SOCIAL INTERACTION AND CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AND MALAYSIAN STUDENTS AT UPSI

NOR ILI BINTI AHMAD TAJUDDIN

SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

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SOCIAL INTERACTION AND CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT OF
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NOR ILI BINTI AHMAD TAJUDDIN

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فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا - إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

"For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease." "Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease."

(Quran, Al-Insyirah 94: verse 5-6)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the social interactions among International and Malaysian students at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) Tanjung Malim, Perak. The study's goal was i) to understand the challenges faced by international and Malaysian students during their social interactions. ii) to describe how international and Malaysian students cope with the challenges during social interaction, iii) to explore international and Malaysian students' expectations of UPSI programs in promoting social interaction between them. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach and the data were obtained through the interview (11 participants), observation, and document analysis. The data were subsequently analyzed using manual methods. To ensure validity and reliability, data triangulation was used. The findings revealed (objective-1) that the language barrier, lack of social skills, personality traits, lack of confidence, and accents are the most common challenges faced by International and Malaysian students in UPSI during their social interaction. They solve the problem (objective-2) by coping with internal emotions, using body language, asking for clarification, engaging in social activities, lowering the ego, starting a conversation, and building self-confidence. They expected (objective-3) the UPSI in the future to create such a program that can build a conversation between International and Malaysian students and be mandatory for participation. The study's findings are expected to assist university policymakers in encouraging programs that promote social interaction between International and Malaysian students.

INTERAKSI SOSIAL DAN PELARASAN BUDAYA DI KALANGAN PELAJAR ANTARABANGSA DAN MALAYSIA DI UPSI

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka interaksi sosial pelajar antarabangsa dan Malaysia di Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) Tanjung Malim, Perak. Objektif kajian ini adalah i) untuk memahami cabaran yang dihadapi oleh pelajar Antarabangsa dan Malaysia semasa interaksi sosial, ii) untuk menghuraikan bagaimana cara pelajar antarabangsa dan Malaysia menghadapi cabaran semasa interaksi sosial, iii) untuk mengetahui harapan pelajar Antarabangsa dan Malaysia terhadap program UPSI dalam mempromosikan interaksi sosial. Kajian ini telah menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dengan pendekatan kajian kes dan data diperoleh melalui 3 cara iaitu temu bual (11 peserta), pemerhatian, dan analisis dokumen. Data tersebut kemudiannya dianalisis menggunakan kaedah manual. Untuk memastikan kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan, triangulasi data telah digunakan. Dapatan kajian mendedahkan (objektif-1) bahawa halangan bahasa, kekurangan kemahiran sosial, ciri personaliti, tahap keyakinan, dan loghat bahasa adalah cabaran yang paling biasa dihadapi oleh pelajar Antarabangsa dan Malaysia di UPSI. Mereka menyelesaikan masalah (objektif-2) dengan mengatasi emosi dalaman, menggunakan bahasa badan, meminta pengulangan penjelasan, melibatkan diri dalam aktiviti sosial, merendahkan ego, memulakan perbualan, dan membina keyakinan diri. Mereka menjangkakan (objektif-3) program UPSI akan datang adalah seperti program yang mewujudkan interaksi seperti perbualan antara pelajar Antarabangsa dan Malaysia serta mewajibkan penyertaan bagi program-program tertentu. Penemuan kajian ini dijangka membantu penggubal dasar universiti dalam mewujudkan program yang menggalakkan interaksi sosial antara pelajar Antarabangsa dan Malaysia di UPSI.

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COVID-19   Coronavirus Disease 2019

MCO   Movement Control Order

SOP   Standard Operating Procedure

UPSI   Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter tries to highlight the research gap that led to the study's research questions. A research gap is a question about which no existing study or research has provided a solution. When a concept or fresh idea hasn't been explored in any way, there can be a research gap. As a result, it is organized as follows: First, the study's background is presented, along with the issue and problem that this study's problem statement addresses. The growing number of research in this area demonstrates how critical it is to comprehend the cross-cultural adjustment challenges that international students confront, particularly in the context of interactions between international and Malaysian students at UPSI. Following that, the study's purpose is outlined, followed by the research question and objective. Following that is a theoretical and conceptual perspective to guide in the direction and focus of this study, as well as a definition of the term to help the reader in comprehending the study's concept. Following that, the significance and limitations are discussed. Finally, the paper's structure is outlined.

1.2   Background of Study

The number of international students studying in Malaysian universities appears to be growing. This is emphasized in Malaysia's Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education), which sets a target of 250,000 international students by 2025. As a result, Malaysian higher education institutions must be prepared to meet the high number of international students among Malaysian university students. Malaysian universities and students' preparation is also an important component in implementing the internationalisation program in Malaysian higher education. Internationalization has emerged as a major driver of change in higher education, both in industrialized countries and in emerging and developing societies (deWitt, 2019). As a result, the relationship between Malaysian (local) and international students has evolved as one of the most significant issues in the literature on educational globalization.

However, as the number of international students grows, they also confront additional problems, particularly in terms of social interaction with Malaysian students. Although international and Malaysian students interact in the same spaces such as classrooms, faculties, offices, cafeterias, and colleges, it does not appear to be easy when they do not share the same language and communication skills. Even social stigma, such as stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice, contributes significantly to a lack of social interaction. Other frequently cited concerns include second language learning, social isolation, cultural norms, fees, immigration procedures, and prejudice (Lee, 2017). This issue will be felt by international students when they arrive in a new country and require interaction with Malaysian students who serve as the host country's representatives.

Due to the severe role of internationalisation in Malaysia's economic growth, research on international students' experiences has received attention. A review of current research (Knight-Grofe, & Rauh, 2016, Welkulo, 2019) revealed that studies have been conducted in Europe, Australia, and North America, with a particular emphasis on the interaction of domestic and international students. However, just a few recently published studies have explored this problem in Malaysia (Hamzah & Abdullah, 2017).

Numerous studies have concluded that international students' lack of social interaction is a source of disappointment and causes to poor feelings toward the host country (Herman, 2004; Lee, 2010; Zhou & Cole, 2017). Malaysia is no exception. International higher education is advancing rapidly in Malaysia, where several reforms have been implemented to attract international students. Specifically, Malaysia's Higher Education Blueprint (2015-2025) projects that the number of international students would expand to 250,000 by 2025 (PPPM, 2015-2025), owing to the country's expansion of new markets through programs and innovative collaboration. International students have established themselves as a vital part of Malaysia's higher education system.

Farago (2018) also reports that international students benefit countries economically. According to Valka (2015), international students' mobility benefits the host economy, but he also noted that international students' feelings are neglected, which might be troublesome. In agreement with Valka (2015), Farago (2018) views all international student programs as a profit opportunity for the host country rather than an opportunity for global knowledge transfer.

Table 1.1

List of International Students at UPSI by Country of Origin (2021)

No	Country of Origin	Total of Students	Percentage (%)
1	Bangladesh	67	6.29
2	China	472	44.3
3	Egypt	12	1.12
4	India	4	0.37
5	Indonesia	174	16.3
6	Nigeria	6	0.56
7	Palestinian Territory	8	0.75
8	Somalia	7	0.65
9	Syrian Arab Republic	7	0.65
10	Thailand	4	0.37
11	Iraq	85	7.98
12	Papua New Guinea	1	0.09
13	Jordan	13	1.22
14	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	9	0.84
15	Namibia	6	0.56
16	Oman	28	2.62
17	Pakistan	10	0.93
18	Singapore	6	0.56
19	Sudan	2	0.18
20	United Arab Emirates	124	11.6
21	United Kingdom	1	0.09
22	Uzbekistan	2	0.18
23	Saudi Arabia	1	0.09
24	Australia	1	0.09
25	Bahrain	1	0.09
26	Comoros	3	0.28
27	Japan	1	0.09
28	Philippines	4	0.37
29	Switzerland	1	0.09
30	Yemen	2	0.18
Total	**Grand Total**	**1065**	**100%**

Source: UPSI International Affairs, 2021

Therefore, understanding international students' cross-cultural adjustment has become crucial as the number of international students enrolling at Malaysian universities, including UPSI, grows year after year (Hamzah & Abdullah, 2017). This cannot be denied. International students who continue to study at Malaysian universities have been around for many years. In reality, since 1996, the number of international students flying to Malaysia has consistently increase. (Malakloluthu & Selan, 2011;

Pandian, 2008). Most crucially, they are all non-native speakers of Bahasa Melayu (Malay Language) or have a greater influence on the mother tongue.

As a result, several unavoidable challenges occur that may impede or even prevent international students from adjusting to a new culture. The difficulties of adjusting to a new culture might have a negative impact on their daily lives as well as their ability to socialise with people from different cultures or locals. (Talib et al., 2014; Manjet, 2012; Pandian, 2008; Selvaratnam, 1988). Socialization is very important because it is the process through which a person learns the function, status, and values that are required in a social organisation. Individuals' initial behaviour can be modified by socialization in order to fit the social life needs of current's society (Amir Hasan Dawi, 2009: 59).

1.3   Problem Statement

According to Maria et al. (2015), many research and studies on the socializing of international students have been conducted in Western countries, but only a few studies have been conducted in Asian countries, including Malaysia. Other research has found that, despite the fact that the number of international students attending Malaysian universities continues to rise, only a small number of recently published studies have looked into this topic in Malaysia (Hamzah & Abdullah, 2017).

Oya Tamtekin Aydın (2020) reveal that poor English practice of local and international students may hinder social interaction between them especially when

English is not their native language. This means that being a non-native speaker of a common language on campus limits social interaction for both student groups, international and local students. Lau and Lin (2017) also found that international and local students in Taiwan perceived language to be an obstacle for social interaction. Local students were perceived to be overly anxious about making mistakes, and they appeared to be obsessed with a native accent. The international students whose first language was English experienced discomfort with this situation, they stated that local students avoided interacting with international students.

Previous study identifies the socializing barriers among Chinese international and local students because of culture stereotyping and culture-based labels. A lack of multicultural experiences and insufficient psychological support, particularly for women, are also contributing factors, which make them less confident to socialize. This has affected social interaction among them. (Lin Ge, Douglas Brown, Douglas Durst, 2019).

The researcher also reveals that personality traits, particularly shy and introvert personality has hindered the process of social interaction among international and local students (Oya Tamtekin Aydın 2020).

In a study of international students has demonstrate that social interaction between international and local students does not occur because international students prefer to interact with their group only especially the presence of home country students. This led them feel unwillingness to make friends from host country. (Oya Tamtekin Aydın, 2020). If international students think that way, do local students do the same? If that happens, both international and local students will lose out for not

taking advantage of the cross-cultural experience at the university. Siti Maziha Mustapha et al. (2021) explore the majority of the local students reported that the cross cultural experiences with international students are important to their personal development.

According to a previous study, a person with good social skills has the ability to overcome a challenge during social interaction. Social skills can be described as behaviours that promote positive interaction with others. These skills enable a person to converse with others, as well as initiate and maintain relationships and friendships. Good social skills are essential for proper life functioning. A person with good social skills can interact and behave socially and effectively, form and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle difficult situations confidently and with appropriate self-control. To summarize, social skills are required for an individual to behave in society in accordance with their culture (Reetu Sharma, Vandana Goswami, Purnima Gupta, 2016).

International students in UPSI are no exception in this matter. During the adjustment period, they face a number of difficulties. For new arrivals, studying at a Malaysian university for the first time presents some obstacles. International students must learn new ways of learning and think not only in the classroom but also throughout their live in Malaysia. Other elements that international students at UPSI must contend with include the weather, the local currency, the English dialect spoken by the Malaysian students, and the native language (Bahasa Melayu), as well as encountering a variety of other international faces who are not their nationality. If not completed promptly, it may have a negative impact on not only their academic achievement but also their emotional stability.

According to Forbes-Mewett and Sawyer (2016), international students cope with difficult situations differently; some find it difficult to adjust and perhaps experience depressive symptoms and suicide attempts. Others, on the other hand, thrive in their new place. According to the authors, depression is one of the most common mental disorders among young people worldwide, with many of them being students. Indeed, facing a foreign culture may create a degree of physical and emotional discomfort for students who are migrating to further their studies in a foreign country. To meet this challenge, students need to adapt as soon as possible to the norms and practices of the local community in order to feel at home.

Living in a culture that is not one's own can be both an exciting adventure and a difficult process. It is common for all international students, regardless of country of origin, to go through a period of cultural adjustment. Understanding the adjustment process and getting support during this transition will allow individuals to have a more fulfilling experience, both academically and personally. Cultural adjustment in this study refers to any type of adjustment that international students encounter in UPSI during their social interaction with UPSI Malaysian students such as language and communication skills.

In conclusion, this study is very important to conduct because limited interaction among students can lead to depression, anxiety, disengagement, loneliness, as well as dissatisfaction. (Lacina, 2002; Sumer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008; Choo & Singh, 2013; Mesidor & Sly, 2016; Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2016; Oya Tamtekin Aydın, 2020). Therefore, it is important for UPSI international students to have social interaction with Malaysian students, which will help them blend into the culture easier. Previous research has also linked the state of financial, emotional, cultural, and personal

issues as risks that impact the mental wellbeing of international students (Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2016). Pressures may include, for example, anxiety about the unfamiliar and new surroundings of the university setting, academic challenges, financial strain, and social isolation (Hamamura & Laird, 2014). To meet this challenge, students need to adapt as soon as possible to the norms and practices of the local community in order to feel at home. If UPSI is going to accept students from abroad, then they should address these issues and many more that follow. Therefore, the study of international students in UPSI must be conducted in order to explore their cross-cultural adjustments towards the interaction with Malaysian students.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How are the challenges faced by international and Malaysian students during social interaction?

2. How international and Malaysian students cope with the challenges during social interaction?

3. What kind of program that international and Malaysian students expect from university in promoting social interaction?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To understand the challenges faced by international and Malaysian students during their social interactions.

2. To describe how international students cope with the challenges during social interaction.

3. To explore international and Malaysian students' expectation of programs in promoting social interaction between them.

1.6   Significance of the Study

This present study seeks to focus and enhance understanding on how interaction would be a barrier between international and Malaysian students during their socialization even if they interact and communicate with the same language or not. There are various other significances and contributions on this study that have been particular to more specific purposes as stated below.

1.6.1   Contribution to the Malaysian Higher Education Institutions

This present study will serve as benefits for universities and private colleges in Malaysia to design a mechanism that fixes the problems confronted by international students in Malaysia. This study will help to educate them further on the problems of some international students and to understand the necessary actions that would be taken to address such a situation.

This study is fundamental because it will provide a better solution on how to improve the social interaction among international and Malaysian students in Malaysia. This study also allows the government of the host country to discover various categories

of challenge facing those international students in Malaysia. As a result of that, they can plan some strategies that will reduce the challenges facing international students.

In practical terms, this study also seeks to provide findings that will help Malaysian Higher Education institutions to cater more effectively to international students by providing better services. Subsequently, this will lead to an improvement in a positive learning environment for international students and provide recommendations for policy makers in improving service quality for Malaysian higher international education to attract, retain, and receive international students in the near future. A stable inflow of international students will help Malaysia grow and prosper as an educational hub and later on, create more quality in higher education, improve more employment opportunities for Malaysians, and enhance national income growth.

1.6.2   Contributions to Lecturers

Moreover, the study will enable the lecturers to understand the problem of international students and how to create suitable approaches that will improve the social interaction between international and Malaysian students in the classroom or during others activities related which involve both international and Malaysian students.

1.6.3 Contribution to Literature Sources

This study is a contribution to the existing literature on the adjustment of international students in several ways. Firstly, to the best of our knowledge. Furthermore, the outcome of this present study would definitely add to the existing literature by widening the stock of knowledge on the problems faced by international students in Malaysia since the area of this study in Malaysia perspective context is a few. Besides, it would be a source of material for prospective researchers who intend to conduct research on international students in Malaysia.

1.6.4 Contribution to International and Mobility Centre (IMC) UPSI

This study is also worth to be conducted because it can provide suggestions to the responsible International and Mobility Centre (IMC) to improve social program to facilitate the international students during their adjustment period.

Last but not least, this study is also important to understand the experience of cross-cultural adjustment among international students from various backgrounds. It offers rich insights of cross-cultural adjustment among international students that includes diverse people's voices. These are valuable insights to assist in determining the adjustment process of cross-cultural reality of international students going through and understanding the differences between each student's experiences they encounter towards language barriers during their social interaction.

1.7   Limitations of Study

Limitation of study is the inadequacy in this present research which give significant impact on the findings of the study. According to Ghazali Darusalam and Sufean Hussin (2018), the purpose of the study's limitations is to state where's the limitation or study's limitation from aspect of methodology.

First, this study will be conducted at Sultan Idris Education University, Tanjung Malim Perak. The participants in this research will be involved are undergraduate international and Malaysian students only. This is because, after the observation was made, most of postgraduate international students did not interact with Malaysian students because of several factors, such as time limitation due to having a family commitment. Compared to undergraduate international students were a lot in the classroom or campus because they lived in a hostel provided by the university.

Further, the limitation of variables is, the researchers focus more only on the aspect of social interaction between international and Malaysian students. But other factors influenced that are found later will also be discussed if necessary.

1.8 Research Framework
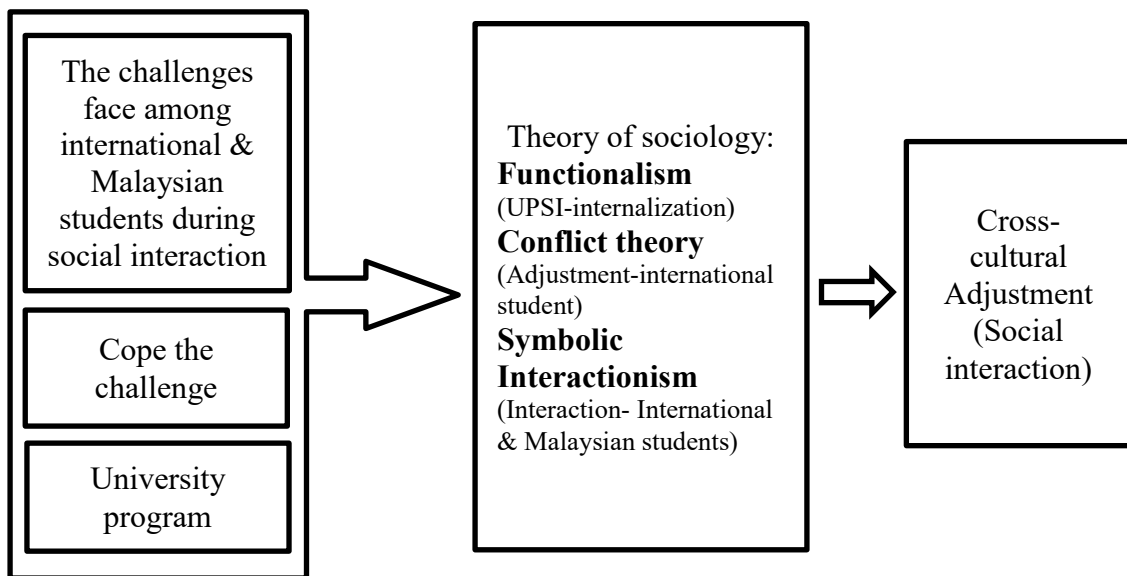
Figure 1.1. Research Framework

The researcher used three types of related sociological theories as a guide in conducting this study, namely functionalism theory, conflict theory and symbol interactionism theory. According to Gelles and Levine (1995), a theory is a summary of knowledge that provides guidance for conducting research and interpreting new information. Researchers use these theories because they are found logical and reasonable to discuss the objectives in this study.

1.9 Theoretical Approach

Merriam (2001) describes the theoretical framework as "the structure, the scaffolding, the frame of your study" (p. 45). Studies in the field of social sciences, especially those of scientific research such as this dissertation, the researcher uses a theoretical approach to help this study be directed and focused.

In this study, researchers want to explore and understand the challenge faced by international students during their cross-cultural adjustment particularly in social interaction with Malaysian students. This challenge is much related to the culture of a foreign country that one must learn during their adjustment period. Thus, to understand this problem, culture takes the first place for international students to learn. This is because of the language and interactions that international students had to face during their adjustment period involved cross-cultural experiences.

Therefore, this section will be discussed based on several points of the sociological theories that appear to be related to this research problem.

1.9.1   Theory of Conflict by Lewis A. Coser

Lewis Coser considers conflict to have a positive function if it can be managed and expressed accordingly. Conflict sociology Lewis Coser influences the sociology of pragmatic conflict, or multidisciplinary, which is used to manage conflict in companies or other modern organizations (Novri Susan, 2009, p: 46).

Conflict theory according to Lewis A. Coser views social systems as functional. According to Coser, conflict does not always have a negative nature. Conflict can also strengthen relationships between individuals in a group.

Coser believes the existence of conflict should not be dysfunctional. Therefore, the existence of conflict can trigger a form of interaction and trigger positive

consequences. Besides, the presence of conflict can also move isolated group members to play an active role in their group activities.

In addition, Coser classifies social conflict into two types, namely realistic and non-realistic conflict. Realistic conflict is a conflict based on the frustration of individuals or groups over various forms of problems in social relationships. While non-Realistic Conflict exists because there is a need to release pressure from one or 2 conflicting parties.

In this study, conflict theory drives the researcher in placing international students as a conflict group. This is because according to previous studies, international students who do not socialize tend to feel isolated, lonely and some other problems. So, those who want to overcome this problem will come out of the comfort zone in order to find satisfaction through interaction with local students. Through interaction, they are able to build friendships. This can reduce homesickness as international students away from family. According to this theory (refer in chapter 2), there are two problems of conflict from external and internal aspects. It is also closely related to the problem of social interaction between international and local students. Internal problems such as personality problems. Individuals who carry an introvert personality usually have trouble interacting. External problems are language problems, cultural differences and so on.

1.9.2 Functionalism

Theory of functionalism was introduced by Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim. According to this theory, society develops and stabilizes based on social rules and current changes.

Following the ideas of Comte and Spencer, Durkheim likened societies are thought to function like living organisms, in which each organ plays a necessary role in keeping the being alive. Just as an individual has a heart, brain, blood and other part of body as well as a nervous system, so society also has a set of economic, political institutions, family, education and religion. If all the parts of a living organism work together to keep it alive, then so does society. All parts of society must work together to ensure that it continues to grow, remain and be stable.

The functionalist perspective continues to try and explain how societies maintained the stability and internal cohesion necessary to ensure their continued existence over time. The various parts of society are assumed to work together naturally and automatically to maintain overall social equilibrium. Because social institutions are functionally integrated to form a stable system, a change in one institution will precipitate a change in other institutions. Dysfunctional institutions, which do not contribute to the overall maintenance of a society, will cease to exist.

Therefore, this idea has been linked as a university (UPSI) which is also an institution needs to play a role in paying attention to the problems faced by international students. The admission of international students is an important asset to the university itself from an economic perspective. Therefore, the institutions need to focus on their

problems, which most previous studies have linked to the problems of international students, resulting in emotional stress and mental problems. If the host (UPSI) tries to overcome this problem, it is possible that the difficulties they face can be heard and can be resolved in order to avoid emotional problems that will affect their academics. While international and Malaysian students, they also need to play the functions and roles of individuals well so that every effort made by the university can achieve its goals. In addition, this theory is also in line with the concept of internalization in higher education promoted by the Malaysian government. It is not just a term of 'internationalization', but must prove what needs to be done to bring the meaning of the term.

1.9.3 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interaction is one of many theories in social sciences. This theory claims that facts are based on and directed by symbols. The foundation of this theory is meanings. Symbolic interaction examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of "which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people?"

Symbolic interactionism that perceives individual as a social entity has lost its dynamism since 1970's. New symbolic interactionism is a more different and synthetic perspective than that of the period of Mead and Blumer. It has entered a period that Fine (1992) calls "Post-Blumerist" era (Slattery, 2007).

Thus, it can be concluded that, symbolic interactionism looks at how an individual shapes and is shaped by his or her interactions with others. It emphasizes the active role of an individual in social relationships and that a human being is not passively shaped by the social environment.

The concept of symbolic interaction theory was introduced by Herbert Blumer around 1939. This idea can be linked to the interaction between international students and Malaysia. Social interaction will exist if these two individuals play a role with each other during the interaction. Because the interaction requires two or more parties. In line with the thinking of symbolic interactionists who focus on face -to -face relationships in the context of everyday life. This is because every day human beings are involved in socializing with people. Symbolic meanings are useful during interactions where the meanings cause the relationship to become friendlier.

The symbolic interaction by Herbert Mead states that every human action is grounded the meaning that the individual interprets against something, hence the interpretation of this meaning determine the action to be taken by the individual (Achmad Taofik, 2015).

Thus, interactionism theory emphasizes the process of human social interaction. If we don't socialize, we won't behave like normal human beings. We may be considered insane or insane. Many stories about human beings who since childhood have been isolated from other human beings have shown different behaviours than human beings we consider normal. One example is the legend of Tarzen who behaved like an animal because he had no interaction with humans during his childhood. Therefore, how can a person who travels to a foreign country live a normal life without

socialization? Necessarily as a student, it becomes a responsibility on oneself to start socialization in a new life in a new place. If it continues to entertain feelings of sadness due to loneliness, it risks harming oneself towards mental illness as highlighted by the researcher in the problem statement.

1.10   Operational Definition

The following definitions are provided to aid the reader in understanding the terms used in this study. Operational definition refers to a precise statement of how a conceptual variable is turned into a measured variable. While conceptual definition, it is related to abstract concepts or ideas of this study. The following terms are the definitions of operations and conceptual contained in this study as stated below.

1.10.1   Social Interaction

In sociology, social interaction is a social exchange between two or more individuals. These interactions form the basis for social structure and therefore are a key object of basic social inquiry and analysis. Social structures and cultures are founded upon social interactions. By interacting with one another, people design rules, institutions and systems within which they seek to live. Symbols are used to communicate the expectations of a given society to those new to it, either children or outsiders. Through this broad schema of social development, one sees how social interaction lies at its core. Kimball Young and Raymond, W. Mack in Sociology and Social Life (1954) explained

the social interaction is the key to all social life, without social interaction there would be no life together.

In this study, social interaction refers to, any activity that involves two -way interaction among international and Malaysian students studying in UPSI no matter whether in the classroom, cafeteria, bus station, toilet, hostel, faculty including outside campus and other place which it occurs directly or indirectly.

1.10.2   Cross-Cultural Adjustment:

Cross-cultural means "involving two or more different cultures and their ideas and customs" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). 'Adjustment' means one's psychological comfort with a new setting (Black. 1988). Thus, cross-cultural adjustment may be viewed as the process of "getting comfortable" with living and working in a culture different from one's home culture.

So in this study, cross-cultural adjustment is a behavioral process of international students that continues to occur throughout their studies at UPSI or even can ongoing throughout an individual's lifetime. From day to day there is definitely something new that they have to learn to adapt as they study in a foreign country. Of course there are many important things that need to be adjusted in terms of language, academic, food, interaction, communication, and so on. This process is the way a person finds balance in meeting their needs and keeping needs in balance.

1.10.3   International Student

According to Zar (2009), an international student is someone who studies and lives in a country other than his or her home country. International students are also defined as individuals who temporarily reside in a country other than their country of citizenship in order to participate in international educational exchange as students (Paige, 1990). They come from different countries with different backgrounds and experience. International students are also sometimes referred to as foreign students or sojourners in the previous study of literature.

But International students in this study refers to, students from abroad who are enrolled in courses at UPSI, and are admitted under a temporary visa. In detail, international students in this study come from Bangladesh, China, and Nigeria.

1.11   Summary

So this chapter concludes by familiarizing the reader with the topic of cross-cultural adjustment among international student in terms of social interaction with Malaysian students in UPSI. A meaningful relationship between the international and local student not only promotes cross-cultural understanding, but it may also encourage second-language communication among international students, which, if avoided, can lead to a loss of self-confidence and self-efficacy, anxiety, unhappiness, exhaustion and feelings of lack over their language abilities. Thus, this study is very important to conduct because limited interaction among international students can lead to

depression, anxiety, disengagement, loneliness, as well as dissatisfaction. Indeed, it is necessary for international students to have social interaction with local students, which will help them blend into the culture easier.