

# The Academic Experiences of Undergraduate International Thomasian Students

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**Abstract:** International students have diverse needs when undertaking education in Philippine universities. It is in the interest of both international students and the host institution to ensure these students achieve success in their studies. This study explores, from the students' perspective, the academic adjustment experiences of undergraduate international Thomasian students. Descriptive design was used for the study. The transcribed data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The objective of this study is to determine the academic adjustment experiences of the targeted students. The results of this study shows that most of the student prefer to study in the Philippines because of the friendly Filipinos, and prefer to study at UST because the university offers the desired course. Most informants adjust in studying at UST by using the library and reading in advance. Seeking help from staff, senior students and classmates, and having a group study are also used by informants in ensuring their successful academic adjustment at UST. Of the responses received, first semester was commonly regarded as the most difficult time for making the adjustment to the new environment; however, results show that most international students are already adjusted academically at the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester. The factors that aggravate the adjustment of international students are student-staff interaction, student – student interaction, and developing independence while studying in the Philippines.

**Keywords:** adjustment, adjust, international students, transition.

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## I. Introduction

The Philippines has been a center of attraction for international students from all over the world. According to Asia Pacific Post, as of October 2012, a total of 24,680 foreigners had applied for study permits, which was more than thrice the applications in 2008 totaling 7,569. In spite of the fact that international students' population is significantly increasing in Philippine universities, very little is known about how they learn or what contributes to their academic life. Increasing number of international students in the Philippines is predicted to rise at least 23,000 by the end of the year, which is over four times the 2008 figure of 5,336 applications (Asia Pacific). Recognizing this increase, universities and colleges should make it a point that they would be able to address the academic needs of the international students as they seek good education in the country.

Adaptation to the new environment is critical for international students' way of learning at a university. Factors that influence their academic adaptation would be of great help in the improvement of their adjustment. But as they adapt, they inevitably encounter various problems and difficulties that inhibit them from blending with the environment. These difficulties would affect their learning. Yet, there is limited information and data from researches that investigated the student's perspective and how the difficulties they meet along the way affect their transition in college. However, the sources of the study have not given us full comprehension on the student's adjustment. Therefore, at the end of the paper, we will be including some of the students' advices to incoming freshmen.

### Statement of the Problem

To facilitate a deeper investigation of the general research question, 'What are the academic adjustment experiences of international students studying at the University of Santo Tomas?' four focus questions were formulated. These questions were designed to assist in developing a systematic approach to the survey. These four questions are:

1. What is the profile of the international students?
2. What do international students do in their academic adjustment to meet the demands of the new environment?
3. How long is the academic adjustment of international students?
4. What are the problems that aggravate the adjustment difficulties?

Question (1) set out to determine the background information about the international student. Focus question (2) determine the specific adjustment students made during their study at UST, asking informants to give account of the actions taken to make the adjustment, which they felt, was necessary. This was the core of the research question of academic adjustment.

Questions (3) and (4) were aimed to identify the stages and causes of the adjustment. These questions were designed to assist informants to analyze their own experiences to see whether they perceived any major stages in their adjustment, and, if so, what did they perceive as the cause or reason for the adjustment. It is from these possibly diverse personal reflections that we hope to identify common terms and opinions. We believed it was important to listen carefully to the voices of the informants on the matter, and because of the complex nature of some of the issues, we were prepared to pursue the investigation in the informants' own terms.

As with any research study, the outcome is of limited use if one is content to remain in the analysis stage. The real usefulness of any research is demonstrated in the way that it addresses the problem, studies the causes and give recommendations as to the innovation in future practice.

## **II. Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to:

- To determine the academic adjustment experiences of the targeted students

More specifically, it will:

- i. Determine the profile of the international students
- ii. Determine the academic activities done by the international students to adjust during their study at UST
- iii. Determine how long is the duration that most international students are adjusted academically
- iv. Identify aggravating problems that add to the difficulty in adjustment

## **III. Review of Related Literature**

Foreign students, just like any visitors to a foreign country, must deal with cultural differences and make adjustments. Foreign students will be struggling with the tremendous challenges presented by an unfamiliar environment, a foreign culture, different language, and for most of all, their learning. The study concentrates on the academic experiences of international students studying at the University of Santo Tomas. Because of the focus of the study is particular, it can be described as 'educational research' and the methods and processes accomplished in this study are mostly found in the educational field (Zhang 2002).

Although they are unfamiliar to the culture and language, international students migrating to the Philippines clearly have high interests in acquiring educational advancement. The international students, under confusing circumstances, still have to find ways in making their transition to a new environment as easy as possible. "According to Berger and Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory, a student is motivated to seek guidance or advice in order to "increase predictability about the behavior of both themselves and others in the interaction".

*The academic adjustment experiences of international students at UST*, being the focus of this study, is considered complex and broad. As complex, it involves issues related to aspects of international education, cross-cultural

adjustments, and the academic culture of international learners. On the other hand, it is also considered broad because it covers and crosses the boundaries of education, anthropology, and psychology. Given the particular setting and focus of the study, it can be said that the nature of this study is most conveniently described as an educational research. This study's methodology and process will follow those usually found in the educational field.

Having been set specific boundaries for the study, the significance to higher education is the major theme focused in this study. The literature first discusses the concept of international students. Past research studies on international students are discussed, thereby setting the context of the study. Theories of cross-cultural adjustment relevant to the study are also discussed. It will also mention a few studies focusing on the challenges faced by international students and the learning experiences of international students. Finally, it will discuss some models for educational research in an effort to establish a theoretical framework for the study.

### **The notion of 'international' students**

In the earliest studies, international students were referred to as 'foreign students' (Rao 1976). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, they were referred to as 'overseas students' (Burke 1986; Ballard & Clanchy 1984) but since the mid-1990s, the term 'international students' has been widely used in the literature (Ballard & Clanchy 1997; Burke 1997).

Profound and gradual change in the attitudes towards international students by the institutions of higher education is due to the change of terminology of 'foreign' to 'international'. From a negative to a positive term, it provides a social key for a more positive and understanding attitudes towards the international students during their stay in the universities in the Philippines. This change also represents an affirmative shift in values of Philippine universities.

According to Burke (1986) this change in referring to international students has been associated with an increased interest in addressing the needs in understanding the students' learning needs and of their experiences in universities. (Zhang, Sillitoe & Webb 1999) identified that the problems and difficulties experienced by the international student were frequently related to language. In later literature (Burke 1986; Ballard & Clanchy 1991, 1997) however indicates that there has been a gradual change throughout the higher education community to positive effort to know and address deeper issues related to the education of international students. Such positive efforts denote the eagerness of Philippine universities to look in different ideas (Sameulowicz 1987; Ballard 1987, 1989) and to give emphasis their increasing attempt at accommodating the efforts of international student and institutions to act in union in the process of cross-cultural education (Volet 1997).

### **Cross-cultural communication in international education**

One of the concepts significantly related to this study is culture. However, in an attempt to be specific, there is no single and widely accepted definition of culture that can be accessed as a non-equivocal basis for this study.

According to Groeschl and Doherty (2000), "The term culture is used in a wide range of social sciences, and it has therefore different meanings in the different fields". These authors have concluded that many recently developed definitions of culture are mainly based on two early premises; the first involves value orientations while the second relates to the predictions of common human problems. A most authors would agree, indeed, the term culture is a complex term and very difficult to define.

One of the useful definitions of the word culture was postulated by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). They conducted a comprehensive study of the definitions of culture and reported more than 160 attempts. They have concluded that most of the social scientists agreed that culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, consisting the distinctive achievements of human groups. The essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially attached values (p.161).

The use of the layers of an onion as a metaphor is one of the useful approach in understanding culture. A good example is when Hofstede (1991) used this metaphor to illustrate that the "core of culture" is formed by values. In another work having a similar theme, Groeschl and Doherty (2000) suggested that "The shallow, first layer [of culture] is behavior and represents the explicit culture. Implicit culture includes a second and deeper layer, namely values. The core of culture is formed by basic assumptions (p.14).

Barker(1990) identified five barriers or obstacles to the practice of intercultural communication and this contributed to a broader understanding about culture. These barriers are, in summary: (1)language; (2)non-verbal communication; (3)perceptions and stereotypes; (4)the tendency to place different values on the same behaviour; and (5)high anxiety. The identification of these barriers is very useful because they do not only suggest the most likely areas for potential misunderstanding, but they also indicate the most profitable directions for initiatives designed in making communications work.

The mentioned observations above will clearly be the obstacles most encountered in cross-cultural communication. Barker (1990) provides some key considerations for this study. Barker's points numbered (2), (3) and (4) are important for this study because not only do they indicate where cross-cultural misunderstandings can arise, but they also give clues to where difficulties in academic adjustment experiences are generated for international students. These "intangible, symbolic rules and values" (Banks 2001, p.70), which arise during cross-cultural interactions, leave much room to be explored.

### **Culture shock and cultural adjustment**

Culture shock has been recognized as a common experience among international students, and it has been claimed that most international students experience culture shock to some degree (Burke 1986). Indeed, there a number of authors who believe that culture shock is predictable in the adjustment cycle of a student as he/she encounters with the new academic, cultural and social expectations and that he/she also acquire the skills in dealing with the academic system in a foreign place. (Bochner 1972; Furnham&Bochner 1986; Kim 1988; Barker 1990a). Barker (1990) related culture shock encounters by students to the ups and downs of their psychological experiences during their first exposure with the new culture. This initial experience may also be described as 'a time of stress, anxiety and temporary reduction in normal capacity to adapt and cope' (p.10). "It is this emotional tug-of-war that is experienced by international students that generates the confusion and disorientation referred to as culture shock."

There were many attempts made to identify the 'stages of adjustment that individuals go through in an unfamiliar culture. Oberg (1960), for instance, described four stages (1) a 'honeymoon' stage characterized by fascination, elation, and optimism; (2) a stage of hostility and emotionally stereotyped attitudes toward the host society and increased association with fellow sojourners; (3) a recovery stage characterized by increased language knowledge and ability to get around in the new cultural environment; and (4) a final stage in which adjustment is about as complete as possible, anxiety is largely gone, and new customs are accepted and enjoyed.

### **Academic adjustment**

There are many different phrases that can describe the 'academic adjustment' of an international student to the new culture. An example is Anderson's (1994) 'model of adaptation'. Anderson claims that there are four stages in a student's development to a foreign culture, and these are cultural encounter, obstacles, response generation and overcoming phases. Anderson gave a detailed analysis within each stage, and that there are three dimensions involved in the students' adaptation, which Anderson called the affective, cognitive and behavioral responses.

In a later work, Barker (1999) linked cross-cultural adaptation to successful adjustment in a way that Socio-cultural adjustment is connected to skills that enable them to interact to the different culture, and general behavioral competence. It can mean that a student can socially interact due to the following influences: knowledge about the new culture, number of residents, they have to deal with, length of stay, cultural identity and cultural distance.

More related studies, one, conducted by Hofstede (1991), identified four dimensions of national culture, which are termed 'power distance', 'individualism- collectivism', 'masculinity-femininity', and 'uncertainty avoidance' and we can infer from here that an international student can exhibit these traits in the community as he/she adjusts. Another is Baker (1990b) who looked into the theories like 'adjustment in terms of the stages that sojourners experience in the new culture' (p.9), and suggested that a successful adjustment is defined as a combination of three factors: good personal adjustment, good interpersonal relations, and task effectiveness.

### **Challenges of academic adjustment facing international students**

Academic adjustment challenges includes homesickness, language, accommodation, lack of a support network of family and friends , living independently, finance, adjusting to different teaching styles and different learning styles

(Burke 1986; Rao 1976; Samuelowicz 1987; Bradley & Bradley 1984; Ballard & Clanchy 1984, 1988, 1991; Tay & Smith 1990; Burns 1991). These factors influencing academic success have been well documented. Particular challenges include: writing and reading skills, and the difficulty in adjusting to Asian educational traditions that stress independent learning, linear development of ideas and critical analysis (Beasley 1990).

Communication challenged international students in their day-to-day social interaction due to language. This can hinder their progress in academic pursuit of writing, reading, understanding lectures and participating in tutorials. In many cases students themselves attribute language as the major cause of difficulties in their studies and staff attributes the lack of progress of a student to lack of language proficiency. But according to Ballard and Clanchy (1984, 1991) and Burke (1986) cultures as well as language contribute to the difficulty facing by the international students.

All or some of these factors may hinder the individual international students in reaching his or her potential in higher education. The chosen factors influencing the learning experiences of international students for this work are culture, expectation, language, teaching and learning styles (Volet & Renshaw 1996; Burke 1986; Ballard & Clanchy 1991, 1997). Figures 2 summarize the dynamics of the academic experiences of international students, and issues will be discussed in some details below.

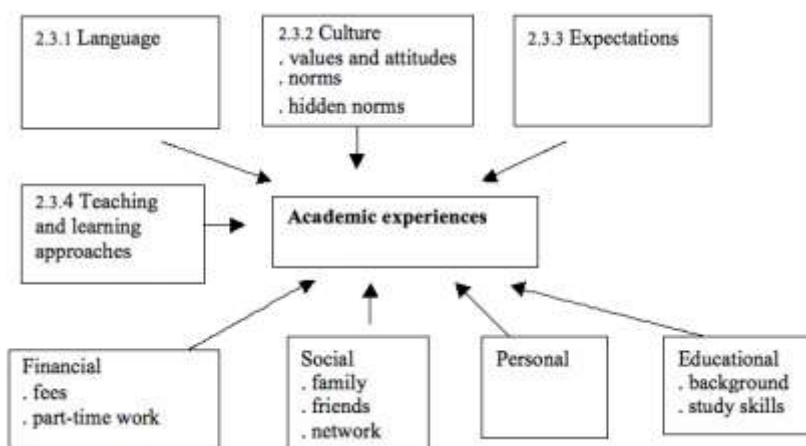


Figure 2

### Dynamics of educational experiences of international students

#### Language

The needs of international students in terms of communication are important and complicated, especially for those who may have had not a good background in English. These international students face the challenges in adapting to a new language, a different academic environment, and an unfamiliar culture and society. (Burke 1986; Samuelowicz 1987; Burns 1991; Ballard & Clanchy 1991, 1997) indicate that many academic support and teaching staff have empathy for the challenges faced by international students. It is observed by many researchers (Ballard & Clanchy 1991) that individual students consider their lack of proficiency in English as the single cause of difficulties in their studies. "Students make little progress in their studies because of language difficulties." Consequently, many universities once offered language classes as a way to support students based on recognizing their needs.

The term 'language difficulty' has a number of specific areas of concern. Some studies done by a number of support service staff in different universities confirm that Asian international students experience language difficulties in reading, speaking, listening and writing (Bradley & Bradley 1984; Burke 1986, 1989). Although most of these previous studies were conducted in different universities (Samuelowicz 1987; Burke 1986, 1989; Ballard 1987, 1989; Burns 1991; Ballard & Clanchy 1991, 1997), the findings are strikingly similar. In general, Asian international students are described as quiet members of class who seldom participate in discussions. They tend to prefer to see their lecturers and tutors after class if they have questions (Ballard & Clanchy 1991). It is also observed by Ballard and Clanchy that when a staff confronts a silent student tend to conclude that either the student did not prepare for class discussions well, or the lack of

proficiency of English hinders the student in speaking up. They suggest that language may be part of the reason for the student's non-participation in class; it may also be due to a lack of confidence. Personal encouragement from peers and colleagues may be needed to help students build their confidence so they can participate in class discussions and other activities.

### Teaching and learning approaches

The approaches to teaching and learning strategies possess significant cultural differences. Having been summarized by Ballard and Clanchy (1991, 1997), the key differences suggest that in western culture, tertiary education is oriented towards extending knowledge. As a consequence, teaching approaches adopted are designed to develop the analytical and speculative ability of students. Comparing in more traditional culture, for example the Chinese culture, the education systems are mainly oriented towards conserving knowledge and the teaching approach emphasizes the productive ability of students.

Because the majorities of international students that enter the Philippine have taken higher education with overseas secondary schooling and have no exposure to analytical or speculative styles in education, academic adjustment to this situation is clearly a difficult one.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the significant differences between learning and teaching approaches in Western cultures and more traditional cultures as presented by Ballard and Clanchy (1997).

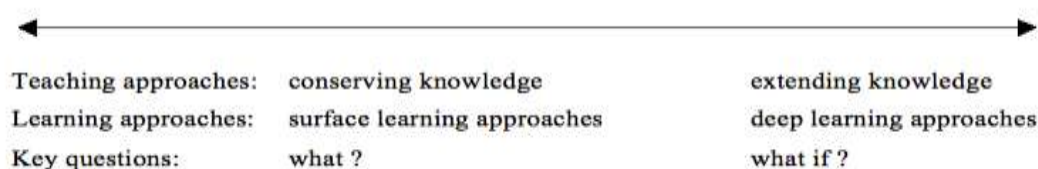


Figure 2.1 Oposing orientations to knowledge generation

### Global research on international students

Research done globally has shown that the types of challenges faced by international students are very similar in nature. For example, a study done in the UK (Wier 1982) found that language is only one of the difficulties experienced by international students. Other factors include academic difficulties, and adjusting to English society.

Research in the United States and Canada seem to confirm the common areas of challenges to international students. Stoyhoff (1996) carried out studies at US campuses designed to elucidate how international students learn and what contributes to their academic success. The study particularly sought to explore whether self-regulated learning strategies can enhance student achievement. In a later study, Stoyhoff (1997) identified factors associated with international students' academic achievement. Here, it was found that high achievers are distinguished by their more frequent use of social assistance as a learning strategy. They regularly used peers and teachers to help them learn. Other findings suggested that more academically successful students: better managed their study time; were better able to prepare for and take tests; were better at identifying the main ideas in spoken and written discourse; made better use of social support systems; and spent more time studying than less academically successful students.

## IV. Research Methodology

### Research Design

The researchers used the descriptive design, specifically survey.

### Subject

International students enrolled in undergraduate courses in the academic year 2013-2014 at UST, were chosen as the target group for this study. However, it should be noted that an International Students is a term use to refer to students

who live away from their home country. Therefore a student will qualify as international as long as he/she only resides here in the Philippines to study.

**Instrumentation**

The researchers to collect data in the study constructed a questionnaire, which is located at the appendix section.

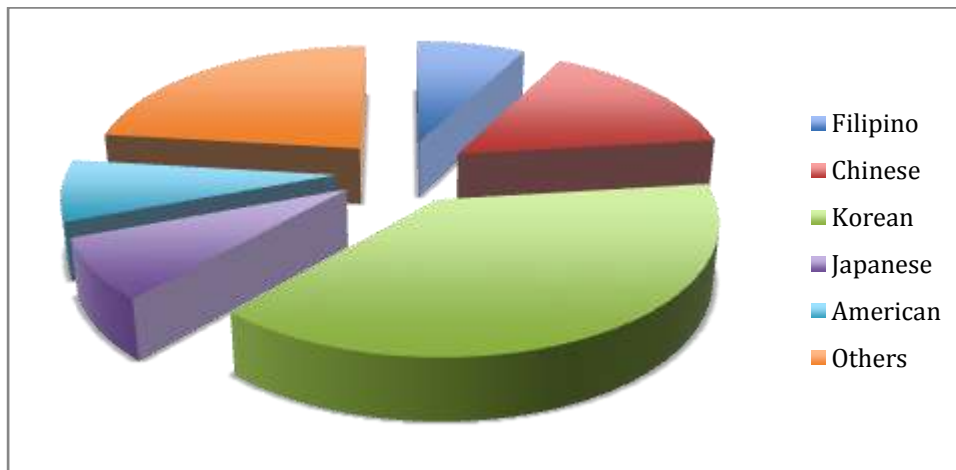
**Procedure**

A survey was conducted from February 20 to February 26, 2014 to the entire pool of international students. However, due to limited amount of time, and that the only way the researchers can survey international students is either roam around the campus and give the questionnaire to the targeted students manually, or the researchers would go to Tan Yan Kee Building and find international students, who have free time. The researchers have only surveyed 57 international students.

**Data Analyses**

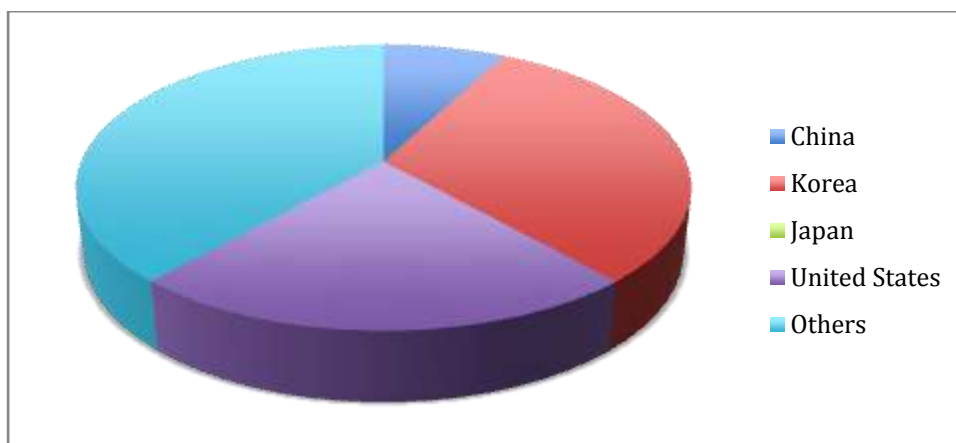
The software used in this study was Microsoft Excel.

**V. Results and Discussion**



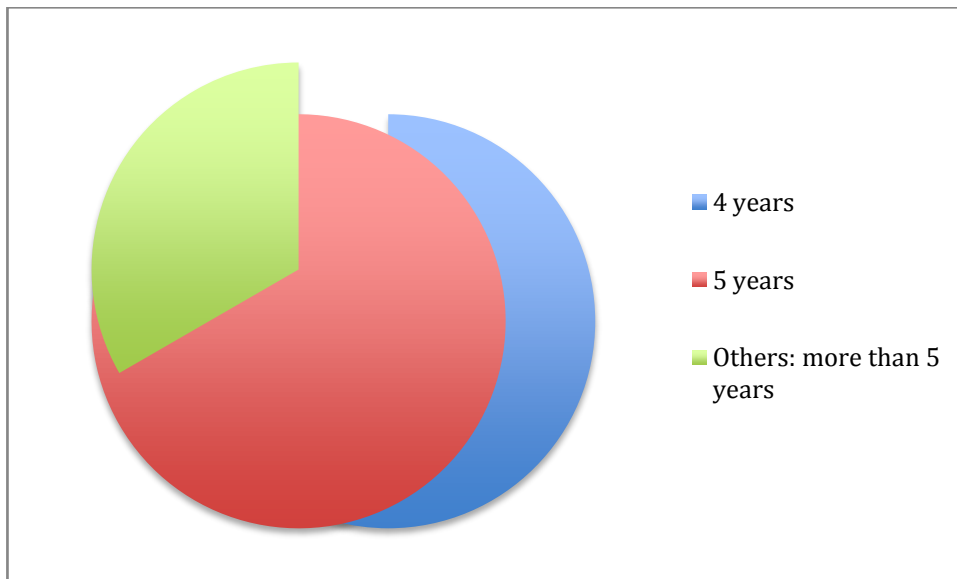
**Graph 1.**Nationality of the international student studying in University of Santo Tomas

As seen on the above figure, majority of the nationality of the respondents is Korean. Other nationalities also resulted into a large number of the respondents. Next to it is the Chinese nationality while Filipino, Japanese, and American nationality shares the same number of respondents.



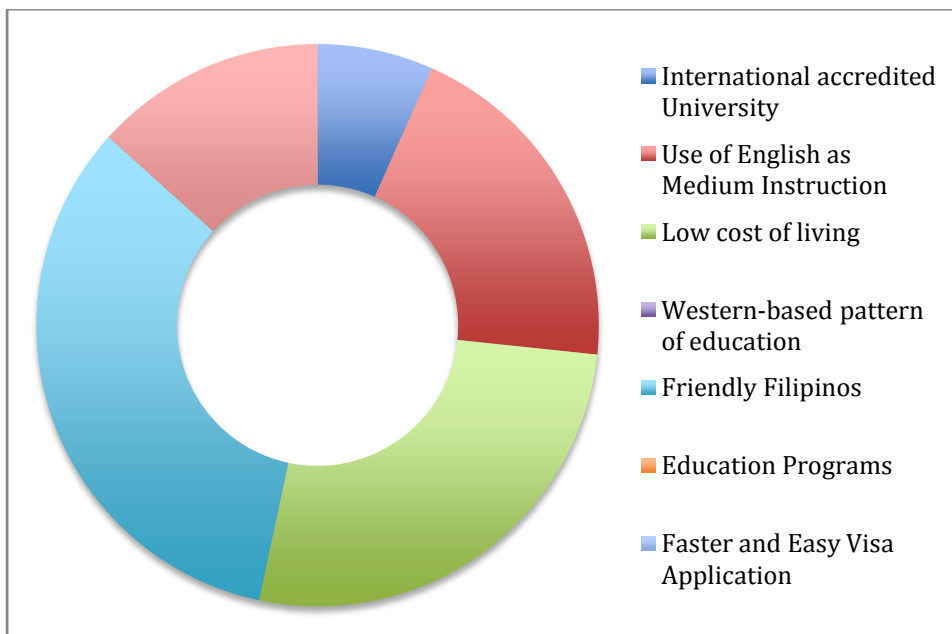
**Graph 2.**Current passport of the international student studying in University of Santo Tomas

The graph shows that a greater part of the respondents are currently carrying passports other than Chinese, Korean, and US passports. Korean passport comes second in the majority of current passports the international students have. United States follows while Chinese passports show a small share in the graph. There are no known respondents carrying a Japanese passport.



**Graph 3.**Expected number of years of stay of the international student in the Philippines

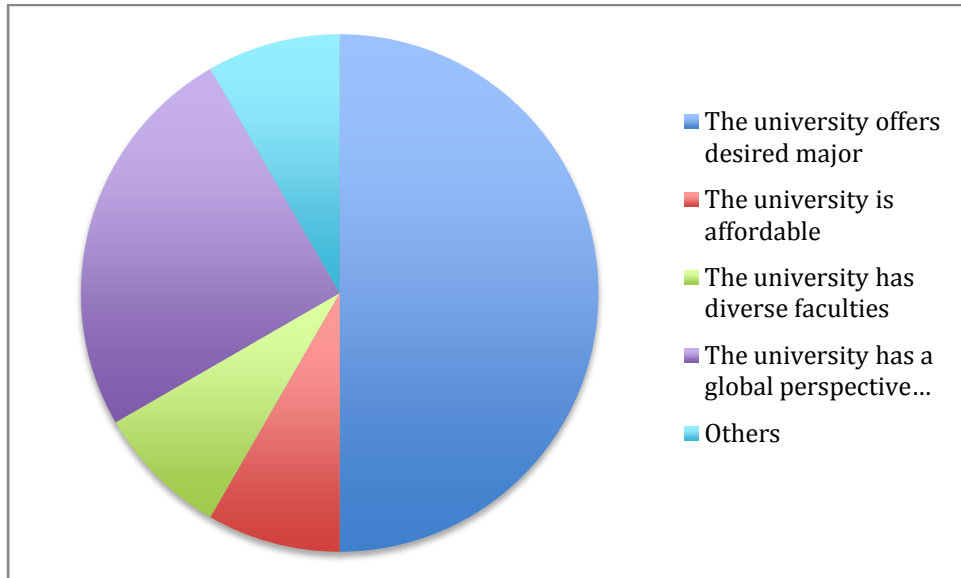
The graph seen above shows the number of expected years of stay of the international student in the Philippines. Most of the international students are expected to stay in the Philippines for 4 years. And some of them are expected to stay in the Philippines for 5 years.



**Graph 4.**The reason of international student for choosing the Philippines for their study

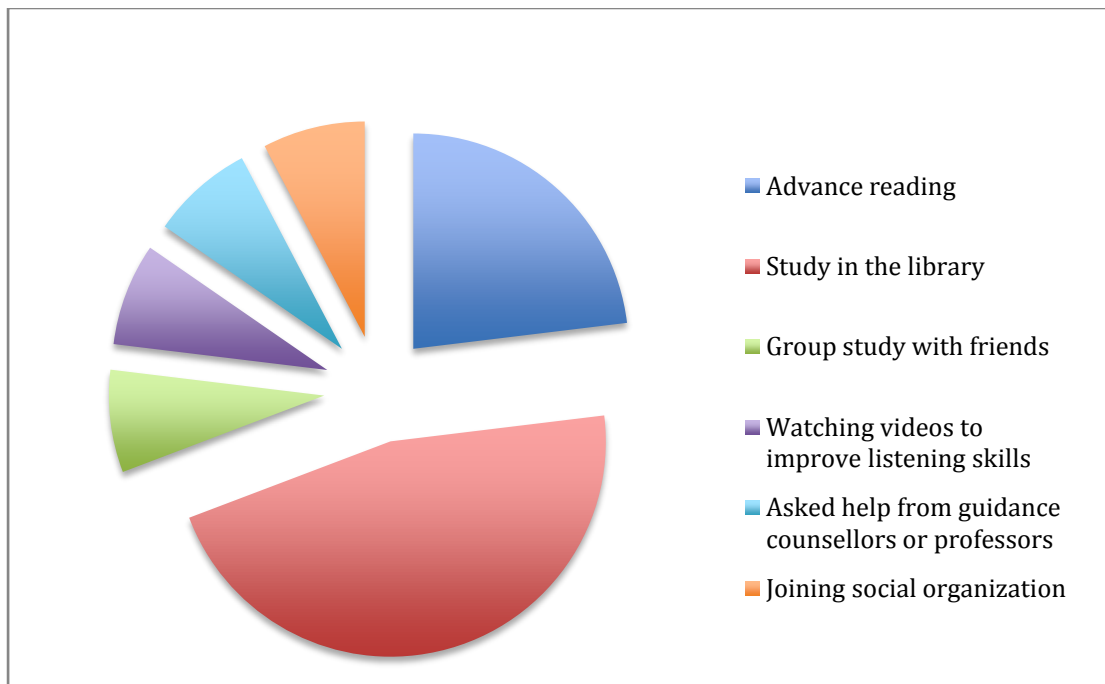
The graph above shows that most international student chooses Philippines for their study because they find Filipino as friendly people. The second reason they chosen Philippines was they find it as a low cost of living. The third reason was Philippines uses English as medium of instruction. The fourth and fifth reasons were Philippines have a western-based pattern of education and it was international accredited university.





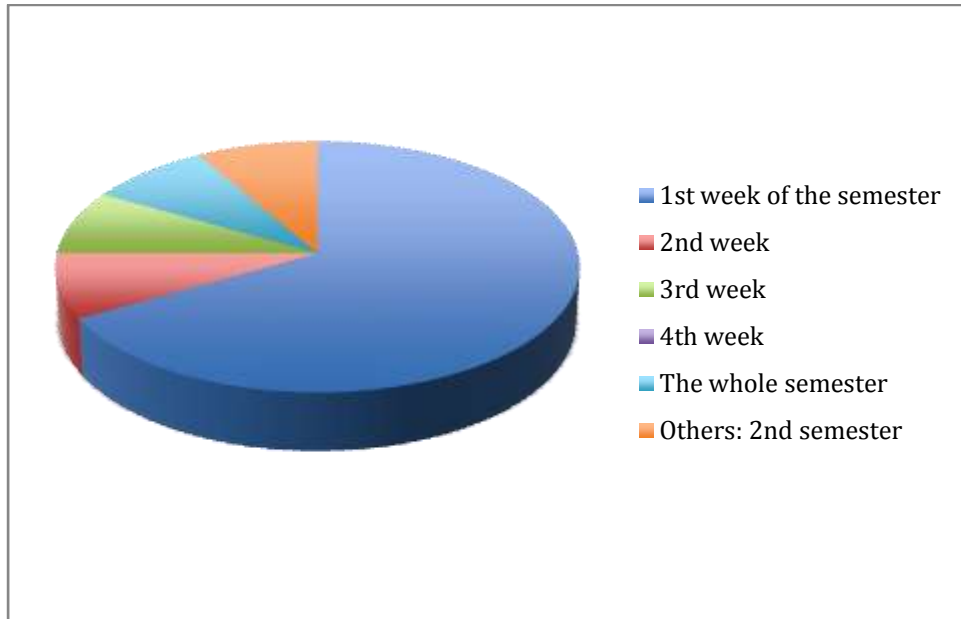
**Graph 5.** The reason of the international student for choosing the University of Santo Tomas for their study

The graph explains that half of the students answered “the university offers desired course” when asked about their reason in choosing the university. A big portion of respondents also answered “the university has a global perspective...”. On the other hand, “the university is affordable”, “the university has diverse faculties”, and others show a similar number of respondents who answered them.



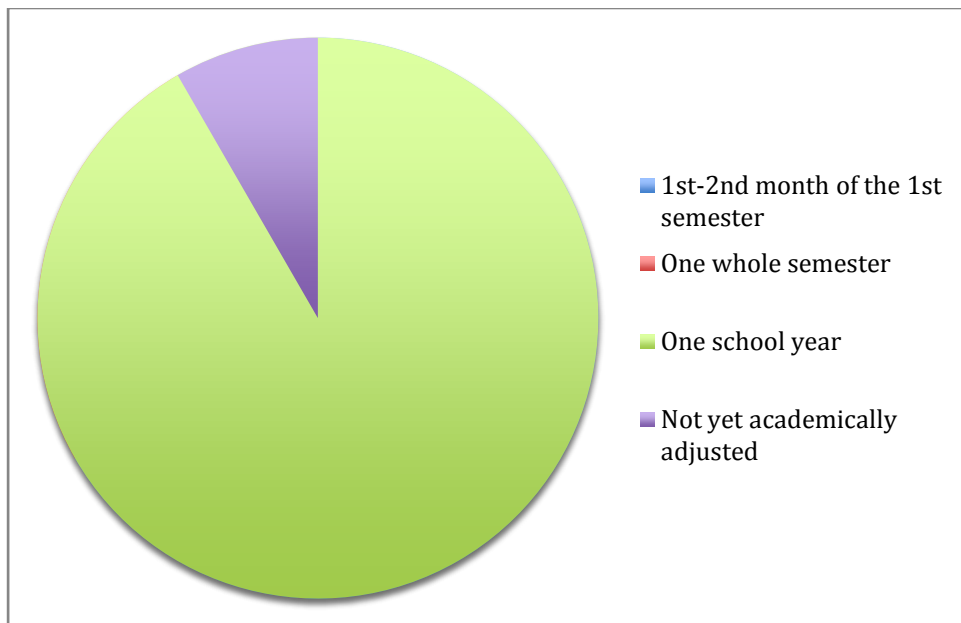
**Graph 6.** Activities done by international student to cope up with their academic difficulties

Most of the students study in the library in order to cope up with their academic difficulties in the university. A fair part of the graph also shows that the international students are doing some advance reading in order to cope up. Moreover, group study, watching videos, asking for help from guidance counselors, and joining social organizations share the same portions in the graph.



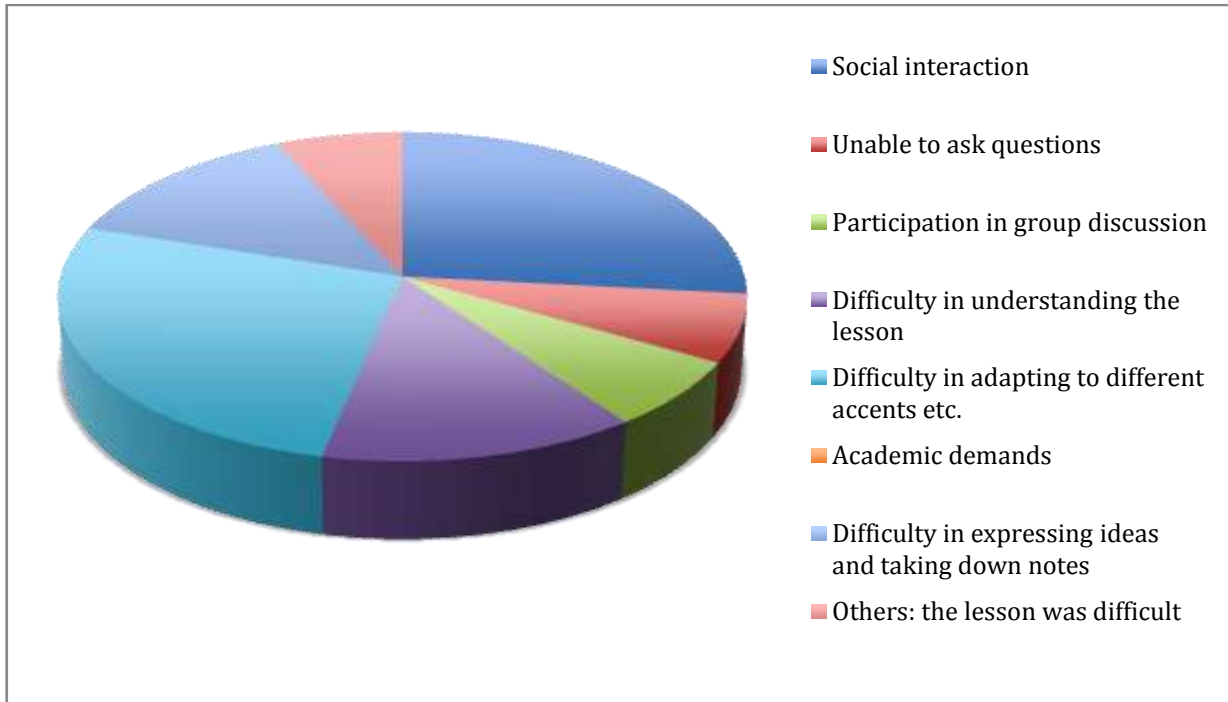
**Graph 7.** Most difficult time of international student in adjusting to the new environment

Most international student has a difficult time in adjusting to the new environment in their 1<sup>st</sup> week of the semester in the university. The second big portion of the graph shows that student find it difficult in adjusting to the new environment in their 2<sup>nd</sup> week of stay in the university. And some find it difficult in adjusting in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th week of the semester or even in the whole duration of the semester.



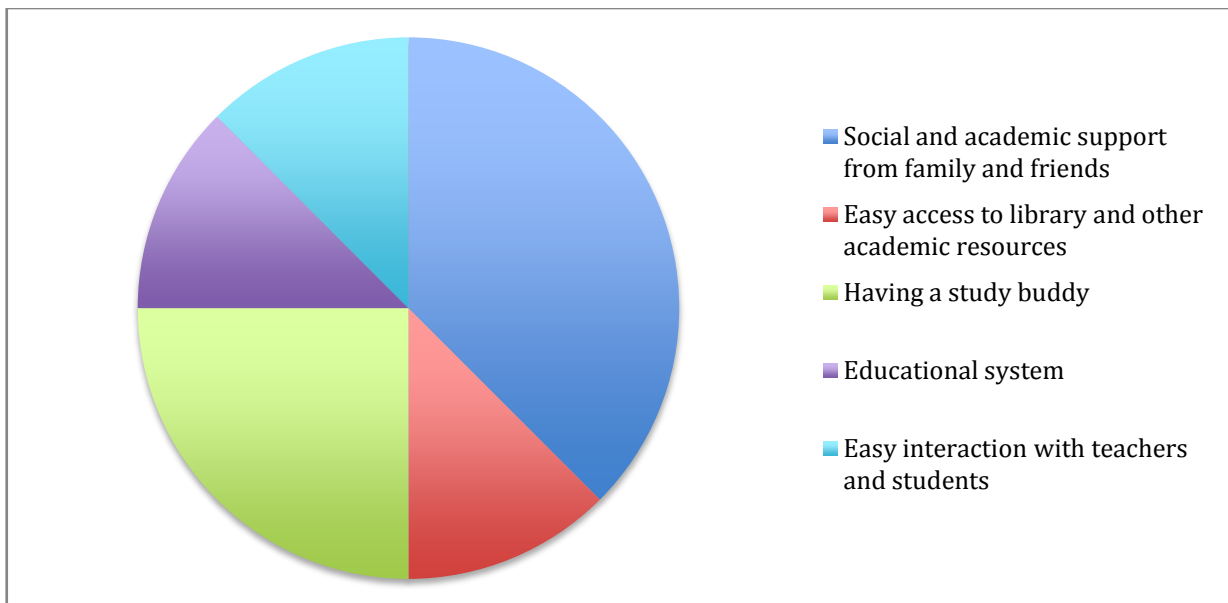
**Graph 8.** The length of time of the international student in adjusting in the academic changes while studying in the University of Santo Tomas

As seen above, big portion of the graph shows that international student have adjusted in the academic changes they've experience in the 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester. The second big portion of the graph shows that some international student took one whole semester to be able to adjust in the academic changes they've experienced while some are not yet academically adjusted.



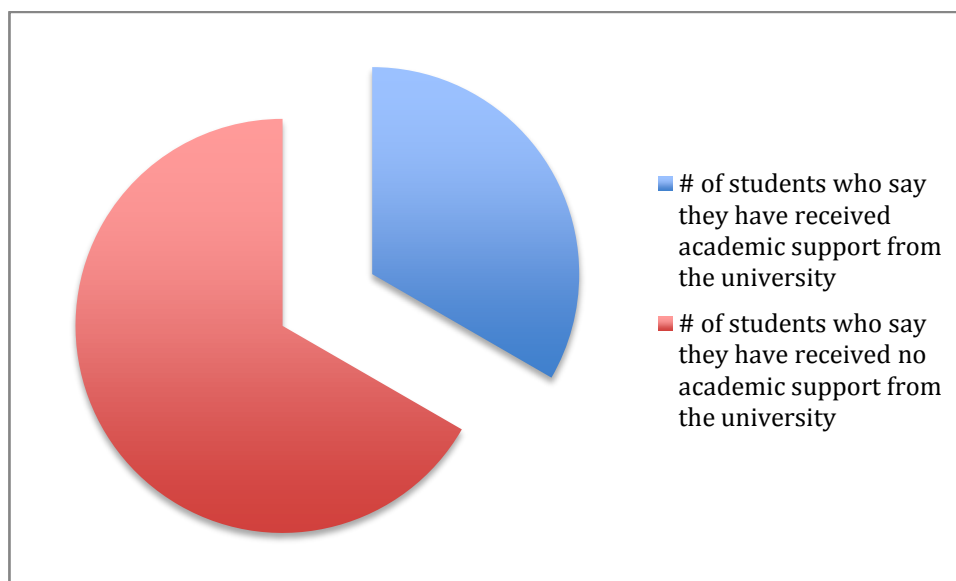
**Graph 9.**Situations that the International Students find the hardest to adjust to academically

Adapting to the different accents and interacting social are the hardest situations the international students find the hardest to adjust to. Next is difficulty in expressing ideas and taking down notes and difficulty in understanding the lesson. Furthermore, the inability to ask questions, participation in-group discussions, and others show an equal portion of the number of respondents who answered these.



**Graph 10.**Situations that help the international students to adjust easily

The graph shows that majority of the international students found it easy to adjust academically if they are receiving social and academic support from family and friends. Having a study buddy also helped them at a great extent. Having easy access to the library and other academic sources, the educational system, and easy interaction with teachers and students also help but only to a small extent.



**Graph 11.**Academic support received by the students

More than half of the number of international students answered that they have not received academic support from the university. Still the remaining portion shows the number of students who answered that they have received academic support from the university.

#### ***Discussions & Interpretation***

In this interpretation of data, the four research questions will be answered.

#### **What is the profile of the international students?**

Majority of the nationality of the respondents is Korean. Other nationalities also resulted into a large number of the respondents. Next to it is the Chinese nationality while Filipino, Japanese, and American nationality shares the same number of respondents. Most of the student prefer to choose UST because the university offers the desired course and prefer to study in the Philippines because of students find Filipinos friendly.

#### **What do international students do in their academic adjustment to meet the demands of the new environment?**

Primarily, most students rank language as the number one difficulty in their academic adjustment at UST. Almost all informants mentioned at the survey that they had difficulty understanding Filipino and English accent in lectures and tutorials, or if lecturers spoke English too fast. Informants made comments at the survey about their language difficulties and comments were often quite broad. They may, for example, have referred to the words, or concepts, or the interpretation or communication in the teaching and learning environment. It is not clear from the informants' responses whether it is only one of these elements or a combination of more than one or all the elements that led to the language difficulty. In a university most informants academically adjust at UST by studying in the library in order to cope up with their academic difficulties in the university, and reading in advance and studying hard. For example, some spend more in reading in advance while some used weekends to study. They also sought help from staff, senior students and classmates. Group study, such as taking special classes where they would learn the basics in speaking Filipino are used by informants in ensuring their successful adjustment to study at UST.

Suggestions of informants to new students include developing good English language skills if coming to study the Philippines, and always practice using the said language. They also advised the incoming freshmen to study very hard and acquire knowledge and not merely learn English. Another strategy suggested by informants is watching the television news, because it helps to improve listening skills.

On one hand, this is consistent with opinions in the literature (Burke 1986; Ballard & Clanchy 1991) that language proficiency is significant in students' academic adjustment. On the other hand, even the very articulate informants still reported that language is the cause of the difficulty in their academic adjustment. This strongly suggests that, at maybe a deeper level, there is something more than language that is underpinning the adjustment experiences of international students. Contributions from the literature suggest that this might include the values and norms of the diverse culture of the students.

### **How long is the academic adjustment of international students?**

As the experiences of adjusting are quite individual, it was expected that the responses to this focus question would vary. Of the responses received, first semester was commonly regarded as the most difficult time for making the adjustment to the environment. One of the informants responded that the first year was predominately a time of academic adjustment at UST.

Most international students however, experienced academic adjustment in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, while some of them were not aware of the adjustment, until they had gone through it.

### **What are the problems that aggravate the adjustment difficulties?**

#### **Student - staff interactions**

Because of the expectations on students to be more independent, lecturers at UST require students to do independent reading and researching for their learning. The degree and scope of assistance students get from staff is sometimes very different from what students have expected. What they may expect is a detailed discussion, but they may in fact get some general guidance referring to a book and page numbers. This is when international students get quite confused in their initial study experiences. In an effort to understand such unexpected behavior a student might mistakenly think that the lecturer is possibly a racist or perhaps the lecturer does not want to help.

#### **Student - student interactions**

The experiences of student - student relationships vary considerably. Some find it easy to make and gain friends especially fellow international students, some says that they have to make friends with the Filipino students and others have difficulty of making friends. Some informants answered that they were more reliant on friends for help in their study, as they have no relatives or family members who are near, to ask some help. In case of difficulty, friends often offered help. Some students, by contrast, found that it is hard to meet other students. In a Philippine university, students attend different lectures. There are less formal contact hours and therefore fewer opportunities to meet and find study partners. Students indicated that at home, one can make friends easily, but in the Philippines students mostly speak a different language they find it hard to interact very well. Student- student relationships really do vary. International students get along with each other even though the nationality or language is different but when it comes to Filipino students, they may have to find time in building relationships with them.

#### **Expectations of living in The Philippines**

Some students mentioned that the new experiences of living in the Philippines required them to develop new skills. Apart from studying, students have to spend time in housekeeping duties such as cooking, shopping and laundry by themselves. Some students found that the responsibilities that come from this independence placed competing workloads on their study.

## **VI. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### ***Conclusions***

The following are the conclusions of the study

- Majority of the students are Koreans, most of the international students prefer to study in the Philippines because of the friendly Filipinos, while chooses UST because the university offers the desired course

- Most informants adjusted to studying at UST by using the library and reading in advance; seeking help from staff, senior students and classmates, and having a group study are used by informants in ensuring their successful adjustment to study at UST.
- Most international students experience academic adjustment in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester
- The factors that aggravate the adjustment of international students are student-staff interaction, student – student interaction, and developing independence while studying in the Philippines.

### **Recommendation**

Future researchers may use grounded theory as their methodology.

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## **APPENDIX**

**Please fill in the questionnaire by putting a check in the appropriate box.**

**Note:** You can check more than one box depending on your answer.

1. Your nationality
  - Filipino
  - Chinese
  - Korean
  - Japanese
  - American
  - Others, please specify : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Current visa
  - China
  - Korea



- Japan
  - United State of America
  - Others, please specify : \_\_\_\_\_
3. Expected stay in the Philippines
- 4 years
  - 5 years
  - Others, please specify : \_\_\_\_\_
4. Reason for choosing Philippines
- International Accredited University
  - Use English as Medium of Instruction
  - Low cost of living
  - Western-based pattern of education
  - Friendly Filipinos
  - Education Programs
  - Faster and Easy Visa Application
  - Others, please specify : \_\_\_\_\_
5. Reason for choosing UST
- The university offers your desired major.
  - The university is affordable given your personal resources and career aspirations.
  - The university has diverse faculties that are accomplished in their respective fields and interact in meaningful ways with the world beyond the campus boundaries.
  - The university has a global perspective, as reflected in its programs, curriculum, faculty, student body, internships and alumni network.
  - The university gives an outstanding training grounds for the student
  - Students are competent and knowledgeable
  - The university is financially strong and has the resources to provide a superior student experience.
  - Others, please specify : \_\_\_\_\_

### Survey Questions

1. Have you experienced academic difficulties since the time you started studying in UST?
  - Yes
  - No
2. If yes, what were the activities that you did to cope up with your academic difficulties?
  - Set up a timetable
  - Advance reading of the next lesson
  - Study in the library
  - Group study with peers
  - Watching videos to improve listening skills
  - Asked help from the guidance counsellor or professors
  - Joining social organization
  - Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
3. When was the most difficult time for you to adjust to the new environment?
  - First week of the semester
  - Second week of the semester
  - Third week of the semester
  - Fourth week of the semester
  - Others, please specify : \_\_\_\_\_
4. How long did it take you to adjust in the academic changes you've experienced?
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the first semester
  - One whole semester
  - One school year (Two semesters)
  - Not yet adjusted academically

- Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What made your academic adjustment difficult?

- Social interaction between other students and with the professors
- Unable to ask questions about the lesson because of shyness and communication problem
- Participation in the group discussion
- Difficulty in understanding the lesson because the professors discuss the lessons fast
- Difficulty in expressing ideas and taking down notes
- Difficulty in adapting to the different accents, pronunciation, instruction and examination of the professors
- Academic Demands
- Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What made your academic adjustment easy?

- Social and academic support from family and friends
- Easy access to library and other academic resources
- Having a study buddy
- Educational system used
- Easy interaction with teachers and students
- Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Is/Are there any academic support you receive from University for your Academic Adjustment?

- Yes
- None

If yes, what is it/are those? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What advice would you give to incoming international students?