

A survey of foreign students' adjustment  
at Iowa State University

by

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

According to the 1989 report on foreign students by the Institute of International Education, there were 366,354 foreign students attending colleges and universities in the United States during the 1989/1990 school year. These students come from 172 different countries and territories. Over 50% of the foreign students in the United States come from Asia, 12.3% from Latin America, 1.7% from Europe, 11.0% from the Middle East, 7.1% from Africa, and 5.7% from Canada.

Foreign students desire to study in the United States to benefit from training not available in their home countries (Marshall, 1970). Singh (1976) and Hull (1978) also found that academic goals were the most important goal to foreign students. According to Spaulding, Seth and Flack (1976), the major reasons foreign students coming to the United States are 1) to get advanced education or training, 2) to acquire prestige through a degree from a United States institution, 3) to take advantage of available scholarship funds, 4) to escape unsettled political or economic conditions or, 5) to learn more about the United States.

### Problem Statement

When foreign students come to the United States, they bring the desire for an education that can provide them with a meaningful role in their home societies. While pursuing this goal, they are exposed to new and different societal values, roles, rights, and responsibilities. At this point, foreign students also find themselves in a different and alien culture which requires significant adaptation and adjustment.

However, adjustment to the new environment and its culture is difficult for foreign students who are trying to achieve their academic goals. These students must make a number of important adjustments during their stay in the United States. Some of these adjustments are related to their relationship with the community setting, such as the facilities offered, as well as alien norms and values to which they are exposed (Aliabadi, 1972). They must adapt also to the food, weather, political, and educational systems. Although adjustment to campus life is a common problem for all new students entering a university, it is especially difficult for foreign students, who are not usually fluent in English, and are unfamiliar with the culture of the United States. This raises the question of how foreign students might best adapt themselves to the new environment.

Several variables perhaps might be included to explain the different degree of adjustment among foreign students. Mass media researchers began to be aware of the important role of mass media in the adjustment process of foreign students. This is because mass media are important socialization agents in modern society, along with parents, and peer groups (Peterson, Jensen and Rivers, 1965). Also, mass media function as major vehicles for foreign students to learn about American culture (Klineberg and Hull, 1979). Therefore, attention is given in this study to the role of American mass media in the adjustment of foreign students at Iowa State University.

Cognitive perception is also considered an important variable (Kim, 1979). Cognitive perception refers to ways in which an individual receives, interprets, and responds to a stimulus. Sabrosky (1961) stated that perception develops from one's own ideas about the universe, and adjustment lies between the two extremes. Therefore, adjustment behavior occurs if and when a person thinks of events or objects in the light of what other people think, and accordingly changes his or her previous idea about the new culture. Levin and Murphy (1948) concluded that the different patterns of perception result in different modes of learning, and this in turn results in different degrees of



adjustment. Based on this, cognitive perceptions of Americans and American culture by foreign students are taken into consideration in this study.

Another important variable which is included in this study is the interaction that foreign students have with Americans. According to Kim (1979), the extent to which foreign students are incorporated into the host society through the interpersonal relationships with members of the host society has an impact on the degree of adjustment.

Language ability and length of stay in the United States and Iowa State University (ISU) are also measured in the present study. Effective communication between foreign students and Americans can take place only when the English language is at least minimally comprehended by the foreign students. Graves (1977), in his study about Asians students' adjustment concluded that the English language is a crucial factor in facilitating foreign students' cultural learning and interaction with Americans. Nagata (1967) proposed that the length of stay is also an important variable in foreign students' adjustment process. According to him, the longer the foreign students stay in the United States, the more positive the attitude toward the host country; the shorter the stay, the more serious were adjustment difficulties.

Therefore, the major purpose of this study was to explore communication variables that may affect the adjustment process of foreign students to American culture. These include foreign students' cognitive perceptions of the American and American culture, exposure to American mass media, language proficiency, interaction with Americans, and length of stay in the United States and at Iowa State University.

### Significance of the Study

Foreign students have a special kind of adjustment to make as they move from one culture to another. The behavioral modes and values in their home setting may prove maladaptive in the new environment. Many aspects of life are unfamiliar to them, and they are faced with a high degree of uncertainty. This degree of uncertainty reaches its highest peak at the initial stage and then gradually declines with time as they begin to acculturate. Foreigners must understand the norms and values better before they can adapt to the host society (Kim, 1977). Therefore, attention is given by the author in understanding how foreign students can adapt themselves to the new environment, since this process is important and interesting.

According to Lee, Abd-Ella, and Blair (1981), not only have institutions of higher education in the United States been indifferent to the adjustment problems of foreign students, they have also given little attention to such problems as the relevancy of the American educational programs for the developing world. Today, many educators in developing countries question the suitability of western technology, education, and culture for their countries.

#### Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the thesis and conceptual framework to the present study. Chapter II discusses studies relevant to adjustment behavior of foreign students, communication in inter-cultural study, the role of interpersonal communication in the adjustment process, exposure to mass media, length of stay, and English proficiency in the adjustment of foreign students. Chapter III reports the methods used to conduct this research and Chapter IV interprets the findings. Finally, Chapter V discusses the results and draws conclusions about this study.

## CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a conceptual framework for the present study. The model and theories used in this study are described. Research on foreign students' behavioral adjustment are discussed based on the theoretical framework. Finally, several hypotheses are presented.

### Theoretical Framework

According to Young Yun Kim (1979), communication is the underlying process in adjustment by which foreigners and the host socio-cultural system interact. Kim (1979) proposed a model which attempted to explain why certain individuals display greater participation in the communication channels of the host's society and how such participation affects the general acculturation process. The theoretical framework in this research will be based on this model, since it takes into consideration variables included in the problem statement.

According to Kim's (1979) model, these elements should be considered 1) cognitive perception, 2) interpersonal communication, 3) mass media behavior, and 4) communication environment.

### Cognitive perception

Schroder, Driver, and Streuf (1967) explained that the level of cognitive complexity in a given area is not necessarily held static over time. He also noted that foreigners' perceptions of the host society become more complex and refined as they learn more about the host's culture, particularly the immediate cultural-social context in which they live. As their cognitive structure becomes refined, they are able to detect variations and complexities in the new social and cultural environment.

Another important element of cognitive perception is the image of self in relation to the image of others around him or her. Here, a person's self-image is considered a cumulative result of dynamic interaction between the person and the environment. It affects the person's social communication patterns, since human beings interact not so much in terms of what they actually are, but in terms of how they perceive themselves to be in relation to others (Kim, 1977, p. 34). The way foreigners perceive host society members may lead to different degrees of interaction. In the present study examines how foreign students' cognitive perceptions toward Americans and the American culture are related to their degree of interaction with Americans.

Literature review on cognitive perception Hartley

and Hartley (1952, p. 228) defines perception as follows:

Perception is the process by which we register what is in the field of view in a way that is meaningful. Moreover, when we speak of 'seeing' or 'viewing,' we are speaking figuratively, not confining ourselves to the function of the eyes alone, but implicitly including all the means of obtaining information and interpreting it according to our concepts of external world.

Selltiz and Christ (1963) identified the characteristics of Americans as seen by foreign students. Their study showed that the two outstanding characteristics of Americans as perceived by foreign students are friendliness and practicality. More than three-fifths of the foreign students selected these characteristics as typical of Americans. According to them, Americans were also described as optimistic, energetic, interested in improving their physical and economic condition, ambitious, materialistic, and value success.

Rogers (1967) examined the opinions that foreign students have towards United States foreign policy. Most of the respondents rated the most important aspect of United States foreign policy as "worldwide arms control," followed by "defending security" and "securing adequate supplies." Selltiz and Cook (1962) found that about half of the foreign students selected in their study indicated that "preventing the spread of communism" was the major goal of American foreign policy. A majority of the foreign students

associated United States foreign policy with altruistic goals such as preserving peace, promoting international cooperation, guaranteeing freedom, and improving living conditions throughout the world.

#### Interpersonal communication by foreign students

Interpersonal communication by foreign students in the host country occurs through interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationship patterns represent the product of cognitive perception. This means that the degree of relationship formulation between foreign students and Americans depends upon the perception that foreign students have towards the Americans. Kim (1979) stated that interpersonal relationship patterns that result from perceptions of Americans are an effective and vital component to understanding the adjustment process of foreign students. Therefore, foreign student involvement with individuals of the host society is viewed as an important adjustment indicator in this thesis.

Literature review on interpersonal relationship      The important role of interpersonal communication in the adjustment process of foreign students was confirmed by Watson (1952) in her study of German students at the University of Michigan. She stated that:

If foreign students have numerous opportunities for testing the reactions of Americans, and if, in

this testing, they receive the kind of assurance that they want, this period of testing out may be shortened. If, on the other hand, the opportunities for interaction are few or if they are provided with unwanted, unfavorable, ambiguous, and contradictory information, the anxieties and resistances of the visitor may build up to the point where it is impossible for any positive learning and adjustment to take place (Du Bois, 1962, p. 94).

She also added, however, that once this period has been successfully completed, there are several important and lasting results of the adjustment process of foreign students (Du Bois, 1962). For example, foreign students will become more confident in interaction with Americans since he/she is more sure that Americans like him/her. This will develop a readiness to learn about the United States and its culture (Du Bois, 1962). Splinder and Goldschmidt (1958) also concluded that foreigners who tend to seek interpersonal relationships with Americans in social situations have not only a greater potential, but actually achieve a higher level of adjustment. Therefore, the role of interaction with Americans is considered an important factor that contributes to the adjustment of foreign students.

✓ However, several studies on social adjustment have indicated that foreign students are frequently isolated from the social life of United States campuses, tending, instead, to form co-national groups which provide a surrogate for the



home-culture, protect members from psychological conflicts in adjusting to the American society, and ease the transition upon return home (Gandhi, 1970, Kang, 1972). In a study at the University of Minnesota, for example, Kang (1972) found that 80% of the Chinese students created their own small community, which resulted in the maintenance of traditional values and belief systems. They lived together, supported their own church, belonged to only Chinese organizations, and maintained close ties with their homeland.

Studies which have dealt with personal interaction among members of different geographical regions have found those from non-western and developing countries to have greater difficulties in adjusting to the academic work, new personal relationships with persons from countries other than their own, and the American culture. Klein (1971), for example, found that more than half of the Asian students he studied had not established significant social relationships with Americans during their stay. His study suggested that role conflict and self-esteem are essential elements in determining social adaptation.

Other studies have shown that environmental conditions, such as proximity, may have an important influence on the development of personal associations (Cohen 1970; Gandhi,

1970). Therefore, the extent of opportunities for contact may be decisive in determining whether one associates with members of that group. Gandhi (1970) noted that 90% of the Indian students live with or close to other Indians. Cohen (1970) found that Kenyan students preferred living with compatriots, forming friendships with members of the same tribal group.

Studies of association among different ethnic groups within the United States have suggested that personal association with members of another group is likely to lead to favorable changes in attitudes toward that group. Heath (1970) indicated that most foreign students he interviewed had a favorable predisposition toward Americans, if they had frequent contact with them. Chang (1972) also found that attitudes of Chinese students toward Americans were positively-related to the extent of their association with them as well as to the foreign students' perception of the relationship of their own country to the United States.

#### Mass media behavior

Mass media play an important role in the socialization process. According to Gordon (1974, p. 53),

the media's major socialization influence is on the images and stereotypes we possess of our environment, our social system, the long term value systems we possess and what we view as priority concerns by way of the media agenda setting function.

Since the content of mass media refers not only to topic events, but also reflects societal values, norms of behavior, and traditional perspectives for interpreting the environment, the media transmit the host country's culture to foreign students. Typical mass media behaviors related to adjustment are reading newspapers or magazines, listening to the radio, and watching television.

Literature review on mass media behavior      Media exposure is a process whereby the information diffuses across space and time providing a symbol of reality to which a large portion of the entire population within the society is exposed or responds (Kim, 1979). According to Kim, through institutionalized mass media communication, a social system can perpetuate its cultural norms and values in its heterogeneous subsystems. Since the content of mass media not only refers to topic events, but may also reflect societal values and norms behavior, the media may be said to contribute to the adjustment process of foreign students in the United States and therefore at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, in particular.

According to Seyfi (1979), since most foreign students find it difficult to establish interpersonal relationships with Americans, the mass media become a potential source of learning about the United States and the English language.

Typical of the mass media behavior related to foreign students' adjustment process has been reported by Richmond (1967). He stated that the newspapers and magazines explicitly and implicitly convey a knowledge of Canadian norms and behavior, and social institutions, without which the foreigners would remain completely absorbed into the Canadian way of life.

The influence of television and radio was noted also as a possible source of adjustment. DeFleur and Cho (1957) indicated the function of these two media in the adjustment process. They assumed that the amount of daily exposure to radio, as well as television, is one of the variables that plays an important role in the adjustment process of foreigners to the United States.

✓ Much research also has been conducted about the use of mass media by foreign students at university campuses. Lee (1984) studied variables affecting the news-seeking behavior of Chinese students. Her findings indicated that Chinese students who planned to stay in the United States after graduation spent more time consulting United States mass media and had more frequent personal contacts with Americans than those who planned to return home after their studies were completed. Those who planned to return to their home countries had more frequent personal contacts with their compatriots than with Americans.

Seyfi (1979) examined the use of American mass media among 50 foreign students attending classes at Iowa State University in 1978. Foreign students were found to use American mass media considerably less than the average American. Among media, television was found to be the medium foreign students devoted most of their time. Categorizing foreign students into English and non-English speaking, no significant differences were found between the two groups for the reasons they watched television. Television and American friends were found to be the top source of information about American life styles among English-speaking foreign students. Non-English speaking foreign students learned the American way of life more often from home country friends.

✓ The communication environment

The process of acculturation and communication behaviors (cognitive perception, interpersonal, and mass media communication) can be accurately understood only when environmental factors are considered (Kim, 1979). A person's communication environment shapes the degree of "accessibility" to host communication channels. The term accessibility means, in relation to interpersonal communication, "interaction potential," i.e., the degree of opportunity for association with members of the host society

provided in one's daily communication environment (Kim, 1979, p. 448). For example, a foreign student who works with Americans and is more fluent in the host language has a greater chance to develop more meaningful relationships with Americans than others who do not.

In this study, interaction potential means the extent of interpersonal contact that foreign students have with Americans. Interaction potential is measured in this study by the frequency of outside classroom meetings with Americans, time spent with their American friends, the number of invitations to Americans' homes, and attendance at meetings that involve mostly Americans.

Literature review on foreign students interaction  
Selltitz and Christ (1963), in a study of attitudes and social relations of foreign students in the United States, proposed that contact with Americans tends to produce favorable attitudes among foreign students toward the United States. Among the variables that determine positive cross-cultural contact are, according to research (Hull, 1978; White and White, 1981), language proficiency, previous travel experience, absence of discrimination, and cultural background. A number of studies have examined these factors.

Klineberg and Hull (1979), found that foreign students who had travel experience away from their home countries tended to better establish positive contact with people in the host country. However, they also noted that ethnic or religious discrimination prevented positive cross-cultural contact for foreign students. Foreign students were most likely to report the existence of discrimination in France, followed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

Another factor that inhibits cross-cultural contact is the background of the foreign student. White and White (1981), for example, reported that cultural background was more significant than language proficiency when correlated with social adjustment, the relationship appeared to be neither strong nor consistent across groups of foreign students of different national origins.

According to Hull (1978), unless foreign students are able to establish frequent, easy and harmonious inter-relationships with the natives of the host country, it is predictable that their sojourn will be one of considerable dissatisfaction. Next to academic success, positive contact with natives of the host country ranks at the very top of foreign students' needs. Foreign students who reported frequent positive cross-cultural contact with Americans were the ones most likely to report less loneliness and

homesickness, more favorable attitudes about their experience in general, less desire to return home, less discrimination, and basically fewer negative reactions during their stay in the United States. Hull also stated that the main reasons for cross cultural contact between foreign students and Americans were favorable perceptions toward Americans, feeling lonely, depressed, and a desire to learn more about the host culture. These factors, according to Hull, lead to positive cross-cultural contact.

#### Other Related Research

Even though the theoretical framework suggests several variables that should be taken into consideration about the research on foreign students' adjustment, two additional variables are included in this research. These variables are length of stay in the United States and at Iowa State University and perceived language proficiency. A number of studies have demonstrated that the length of stay by foreign students and their English competency are the most important factors for explaining their attitudes toward the United States and Americans (Cowan, 1968; Gandhi, 1970; Becker, 1971).



Length of stay and adjustment

Passin and Bennett (1962), in a study of Japanese students, suggested length of residence in the United States as an important factor in the adjustment process of foreign students. He stated that the longer residence in the United States, the more positive the attitudes toward the United States; while the shorter the stay, the more serious the adjustment difficulties that foreign students must face. This has been confirmed in a study by Tanenhous and Roth (1962). They found that foreign students who had been at New York University for less than six months complained more frequently about the lack of opportunity in interaction with Americans than those who had been there for six months or more.

Foreign students who stayed in the United States for a shorter period also had to face a lot of problems compared to the others who had stayed in the United States longer (Du Bois, 1962). Gandhi (1970) also found that Indian students staying in the United States for less than two years tended to maintain traditional lifestyles. Becker (1971) also found that students who stayed longer in the United States showed less patriotism toward their home country and increased favorableness toward the United States.

According to Spaulding, Seth and Flack (1976), the length of stay has remained a confirmed, significant variable related to adjustment problems, academic performance, and satisfaction with training. With regard to the problem with English, research findings indicate that foreign students experience English difficulties during the first year~~s~~ and the difficulties decreased after one year (Lozada, 1970; Gabriel, 1973). A similar trend was observed with regard to the relationship between length of stay and social problems (Lee, Abd-Ella, and Blair, 1981).

#### Language proficiency and adjustment

The importance of interpersonal relations as well as the importance of the whole formal education process are mediated by the ability to communicate. Most of what foreign students do in their academic work or social conduct depends on their English and lack of proficiency was negatively related to foreign students contact with Americans. Selltiz and Christ (1963) found that foreign students who had a low ability in English faced social and emotional problems in adjustment to the United States. Based on this, the present study assumes that language competency is positively related to the degree of interpersonal communication. Fluency in the host's language is also considered to be an important determinant and has a

strong influence on foreign students' adjustment in the United States.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in this study are based on the literature reviewed. They also take into consideration the theoretical framework just described.

#### Cognitive structure

Cognitive structure is an important communication variable. In communication terms, the discrepancy between the intention of a sender (host society) and the meaning of the messages to a receiver (foreign students) will be reduced by the degree of favorable or unfavorable perceptions that foreign students have toward the United States. Cognitive structure is, therefore, an important mechanism through which foreign students pursue the goal of better acculturation in the host society (Kim, 1979).

Based on this, the following hypotheses were:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of Americans and interaction with them.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of Americans and exposure to the United States mass media.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of Americans and the length of stay.

Language proficiency

For students studying in a foreign country, a thorough acquaintance with that country's language can be a valuable asset. Not only does language proficiency ease foreign student's academic tasks, but it also allows foreign students to take part in the social life and deal easily with the small transactions that are part of everyday living in any community.

Most of the foreign students in the United States have some knowledge of English (Selltitz and Christ, 1963). Nevertheless, there are wide differences in their ability to communicate. Selltitz and Christ (1963) also stated that foreign students who were confident and have a better ability to speak and understand English were likely to interact more with Americans than those who had less confidence and less ability in their command of the English language. It is expected that students who speak English well will have less trouble than others in establishing and maintaining social relations with Americans and comprehending things going on around them.

Based on this, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between English competence and frequency of interaction with Americans.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between English competence and exposure to the United States mass media.

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between English competence and the length of stay.

Mass media exposure

Another factor which is proposed to influence one's inter-cultural communication behavior is "accessibility" to host communication channels. Accessibility is indicated by the availability of the American mass media.

Taking this into consideration, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between exposure to American mass media and contact with Americans.

## CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methods and procedures used in this study are organized under five headings: 1) sampling, 2) questionnaire design, 3) pre-test, 4) data collection, and 5) operational measures.

## Sampling

Systematic random sampling, in which every nth subject or unit is selected from a population, was used to draw the sample from a foreign student directory provided by the Office of International Education, at Iowa State University. A total of 300 respondents were selected.

## Pre-test

Fifteen foreign students were selected from this sample to complete and critique the first draft of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then modified, based on the pre-test results. For instance, in the cognitive perception section, all the questions were organized in a positive format. Several suggestions were made by the respondents that negative statements also should be included. Therefore, some questions were transformed into negative statements. The questionnaire was also approved by the Human Subjects Committee (Appendix A).

## Data Collection

Three hundred questionnaires were mailed to the selected respondents with stamped reply envelopes. Two weeks after the questionnaires were mailed, a follow-up letter was sent to each of the respondents to thank those who had returned the survey and to urge those who had not completed one to do so. After six weeks, a total of 176 questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 58%. All of the questionnaire returned were analyzable.

TABLE 1. Composition of sample

	% in total population	% in sample
Asian	64.29%	68.0%
Near and Middle Eastern	12.51	11.0
Europe	8.34	7.4
Latin American	6.00	3.4
Africa	5.27	4.5
Canada	2.01	3.4
Caribbean Islanders	0.88	1.2
South Pacific Islanders	0.70	1.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1 indicates that the sample of respondents was approximately representative of the total foreign student

population at Iowa State University. The largest percentage of foreign students are from Asia, followed by the Near and Middle East, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Canada.

### Operational Measures

#### Mass media exposure

This section is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on foreign students' exposure to the television. The second part concentrates on listening to the radio. The final part is concerned with reading American newspapers or magazines.

Television The respondents were asked whether they had access to a television or not. If the answer was yes, respondents were asked to indicate how much time they spent watching television every day and how frequently they watched certain types of programs. Respondents were also asked to indicate how often they watched television for learning purposes. Finally, in this section, respondents were also asked how they perceived the credibility of the news.

Radio The participants were asked if they had access to a radio. If the answer was affirmative, they were also asked to indicate the programs they usually listened to, how frequently they listened to them, their purpose for



listening to such programs, and how they perceived the credibility of radio news coverage.

Newspapers and magazines Respondents were asked whether they read American newspapers and magazines, how much time they spent reading them, their purpose for such reading, and the perceived credibility of the news in newspapers or magazines.

#### Cognitive perception

In order to measure foreign students' cognitive perceptions of United States culture, fifteen opinion statements were generated. The statements included opinions on American attitudes, behaviors, politics, economy, and food. Respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement using a scale ranging from one to four, with one indicating strong disagreement and four indicating strong agreement. A simple, summed index was then created from these items.

Respondents were asked to indicate their perception of their ability to understand spoken and written English, and to speak and write in English. The respondents were also asked whether they learned English in school and/or after they came to the United States.

To measure personal interaction with Americans, five items were included in the questionnaire. These included

their social contact with Americans outside the classroom, how often they attended meetings involving mostly Americans, going out with Americans for recreation, time spent on a daily basis with American friends, and whether they had been invited to an American's home.

### Background

Several questions were asked about the students' social backgrounds, their home country, length of stay in the United States and at Iowa State University, gender, degree program, living arrangements, academic college, and age.

Appendix B contains the complete questionnaire.

## CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings are discussed. First, descriptive statistics for each variable are presented. Then, the results of the hypothesis test, using a correlational analysis, are given.

### Demographic Characteristics

Table 2 shows a descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the foreign students who participated in this study. Fifty-four percent of the respondents are male and 46% are female. About 55% of the respondents have been in the United States and have attended Iowa State University for less than two years. Most of the respondents (46.4%) are working toward their master's degree. Over 18% of the respondents are in the College of Sciences and Humanities, followed by 17.6% in Engineering, 12.5% in Agriculture, 12.5% in Business, and 11.9% in the Design College. About half (54%) of the respondents live in university housing. The age of most of the respondents is between 22-25.

### Mass Media Availability

The results shown in Table 3 indicate that foreign students' exposure to American mass media is high. Over 80% of the respondents said they had access to television, radio, newspapers, or magazines.

TABLE 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents  
(N=176)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	(%)
Sex	Male	95	54.0
	Female	81	46.0
Length in the U.S.	0-1 year	40	22.7
	1-2 years	57	32.4
	3-4 years	54	30.7
	> 4 years	25	14.2
Length at ISU	0-1 year	40	26.1
	1-2 years	57	36.9
	2-3 years	54	26.7
	> 4 years	25	10.2
Degree	Bachelor's	57	32.4
	Master's	82	46.6
	Ph.D.	36	20.5
	Others	1	0.6
College	Sci. and human.	32	18.2
	Engineering	31	17.6
	Agriculture	22	12.5
	Business Admin.	22	12.5
	Design	21	11.9
	Family & Con. Sci.	20	11.4
	Education	17	9.7
	Grad. College	8	4.5
	Vet. Science	3	1.7
Living	Off-campus	74	42.0
	On-campus	95	54.0
	Other	7	4.0
Age category	18-21	33	18.8
	22-25	50	28.4
	26-29	40	22.7
	30-33	31	17.6
	34-37	12	6.8
	38-41	4	2.3
	42-45	6	3.4

TABLE 3. Percentage with access to media

Mass Media	Frequency	Percent	Missing Data	N
Television	151	85.8	2	174
Radio	142	80.7	0	176
Newspapers or magazines	156	88.6	1	175

TABLE 4. Mean levels of exposure to media

Mass media	Mean	Std. Dev.	Missing Data	N
Television	2.903	.398	21	155
Radio	2.266	1.100	33	143
Newspapers and magazines	2.399	1.111	18	158

1 = less than 1 hour  
 2 = 1-2 hours  
 3 = 3-4 hours  
 4 = 5-6 hours  
 5 = 7-8 hours  
 6 = > than 8 hours

Table 4 shows the average time respondents stated they spent on media per day. Respondents averaged almost 3 to 4

hours per day watching television, about 1 to 2 hours per day listening to the radio, and about 1 to 2 hours per day reading newspapers or magazines. These data indicate that respondents have a relatively high exposure to American mass media, especially television. These findings are consistent with Seyfi's (1979) finding that, among the media, foreign students devoted most of their time to television.

What type of media content do foreign students usually attend to? Table 5 shows that the respondents gave the most attention to movies, news, and comedy shows, while watching fewer crime dramas, sports, and talk shows on television. For the radio listener, music was the most frequent content they listened to and they spent the least time listening to talk shows. Respondents spent the most time reading articles about economics, politics, and social or environmental issues, but spent little time reading entertainment articles.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how often they used the mass media for various learning purposes. Table 6 shows that the main reason for using television, radio, and newspapers or magazines was to learn English. Television was most often used to learn about American customs. The respondents often listened to the radio to learn English. Newspapers and magazines were turned to most often to learn

TABLE 5. Mean levels of attention to the categories of mass media content

Content	Mean	Std. Dev.	Missing Data	N
<u>Television</u>				
Movies	3.226	.761	21	155
News	3.103	.823	21	155
Comedy	2.948	.820	21	155
Crime-dramas	2.871	.812	21	155
Sport	2.548	.934	21	155
Talk shows	2.490	.878	21	155
Quiz shows	2.323	.867	21	155
Variety	2.232	.859	21	155
Children shows	1.794	.795	21	155
Religious shows	1.574	.720	21	155
<u>Radio</u>				
Music	3.070	.793	33	143
News	2.413	.875	33	143
Talk programs	1.594	.674	33	143
Others	1.392	.617	33	143
<u>Newspapers/Magazines</u>				
Social and Environment	2.810	.807	18	158
Economics	2.797	.796	18	158
Politics	2.785	.760	18	158
Sports	2.367	.919	18	158
Weather	2.304	.894	18	158
Entertainment	2.285	.931	18	158
1 = never				
2 = rarely				
3 = sometimes				
4 = frequently				

about American politics. Media were not generally used to find solutions to problems.

TABLE 6. Mean levels of mass media use for learning purposes

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Missing Data	N
<u>Television</u>				
English language	3.174	.731	21	176
American customs	2.916	.797	21	155
American politics	2.787	.853	21	155
Solve problems	1.923	.810	21	176
<u>Radio</u>				
English language	2.462	.785	33	143
American politics	2.168	.813	33	143
American customs	1.951	.725	33	143
Solve problems	1.923	.625	33	143
<u>Newspapers/Magazines</u>				
English language	2.956	.738	18	158
American politics	2.819	.760	18	158
American customs	2.537	.760	18	158
Solve problems	2.006	.797	18	158
1 = never				
2 = rarely				
3 = sometimes				
4 = frequently				

Respondents were asked to indicate how credible they perceived news coverage in each medium. Table 7 shows that the American news media have a high credibility from the foreign students' point of view. For television, most of the respondents ranked its news coverage between truthful and somewhat truthful. For radio and newspapers or magazines, news coverage was most ranked in the two media



TABLE 7. Mean scores of the credibility of American mass media

Mass Media	Mean	Std. Dev.	Missing Data	N
Television	1.806	.646	21	155
Radio	1.620	.542	33	143
Newspapers/Magazines	1.694	.604	18	158
1 = truthful				
2 = somewhat truthful				
3 = somewhat untruthful				
4 = very untruthful				

between truthful and somewhat truthful. This analysis also related a high degree of accessibility and exposure to American mass media from Table 3 and Table 4. This indicates that foreign students refer to the mass media which they perceived as credible. This concurs with Pruitt's (1977), research which found that foreign students tend to learn from sources that they perceived was credible. Hence, this finding shows that credibility of the American media is important. Since foreign students believe in the credibility of the media, most of them spent a lot of time with American mass media.

TABLE 8. Frequencies of English background

Background	Yes	No	Total	N
Study English before and after coming to the U.S.	90.3%	9.7	100%	176
English as primary language at home	11.4%	88.6	100%	176

Table 8 indicates that most respondents use their own primary language at home and most take English courses after they come to the United States. Most of the respondents then, come from non-English speaking countries, where they have their own language. They probably learned English as a second language. Hence, to meet fulfill admission requirements and to comprehend English better, most of them also need to take English classes after they arrive at Iowa State University.

Table 9 shows that most of the respondents ranked their ability to understand daily spoken and daily written English between average and good compared to those who consider their English ability as good. Also, the respondents considered their ability to speak and write in English between average and good compared to those who have a better ability in English.

TABLE 9. Mean levels of the perceived rate of understanding English

Ability	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
<u>Understanding:</u>			
Daily spoken English	2.727	.774	176
Daily written English	2.653	.828	176
<u>Expression:</u>			
Speak daily English	2.636	.824	176
Write daily English	2.597	.843	176
1 = poor 2 = average 3 = good 4 = very good			

TABLE 10. Frequencies of personal interaction with the Americans

Interaction	Yes	No	Total	N
Go out for recreation	36.9%	63.1%	100%	176
Attends meeting	43.2	56.8	100	176
Invitation	42	58	100	176

Table 10 indicates that foreign students have a low interaction with Americans. Most of them have never gone

out with an American for recreation, attended any meeting that involved mostly Americans, or have been invited to an American's house. Sixty three percent of the respondents said they had never gone out with an American for recreation, 56.8% had never attended any meeting that involves mostly Americans, and 58% had never been invited to an American's house.

### Hypothesis Testing

All the hypotheses were tested by using the Pearson correlation analysis to determine the relationship between variables. This section is divided into three parts, cognitive structure, language proficiency, and mass media availability.

#### Cognitive structure

Hypotheses 1: There is a positive relationship between positive perceptions of Americans and interaction with them.

Table 11 shows the correlations between the cognitive perception index and several measures of interaction with Americans. The cognitive perception index was created through the summation of the scores based on the fifteen statements about Americans and the American culture. Foreign students were asked to indicate their degree of agreement about each of the statements. These statements

TABLE 11. Pearson correlation coefficients between cognitive perception and interaction with Americans

Interaction	Cognitive Perception Index
Contact with Americans	.18*
Hours spent with American friends	.16
Going out with American friends for recreation	.22*
Attending meetings involving mostly Americans	.15
Invited to an American's house	.26**
***p > .01.	
****p > .001.	

were about American's attitudes, social views, politics, and food. For example, the attitude statements include friendly and polite. The social statement included physical appearance and dating customs. While for politics, the statements included opportunities for minorities and the under-privileged. Statements about food included sweets, fast foods, alcohol, and soda-pop.

The analysis shows that the cognitive perception index is significantly correlated ( $p > .01$ ) by contact with Americans outside the classroom, going out with American friends for recreation, and being invited to an American's

home. The cognitive perception index was not significantly correlated by time spent with American friends or attending meetings involving mostly Americans. Newcomb's (1983) conclusion about interaction could explain this findings. According to Newcomb (1983), a person was more likely interact with those whom he/she has a greater opportunity to interact and those who he/her has a favorable feeling with.

These results show the same situation. The more favorable or positive perception that foreign students' have towards the Americans, the more contact they have with them outside the classroom, going out with Americans for recreation and been invited to an American friend's house. For the students who have unfavorable or negative perception towards Americans, they will interact less. However, there are no significant relationship was found between cognitive perception and two other interaction measures that were hours that foreign students spent with their American friends and attend meetings that involve mostly Americans. Thus, perhaps foreign students did spend more of their time studying or did not attend meetings that they perceived as less important to them. Thus, Hypothesis 1 receives some support from these results.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of Americans and exposure to the United States mass media.

TABLE 12. Pearson correlation coefficients between cognitive perception and exposure to the U. S. mass media

Media Exposure	Cognitive Perception Index
Watching television	.24*
Listen to the radio	.10
Read newspaper/magazines	.22*
***p > .01.	

Table 12 shows there are positive and significant relationships between the cognitive perception index and exposure to the United States mass media. There is a significant relationship between the cognitive perception index and the time that foreign students spent watching television and time spent reading newspapers or magazines. This significant relationship shows that, as foreign students degree of favorableness toward the Americans and American culture increases, their exposure to American mass media also increases. This is the same as what was found from the analysis in Hypothesis 2. Foreign students who have favorable perceptions are willing to learn more about other culture (Newcomb, 1983).

Through exposure to American mass media, they could obtain more knowledge about Americans and the American culture. Therefore, their exposure to the mass media also increases as their degree of perception become positive. However, for the students who have unfavorable perceptions toward the Americans and the American culture, their exposure to American mass media was low. There was no significant relationship between the cognitive perception index and time spent listening to the radio. Thus, Hypothesis 2 received support from these findings.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between cognitive perception of Americans and the length of stay.

TABLE 13. Pearson correlation coefficients between cognitive perceptions index and length of stay

Length	Cognitive Perception Index
Length of time in U.S.	.21*
Length of time at ISU	.18*
***p > .01.	

Table 13 shows there is a positive and a significant relationship between length of stay in the United States and Iowa State University, and the cognitive perception index.



This correlation shows that foreign students who have stayed longer in the United States and Iowa State University will develop more favorable perceptions toward Americans and American culture compared to those who have been here for a shorter period. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Language proficiency

Hypotheses 4: There is a positive relationship between English competence and frequency of interaction with Americans.

TABLE 14. Pearson correlation coefficients between English language proficiency and interaction with Americans

Interaction with Americans	Language Proficiency
Contact with Americans	.73**
Hours spent with an American friend	.64**
Going out with Americans for recreation	.59**
Attending meetings involving mostly Americans	.62**
Invitation to American homes	.52**
***p > .001.	

Table 14 shows that perceived language proficiency is highly correlated with all of the interaction measures with Americans. Clearly, foreign students who perceive they have a high English language ability interact more with Americans. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is strongly supported by these results.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between English competence and exposure to the United States mass media.

TABLE 15. Pearson correlation coefficients between language ability and exposure to mass media

Media Exposure	Cognitive Perception Index
Watching television	.21*
Listening to the radio	.15
Reading newspapers/magazines	.22*
***p > .01.	

Table 15 indicates a positive relationship between perceived English ability and exposure to American mass media. In this analysis, perceived language ability was significantly related to the time spent with television, and newspapers or magazines. However, the relationship between

language ability and hours spent listening to the radio was not significant. Hypothesis 5, then, is generally supported by these results.

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between English competence and the length of stay.

TABLE 16. Pearson correlation coefficients between perceived English language ability and length of stay in the U.S.

Length of time	Language Ability
Length of stay in the U.S.	.51**
Length of stay at ISU	.42**
****p > .001.	

Table 15 shows positive and high correlations between length of stay in the United States and at Iowa State University and perceived English ability. This shows that, as their stay in the United States and Iowa State University increases, they comprehend English better and obtain more confidence in their English ability. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is supported.

Mass Media Availability

Hypotheses 7: There is a positive relationship between exposure to American mass media and contact with Americans.

TABLE 17. Pearson correlation coefficients between exposure to U.S. mass media and contact with American

Media Exposure	Contact
Watch Television	.53**
Listen to radio	.27**
Read newspaper/magazines	.21*
***p > 0.01.	
****p > 0.001.	

Table 17 shows a positive and significant relationship between exposure to American mass media and contact with Americans outside the classroom. This means that the more exposure that foreign students have toward the American mass media, the more contact they will have with Americans outside the classroom. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 is accepted.

## CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of studies that focus on the adjustment process of foreign students. The majority of this research, however, is still conducted by sociologists who focus on demographic variables to explain foreigners' assimilation, economic accomplishments, acculturation, and adjustment. Variables, such as level of education, occupational status, age, sex, and income are commonly applied as explanatory variables. Demographic variables, however, are not sufficient to explain foreign students' adjustment (Yum, 1981). For instance, demographic variables alone do not adequately explain why foreign students of the same age and level of education have different degrees of adjustment. Therefore, in this study, mass media exposure, length of stay, perceived language ability and personal interaction are measured in order to assess their impact on the adjustment of foreign students to the United States culture.

This study found positive relationships between perceptions toward Americans and interaction with them. This result suggests that cognitive perception has an impact on the adjustment process of foreign students. Foreign students who had more favorable perceptions toward Americans had more contact with them, spent more hours with American

friends, went out more often with Americans for recreation, more frequently attended meetings that involved mostly Americans, and received more invitations to their homes.

This study also found a positive relationship between perceptions toward Americans and exposure to American newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. Foreign students who had favorable perceptions toward Americans spent more time reading American newspapers or magazines, watching television, and listening to the radio.

This study also investigated the relationship between cognitive perceptions regarding Americans and the length of stay. These variables were positively related. Length of stay, then, does appear to play an important role in helping foreign students adjust to life in the United States. However, adjustment difficulties do not seem to be solved merely by a longer residence and longer contact with the American educational system. A program planned specifically to help foreign students must be designated to integrate them more fully into the social life of the university and community.

All these findings indicated that cognitive perception plays an important role in explaining the foreign students' adjustment process to the host society. These findings are consistent with what Newcomb (1983) has suggested that on

the interpersonal level, persons who interact more with each other tend to like one another. A related principle is that individuals like others who he believes view him in a favorable light. Also, individuals like whom he believes see him as he sees himself.

According to Sewell and Davidsen (1961) in their study of Scandinavian students in the United States, foreign students who have a desire to learn about American culture and have traveled from home at least one month, will perceive Americans more favorably. According to Kim (1979), the desire to learn about foreign culture and travel experience is not enough to explain this relationship. Other factors such as the role of mass media and interaction opportunity should be included. However, the most important is the combination of all these variables that perhaps could explain in further detail the relationship between cognitive perception and interaction (Kim, 1979).

This study also found that language competency is positively and highly related to the degree of interpersonal communication with Americans. Perceived English competence is positively correlated with frequency interaction with Americans. Similarly, students who are more confident with their English ability will interact more with Americans.

The study further found that those who perceived their English ability as high also spent more time watching television, and reading newspapers and magazines. This means there is a positive and significant relationship between perceived English competence and exposure to American mass media. A positive relationship was also found between length of stay and perceived English competence. The perceived ability of foreign students to comprehend the English language also increased as their stay increased.

These findings conclude that the development of social relations presuppose some ability to communicate. Thus, skill in speaking and understanding English affects the extent of association between foreign students and Americans, and development of friendships with them. This finding is consistent with what Selltitz and Christ (1963) suggested in their study of foreign students: fluency of the host language should be not only an asset based on the foreign student's actual command of the host language, but also based on the degree of the foreign student's confidence in his/her ability to comprehend and use the language. Thus, ability to comprehend the English language is one of the factors which motivates foreign students to communicate and socialize with Americans.



Although there is considerable evidence that students who speak and understand English well are likely to have more and closer social relations with Americans and exposure to American mass media than those who have more difficulty with the language, it is by no means clear that a good command of the English language leads to a greater association with Americans. The relationship may be in the opposite direction-- associating with Americans may help foreign students to speak English more fluently and more exposure to American mass media (Selltiz and Christ, 1963). Or, it may be that some other demographic characteristic, such as national origin, underlies the apparent relation between language skill and the development of social relations. What is more likely, of course, is that the influences are reciprocal: foreign students with a good command of the language may be more self-confident about taking part in activities with Americans. This greater participation, in turn, leads to improvement in their command of English (Selltiz and Christ, 1963).

A positive relationship was also found between access to American mass media and interaction with Americans. This means that mass media play an important role in the socialization of foreign students when they come to the United States. According to Seyfi (1979), for most foreign

students who come to the United States, there are three possible agents of learning about American culture and English language:

1. Americans (either teachers or friends)
2. compatriots from the same country, and
3. American mass media.

Therefore, this finding has provided evidence that mass media are among the important agents that help to ease the foreign students' adjustment process. Also, according to DeFleur and Cho (1957), there are several ways in which media influence a person's values. First, mass media content can reinforce existing patterns and lead people to believe that society maintains the given social norms. Second, mass media use could lead to a greater interpersonal contact, since exposure to mass media could bring more knowledge about other cultures. This is because mass media can create newly shared convictions with respect to topics with which the foreigners have little previous experience. Third, mass media can change existing norms and one form of behavior to another. In this study, the findings indicate that exposure to American mass media could lead to greater contact with Americans.

### Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study had several limitations. First, since this study was only conducted on foreign students at Iowa State University, there is a geographical limit to the extent in which these results can be generalized. Future studies should take into consideration involvement of foreign students from various universities in the United States. For example, a cross-sectional comparative study among foreign students who come from different countries, their background and culture which might perhaps explain in detail what and why certain groups of foreign students better adapt themselves to the United States as compared to other groups.

Second, caution must be exercised in making causal inferences about what variables account for other variables. In most cases, researchers talk about certain factors accounting for other variables statistically. In reality, however, reverse feedback effects may be observed. A foreign student's communication patterns, for example, may subsequently refine his/her perception of the host society, his/her English proficiency or academic performance. As another example, interaction with Americans may lead to favorable attitudes, or vice versa. This means that for further study, the need for a longitudinal study on the foreign students' perception toward the United States.

Perhaps there is also a need for an extended study on perception change of foreign students before and after they return home.

Third, the variables employed in the present study do not exhaust those that might possibly be included. Future studies may want to include such variables as age, sex, marital status, academic levels, major fields, sponsorship, country of origin, living arrangements, and orientation (Lee, Abd-Ella, and Blair, 1981). Gaither and Griffin (1971) stated that adjustment problems for younger foreign students were minimal as compared to those of older foreign students. This is because, older foreign students tend to maintain a high degree of favorableness toward their home country as compared to younger foreign students. A study conducted by Pruitt (1977) compared the degree of adjustment between male and female foreign students among Africans students. His study indicated that male African students were better adjusted to the United States environment than females.

Fourth, in investigating the adjustment of foreign students, one short survey can only describe the overt process. However, the adjustment process is complex and continuous. In this sense, individual foreign students should be pursued over a period of time, based on the panel

or cohort study in order to investigate their adjustment process over time.

However, in spite of these limitations, it is believed that the present study provides some meaningful insights into the problems foreign students have in adapting to the host culture.

#### Suggestions for the OIES, ISU

The findings of this research add knowledge about the adjustment process among foreign students at Iowa State University. These findings indicate the importance of foreign students interacting with Americans while they study in the United States. Foreign students at ISU, however, do not have frequent interaction with Americans. Several actions should be encouraged more. Among them are:

1. Encourage foreign students to stay with a volunteer American family for a few days.
2. Promote trips that involve both Americans and foreign students.
3. Encourage foreign students to have annual cultural presentations about their home countries.
4. Encourage volunteer organizations for American students who want to help foreign students in the English language and vice versa.

### Conclusions

Based on the above findings, this research indicates the important roles of cognitive perception, interaction with Americans, exposure to the American mass media, language proficiency, and length of stay as important indicators to explain foreign students' adjustment to the United States culture. Each of these variables is interrelated in helping foreign students adjust. However, the adjustment processes of foreign students through these variables are more complex, and this study is but one attempt toward an initial investigation of a large phenomenon of foreign students' adjustment process.

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APPENDIX A: HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL

APPENDIX A : HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL  
INFORMATION ON THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH  
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

(Please follow the accompanying instructions for completing this form.)

1. Title of project (please type): A SURVEY OF COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG  
FOREIGN STUDENTS AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are properly protected. Additions to or changes in procedures affecting the subjects after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review.

CHE SU MUSTAFFA

12.17.89

Signature redacted for privacy

Typed Name of Principal Investigator

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator

675, PAMMEL COURT

296-7917

Campus Address

Campus Telephone

3. Signatures of others (if any). Date Relationship to Principal Investigator  
Signature redacted for privacy

12/11/89

Major Professor

4. ATTACH an additional page(s) (A) describing your proposed research and (B) the subjects to be used, (C) indicating any risks or discomforts to the subjects, and (D) covering any topics checked below. CHECK all boxes applicable.

- ☐ Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
- ☐ Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
- ☐ Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
- ☐ Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
- ☐ Deception of subjects
- ☐ Subjects under 14 years of age and (or) ☐ Subjects 14-17 years of age
- ☐ Subjects in institutions
- ☐ Research must be approved by another institution or agency



5. ATTACH an example of the material to be used to obtain informed consent and CHECK which type will be used.

- ☐ Signed informed consent will be obtained.
- ☒ Modified informed consent will be obtained.

6. Anticipated date on which subjects will be first contacted: Month Day Year  
1 15 90

Anticipated date for last contact with subjects: 2 15 90

7. If Applicable: Anticipated date on which audio or visual tapes will be erased and (or) identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments:

Month Day Year

8. Signature of Head or Chairperson Date Department or Administrative Unit  
Signature redacted for privacy 17.12.89 JLMC

9. Decision of the University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research:

- ☐ Project Approved ☐ Project not approved ☐ No action required

Patricia M. Keith

Name of Committee Chairperson

Date

Signature of Committee Chairperson

APPENDIX B: LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondents,

I am conducting a survey on communication patterns among foreign students at Iowa State University and would appreciate your input through your response to the enclosed questionnaire. The questionnaire will give me information about foreign students' exposure to American mass media and about foreign students' interaction with Americans. The findings from this research will enhance the knowledge of foreign students' adjustment to the new cultures.

I have estimated that it will take about 25 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Please complete all four parts. Your responses will be held in strict confidence. Needless to say, all the information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. The questionnaire is coded only for the purpose of mailing out a reminder to those who fail to initially respond. Once your questionnaire is returned, your name will be removed from my mailing list.

Your participation is greatly appreciated and purely voluntary.

Thank you for your time if you choose to help. Please complete the questionnaire and return it by February 20th, in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed enveloped.

Sincerely,

CHE SU MUSTAFFA  
Department of Journalism  
and Mass Communication  
Iowa State University



## Exposure to American Mass Media

I'd like to ask you some questions about your use of television, radio, and the print media (newspapers and magazines). All of these refer to the American mass media.

1. Do you own or have access to a television?

- a. Yes.....1
- b. No.....2 (Go to Q. 6)

2. Approximately, how many hours per day do you watch television?

- a. less than one hour .....1
- b. 1-2 hours .....2
- c. 3-4 hours .....3
- d. 5-6 hours .....4
- e. 7-8 hours .....5
- f. more than 8 hours .....6

3. How often do you watch the following types of programs on television?

	frequently	sometimes	rarely	never
a. news	4	3	2	1
b. crime-dramas	4	3	2	1
c. comedy	4	3	2	1
d. variety	4	3	2	1
e. sports	4	3	2	1
f. children's	4	3	2	1
g. religious	4	3	2	1
h. quiz-shows	4	3	2	1
i. talk-shows	4	3	2	1
j. movies	4	3	2	1

How often do you watch television to learn about the listed items:

	frequently	sometimes	rarely	never
a. American politics	4	3	2	1
b. American customs and/ lifestyle	4	3	2	1
c. English language	4	3	2	1
d. Solve problems	4	3	2	1

5. How truthful do you think television news coverage is?

- a. truthful.....1
- b. somewhat truthful.....2
- c. somewhat untruthful.....3
- d. very untruthful .....4

6. Do you own or have access to a radio?

- a. yes.....1  
b. no .....2

7. How often do you listen to the following types of programs?

	frequently	sometimes	rarely	never
a. News	4	3	2	1
b. Music	4	3	2	1
c. Talk-shows	4	3	2	1
d. Other	4	3	2	1

8. How many hours per day do you listen to the radio?

- a. Less than one hour .....1  
b. 1-2 hours.....2  
c. 3-4 hours.....3  
d. 5-6 hours.....4  
e. 7 hours or more.....5

9. How often do you listen to the radio to learn about the listed items?

	frequently	sometimes	rarely	never
a. American politics	4	3	2	1
b. American custom/ and lifestyle	4	3	2	1
c. Learn English	4	3	2	1
e. Solve Problem	4	3	2	1

10. How truthful do you think radio news coverage is?

- a. Very truthful.....4  
b. Somewhat truthful.....3  
c. Somewhat untruthful.....2  
d. Untruthful.....1

11. Do you read any American newspapers or magazines?

- a. Yes.....1  
b. No.....2

12. Approximately, how much times per day do you spend reading American newspapers or magazines?

- a. 1-15 minutes.....1  
b. 16-31 minutes.....2  
c. 31-45 minutes.....3  
d. 46-60 minutes.....4  
e. more than one hour.....5

13. Which of the following types of articles would you be most likely read in American newspapers and magazines?

	frequently	sometimes	rarely	never
a. Political news	4	3	2	1

b. Economic news	4	3	2	1
c. Social and/ environmental	4	3	2	1
d. Sports	4	3	2	1
e. Weather	4	3	2	1
f. Entertainment	4	3	2	1

14. How often do you read American newspapers and magazines to learn about the listed items?

	frequently	sometimes	rarely	never
a. American politics	4	3	2	1
b. American customs and lifestyle	4	3	2	1
c. Learn English	4	3	2	1
d. Solve problems	4	3	2	1

15. How truthful do you think newspaper and magazine news coverage is?

a. Very truthful.....	4
b. Somewhat truthful.....	3
c. Somewhat untruthful.....	2
d. Untruthful.....	1

#### Cognitive Perception

I'd like to ask a few questions about your perception of Americans and American culture. Please answer your question by using the following order:

SA	=	STRONGLY AGREE
A	=	AGREE
DA	=	DISAGREE
SDA	=	STRONGLY DISAGREE

16. In general, Americans are friendly	SA	A	DA	SDA
17. American family ties are close	SA	A	DA	SDA
18. There is a close student-teacher/ relationship in America	SA	A	DA	SDA
19. Americans are honest	SA	A	DA	SDA
20. In the U.S., there is freedom of speech	SA	A	DA	SDA
21. There are equal opportunities for minorities in the U.S.	SA	A	DA	SDA
22. The under-privileged in this				

- |  |    |   |    |     |
|--|----|---|----|-----|
| country are cared for economically                                       | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 23. Americans are impolite   | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 24. People in the U.S. drink too much alcohol                            | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 25. Americans are too worried about their physical appearance            | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 26. There is too much dating among teenagers in the U.S.                 | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 27. In the U.S., students go to college to have fun rather than to learn | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 28. Americans eat too many sweets  | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 29. Americans drink too much alcohol                                     | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 30. Americans eat too much fast food                                     | SA | A | DA | SDA |

#### Language Ability and Personal Interaction

31. Was English your primary language at home?  
 a. Yes.....1  
 b. No.....2
32. Did you study English as a foreign language before and after you come to the U.S.  
 a. Yes.....1  
 b. No.....2
33. How would you rate your ability of the following?
- |                          | good | very good | average | poor |
|--------------------------|------|-----------|---------|------|
| a. daily spoken English  | 4    | 3         | 2       | 1    |
| b. daily written English | 4    | 3         | 2       | 1    |
34. How would you rate your ability to do the following?
- |                        |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| a. speak daily English | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. write daily English | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
35. Besides classroom meetings, how much contact would you say you have with Americans.
- |                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| a. very much     | .....4 |
| b. some          | .....3 |
| c. not very much | .....2 |
| d. none          | .....1 |

36. How much time per day do you spend with American friends?

- a. 0-15 minutes.....1
- b. 16-30 minutes.....2
- c. 31-45 minutes.....3
- d. 46-60 minutes.....4
- e. more than one hour.....5

37. Have you ever gone out with American friends for recreation?

- a. Yes.....1
- b. No.....2

38. Have you ever attend organization meetings that involve mostly Americans?

- a. Yes.....1
- b. No.....2

39. Have you ever been invited to American friend homes?

- a. Yes.....1
- b. No.....2

#### Background

Finally, I'd like to ask you about your background.

40. What is your home country?.....

41. How long have you been in the United States?

- a. 0-1 year.....1
- b. 1-2 years.....2
- c. 3-4 years.....3
- d. more than 4 years.....4

42. How long have you been at I.S.U?

- a. 0-1 year.....1
- b. 1-2 years.....2
- c. 3-4 years.....3
- d. more than 4 years.....4

43. What is your gender?

- a. male.....1
- c. female.....2

44. What degree are you working toward?

- a. Bachelor's.....1
- b. Master's.....2
- c. Ph.D.....3
- d. Other (please specify)...4

45. Where do you live?
- a. Dormitory.....1
  - b. On-campus family housing..2
  - c. Off-campus.....3

Thank you for your cooperation