Factors Affecting Adaptability of International Students in Malaysia during COVID-19 Pandemic

Mengtian Xie[1], Walton Wider[1,*], Subashini K. Rajanthran[2], Ling Shing Wong[3], Choon Kit Chan[4], Siti Sarah Maidin[5], & Nurul Aliah Mustafa[6]

[1]Faculty of Business and Communications, INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

[2]Teaching and Learning, INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

[3]Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

[4]Mechanical Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering and Quantity Surveying, INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

[5]Faculty of Data Science and Information Technology, INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

[5]School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Wawasan Open University, George Town, Penang, Malaysia

*Correspondence: INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Abstract

It is crucial to investigate adaptability in the context of COVID-19, as evidence suggests that difficulties posed by adaptability can be exacerbated during times of crisis. International students encounter additional pressures during this period, which might impair their capacity to stay and prosper in a new place. In light of this context, the purpose of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to the adaptability of international university students in Malaysia, namely the academic system, acculturation, and social support. A cross-sectional research design was used, and the research instruments were adapted from a number of previous studies. A total of one hundred thirty online questionnaires were filled out by international students in Malaysia. The research hypotheses were evaluated using SPSS Version 27.0. All predictors were found to have a statistically significant and positive effect on the adaptability of international students. This research aims to shed light on educational management strategies for addressing the adaptability challenges faced by most international students within COVID-19 by illuminating the key drivers that influence adaptability.

Keywords: adaptability, international student, academic system, acculturation, social support

1. Introduction

Adaptability refers to a person's capacity for adjusting, and thus surviving, and ideally thriving despite environmental changes (Levin & Lipshits-Braziler, 2021). In the context of international students, it refers to their ability to adjust to a new and likely unfamiliar environment in their host nation (Hussain & Shen, 2019; Makhmutova et al., 2018). When studying in a foreign country, international students will undoubtedly face significant changes and obstacles (Erturk & Luu, 2022). According to Makhmutova et al. (2018), the difficulties stem from the possibility of substantial differences between their home country and their host country. The distinction may take political, social, academic, or technological forms (Erturk & Luu, 2022). These differences are what make adaptation challenging for international students (Kiyashchuk et al., 2018). While it is the responsibility of students to effectively adapt to a foreign country and institution, institutional leaders can play a significant management role in assisting them to do so (Hussain & Shen, 2019). According to Tran and Nghia (2020), it is the responsibility of institutional leaders to create a learning environment that supports international education. Such an environment can facilitate the adaptation process for international students (Erturk & Luu, 2022). Qadeer et al. (2021) recommend that school leaders and managers increase their knowledge of the experiences of international students at universities in order to foster an environment that facilitates international students' adaptation. According to Erturk and Luu (2022), it is especially

important to understand international students who come from a country that is significantly different from the host country, because such students are likely to experience greater difficulty adjusting. GulRaihan and Sandaran (2017) elaborate on this by stating that while the majority of international students in Malaysia struggle with adaptability, those from regions outside the Asian continent tend to suffer the most due to the significant differences between Malaysia and their home country. However, universities can design effective strategies for managing international students, allowing them to adapt to a foreign environment, if they comprehend the experiences of international students (Qadeer et al., 2021).

It is important to note that adaptability has a significant impact on the student.   Adaptability, whether perceived or actual, serves as a learning motivational factor that may lead to improved educational outcomes and promote degree completion (Holliman et al., 2021). In turn, positive educational outcomes can contribute to the perception that the institution provides a quality education (Holliman et al., 2018). An institution or destination that is perceived to provide high-quality education is likely to attract more students (Hussain & Shen, 2019). Research on adaptability has also been done in relation to crises, where it has been found that students encounter difficulties with adaptability (Rilliard, 2020). However, international students are typically the most severely affected because they are in a foreign and unfamiliar environment when a crisis occurs (Humphrey & Forbes-Mewett, 2021). During such a time, the general health and wellbeing of students who adapt to the environment are likely to improve, whereas those who struggle may experience a decline (Rilliard, 2020). Numerous studies (Erturk & Luu, 2022; Makhmutova et al., 2018) have examined the adaptability of international students at length. Some studies have even concentrated on the Malaysian case (GulRaihan & Sandaran, 2017; Jamal & Wok, 2020). There are numerous international and local studies on the adaptation of international students (Bordovskaia et al., 2018; Hussain & Shen, 2019; Makhmutove et al., 2018; GulRaihan & Sandaran, 2018; Kin & Kareem, 2019). However, the utter lack of studies that specifically examine how well international students adapt in the context of COVID-19 is regarded as a significant gap in the literature. Taking into consideration the findings of surveys and reputable research institutions, this indicates that the pandemic caused a disruption to the plans of these particular students (Mok et al., 2021; Chirikov & Soria, 2020). Mok et al. (2021) mentioned disruptions and alterations in the learning plans of international students as a result of COVID-19, but do not specify whether these alterations are a result of students anticipating greater adaptation challenges. Filling the gap helped determine whether changes in plans were due to the pandemic's new adaptation challenges. It also assisted in identifying and explaining the nature of the new adaptation obstacles. Such information from the current study helped to fill the knowledge gap by determining the similarity between adaptation challenges before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as providing information on the contextual gap in order to determine whether COVID-19 may have altered international students' perceptions of adaptation challenges. Nevertheless, this study may still be relevant given that the adaptability of international students during and immediately after a pandemic or crisis may be different. The research will have both theoretical and practical value. Theoretically, it will contribute to the existing body of literature concerning educational management. It will provide insights that institutional leaders, managers, and even teachers can use to facilitate international students' adaptation to learning environments.

1.1 Underlying Theory

Tony Bush's theories of education management served as the foundation for this study. It utilised the subjective and postmodern educational management and leadership model in particular (Bush, 2007). Under Tony Bush's theories, the subjective model is one of the educational models that emerges after years of constant review and refinement, while the post-modern model is its equivalent in terms of leadership, as opposed to management (Bush & Sargsyan, 2013). According to these models, institutions are functions of their stakeholders, particularly their internal stakeholders (Bush, 2007). These stakeholders are likely to hold divergent or even contradictory viewpoints; consequently, the leadership must acknowledge, value, and account for their diverse perspectives (Bush et al., 2018). The theory was adopted because it is applicable to the context of an international institution with diverse student populations (Bush, 2007). Specifically, the variable, subjective model theory directs the investigation to concentrate on how the education system meets the individual needs of international students (Bush & Sargsyan, 2013). Due to the subjective interpretations of students from various cultural backgrounds, the research was able to recognise the existence of multiple academic realities as a result of the theories (Bush et al., 2018). Thus, subjective and postmodern models recognise the impact of cultural differences on the learning perceptions of international students (Connolly et al., 2019). The model also guided research into how the subjective perception of social support influences international students' adaptability. This is because the model views educational institutions as socially constructed entities (Bush, 2007).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Adaptability of International Student

Adaptability is a person's capacity to adjust emotionally, physically, cognitively, and behaviorally in order to function effectively in a new environment (Makhmutova et al., 2018). The adaptability of international students refers specifically to their ability to adjust to the overall environment in their host country (Gebru & Yuksel-Kaptanoglu, 2020). Adaptability has also been evaluated in relation to the amount of stress international students experience (Muraru et al., 2020). Ladum and Burkholder (2019) argue that international students find it difficult to adapt because they are exposed to a greater number of stressors. Hansen et al. (2018) also found that international students experience relatively elevated levels of acculturative stress, which may hinder their ability to adapt to a new environment. Acculturative stress is the stress brought on by cultural and psychological changes that primarily result from exposure to new environments (Ladum & Burkholder, 2019). Such stress can be caused by homesickness, which can complicate the process of adjusting to the host country (Muraru et al., 2020). As globalisation increases, Hussain and Shen (2019) argue that adaptability has been and will continue to be an important issue. This is likely due to the fact that most nations strive to internationalise their education systems, especially their higher education systems (de Wit, 2019). As a result, these nations offer enticing incentives, such as scholarships, study aid, and infrastructures for higher education (Gebru & Yuksel-Kaptanoglu, 2020). Supporting students so they can easily adapt to the learning environment may be one of the most effective ways to attract and retain international students (de Wit, 2019; Hussain & Shen, 2019; Gebru & Yuksel-Kaptanoglu, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to investigate the adaptability of international students from both a global and a local perspective.

Diverse researchers have defined and described the factors that influence the adaptability of international students to the educational environment of the host nation (GulRaih & Sandaran, 2018; Husein & Shen, 2019; Jamal & Work, 2020). Makhmutova et al. (2018), for instance, categorised and described them in terms of physiological, social, psychological, and linguocultural characteristics. Husein and Shen (2019) classified them into three categories: social-cultural, academic difficulty, and language incompetence. Local studies, particularly those focusing on the Malaysian context, identify the academic system and acculturation as two of the most important factors influencing adaptation (Bastein et al., 2018; GulRaih & Sandaran, 2017; Jamal & Work, 2020). It is believed that the academic system, acculturation, and social support have the greatest impact on the relationships between Malaysian universities and international students. In order to assess the relationship post-COVID-19 pandemic and to identify any differences, the same factors are included in the current study.

2.2 Academic System and Adaptability of International Students

Alston (2017) defines the academic system, also known as an education system, as the socioeconomic factors present in an educational setting. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development suggests that these factors include funding, learning facilities, staffing, teaching resources, and other resources available to support educational institutions and, by extension, the students (Adiwijaya, 2022). Academic, also known as an educational system, can be expanded to include teaching, learning models, and campus life (Ahrari et al., 2019). Several researchers have investigated and/or reviewed the academic system in the context of adaptation for international students (Alston, 2017; Bastien et al., 2018; GulRaihan & Sandaran, 2018). Ahrari et al. (2019) indicated that Malaysia's approach to the English language, the type of support services it offers to students, and the teaching models it employs distinguish it from other nations. GulRaihan and Sandaran (2018) offer one explanation for the country of origin difference: international students may struggle if the Malaysian academic system differs from their home country's system. Significant differences between home and host academic systems can make adaptation difficult for international students (Ahrari et al., 2019). International students frequently began their education earlier in their home country (Bastien et al., 2018). Therefore, their learning style and expectations are more often subconsciously or consciously influenced by the system of their home country (Martirosyan et al., 2019). Bastein et al. (2018), for instance, argue that international students in the United States struggle due to differences in pedagogy regarding class discussion, oral presentation, and group projects. Consequently, we hypothesise:

H1: The academic system in Malaysia has a positive and significant effect on the adaptability of international students studying in Malaysia.

2.3 Acculturation and Adaptability of International Students

Acculturation is the process whereby individuals adapt to a new cultural environment (Bastien et al., 2018). Saykili (2018) defines cultural differences as the dissimilarities between the values, behaviours, beliefs, and thought processes of two or more countries. Culture influences how individuals interpret social behaviour, values, and other

environmental cues (Barreto et al., 2021; Sawagvudcharee & Yolles, 2019). Individuals immersed in an environment characterised by a culture different from their own may encounter difficulties and obstacles as a result of such interpretation (Beltrán-Velasco et al., 2020). According to Barreto et al. (2021), cultural differences typically exacerbate feelings of isolation. Similarly, Beltrán-Velasco et al. (2020) contend that cultural difference is positively associated with psychological stress. Observable aspects of culture include social behaviour, language behaviour, and cognitive belief systems (Sawagvudcharee & Yolles, 2019). Language and culture are interdependent in that culture influences the development of language (Rabiah, 2018). Moreover, language is used to communicate culture (Warsito & Triadi-Purtranto, 2020). As a component of culture, language encompasses cues that express acceptable social behaviour and values in addition to spoken words (Rabiah, 2018). Therefore, cultural differences can be observed in terms of how one expresses oneself through language, how one interprets that language, and one's values and thought patterns (Sawagvudcharee & Yolles, 2019). Other researchers have examined the concept of acculturation in the context of international students' adaptation (Ahrari et al., 2019; Bastien et al., 2018; Makhmutova et al., 2018). For instance, Hussain and Shen (2019) determined that language inadequacy is one factor that complicates the process of international students adapting to their host country's environment. Makhmutova et al. (2018) identified linguocultural factors as one of the most influential determinants of international students' adaptability. Similarly, Ahrari et al. (2019) noted that social-cultural factors such as language, perceived discrimination, and communication could impact international students' ability to adapt to environments in Malaysia. Consequently, we hypothesise:

H2: Acculturation has a significant and positive effect on the adaptability of international students studying in Malaysia.

2.4 Social Support and Adaptability of International Students

International students require emotional, informational, social networking, instrumental, and esteem support from their communities' friends, fellow students, and professionals (Law et al., 2019). Hussain and Shen (2019) argued that university support, psychiatric satisfaction, and peer support are essential for international students to adapt to their new environment. Such assistance could assist students in overcoming social adjustment and academic obstacles (Martirosyan et al., 2019). According to Hussain and Shen's (2019) qualitative analysis, the primary academic support services include academic, financial, housing, healthcare, and research assistance. These services can assist in mitigating the challenges of adjusting to diverse academic systems (Ahrari et al., 2019). Peer support entails facilitating students' participation in daily activities, constructing social networks, assisting in emergencies, and providing informal cross-cultural education (Hussain & Shen, 2019). This assistance can help students overcome feelings of isolation brought on by acculturation (Barreto et al., 2021). Psych-satisfaction support is concerned with facilitating students' enjoyment of a quality education, development of self-esteem, and access to employment and other opportunities (Hussain & Shen, 2019).

It has also been observed that perceived social support has numerous positive effects on students, particularly international students (Holliman et al. 2021; Jackson et al., 2019; Lashari et al., 2018). For example, Qi et al. (2021) found that a high level of perceived social support is associated with psychological well-being. Despite the fact that Holliman et al. (2021) did not find a significant correlation between social support and psychological well-being, their findings indicated that adaptability enhanced well-being. In contrast, Lashari et al. (2018) found that social support led to improved psychological and academic adjustment. Therefore, social support and adaptability are associated with psychological health (Holliman et al., 2021). Indeed, psychological wellbeing is one of the indicators by which international students perceive adequate support from key stakeholders (Jackson et al., 2019). Consequently, we hypothesise:

H3: Social support has a significant and positive effect on the adaptability of international students studying in Malaysia.

The following conceptual framework was built based on a review of the literature and the underlying theory (refer to Figure 1).
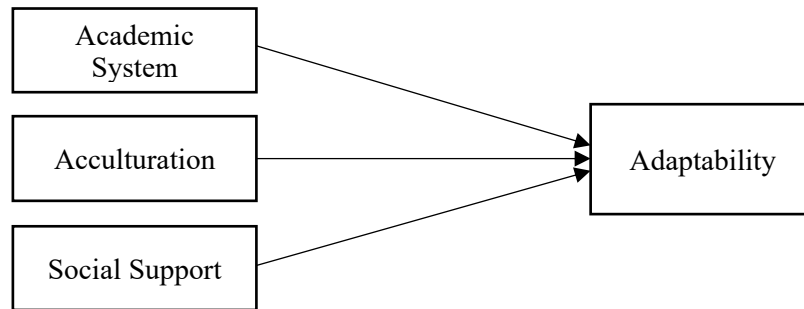
Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

This study utilised a cross-sectional design. International university students studying in Malaysia were chosen for this study using a convenient sampling. The procedure involved selecting participants based on their accessibility. Using a G-power analysis, the sample size was determined. The analysis resulted in a sample size of 119 based on three parameters: the significance level of 0.05, the effect size of 0.15, and the statistical power of 0.95. With a total of 130 surveys completed, the response rate was 100%. The participants' demographic profile is shown in the Table 1. In terms of gender, 66.9% of participants were female, while only 33.1% were male. Regarding the respondents' country of origin, the vast majority (66.2%) were Chinese, 27.7% were of Indian descent, 4.6% were from the United States, and 1.5% were from Europe. Seventy percent of the population was single, 23.8% of respondents were in a committed relationship, 3.8% of the participants were married without kids, while 2.3% were with kids.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	87	66.9
	Male	43	33.1
Countries of origin	America	6	4.6
	China	86	66.2
	Europe	2	1.5
	India	36	27.7
Marital Status	In a relationship	31	23.8
	Married	5	3.8
	Married with kids	3	2.3
	Single	91	70.0

3.2 Instrument

The demographic section of the questionnaire contained three questions: gender, countries of origin, and marital status. In addition, there was a section containing a five-item measure of adaptability (e.g., "I am easily able to adapt to Malaysia's environment") adopted from Makhmutova et al. (2018). The academic system consisted of four items (e.g., "it is quite easy to understand the academic approach adopted in Malaysia") adapted from Alston (2017). Acculturation consisted of four items adapted from Saykili (2018) (e.g., "I find host culture associated with a positive university experience"), and social support consisted of four items (e.g. "my classmates are understanding, caring, and concerned") adapted from Hussain and Shen (2019). Cronbach Alpha ranges between 0.834 and 0.924.

3.3 Data Analysis

This study relies on primary data gathered from questionnaire surveys. The technique for disseminating and collecting the data consisted of constructing the questionnaire in Google Form and distributing this link via Instagram, Reddit, and Discord, where the majority of students spend their time online. We utilised Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0 to analyse the data. Various levels of analysis were conducted to evaluate the study's aims. The data were subjected to descriptive analysis to determine the frequency distribution of respondent backgrounds and research variables. The relationships between the academic system, acculturation, social support, and adaptability were then examined using Pearson correlation analysis. Lastly, a multiple regression

analysis was employed to explore the unique factors that influence adaptability. All statistical tests utilised a significance level of 0.05 as their cutoff point.

4. Results

Table 2 displays the results of the Pearson correlation between the academic system, accultations, social support, and adaptability. The academic system is positively correlated with adaptability (r = .628, p < .001). This indicated that international students who viewed an effective educational system tended to be more adaptable. The correlation between acculturation and adaptability is likewise statistically significant (r = .744, p < .001). Acculturated international students have a better tendency for adaptability. The link between social support and adaptation was statistically significant (r = .731, p < .001). This revealed that international students with more social support had better levels of adaptation.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Variables (N = 130)

No.	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1.	Adaptability	3.83	.974	1			
2.	Academic System	4.05	.956	.628**	1		
3.	Acculturation	3.90	1.08	.744**	.571**	1	
4.	Social Support	3.65	1.08	.455**	.329**	.393**	1

Note: **p < .001

Table 3 displays the findings of the multiple regression analysis assessing the predictors of international students' adaptability. The results revealed that the academic system, acculturation, and social support, together significantly explained 63.5% of the variance in adaptability. The strongest predictor of adaptation was acculturation (beta = .524, p < .001). The ability of international students to navigate and integrate into a new culture can help them adapt to their new environment. Next, academic system (beta = .277, p < .001) is the second strongest predictor of adaptation. The academic system can also provide international students with assistance and resources to help them adapt. Finally, the social support (beta =.158, p < .001) is the least significant predictor of adaptation. Having a supportive network can help international students feel more confident and resilient in the face of difficulties, resulting in better overall adaptation to their new environment. Thus, the H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses are supported.

Table 3. Predictors of International Students' Adaptability (n = 130)

Criterion Variable	Predictor Variable	F	R^2	df	Beta	t	p
Adaptability	Academic system	73.038**	.635	(3,126)	.277	4.176	.000
	Acculturation				.524	7.707	.000
	Social Support				.158	2.668	.000

5. Discussion

This study aims to examine the effect of the academic system, acculturation, and social support on the adaptability of international students in Malaysia's private higher education system. The findings indicate that all three independent variables positively affect the adaptability of international students during COVID-19 in Malaysian private higher education institutions. The strongest predictor was acculturation, followed by academic system and social support.

This study's findings indicate that acculturation is the most important indicator of international students' adaptability in private higher education in Malaysia, thereby supporting Hypothesis 2. Our findings confirm those of prior research by Ahrari et al. (2019), Bastien et al. (2018), and Makhmutova et al. (2018). The majority of international students agreed that host culture was associated with positive university satisfaction. International students are generally receptive to Malaysian culture, as it facilitates a more seamless adaptation process (Chen, 2019). Academic excellence is strongly influenced by the learning environment and how people interact with one another during the learning process. International students generally agreed that life in Malaysia was similar to their home countries in many respects.

This study's secondary hypothesis was that academic system positively impact the adaptability of international students. The findings were consistent with those of Alston (2017), Bastien et al. (2018), and GulRaihan and Sandaran (2018). Every nation has its own distinct educational system, complete with its own set of guidelines for

teaching and testing. The majority of international students agreed that they found academic standards helpful in improving overall performance, despite the fact that at first they may struggle if Malaysia's academic system is different from the system that is customary in their home country. Some international students find that the mode of teaching and examination in the country is quite different from what they are used to in their home country, which poses a challenge for them (Heng, 2018). The vast majority of international students at Malaysian universities expressed consensus that they were satisfied with the academic level of the faculty. The majority of students concurred that they preferred the Malaysian academic system to all other academic systems. Malaysia's education system is distinct from those of other nations due to its approach to the English language, the support services it offers international students, and the teaching models it employs (Singh, 2021). Most international students agreed that the academic approach used in Malaysia is simple to grasp; lecturers are always available to help students, and assignments are assigned based on the concepts learned.

In accordance with the findings of Lashari et al. (2018), Holliman et al. (2021), and Jackson et al. (2019), the final finding of this study, related to Hypothesis 3, demonstrates a significant effect of social support on the adaptability of international students in Malaysian private higher education. It was determined that social support is necessary for international students in order to facilitate their adaptation to life in a foreign country; they should have access to social amenities and be properly instructed on how to use them (Pollock et al. 2020). The international students agreed that social support aids in the adjustment process; students who receive the necessary social support adapt to their new environment quickly and with fewer difficulties. Most international students concurred that social support contributed to their personal development. Poor personal characteristics result in emotional discomfort, lack of self-acceptance, low self-esteem, and positive acceptance of others; students with personal issues will have difficulty adjusting to a new environment (Zhang et al. 2022).   The international students concurred that their classmates comprehended, cared, and were concerned. As a result, they were given direction and assistance in matters that the individuals were incapable of understanding on their own.

5.1 Recommendation

The research findings will provide university leaders, managers, and even educators with insights to facilitate international students' adaptation to learning environments. The university's stakeholders should ensure that all cultural aspects, including language and customs, are favourable for international students, as culture is associated with positive university satisfaction. In addition, it will highlight how educational management can be utilised to address the challenges of adaptability faced by the majority of international students in the country. This will reduce stress associated with adaptability, thereby enhancing international students' ability to adapt to their new environment. The administration of the university should ensure that international students receive emotional, informational, social networking, instrumental, and self-esteem-building support from university staff, fellow students, professionals, and the community at large. Additionally, the educational system should be expanded to include teaching, learning models, and campus life, which will facilitate the students' coping mechanisms. International students should be instructed on how to adapt to their new culture in order to prevent a series of depressions from hindering their adaptability in their current culture, thereby allowing them to adapt quickly and begin their studies without delay. For example, social support should be provided to international students to aid in their adaptation; students who receive the necessary social support adapt quickly and with fewer obstacles to their new environment, regardless of the new cultural practises they encounter in their institutions. In order for international students to comprehend the academic approach utilised in Malaysia, lecturers should always be prepared to guide them through the fundamental aspects of the Malaysian education system and assign class-related homework. Such a move would enhance the adaptability of the country's international students.

6. Conclusion

COVID-19 is a major crisis that impedes the adaptability of international students studying in Malaysia, where the crisis has resulted in substantial academic, cultural, and social changes. This study was guided by Tony Bush's theory of educational management, which is based on a subjective and postmodern model of educational management and leadership. According to the findings of this study, there is a significant relationship between the adaptability of international students studying in Malaysia and the academic system, acculturation, and social support factors. Social support is required for international students in order to facilitate their adaptation to life in a foreign country; social amenities must be accessible and students must be instructed on how to use them. Malaysia's education system is distinct from those of other nations due to its approach to the English language, the support services it provides to international students, and the teaching models it employs. International students are generally receptive to

Malaysian culture, as it facilitates a more seamless adaptation process. The environment in which learning takes place and the degree to which individuals collaborate with one another during the educational process are two factors that significantly influence academic success.

The study's data was gathered from international students enrolled in one of Malaysia's private universities in Negeri Sembilan. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalised to all international students at all universities throughout the country. To increase the validity of the results, future research should gather participants from diverse universities. In addition, the researcher recruited participants through convenience sampling, which may have resulted in some biased data. For more reliable results, future research on the same topic should employ both qualitative and quantitative methods. Lastly, there are additional factors that influence the adaptability of international students that were not accounted for in this study, such as financial aspects; such factors should be considered by future researchers.

References

Adiwijaya, A. (2022, August). Effectiveness of the implementation of education budget arrangements in the APBN/APBD based on the 1945 Constitution Article 31 paragraph (4) and Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 49 paragraph (1) related to the Covid 19 pandemic. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Law, Social Science, Economics, and Education, ICLSSEE 2022, 16 April 2022*, Semarang, Indonesia. https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.16-4-2022.2319705

Ahrari, S., Krauss, S. E., Suandi, T., Abdullah, H., Sahimi, A. H. A., Olutokunbo, A. S., & Dahalan, D. (2019). A stranger in a strange land: Experiences of adjustment among international postgraduate students in Malaysia. *Issues in Educational Research*, *29*(3), 611-632.

Alston, C. R. (2017). *A causal comparative study of teacher and administrator perceptions of school climate within elementary schools in a school district*. Liberty University.

Barreto, M., Victor, C., Hammond, C., Eccles, A., Richins, M. T., & Qualter, P. (2021). Loneliness around the world: Age, gender, and cultural differences in loneliness. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *169*, 110066. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110066

Bastien, G., Seifen-Adkins, T., & Johnson, L. R. (2018). Striving for success: Academic adjustment of international students in the US. *Journal of International Students*, *8*(2), 1198-1219. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v8i2.143

Beltrán-Velasco, A. I., Mendoza-Castejón, D., Fuentes-García, J. P., & Clemente-Suárez, V. J. (2020). Behavioural, psychological, and physiological stress markers and academic performance in immigrant and non-immigrant preschool and school students. *Physiology & Behavior*, *225*, 113081. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physbeh.2020.113081

Bordovskaia, N. V., Anderson, C., Bochkina, N., & Petanova, E. I. (2018). The adaptive capabilities of Chinese students studying in Chinese, British and Russian universities. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *7*(4), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v7n4p1

Bush, T. (2007). Educational leadership and management: Theory, policy and practice. *South African journal of education*, *27*(3), 391-406.

Bush, T., & Sargsyan, G. (2013). Educational leadership and management: Theory, policy, and practice. *Main Issues of Pedagogy and Psychology*, *3*(3), 31-43. https://doi.org/10.24234/miopap.v3i3.255

Bush, T., Abdul Hamid, S., Ng, A., & Kaparou, M. (2018). School leadership theories and the Malaysia Education Blueprint: Findings from a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *32*(7), 1245-1265. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-06-2017-0158

Chen, M. (2019). The impact of expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment on work stress and job involvement in the high-tech industry. *Frontiers in psychology*, *10*, 2228. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02228

Chirikov, I., & Soria, K. M. (2020). *International students' experiences and concerns during the pandemic*. SERU Consortium, University of California - Berkeley and University of Minnesota. Retrieved from https://cshe.berkeley.edu/seru-covid-survey-reports

Connolly, M., James, C., & Fertig, M. (2019). The difference between educational management and educational leadership and the importance of educational responsibility. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *47*(4), 504-519. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143217745880

de Wit, H. (2019). Evolving Concepts, trends, and challenges in the internationalization of higher education in the world. *Educational Studies*, *2*, 8-34.

Erturk, S., & Luu, L. A. N. (2022). Adaptation of Turkish international students in Hungary and the United States: A comparative case study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *86*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.10.006

Gebru, M. S., & Yuksel-Kaptanoglu, I. (2020). Adaptation challenges for international students in Turkey. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, *8*(9), 262-278. https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2020.89021

GulRaihan, M., & Sandaran, S. C. (2017). Sociocultural adaptation challenges of international students at a higher learning institution in Malaysia. *LSP International Journal*, *4*(2), 85-101. https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v4n2.58

Heng, T. T. (2018). Different is not deficient: Contradicting stereotypes of Chinese international students in US higher education. *Studies in higher education*, *43*(1), 22-36. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1152466

Holliman, A. J., Martin, A. J., & Collie, R. J. (2018). Adaptability, engagement, and degree completion: a longitudinal investigation of university students. *Educational Psychology*, *38*(6), 785-799. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2018.1426835

Holliman, A. J., Waldeck, D., Jay, B., Murphy, S., Atkinson, E., Collie, R. J., & Martin, A. (2021). Adaptability and social support: Examining links with psychological wellbeing among UK students and non-students. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 205. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.636520

Humphrey, A., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2021). Social value systems and the mental health of international students during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of International Students*, *11*(S2), 58-76. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v11iS2.3577

Hussain, M., & Shen, H. (2019). A study on academic adaptation of international students in China. *Higher Education Studies*, *9*(4), 80-91. https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v9n4p80

Jackson, M., Ray, S., & Bybell, D. (2019). International students in the US: Social and psychological adjustment. *Journal of International Students*, *3*(1), 17-28. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v3i1.515

Jamal, H. R., & Wok, S. (2020). Assessing cross-cultural adaptation of international students in IIUM. *International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences*, *3*(14), 47-63. https://doi.org/10.35631/IJMTSS.314004

Kin, T. M., & Kareem, O. A. (2019). School leaders' Competencies that make a difference in the Era of Education 4.0: A Conceptual Framework. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *9*(5), 214-225. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v9-i4/5836

Kiyashchuk, T. V., Kiyashchuk, A. A., & Sardarian, A. R. (2018). Special aspects of international students' socio-psychological adaptation at modern universities. *Espacios*, *39*(23), 11-20.

Ladum, A., & Burkholder, G. J. (2019). psychological adaptation of international students in the Northern Part of Cyprus. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, *9*(1), 28-46. https://doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v9i1.436

Lashari, S. A., Kaur, A., & Awang-Hashim, R. (2018). Home away from home-the role of social support for international students' adjustment. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, *15*(2), 33-54. https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2018.15.2.2

Law, K. M., Geng, S., & Li, T. (2019). Student enrollment, motivation and learning performance in a blended learning environment: The mediating effects of social, teaching, and cognitive presence. *Computers & Education*, *136*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.02.021

Levin, N., & Lipshits-Braziler, Y. (2021). Facets of adaptability in career decision-making. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-021-09489-w

Makhmutova, E. N., Kovtun, N. V., Kostikova, L. P., & Revkova, E. A. (2018). International students: flexibility and adaptation issues. In *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences* (pp. 198-204). https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2018.12.02.22

Martirosyan, N. M., Bustamante, R. M., & Saxon, D. P. (2019). Academic and social support services for international students: Current practices. *Journal of international Students*, *9*(1), 172-191. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v9i1.275

Mok, K. H., Xiong, W., Ke, G., & Cheung, J. O. W. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on international higher education and student mobility: Student perspectives from mainland China and Hong Kong. *International*

Journal of Educational Research, *105*, 101718. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101718

Muraru, I. D., Iorga, M., Munteanu, C., & Ioan, B. G. (2020). Factors influencing the adaptability of international students. A pilot study on first-year dentistry students in Romania. *Romanian Journal of Oral Rehabilitation*, *12*(1), 16-23. https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/2564725

Pollock, A., Campbell, P., Cheyne, J., Cowie, J., Davis, B., McCallum, J., ... & Maxwell, M. (2020). Interventions to support the resilience and mental health of frontline health and social care professionals during and after a disease outbreak, epidemic or pandemic: a mixed methods systematic review. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD013779

Qadeer, T., Javed, M. K., Manzoor, A., Wu, M., & Zaman, S. I. (2021). The experience of international students and institutional recommendations: A comparison between the students from the developing and developed regions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3396. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.667230

Qi, L. Y., Roslan, S., & Zaremohzzabieh, Z. (2021). Perceived social support and psychological well-being of international students: The mediating effects of resiliency and spirituality. *Asian Journal of University Education (AJUE)*, *17*(3), 220-234. https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v17i3.14502

Rabiah, S. (2018). Language as a tool for communication and cultural reality discloser. https://doi.org/10.31227/osf.io/nw94m

Rilliard, M. (2020). Adaptability 2.0: Tackling the challenge of the COVID-19 crisis. *Second Language Research & Practice, 1*(1), 179-182.

Sawagvudcharee, O., & Yolles, M. (2019). Understanding cultural differences: A case study of Chinese culture. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Research*, *3*(10).

Saykili, A. (2018). Distance education: Definitions, generations and key concepts and future directions. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, *5*(1), 2-17.

Singh, J. K. N. (2021). Academic resilience among international students: lived experiences of postgraduate international students in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *22*(1), 129-138. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-020-09657-7

Tran, L. T., & Nghia, T. L. H. (2020). Leadership in international education: Leaders' professional development needs and tensions. *Higher Education*, *80*(3), 479-495. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00494-1

Warsito, B., & Triadi Putranto, T. (Eds.). (2020, November). Culture as a Javanese language retention strategy for women's society in Klaten, Central Java. In *E3S Web of Conferences* (Vol. 202, p. 07061). EDP Sciences. https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202020207061

Zhang, X., Yue, H., Sun, J., Liu, M., Li, C., & Bao, H. (2022). Regulatory emotional self-efficacy and psychological distress among medical students: multiple mediating roles of interpersonal adaptation and self-acceptance. *BMC Medical Education*, *22*(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03338-2