods of time.
4. The social and professional network of the sojourner expects returnees to exhibit pre-sojourn behaviors and often reacts negatively to sojourner changes.

5. A major source of disappointment to sojourners is the lack of genuine interest of family and friends regarding the overseas experience.

The above reentry difficulties appear to be experienced by most returnees regardless of their status and occupation. The American-educated foreign student must face up to a social problem too. Back in his own country he is viewed by his compatriots as if he wore a conspicuous label reading "Made in the U.S.A.." He himself, his family, his colleagues, and his friends, are aware of this "label". He returns with certain expectations, and certain responses are expected of him. From either viewpoint, challenges are experienced by the returnee. In an effort to determine what these challenges are, a study of 62 Teachers College (Columbia University) alumni who had received the Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Education degree in the period 1946-1955 was carried out. Following is a list of seven categories of major return adjustment problems as reported by Cajoleas (1959).

1. Reconstruction of personal values upon return home.
2. Bringing about changes in the home country environment.
3. Meeting criticisms of American degrees and training.
4. Accepting the standards of living back home.
5. Meeting anti-American attitudes.
6. Low salaries and lack of public or institutional funds for education.
7. Limited job opportunities and excessive work loads.

The returning sojourner can face a wide variety of difficulties, ranging from finding a job to feelings of cultural alienation. An enumeration of returnee concerns includes these items (Brislin, 1974):

#### Personal Issues and Concerns

1. Changes in eating, sleeping, and other habitual patterns.

2. Physical, mental and emotional anxiety and irritability due to changes in environment and in relationships with others.
3. Identity crises resulting from inability to reconcile previous values, attitudes and lifestyles with those experienced and adopted while abroad.
4. Insecurity as a result of inability to fit into previous roles and patterns of behavior expected by others.
5. False expectations of self and others resulting from failure to anticipate and/or acknowledge reentry concerns, i.e., "Nothing has changed."
6. Uncertainty about educational and career plans due to new insights and opportunities gained through the experience abroad.
7. Frustration with professional situation due to inability to study or work in chosen field.
8. Unhappiness over the loss of status, income, host country activities or other benefits and enjoyments of living abroad.

#### Social Issues and Concerns

1. Changed patterns of behavior in relating to others: differing social activities, recreational and leisure time interests, work or school related activity.
2. Feelings of alienation and isolation from family, friends and community due to changes in individuals and relationships.
3. Pressures from others to conform again to social norms in the home community.
4. Boredom resulting from a return to a daily work or school routine.
5. Loneliness due to becoming more independent while abroad, yet feeling "let down" as a result of no longer being a center of attention as a foreign student.



6. Feelings of superiority due to international experience and travel; frustration with others due to their perceived "provincialism" and failure to recognize the significance of the experience abroad.
7. feelings of jealousy and resentment from peers who have not had international opportunities; need to share reentry concerns and issues with others who have had a similar experience.
8. A need to maintain communication and relationships with friends and/or host family members in the host country.
9. Inability to integrate the cross-cultural learning experience into studies or work at home; inability to communicate what was learned to others.
10. Resentment from others due to adoption of host country communication patterns (verbal and non-verbal) that are not accepted in the home country; unfamiliarity with new or forgotten communication patterns (verbal and non-verbal) in home country.

### Cultural Issues and Concerns

1. More objective and critical viewpoint of one's own culture and society.
2. More informed about and appreciative of one's own country and cultural background.
3. Reverse culture-shock resulting from unexpected changes in culture and society that have taken place during the experience abroad.
4. Feeling of alienation and "marginality" in that one does not fit into the home culture as before, yet is not a part of the new culture either.
5. Difficulty in readjusting to the educational environment and/or curriculum in the home country.
6. Frustration resulting from inability to "do something" to effect changes in social and cultural systems which are now viewed more critically.

### Political Issues and Concerns

1. Changes in political conditions and policies that are unfavorable to the returnee.
2. Political climate and views of the returnee not conducive to professional activity and advancement.
3. Dissatisfaction with observed lack of inadequacy of national goals and policies, especially in relation to host country.
4. Dissatisfaction with observed nationalism instead of internationalism in foreign policy and international relations.

Nobleza Asuncion-Lande (1976) amplified an inventory of reentry problems originally prepared by the University of Texas Janus program. This inventory focused on reentry problems experienced by foreign students who had studied in the United State and were returning to their home countries to work. The problems were categorized into six general headings: cultural adjustment, social adjustment, linguistic barriers, national and political problems, educational problems and professional problems (Appendix B).

### Reentry Behavior Patterns

Three typical behavior patterns have been found among persons returning home, alienation, reversion and integration. The alienated returnee reacts negatively to the home culture, criticizing its dominant values, beliefs and norms while glorifying the cultural beliefs and values found in the foreign country. Consequently, they begin to withdraw from society finding that they simply cannot or will not re-adapt as rapidly or as well as one might desire. Returnees of this type refuse to recognize that they are in transition from one culture to another. Alternatives for resolving personal, social and political concerns are restricted.

In sharp contrast to the alienated behavior pattern is the pattern of reversion, whereby the returnee reverts to the same values, beliefs, and norms which guided choices before the cross-cultural experience. Any personal changes which may have occurred during contact with the other culture are denied or rejected. Confrontations which result can be quite trying.

The final preferred behavior pattern is integration. The returnee uses the return home as an opportunity for learning and change. The transition is challenging but exciting, as returnees try to integrate aspects of their foreign cultural experience into their life at home. The returnees may tend to develop a new and expanded identity and lifestyle which others can enjoy in accordance with the changed self. This is probably the healthiest reaction if handled carefully without offense or confusion. Change is viewed as a positive process (Theoret, Adler, Kealy & Hawes, 1979).

### Conclusion

Preparing to go home is much like moving to a new culture...it is a time of excitement and apprehension. Because of this, returnees need to think through what they may encounter. Reentry adjustment is predictable and normal. But it isn't

always easy (Denny & Eckert, ). Reentry difficulties appear to be experienced by most returnees irrespective of their status and occupation. Anticipation of stressful events and specific difficulties can help the person rehearse for the actual situations should they arise. The expression "To be forewarned is to be forearmed" seems to apply here.

Due to the career orientation of most foreign students, they face a series of unique challenges in returning home. Many of these challenges revolve around job placement and applying their American education appropriately to home country situations. The most effective way to minimize the severity and duration of reentry shock/reverse culture shock, is to anticipate its occurrence. If one is aware of the patterns of cross cultural adjustment, including the reentry phase, it is fairly easy to recognize "symptoms" and develop specific coping strategies (Weaver, 1987).

Based on what is known about the nature and process of the reentry experience, several goals for the facilitation of readjustment can be identified (Althen et al., 1981):

1. Helping bring the experience abroad to a positive conclusion.
2. Increasing awareness of the psychological dynamics of the reentry process.
3. Reflecting upon the changes and learning that have taken place as a result of the cross-cultural experience, and considering changes in the home environment that have occurred during the time abroad.
4. Identifying expectations about returning home.
5. Providing opportunities for returning students to establish contact with other returnees who can provide support.

Reentry is a two step process: 1) leaving your host country and 2) returning to your home country and re-involving yourself in life back home. Often people focus on the latter, missing the importance of the former. A careful balance is required so that you neither "check out" too early nor too late (Wallach & Metcalf, 1980).

### CHAPTER 3. METHODS OF PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study was to explore the prospective/anticipated attitudes of foreign students, at Iowa State University, whom it is anticipated will return home after the completion of their studies in the United States. The methodology for conducting this study is reported here. The following steps were followed to achieve the objectives of the study: (1) instrument development, (2) human subjects review, (3) pilot study, (4) sample selection, (5) data collection, and (6) data analysis .

#### Instrument Development

The data collecting instrument used in this study was developed after reviewing related literature and examining questionnaires designed by researchers who had conducted studies on reentry problems. The instrument was used to collect data regarding demographic information, and the perceptions of anticipated reentry problems associated with self, friends, family, co-workers, and the home and community environment.

In the section dealing with the perceptions of anticipated reentry problems, the students were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed to statements focusing on adjustment problems as it related to self, friends, family, co-workers, and home and community environment. The items dealing with perceptions contained a 6-point scale response pattern. The points were labeled as 5 - strongly agree, 4 - agree, 3 - no opinion, 2 - disagree, 1 - strongly disagree and 0 - does not apply.

In the demographic section, the items were related to the students' sex, age, marital status, number of children and country of citizenship. In conclusion, space was provided so that the students could tell about anticipated adjustments and/or conflicts that they think they will encounter on their return home, relating to self,

friends, family, co-workers, and home and community environment. Also, they were asked to tell what they think can be done to help them adjust better or overcome adjustment problems.

#### Human Subjects Review

The questionnaire and procedures for data collection used in this study were reviewed by the Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research, and were approved indicating that the rights and welfare of the human subjects were protected, that confidentiality of data was assured, and that informed consent was obtained by appropriate procedures.

#### Pilot Study

The questionnaire was reviewed and critiqued by my three committee members for content accuracy and readability. With their cooperation and input, the questionnaire was revised and ready to be pilot tested. Eleven international students from the department of Industrial Education and Technology were involved in the pilot study of the questionnaire. The students were selected because they represented the international students similar to those in the study. The questionnaire was administered during a class period so an estimate of the time spent to complete it could be derived. The students were asked to make suggestions for improving the clarity of the questionnaire. The average time spent completing the questionnaire by all eleven students was 20 minutes. This time was used as the estimated time for the final questionnaire. The students offered excellent suggestions for revisions that helped in reducing the ambiguity and misinterpretation of directions and questions found on the questionnaire. The revised questionnaire was then typed, printed and prepared for mailing.

### Sample Selection

The sample was limited to present international junior and senior year students at Iowa State University whom it is assumed would be going back to their home country at the end of their program of study. The names and mailing addresses of the students were obtained from the Office of International Educational Services at Iowa State University. A total of 140 names which met the above criteria were used, and questionnaires were mailed to all of them. The final sample used in the statistical analysis was limited to those students who returned the completed questionnaire.

### Data Collection

The data obtained for the study were collected by means of self-administered questionnaires which were mailed to 140 junior and senior year international students at Iowa State University. The questionnaires were number coded for purposes of follow-up on non-respondents, and mailed to the students by first class mail ( Appendix A). A cover letter attached to the questionnaire informed the students as to why they were selected to be a part of this study, the purpose for conducting this study, and an appeal for cooperation in returning the questionnaire by the deadline. Enclosed in the envelope was a business reply, prepaid, addressed envelope which was to aid the students in returning the questionnaire. Less than 25% of the questionnaire were returned during the first two weeks. To ensure an increase in the percentage of returned questionnaires, a follow-up letter, (see Appendix B) another questionnaire, and a business reply, prepaid, addressed envelope were sent to non-respondents. Of the 140 questionnaires mailed out to the students, 85 usable ones were received, for a response rate of 61%.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were coded for computation. A code book was developed to specify the location and number of columns for each item. The (SAS) package was used to analyze the data, including descriptive statistics and group comparisons.



## CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the result of the statistical analyses applied to the data. The respondents completed a 70 item questionnaire which was used to (1) obtain demographic information such as age, sex, marital status, number of children, country of citizenship, year in school, major and year of graduation, (2) explore the prospective/anticipated attitudes of foreign students who will return home after the completion of their educational studies in the United States. (3) identify the adjustment problems and conflicts that the respondents may encounter with aspects of self, friends, family, co-workers, and the home and community environment.

One hundred and forty questionnaires were mailed out to junior and senior foreign students at Iowa State University. A total of 87 were received. Of this total, two were not completed by the students. The effective response rate for the 85 usable questionnaires from the 140 mailed out was 61 %.

It should be noted that totals, numbers and percentages found in the tables throughout this chapter may not always be equal to the number of students who returned questionnaires, because some students failed to answer all of the questions, and some questions were not applicable to all the students. The number and percentage figures found in the tables in this chapter are based on the number of students who responded to a particular question.

### Demographic Characteristics

#### Age and Sex

Responses from the questionnaires revealed that 32 of the 85 students were female and 53 were male. The students were grouped by their age into three categories as indicated in Table 1. The largest group of students (91.8%) was 20-29

years in age. The remaining two age groups, below 20 years and 30 - 39 years were represented by fewer respondents (2.4% and 5.9% respectively).

#### Marital Status and Number of Children

Of the 85 students responding, 77 (90.6%) of them were single and 8 (9.4%) were married (Table 1). None of the students, either single or married, had children.

#### Country of Citizenship

The 85 students who responded to the questionnaire represented 32 countries. Hong Kong had 7 (8.2%) students represented. There were 14 countries with only one student representing that country. Two students did not indicate which country they were from (Table 2).

Table 1. Personal characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
<b>Sex of Respondents</b>		
Female	32	37.6
Male	53	62.4
<b>Age Group</b>		
Below 20 yrs	2	2.4
20 - 29 yrs	78	91.8
30 - 39 yrs	2	5.9
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Not Married	77	90.6
Married	8	9.4

Table 2. Country of citizenship

Country	Number	Percentage
Hong Kong	7	8.2
Malaysia	6	7.1
Panama	6	7.1
Korea	5	5.9
Norway	5	5.9
Indonesia	5	5.9
Singapore	4	4.7
Brazil	4	4.7
Japan	4	4.7
Pakistan	3	3.5
Guatemala	3	3.5
Taiwan	3	3.5
Germany	3	3.5
Nigeria	3	3.5
Kenya	2	2.4
Colombia	2	2.4
Iraq	2	2.4
Palestine	2	2.4
India	1	1.2
Yemen	1	1.2
Mauritius	1	1.2
Spain	1	1.2
Greece	1	1.2
Ecuador	1	1.2
Portugal	1	1.2
Morocco	1	1.2
The Netherlands	1	1.2
Iran	1	1.2
Jordan	1	1.2
Israel	1	1.2
Costa Rica	1	1.2
Syria	1	1.2
Missing	2	2.4

### Education

A breakdown of the different majors of the respondents can be found in Table 3. Twenty-eight, (32.8%) of the students planned to graduate in 1991. While the rest of them, 57 (67.2%) planned to graduate sometime between 1992 and 1995. Of the 85 students who responded, 36 (42.4%) of them were juniors at Iowa State University, and 49 (57.6%) were seniors. The largest number of the students, 33 (38.8%), were from the Engineering Department while the Liberal Arts and Science Department had the second largest number of students, 23 (27.1%), (Table 4).

Table 3. Major in school of international students

Major	Number	Percentage
Mechanical Engineering	10	11.8
Electrical Engineering	8	9.4
Industrial Engineering	6	7.1
Computer Science	5	5.9
Management Information Systems	5	5.9
Management	4	4.7
Civil Engineering	3	3.5
Construction Engineering	3	3.5
Journalism and Mass Communication	3	3.5
Computer Engineering	2	2.4
Aerospace Engineering	2	2.4
Botany	2	2.4
Biology	2	2.4
Horticulture	2	2.4
Agronomy	2	2.4
Animal Ecology	2	2.4
Architecture	2	2.4
Graphic Design	2	2.4
Political Science	2	2.4

Table 3 cont.

Major	Number	Percentage
Economics	2	2.4
Psychology	2	2.4
Sociology	2	2.4
Hotel Restaurant and Institution Management	2	2.4
Dietetics	2	2.4
Fashion Merchandising	2	2.4
Growth and Development of Children	2	2.4
Computer Graphics	1	1.2
Craft Design	1	1.2
General Studies in Family and Consumer Sciences	1	1.2
Telecommunicative Arts	1	1.2

Table 4. Classification in school and department

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Classification		
Junior	36	42.4
Senior	49	57.6
Department		
Engineering	33	38.8
Liberal Arts and Science	23	27.1
Family and Consumer Sciences	9	10.6
Business Administration	9	10.6
Design	6	7.1
Agriculture	5	5.9

### Anticipated Reentry Adjustments

Part A of the questionnaire dealt with specific statements about the anticipated reentry adjustments that the students may encounter as they go back home. The students were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with different statements relating to themselves, their family and friends, their co-workers and work, and their home and community environment. A 6 - point Likert-type scale of 1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - no opinion, 4 - agree, and 5 - strongly agree was used. In the sections dealing with family and friends, co-workers and work and home and community environment, a point of 0 - does not apply was used. Each statement relating to the reentry adjustments was prefixed by "Going back home, I expect...".

#### Anticipated Reentry Adjustments Relating to Self

Following inspection of the data, percentage responses for individual statements were reported. For easier interpretation of the results it was best to combine the two outside categories, strongly disagree or disagree and agree and strongly agree into three responses rather than using the more larger gradients for a small sample. The response rate for those who disagreed that going back home would be a difficult move was 46 students (54.1%), while 39 of them (45.9%) agreed that the experience would be difficult.

Fifty-nine (69.4%) of the students going back home do not believe that it will be a happy experience. Nine (10.6) of them had no opinion about the statement, while only 17 (20% ) of the students felt that going back home was going to be a happy experience. Finding it hard to "fit back in" to the home environment was

disagreed upon by 39 (45.9%) of the students. Seven (8.2%) of them had no opinion on this matter, and 39 (45.9%) students agreed that it would be hard to "fit back in".

Having lived in the U.S.A. for a good length of time and now going back home, 46 (54.1%) felt that they would become more critical of their home country. Nine (10.6%) had no opinion on this issue. Only 15 (17.6%) of the 85 students felt they would not miss the U.S.A. when they go back home. Fifteen others, however had no opinion and 55 (64.7%) felt they would miss the U.S.A. when they go back home. In response to the statement "Going back home I expect things to go too slowly for me, 46 (42.4%) students disagreed and 29 (34.2%) of them agreed; 20 (23.4%) of them had no opinion.

Sixty-seven (78.9%) of the 85 students responded that when they go back home, they expect to feel good about themselves and their accomplishments. Forty-one (48.2%) of them agreed that they expect to feel comfortable with their attitudes that have changed, and that are different from those of their family and friends. With regards to the response about being more critical of their home culture, forty-six (54.1%) of the students were in agreement with that statement while nine (10.6%) had no opinion at all. Fifteen (17.7%) students disagreed that they would miss the U.S.A. when they go back home while 55 (64.7%) others agreed that they would miss the U.S.A.. Overall, the students agreed that their parents, spouse, siblings, children, co-workers and friends would be receptive and supportive to their experiences and needs.

### Anticipated Reentry Adjustments Relating to Family and Friends

#### Family

Thirty-three (38.8%) students expected their parents to interfere in their lives, while 20 (23.6%) expected their relatives to interfere in their lives. Forty-four (51.7%)

of the students disagreed with their parents interfering in their lives and 50 (58.9%) of them did not expect their relatives to interfere in their lives. Thirty-nine (45.9%) students felt that their will be pressure from their families to conform to some of the family values.

### Friends

In response to the statement "Going back home I expect my relationships with my close friends to have changed because of my absence", 28 (33.0%) of the students disagreed with the statement, 9 (10.6%) had no opinion while 47 (55.3%) of the students agreed to a change in relationships with friends. This statement did not apply to one student. Sixty-six (76.6%) students felt that their friends would be interested in their experiences abroad, while 49 (57.7%) felt that their friends would be open to new ideas that they have learned. In terms of friends pressuring the students to conform to some of their values back home, 46 (54.1%) disagreed with that statement. Twenty-five (29.4%) had no opinion on this issue while 14 (16.5%) students agreed that they would be pressured by friends to conform to some values. Sixty-one (71.1%) of the students felt that they would miss the friends that they had made in the U.S.A.

### Anticipated Reentry Adjustments Relating to Co-workers and the Home/ Community Environment

#### Co-workers

Thirty-one (36.5%) students felt that they would be readily accepted by their co-workers and twenty-one (24.7%) disagreed. A high number of eighteen (21.2%) had no opinion, while this statement did not apply to fifteen (17.6%) of the students. Thirty-seven (43.5%) of the respondents did not feel that they would experience



discrimination in their jobs as a result of having studied in the U.S.A.. while twenty-eight (32.9%) of them did. Thirteen (15.3%) of the respondents had no opinion about this statement, and it did not apply to seven (8.2%) of them. A high number, 71 (83.5 %) of the students hoped to find the education received at Iowa State University to be relevant to the work that they intend to do back home. Thirty (35.3%) of the students disagreed that adjusting to the daily work routine of their job would be difficult, and thirty-five (41.2%) of them agreed.

#### Home/Community Environment

Forty-eight (56.4%) of the respondents agreed that they will become more critical of their home culture's government. Fifteen (17.6%) of them had no opinion on this issue while twenty (23.5%) disagreed. Forty-three (50.6 %) of the respondents felt that adjusting to the changes in lifestyle from the U.S.A. to be difficult. Seventy-nine (92.9%) of the students did not feel that it would be difficult adjusting to the food back home, while sixty-four (75.3%) of them were not going to miss the food in the U.S.A.. In terms of living conditions in their home countries to be equal to or better than their U.S.A. living conditions, forty-seven (55.3%) of the students agreed with that statement. Twenty-four (28.2%) of them disagreed and thirteen (15.3%) had no opinion. Fifty-three (62.3%) of the respondents felt comfortable with their countries customs of social interaction.

In part B of the questionnaire, the following responses in Table 5 were given for regular contact each of the students had with different people back home. Included in the group of others were neighbors. Table 6 deals with the means of having regular contact with family and friends back home, and Table 7 indicates the

Table 5. Regular contact with home

People	Number	Percentage
Family	84	98.8
Friends	65	76.5
Co-workers	10	11.8
Others	3	3.5

Table 6. Means of regular contact with home

Means of contact	Number	Percentage
Letter writing	75	88.2
Telephone	83	97.6
Visits	35	41.2
Through other people	10	11.8

Table 7. Frequency of travel back home

Frequency	Number	Percentage
Once	19	22.4
Twice	17	20.0
Three times	12	14.1
Four times and above	7	8.2
Never been back	30	35.3

number of times the students have been back home since their arrival at Iowa State University.

#### Differences Among the Students

The original analysis plan included investigating the relationship that exists between the country or geographical area of residence and the length of stay abroad of the international students and their perception of reentry adjustment. The resulting frequency data did not support the use of the individual countries as usable groups for analysis based on the fact that there was a low number of respondents from each country (as few as one respondent each from thirteen countries). It was therefore best to group the countries together for further analysis of the data. This was done by geographic locations as continents and per similar or closely related socio-economic backgrounds. The grouping of the countries is indicated in Table 8.

Single classification analysis of variance procedures were used to test the relationship between (1) the time spent in the U.S.A., (2) the geographic location of the home countries and the perceived reentry adjustments of international students, as they relate to self, family, friends, co-workers, work and home environment.

#### Length of Time Spent in the U.S.A.

Three classifications were derived for the length of time spent in the U.S.A. Group A = Less than 2 years, Group B = Equal to 2 years and less than 3 years, and Group C = Equal to three years and greater. The level of significance of 5% was used for testing the hypothesis of equal means among groups. Of approximately 50 items listed, 12 items emerged as significant. The items with a significant relationship are listed below.

Table 8. Grouping of countries

Group	Countries	Number
Indochina	Malaysia	6
	Indonesia	5
	Singapore	4
	Pakistan	3
	India	1
	Total	19
North Asia	Hong Kong	7
	Korea	5
	Japan	4
	Taiwan	3
	Total	19
Middle East and Africa	Nigeria	3
	Kenya	2
	Iraq	2
	Mauritius	1
	Yemen	1
	Morocco	1
	Palestine	1
	Iran	1
	Jordan	1
	Syria	1
Total	14	
Latin America	Panama	6
	Brazil	4
	Guatemala	3
	Colombia	2
	Ecuador	1
	Costa Rica	1
Total	17	

Table 8 cont.

Group	Countries	Number
Europe	Norway	5
	Germany	3
	Spain	2
	Portugal	1
	Greece	1
	The Netherlands	1
	Israel	1
	Total	14

Going back home, I expect...

1. it to be a difficult move.
2. things to go too slowly for me.
3. to feel comfortable with my changed attitudes.
4. to be pressured by my friends to conform to some of their values
5. my parents to interfere in my life.
6. my relatives to interfere in my life.
7. to be pressured by my family to conform to some of their values.
8. to be pressured by the community to conform to some of their values.
9. to prefer my own family orientation to the individualism of the U.S.A.
10. my co-workers to be open to changes that I suggest
11. to experience discrimination in my job because of having studied in the U.S.A.
12. to have a lot of my money go to my parents.

The differences between the three groups for the items with a significant relationship are listed in Table 9.

Table 9 Scheffe group comparisons of length of time spent in the U.S.A.

Item	Means	Groups	S/NS*
A difficult move <sup>a</sup>	A = 2.36 <sup>b</sup>	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.93	A vs C	S
	C = 3.30	B vs C	NS
Things go too slow	A = 2.21	A vs B	S
	B = 3.07	A vs C	S
	C = 3.17	B vs C	NS
Changed attitude	A = 3.79	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.41	A vs C	S
	C = 3.03	B vs C	NS
Pressure from friends	A = 2.11	A vs B	S
	B = 2.81	A vs C	NS
	C = 2.55	B vs C	NS
Parents interfere	A = 1.89	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.54	A vs C	S
	C = 2.72	B vs C	NS

\* S = significant at the .05 level ( $p < .05$ )  
 NS = not significant at the 0.05 level

<sup>a</sup> For a complete description of the items see the list on page 35

<sup>b</sup> A = Less than 2 years  
 B = Equal to 2 years and less than 3 years  
 C = Equal to three years and greater

Table 9 cont.

Item	Means	Groups	S/NS
Relatives interfere	A = 1.89	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.54	A vs C	S
	C = 2.72	B vs C	NS
Pressure from family	A = 2.54	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.07	A vs C	S
	C = 3.43	B vs C	NS
Pressure from community	A = 2.25	A vs B	S
	B = 3.11	A vs C	NS
	C = 2.83	B vs C	NS
Prefer own family orientation	A = 3.15	A vs B	S
	B = 3.96	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.33	B vs C	NS
Co-workers open to changes	A = 3.50	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.08	A vs C	S
	C = 2.78	B vs C	NS
Job discrimination	A = 2.35	A vs B	S
	B = 3.23	A vs C	NS
	C = 2.77	B vs C	NS
Money to parents	A = 2.25	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.88	A vs C	S
	C = 3.03	B vs C	NS

#### Geographic Location of Home Countries

The five groups of home countries as seen in Table 8 are Group A = Indochina, Group B = North Asia, Group C = Middle East and Africa, Group D = Latin America and Group E = Europe. The level of significance of 5% was used for

testing the hypothesis of equal means among groups. Of approximately 50 items listed, 18 items emerged as significant. The items with a significant relationship are listed below.

Going back home, I expect...

1. it to be a difficult move
2. it to be a frightening experience
3. to become more critical of my home culture
4. to not have much privacy
5. things to go too slowly for me
6. my friends to be receptive to my experiences and needs
7. my friends to be supportive of my experiences and needs
8. my relatives to interfere in my life
9. to be pressured by my family to conform to some of their values
10. to be readily accepted by my co-workers
11. to experience discrimination in my job because of having studied in the U.S.A.
12. adjusting to the daily work routine of my job to be difficult
13. to find myself uncomfortable in many work situations with my co-workers
14. transportation to be a problem
15. to become more critical of my home country's government
16. adjusting to the food to be difficult
17. pressure from my community to conform to some of their values
18. my living conditions in my home country to be equal to or better than my U.S.A. living conditions.

The differences between the five groups for the items with a significant relationship are listed in Table 10.



Table 10. Bonferroni group comparisons of geographical locations.

Item	Means	Groups	S/NS*
A difficult move <sup>a</sup>	A = 2.26 <sup>b</sup>	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.95	A vs C	S
	C = 3.62	A vs D	S
	D = 3.56	A vs E	NS
	E = 2.14	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	S
	D vs E	S	
A frightening experience	A = 1.84	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.05	A vs C	NS
	C = 2.46	A vs D	NS
	D = 2.67	A vs E	NS
	E = 1.57	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
	D vs E	S	

\* S = significant  
NS = not significant

<sup>a</sup> For a complete description of the items see the list on page 38

<sup>b</sup> A = Indochina  
B = North Asia  
C = Middle East and Africa  
D = Latin America  
E = Europe

Table 10. cont.

Item	Means	Groups	S/SN
Critical of home culture	A = 3.00	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.16	A vs C	NS
	C = 2.92	A vs D	NS
	D = 4.00	A vs E	NS
	E = 2.57	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	S
Not much privacy	A = 2.56	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.42	A vs C	NS
	C = 2.84	A vs D	NS
	D = 3.44	A vs E	NS
	E = 2.07	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	S
Things go too slow	A = 2.63	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.21	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.46	A vs D	NS
	D = 3.56	A vs E	NS
	E = 2.42	B vs C	S
		B vs D	S
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	S

Table 10. cont.

Item	Means	Groups	S/NS
Friends are receptive	A = 3.68	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.94	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.00	A vs D	NS
	D = 3.78	A vs E	NS
	E = 3.79	B vs C	S
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	NS
Friends are supportive	A = 4.05	A vs B	NS
	B = 4.00	A vs C	S
	C = 3.08	A vs D	NS
	D = 3.83	A vs E	NS
	E = 3.926	B vs C	S
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	NS
Relatives interfere	A = 2.57	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.06	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.16	A vs D	NS
	D = 2.67	A vs E	NS
	E = 1.79	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS

Table 10. cont.

Item	Means	Groups	S/NS
Relatives interfere cont.		C vs E	S
		D vs E	NS
Pressure from family	A = 3.05	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.21	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.15	A vs D	NS
	D = 3.50	A vs E	NS
	E = 2.21	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	S
Acceptance by co-workers	A = 3.29	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.29	A vs C	NS
	C = 2.90	A vs D	NS
	D = 2.80	A vs E	NS
	E = 3.90	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	S
Job discrimination	A = 3.17	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.07	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.00	A vs D	NS
	D = 2.82	A vs E	S
	E = 1.77	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	NS

Table 10. cont.

Item	Means	Groups	S/NS
Adjusting to daily work routine	A = 3.11	A vs B	NS
	B = 3.85	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.85	A vs D	NS
	D = 2.89	A vs E	NS
	E = 2.62	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	S
		D vs E	NS
Uncomfortable with co-workers	A = 3.00	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.83	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.38	A vs D	NS
	D = 3.44	A vs E	S
	E = 2.00	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	S
		D vs E	S
Transportation a problem	A = 2.63	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.11	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.69	A vs D	NS
	D = 3.28	A vs E	NS
	E = 1.50	B vs C	S
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	S
		D vs E	S

Table 10. cont.

Item	Means	Groups	S/NS
Critical of home government	A = 3.74	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.78	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.75	A vs D	NS
	D = 3.89	A vs E	NS
	E = 2.93	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	S
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	NS
Adjusting to the food	A = 2.11	A vs B	NS
	B = 1.47	A vs C	NS
	C = 1.85	A vs D	NS
	D = 1.67	A vs E	S
	E = 1.29	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	NS
Pressure from community	A = 3.00	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.67	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.23	A vs D	NS
	D = 2.94	A vs E	NS
	E = 1.93	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	S
		D vs E	NS

Table 10 cont.

Item	Means	Groups	S/NS
Equal living conditions	A = 3.47	A vs B	NS
	B = 2.95	A vs C	NS
	C = 3.08	A vs D	NS
	D = 2.78	A vs E	NS
	E = 4.08	B vs C	NS
		B vs D	NS
		B vs E	NS
		C vs D	NS
		C vs E	NS
		D vs E	NS

## CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify international students perceptions of reentry adjustments. International students who were in their junior and senior years at Iowa State University responded to a questionnaire specifically designed to

1. identify potential reentry adjustments of international students as it relates to self, family, friends, co-workers, work and home environment.
2. determine whether or not a relationship exists between the amount of contact/visit with the home country and the international students perceptions of reentry adjustment.
3. determine whether or not a relationship exists between the country or geographical area of residence of international students and their perception of reentry adjustment.
4. better understand reentry adjustment experiences of international students.
5. determine whether or not a relationship exists between the length of stay abroad and the returnees' perceptions of reentry adjustment.
6. analyze the recommendations made by the international students that would aid in improving the reentry adjustment process for present and future students.

Data secured from the study will be helpful in providing some insight into the reentry adjustment perceptions of the international students, and, hopefully, help improve the reentry adjustment process.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part 1 - perceptions of anticipated reentry problems, and Part 2 - demographic. In Part 1, a 6-point Likert-type scale was used to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements focusing on adjustment problems as it related to self, friends, family, co-workers, and home and community environment. Questionnaires were mailed to all 140 students who met the necessary criteria. A total of 85 questionnaires were returned. for a response rate of 61%.



### Summary of Major Findings

1. Fifty-three male and thirty-two female students completed the questionnaire.
2. The eighty-five students who participated in this study came from thirty-two different countries. The largest number (7) came from Hong Kong.
3. Thirty-six juniors and forty-nine seniors participated in this study.
4. Approximately one third of the students were from the engineering department.
5. Most of the students were in the age group of 20 - 29 years.
6. About ninety percent of the students were single, and none of the respondents had any children.
7. Most of the international students expect to find employment in their area of specialization when they go back home and to be readily accepted by their co-workers.
8. Many of the students maintained regular contact with family, friends, co-workers and neighbors.
9. The means of contact most widely used was the telephone, second to letter writing.
10. Approximately one-third of the students had never been back home since their arrival in the U.S.A.
11. The longest time a student had been in the U.S.A. was thirteen years, and the shortest time was four months.
12. The largest percentage of the students surveyed were generally optimistic about their reentry adjustment when they go back home.
13. The majority of the students did not think that they would be pressured by their family, friends co-workers or the community to conform to their values.

14. About half of the students expected their living conditions at home to be equal to or better than their U.S.A. living conditions.

### Conclusions

The returning student can face a wide variety of adjustments. It is the researcher's observation that most of the students anticipate a stressful situation when they go back home. But being optimistic, as they seem to be, they will prepare themselves both physically and emotionally to cope with it. Some may fail to anticipate or acknowledge reentry concerns as if nothing has changed. Others will face identity crises resulting from the inability to reconcile previous values, attitudes and lifestyles with those experienced and adopted while abroad (Brislin, 1974).

Simple changes in eating, sleeping and other habitual patterns may occur which the returning student failed to anticipate. Also, there could be feelings of alienation and isolation from family, friends and community due to changes in the returnee and other individuals at home, and in relationships. Some would be pressured to conform again to social norms in the home community. Based on past research studies results indicate that preparing to go home is a time of excitement and apprehension. Because of this, returnees need to think through what they may encounter. Anticipation of stressful events and specific difficulties can help the person rehearse for the actual situations should they arise. The expression "To be forewarned is to be forearmed" seems to apply here. The limitation of this study was two fold: 1) Undergraduates tend to be more optimistic about their future and 2) perceptions of these students may not be based on experience or reality.

### Recommendations

Because of the limited findings in this study the following recommendations were made.

1. Replicate this study with a much larger and varied population. Include more than just one university in the study so there will be more useful and meaningful data to analyze.
2. Revise the survey so there will be similar interpretation of the statements. Delete the "No opinion" response. This will give the respondents a choice of agreeing or disagreeing with a statement.
3. Expand the reentry program for returning students that the Office of International Educational Services puts on at Iowa State University.
4. Focus on various aspects of the reentry experience, especially on the positive and growthful aspects for the returning student when planning pre-departure/reentry programs
5. Encourage the returning student to be aware and keep abreast of the social, economic and political changes in their home country.
6. Provide opportunities for returning students to establish contact with other returnees who can provide support.
7. Iowa State University and the Office of International Educational Services should help bring the experience abroad of the international students to a positive conclusion through programs that will have them reflect upon the changes and learning that have taken place as a result of their being abroad.
8. Cross-cultural counseling facilities and programming should be initiated and/or expanded through the use of professionals trained in cross-cultural counseling or peer counseling to aid the students in reentry adjustment.

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APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRE

April 1991

Dear International Student:

We are pleased to write to you and to ask your assistance in identifying adjustments that you anticipate having to make, or problems you anticipate having to deal with when you return to your home country.

You have been selected to participate in this study because you are a current international student at Iowa State University. We realize that your time is very valuable, and we are grateful to you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. This questionnaire should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete. Our hope is that you will view this as an opportunity to share your insights with others.

In the report of findings of this study, your name will not be associated with the data. You are assured of anonymity as all data will be tested and reported as group data. a numerical identification code will be used for follow-up purposes only. The results of this study will provide insights to help alleviate or minimize the anticipated problems and adjustments that international students will be faced with as they return to their home country.

Postage for the questionnaire is prepaid, so all you need to do is to put it in the enclosed envelope, and drop it in a mailbox by May 15, 1991.

Sincerely,

William Wolansky  
Professor and Coordinator  
International Education

Elaine B. Turner  
Graduate Student  
Professional Studies in Education

- A. This section includes specific statements about your anticipated reentry adjustments and conflicts pertaining to yourself, your family and friends, your co-workers and your work, home and community environment.

Please indicate to what extent you **agree** or **disagree** with each of the statements below, by circling the corresponding number.

- 1 - strongly disagree  
 2 - disagree  
 3 - no opinion  
 4 - agree  
 5 - strongly agree

SELF

Going back home, I expect:

- |                                                                                                                        | strongly disagree | disagree | no opinion | agree | strongly agree |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| 1. it to be a difficult move                                                                                           | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 2. it to be a frightening experience                                                                                   | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 3. it to be an exciting experience                                                                                     | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 4. it to not be a happy experience                                                                                     | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 5. to feel really depressed                                                                                            | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 6. to find it hard to "fit back in"                                                                                    | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 7. to become more critical of my home culture                                                                          | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 8. to miss the foreign culture (USA) where I stayed                                                                    | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 9. to have a lot of contact with members of the host culture (USA)                                                     | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 10. to feel generally alienated at home                                                                                | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 11. to not have much privacy                                                                                           | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 12. things to go too slowly for me                                                                                     | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 13. to feel good about myself and my accomplishments                                                                   | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |
| 14. to feel comfortable with my attitudes that have changed and that are different from those of my family and friends | 1                 | 2        | 3          | 4     | 5              |

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Going home, I expect:						
15. the following people to be receptive to my experiences and needs	0	1	2	3	4	5
a. parents	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. spouse	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. siblings	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. children	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. co-workers	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. friends	0	1	2	3	4	5
16. the following people to be supportive of my experiences and needs						
a. parents	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. spouse	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. siblings	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. children	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. co-workers	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. friends	0	1	2	3	4	5

**FRIENDS**

Going back home, I expect:						
17. my relationships with my close friends to have changed because of my absence	0	1	2	3	4	5
18. my friends to be interested in my experiences abroad	0	1	2	3	4	5
19. my friends to pressure me to conform to some of their values	0	1	2	3	4	5
20. my friends to be open to new ideas that I have learned	0	1	2	3	4	5
21. miss the friends that I made in the host culture (USA)	0	1	2	3	4	5

**FAMILY**

Going back home. I expect:						
22. my parents to interfere in my life	0	1	2	3	4	5
23. my relatives to interfere in my life	0	1	2	3	4	5
24. my parents to take a lot of my time	0	1	2	3	4	5

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Going home, I expect:	not applicable	strongly disagree	disagree	no opinion	agree	strongly agree
25. my relatives to take a lot of my time	0	1	2	3	4	5
26. my relatives to be interested in my experiences abroad	0	1	2	3	4	5
27. my family to pressure me to conform to some of their values	0	1	2	3	4	5
28. my relatives to be open to new ideas that I have learned	0	1	2	3	4	5
29. a lot of my money to go to my parents	0	1	2	3	4	5
30. a lot of my money to go to my relatives	0	1	2	3	4	5
31. to prefer the family orientation of my country to the individualism of the United States	0	1	2	3	4	5

## CO-WORKERS

Going back home, I expect:						
32. to be readily accepted by my co-workers	0	1	2	3	4	5
33. my co-workers to be open to changes that I suggest	0	1	2	3	4	5
34. to encounter admiration from my co-workers for the skills and knowledge I developed at ISU	0	1	2	3	4	5
35. to experience discrimination in my job because of having studied in the U. S. A.	0	1	2	3	4	5
36. the education received at ISU to be relevant to the work that I intend to do	0	1	2	3	4	5
37. to use some aspect of the education received at ISU frequently	0	1	2	3	4	5
38. to be able to find employment in my area of specialization	0	1	2	3	4	5
39. adjusting to the daily work routine of my job to be difficult	0	1	2	3	4	5
40. to find it difficult to communicate what I have learned in the USA	0	1	2	3	4	5

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Going back home, I expect:						
41. predicting what people are going to do to be difficult	not applicable	strongly disagree	disagree	no opinion	agree	strongly agree
42. to find myself uncomfortable in many situations	0	1	2	3	4	5

#### HOME/COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Going back home, I expect:						
43. transportation to be a problem	0	1	2	3	4	5
44. life in my home culture to be boring, after the excitement of living abroad	0	1	2	3	4	5
45. to become more critical of my home culture's government	0	1	2	3	4	5
46. adjusting to the changes in lifestyle from the USA to be difficult	0	1	2	3	4	5
47. adjusting to the food to be difficult	0	1	2	3	4	5
48. to miss the food in the U. S	0	1	2	3	4	5
49. my community to pressure me to conform to some of their values	0	1	2	3	4	5
50. my living conditions in my home country to be equal to or better than my U.S. living conditions.	0	1	2	3	4	5
51. to feel comfortable with my country's customs for social interaction	0	1	2	3	4	5
52. to be able to adapt the knowledge learned at ISU to use at the local and community level	0	1	2	3	4	5

B. Please complete the appropriate spaces provided below:

53. Please indicate the number of other family members who will be living in the same household as you:
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. parents
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2. parents-in-law
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3. brothers and sisters
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4. brothers and sisters-in-law
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5. other \_\_\_\_\_



54. Please indicate the number of other family members who will be financially dependent on you \_\_\_\_\_
55. I am in regular contact with:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1. family  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 2. friends  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 3. co-workers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4. others \_\_\_\_\_
56. I stay in regular contact with my family and friends through:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1. letter writing  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 2. telephone  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 3. visits  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4. other people  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 5. other \_\_\_\_\_
57. Since my arrival at ISU, I have been to my home country:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1. once  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 2. twice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 3. three times  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4. four times and above  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 5. have not been back
58. I have lived in the United States for:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months
59. Approximately, how much longer do you plan on staying in the United States?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months \_\_\_\_\_ no idea

#### STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- C. This section includes some general questions about your education and personal background.

Please complete the appropriate spaces below.

#### EDUCATION

60. What is your classification in school?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1. junior  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 2. senior  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 3. special student  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4. graduate \_\_\_\_\_ MS \_\_\_\_\_ Phd
61. Department \_\_\_\_\_
62. Major \_\_\_\_\_
63. Year of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

64

64. What is your sex?

- 1. Female
- 2. Male

65. What is your age group?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. 20 - 29
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. 30 - 39
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. 40 - 49
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. 50 - 59
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. 60 or above

66. What is your country of citizenship

---

67. What is your marital status?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. single
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. married
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. separated/divorced
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. widowed

68. Do you have any children?

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. yes. Please indicate the number of children by age group:

- \_\_\_\_\_ i. (0 - 5) years of age
- \_\_\_\_\_ ii. (6 - 11) years of age
- \_\_\_\_\_ iii. (12 - 15) years of age
- \_\_\_\_\_ iv. (16 and above)

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. no

D. This last section has open-ended questions. Responding to these are optional.

69. Please tell us about other anticipated adjustments and/or conflicts pertaining to any or all of the following, that you think you will encounter on your return home; yourself, your family and friends, your co-workers, your home, work and community environment.

70. Please tell us what you think can be done to help you adjust better or overcome these adjustments and/or conflicts.

**APPENDIX B**  
**INVENTORY OF REENTRY PROBLEMS**

1. Cultural Adjustment
  - a. Identify problem
  - b. Insecurity
  - c. Adjustment to changes in lifestyle
  - d. Adjustment to a pervasive quality of envy and distrust in interpersonal relations
  - e. Adjustment to the localiteness of kin and friends
  - f. Adjustment to a daily work routine
  - g. Family or community pressure to conform
  - h. No problem
  - i. Other
  
2. Social Adjustment
  - a. Adjustments from individualism of U.S. life to familism (conformity and submissions to the demands of family) in home country
  - b. Colonial mentality
  - c. Feelings of superiority due to international experience and travel
  - d. Lack of amenities which were a part of U.S. existence
  - e. Uncertainties in interpersonal relations
  - f. Social alienation as a result of foreign sojourn
  - g. Dissatisfaction with ritualized patterns of social interaction
  - h. Frustration as a result of conflicting attitudes
  - i. No problem
  - j. Other
  
3. Linguistic Barriers
  - a. Adoption of verbal/non-verbal codes which are not familiar to country men

- b. Adoption of certain speech mannerisms which may be misinterpreted by countrymen
  - c. Absence of colleagues who speak the same code as returnee
  - d. Unfamiliarity with new forms of communication or styles of expression
  - e. No problem
  - f. Other
4. National and Political Problems
- a. Changes in political conditions
  - b. Shifts in national priorities/policies
  - c. Shift in political views
  - d. Political climate not conducive to professional activity
  - e. Political climate not conducive to professional advancement
  - f. Dissatisfaction with political situation
  - g. Observed lack of national goals
  - h. Politicization of office of colleagues
  - i. Changes in bureaucratic leadership
  - j. No problem
  - k. Other
5. Educational Problems
- a. Inability to reconcile aspects of U. S. education to education in home country
  - b. Relevance of education to home situation
  - c. Fulfillment of objectives in coming to U. S.
  - d. Aspects of U.S. education which are least helpful to returnee
  - e. Lack of facilities and resources for research
  - f. Wrong expectations

- g. Failure to improve skills
  - h. Absence of professional education programs to keep up with new developments or knowledge
  - i. No problem
  - j. Other
- 
- 6. Professional Problems
    - a. Inability to work in the chosen speciality
    - b. Placement in inappropriate field
    - c. Facing a glutted job market
    - d. Scientific terminology in U. S. studies which are not subject to adequate translation into the native language
    - e. Inability to communicate what was learned
    - f. Resistance to change by co-workers
    - g. Feeling of superiority due to U. S. training
    - h. Non-recognition of U. S. degree
    - i. Jealousy of colleagues
    - j. Low compensation
    - k. High expectations
    - l. Isolation from academic and scientific developments in U. S. or in own field
    - m. Perceived lack of enthusiasm and/or commitment among co-workers
    - n. Concern with quick material success
    - o. No problem
    - p. Other

**APPENDIX C**  
**STUDENTS' COMMENTS**

FOREIGN (INTERNATIONAL) STUDENTS COMMENTS ON ANTICIPATED ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR CONFLICTS RELATING TO THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS, THEIR CO-WORKERS, THEIR HOME, WORK AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT.

- I think that the most difficult adjustment I am going to have to make is the transfer of technology. While at I.S.U., I have computers and all sorts of machines to do my work. These facilities are not available in my country. Overall, adjustment won't be difficult.
- My stay in the United States has changed my view of the world and of myself. Besides the personal changes, I have missed some of the experiences my friends, and relatives have had while I was here. Therefore, I don't expect to fit back in right away. I think I have to work hard to create or rebuild my social life.
- I don't think I will have any conflicts/problems when I return home. I only feel happy and pleased that I can see my family and friends again.
- I believe that I can be accepted when I go home. Therefore, it will be a very happy experience for me to go home.
- It will be very hard for me to adjust to the "new" environment there.
- Maybe a language problem. After all, I have forgotten most of the Japanese language.
- I think the main adjustment would be the technological superiority of the U.S.A. in comparison to my home country. It is rather sad to learn something that I may never apply. However, there is a chance to relate things that I have learned at Iowa State University. In other words, my education at I.S.U. has been worth it.



- In 2 1/2 years, the economic situation in my country has changed a lot. I will find it difficult to believe the prices of the food items when I get back home, because I was the one who bought the food (not with my money, of course) for the house every week.
- Political freedom will be missed. Privacy will also not be as easy to have as it is in the U.S.
- Since my arrival here in February 1978, I immediately started to absorb and adapt to the western standards and culture. I have not left the U.S. soil as yet. The changes in Iran during the past 13 years have been phenomenal. I feel my "old" country had a chance to leap into the future after the Shah, but instead it fell back to the dark ages. The thought of going back home has become my worst nightmare for the past decade. I feel bitter, cheated and betrayed by everyone, especially my own people the Iranians.
- It will take a while (2 months), to get my degree from the U.S. accepted as a Norwegian degree.
- When going back home, I will glad and at the same time I am afraid of going back to the Japanese society. It is different from the American society. It is not individualistic; it values group and manner too much. Now I am used to the American society and I like it. When I go back home, I have to live with my family again. Here, in America, I live by myself. It is really good. I don't have to hesitate for anyone. I am free. But when I go home, I won't be as free as the American life anymore. Everything in my country is small so at first I will be shocked when I go home.
- Religion is more consumptive and individualistic.
- When I return home, it will be difficult for me to relate to the values of my family as I have been very independent out here. I have learned the good and the

bad that exist in my country and here I am glad that I can appreciate things much more now.

- I expect to find some difficulties in adjusting to people's actions and reactions at the beginning, similar to some of the difficulties I faced when I came to the U.S.. However, I usually adjust easily to new situations after a short period of time.
- I think that my adjustments are going to be difficult, because while I am happy to go back home, I am going to be sad leaving the U.S.A., and so on (friends, family, co-workers, home and the environment). I would like to be in both countries at the same time.
- It is very rare for someone to come to the U.S. to study from Mauritius. When I go back, I might be the only one. I might be discriminated against in trying to get a job since people do not know how a graduate from Iowa State University might perform. They might ask me for my previous work experience, recommendations from my professors etc. I intend to operate my own industry for which I need experience and self confidence in myself. The education I get from I.S.U. will be helpful to manage my own industry (textile industry).
- Pace of life - I will need to adjust to a quicker pace. It may take some time and personal effort to readjust.
- It will be hard to find people that I really can associate with, as I feel that secular people that are concerned about social issues tend to ignore the importance of their own actions, and lack individualism. Thus they tend to drink and smoke to a much larger extent than what they do here. In general, I prefer Norwegians to (at least white) Americans. I find that I can more easily associate with African - Americans than with Norwegians.
- You have done a pretty good job of that. I have no other suggestions.

- Inflation. Incorporating this to normal life, and to stop doing comparative analysis of prices 5-10 years ago.
- I think it will be difficult to adjust to the space of my home because it is very small. I have to share my room with my brother. Also, I think it would be difficult to go back and see the poor conditions of schools, universities, hospitals etc.

FOREIGN (INTERNATIONAL) STUDENTS COMMENTS ON WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP THEM ADJUST BETTER OR OVERCOME THESE REENTRY ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR CONFLICTS.

- I personally think that adjustments and conflicts are important personal experiences which lead to personal growth. It is through such "conflict" situations that students become more aware, and at the same time more critical of their nation's realities. Maybe such adjustments and conflicts should not be avoided.
- I think it would be nice to have some lectures about, "What are you going to do when you go back home?" I think people should think more and question themselves about going back home. It would be good to tell people that even though it could be difficult to go back, it would be great because they are people with good knowledge that can help the development of their countries.
- Help students find more suitable jobs to match their most recent training at Iowa State University.
- I probably need to join lots of organizations until I can find people that are more like me. Due to the larger concentration of minorities there, I probably

have to live in a big city (maybe, even move to a big city in Sweden or Denmark).

- Getting some kind of training in an industry will surely help me gain confidence in myself. My main objective of doing Industrial Education is so that I can go back home and reopen a textile industry which my father had to close down due to lack of personnel and professionals. Due to lack of a production engineer the whole industry was closed. About forty people were left unemployed, and the machinery had to be sold. I don't want this to happen again.
- Probably, reentry workshops in which psychologists could help us understand what may happen in our lives, and make us aware of all the adjustments and conflicts we are going to pass through.
- I suggest that the university establishes an orientation for the foreign (international) graduate students to give them different kinds of ideas about what to expect, (a kind of reminder). They came from a different culture and thus they should expect it to be different when they go back. Besides, these orientations should focus on the recent changes in different countries such as political and social.
- To adjust better when I go back home, I think I should keep in close contact with my culture and often remind myself that my independence and individualism will not be there when I go home.
- I will just try to adjust to the custom of my country. I will try to make a lot of friends there, and challenge many things.
- I don't think any thing can be done. When I left to come here, I was aware that going back home would be difficult, but I made the choice to come anyway.
- The only thing that can be done to help me is to change the government and 99% of the Persian people. My only hope for happiness is to stay here.

Should I be forced to return to hell, the only thing you can do to help yourself is to turn your head and grab your ears.

- I can't think of anything that you can do. I believe it is something every foreign (international) student will just have to go through. However, if you can do anything about it I wish you good luck.
- There are usually huge American corporations such as IBM, Xerox and Shell, and others that have representatives in other countries. Iowa State University can work together with them to help foreign (international) students get internships in the foreign countries so when a foreign (international) student graduates, he/she can possibly work for them. Or at least he/she can persuade the company he/she is working for to apply the techniques they learned while working with those corporations. These techniques may have been techniques learned in college.
- Nothing. On the other hand, let me stay here and give me a job.
- Workshops with people who have gone through the reentry process. We can learn something from them.
- It is difficult for me to suggest anything that can be done to help me adjust when I go back home. I guess you understand why. Maybe, the best way is to explain to the foreign (international) students how the international market works, and how other countries take advantage of others, so we can understand the reasons for the changes, even if we can not anticipate what is the magnitude of the changes.
- When we came to Iowa State University we got an introduction which in part dealt with the culture shock we would experience going back to our own country. We are going to go through that culture shock process. Perhaps a similar orientation program would help us. It does not have to be extensive.

A few practical tips might be enough. After all, I think foreign (international) students are flexible people. We wouldn't have survived otherwise!