

**Understanding the Relationship between
Self-construals, Self-esteem, Religiosity, Social
Support and the Sociocultural Adaptation of African
Students in North Cyprus**

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ABSTRACT

Moving to a new environment is usually associated with difficulties. International students have to adapt to the new environment and this can be challenging if the new environment is very different from the students' home environment. This study sought to explore the relationship between self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity, social support and the sociocultural adaptation of African students in North Cyprus. A total of 122 students from Sub-Saharan Africa studying in Eastern Mediterranean University completed a questionnaire which had a demographic section and the Singelis Self-construals scale, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Hoge Intrinsic Religiosity Scale and the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List. Results showed that only the interdependent self-construal and social support predicted sociocultural adaptation. This study highlights the importance of social support for international students from Sub-Saharan Africa studying in North Cyprus.

Keywords: Sociocultural adaptation, self-construals, African students, North Cyprus.

ÖZ

Yeni bir ortama taşınmak genellikle zorlukları da beraberinde getirmektedir. Uluslararası öğrenciler yeni ortama uyum sağlamak durumundadırlar ve eğer yeni ortam öğrencilerin kendi ülkesindeki ortamlarından çok farklı ise süreç zorlayıcı olabilmektedir. Bu çalışma, Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki Afrikalı öğrencilerin özbenlik kurgusu, özsaygısı, dindarlığı, sosyal desteği ve sosyokültürel uyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmaktadır. Katılımcılar Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi'nde okuyan Sahra Altı Afrika'dan 122 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Veri toplamada, demografik bölüm ve "Singelis Benlik Kurgusu Ölçeği", "Rosenberg Özsaygı Ölçeği", "Hoge İç Güdümlü Dindarlık Ölçeği" ve "Kişilerarası Destek Değerlendirme Listesi"ni içeren bir anket kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, sadece bağımlı benlik kurgusunun ve sosyal desteğin sosyokültürel adaptasyonu yordadığını göstermiştir. Bu çalışma sosyal desteğin Sahra Altı Afrika'dan Kuzey Kıbrıs'a gelen öğrenciler için önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sosyokültürel adaptasyon, benlik kurgusu, Afrikalı öğrenciler, Kuzey Kıbrıs.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS/ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
CMA	Concordance Model of Acculturation
Etc.	et cetera translated from Latin to English as, and other things
HIRS	Hoge Intrinsic Religiosity Scale
IAM	Interactive Acculturation Model
e.g.	for example
i.e.	that is; that is to say
et al.	and others
ISEL	Interpersonal Support Evaluation List: Shortened version
M	Mean
RSES	Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale
SCAS	Sociocultural Adaptation Scale
SD	Standard Deviation
SSCS	Singelis Self-constural Scale
TRNC	Turkish Republic of North Cyprus
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Every year, thousands of students travel internationally for the purpose of education. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistic (UIS), in 2012 there were approximately 784,427 international students studying in the United States, 54,387 in Turkey, 7,454 in The Republic of Cyprus (UIS, 2014). In the 2014/2015 academic year, there were 58,318 international students in The Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2015). In 2012, at least four million students were studying out of their country, with approximately 288,200 of these students from Sub-Saharan Africa (UIS, 2014).

Going to a new country for studies often involves getting in contact with a new culture and the incoming students (and the host population) have to adapt to their new life in the new environment. Acculturation which is defined by Berry (2005, p.698) as, “the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” is bound to occur as a result of cross cultural contact as both the host nationals and the incoming students mutually accommodate for each other. According to Berry (2005) this process leads to the psychological and cultural adaptation of the incoming individuals to their host environment and the level of adaptation will depend on some factors like the individuals’ personality, the response of the host nationals to the incoming individuals and the level of difference between the two cultures.

1.1 Sociocultural Adaptation

Sociocultural adaptation refers to the behavioral aspect of adaptation which involves an individual learning the values of the new culture and integrating them and later modifying his/her behavior to better fit in the new environment (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). It is different from psychological adaptation which relates to the emotional and affective aspects of adaptation, i.e., the different emotional and affective feelings experienced during the transition process (Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Berry, 2005). Psychological adaptation has been measured with emotional and affective related constructs like life satisfaction (Ullman & Tatar, 2001), depression (Torres & Rollock, 2007) and anxiety (Armes & Ward, 1989).

1.1.1 Culture Shock

Culture shock is an example of a psychological difficulty experienced by most immigrant groups (e.g., student, refugees, etc.). It was conceptualized by Oberg (1960) as feelings of loss, confusion and anxiety as a result of loss of social and cultural cues when in contact with a new and unfamiliar culture. According to Winkelman (1994), culture shock is a normal part of the adaptation process experienced by individuals in an unfamiliar environment. It is generally agreed by most researchers (Kohls, 1984; Oberg, 1954) that culture shock is a process (or part of a process) that occurs in 4 stages. First, there is the honeymoon phase which is characterized by excitement and euphoria. The individual explores the new environment and any difficulties faced and any anxiety experienced is interpreted positively. Next is the crisis or cultural shock phase. According to Furnham and Bochner (1986) the time of onset and the extent of the crisis will depend on the personality of the individual and level of preparation for change (i.e., research about what to expect). The individual starts to experience things negatively. Small

frustrations or difficulties are blown out of proportion and the cultural differences that were experienced positively in the honeymoon phase become annoying. The new environment becomes disappointing and the individual might feel a lack of control of his/her life, disliked, accompanied by many frustrations which can lead to depression (Winkelman, 1994). The individual becomes very home sick, missing those left behind and his/her familiar home environment and usually desires to go back to his/her place of origin. Later comes the adjustment phase in which the individual learns how to adjust to the new environment. Some individuals may choose isolation and surround themselves in a familiar ethnic community and limit their experience of the new culture. On the other hand, those individuals who want to function in the new environment start developing skills to overcome the daily difficulties they face. The problems of the crisis phase are still present but the individual develops a more positive attitude towards the problems and works on overcoming them. Lastly comes the adaptation phase. Here, the individual develops stable adaptive behaviors and is more successful in overcoming problems faced and managing his/her life in the new cultural environment (Winkelman, 1994).

Sociocultural adaptation happens through a process of cultural learning which involves the individual developing specific cultural skills which permits the negotiation of the interactive aspects of functioning in the new environment (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Most research on sociocultural adaptation has been done considering situational variables like host language skills, length of stay in host environment, degree of interaction with host nationals, previous international experience, cultural knowledge, etc., to explore their predictive effect on sociocultural adaptation. A few theories and models have been proposed in an attempt to explain the adaptation process.

1.1.2 Cultural Fit Theory

Cultural fit can be defined as the fit between an individual's internalized cultural framework (cognition, affect, personality) and the cultural norms and practices of the host society (Ward & Chang, 1997). The cultural fit theory proposes that, the better the fit between the individual and the culture of the host society, the better the adaptation. Searle and Ward (1990) found that extraversion which is an appreciated characteristic in New Zealand predicted psychological adjustment of Malaysian and Singaporean students in New Zealand. Cross (1995) found that, Asian students with independent self-construal (i.e., autonomous self) similar to those of the host nationals (American students) used more direct coping styles and had better psychological adjustment. In Oguri and Gudykunst's (2002) study, the independent self-construal predicted better psychological and sociocultural adjustment and it was also observed that the students who used communication styles similar to those of the host society individuals had better adjustment outcomes. The cultural fit theory has not been supported in all studies. Yang, Noels and Samure (2006) tested the cultural fit theory by subtracting the mean value of self-construals (interdependent and independent self-construals) of Canadian students (domestic students) from the scores of self-construals of Asian students in Canada. The discrepancy in scores did not predict depression, self-esteem and sociocultural adaptation.

Cultural distance is similar but not synonymous to cultural fit. Cultural distance can be defined as the differences or similarities between two cultures in terms of their physical (e.g., climate) and social (e.g., language, education, religion, family, etc.) characteristics (Babiker, Cox & Miller, 1980). Cultural distance has been reported (by Berry, 1992; Searle & Ward, 1990) as having considerable effect on cross-cultural adaptation. Matsumoto et al. (1999) in their study of the relationship

between discrepancies between culture and wellbeing argued that individuals with greater discrepancies used more coping behavior and coping behavior in turn was associated with greater anxiety and depression. Babiker, Cox and Miller (1980) proposed that, cultural distance creates ‘barriers’ for individuals from effectively interacting in the society and these barriers are the cause of anxiety, depression and poor sociocultural adaptation. They developed a questionnaire to measure cultural distance and found a positive relationship between cultural distance, anxiety and medical consultation in international students in the UK. In their study of Malaysian students in Singapore, Ward and Kennedy (1993) found that cultural distance predicted more social difficulty.

1.2 Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM)

Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, and Senecal (1997) proposed the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) which considers the interaction of the acculturation experience of the host society with the acculturation experience of the incoming individuals. In this model, the members of the host society can adopt one of five acculturation attitudes, which are: integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion and individualism. The integration attitudes means the host society accepts and values the maintenance of the immigrant cultural heritage and expects the immigrants to adopt some of the host society’s culture. The assimilation attitude is when the host nationals expect the immigrants to forgo their cultural heritage and adopt that of the host society. Segregation attitudes refers to when the members of the host society don’t want the immigrants to adopt or change the host society’s cultures and prefers that the immigrants should maintain their cultural identities and remain isolated in an enclave. The exclusion attitude is when the members of the host society do not tolerate the maintenance of the immigrant culture and also do not accept the

immigrants to adopt the host culture. The individualism attitudes is when the members of the host society don't view themselves and others as members of groups and interact with those they come in contact with depending on their personal characteristics and not their group of origin.

According to the IAM the immigrants also adopt different attitudes towards acculturation. They can adopt the integration, assimilation, separation, anomie and individualism attitudes. Integration attitudes are when the immigrants maintain key features of their cultural identity while they also adopt aspects of the host society's culture. In the assimilation attitudes, they forgo their own culture and adopt the culture of the host nationals. The separation attitudes occur when the immigrants maintain all aspects of their home culture and refuse interaction with the members of the host culture. Some immigrants might feel marginalized and hence adopt the anomie attitude in which they refuse to adopt their home culture and that of the host society. The individualistic attitude on the other hand is when the immigrants dissociate themselves both from their ethnic culture and the host society's culture and view themselves and other as individuals not as members of any group.

The model states that, the actual acculturation experience of the host national and that of the immigrant will depend on a match or mismatch between the attitudes of the host nationals and that of the immigrants. There are a total of three possible outcomes which are: consensual, problematic and conflictual.

The consensual outcome is the most positive outcome and occurs when the host group and the immigrants both have integration, assimilation or individualistic attitudes toward acculturation. It predicts positive relational outcomes in most

domains. The problematic relational outcome occurs when there is a mismatch between the attitudes of the host nationals and that of the immigrants. It can occur when the host nationals want the immigrants to assimilate the host culture while the immigrants want the host society to integrate their values into their culture. The conflictual relational outcome is the most negative outcome in this model. It can occur when the immigrant groups adopt a separation attitude and the host nationals have segregation or exclusion attitudes. This creates room for miscommunication, stereotyping and discrimination against the immigrants. These negative outcomes can be attenuated by State policies if there have a pluralism and civic ideology and can be accentuated by State policies if they have assimilation and ethnist ideologies. The influences of the State according to the IAM will be discussed next.

The role of government policies is emphasized in this model as the government policy is considered to have great influential effect on both the incoming individuals and the host society's acculturation attitudes. The possible ideologies the government can adopt have been grouped into four clusters of ideologies which are the pluralism ideology, civic ideology, assimilation ideology and ethnist ideology. These four clusters can be viewed as being in a continuum that has the pluralism ideology on one end and the ethnist ideology on the other end.

In the pluralism ideology, the government expects the immigrants to adopt the civic and criminal code of the State and also respect the human right provisions and constitutions of the State. However, the State doesn't regulate the private values of the immigrants. The private values include religion, community involvement, leisure, politics, etc. When needed, the State can intervene both socially and financially in the promotion of private and/or cultural activities of the immigrant group.

The civic ideology is similar to the pluralism ideology in that the State expects the immigrant group to respect the public policies and the State doesn't intervene in the private matters of the immigrant group. The difference with the pluralism ideology is that, the State allocates no funds or endorsement towards the promotion of the immigrant group's values.

In the assimilation ideology, just like with the previous ideologies, the State expects the immigrants to respect public policies. Although the State generally doesn't intervene in the private matters of the immigrant group, there are some domains in which the State intervenes. The State expects the immigrant group to abandon its cultural and linguistic values to adopt that of the host country. Some countries might set laws to limit the cultural expressions in public domains.

The ethnist ideology according to the IAM is similar to the assimilation ideology in that, the State expects the immigrants to respect the public values of the State and the State can intervene in some aspects of the immigrants private matters. In some cases, the State expects the immigrant to forgo their cultural identities and adopt that of the host country, while in other cases, the State does not expect the immigrants to adopt the values of the host country because they do not plan of ever accepting the immigrants as members of their society.

According to Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, and Senecal (1997), these ideologies are not mutually exclusive and occur in a continuum and hence characteristics of more than one ideology can be found in a single country in different domains (economy, housing, language, education, etc.)

1.3 Concordance Model of Acculturation (CMA)

Another acculturation model is the Concordance Model of Acculturation (CMA) proposed by Piontkowski, Rohmann, and Florack (2002). In this model, the match or mismatch of the attitudes of the incoming – group of – individuals and that of the host society results in four levels of possible outcomes: (1) consensual level, if there is a match between the incoming individuals and the host societies attitudes towards acculturation, (2) the contact problematic level results if there is a mismatch in attitudes relating to contact. The host society might prefer segregation while the incoming group might want integration (3) in the culture-problematic level, discordance arises when there is a mismatch between the incoming individuals' and the host society's acculturation attitudes. This can occur in a situation where the incoming group wants the host society to integrate aspects of their culture to the host society's norms whereas the host society wants the incoming group to assimilate the host society's culture, (4) the conflictual level occurs when the host society doesn't want any contact with the incoming group and there is a mismatch in the attitudes of both groups towards acculturation issues.

Above are two models of acculturation which are largely based on Berry's works. However, there is limited empirical testing of these models. Most research on the acculturation experience of students are not based on a particular model. They typically measure predicting effects of different variables on acculturation or the predicting effect of acculturation on other variables (e.g. stress).

1.4 Sources of Acculturative Stress

According to Ward, Bochner and Furnham, (2001) the new experiences of international students in their new culture can be sources of stresses if the students face associated difficulties such as language barrier, academics difficulties, discrimination, finances difficulties and difficulties related to social aspects. These sources of stress will be considered next.

1.4.1 Language

Language may be a stressor when the language of the host society is different from the first language of the incoming student. According to Chen (1999), language barrier due to lack of proficiency in the host society's language creates language anxiety which has negative impacts on both the academic and social domains of the individual's life. Many studies have shown a relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement of international students (Poyrazlı, Arbona, Bullington, & Pisecco, 2001; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Academic staff in the United States has also reported that one of the greatest difficulties faced by international students is difficulties in English language use (Trice, 2003). English language proficiency has been shown to predict not only better educational achievements of international students in the United States, but also better social adjustment (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Language proficiency relates positively with international students' interaction with host nationals (Chen, 1999) and it has also been linked to less acculturative stress in many studies (Duru & Poyrazlı, 2007; Poyrazlı, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Kashima and Loh (2006) in their study with Asian students in Australia found that a background in English was positively associated with both sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment.

1.4.2 Academics Difficulties

Although academic stress is common to all students, it is believed that it is experienced more intensely by international students because of the co-presence of stress due to language anxiety and stress due to the adaptation process they are going through (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). A study of African and Western students in China revealed that academic stress was the most reported type of stress for both groups of students (Hashim & Yang, 2003). However, mixed results have also been found where international students in the United States had less academic stress compared to American students (Misra & Castillo, 2004) while another study showed no significant difference in levels of academic stress in both groups (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2008). International students might also experience stress from difficulties in adaptation to the system of education. Education in the Western countries encourages critical thinking and class participation and international students from a background in which rote learning is the main form of education practiced will face difficulties (Aubrey, 1991). Studies of the academic learning experiences of international students in the United States (Lieberman, 1994) and Australia (Edgeworth & Eiseman, 2007) revealed that these students experienced difficulties in adapting to the teaching style of these host countries. Additionally, international students may be pressured by their family or sponsoring organization to obtain excellent results which because of the difficulties associated with the adaptation process and academic difficulties, they are unable to obtain. A student's inability to overcome these stress may result in a decrease in the ability to adapt to the new environment (Chen, 1999).

1.4.3 Social Difficulties

International students arriving in the host society have the task of creating new social networks and making new friends. Research has shown that the personal characteristics of the individuals like extraversion, assertiveness and attachment styles will influence their ability to make friends and create social networks which is known to facilitate the adaptation process (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis, & Sabatier, 2010). Lee and Çiftçi (2014) in their study of the sociocultural adaptation of Asian students in the United States found that the Asian students' sociocultural adaptation to the United States was associated with their level of assertiveness and multicultural personality. Both multicultural personality and assertiveness were positively related to sociocultural adaptation. Language barriers and new cultural norms also play a role here as they both might limit the international student's ability to create new friendships and hence may lead to feelings of loneliness (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Many international students in McLachlan and Justice's (2009) research on international students from a varied background complained of loneliness with many saying they were experiencing it for the first time. This was discussed in this study in relation to their collectivist society background as they were living in a society considered to be individualist for the first time. Collectivism is used to define cultures in which people are interdependent within their group (i.e., family, tribe), group goals are given priority over personal goals, and in which people shape their behavior to follow the group norm. The individuals live in a communal manner with high relatedness amongst them (Mills & Clark, 1982). Individualism defines cultures in which individuals are autonomous and prioritize their goals over the goals of the group. Individuals in these societies behave primarily according to their attitudes and not according to the norms of their group (Trandis, 2001). Although their levels of

collectivism may vary (Triandis, 1999), students from collectivist cultures (mostly Asia and Africa) might face more difficulties in making friends in Western societies because of the general individualistic culture (Yeh & Inose, 2003). International students from collectivist societies might find it more difficult to adapt to the way of life in an individualistic culture than in a collectivist culture because of greater culture difference between the student's home culture and the individualistic culture (Berry, 2005). This is because they are used to the closely-knitted family structures in their home collectivist cultures (Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004).

1.4.4 Discrimination

Higher levels of perceived discrimination have been reported by international students compared to domestic students (Hanassab, 2006; Lee & Rice, 2007; Karuppan & Barari, 2010). In Lee and Rice's (2007) study with international students of Western, Asian and African origin, students from English speaking Western countries experienced much less discriminatory practices than those from other regions. In Poyrazli and Grahame's study (2007), international students in the United States reported more discrimination occurring out of the university campus. Discrimination has been linked to lowered levels of psychological wellbeing (Jung, Hecht, & Wadsworth, 2007; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007) among international students which can in turn lead to less adaptation because they might have a reduced tendency to approach individuals of the host society for help and support and this would in turn lead to lowered adaptation to the host country (Chen, 1999).

1.4.5 Financial Difficulties

Stress associated with finance has been reported in many studies of international students (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Nasirudeen, Josephine, Adeline, Seng, & Ling, 2014; Forbes-mewett, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia, & Sawir, 2009). International

students might be more prone to experience financial difficulties in countries which charge higher tuition fees for international students, which have working restrictions and restrictions in applying for financial aid (Chen, 1999; Thomas & Althen, 1989). Nasirudeen et al. (2014) found a significant difference in acculturative stress between students who had an allowance of more than 1000 dollars per month and those who had less than 1000 dollars. Khawaja and Dempsey's (2008) comparative study of international students and domestic students in Australia found no significant difference in financial satisfaction. The international student population usually has both very wealthy students and poor students who struggle to make ends meet and to afford meals (Butcher & McGrath, 2004).

1.5 Factors Influencing Sociocultural Adaptation

1.5.1 Age

Inconsistent results have been found in the literature on the relationship between age and adjustment of international students to their host society. In Oei and Notowidjojo's (1990) study of international students in Australia, the older students were, the less depressed they were. On the other hand, Yang, Noels and Saumure's (2006) study with Asian students in Canada did not find age to be predictive of adjustment indicators (depression, self-esteem, and sociocultural difficulty). No significant effect of age was also found by Furukawa (1997) in his study of Japanese students abroad. Age did not predict levels of depressive symptoms. It should be noted that Furukawa (1997) had a significantly homogenous group made up of only teenagers and this might explain why there was no age effect.

1.5.2 Gender

Gender differences in student adaptation to college and university has been observed in both domestic and international students. Hawkins (1995) in his study with

American university students found that female university students were generally more anxious than male students. There was a negative relationship between social support and anxiety only among the female students. For the male participants however, there was no relationship between social support and anxiety. Wang, Hong, and Pi (2015) found that online social support had a more significant relationship with psychological wellbeing for the female international students than for the male students. Another study, (Chirkov, Safdar, De Guzman, & Playford, 2008) found no gender difference in sociocultural adaption of international students to Canada. On the other hand, in this same study, female students were observed to report a higher frequency of physical symptoms than male students. Females also reported more autonomous motivations for studying abroad than did males.

1.5.3 Length of Stay

Adjustment to new cultures was and is still assumed to follow a U-shaped curve. This proposition had its origin with Lysgaard (1955) from his study of Norwegian students in the United States. He proposed that the sojourners reported worst adjustment to the new environment during a period of stay that ranges from 6 to 12 months, whereas, they report good adjustment in the early stages of their arrival in the new environment and after they have spent about 18 months in the new environment. Oberg's (1960) proposition on the stages of culture shock to explain the sojourners experience could also be described as following a U-shaped curve. As earlier described, the sojourners first experience a honeymoon phase in which they are fascinated by the new environment and are enthusiastic. Then comes the crisis phase in which the sojourners experience hostility towards the new environment, anger, helplessness and withdrawal. Then finally comes the adjustment phase in which the sojourners learn to live in and enjoy the new environment. It can be

noticed that culture shock considers more of the psychological aspect of adaptation considering that it discusses mostly the emotional and affective experience of the sojourner. Although this U-shape adjustment pattern is still widely accepted today, it has received much criticism partly because of the cross-sectional research from which it was developed and the lack of strong empirical evidence for this model (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Ward, Leong and Kennedy (1998) argued that the greatest adaptation difficulties should be faced on arrival in the new environment because the new sojourner lacks the social support system and the cultural learning experience to successfully adapt both psychologically and socioculturally to the new environment. In Ward and Kennedy's (1996) study of the adaptation of Malaysian and Singaporean students to New Zealand, greatest psychological and sociocultural adaptation difficulties were observed one month after arrival compared to 6 months and 12 months later. A negative correlation between length of stay and cross cultural adaptation difficulties was also observed in another study of international students in the United States (Wilton & Constantine 2003).

1.5.4 Interaction with Host Nationals

Considering the intergroup contact theory by Allport (1954), well managed interpersonal contact is a good way to reduce prejudice between groups. Allport states that, as the two individuals or groups begin to communicate with one another, they start to understand each other's point of view and way of life. This results in the diminishing of issues like discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. This theory shows the need for international students and host individuals to interact in order to reduce or eliminate discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping and hence, promote adaptation. This is particularly necessary for African students because of the negative stereotyped images of war, famine, sickness and poverty that individuals in Western

societies have about Africa (Traore, 2006). These stereotyped images of Africa can negatively affect African student's adaptation to Western societies (Manguvo, Whitney & Chareka, 2013). However, authors also stated that, student's participation in volunteering activities (e.g., taking care of children, helping in food banks) may contribute positively to their adaptation. African students reported feeling more integrated and welcomed in their host society. They also reported building new relationships, hence increasing their social capital which is essential for developing skills to navigate in the new environment. Just two of the 13 participants reported negative experiences caused by feelings of being alienated from/by other volunteers and feelings of incompetence (Manguvo, Whitney & Chareka, 2013). In Westwood and Barker's (1990) study of the effect of a program in which international students on arrival in the new environment were paired with a domestic student, results showed that the international students that took part in the pairing program had better academic achievement and had a lower dropout rate compared to those that did not take part in the program. Chen (1999) also found that, international students' limited contact with host nationals is related to feelings of depression and anxiety.

1.5.5 Self-construals

The term self-construals was used for the first time by Markus and Kitayama (1991). It relates to how individuals understand their self in terms of being separated or being connected to others. Markus and Kitayama (1991) proposed two types of self-construals, the independent self-construal and the interdependent self-construal but they admitted that these are just two of the possible numerous self-construals. They came up with these two concepts of the self as they sort to describe how Americans and Japanese view the self. These two self-construals are those that have gotten most attention and those that have been used in most research till date. The authors

characterized the independent self-construal as having awareness of personal traits, relying on oneself, being distinct from others and having personal freedom. In the independent self-construal, the self is conceptualized as an autonomous and independent person. The following adjectives can be used to describe the independent self: individualist, egocentric, separate, autonomous, idiocentric, and self-contained (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). They proposed that most individuals in the Western world would view themselves this way, but this will occur in varying degrees.

On the other hand, the interdependent self-construal is characterized by functioning with limited interpersonal boundaries, high emotional exchange and connectedness with one's main social group and putting the group's interests before personal interest. The interdependent self views itself as functioning as part of a large relationship with the knowledge that one's actions and decisions are made considering or determined by the feelings, opinions and actions of others in the relationship. The identity of the self is better understood by the individual's place in the relationship. The interdependent self can be described with words such as sociocentric, holistic, collective, allocentric, ensembled, constitutive, contextualist, connected, and relational (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Although one might have personal internal characteristics like abilities and opinions, these usually take a secondary position and are expressed unreliably because they are kept under control and expressed only in situations where appropriate for the group interest. Markus and Kitayama (1991) argued that the interdependent self construal is the type found in most Asian countries. Beattie (1980) described the concept of the self in African societies as interdependent arguing that Africans' view others and the world as extensions of their self. Empiric studies have also concluded that countries of Sub-

Saharan African have a general collectivist culture (Pirttila-Backman, Kassea, & Ikonen, 2004; Hofstede, 1991).

According to Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Singelis (1994) individuals possess both the independent self-construal and the interdependent self-construal in varying degrees according to the priming of one of the self-construals to the detriment of the other by the individual's culture of origin. For this reason, the independent self-construal has been associated with individualistic cultures while the interdependent self-construal has been associated with collectivist cultures. But it should be noted that, self-construals are used to describe personal characteristics whereas individualism and collectivism are used to describe cultures (Cross, Hardin & Gerçek-Swing, 2011).

Markus and Kitayama (in Markus, Mullally, & Kitayama, 1997) later talked about self-ways which represents individual patterns or ways of behaving in the world as shaped by the independent self-construal or interdependent self-construal priming of their culture. As they explained, self-ways are linked to the sociocultural context and are different from personality if personality is considered invariable.

1.5.5.1 Self-construals and Cultural Adjustment

Self-construals may be an efficient predictor of adaptation when an individual moves to a new cultural environment. In their cross-cultural study with participants from Hong-Kong, Hawaii and the United States, Singelis, Bond, Sharkley and Lai (1999) found that self-construals affected the students' report of embarrassability. There was a positive relationship between the interdependent self-construal and embarrassability while on the other hand, a negative relationship between the independent self-construal and embarrassability was observed. Cross (1995) found a

positive correlation between the independent self-construal and coping strategies and between the interdependent self-construal and perceived stress in Asian students studying in Canada. Yang, Noels and Saumure (2005) in their research on Asian international students in Canada, found that the independent self construal predicted better sociocultural adjustment to life in Canada and better self-esteem.

1.5.6 Self-esteem

Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem simply as positive or negative attitudes towards oneself. It was defined as personal judgment of worthiness by Coopersmith (1967). It has been argued that self-esteem is made up of two components which are self-competence and self-liking (Tafarodi and Swann, 1995). Self-competence refers to how positively or negatively we view ourselves as capable of efficiently carrying out intentional acts to meet the targeted goal (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). It is very similar to self-efficacy as conceptualized by Bandura as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that control their lives” (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Self-liking on the other hand refers to the overall value given to ourselves as a social object. It is not simply the perception of the value attributed to us by other individuals. Although the perceptions of others (can) contribute to our self-esteem, self-liking refers to the social value that we ascribe to ourselves (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001).

Rosenberg (1965) conceptualized self-esteem as being unidimensional, made up of self-liking with self-competence being one of the sources of self-liking. Tafarodi and Swann (1995) and later Tafarodi and Milne (2000) opposed this one dimensional model as proposed by Rosenberg by submitting the Rosenberg self-esteem scale to principal component analyses which they claim suggested a two dimensional nature

of the scale consisting of their proposed components, i.e. self-competence and self-liking.

Self-esteem has been studied in relationship to many aspects of tertiary education like adjustment to university, performance and retention.

1.5.6.1 Self-esteem and Social Anxiety

Stopa, Brown, Luke and Hirsch's (2010) study with a sample of undergraduate students showed a negative relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety. Social anxiety is related to social phobia which is the fear of exposing oneself (Moscovitch, 2009). Kocovski and Endler (2000) found similar results with students with low self-esteem having greater fear of negative evaluation from others which in turn correlated positively with social anxiety. Izgiç, Akyuz, Dogan and Kugu (2004) in a large sample of university students found that students with social phobia had significantly lower self-esteem than students without social phobia.

1.5.6.2 Self-esteem and Adjustment to University

Self-esteem has already been shown to be related to university students' reported level of social anxiety. High social anxiety may result in students isolating themselves and hence not socially adapting to university (Stopa, Brown, Luke, & Hirsch, 2010). With different measures of adjustment to college or university, research has shown inconsistent results as concerns the relationship between self-esteem and adjustment to university. In Crocker and Luhtanen (2003), no relationship was found between self-esteem and academic success while on the other hand, self-esteem was related to more social difficulties. Abouserie, (1994) found a negative relationship between self-esteem and academic and life stress in university students. In the same study, females reported higher stress than males.

Self-esteem predicted greater motivation and better grades in university students in Aspinwall and Taylor's (1992) study. Self-esteem was observed to act as a mediator between social anxiety and academic, social and institutional adjustment. Self-esteem attenuated the negative effects of social anxiety (Nordstrom, Goguen, & Hiester, 2014). Self-esteem was also found to mediate the relationship between negative life events with social adaptation (partly) and social avoidance in Chinese students. Self-esteem acted as a buffer against the negative effects of negative life events (Li, Zhang, Liu, & Cao, 2013). In their study of self-esteem and adjustment to university, Aspelmeier, Love, McGill, Elliott and Pierce (2012) found self-esteem to be positively related to all subscales of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire which include academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal/emotional adjustment, and institutional attachment/goal commitment. Mooney, Sherman, and Lo Presto (1991) in their study with female first year students, self-esteem was positively related to academic and social adjustment.

1.5.7 Religiosity

Religion has been associated with psychology since the early days of psychology. There were mixed opinions as to whether religion promotes better psychological wellbeing or if it impedes wellbeing (Genia & Shaw, 1991).

Religiosity can be defined as participation in group activities that involve specific behavioral, social, doctrinal and denominational characteristics (Fetzer Institute, 1999). It is generally agreed that religiosity consists of religious activities such as prayer, baptism, fasting, going to religious places and worshiping, but religiosity is not limited to religious practices because there is a psychological and social aspect of religiosity (Singh, 2014).

Allport (1963) suggested two types of religious orientation which are intrinsic religiosity and extrinsic religiosity. Extrinsic religiosity refers to practicing religion for personal gain. Gain can be in the form of material gain, group participation (for social interactions), social status, protection, psychological defense against reality, consolation, etc., (Allport & Ross, 1967). Intrinsic religiosity refers to the practicing religion for religious satisfaction in itself. Those who practice religion with intrinsic motivation are fully committed to their religion and religion is influential in every domain of their lives (Allport, 1966).

The terms religiosity and spirituality are both used in literature today but although they are similar, they refer to different aspects of religion. Religiosity refers to the more formal, doctrinal and institutional expressions while spirituality refers to personal, subjective, emotional and unsystematic expressions (Koenig, Larson & Larson, 2001). This distinction of the two terms is not accepted by all researchers and also not understood by religious individuals considering that they experience spirituality within an institutionalized context and describe themselves as both religious and spiritual (Marler & Hadaway, 2002; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

In a more far off past, religion and spirituality did not receive much attention by psychologist and other researchers in the domain of health-related research. Systematic review by Weaver et al. (1998) of seven journals published under the American Psychological Association between 1991 and 1994 found that only 2.7% included a variable on religion and spirituality. Another review by Larson et al. (1986) of major journals on psychiatry between 1978 and 1982 found that only 2.5% of these journals included a quantitatively measured variable on religion and spirituality. In recent years however, there has been an increase in number of

empirical studies on the effects of religion and spirituality on health (Rovers & Kocum, 2010).

1.5.7.1 Religion and Wellbeing

Within the domain of psychology of religion, it is generally accepted that religiosity and spirituality are positively correlated to wellbeing (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Reid and Smalls (2004) found that individuals for whom religion is important engaged in a healthy life style by adopting good health practices and received more social support. A positive relationship was found between religiosity and personal wellbeing in female academicians in Malaysia (Achour, Grine, Nor, & Yusoff, 2014).

Halama, Martos and Adamovova (2010) in a sample of Slovak and Hungarian students found religiosity to be correlated with meaning of life in both groups of students. However, religiosity was positively correlated with happiness and satisfaction only in Hungarian students. The authors raised the need of considering ethnicity in the study of religiosity as religiosity relates with wellbeing differently in different societies. Ethnic differences were also found by Holmes and Hardin (2009) in their study of African-American and European-American students in the United States. The variance in reports of symptomology explained by religiosity was minimal for European-American students while the variance of reports of symptomology in African-American students explained by religiosity was much higher.

Although the positive effect of religion on wellbeing has been well documented, the mechanisms by which religion affects wellbeing has not yet been fully understood (Mochon, Norton & Ariely, 2011; Pargament, 2002). Working on the review of

works on religion done before 1991, Ellison (1991) proposed that religion can affect wellbeing in four ways:

- (1) Social integration. Churches, synagogues and mosques are places where like-minded people come together regularly. This provides opportunities for social interactions which can continue beyond the secular context hence providing a sense of belonging. The religious group forms a social network which provides social support for the members (Taylor & Chatters, 1988). Social control can arise as a result of social integration. The religious group may promote norms relating to healthy lifestyle behaviors, family relationships, business relationships which may be beneficial in promoting wellbeing (Levin & Vanderpool, 1987).
- (2) Divine Interaction. Practices like prayer and meditation may bring about psychological benefits as the individuals experience closeness with the divine from whom guidance and solace can be gotten (Pollner, 1989). Divine interaction may boost self-esteem as the individual considers himself/herself as personally known and valued by a divine other (Capps, 1985).
- (3) Existential coherence. Berger (1967) argues that religion promotes coherence by providing a framework for interpreting life events. This framework can be particularly useful in people experiencing major difficulties like high stress, serious illness and bereavement. This framework can provide consoling explanations or ways of understanding the difficulty being experienced and thus can be used as a coping mechanism.
- (4) Denominational variations. Different denominations are different in terms of their norms in relation to all the above mentioned practices. Literature for example, differentiates between the 'strong' conservative protestant groups

and the 'weak' and more liberal protestant groups. The 'strong' groups usually require more commitment, solidarity and conformity and are more successful in promoting a single coherent system of religious meaning. Hence members of such groups will be more likely to follow the promoted practices which can influence wellbeing. Also, the moral messages are not the same in religious groups. As an example, some groups will not tolerate the use of alcohol, caffeine and other stimulants and promote patterns of family interaction reducing conflicts and hence possibly ensuring better wellbeing (Ellison, 1991)

1.5.7.2 Religiosity and adaptation to university

Religiosity was also shown to predict better adjustment to university (Kneipp, Kelly & Cyphers, 2009). In this study, there was a positive correlation between spiritual wellbeing and student adaptation to university. However, not all studies have found positive relationships between religiosity and wellbeing. Lewis, Joseph and Nobel (1996) and Lewis, Lanigan, Joseph and De Fockert (1997) did not find a relationship between religion and life satisfaction. The two studies used the same measurements but had different samples. In these studies religiosity was measured as attitudes towards Christianity and this might explain why religiosity did not predict happiness in university students (Lewis et al., 1996; 1997).

Hackney and Sanders, (2003) attributed this lack of consistency in findings to the different ways in which religiosity is measured. In some studies, religious attitudes are measured, while in others, religious behaviors are measured. In their meta-analysis which considered studies on religion done between 1990 and 2001, only studies which considered religiosity and not related constructs (like spirituality, mysticism, transcendence experience, moral reasoning, and religious coping) were

considered. A positive relationship was found between religiosity and mental health. This study also confirmed the effect of the difference of how religiosity is defined and measured and revealed that, the main effect of religiosity increases with the change from institutionalized religiosity to more personalized religiosity measurement.

1.5.7.3 Religion and Coping

Religiosity is employed as a coping method against stress and depression. Acculturative stress is experienced by students as they learn to live in their new environment. Acculturative stress can be very limited if the students use adequate coping strategies, however, if the students use weak or inadequate coping strategies, the acculturative stress could develop into psychopathology like depression and anxiety (Berry, 2009). Ellison and Levin (1998) proposed four ways in which religion might be effective against stress, (1) through the regulations of unhealthy life style like drinking and substance use, (2) by providing social networks and social support, (3) by boosting self-esteem and encouraging putting one's life in the control of the divine, and lastly, (4) counseling and teaching thorough religious participation or through consulting spiritual elders.

1.5.7.4 Religion as a Protective Factor

Starting college or university is often associated with experiencing new freedom, liberty and fewer restrictions due to living away from parents (Fisher, Fried, & Anushko, 2007). This is especially true for international students who usually live in a different country from their parents. With this new freedom, student might be more exposed to alcohol consumption (Lindsay, 2006). Religiosity has been shown to be protective again alcohol consumption hence limiting the negative effects of alcohol consumption (Adewuya, 2006). Religiosity has been shown to be protective against

substance use in college students (Baer, 2002). A racial difference of the effect of religiosity on substance use was observed, with stronger effects observed among Caucasian whites compared to African American blacks (Christian & Barbarin, 2001).

1.5.8 Social Support

International students usually experience feelings of loss when they go to a new country as they leave their friends, family and social networks behind (Sandhu, 1995). According to Ying and Liese (1991), social support is vital for the adaptation of international students.

Social support has been defined and/or conceptualized differently by different researchers (Cohen & Syme, 1985). Cobb (1976) defined social support as (1) information that one is cared for and loved (emotional support), (2) information that one is esteemed and valued (esteem support) and, (3) information that one belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligations. In his definition of social support, Cobb considers social support to be purely information or awareness and hence cannot be measured like mass or energy. He considers social support to be information, which is different from the actual services rendered (or that can be rendered) to confirm the information.

Cohen and Syme (1985) on the other hand defined social support as the resources (which can be information or other things) that are provided by other persons. House, Kahn, McLeod and Williams (1985) divided social support into three measurable categories, (1) social networks, which includes measures of network size, intensity, durability, and homogeneity, (2) social relationships which measure the quantity and quality of relationships, (3) the social support which measures the actual resources

made available by others, (emotional, financial, informational) the source, the quantity and quality.

1.5.8.1 Social Support and Health

Berkman and Syme's (1979) pioneering research on the relationship between social support and health was able to demonstrate higher mortality in individuals receiving less social support after controlling for prior ill health. In a study in which social support was defined as the presence of a friend or confidant, (Miller, Ingham & Davidson, 1976) social support was associated with more coping skills and fewer reports of psychiatric symptoms. In patients with coronary artery disease, Barefoot et al. (2000) found higher mortality rate for those patients without social support compared to those receiving social support. Mulvaney-Day, Alegria and Sribney (2007) found family social support to be related with better physical health among Latinos living in the United States.

As concerns how social support influences health, there have been many propositions from researchers. Hirsch (1980) proposed that social support buffers against stress and boosts coping ability through significant others who offer guidance and advice and are used for cathartic evacuation of fear and anger which results in reducing stress.

1.5.8.2 Social Support and Adjustment to University

Students' wellbeing might be influenced by the fact that they do not perceive their environment as being supportive (Zea, Jarama & Bianchi, 1995). Adaptation to university is generally a stressful process for students. Adaptation to university has been conceptualized as not quitting university, having psychosocial wellbeing and performing well academically (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). Zea, Jarama and Bianchi, (1995) found that satisfaction with social support significantly predicted

adaptation to university. Liang and Bogat (1994) found that for whites with an internal locus of control, the perception of social support acted as a buffer against stress. Riggio, Watring, and Throckmorton (1993) found that social support predicted satisfaction with university, life satisfaction and reduced reports of loneliness in undergraduate students

1.5.8.3 Social Support and Adaptation of International Students

As earlier discussed, international students experience stress in many life domains as they learn to function in the new environment and achieve their academic goals. The social support network of international students helps them to better adapt both psychologically and socially (Ong & Ward, 2005; Cohen & Willis, 1985). Ong and Ward (2005) found that international students relied on support from their home countries in the domain of emotional support, psychological support and support related to more personal matters while they relied more on support from the host nationals for guidance on day to day activities in the new environment. In a sample of Turkish students in the United States, self-esteem and social support predicted better psychological adaptation (Bektaş, Demir, Bowdenl, 2009). Yusoff (2012) in a sample of international students in Malaysia found social support from friends and significant others to predict psychological adjustment.

1.6 The Current Study

The aim of the current study was to explore the relationship between self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity, social support and the sociocultural adaptation of international students from Sub-Saharan Africa in North Cyprus. During the review of literature on international students' adaptation, it was noticed that very few studies considered the adaptation of students from Africa to their new foreign environment.

No study was found on the adaptation of students from Sub-Saharan Africa to North Cyprus.

The Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) is a self-declared State officially recognized only by Turkey. It encompasses the northeastern part of the island of Cyprus. North Cyprus has a population estimated at 313,626 (TRNC State Planning Organization, 2015). North Cyprus is home to eight universities which are all approved by the Higher Education Council of Turkey. In the 2014-2015 academic year, there were 73,894 university level students in North Cyprus of which 19,631 were international students from countries other than Turkey (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2015). Despite this high percentage of international students, no study has considered the sociocultural adaptation of international students in North Cyprus. This study is a first attempt to address the adaptation of students in North Cyprus.

According to the life span development perspective, development occurs throughout the life span, starting from conception (even before) to death. There exist normative age graded influences which are biological and environmental influences that are similar for individuals in the same cohort (Baltes, Staudinger & Lindenberger, 1999). Examples of these influences are puberty, menopause, entry into formal education, retirement, etc. Entry into university is a common developmental stage for millions of individuals and more specifically for the individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa who chose to study abroad. In view of the difficulties involved in doing university studies in a new country, there is need for cultural or ethnic specific research on the adaptation of international students to their host environment.

Considering the above literature review, the following four hypotheses were developed to guide this study:

- 1) Sociocultural adaptation will be positively related with the independent self-construal and negatively related with the interdependent self-construal.
- 2) There will be a positive relationship between self-esteem and sociocultural adaptation.
- 3) There will be a positive relationship between religiosity and sociocultural adaptation.
- 4) There will be a positive relationship between perceived social support and sociocultural adaptation.

Chapter 2

METHOD

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity, social support and the sociocultural adaptation of students from Sub-Saharan Africa in North Cyprus. The research sample, the data collection tools and the procedure of the study will be presented below.

2.1 Participants

Participants of this study were 122 English speaking students from Sub-Saharan African countries studying in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). English was the first formal language of 120 of the participants and French was the first formal language of 2 participants. Only students 18 years old and above who had studied in North Cyprus for at least one semester could take part in the study. The participants' length of stay in North Cyprus ranged from 9 months to 51 months ($M=24.52$, $SD=12.62$). All participants had a good command of English and had all obtained at least one academic degree taught entirely in English. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 31 years ($M=22.03$, $SD=2.71$). The sample was composed of 87.6% undergraduate level, 10.7% graduate level students and 1.6% postgraduate level students. There were 65 male students (53.3%) and 52 female students (42.6%). Five (4.1%) students did not report their gender. There were 96 (78.7%) students from Nigeria, 11 (9%) from Zimbabwe, 9 (7.4%) from Cameroon, 3 (2.5%) from Tanzania, 2 (1.6%) from Uganda and 1 (.82%) student from Namibia. The majority (78.7%) of participants reported that they were Christians, 18% were Muslims and

the rest (3.3%) did not mention their religious affiliations. The mean and standard deviation values of demographic variables of the participants by gender are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of demographic variables by gender

Variables	Male		Female	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age (years)	22.45	2.71	21.75	2.74
GPA	3.32	0.53	3.36	0.47
Length of stay (months)	24.54	12.57	25.23	12.5
Turkish Skills	3.42	0.94	3.32	1.07
Interaction with Turkish Cypriots	2.59	0.76	2.47	0.74
Interaction with Co-nationals	3.91	0.85	3.89	0.95
Interaction with Individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa	3.19	0.95	2.67	0.95
Interaction with other international individuals	3.04	0.85	2.4	0.87
Previous international experience	1.1	1.44	1.1	1.17

Note: * $p < .05$. No Gender differences were observed.

2.2 Materials

For this study, data was collected with the use of a questionnaire (appendix A). The questionnaire was made up of a demographics section and five scales which were: Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Singelis Self-Construal Scale (SSCS), Hoge Intrinsic Religiosity Scale (HIRS) and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL).

2.2.1 Demographic Information Form

The demographics section of the questionnaire was built to collect information such as gender, age, nationality, time spent in North Cyprus, level of education, GPA of previous semester, religious affiliation and Turkish proficiency. Data on the participants' interaction with individuals of their home country, individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkish and/or Cypriot individuals and other international individuals was also collected. Data on the participants' previous international experience (number of countries visited) was also collected. The demographics section had a total of 27 items.

2.2.1.1 Turkish Proficiency Measurement

The participants' Turkish reading, writing, speaking and listening abilities were measured by 4 items. The participants rated their abilities on a 6-point Likert scale which ranged from (1) *No ability* to (6) *very good*. The four items had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .90.

2.2.1.2 Interaction Measurement

The participants' level of interaction with four different groups was measured. The four groups were: Turkish Cypriots, individuals from the participant's country (Conationals), individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa and other international individuals in North Cyprus. Interaction with each group of individuals was measured in three different settings, at home, on campus and other places (i.e. market, restaurants, banks, etc.). The participants rated their level of interaction using a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from (1) *not at all* to (5) *very high degree*. The Cronbach's alpha for the interaction with Turkish Cypriot scale was .71, for the interaction with Conationals scale was .83, for the interaction with individuals from

Sub-Saharan Africa scale was .85 and that for the interaction with other international individuals scale was .87.

2.2.2 Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS)

The Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) measures the sociocultural adaption of sojourners to their host environment. The initial version of the SCAS which had 16 items was first used by Searle and Ward in 1990 with international students in Britain. The current version of SCAS which is made up of 29 items was developed by Ward and Kennedy in 1999. Permission to use the scale was obtained from Prof. Colleen Ward (appendix B). This version considers both the behavioral and the cognitive aspect of adaptation. It is flexible as it can easily be adapted for different host countries or regions. Due to typing error, item 20 was omitted from the scale, so 28 of the 29 items were used in this study. The participants respond by rating the amount of difficulty they experience in different areas of adaptation using a 5-point Likert scale which ranges from *no (1) difficulty* to *(2) extreme difficulty*. The SCAS was used in a sample of Singaporean students studying abroad and showed good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha value of .89 (Kennedy, 1998). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha value of the SCAS was .88.

2.2.3 Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was developed by the sociologist Rosenberg (1965) to measure global self-esteem. It is made up of 10 items. It has 5 positively worded items and 5 negatively worded items which are randomly distributed in the scale. The negatively worded items are reversed scored. It uses a 4-point Likert scale which ranges from (1) *strongly agree* to (4) *strongly disagree*. It is a widely used test and has shown good reliability. Yorra (2014) found a reliability of 0.89 in a sample

of American university students. In this study the Cronbach's alpha value of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale was .67.

2.2.4 Singelis Self-Construal Scale (SSCS)

The Singelis Self-Construal Scale (SSCS) measures the independent and interdependent self-related concepts i.e., how an individual considers the self in relation with others. It was developed by Singelis (1994). The scale is made up of two subscales, one measuring the strength of the independent self and the other measuring strength the interdependent self. Each subscale has 15 items. Items 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 27, and 29 make up the independent subscale and items 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 26, 28 and 30 make up the interdependent subscale. Each participant receives two score, one for the strength of his/her independent self and another for the strength of his/her interdependent self. Responses are provided on a 7-point Likert scale which ranges from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. Although the independent and the interdependent self-construals may seem to be opposite extremes of a single construct, research has shown that they are distinct factors that need individual consideration. Scoring is done by summing the responses from each subscale and dividing the sum by 15 to get the average of the strength of each self-construal. The Cronbach's alpha reliabilities of the subscales usually range from .60's to .70's. In the present study, the independent self-construal sub-scale had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .73 and the interdependent self-construal scale had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .76.

2.2.5 Hoge Intrinsic Religiosity Scale (HIRS)

The Hoge Intrinsic Religiosity Scale (HIRS) was developed by Hoge (1972) as a measure of internal feelings about religion. It can be viewed as a measure of motivation or commitment to religious belief. Intrinsic religiosity is practicing

religion as a goal in itself and not for social or personal gain (e.g., acceptance, comfort). It is made up of ten items and uses a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from (1) *not at all true for me* to (5) *totally true for me*. It was built from the Religious Orientation Scale which was developed by Allport and Ross in Harvard University (Allport & Ross, 1967). Hoge developed this scale by selecting items that represent mostly the intrinsic aspect of religious and this resulted in the one dimensional nature of the scale. The HIRS can be used for different religions as it avoids the usage of sectarian language and doesn't mention any religious personalities. The scale showed a Kuder-Richardson reliability of .90 (Hoge, 1972) and a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .83 (Koenig, George, & Peterson, 1998). In the current study, the HIRS had Cronbach's alpha value of .72.

2.2.6 Interpersonal Support Evaluation List: Shortened version (ISEL)

The Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) developed by Cohen (Cohen & Syme, 1985) is a 40 item scale that measures perception of social support. The version used in this study is the shortened version that is made up of 12 items. The scale is made up of three subscales with 4 items each which measure: (1) Appraisal Support, items 2, 4, 6, 11; (2) Belonging Support, items 1, 5, 7, 9; (3) Tangible Support, items 3, 8, 10, 12. Items 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12 are reverse items. The scale uses a 4-point Likert scale that ranges from (1) *definitely true* to (4) *definitely false*. Good reliability of the whole scale in different norming samples was observed, with Cronbach's alpha values greater than .80, however Cronbach's alpha values of less than .70 were frequently observed for the different subscales (Merz et. al, 2014). The Cronbach's alpha values of the ISEL scale in this study was .75.

2.3 Procedure

Before the data collection part of the study could commence, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics and Research Committee of the Department of Psychology in Eastern Mediterranean University (appendix C). Opportunistic sampling method was used. Participants were recruited in various settings on campus. Some participants were recruited in classrooms with the permission of the lecturer and others in the university library. The questionnaires were administered in both group settings and individually. The study was briefly presented to potential participants and questions were asked to verify if they met their inclusion criteria (i.e., language, country of origin). Those that met the inclusion criteria were presented with the informed consent form (appendix D) and their written informed consent was obtained. They were then handed a questionnaire and they had a choice to fill it immediately or later at their convenience. For those that did not complete the questionnaire on the spot, arrangements were made for when to collect the completed questionnaire. When the questionnaire was collected, the participants were given a debrief form (appendix E), they were thanked and were allowed to ask questions. Data was collected during a three week period that spanned the second to the last week of December 2015. The responses in the questionnaires were later entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS- Version 20) and were statistical analyzed.

Chapter 3

RESULTS

Guided by the hypothesis of this study, the data collected was statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20) computer software. The statistic techniques used were correlations, ANOVAs, regression and t-tests. The results are presented next.

The means and standard deviations by gender for the main study variables are presented in Table 2. Higher mean values of self-construals, religiosity and social support represent higher endorsement of the constructs whereas, lower values of sociocultural adaptation and self-esteem represent higher endorsement of the constructs.

Table 2: Means scores and Standard Deviations for the main study variables by gender

Variables	Male		Female	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Independent self-construal	5.32	.72	5.4	.75
Interdependent self-construal	5.21	.74	4.97	.79
Self-esteem	1.74	.38	1.67	.38
Religiosity	3.93	.64	4.05	.67
Social support	3.09	.48	3.19	.51
Sociocultural adaptation	2.28	.58	2.3	.61

Note. * $p < .05$. No gender differences were observed.

3.1 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation was used to test the relationship between the independent variables (self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity and social support) and the dependent variable (sociocultural adaptation). Correlation analysis permitted the test of the hypotheses in this study. Correlations between the main study variables and Turkish skills and interaction with the different groups were calculated. The correlation coefficients can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlations amongst variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Independent self-construal	-										
2. Interdependent self- Construal	.48**	-									
3. self-esteem	.32**	.11	-								
4. Religiosity	.12	.39**	.11	-							
5. Social Support	.11	.21*	.26**	.14	-						
6. Turkish Skills	.22*	.08	.11	.04	-.01	-					
7. Interaction with Turkish Cypriots	.03	.15	.06	.07	.17	.22*	-				
8. Interaction with Co-nationals	.2*	.19*	.2*	.18*	.21*	.31**	.17	-			
9. Interaction with Sub-Saharan Africans	.02	.04	.16	.09	.19*	.14	.24**	.26**	-		
10. Interaction with other international Individuals	.08	.08	.1	-.04	.09	.24**	.45**	.26**	.35**	-	
11. Sociocultural Adaptation	.02	-.25**	.08	.15	.35**	-.08	.14	-.14	-.03	.09	-

Note: *. Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

The sign of the correlation coefficient was changes for pairs of which higher endorsement of the construct were scored in opposite directions.

The correlation between the independent self-construal and sociocultural adaption was insignificant, $r=.02$, $n=122$, $p>.05$, while on the other hand, there was a weak positive correlation between the interdependent self-construal and sociocultural adaptation, $r=.25$, $n=122$, $p=.005$. The correlations between self-esteem and sociocultural adaptation and that between religiosity and sociocultural adaptation were not significant, $r=.08$, $n=122$, $p>.05$ and $r=.15$, $n=118$, $p>.05$ respectively. There was a significant weak and positive correlation between social support and sociocultural adaptation, $r=.35$, $n=117$, $p<.001$.

3.2 ANOVA

A repeated measures ANOVA was used to test for differences in level of interaction of the participants with Turkish Cypriots, Conationals, individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa, and other international individuals.

There was a significant main effect of interaction, $F(3,357) = 76.12$, $p<.001$. The participants reported significantly more interaction with Conationals ($M=3.91$, $SD=.89$) than with Turkish Cypriots ($M=2.54$, $SD=.75$), individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa ($M=3.0$, $SD=.96$) and with other international individuals ($M=2.81$, $SD=.94$). Also, interaction with Turkish Cypriot ($M=2.54$, $SD=.75$) was significantly less than interaction with individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa ($M=3$, $SD=.96$) and other international individuals ($M=2.81$, $SD=.94$). There was no significant difference ($p>.05$) in level of interaction with individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa ($M=3.0$, $SD=.96$) and other international individuals ($M=2.81$, $SD=.94$).

3.3 Regression Analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity, and social support to predict the level of sociocultural adaptation after controlling for gender, age, length of stay, Turkish skills, interaction with Turkish Cypriots, interaction with Conationals, interaction with individuals from Sub-Saharan African and interaction with other international individuals.

Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violations of assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity.

Because the participants varied in terms of gender, age and length of stay, these variables were entered in step 1 to account for any prediction they might have on sociocultural adaptation. The first step did not significantly contribute to variations in sociocultural adaptation.

Interaction with Turkish Cypriot, Conationals, Sub-Saharan Africans and other international individuals were entered in step 2. This step too did not significantly predict sociocultural adaptation.

The independent self-construal, interdependent self-construal, self-esteem, religiosity and social support were entered in step 3. The total variance of the model as a whole was 26.4%, $F(113, 111) = 2.72, p < .005$. The variables added in step 3 explained an additional 18.1% of the variance in sociocultural adaptation after controlling for gender, age, length of stay, Turkish skills and interaction the different groups (Turkish Cypriot, Conationals, individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa and other international individuals), $R^2 \text{ change} = .181, F(5, 98) = 4.83, p = .001$. In the final

model, the only variables which significantly predicted sociocultural adaptation were, interaction with Conationals ($\beta = .26, p < .05$), interdependent self-construal ($\beta = -.24, p < .05$) and social support ($\beta = -.32, p < .01$). The results of the hierarchical multiple regression are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of hierarchical multiple regression of variables predicting sociocultural adaptation

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Gender	.00	.11	.00	-.04	.12	-.03	-.01	.12	-.01
Age	.03	.02	.12	.03	.02	.14	.00	.00	.04
Length of stay	.00	.00	.05	.00	.00	.05	.00	.00	.04
Turkish skills				.06	.06	.12	.03	.06	.06
Interaction with Turkish Cypriots				-.11	.09	-.14	-.05	.08	-.06
Interaction with Conationals				.09	.07	.14	.17	.07	.26**
Interaction with Sub-Saharan Africans				.02	.07	.04	.06	.06	.09
Interaction with other International Individuals				-.08	.07	-.12	-.09	.07	-.14
Independent self-construal							.06	.09	.08
Interdependent self-construal							-.18	.09	-.24*
Self-esteem							.09	.15	.06
Religiosity							-.06	.09	-.07
Social support							-.39	.12	.32**
R ²		.02			.083			.264	
F for change in R ²		.72			1.4			4.83***	

Note: * Correlation significant at .05

** Correlation significant at .01

*** Correlation significant at .001

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

This study explored the relationship between the independent self-construal, the interdependent self-construal, self-esteem, religiosity, social support and the sociocultural adaptation of students from Sub-Saharan Africa in North Cyprus.

Correlation analysis revealed that there was no association between the independent self-construal and sociocultural adaptation. However, the interdependent self-construal positively correlated with sociocultural adaptation. This means that as the strength of the interdependent self-construal increased, sociocultural adaptation also increased. These findings are not what were expected as it was hypothesized that, sociocultural adaptation will correlate positively with the independent self-construal and negatively with the interdependent self-construal. Studies in literature have found the independent self-construal to correlate positively with sociocultural adaptation and with indicators of psychological wellbeing (Yang, Noels & Saumure, 2005; Cross, 1995; Yamaguchi & Wiseman, 2001). The fact that the participants of the study were all from Sub-Saharan Africa whose societies are considered to be collectivist (characterized by high relatedness and interdependence) possibly explains why the interdependent self-construal correlated positively with sociocultural adaptation. Although there was no correlation between interaction with Conationals and sociocultural adaptation, results from the repeated measures ANOVA showed that the interaction with Conationals was significantly higher than

the interaction with other groups of individuals. International students tend to get social support which includes guidance in the adaptation process from Conationals and members of their ethnic group (Yang & Clum, 1995; Ying & Liese, 1991). Interaction with Conationals is very likely to be high in relatedness according to the self-construal primed by their common culture which in this case is the interdependent self-construal, hence the interdependent self-construal correlated positively with sociocultural adaptation.

Another possible explanation of the fact that only the interdependent self-construal correlated with sociocultural adaptation is the cultural fit hypothesis. Although there are no empirical studies that say if North Cyprus has an individualist or collectivistic culture, North Cyprus might be more collectivists than individualistic considering the great number of Turkish settlers in North Cyprus (Bahceli, 2007). The Turkish society although changing, can be considered to be more collectivistic than individualistic or characterized by more interdependence than independence (Kagitçibaşı, 2005; Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001). Attesting to the influence of Turkish culture in North Cyprus is the fact that there are approximately three times more Turkish university level students in North Cyprus than Turkish Cypriot students (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2015). Also, Turkish is the official language of North Cyprus and this facilitates cultural exchange between the two countries. The cultural fit or low cultural difference between the collectivist culture of students from Sub-Saharan Africa and the possible collectivist culture of North Cyprus, might explain the positive correlation between the interdependent self-construal and sociocultural adaptation. The Turkish Cypriots might interact with foreign students in a less formal and less superficial way which might be similar to the type of interaction in the collectivist Sub-Saharan African society.

Studies in which the independent self-construal predicted better sociocultural adaptation (Yang, Noels & Saumure, 2005; Cross, 1995; Yamaguchi & Wiseman, 2001) were carried out in Western countries which are considered to have an individualist culture (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). International students with more individualistic characteristics, i.e., having stronger independent self-construals adapted better in these societies. Considering the cultural fit theory, the students with stronger independent self-construals had less discrepancy with the host nationals in these Western countries and hence could adapt better.

The factor with the strongest prediction of sociocultural adaptation was perceived social support. Social support has consistently been found to facilitate adaptation to university (Riggio, Watring & Throckmorton, 1993; Zea, Jarama & Bianchi, (1995) and the adaptation of international students (Ong & Ward, 2005; Cohen & Willis, 1985). Perceived social support also positively correlated with the interdependent self-construal and not with the independent self-construal. This suggests that the more one perceives him/herself as being related to others the more perceived social support he/she will have. The fact that there was no significant correlation between perceived social support and the independent self-construal suggests that considering oneself as independent from others does not influence the amount of perceived social support for this sample.

The weak but insignificant correlation between religiosity and sociocultural adaptation suggest no relationship between religiosity and sociocultural adaptation in this sample. In literature, religiosity has mostly been studied in relation with wellbeing (Hill & Pargament, 2003), meaning of life (Halama, Martos and Adamovova, 2010), Happiness (Halama, Martos and Adamovova, 2010) which are all

indicators of psychological wellbeing. Adaptation is considered to be composed of two dimensions (Searle & Ward 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1996; Ward, 1999), psychological adaption which is influenced by factors like internal locus of control, relationship satisfaction, coping styles and sociocultural adaptation which is more influenced by cultural learning and social skills (Ward, 1999). Considering this, it is not very surprising that religiosity did not have a significant effect on sociocultural adaptation. Moreover, intrinsic religiosity which refers to practicing religiosity for an ultimate end in itself (Allport, 1966; Koenig & Büssing, 2010) was considered in this study. This type of religiosity might not be functional for sociocultural adaptation compared to extrinsic religiosity which is practicing religiosity “for show” and to meet some goals which could be social status, comfort, financial gain or as a congenial social activity (Koenig & Büssing, 2010).

The fact that the mechanism through which religiosity influences wellbeing is not fully understood and there are ethnic differences in the influence of religiosity motivated the exploration of the relationship between intrinsic religiosity and sociocultural adaptation in this population. Religion is central to the life of Africans (Butselaar, 2014) and there is a religious atmosphere in EMU considering that there are churches and a mosque on campus.

There were positive correlations between religiosity and the interdependent self-construal and also between religiosity and interaction with Conationals. These correlations suggest that religion is a factor that influences the interactions between students from Sub-Saharan Africa and might be a factor which brings students together.

It was hypothesized that self-esteem will positively correlate with sociocultural adaptation. However, a non-significant correlation trend was observed in this sample. There was a positive correlation between self-esteem and sociocultural adaptation in the study by Yang, Noels and Samure (2006) on the adaptation of Asian students in Canada. In the same study, self-esteem also correlated positively with the independent self-construal, language skills, contact with host nationals and negatively with depression. In the present study, self-esteem also correlated positively with the independent self-construal but did not correlate with the interdependent self-construal. This is not surprising considering that the self in the independent self-construal is characterized by being aware of personal traits and uniqueness and relying on oneself. This is related with valuing oneself which is similar in conception to self-esteem. There has been mixed results in literature on the relationship between self-esteem and adaptation to university, with some studies showing a negative relationship between self-esteem, adaptation to university and psychological wellbeing (Abouserie, 1994) and others (e.g., Crocker & Luhtanen, 2003) showing no relationship between self-esteem and academic success. On the other hand, many studies have shown positive influence of self-esteem on adaptation to university (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Aspelmeier, Love, McGill, Elliott and Pierce, 2012; Mooney, Sherman, and Lo Presto, 1991).

Neither Turkish skills nor interaction with any of the four groups of individuals correlated significantly with sociocultural adaptation. Host language proficiency has been shown to predict better adaptation by many studies (Poyrazli, Arbona, Bullington, & Pisecco, 2001; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). In this sample, the participants were all taught in EMU in English which is not the official language of North Cyprus, unlike in other studies in which the host's national language is the

same as the language of instruction in the university. The participants in this study are not obliged to learn the official language of the host country (Turkish) and hence many students might prefer not to go through the strain of learning a new language. With no or poor knowledge of Turkish, the students might tend to look for other ways to adapt; hence language will not predict sociocultural adaptation. Also, language skills were assessed by self reports and not with the use of a standardized language test which is an objective way of measuring language skills. Some students might have overrated their ability while others underrated theirs. This random rating of language ability prevents the expected positive correlation between sociocultural adaptation and Turkish language skills.

ANOVA test showed differences in the level of interaction with the four groups. Interaction with the Turkish Cypriots was significantly less than interaction with all the other groups of individuals (Conationals, individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa and other international individuals). Studies have shown that international students are more satisfied with their academic program and the international experience when they have more interactions with host nationals (Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Klineberg & Hull, 1979). Considering the IAM, the acculturation of the incoming individuals depends not only on their acculturation attitudes but also on the attitudes of the host nationals. The host nationals can adopt integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion and individualism attitudes towards the immigrants or sojourners and the immigrants can adopt integration, assimilation, separation, anomie and individualism attitudes towards the host nationals. The low level of interaction with Turkish Cypriots might suggest segregation and exclusion attitudes by the host nationals or separation attitudes by the immigrants. This gives rise to the conflictual acculturation situation considering the IAM and to the contact problematic level

considering the CMA. In this study however, acculturative attitudes were not measured, and the low level of interaction between the individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa that made the sample and the Turkish Cypriots is surely better explained by the language barrier. The Turkish Cypriots might have low English language proficiency and/or the individuals from Sub-Saharan African might have low Turkish language proficiency and hence communication between the two groups would be difficult. The low interaction of with Turkish Cypriots remains problematic because international students don't receive this extra positive factor which could make their stay and academic experience better.

4.1 Conclusion

For students from Sub-Saharan Africa in North Cyprus, considering oneself as being more related to others might lead to perceiving more social support and having better sociocultural adaptation in North Cyprus.

The findings of this study can be cautiously applied by both student counselors and university authorities. This study highlights the need of relatedness and social support and hence international students can be encouraged to have positive attitudes towards being interrelated with Conationals from whom they can get social support which facilitates sociocultural adaptation.

Considering the IAM, the policy makers have a role to play in promoting adjustment of both the incoming students and the host nationals. More efforts can be made to promote language skills acquisition by both the host nationals and the international students. The university authorities can also create a pairing program in which

international students are paired with domestic students on arrival. This could increase the interaction between international students and domestic students.

4.2 Limitations

There are several limitations that can be considered in this study. Firstly, self-reported measures were used so the truthfulness of the responses cannot be verified. Most participants complained of the long length of the questionnaire and there is a possibility that some participants did not give enough thought to their responses. Secondly, language skills could have been measured more objectively. This would have limited the possibility of individuals overrating or underrating their language abilities. Thirdly, because of the sample considered, the results can only be generalized to African students from Sub-Saharan Africa studying in North Cyprus. Lastly, the research was cross-sectional and correlational in nature and hence causal relationships cannot be derived from this study.

Future studies could consider the acculturative attitudes of the host nationals and those of the sojourners (international students) and their relationship with sociocultural adaptation. Also, the relationship between extrinsic religiosity and sociocultural adaptation or the comparative study of the relationship of both types of religiosity with other adjustment indicators could be studied. Language difficulties could be assessed by considering the ease or anxiety associated with the use of the host language.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please fill this form about yourself.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Nationality: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Date of first entry into North Cyprus (month/ year): _____ / _____
5. At what level are you studying? : Undergraduate Graduate Post Graduate
6. What is your department of study? _____, Faculty?: _____
7. What is your GPA of last semester: _____
8. Religion: Christian Muslim Atheist Other _____
9. What is your first language? : _____

Please rate your Turkish language proficiency

10. **Reading**
No reading ability Very poor Poor Average Good Very Good
11. **Writing**
No writing ability Very poor Poor Average Good Very Good
12. **Speaking**
No speaking ability Very poor Poor Average Good Very Good
13. **Listening**
No listening ability Very poor Poor Average Good Very Good

14. Which other Languages do you speak and what is your proficiency in that language?

- (a) _____ Very poor Poor Average Good Very Good
- (b) _____ Very poor Poor Average Good Very Good
- (c) _____ Very poor Poor Average Good Very Good

15. Apart from North Cyprus and your country of origin, which other countries have you visited and for how long (estimate the total time spent) did you stay in that country?

- (a) _____ Duration _____ Days Weeks Months Years
- (b) _____ Duration _____ Days Weeks Months Years
- (c) _____ Duration _____ Days Weeks Months Years

Please rate your interaction with Turkish and/or Cypriot individuals in different settings. Do you interact with Turkish and/or Cypriot individuals at:

16. *home*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

17. *On Campus*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

18. *In other public places (market, banks, restaurants, etc.)*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

Please rate your interaction with individuals from your home country in different settings. Do you interact with individuals from your home country at:

19. *home*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

20. *On Campus*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

21. *In other public places (market, banks, restaurants, etc.)*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

Please rate your interaction with individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding those from your home country) in different settings. Do you interact with individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding those from your home country) at:

22. *home*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

23. *On Campus*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

24. *In other public places (market, banks, restaurants, etc.)*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

Please rate your interaction with other international individuals (excluding Turkish and/or Cypriots and individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa) in different settings. Do you interact with other international individuals (for example: Iranians, Syrians, Pakistanis, Iraqis, Jordanians, etc.) at:

25. *home*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

26. *On Campus*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

27. *In other public places (market, banks, restaurants, etc.)*

Not at all Small degree Moderate degree High degree Very high degree

SOCIOCULTURAL ADAPTATION SCALE

Please indicate how much difficulty you experience in North Cyprus in each of these areas. Please make a tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

	<i>No difficulty</i>	<i>Slight difficulty</i>	<i>Moderate difficulty</i>	<i>Great difficulty</i>	<i>Extreme difficulty</i>
1. Making friends.					
2. Finding food that you enjoy.					
3. Following rules and regulations.					
4. Dealing with people in authority.					
5. Taking a Turkish Cypriot perspective on the culture.					
6. Using the transport system.					
7. Dealing with bureaucracy.					
8. Understanding the Turkish Cypriot value system.					
9. Making yourself understood.					
10. Seeing things from a Turkish Cypriot's point of view.					
11. Going shopping.					
12. Dealing with someone who is unpleasant.					
13. Understanding jokes and humour.					
14. Accommodation.					
15. Going to social gatherings.					
16. Dealing with people staring at you.					
17. Communicating with people of a different ethnic group.					
18. Understanding ethnic or cultural differences.					
19. Dealing with unsatisfactory service.					
21. Relating to members of the opposite sex.					
22. Finding your way around.					
23. Understanding the Turkish Cypriot' political system.					

	<i>No difficulty</i>	<i>Slight difficulty</i>	<i>Moderate difficulty</i>	<i>Great difficulty</i>	<i>Extreme difficulty</i>
24. Talking about yourself with others.					
25. Dealing with the climate.					
26. Understanding the Turkish Cypriot's world view.					
27. Family relationships.					
28. The pace of life.					
29. Being able to see two sides of an inter-cultural issue.					

ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how you feel by making a tick (✓) in the appropriate area.

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.				
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.				
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.				
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.				
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.				
6. I certainly feel useless at times.				
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.				
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.				
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.				
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.				

SINGELIS SELF-CONSTRUAL SCALE

Listed below are a number of statements. Read each one as if it referred to you. Beside each statement write the number that best matches your agreement or disagreement. Please respond to every statement. Thank you.

Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Don't agree or disagree 4	Agree somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
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- ___1. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.
- ___2. I can talk openly with a person who I meet for the first time, even when this person is much older than I am.
- ___3. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.
- ___4. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.
- ___5. I do my own thing, regardless of what others think.
- ___6. I respect people who are modest about themselves.
- ___7. I feel it is important for me to act as an independent person.
- ___8. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.
- ___9. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood.
- ___10. Having a lively imagination is important to me.
- ___11. I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education/career plans.
- ___12. I feel my fate is intertwined with the fate of those around me.
- ___13. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met.
- ___14. I feel good when I cooperate with others.
- ___15. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.
- ___16. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.
- ___17. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.
- ___18. Speaking up during a class (or a meeting) is not a problem for me.
- ___19. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor (or my boss).

Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Don't agree or disagree 4	Agree somewhat 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
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- ___20. I act the same way no matter who I am with.
- ___21. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me.
- ___22. I value being in good health above everything.
- ___23. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group.
- ___24. I try to do what is best for me, regardless of how that might affect others.
- ___25. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.
- ___26. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.
- ___27. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.
- ___28. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.
- ___29. I act the same way at home that I do at school (or work).
- ___30. I usually go along with what others want to do, even when I would rather do something different.

HOGUE INTRINSIC RELIGIOSITY SCALE

Please read each of the following statements. Choose the response that best describes how true each statement is for you. *Please make a tick (✓) in the appropriate box.*

	Not at all true for me	Somewhat true for me	Moderately true for me	Mostly true for me	Totally true for me
1. My faith involves my whole life.					
2. In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine (i.e., God).					
3. Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs					
4. Nothing is as important to me as serving God as best as I know how.					
5. My faith sometimes restricts my actions.					
6. My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.					
7. I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.					
8. One should seek God's guidance when making every important decision.					
9. Although I believe in religion, I feel there are many more important things in life.					
10. It does not matter so much what I believe as long as I lead a moral life.					

INTERPERSONAL SUPPORT SCALE

This scale is made up of a list of statements each of which may or may not be true about you. For each statement tick the box corresponding to "**definitely true**" if you are sure it is true about you and "**probably true**" if you think it is true but are not absolutely certain. Similarly, you should tick "**definitely false**" if you are sure the statement is false and "**probably false**" if you think it is false but are not absolutely certain.

Definitely false Probably false Probably true Definitely true
 1 2 3 4

	<i>Definitely false</i>	<i>Probably false</i>	<i>Probably true</i>	<i>Definitely true</i>
1. If I wanted to go on a trip for a day (for example, to the country or mountains), I would have a hard time finding someone to go with me.				
2. I feel that there is no one I can share my most private worries and fears with.				
3. If I were sick, I could easily find someone to help me with my daily chores.				
4. There is someone I can turn to for advice about handling problems with my family.				
5. If I decide one afternoon that I would like to go to a movie that evening, I could easily find someone to go with me.				
6. When I need suggestions on how to deal with a personal problem, I know someone I can turn to.				
7. I don't often get invited to do things with others.				
8. If I had to go out of town for a few weeks, it would be difficult to find someone who would look after my house or apartment (the plants, pets, garden, etc.).				
9. If I wanted to have lunch with someone, I could easily find someone to join me.				
10. If I was stranded 10 miles from home, there is someone I could call who could come and get me.				
11. If a family crisis arose, it would be difficult to find someone who could give me good advice about how to handle it.				
12. If I needed some help in moving to a new house or apartment, I would have a hard time finding someone to help me.				

Appendix B: Permission to use the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale

FW: SPN Profile Message: Request for a copy of the recent version of the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale

Thursday, 15 October, 2015 15:38

From: "Colleen Ward" <Colleen.Ward@vuw.ac.nz>
To: "Jessie Wilson" <jwilson@allenandclarke.co.nz>
Cc: "TCHOH Bennett Kuwan" <bennettkuwan@yahoo.co.uk>

Hi Jessie

Could you kindly give permission and send this to Bennett?

Colleen

----- Forwarded Message

From: TCHOH Bennett Kuwan <bennettkuwan@yahoo.co.uk>
Reply-To: "bennettkuwan@yahoo.co.uk" <bennettkuwan@yahoo.co.uk>
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2015 12:52:09 -0400
To: Colleen Ward <colleen.ward@vuw.ac.nz>
Subject: SPN Profile Message: Request for a copy of the recent version of the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale

Dear Prof Ward,

I am a masters student in the department of Psychology in Eastern Mediterranean University. I will like to study the adaptation of international students from Sub-Saharan Africa to life in North Cyprus. For that I need the scale you developed.

Can you please provide me with the scale?

I will be happy to share my findings with you.

Best regards,

Bennett

----- End of Forwarded Message

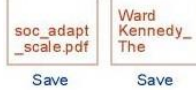
RE: FW: SPN Profile Message: Request for a copy of the recent version of the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale

Sunday, 18 October, 2015 23:17

From: "Jessie Wilson" <jwilson@allenandclarke.co.nz>
To: "Bennett" <bennettkuwan@yahoo.co.uk>
Cc: "Colleen Ward" <Colleen.Ward@vuw.ac.nz>

2 Files | 189KB | Download All

PDF 10KB PDF 179KB



Hello Bennett,

The new version is currently being drafted for publication, but in the meantime I've attached the old (but current) version of the scale and the related article. I would absolutely understand if you choose to use the latter.

Regards,

Jessie

-----Original Message-----

From: Bennett [mailto:bennettkuwan@yahoo.co.uk]
Sent: Saturday, 17 October 2015 5:59 a.m.
To: Jessie Wilson <jwilson@allenandclarke.co.nz>
Cc: Colleen Ward <Colleen.Ward@vuw.ac.nz>
Subject: Re: FW: SPN Profile Message: Request for a copy of the recent version of the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale

Dear Jessie,

Thanks for providing me with the SCAS-R and your thesis.

My supervisor is a little concerned for your work has not yet been published (or has it already been published or is it under review?) and she prefers I use scales from published work. She will be the one to make the final decision. I will write again to Prof. Ward to request the latest version which has been used in a published work.

Thanks again.

I will tell you what version I finally used.

Best regard,

Bennett

Appendix C: Ethical Approval



Eastern
Mediterranean
University

The Department of Psychology
Eastern Mediterranean University
Research & Ethics Committee
Senel Husnu Raman-Chairperson

Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern
Cyprus
Tel: +(90) 392 630 1389
Fax: +(90) 392 630 2475
e-mail: senel.raman@emu.edu.tr
Web: <http://brahms.emu.edu.tr/psychology>

Ref No.: 15/11-01

Date: 01.12.2015

Dear TCHOH Bennett Kuwan,

Your ethics application titled '*Relationship between self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity, social support and sociocultural adaptation of African students in North Cyprus*' has been approved by the Ethics & Research Committee on 01.12.2015. If any changes to the study described in the application or supporting documentation is necessary, you must notify the committee and may be required to make a resubmission of the application. This approval is valid for one year.

Good luck with the research.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ilmiye Seçer'.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ilmiye Seçer
On Behalf of the Research & Ethics Committee
Psychology Department
Eastern Mediterranean University

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi
Eastern Mediterranean University

"Uluslararası Kariyer İçin"
"For Your International Career"



Psikoloji Bölümü / Department of Psychology

Department of Psychology
Eastern Mediterranean University
Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Tel: +(90) 392 630 1389 Fax: +(90) 392 630 2475
Web: <http://brahms.emu.edu.tr/psychology>

Understanding the relationship between self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity, social support and sociocultural adaptation of African students in North Cyprus.

Dear participant,

Please take a few minutes to read the following information on this research project carefully before you agree to participate. **If at any time you have a question regarding the study, please feel free to ask the researcher who will provide more information.**

This study is being conducted by TCHOH Bennett Kuwan under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Biran Mertan. It aims to examine the factors that influence the sociocultural adaptation of African students in North Cyprus. The questionnaire should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

Of course, you are not obliged to participate in this research project and are free to refuse to participate. You may also withdraw from the study at any point without giving any reason. In this case, all of your responses will be discarded and omitted from the research. If you agree to participate and complete the questionnaire, all your responses will be treated **confidentially**. Once the data is analyzed, a report of the findings may be submitted for publication.

To signify your voluntary participation, please complete the consent form below.

CONSENT FORM

Understanding the relationship between self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity, social support and sociocultural adaptation of African students in North Cyprus.

Name of Researcher: TCHOH Bennett Kuwan
Email: bennettkuwan@yahoo.co.uk

Please tick the boxes to confirm that you agree to each statement.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.
3. I agree to take part in this study.

Date

Signature

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study, please inform Dr. Şenel Husnu Raman, Chair of the Psychology Research & Ethics Committee at Eastern Mediterranean University, in writing, providing a detailed account of your concern (shenelhusnu.raman@emu.edu.tr).

Gazimagusa, North Cyprus, via Meersin 10 TURKEY

<http://brahms.emu.edu.tr/psychology>
psychology@emu.edu.tr
www.emu.edu.tr

Tel: +90 392 630 1389 / 1079 - Fax: +90 392 630 2475

Appendix E: Debrief Form



Department of Psychology
Eastern Mediterranean University
Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Tel: +(90) 392 630 1389 Fax: +(90) 392 630 2475
Web: <http://brahms.emu.edu.tr/psychology>

Nov/Dec 2015

Participant Debrief Form

Thank you very much for participating in this study with the title **Understanding the relationship between self-construals, self-esteem, religiosity, social support and sociocultural adaptation of African students in North Cyprus.**

Please take a few more minutes to read the following information, which will explain the aims and purpose of the research further. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the researcher whose contact details are stated below.

This aim of this research project is to examine the sociocultural adaptation of African students in North Cyprus. Adaptation to the local culture is important to overcome cultural shock usually experienced by international students (Winkelman, 1994). Previous research has been done mostly on Asian students studying in western societies. We are extending this work by considering the African population in North Cyprus.

If during the completion of this questionnaire you felt any distress or discomfort and you would like to speak to a professional, please contact the EMU Psychological Counselling and Guidance Center (PDRAM) located below the EMU Health Centre. You may also contact the researcher TCHOH Bennett Kuwan, tel:05338529783, email:bennettkuwan@yahoo.co.uk or the research supervisor Prof. Dr. Biran MERTAN, email: biran.mertan@emu.edu.tr with any questions.

Once again thank you for your valuable contribution to this research. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

TCHOH Bennett Kuwan

Reference

Winkelman, M. (1994). Cultural shock and adaptation. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 73, 121-126.