AN EXPLORATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL VARIABILITY ON MEMBERS OF MULTICULTURAL STUDENT GROUPS AS THEY WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF A MUTUAL GOAL

Elizabeth Crawford

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Abstract

This thesis explores the influence of culture on multicultural student groups as they work together towards the attainment of a mutual goal. Additionally, the study includes the contribution of interpersonal factors to the adaptation process of these multicultural students as they interact with each other. Multicultural group research is becoming increasingly important as the numbers of international students coming to Britain to study continues to rise. Whilst there is considerable previous research on intercultural communication it appears that multicultural group research has not enjoyed the same amount of scholarly attention.

A qualitative approach is followed using in-depth interviews in an attempt to gain information about the attitudes and values between the students which might influence their interaction with each other. Nine students from various cultures were interviewed in two stages. The first stage interview took place at the start of their group assignment and the second stage interview was completed at the end of their group assignment. This enabled insights into the first impressions of the students as they came together for their assignment and also provided a retrospective account of their group experience.

The data suggests that cultural variability is demonstrated through the different expectations the students have of their group work and influences the ways in which they work together. Furthermore, cultural dimensions are useful to an extent in identifying the different attitudes and values between students although it is apparent that additional factors such as personality and situation are important when considering cultural variability within multicultural student groups. In relation to interpersonal factors and the adaptation process it is evident that cultural knowledge and motivation to adapt to the new culture are essential in easing the adaptation process. Also it is clear that issues such as ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, anxiety and uncertainty reduction and first impressions are useful when exploring adaptation of multicultural student groups.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The need for effective communication between peoples of diverse cultures is immense. One only has to consider the global transformation experienced, even during the last decade that previously would have seemed unimaginable. As new technology has brought people together, from both a communicative point of view and from the enabling of travel, work and overseas study more than at any other time in history, it does not seem an understatement to stress the urgency for continuing investigation into intercultural matters.

Certainly, it is significant that research into the differences between cultures and the ways in which these differences impact on communication between people has proliferated enormously during the second half of the 20th century and on into this present one. Yet, despite the enormous strides forward in providing knowledge of intercultural matters by scholars such as Hofstede (1980, 2001), Gudykunst and Kim (2003), Ting-Toomey (1999), Triandis et al (1988) and Kim (1988) together with very many others, availability of areas for study continues to be broad and ongoing.

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which differences in culture might influence the ways members of multicultural student groups work together for the attainment of a mutual goal. For this investigation the term multicultural groups refers to groups of people from different countries rather than groups of people from subcultures within Britain.

The importance of primary groups such as family and close friends for people in society has always been recognised. Indeed, throughout history people have worked together to accomplish tasks, make decisions and solve problems. Several reasons have been mooted regarding the need for groups in peoples' lives. For instance, Festinger (1954) claimed that people were attracted to groups of similar others as this helped them to create a sense of social reality because their attitudes and values converged with their group members. On the other hand, Schutz (1958) claimed that people sought inclusion, control and

other hand, Schutz (1958) claimed that people sought inclusion, control and affection from group membership. However, despite the reasons for people choosing to join groups in the past, it seems that today in the workplace people do not have a choice as to whether or not they will join groups as organisations have realised the benefits of group/team work. Hampton (1999) suggests that groups can motivate and influence their members. They can imbue peers with such a sense of team spirit that they have the confidence to overcome obstacles which they might have been unlikely to do as individuals. Indeed, the influence of the group was evident in the now famous 'Hawthorne studies' of the 1930's when researchers found that one of the reasons for the unexpected results of their experiments, the Bank Wiring Observation Room, was due to an unforeseen phenomenon: the power of the group. Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) came to the conclusion that the workers were more receptive to the influence of their peer groups than the incentives of management.

Certainly, organisational behaviour scholars have highlighted the trend towards groups/teams within organisations today. For instance, Robbins (2003) points to the fact that twenty- five years ago when large manufacturing companies in the USA introduced teams into their production processes it was newsworthy, yet today it is the organisation that does not use teams that seems to be worthy of note. Additionally, the significance of groups/teams to the effective running of organisations seems much in evidence in the commercial world at this time, with prospective employees expected to have some understanding of group/team skills as part of their personal portfolios.

Yet, there is documented evidence cautioning over reliance on groups in relation to decision making and problem solving. For instance, Stoner (1968) discovered what he termed 'the risky shift phenomenon' whereby group decisions were riskier than decisions made by individuals prior to group discussion. Stoner deduced that this was not simply due to the influence of others' attitudes and values, it was also related to the diffusion of responsibility between the group members for the ultimate outcome. Furthermore, Janis (1983) warns in his 'group think' hypothesis, that intelligent group members with expertise and the necessary resources available to them can make

group decisions, included cohesion, conformity, and ingratiation to the leader, all of which led to lack of critical thought. It is evident, therefore, that bonds of cohesiveness, loyalty and unity can have detrimental outcomes. None-the-less, it seems that the benefits outweigh any costs involved and that groups/ teams have now become a vital part of organisational life (Aranda, Aranda and Conlon, 1998). Certainly, there is much literature to support the idea that on the whole, group decisions are superior to individual decisions (Burelson, Levine and Samter, 1984; Stasson and Bradshaw, 1995). It is hard to deny that there are many benefits to working in groups, such as bonds of unity and interdependence between members and more effective decision making and problem solving due to the obvious merits of being able to pool peoples' experiences and expertise.

A reason for today's movement towards the use of teams within some organisations was suggested by Mullins (1993) to have been due to the general movement within industry towards flatter organisational structures. This led to the need for improved efficiency and competitiveness and the adoption of more participative management styles. This in turn resulted in much greater use and reliance on groups/teams. Indeed, Schneider and Barsoux (2003) note that more and more companies are realising the importance of groups/teams as an effective way of dealing with the complexities of corporate life. Furthermore, the requirement for group/teams within the working arena is demonstrated through the demands from organisations for graduates who are proficient in group/team skills. This is evident in job advertisements where group/team working skills seem to be a prerequisite for prospective employees. Certainly, Bournemouth University includes modules related to groups, teams and organisations in their degree programmes.

Given the present world trend in people choosing to live, work and study abroad, it seems fair to assume that many people will find themselves working in groups with people from a diversity of cultures. Schneider and Barsoux (2003) argue that in the corporate world at this time, it is apparent that the office of today is likely to consist of people from many different cultures working together. Furthermore, they claim that in order to perform more efficiently those

multicultural groups/ teams need to develop culturally appropriate ways of managing and working together.

Thus far it appears that much of the proliferation in studies on group/team matters is applicable to the Western idea of groups with an enormous amount of literature on the topic originating in the USA. Research specifically relating to the arena of multicultural groups appears to have received little attention. It is true that most textbooks on the subject of groups/teams do offer general guidelines on some of the main differences between the attitudes and values of people from various cultures. However, in many cases it is left to the reader to make suppositions as to how these differences might apply to multicultural groups, rather than being provided with insights gathered from research on these groups. Indeed, Bantz (1993) makes the point in his study of multicultural teams that it is not simply a matter of knowing the different characteristics of each individual member's culture, it is the mixture of these characteristics within the group that one has to consider and the interplay between them. Bantz's (1993) comments highlight the need for further investigation into this important field of intercultural research.

Furthermore, it appears that research regarding multicultural group dynamics has not enjoyed the proliferation of studies to the same extent as other areas of intercultural research. The tendency seems to have been to conduct cross-cultural studies comparing one or two, sometimes a few countries with each other, rather than exploring the dynamics of groups of people working together whose members come from a diversity of cultures. For instance, Gibson's (1999) research on group effectiveness across tasks and cultures involved two comparative studies, one between the USA and Hong Kong and another between the USA and Indonesia. While this study provides significant insights into the issues explored, it seems fair to suggest that more investigation of multicultural group research would be judicious also. This was apparent in research by Bantz (1993). In his study on cultural diversity within a cross-cultural research team of eight different nationalities, he identified the influence of issues such as leadership, norms, roles and conflict on the groups' dynamics.

In so doing, he was able to suggest tactics that would be useful in managing the differences in that type of group.

Furthermore, it seems that the USA has been a fertile ground for intercultural research over the past decades, possibly due in part, to the range of different cultures within that nation. For instance, various studies have been conducted between people of different ethnic backgrounds, namely African/ American; Arab/American; Hispanic/American and so forth (Kim, 1988). Likewise, there have been numerous comparative studies conducted between, for instance, USA and Japan, USA and China, USA and Arab countries over the years. The invaluable contribution of these studies is well documented, yet, arguably, there is a need for further research in Europe. Certainly, Kim (1988) asserts that while European studies are making some inroads into the intercultural research arena, these are less intensive. This strengthens the rationale for this present study which will take place at a British University. It is easy to appreciate why research between America and these countries is so appealing given the continuing immigration trend in the USA. Neuliep (2003) notes, the inevitably of this leading to more and more people within the USA eventually working with others whose cultures are very different.

It appears too, that immigration is continuing to rise in the United Kingdom. In September 2004, the BBC News reported that almost 140,000 immigrants settled in the United Kingdom in the year 2003, this was a rise of a fifth from the previous year, 2002. It is also apparent that figures of overseas students now coming to Britain to study have proliferated in recent years. The following table provides an indication of how many international students choose to study in the Britain.

International students in U.K.	2000/1	2002/2	2002/3
Total	225,615	235,175	279,090

Table 1: International students in U.K. (HESA – Higher Educational Statistics)

Source: Bournemouth University International Office, November 2004.

Furthermore, it appears that the numbers of postgraduate international students at Bournemouth University are also rising.

International students at Bournemouth University	2001/2	2002/3	2003/04	2004/5
Total	603	1608	2120	2215

Table 2: International students studying at Bournemouth University
Source: Bournemouth University International Office, November 2004

If this trend in students coming to Britain to study continues in the future, it raises important issues for these institutions in Britain offering places to people from other cultures. For example, while many universities no doubt provide induction programmes for international students at the start of their degree courses, and certainly Bournemouth University does so, it seems that there could be room for a more holistic approach. In other words, it would be beneficial for teaching staff and British students to be aware of the potential difficulties international students might face within a multicultural environment. Presumably, if British students too, were aware of these issues and had experience of working in multicultural groups within their educational environments, they would have a better understanding of some of the issues they may well have to face in the wider multicultural working arena.

Indeed, the idea for this study arose from the researcher's personal experience of international postgraduate students working together on a group project at Bournemouth University. Some of the international students experienced communication problems, apparently due to the diversity of their cultural norms. Conflicts arose between them, particularly as the completion time of their projects drew near, to such an extent that after the projects were finished these conflicts were never resolved. It was found through discussion with the students that it was only retrospectively that they were able to see that some issues might have been handled differently. The students involved asserted that had they been more aware beforehand of the need to consider the differences in culture more assiduously, the problems might have been avoided.

However, it seems that these students' problems were not unusual and scholarship suggests that they may have been due to a phenomenon called ethnocentrism (Bennett, 1998). Ethnocentrism is common for all peoples who interact with others from different cultures (Bennett, 1998). Indeed, Kim & Ruben (1988) advise that successful communication among culturally diverse people requires them to give up their ethnocentricity. Yet, the difficulty is that most people simply assume that everyone thinks in the same way as they do themselves, even although they are aware that their cultures are somewhat different. In other words, people simply forget that meanings are not automatically shared across cultures. These issues demonstrate the complexity of communication and the need for greater understanding between peoples of various cultures who come together to interact, not just cross culturally, but also within a multicultural environment. It seems fair to surmise that more investigation into multicultural groups is imperative given the importance of groups/teams in society and the movement of peoples around the world for both work and study. Thus, it is argued that there is a need to address this gap. This study, therefore, will explore the influence of culture on postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together towards the attainment of a mutual goal.

A prominent figure in the field of intercultural research is that of Hofstede (1980). In a study by Hart (1998), it was highlighted that Hofstede was one of the top six most cited authors between 1978 and 1991. Additionally, his book 'Cultures Consequences' was ranked as the third top most influential book on intercultural communication. Hofstede's (1980) seminal study, of a large multinational organisation, revealed that there were four significant variables that highlighted the differences between cultures. These were individualism / collectivism, high/low power distance, high/low uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/ femininity. According to Hofstede (1980) all of these issues have different levels of importance depending upon the cultural background of those involved.

Since the publication of Hofstede's original findings, an enormous amount of research has been conducted utilising his ideas on cultural variability. However,

Hofstede is not without his opponents. Some criticise the idea that cultures can be compartmentalised in such a way (Tayeb, 2001). Others criticise his chosen method of data collection (McSweeney, 2002). Yet, the initial excitement caused by Hofstede's (1980) work seems not to have waned. Scholars have continued to use his dimensions fruitfully as was apparent in research referred to earlier by Bantz (1993) who used Hofstede's dimensions as the basic frame of reference for his study. It is deemed judicious, therefore, to explore how useful Hofstede's (1980) dimensions might be in identifying the differences in culture between students within a multicultural environment.

Other intercultural scholars have identified a range of issues and processes which emerged from intercultural interaction. One of these issues was adaptation which has generated several important insights. For instance, some scholars assert that prior cultural knowledge is a prerequisite for a smooth adaptation process (Ward and Searle, 1991). Others advocate that successful adaptation needs to be viewed as a two way process between the host culture and the newcomer (Ting-Toomey, 1999). However, whilst these ideas appear to be essential, effective adaptation could also be hindered by a person's feelings of uncertainty and anxiety (Berger and Calabrese, 1975). Feelings of anxiety arise because people often have preconceived stereotypical views about others and even more so if these are negative in any way (DeVito, 2000). Furthermore, people use these ideas in two ways; firstly, in order to be able to predict the way in which others might act towards them; and secondly to gauge the way they themselves might be expected to act. These, in turn, are significant factors in impression formation and could influence the way a person acts towards another during the initial encounter. Arguably, if first impressions are favourable, the adaptation process might not to be so daunting.

Clearly all of these matters could have implications for international students as they attempt to adapt to their new environment. In a multicultural group setting where peoples' cultural values and attitudes are quite different, there is the added potential for misunderstanding and uncertainty between the group members. Thus, it seems propitious to include these matters relating to adaptation when exploring the ways in which the differences in culture might

influence students in a multicultural student group environment working towards the attainment of a mutual goal.

It is envisaged that the insights garnered from this study may be of use to Bournemouth University for inclusion in their induction programmes for international students. It is also surmised that this knowledge may be of use to Bournemouth University teaching staff and others who provide support for international students. British postgraduate students too may find the information practical when working with students in a multicultural environment.

The principal aim of this study, therefore, is to explore the extent to which differences in culture might influence the ways members of multicultural student groups work together for the attainment of a mutual goal. In order to do so, two particular areas of literature will be examined. The first area of literature will investigate Hofstede's (1980) research together with other pertinent intercultural studies. The second area of literature will examine issues related to the adaptation process. From this two further aims will be developed.

This introduction to the study is followed by chapters two and three which offer a detailed analysis of the pertinent scholarly issues which inform the study. The next chapter four outlines the aims of the study and provides information on the chosen method and the rationale for using qualitative interviews. Chapters five and six present a discussion of the data collected. The concluding chapter seven draws together the main issues that have arisen from the study and addresses the study's limitations and offers recommendations for future study in the area of multicultural group research.

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF CULTURAL ISSUES

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of culture on postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together towards the attainment of a mutual goal. In this chapter, an examination of Hofstede's (1980) research on cultural variability is provided, together with other pertinent intercultural studies and criticisms. Relevant contributions by small group communication scholars are also included. The following chapter three will explore interpersonal issues which might influence the adaptation process of multicultural students.

Culture relates to the deeply entrenched beliefs, attitudes and values people hold about the societies in which they live. Thus culture guides societal rules and norms and provides societies with expectations of the way they communicate with each other. It seems difficult to argue with the idea that in order to interact effectively with people from other cultures, people need to have some understanding of their new culture's codes (Hall, 1977).

The study of intercultural communication is defined by Ting-Toomey as 'the study of cultural differences that really make a difference in intercultural encounters' (1999: 3). This definition does not deny the obvious advantage in speaking another's language rather it acknowledges that intercultural research is much more than that. It is the study of the subtleties and nuances of peoples' attitudes and values which are part of who they are and which determine the way they think, feel and behave towards others. These differences between people have the potential to create barriers because of misunderstandings. If people are to interact successfully with others who are different they need to learn about the issues that may lead to difficulties.

Past studies are invaluable in providing understanding about a culture's distinctiveness. Possibly one of the best known is Hofstede's ground- breaking research of the late1960's and early 70's and published in 1980. His study was quantitative in nature and was based on the multinational company, IBM, where over 100,000 employees from 40 countries were surveyed. His study sought to illuminate the differences between the various cultures and his investigation

identified four dimensions of cultural variability. Arguably this provided a breakthrough, at that time, into some of the underlying variations in attitudes and values that could cause confusion for people during their interaction. He identified these dimensions as individualism and collectivism, high and low power distance, high and low uncertainty avoidance and masculinity and femininity. Hofstede also acknowledged that his dimensions were based on the *predominate* tendencies of these cultures and thus did not allow for unique individual differences in people. In other words, his study did not account for the differences in peoples' personalities, education and so forth that might also have an influence on their interaction with others. Furthermore, because of concern about the potential for a Western bias in Hofstede's work, Bond (1988) later explored the dimensions further. In collaboration with Hofstede and together with a group of researchers called The Chinese Culture Connection, Bond (1988) discovered that there were indeed important differences between Western and Eastern ways of thinking which he labelled Confucian Dynamism. This was of such import that Hofstede (2001) acknowledged it as a fifth dimension and relabelled it as long or short term orientation. However, the focus of this present study is on Hofstede's (1980) dimensions.

Since the publication of Hofstede's findings in 1980, he has revisited several pertinent issues related to his 1980 study. At times in order to defend his assertions in the light of scholarly scepticism, at others to acknowledge the valuable research by others which has filled some of the gaps in his own earlier work. Some of these matters are incorporated into the following debate.

HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSIONS

Hofstede's (1980) dimensions are now examined together with contributions from other scholars in the field of intercultural communication and small group communication.

Individualism/Collectivism: 'Alone versus together'

This dimension identifies that one of the key factors that differentiates cultures is the extent of attachment people have towards their in-groups. According to Hofstede (1980), individualistic cultures place a higher value on individual goals than group goals and diversity among members of their groups is expected and often encouraged. This results in people moving in and out of many groups throughout their lifetimes. The propensity then for members of individualistic cultures is to be self oriented; looking for self fulfilment and self achievement. Research by Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai and Lucca (1988) supports these ideas adding that group members in individualistic cultures are likely to focus on the task rather than on relationships between group members. Given these characteristics, it is not surprising that group conformity appears not to be highly relevant within individualistic cultures. Indeed, a study by Hsu (1981) of Americans and Chinese showed that Americans were so inner-directed they resented the idea of having to conform. Countries that tend to be individualistic include, USA, Britain, Australia, Italy, Belgium and Denmark

Furthermore, Triandis (1995) suggests that individualistic and collectivistic cultures have both horizontal and vertical tendencies due to the differences in the way conformity is viewed. It appears that cultures with horizontal tendencies value equality between people while cultures with vertical tendencies value freedom and the idea that it is all right to be different. When considering two individualistic cultures, say Britain and Sweden, these tendencies can help to show that they can be both similar in their individualism and yet different in the issue of conformity. Britain is considered to be vertical and as such, people are expected to act as individuals and conformity is not expected. On the other hand, Sweden is horizontal and people there are encouraged to act as individuals but at the same time to conform. This indicates a certain amount of flexibility in relation to equality and freedom in some cultures (Triandis, 1995). It also highlights the usefulness of Hofstede's study in generating further insights into the individualist/ collectivist dimension.

As far as collectivist cultures are concerned, the needs of the group are regarded as paramount with the individual's requirements taking second place. Group members are expected to conform to in-group norms which leads to a high amount of cohesion within these cultures (Hofstede1980). This is borne out again by Hsu (1981) who notes that in China conformity tends to dominate all interpersonal relationships and is approved of both socially and culturally. This reliance on and loyalty to their in-groups means that people in collectivist cultures tend to belong to only a few in- groups in their life times. The goals, wishes and opinions of the in-group almost always prevail. In such cultures, cooperation is a valued characteristic and people are more apt to think and behave in terms of 'we' and ''us'. For example, decisions are often reached slowly as members search for consensus by considering others' ideas in a non - confronting way. Triandis et al (1988) also note that the emphasis is on relationship rather than task, thus relationships within in-groups are intensive and interdependence is high. Countries that tend to have collectivist characteristics include those of the Far East, India, Venezuela, Turkey and Greece.

As before, Triandis's (1995) ideas about horizontal and vertical cultures in relation to conformity can help to explain why Japan and India, both collectivist countries, can be similar and yet different. Japan is horizontal where equality is a highly valued concept and people are expected to conform whereas India's culture is vertical, and people are expected both to conform to the group but at the same time have the freedom to stand out as individuals.

Although it appears from the above research that these issues of cohesion, loyalty and conformity offer clear differences in the behaviour one might expect from members of collectivist and individualist cultures, small group scholars would question this assumption. Various studies have demonstrated the significance of conformity in Western Societies. One of the most famous studies was that of Asch (1952). Asch found that the students in his study were willing to conform to the other group members' views despite knowing that they were lying about what they saw. They preferred to believe that it was due to their own fallibility, rather than be seen to be the odd one out of the group. Asch

deduced that this was due to social pressures. If this were indeed the case, it is feasible to surmise that conformity in collectivist cultures could also be due to social pressures. As Hofstede (1980) himself asserts, the needs of the 'group' take precedence over the 'self' in collectivist cultures. Yet, this seems not to have been borne out by Frager (1970) who conducted a cross -cultural study between Japan and the USA. He found that the average conformity score for the Japanese subjects was lower than the American subjects. However, Frager deduced that the reason was due to the Japanese subjects' response to strong social pressures, rather than conformist tendencies in their personality. However, it seems that conformity in Japan could also be due to the country's tendency towards masculinity rather than femininity (Hofstede, 1980). Also Lustig and Cassotta (1992) found in their study that assertiveness and competition were social norms for the males in Japan making conformity unlikely.

Asch's study on group conformity stimulated a great deal of interest in the subject by small group scholars and several views were posited as potential reasons for conformity. Allen (1965) claimed that situational factors influenced an individual's response to group conformity. These included, the level of commitment to and attractiveness of the group and the degree of interdependence within the group. This provides evidence in support of Hofstede's (1980) ideas in relation to collectivist cultures and conformity.

Shaw (1981) proposed that personality and gender influenced group conformity. For example, the more intelligent group members were, the less likely they were to conform. Perhaps this is because intelligent people are sure of their understanding about an issue and thus are more confident in holding on to their views. Additionally, Shaw (1981) found that conformity levels were higher in mixed gender groups than in single gender groups.

On the other hand, Douglas (1983) proposed that competency influenced conformity. This seems a reasonable assumption as those who perceive other group members as more competent are likely to conform due to their own uncertainties. Douglas (1983) also cites the issue of leadership as being, by its very nature, influential and thus encouraging conformity by followers.

However, scholars of democratic leadership such as Hersey and Blanchard (1986) might refute this idea as democracy is based on egalitarianism. Yet, it seems perhaps that Douglas (1983) does have a point when one considers Janis's (1983) research on 'group think'. Janis (1983) found in a number of his studies that conformity was often caused by ingratiation to the group leader. Although this ingratiation was towards extremely powerful political leaders, such as the USA's President Kennedy, who perhaps could be said to be in a position to exert more pressure towards conformity.

All of these views serve to highlight the complex nature of conformity and also that conformity might just as easily apply to individualist cultures as well as collectivist cultures. It seems that the main difference between the two types of culture is that people in individualist cultures are encouraged to be deviant in order to develop critical debate (Forsyth, 1990). In contrast, in collectivist cultures this would not be tolerated in order to conserve group relationships.

Conformity is also closely aligned with cohesion, perhaps because cohesive groups can often be conforming because of their very nature. For instance, Brilhart, Galanes and Adams (2001) define a cohesive group as one where the members are united and where they feel accepted and valued as group members. This then engenders feeling of loyalty towards each other. It is easy to see that groups who are cohesive and loyal may tend to conform in order to sustain their friendly and supportive group climate (Gibb, 1961). This again supports the idea that social pressures might lead to conformity. Also many scholars concur that cohesive groups are somewhat more productive than non- cohesive groups due to the high level of co-operation between the members (Douglas, 1983; Forsyth, 1990; Shaw, 1981). However, a high level of cohesion can also be detrimental to a group. For example, Janis (1983) found that 'groupthink' is more likely to occur in a cohesive group because the group prefers to maintain the friendliness and harmony of the group rather than to create a climate of critical thinking. Yet critical thinking is essential in any group faced with solving problems and making decisions (Ellis and Fisher, 1980). Cathcart, Samovar & Henman (1996) assert that while personal attraction between members can contribute to cohesion, often it is the satisfaction of goal achievement that leads to cohesion.

However, while Larson & La Fasto (1989) support this idea, they also purport that the productivity of groups depends on their acceptance of the goal and their motivation and enthusiasm to carry out the task.

It is evident that these matters relating to the prominence of the group for some cultures and the importance of the individual for others could have consequences for multicultural groups of students working together. For example, from the ideas put forward above collectivist group members might expect cohesion, loyalty and conformity from their group members and to be directed rather than to take the initiative. Conversely, individualist group members might expect their group members to feel free to express dissent rather than to simply conform, particularly as Bournemouth University as a British institution, is likely to have a culture that is influenced by individualistic tendencies.

The reasoning behind these ideas of individualism and collectivism are derived from Hofstede's (1980) defining culture as the mental programming of the mind. Hofstede asserts that this mental programming is partly unique and partly shared with others in society. In other words a person's culture is partly made up of his/her own unique personality together with his/her socialisation process. According to Hofstede (1980) each dimension reflects an individual's values and attitudes towards the particular issue in question. Additionally, Hofstede explains that with regard to the dimension of individualism and collectivism, the central element in a person's mental programme relates to the self - concept. This determines the relationship a person has with their sense of individuality as opposed to their notion of the collective.

To emphasise the important differences in this respect between individualism and collectivism Hofstede (1980) draws on a study by Hsu (1971) who asserts that the Western idea of personality, which is reflective of a person's self concept, does not exist in China. He suggests that rather than considering personality as a separate entity from society itself, as people tend to do in individualistic cultures, the Chinese regard the person him/herself together with his/her societal and cultural environment to make his/her life meaningful. This

results in the Chinese modifying their personal views to be in line with their environment. Additionally, Ho (1978) makes the point that collectivism does not negate the well being of an individual in Chinese society, it is simply that this is more likely if the group's well being is preserved. Hence this supports the importance of groups in Chinese society as opposed to the individual as in individualist cultures such as Britain.

In relation to personality, it is important to note at this juncture that while personality is not one of the concepts included in Hofstede's study, it could be a variable worthy of consideration. Arguably, personality could be a reason for a person behaving differently to the characteristics reflected in Hofstede's dimensions. Indeed, Tayeb (2001) asserts that personality is an important part of culture and should be included in the cultural mix. However, to be fair to Hofstede(1980:2) he does not state that personality is not an important part of a person's culture as his following quote demonstrates:

> The individual level of human programming is the truly unique part. No two people are programmed exactly alike [...] This provides for a wide range of alternative behaviours within the same collective culture.

Hofstede acknowledges that within the same society or 'collective', as he terms it, people may share the same societal codes but the extent to which this person holds to these beliefs is partly determined by the person's personality. He also claims that it is difficult to draw a dividing line between personality and culture. Furthermore, his view is supported by Hollan (1992) who asserts that while the self- concept may be derived from one's own personal and social experience, it may not coincide with the self-concept which is culturally formed. These views by Hollan highlight the complexity of culture and provide a reason perhaps for deviance from the expected cultural norms of behaviour which could be due to a person's personality.

Clearly personality must have an influence on the way people interact. For instance, people raised in the same family often have very different attitudes towards matters even although they have been raised in the same way. Indeed,

personality was found to be significant in a study by Triandis et al (1988) in which they found that some people had difficulties accepting ingroup norms even when it was usual to do so in their culture. They suggested that the reason for this anomaly was due to a personality trait known as allocentrism/ idiocentrism. They also found that these traits correlated with collectivism and individualism respectively. For instance, allocentric people in collectivist cultures accept in-group norms unquestioningly whereas idiocentric people in these cultures challenge acceptance of such norms and may even feel antagonistic about having to do so. On the other hand, allocentric members of individualistic cultures are more likely to be governed by in-group norms than idiocentric members who find it natural to do what they feel is best, regardless of the needs of the other group members.

These ideas outlined alert researchers to the need to consider personality as a potential variable if discrepancies are found between the expected behaviours of people from another culture and their actual behaviour. Certainly this may be relevant to this study as a possible challenge to the potential usefulness of Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

Furthermore, Triandis et al's (1988) ideas above provide support for scholars who suggest that these dimensions may coexist within some cultures. For instance, Tayeb (2001) asserts that to label cultures according to dimensions is limiting them and not accounting for the collectivist and individualist in everyone that may surface occasionally depending on the situation. She illustrates this by using Britain and India as examples, explaining that in individualist Britain if a tragedy befalls a small town in one part of the country it brings out the community spirit in the rest of the country. However, this could be said to be universally true of most countries around the world and has been evidenced in recent days in response by many countries in the world to the countries involved in the devastating Tsunami disaster. With regard to collectivist India, Tayeb says that people can behave in a most individualistic manner towards others simply because of the caste system and degree of wealth. This was noted earlier in reference to a study by Triandis (1995) in relation to conformity (see page 18). However, Hofstede (1980) admits that his dimensions

are based on the *predominate* tendencies within cultures which allows for the fact that not everyone in a culture will necessarily share each and every value. Another issue that could feasibly be linked to differences in values between people in a culture was that of cultural change raised by Smith (2002). Smith suggested that consideration needed to be given to the possibility that Hofstede's dimensions would not necessarily endure over time. One only has to consider the changes in British society through historical accounts and the adjustments made by people during the industrial revolution, to accept the notion that societies evolve over time due to changes in attitudes and values. Smith's (2002) ideas resulted from a study by Smith, Dugan and Trompenaars (1996) in which he noted that while there were certainly significant correlations with Hofstede's (1980) study, these correlations were not as strong as to discount the possibility of changes within cultures since 1980. This helps to strengthen the argument for continuing research in intercultural issues.

Hofstede (2001) too acknowledges the inevitability of cultural change due to factors such as modifications in a culture's economic or political situation and technological innovation. Though he purports that this change happens slowly. Furthermore, he does not accept the view that all societies will eventually become more and more similar. He sides with Inkeles's (1981) view that while technological modernisation is an important reason for cultural change, it does not wipe out variety completely. Also Hofstede (2001) states that change can occur through age and generations. This is apparent when one considers that new technology is often embraced more wholeheartedly by the younger generation who seem to be keener to try out the 'new' than the older generation. An example of this in today's 'media age' is the idea that it is absolutely essential to have a mobile phone. Certainly, the comment ' we are living in a different society today' is one that seems to have been uttered from generation to generation. Indeed, all these aspects offer challenges to Hofstede's ideas that societies can be classified strictly according to the dimensions of individualism and collectivism.

In summary, through examining the literature on individualism and collectivism it appears that Hofstede's framework may be a useful one for exploring the

different ways in which people from different cultures interact. It seems that people from collectivist cultures would be more likely to subordinate their own goals for the sake of the group than people from individualist cultures. This is because of the collective ideal of the 'group' as opposed to the 'self' within individualism. However, it is apparent that there are also several factors which could mediate between a person's cultural propensity to be either individualistic or collectivist. For example, personality is highlighted as a likely cause for discrepancies in behaviour and also gender and leadership. Similarly, it is apparent that situational factors could also influence cultural attitudes. Evolution of cultures is also mooted and finally so too is the feasibility of coexistence of cultural values within cultures. This demonstrates the complexity of cultures and the need for continuing research in this important field of research. Recognising, therefore, the value of Hofstede's dimensions, this discussion moves to consider a second cultural dimension against which national cultures can be measured.

Masculinity/Femininity 'Tough versus tender'

In addition to the individualist/collectivist distinction, Hofstede (1980) suggests that societies can be clarified as masculine or feminine. He maintains that masculinity refers to cultures in which social gender roles are distinct. For example, men are expected to be assertive, tough and ambitious and to focus on material success. On the other hand, women are expected to show strong female characteristics of nurturing and empathy and to be more concerned with quality of life. In masculine cultures women work in order to live. Societies high in masculinity place a high value on power and assertiveness and people in these cultures have a strong motivation for achievement. Members of masculine cultures value challenge, believe in independent decision making and work is central to their lives (Hofstede, 1984). Van de Vliert (1998) also notes that masculine cultures reflect more competitiveness among males than females particularly within the workplace, often resulting in occupying positions of power.

In contrast, in what Hofstede (1980) terms feminine societies, there is a blurring of gender roles with both men and women demonstrating the female characteristics as outlined above. There is greater equality between the sexes than in masculine cultures. Employees in organisations are more likely to work in order to live and they value co-operation in the work place which is characterised by group decision making rather independent decision making (Hofstede, 1984). Hofstede (1998:3) also cautions:

> these terms should not be confused with individualism /collectivism nor should the cultural distinction be confused with differences in individual personality .

Hofstede's comments in relation to individualism and collectivism seem to suggest that people might associate feminine cultures with collectivism because of the collectivist importance of relationships with others. On the other hand individualism might be associated with masculine cultures because of the value towards self. However, Hofstede's (1980) dimensions show that this is not always the case. For example, Japan is ranked as being collectivist and yet it is a highly masculine culture while Denmark is ranked as individualist and yet is highly feminine. Britain is ranked as individualist and is purported to be masculine.

In relation to Hofstede's point about personality, it seems that confusion could arise when considering the nature/nurture debate. People whose belief that characteristics are developed by nature may well be tempted to associate Hofstede's characteristics above with personality, while those who believe that characteristics are developed through nurture may associate these with socialisation. However, it is evident from Hofstede's (1980) concept of mental programming that the masculinity and femininity dimension is associated with socialisation rather than personality, hence his caution. He states that gender role programming starts immediately after birth by parents and then is continually confirmed through schooling and society at large through the media. These ideas are supported extensively by many scholars, over several decades and still seem to be pertinent in today's social climate. For example, Martin, Eisenbud and Rose (1995) report that pre school age boys and girls like a new

toy less if they are told that it is a toy that opposite sex children like. Interestingly this research was conducted fairly recently and perhaps supports Hofstede's (2001) assertions that despite modern thinking, cultural evolution is slow. Although there are areas where the blurring of gender boundaries is in evidence today with the acceptance by many cultures of gay rights. Hofstede (2001) gives thought to the issue of attitudes towards homosexuality and cites Bolton (1994) as suggesting that homosexuality is rejected by masculine cultures, as it is a threat to their norms whereas he found in feminine cultures that it is looked upon more as a fact of life. These views are interesting as Hofstede (1980) ranks Britain as highly masculine. Yet homosexuality is an acceptable part of life today by some people in Britain although others still find it unacceptable. This suggests that cultural differences within dimensions, other than individualism and collectivism as suggested by Triandis (1995) and Tayeb (2003) can coexist (see page 23). It also draws further attention to the issue of cultural evolution posited by some scholars (Smith, 2002) (see page 24).

Furthermore, Hofstede's (1980) suggestion that masculine cultures have clearly delineated gender roles is not necessarily true in Britain today. There appears to be an overlapping of gender roles with males choosing to do traditionally 'female' jobs, such as nursing, and childminding and females choosing to become mechanics and bricklayers. Also Hofstede (1980) asserts that males in masculine cultures focus on performance and ambition and females focus on quality of life and service. Yet, in Britain today it is clear that females, like males, are encouraged to be ambitious and competitive. This is evidenced in many more females studying in higher education and females attaining positions of power within industry and government than in former years. These anomalies provide evidence to support ongoing research into intercultural issues, particularly as cultures change and evolve.

Ting-Toomey (1999) cautions that it is important to be aware of the environment in respect of masculinity and femininity. She notes that if the cultural ideals between the members of a group were of masculinity then clearly delineated roles would be expected for the males and females, whereas in that of a feminine culture, flexible sex role norms would be usual.

In summary, in exploring the influence of culture on postgraduate multicultural student groups, the ideas provided by Hofstede in relation to masculinity and femininity are useful in highlighting key areas of diversity that could arise in multicultural groups. Importantly, the situation could be a significant factor. In Britain, a masculine culture, group members would be expected to focus on issues related to their work rather than on nurturing relationships between members. In a multicultural student group where there may be people from feminine cultures this could be challenging. Students from these cultures may find it difficult to concentrate on the task in hand before getting to know the other group members. Other factors of significance were issues of coexistence of values within cultures in relation to homosexuality and the overlapping of gender roles. These could also have implications for multicultural student groups working together. This discussion of Hofstede's cultural dimensions continues with his third dimension which addresses the way in which power is tolerated within societies.

Power Distance 'Unequal versus equal'

A third feature of culture that emerges from Hofstede's (1980) study is the extent to which societies accept or reject an unequal distribution of power. For example, Hofstede (1980) suggests that individuals from high power distance cultures accept power as a basic component of their society and expect subordinates to defer to their superiors. On the other hand, low power distance countries embrace an egalitarian view of life and believe that power should be used only when it is legitimate or perhaps when a particular expertise is required. Additionally, within group situations, people from low power distance cultures prefer group participation and cooperation while those members from high distance cultures prefer autocratic or majority rule decision making (Hofstede,1984).

These differences in power are apparent in the way in which cultures differ in the area of leadership. Furthermore, differences in leadership style affect group communication (Shaw, 1981). Although various styles of leadership have been proposed over the past decades, most styles today incorporate behavioural

patterns associated with autocratic and democratic leadership (Cathcart, Samovar and Henman, 1996). Autocratic leadership is characterised by control and strict enforcement of rules and includes coercive or referent power (Bass, 1985). Countries high in power distance, such as India, Turkey and Arab countries are more likely to use this style of leadership (Hofstede, 1991). Furthermore, groups in these countries would expect to be directed by a leader. On the other hand, democratic leadership exercises limited control and promotes self- initiative and cooperation, usually associated with legitimate or expert power (Bass, 1985). Countries low in power distance, such as, Britain, USA and Japan would utilise this style (Hofstede, 1991). Groups in these countries would not always be expected to look to a leader for direction. Yet small group scholars, Bormann and Bormann (1976) assert that groups without designated leaders are likely to lack cohesion as designated leaders provide stability and unity. Ellis and Fisher (1980) agree and assert that although people in a group may start out on an equal footing, often someone will emerge as leader in order to provide organisation and direction. These issues could have implications for multicultural students working together. Students used to a high power distance might feel anxious without a leader to guide them whereas those used to a low power distance could feel confident and empowered.

These ideas above are reflected in Hofstede's (1980) idea of mental programming. Hofstede (1980) asserts that the power distance dimension deals with the desirability or undesirability of inequality in society together with dependence versus independence as the norm. In other words, members of high power distance societies expect to have a particular place in society and do not expect to reach a position above that station. This would be reflective of their general attitude to life, even with regard to education it seems. Hofstede (1980) claims that in high power distance cultures there is a strict hierarchy of authority and teachers are treated with great respect with students expecting to be punished for disobedience. Often workers in large power distance societies are uneducated which may help to maintain the divide between the haves and the have-nots. Conversely, education in low power distance cultures promotes a student centred education system where students are expected to question and challenge their teachers.

Tayeb (2001) argues that attitudes by members of a culture towards power and authority are often related to context. She cites the example of an Indian man, used to a high power distance at work and whose wife is the chairperson of the company. She suggests that he may feel less powerful at work but more powerful at home where the male is seen as the authority figure. However, it could be said that this may be more of a problem for a highly masculine culture, where females would not normally hold such positions. India is mid way on Hofstede's masculinity/ femininity dimension thus in relation to gender it would be acceptable for a woman to have a high position of authority at work. It could also be reflective of Triandis's (1995) ideas that India is a vertical culture where it is acceptable to be different from the norm (see page 23). Furthermore, Gudykunst & Kim (2003) posit that when people who hold these diverse beliefs interact, there is potential for misunderstanding unless there is some knowledge of the others' differences.

In summary, the dimension of power distance raises important issues with regard to postgraduate multicultural student groups working together. Of particular significance to this study is the way in which power distance impacts on educational institutes. British students are encouraged to be innovative and critical rather than simply accepting what they are being taught. This might be very difficult for students coming from cultures where this is not the norm. Furthermore, in multicultural student groups where some members prefer participative decision making and others prefer majority decisions this might leave some members feeling frustrated, especially if they feel that they are always in the minority. It is also apparent that like the other dimensions of individualism and collectivism, and masculinity and femininity, situational factors and coexistence of characteristics within cultures could be significant issues in the study of multicultural groups. Hofstede's fourth dimension of cultural variability, uncertainty avoidance, is now discussed.

Uncertainty Avoidance 'Rigid versus flexible'

Hofstede's (1980) fourth dimension is that of uncertainty avoidance. According to Hofstede, uncertainty about the future is part of human life and different

cultures adapt to this phenomenon in different ways. He purports that cultures high in uncertainty avoidance have a greater need for formal rules and predictability and suffer from high levels of stress if these needs are not met. Furthermore, people in high uncertainty avoidance cultures try to avoid ambiguity and hence their need for rules for virtually every possible situation.

On the other hand, societies with a low need for uncertainty avoidance can work effectively without direction and accept out of the ordinary behaviour between group members. Ambiguity is less problematic as their tolerance in this respect is high. Hofstede (1984) also suggested that these countries were more open to change and were much less hierarchical than those with a high need for uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1984). Additionally, Hofstede (1991) points out that people must not assume that uncertainty avoidance is the same as risk avoidance. For example, he suggests that people who find ambiguous situations threatening often engage in risk taking behaviour in order to diminish the ambiguity.

These issues reflect Hofstede's idea of mental programming. Hofstede (1980) suggests that the general societal norm of uncertainty avoidance can be reflected by society in one of two ways. For example, some societies reflect the belief that uncertainty is an inherent part of life and as a continuous threat must be fought while other societies believe that each day must be taken as it comes. Furthermore, he claims that those holding to the first view resist change more emotionally than the latter and tend to be more conservative with a strong desire for law and order. Conversely, those who follow the latter view are much more relaxed about life in general. Interestingly, low tolerance for uncertainty avoidance can often lead to those who control uncertainty as being more powerful (Hofstede, 1980).

Regarding the issue of rules and small groups there seems to be agreement between small group scholars that a clear distinction can be made between rules and norms (Douglas, 1983). These scholars assert that rules tend to be formalised and written down by governments or organisations. On the other hand, norms usually develop gradually from the time of a group's initial

formation. These norms are tacit rather than explicit and are unwritten norms of conduct to which the group members are expected to adhere. Furthermore, norms reflect cultural beliefs about what is appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. In Britain, good timekeeping is a 'cultural' norm and as such it is accepted by society at large. However, in other cultures such as the Middle East, time is not of such import and because relationships are important in these cultures, people might be left waiting around for hours (Hall, 1977).

Additionally, a problem with norms is that because they are simply passed on by word of mouth, rather than written down, it is not always easy for an outsider to know what these are. It is sometimes only by observation that one becomes more cognisant with the cultural norms of a country and this can take a matter of time (Forsyth, 1990). Also norms that apply to one group may not apply to another. Within an organisation, a group from one particular department may have norms that are different from a group within another department. This is the same for groups/teams within departments. Furthermore, because of the looseness of these norms it is often easy for people to ignore them (Thompson, 2000).

The issue of structural tightness is an important concept with regard to a culture's rules. Triandis (1995) notes that tight cultures impose many rules and constraints on members' behaviour while loose cultures are much more relaxed and place few constraints on their members' behaviour. Britain is thought to be a loosely structured culture. However, this looseness can lead to problems, particularly as it can become difficult when attempting to punish those group members who break them.

Clearly, there are implications for people from cultures which have a high need for rules and who find themselves in a culture where rules are relaxed. Certainly, Cushman & Whiting (1972) claim that in cultures that have a need for co-ordination between people, accuracy in understanding the rules and norms is crucial. Additionally, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) purport that when considering the 'collective' nature of collectivist cultures their need for rules and norms would be greater than for individualistic cultures. Yet, Hofstede's

(1980) dimension of uncertainty avoidance would not necessarily correlate with this. For instance, Belgium is an individualist country and has a high need for uncertainty avoidance. On the other hand, Argentina is a collectivist country and has a low need for uncertainty avoidance. This demonstrates the necessity of not making assumptions about cultural issues based on evidence that relates to another aspect of that culture.

In summary, in considering the influence of culture on multicultural postgraduate student groups, Hofstede's dimension of uncertainty avoidance raises some pertinent issues that can be explored through primary research. For example, it has been shown that some cultures can work effectively in uncertain situations and yet others might find this stressful. It is also apparent that for groups in any society rules are beneficial. It seems too that rules and norms are distinguishable. The former are easy to grasp because they are formally written down whereas norms can be illusive due to their tacit and informal nature. Apparently, cultures can be identified as having tight or loose structures (Triandis, 1995). In loosely structured cultures, rules and norms tend to be relaxed which means that they are not always easy to enforce. This could have implications for the students in this study as Britain is loosely structured and students from tightly structured cultures may find it difficult to work effectively without rules and norms to guide them.

Interestingly, Bond (1988) explored Hofstede's dimensions further, in order to ascertain if there had been a Western bias because of the method used in the data collection. Bond (1988), in collaboration with Hofstede, together with the group of researchers known as the Chinese Culture Connection, conducted research using a method with a Chinese bias. These scholars discovered that the uncertainty avoidance dimension was the only one of Hofstede's dimensions that did not correlate with their research. Instead, a dimension emerged entitled Confucian Work Dynamism, later referred to by Hofstede (2001) as long/short term orientation and which is now discussed.

Confucian Dynamism

Bond (1988) found that at the heart of Confucian philosophy was the belief in social harmony, which considered proper human relationships as the basis of society. This involves aspects such as the protection of 'face', dignity, self - respect, reputation, honour and prestige. With regard to interpersonal relationships, Confucianism is thought to influence perception and communication in a variety of ways. It teaches both directly and indirectly the notion of empathy, which makes listening an important element of communication. Also there is concern with status relationships and social etiquette. The use of indirect rather than direct language is also encouraged in order to preserve 'one's own' and the 'other's' face.

To some extent Bond's ideas can be said to reflect ideas emerging from Hall's (1977) study on high and low context communication. Hall's (1977) research revealed that some cultures use high context communication when interacting with others. These cultures, such as those in the Far East, rely more on situational aspects such as body language and the ambiance or climate of the situation in order to gauge the meaning of the communication. On the other hand, low context communicators, such as Britain and other Western nations, depend on the spoken word for meaning. It is not difficult to imagine the misunderstanding between people who communicate in different ways. High context communicators might suffer embarrassment and 'loss of face' at the openness and directness of low context communicators especially if they feel that openness is to be reciprocated. In contrast, low context communicators could be frustrated at the lack of openness of their high context peers. These issues may be useful in this present study when considering the influence of culture multicultural students working together.

Worthy of note is that in acknowledging the importance of Bond's (1988) research, Hofstede (2001) admitted that despite the five - nationality team of advisers used in devising his original IBM questionnaire, and its pre test in ten countries, their lack of consideration of a potential Western bias was a serious omission. He subsequently incorporated Bond's Confucian Dynamism as a fifth

dimension in his latest writings, renaming it long /short term orientation from its original title. Hofstede's (2001) reasoning was that people would not necessarily be familiar with Confucian teaching and furthermore, he also found that some non- Confucian countries such as Brazil and India had a leaning towards these values.

Overall, in this overview of Hofstede's (1980) ideas about cultural dimensions it has been argued that Hofstede's study does provide insights into differences between cultures. Furthermore, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) have noted that out of all of Hofstede's dimensions, individualism and collectivism is the one dimension that provides the most significant insights into cultural diversity. Certainly it is apparent in reviewing the literature that individualism/ collectivism seems to have generated the most interest by scholars and therefore this dimension is likely to be an important one to explore through research of postgraduate multicultural student groups. There is also evidence from Tayeb (2001) and others that personality and age should be included in considering cultural diversity and the assertion that cultural variables coexist by Smith (2002), Tayeb, (2001) and Triandis (1995) demands consideration in further research. It is evident too that situational factors have a bearing on the ways in which people behave and may account for peoples' seemingly deviant behaviour from their usual cultural norms, indicating that context needs to be considered as well as culture when exploring multicultural student groups.

Furthermore, hundreds of scholars have used Hofstede's ideas as the basis for their research and found these to have offered a useful heuristic for the analysis of cultures and their differences. For example, studies include Bantz (1993), Ilgen et al (2001),Lustig and Cassotta (1992). Hofstede (2001) also wrote,

> data from 140 other studies comparing from 5 to 39 countries were found to be significantly correlated with one or more of the five dimensions.

His evidence indicates the value of his dimensions as an approach to research. Even those researchers who point to the coexistence of cultural dimensions indicate the usefulness of drawing on the notion of cultural dimensions as a way of understanding differences across and between cultures. Furthermore, while

Hofstede was conducting his early research, support for his four dimensions came from Rokeach (1970) who was conducting a similar study at the same time as Hofstede. Hofstede and Bond (1988: 15) claimed:

> Rokeach's work provides strong support for the universality of the four IBM dimensions.

It appears, therefore, that Hofstede's framework is the most appropriate and well tested of any for researching societal cultures despite its limitations.

However, whilst it is clear that Hofstede's research has many advocates, it also has several critics. Indeed such is the intensity of debate surrounding his study that much added richness and depth have been provided by the many subsequent studies generated. This review now considers important contributions to this debate.

Challenges to Hofstede's Ideas

A focus of debate regarding Hofstede's research is his chosen method. The study is quantitative in nature and is based only on one multinational company, IBM. The survey includes over 100,000 middle class employees from 40 countries and the responses to the questionnaire on work related values provide the database from which the conclusions are reached. Various criticisms are levelled at Hofstede (1980) none more so than from McSweeney (2002) who is rather scathing in his indictment of Hofstede's claims and appears to see little laudable or useful in his research. Some of the issues he raises are addressed below.

McSweeney (2002) disputes Hofstede's (1980) claims that those surveyed were similar in every respect apart from nationality. For example, McSweeney (2002) claims that it is contestable that there is only one organisational culture within the confines of IBM and there is evidence by organisational behavioural scholars to back his claim. Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1984) who take an interpretivist approach, argue that organisations are made up of many

subcultures and that culture is enacted through communication. In other words organisational cultures change and evolve through interaction. On the other hand, other scholars disagree with this approach and take a more functional attitude towards organisational culture. Deal and Kennedy (1982) side with Hofstede's functionalist approach to organisational culture believing that cultures are 'given' to the organisational members and that culture remains static unless the leaders decide to change it. Thus the overarching culture conveys to all employees the values that their organisation holds and to which members should adhere. This is in line with Hofstede's (1980) findings.

Another criticism of Hofstede's (1980) work by McSweeney (2002) is the assumption that because the respondents were matched on an occupational basis, they would also share the same occupational culture. However, much of the organisational literature today agrees that departments within organisations do indeed have their own unique culture. Brooks (2003) claims that a reason for this is that the personalities of people attracted to a certain occupation are similar and thus groups can have personalities that reflect the personalities of the group members. For example, it could be assumed that people within the creative department would share certain personality traits and therefore its culture would feasibly be quite different from the accountancy department, despite being in the same organisation. This also suggests that Hofstede's results are dependable.

Yet, Mc Sweeney (2002) does appear to raise some valid points in relation to the ways in which the respondents may have been compelled to answer the questionnaires. Apparently some of the questionnaires were completed within groups and not individually. This could be problematic, for say, a collectivist country, as the members of the groups would possibly have a tendency to give the same answers due to their natural need for conformity. Triandis (1988) and others whose research included the issue of conformity would certainly view this as an important issue that should have been confronted by Hofstede. However, the aggregation of results may nullify this criticism to a certain extent. Also Hofstede's (1980) dimensions are based on the *predominate*

tendencies in each culture. He does not suggest that every person in every culture will share exactly the same attitudes and values.

Mc Sweeney (2002) also censures Hofstede for adding a fifth dimension due to Hofstede's early (1980) claims of having found four main dimensions of national cultures. Instead of viewing this as commendable, he suggests that because this new dimension arose due to Bond's (1988) discovery that uncertainty avoidance seemed not to be of significance within Chinese society, Hofstede (1980) should downgrade his uncertainty avoidance dimension from a universal culture to a non-universal culture to reflect this. However, it seems reasonable to surmise that because it is not important to the Chinese population does not negate its importance to other cultures as is evident from Hofstede's findings.

In relation to the sample, Hunt (1981) also deliberates on the merits of Hofstede's investigation, particularly about the suitability of IBM as the sample and also the preponderance of male respondents, particularly in countries where there are few executive female positions. Yet despite these concerns he suggests that Hofstede's contribution to cross cultural studies is impressive and what is needed is more of Hofstede's work. Hunt (1981:62) suggests the following:

> We need some flesh on the bones or framework he has devised. The alternatives to his framework are the heavily socio-economic models of cultural differences that may assist overall impressions but do little to explain day to day interpersonal relationships in different cultures.

Since 1980 there has indeed been extensive research by scholars in the field. Tayeb (2001) notes that the main advantage of breaking culture down into characteristics is that it allows for others to use these to make comparisons across cultures and to identify areas of similarity and difference. Yet, with her support comes caution as she also argues that if culture is simply put into neat, sometimes unconnected little boxes, scholars are in danger of losing sight of the larger whole. Furthermore, Tayeb (2001) argues that it is preposterous to suggest that nations can be labelled with certain characteristics forever. Her

view in this respect coincides with Smith's (2002) views on culture evolution (see page 24). However, Williamson (2003) defends Hofstede's (1980) work by claiming that Hofstede is aware of the incomprehensiveness of his dimensions, thus suggesting that labelling them forever was not his intention. It is clear to see from Tayeb's comments that national culture is complex and that to simplify it may indeed be risky. Her ideas also support the issues addressed earlier with regard to the need to consider other factors like situation, coexistence of cultures, age, personality and cultural evolution. She seems not to be belittling Hofstede's original study as like Hofstede (1980) she also acknowledges that a person's behaviour is informed by a person's national values and assumptions, but she highlights the need for research to take a much more holistic approach to national culture.

Finally, it is acknowledged that the above discussion cannot do justice to the extensive amount of commendation and criticism Hofstede has received and no doubt will continue to do so. It has simply been an attempt to demonstrate the importance of Hofstede's research in providing significant insights into the much required area of intercultural research. It seems that the debate will continue to rage between those like Mc Sweeney who strongly refute the validity or usefulness of the study and those who hail Hofstede's research as a dominant influence. For example, Chapman (1997:1360) states

> There is perhaps no other contemporary framework in the field of culture and business that is so general, so broad, so alluring and so inviting to argument and fruitful disagreement.

Therefore, there is value in drawing on Hofstede's ideas whilst at the same time recognising the complexity and multidimensionality of cultures and therefore, the limitations of his framework.

In conclusion, in order to study the influence of culture on postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together, Hofstede's (1980) research appears to provide a credible framework. Noting, however, that the framework has both strengths and limitations, it will be necessary to evaluate the usefulness through primary research. Additionally, the views and insights gathered from

other scholars included in this review will be used to further inform this study. Likewise the coexistence of Hofstede's dimensions within cultures and also the possibility of cultural evolution will also be considered. It is hoped that this will provide a more holistic approach to exploring and understanding cultural differences especially those within postgraduate student groups.

The principal aim of this study is to explore the influence of culture on postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together towards the attainment of a mutual goal.

A further aim is to evaluate the usefulness of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions in identifying cultural variability in postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together towards the attainment of a mutual goal

The following chapter three provides an examination of interpersonal issues which might have a bearing on the adaptation process of multicultural student groups working together.

CHAPTER THREE: A REVIEW OF INTERPERSONAL ISSUES

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of culture on postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together towards the attainment of a mutual goal. In this chapter, an examination of interpersonal factors such as adaptation, ethnocentrism/ cultural relativism, anxiety and uncertainty reduction, stereotyping, and first impressions is provided as these are often important issues when interacting with people initially. Several prominent scholars in the field of intercultural communication are incorporated, together with important contributions from interpersonal communication scholars.

The literature suggests that one of the key issues inherent in being able to settle comfortably into unknown territory and thus experience less tension and stress is the ability to adapt to others' ways of doing and being, therefore, this chapter begins with a section on adaptation.

Adaptation

Anderson (1994) asserts that at the end of the day whether or not a person adapts effectively depends on how he/she chooses to respond to the new environment. She is of the opinion that a person creates his/her own adjustment and that people demonstrate varying degrees and levels of adaptation as a continuum. While this may well be the case, it is arguable that the success or otherwise of the adaptation process may be due to an individual's confidence, personality, age, education, life experience and so forth.

Nolan (1999) takes a cultural approach, pointing out that until a person learns the cultural code of his/her new environment he/she may continue to experience problems and the only way to overcome this is to learn and to change accordingly. On the other hand, Oberg's (1960) model of culture shock indicates that a person may go through various emotions while attempting to adapt to another culture. Initial feelings of exhilaration and anticipation may be followed by gloominess and despair as a stranger to a culture experiences unforeseen difficulties and then returns to more positive feelings as problems

are overcome. Ward and Searle (1991) advocate that adjustment or adaptation can be considered from two standpoints, one being psychological and the other socio- cultural. This both supports and adds to Oberg's model of culture shock as it allows assessment of the adaptation process through the person's experience of their transition.

In their quantitative study of students from 42 countries, Ward and Searle (1991) found that psychological distress is often brought about through cultural dissimilarity and loneliness. In relation to socio- cultural adjustment, cultural knowledge and identity are important variables. Also knowledge of the host culture in particular, helps people to more easily fit into the host culture. However, they suggest that if a person has a strong cultural identity they are less likely to easily adapt to local traditions. These results are broadly consistent with their earlier study a year before with Singaporean and Malaysian students which suggests reliability in their research. Indeed Mak, Ishu Ishyama and Barker's (1999) also found that the most frequently identified barrier to being interculturally effective was unfamiliarity with the host culture and society.

Mak et al's (1999) study addresses the ways in which socio- cultural competences might aid people in attaining their goals for career and educational success. Their findings, therefore, are pertinent to this present research. Mak et al (1999) found that not everyone is aware of the importance of socio - cultural competence in the pursuit of their goals in a new country. They discovered that often people were more concerned with having clear goals for their success and were prepared to work very hard to attain these, even to the extent of missing out on socialising. Chen and Isa (2003) support Mak et al's (1999) sentiments. They claim that over time some people assimilate into the host culture while others remain separate culturally in spite of the physical proximity and that this is due to cultural learning which is an integral part of cultural adaptation.

Whilst these insights from various scholars provide greater understanding into the adaptation process, Bennett (1998) considers another important factor. Bennett explains the usefulness of drawing a distinction between adaptation and assimilation. He suggests that adaptation is additive in that to become

multicultural, a person would embrace new aspects of the host's culture but not at the expense of their own original socialisation. In other words, this would apply to a person who did not intend to live in the country for a long period of time but at the same time would need to change in certain respects to live with a certain amount of ease. Conversely, assimilation is substitutive and a person's intention would be to live and work in the country for a long period of time and thus it would be expedient to replace their own ideas and values for those of the new culture.

Bennett's ideas are exemplified in a longitudinal study by Pratt (1991) who notes that Chinese students studying in Canada for a year were able to embrace issues of individual rights and self development which were alien to them. On returning to their native China they reverted to their original ways of thinking. The reason for the outcome of this study could be due to their Chinese roots which can be explained by reference to Bond's ideas outlined earlier (see page 34). Bond's (1988) research revealed that at the heart of Confucian philosophy is the belief in social harmony. It could be surmised that in order to fulfil the desire for social harmony the students needed to adapt their ways of thinking to those of the Canadians. This supports Kim's (1988) argument that successful adaptation is due to internal willingness to learn about and participate in the host culture's environment. She also adds that this in turn is determined by their intent to be short or long term residents. Aitken (1973) agrees with Kim as he also acknowledges that if staying short term, the strangers would have no real motivation to be deeply involved.

Ting-Toomey (1999: 233) embodies all of the above views in her definition of intercultural adaptation:

> It involves an intercultural boundary-crossing journey from security to insecurity and from familiarity to unfamiliarity. The journey can be a turbulent or exhilarating process.

Her comments suggest that adapting to a new environment will be easier for some than others. She also proposes that the longer a sojourner remains within a

new culture the more likely his/her outlook on life will change. Ting-Toomey (1999:235) defines a sojourner as:

> Typically individuals who have a transitional stay in a new culture as they strive to achieve their instrumental goals. For example, an international student wanting to achieve her MBA.

She adds that the outcome of the adaptation journey will depend on factors such as how receptive the host culture is to the sojourner and the sojourner's expectations and formation of social networks. These points give weight to Ward and Searle's (1991) research above. Indeed, all of the reasons identified, demonstrate the complexity of adaptation. However, arguably language too, could be an initial barrier to effective adaptation, particularly within multicultural student groups where there could be a diversity of languages. Presumably this would depend on the students' initial confidence in speaking in another language which is not their own.

In summary, it is evident from the above studies that adapting to a new culture is not a simple matter. The literature suggests that motivation to adapt is a central factor in successful adaptation. It seems too that psychological and socio cultural aspects are important influences in how successful someone is in adapting or not. Importantly, the process of adaptation does not necessarily require a person to relinquish his/her own values and attitudes. Rather it seems to be a question of incorporating the new culture's values, to some extent, into a person's own value system. Language is also highlighted as a potential initial impediment to the adaptation process. It is deduced that if the students' adaptation journey is reasonably smooth their communication with each other will be easier. These studies indicate the value of exploring adaptation in relation to multicultural student groups working together. The discussion now moves on to consider ethnocentrism and cultural relativism which are two further factors which the literature considers are influential in the adaptation process.

Ethnocentrism/Cultural Relevatism

The literature suggests that ethnocentrism is caused by enculturation and refers to the tendency of people to assume that others think and do in the same way as they themselves. Thus enculturation is an inherent part of a person's belief system and is deeply entrenched through their socialisation as a person grows and develops from birth through to maturity. Neuliep (2003) proposes that ethnocentrism is a universal trait and that everyone is ethnocentric to a certain degree. Dubinskas (1992) offers a reason for this in his assertion that cultural patterns are often invisible to a culture's members. Hofstede (2001) also appears to embrace this idea in his declaration that ethnocentrism can be very subtle and that it is often easier to see ethnocentrism in people from other cultures than in one's own.

Interestingly, Lee and Ward (1998) claim that collectivist cultures are more likely to be ethnocentric than individualist cultures. This is not an unreasonable assumption given the importance of cohesion, loyalty and conformity to collectivist cultures asserted by Hofstede (1980). However, their claims seem questionable in light of the evidence Pratt's (1991) study provided earlier (see page 43). The Chinese students in Pratt's study could be classified as having collectivist tendencies and yet they were able to transcend their collectivism whilst in foreign climes. This shows that one must be cautious about assuming that cultures labelled with an overarching dimension share each of the other characteristics with which it is imbued.

Bennett (1998) purports that effective communication rests in people being culturally relative rather than being ethnocentric. Cultural relativism relies upon people being able to relinquish their own opinions in order to consider others' points of view. Yet arguably, the problem here is that a person's ideals and beliefs are part of who that person is, his/her innermost self and is not easily shifted. Bennett (1998) also claims that a person's unwillingness to give up their ethnocentricity may be related to feelings of being an outsider and wanting to protect their ethnic identity from suppression by the majority. When considering historical accounts of repression globally, this fear seems

understandable. Though in this study's student environment, it is unlikely that the students would feel suppressed. Yet it seems there may be a more simple explanation for ethnocentricity in that many scholars concur that often people across cultures simply assume shared meaning (Dubinskas, 1992; Neulip, 2003). In this study of multicultural student groups it is deduced that there may be difficulties if the students are unaware of some of these issues cited above.

In summarising the above studies, it is apparent that ethnocentrism is an aspect of an individual's cultural identity and is often more pronounced when meeting others whose values and attitudes are different from their own. Furthermore, it seems that becoming culturally relative is not an easy matter, particularly when people's values are deeply ingrained. It appears too, that some collectivist cultures may be more ethnocentric than individualist cultures. A review of the literature on ethnocentrism and cultural relativism shows that it is worthwhile to consider these issues in relation to the adaptation of multicultural student groups. This review now continues by addressing the issue of uncertainty and anxiety reduction which is related to the way in which people communicate with each other as they attempt to initiate and develop relationships, an important facet of adaptation.

While uncertainty avoidance was addressed earlier in chapter two, in relation to Hofstede's (1980) high/low uncertainty avoidance, it was deemed useful to address the matter of anxiety and uncertainty reduction from an interpersonal context as it could also influence the success or otherwise of a person's initial adaptation.

Uncertainty and Anxiety Reduction

The literature on interpersonal communication reveals that in order to reduce uncertainty and anxiety in initial encounters people must be motivated to seek knowledge about others (Berger and Calabrese, 1975). This enables them to more easily predict the other's behaviour. Ting-Toomey (1999) agrees with their views as she emphasises the importance of information seeking in reducing uncertainty and anxiety.

Gudykunst (1993) suggests that the ability to overcome uncertainty and anxiety is related to the level of uncertainty and anxiety felt. Apparently, people can have maximum and minimum thresholds of uncertainty. If a person's uncertainty is either above the maximum threshold or below the minimum threshold he/she may be unable to communicate effectively. The difficulty here is an obvious one. If the only way to overcome uncertainty and anxiety is through communication and a person's anxiety prevents their attempting to do so, there is a dilemma. Furthermore, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) also highlight that frequency in communication only helps in individualistic cultures, not in collectivist cultures.

This idea of frequency in communication only being helpful in individualistic cultures can be related to Hall's (1977) research on high/low context communication (see page 34). Moreover, it appears that high and low context communication is somewhat rule driven and ignorance in these matters during communication could lead to anxiety and uncertainty. For example, countries using low context communication, such as Britain, are expected to communicate in ways that are consistent with their feelings. They should be open, approachable, honest, precise and personal information is a prerequisite to being able to predict behaviour (Gudykunst, 1998). In contrast, people who use high context communication are expected to communicate in ways that maintain harmony within the group. This results in them sometimes offering opinions not in line with their true feelings. Openness is unusual as is offering too much personal information. Interestingly, Mare (1990) indicates that in high context cultures people who use few words are viewed as more trustworthy, which also helps to explain the value of silence in collectivist cultures. However, Hasegawa and Gudykunst (1998) would caution this view of silence. In a cross-cultural study of Japanese and Americans they found that the Japanese had a more negative view of silence when communicating with strangers than with close friends.

The above ideas demonstrate that overcoming uncertainty and anxiety may be easier for some cultures than others. Trenholm and Jensen (2000) advise that it

is only through interaction that people come to some understanding of what others are like. Yet it is evident that for some cultures it is not the norm to provide too much personal information. This could result in problems for the students in this study as some may find it difficult to change their ways of communicating to one of openness while others may find the lack of spontaneity in conversing unhelpful.

However, it seems that there are strategies available which might help to reduce uncertainty and anxiety. It is essential that people should search for similarities between each other rather than focusing on differences. Though this seems to offer a viable solution, it appears that it is not the 'actual' similarity that is important in first encounters but the 'perception' of similarity (Gudykunst and Kim, 2003). Indeed, perception is vital in communication because it influences the way a person sees and evaluates the other (De Vito, 2000). If a person perceives another as being friendly, for instance, then he/she is more likely to react to that person in a friendly manner resulting in the other reciprocating the friendliness thus reducing feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. The issue of searching for similarities could be especially useful in this present study, as the group members will be similar in at least two respects: being students and coming from other cultures.

In summary, it is clear from the above points that in order to overcome uncertainty and anxiety, people need to communicate in order to gain knowledge of each other. However, this seems to be easier for some cultures than others due to high/low context communication. Never the less, the idea of focusing on similarities rather than differences appears to offer a viable solution for reducing uncertainty and anxiety. Yet in a multicultural group this may be difficult with the diversity of values and attitudes between the members. A review of the literature on this issue shows the importance of including matters such as anxiety and uncertainty reduction when considering the adaptation process of multicultural student groups. This discussion continues by considering some of the implications of stereotyping to the adaptation process.

Stereotyping

The matter of stereotyping is important in the adaptation process because people often tend to make judgements of strangers based on the stereotypical images they have of them, therefore, this is the topic of the next section.

Hargie(1997: 46) notes:

> a stereotype is a term which originated in the print process and referred to a plate which repeatedly painted the same image.

This is a useful definition as it demonstrates the process people use when stereotyping others. People tend to 'stamp' a person with a particular trait because of the way they perceive others. This may simply be due to a mode of dress or an accent or some such issue. Similarly De Vito (2000) asserts that a sociological or psychological stereotype is a fixed impression of a group of people. He further adds that the problem with stereotyping others is that people have a tendency to put people into a certain group and respond to them as members of that group, rather than interacting with them as individuals.

Furthermore, Schaefer (1998) notes that in recent times the term seems to have taken on negative connotations, and that these are often exaggerated. Yet Hofstede (2001) asserts that stereotypes are only half-truths, but arguably perhaps, they do have a grain of truth in them. Yet, it seems feasible to suggest that a person's anxieties about others may well be a reflection of the stereotypes they hold. For example, someone coming from a highly collective culture may well be apprehensive on entering an individualistic society whose values seem to run counter to his or her own. Similarly, an individualist in a collectivist culture may be apprehensive at the thought of having to be committed to a group if he or she has enjoyed total autonomy in the past.

The point is that everyone has a tendency to stereotype as it is the only way humans can cope with the enormous amount of information with which they are

bombarded daily. The main advantage of stereotyping is that it allows people to process information they have about others more efficiently and allows them to form swift impressions of others. This in turn should enable them to more easily predict and control their social worlds thereby helping to reduce uncertainties they may have (Hargie, 1997).

However, the content of stereotypes can convey positive or negative information. Ting-Toomey (1999:161) cites an example with the following saying: 'Chinese are good at math or Koreans are too aggressive'. Furthermore she asserts that if people were mindful in their stereotyping it would show an open- minded attitude when dealing with others and a willingness to be prepared not to hold to the preconceived views too rigidly. In other words, it is beneficial to defer jumping to conclusions too quickly particularly as it appears that stereotypes can change over time according to the situation. As an example, it is useful to consider Bond's (1991) understanding of stereotypes held by the Chinese about people from other countries. He cites research by Yang and Yang (1962 and 1971) and explains that in 1962 Yang and Yang found that Taiwanese students had very favourable impressions of Germans, Americans, French and Chinese. Their stereotypes of Indians, Russians and Arabs tended to be negative while those of the Japanese, English and Black people were a mixture of both positive and negative images. However, in 1971 this changed somewhat to reveal less extreme stereotyping overall. The students' stereotyping about the Japanese and the Americans had become quite negative. Yang and Yang believed that the Taiwanese students' stereotyping had changed in line with international affairs at that time when there were disputes with Japan over fishing rights, and Taiwan's expulsion from the United Nations.

It is also the case that stereotyping can be closely aligned with prejudice and discrimination. Ting-Toomey (1999) notes that prejudice means prejudging while discrimination refers to antagonistic and sometimes degrading behaviour towards others. Furthermore, she asserts that while prejudice can be positive it seems to have taken on negative connotations. A significant point too is that stereotypes are very often perpetuated in society by the media. It seems fair to surmise that stereotyping could have implications for this present study of

multicultural student groups as people hold prejudices about each other because of their skin colour, class, dialect, cultural practices and so forth. Furthermore, arguably the issues of stereotyping, is a two-sided process. For instance, a person coming from Japan may not only be concerned about the image he/she has of the British but may also be worried about the image the British might have of the Japanese.

In summary, it is clear that people have a natural propensity to label people with certain group traits simply because of issues such as, skin colour, dress code, accent and even hair style. Certainly stereotyping does serve to assist people as they attempt to predict the behaviour of strangers. However, stereotyping should be used with caution and as Ting-Toomey (1999) asserts, people should be mindful in their stereotyping of others. In this present study, stereotyping could hinder the student's communication with their peers if they have preconceived cultural ideas about their peers. Certainly, the studies reviewed in relation to stereotyping appear to suggest that these are topics worthy of consideration in relation to the adaptation process of multicultural student groups. The final interpersonal factor to be addressed is that of first impressions.

First Impressions

The first impressions people have of others are vital whenever people interact with others for the first time because first impressions can either encourage or discourage future interaction depending on the favourableness of the meeting. Ting-Toomey (1999) notes that people want to create a favourable impression in order for others to find them attractive or at least credible. She also maintains that the concepts of attractiveness and credibility are essentially value laden and reflective of social agreement. As evidence, she cites research by Matsumoto and Kudoh (1993) who compared the United States and Japan in relation to perceptions of attractiveness. They found that the US students rated smiling faces as intelligent and sociable and thus more attractive than neutral faces. On the other hand, Japanese students rated smiling faces as more sociable but not more attractive nor more intelligent than neutral faces. In fact, they thought neutral faces were more intelligent.

Gudykunst & Kim (2003) note the importance of a person's implicit personality theory in first impressions. Implicit personality theories are a person's unconscious taken-for-granted assumptions about the way they communicate with others and are derived from a person's socialisation and unique experiences. Bruner and Tagiuri (1954) highlight the importance of a person's implicit personality theories when people make judgments about others. They suggest that these implicit personality theories influence the judgements people make about others and that people hold certain beliefs that 'hang together'. For example, if a person's experience of an intelligent person includes the idea that he/she is honest and likeable, this will colour the way that person sees others who are intelligent. In other words, they too will be thought of as honest and likeable whether they are or not. Thus it is important for people to question their implicit theories in order to be certain that their first impressions are valid. Furthermore, Bruner and Potter (1964) claim that first impressions are often subject to people seeking to confirm and seek out information that supports their views.

First impressions are also linked to self-presentation. This idea was inspired by Goffman (1959) who argued that life can be likened to a theatre in which people act out certain parts using particular lines depending on whether they are 'front' or 'back' stage. Importantly, he asserts that people present a particular face or social identity to others. The lines they use during interaction are chosen in order to maintain an image appropriate to the situation. As a result, self-presentation is the process by which people try to shape the image they want others to have of them. This concept is of vital importance in China and Ting-Toomey (1999: 75) asserts of the Chinese:

> Face in the Chinese context, means projected social image social respect and group harmony, and thus group interdependence, is achieved through the maintenance of everyone's face in the society and trying hard not to cause anyone to lose face.

Lim and Choi (1996) also advise that the issue of face permeates many Asian cultures. This is borne out by Bond (1996) in his study of the psychology of the Chinese people. Bond (1996) explains that when applying the views of Goffman to the Chinese it is necessary also to consider the hierarchical structure of their society with its unchanging focus on status. He cites an example of a Chinese dinner party, comparing it to that of an American one. In China, rank is indicated by the seating plan so that all who are invited know their standing in relation to everybody else and they do the right thing in relation to bowing and gesturing and paying respect to others. However, in America the situation is roughly the same for all. His example elucidates the importance of face in China and the general belief that the image of self presented to others has a lasting impact. These points serve to indicate how significant status is to the Chinese people.

Bond (1996) enlightens further by explaining that the Chinese concept of face comprises six categories. Firstly, enhancing one's own face where a person may deliberately do face work to enhance one's social position; secondly enhancing the other's face through compliments and conforming with their opinions: thirdly, losing one's own face bringing serious consequences; fourthly, hurting another's face by being insensitive; fifthly, saving one's own face to avoid embarrassment; sixthly, saving another's face due to social harmony.

Importantly, Bond (1996) emphasises that the issue of face underlines just how vital societal collectivism and power distance are in relation to the dynamics of impression management in China. It also demonstrates the interconnectedness of people in Chinese society and their concerns about hierarchical order. These issues could have implications for students in this study as they work together in multicultural groups as it is feasible that the groups may include Asian students.

In summary, it can be seen that first impressions are vital in initial interaction and can determine the nature of future interactions with others. Furthermore it seems that a person's implicit personality theory often influences the judgments he/she might have of another. First impressions also incorporate the way people wish to present themselves to others. In Asian societies, status hierarchy and 'face' are important facets of self-presentation and essential ingredients of

proper social etiquette within that culture. A review of the literature in this area, indicates the value of exploring first impressions with regard to the adaptation process of multicultural student groups.

Overall it is clear from the various studies incorporated that the adaptation process is a complex one. Furthermore, it is also apparent that interpersonal matters such as ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, uncertainty and anxiety reduction, stereotyping and first impressions could contribute to the adaptation process in a positive or negative way.

The third aim of this study, which has emerged from a review of this literature, is to explore the contribution of interpersonal factors namely, ethnocentrism/ cultural relativism, uncertainty and anxiety reduction, stereotyping and first impressions, in the adaptation process of multicultural student groups working together. This concludes the review of the literature and the following chapter four outlines the justification for the chosen method.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

The chapter begins by providing justification for taking an interpretivist stance for this study. This is followed by a discussion of the qualitative data collection including the sample and setting and the procedure. The approach taken for the data analysis is next. Quality issues relating to the worthiness of the study are then addressed and include issues of authenticity, trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In addition reflexivity is explicated as the role of the researcher is particularly significant in qualitative studies. The chapter concludes by considering pertinent ethical matters.

To start it is useful to restate the aims of this research:

- The principle aim of this study is to explore the extent to which differences in culture might influence the ways in which members of multicultural student groups work together for the attainment of a mutual goal.

- The second aim is to evaluate the usefulness of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions in identifying cultural variability in postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together towards the attainment of a mutual goal.

- The third aim is to explore the contribution of interpersonal factors namely, ethnocentrism/cultural relativism, uncertainty and anxiety reduction, stereotyping and first impressions, to the adaptation process of multicultural student groups working together.

AN INTERPRETIVIST APPROACH

This study explores the ways in which the attitudes and values of students from various cultural backgrounds influence each other as they work together and adapt to their new environment. Accordingly, literature and previous research

suggest that an exploration of cultural attitudes and values requires an interpretive approach in order to capture the complexity of the students' experiences (Seale, 1998).

Consequently, this investigation requires an approach which will enable the researcher to go beyond mere surface questioning in order to explore the intricacies inherent in human thought and interaction (Silverman, 1997). Unlike a positivist approach that seeks to discover an external objective reality that can be quantified and measured, an interpretive stance "embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation" (Bryman, 2004:20). In other words, interpretivists consider the social world as being created and continually recreated by people as they act and react in ways that are particularly meaningful to them as individuals. Thus, interpretive enquiry acknowledges that it is possible and desirable to gather insights into the ways in which people make sense of their social words through their own eyes (Lindlof, 1995).

Importantly the aims of this investigation are to explore the influence of culture on multicultural student groups as they interact together and to discover the significance of interpersonal issues in the adaptation process. This requires a subjective approach which will enable the researcher to garner insights about the students' own unique experiences as they interact and adapt to a new situation which may be quite different from their usual social environment. Therefore, the interpretivist approach, usually associated with qualitative research, is more appropriate (Salwen and Stacks, 1996).

Hofstede's (1980) research, addressed earlier in chapter two, was a quantitative survey that provided for the generation of large amounts of data into categories and types and was especially useful in comparable studies across regions and nations. However, the method is inflexible and does not allow for the richness that would come from the more open and flexible methods enjoyed by its qualitative counterpart (Reinard, 1994). This present research is to explore the underlying causes and motives for the multicultural students' attitudes and behaviour as they interact with each other. This perspective would not have

been possible using a quantitative approach as these methods allow little place for understanding the variance and evolving nature of human behaviours (Travers, 2001).

Further support provided by Denzin and Lincoln (1994:119) suggests that qualitative researchers:

> celebrate the permanence and priority of the real world of first-person subjective experience.

Therefore, a quantitative scientific approach would be neither effective nor appropriate for this study which explores the reasons for the student's behaviour as they work together and attempt to adapt to their new social environment.

Additional support comes from Johnson and Tuttle (1990) who claim that intercultural research benefits from flexible methods due to the likelihood of surprise which is much higher in intercultural research than in other research. This is due to differences that may occur because of the potentially biased nature of the preconceived notions of other cultures which the researcher may have. This element of surprise would have been difficult using a quantitative method such as a survey that simply requests answers to the questions set with little room for further elucidation. In depth interviews the researcher can ask for clarification of unexpected issues and also encourage the interviewee to develop these more fully.

DATA COLLECTION

THE SAMPLE AND THE SETTING

Participants were selected using a non-probability convenience sample by virtue of its accessibility to the researcher (Denscombe, 2000).

The study focused on postgraduate students due to the likelihood of a mix of diversity of cultures among postgraduate students, which was not always possible

with undergraduates at Bournemouth University where the study took place. It was also essential that the participants were from as many different cultures as possible as this would provide greater breadth to the study than, for example, only using Chinese and British students. Since it was necessary for this investigation to use students who were working together on a specific group project, the choice was rather limited and the only course available at Bournemouth University, which could offer this at the time of the study, was that of the Marketing Communication Master's degree programme. A copy of the brief for the student's assignment is included at appendix I. The researcher approached the course leader in order to gain access to the students and it was agreed that she could talk to the students to explain the reason for the research and to ask for volunteers. A notice was put on the student's notice board listing availability of dates and times and the students were asked to sign up to the most convenient. All the interviews took place at Bournemouth University, Weymouth House, Room W 142c a comfortable room free from distractions.

As a result, nine students agreed to take part from various cultures. These cultures were Mauritius (1), Iceland (1), Indonesia (1) Great Britain (1), Trinidad (1), China (2), Turkey (1), and Japan (1).

INTERVIEWS

It was deemed more appropriate for this research to use depth interviews rather than focus groups. Yet as noted by Lindlof (1995) there are benefits to using focus groups as group members can be stimulated by the experiences of other group members to voice their own perspectives. However, depth interviews have the advantage of enabling interviewees to feel free to express their thoughts honestly and openly rather than feeling intimidated by others as in a group situation. Additionally, it was feasible that due to particular cultural values, some of the students in this study might have found having to express views which ran counter to those of their peers awkward because of the importance of group loyalty (Hall, 1977). Although the researcher also acknowledges that this type of discomfort could just as easily apply to the students in relation to being interviewed by a lecturer as the researcher.

However, the researcher did attempt to build rapport with the students at the start of the interviews and explained that she was not going to judge the students in any way. On the contrary, she expressed that she was very interested in their own personal points of view as they worked together in their groups and hoped that they would feel free to be as open as possible.

Semi structured interviews were used in order to enable the respondents to develop their ideas more widely if wished. Structured interviews are more often associated with social survey research. The interviewer is expected to read out the questions exactly and in the same order as they are printed on the interview schedule (Reinard,1994). This would have been unsuitable for this present study as it was intended that the interviewees should feel free to embellish on the issues if they so desired. In this way, it was hoped that the interviewees would not feel restricted in being able to add their own thoughts and feelings to the answers, thereby, perhaps uncovering issues the researcher had not addressed. Furthermore it also allowed for clarification of issues due to language differences and lack of understanding of the concepts being addressed.

Two interviews took place with the respondents, in the spring and early summer of 2002, except for the student from Iceland who had returned home and could not be accessed for his second interview. A transcript for the second stage interview from the student from Trinidad was not possible because of the badly distorted quality playback of the tape. She too had left the university and was unable to be contacted. The first stage interview took place as near to the start of the group projects as was practicable and the second stage interview took place after the projects had been completed as can be seen in the following table:

Interviewee Gender Age		**First Stage2002**	**Time**	**Second Stage 2002**	**Time**
'A' Female 28 years old	Mauritius	7th February	12.15 - 12.35	25th June	10.30 - 11.10
'B' Male 26 years old	Iceland	13th February	12.15 - 12.45	Not available	
'C' Female 26 years old	Indonesia	14th February	11.15 - 11.45	27th June	14.00 - 14.30
'D' Female 23 years old	Great Britain	15th February	14.15 - 14.45	2nd July	14.15 - 14.45
'E' Female 27 years old	Trinidad	20th February	12.15 - 12.45	5th July	14.00 - 14.30
'F' Female 24 years old	China	21st February	12.15 - 12.45	9th July	14.30 - 15.00
'G' Male 23 years old	China	6th March	12.15 - 12.45	11th July	13.30 - 14.00
'H' Female 30 years old	Turkey	7th March	11.15 - 11.45	11th July	14.15 - 14.45
'I' Male 25 years old	Japan	8th March	14.15 - 14.45	8th July	14.15 - 14.45

Table 2: Information regarding the interviewees who took part in the study

Each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes and was audio taped in order to have a reliable account of the data. The researcher also paid attention to the atmosphere at the start and during the interviews. If the interviewees appeared nervous at the start, the researcher did her utmost to put them at their ease. For example, they may have been nervous initially due to the language barrier. Also the fact that the researcher was a lecturer could have made them anxious as they may have felt that she expected more of them than they felt they were capable of giving. During the interviews the researcher was aware that questions might have to be rephrased or repeated due to the language barriers. This could have caused confusion and embarrassment for them as they may

have construed it as their not understanding what was being asked. The researcher attempted to reassure them by explaining that it was perfectly usual for interviewees whose ' first' language was English to require clarification at times. All the respondents agreed to the recording.

FIRST STAGE INTERVIEWS

Before the interviews took place a colleague involved in teaching and learning support, specifically for international students at Bournemouth University, was asked to examine the interview guide. There were two small changes made to the wording of two of the questions as she felt that one could be more explicit and the other could be construed as leading. With regard to the first change, in the section relating to general information about cultural issues, question fourteen asked how difficult it was to give up, or otherwise, their ethnocentrism. This was changed to be less confrontational and more general. For instance, ethnocentrism means that we expect others from different cultures to see the world as we do. I should add that we are all ethnocentric to a certain degree. Have you found this to be true? The second change was to the second section about information related to group work. Question fourteen asked the participants if when working with other group members, would they put the relationship first, and question fifteen asked if they would put the task first. This was changed to one question asking whether they would put the relationship or the task first.

The interview guide was divided into two separate sections, a copy of which is contained in appendix II. The first part dealt with general cultural issues and the second part with group issues. Several themes were addressed which past research suggested could be problematic for people from different cultures communicating together because of the diversity of their particular worldviews.

The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with the length of time the students had been in this country and whether they intended to stay after their studies were completed. It was hoped that this would provide insights into their enculturation process. Their preconceived ideas of what they expected the

British to be like and whether these impressions were found to be correct were also considered. They were also asked if they felt that they were expected to adapt to the British way of life or if they had found that the other students with whom they were studying were sensitive to their particular values and beliefs. The issues of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism were also addressed to ascertain whether or not they had found the transition to being in another culture easy or difficult.

The second part of the interview attempted to ascertain their initial impressions about the other group members with whom they had to work on their assignments and whether they were anxious or uncertain about how they might communicate with them. Issues relating to group dynamics, for example, cohesiveness, loyalty and conformity, and importance of task or relationships were addressed as were issues related to preference for rules and procedures and status and gender. There was also opportunity for the respondents to talk about any problems they could foresee as they worked together which had arisen from their first impressions of the other group members.

SECOND STAGE INTERVIEWS

The same colleague who checked the first interview guide was also asked to examine the second interview guide. There were no suggestions for changes to be made.

The second interview guide related to issues about the students' experiences as they worked together in their groups. The topics related to the issues covered in the first interviews, but were asked from the point of view of their retrospective experience while working together, rather than from how they envisaged their group experience might be due to cultural differences. A copy can be seen in Appendix III

The first question asked students to describe the relationship that they felt existed within their groups by the end of the group projects. This was to enable students to provide an overview of their group experience and their relationship

with the other members of their groups, before addressing specific issues. The students were then asked to consider whether issues of cohesion, loyalty and conformity, and putting relationships before the tasks influenced their interaction with their peers. Questions were also asked about the importance of rules within their groups and if issues related to differences in power distance had been problematic. The interviewees were also asked whether or not they had felt that they had to consciously take more care with their communication due to cultural differences. They were questioned as to whether or not they had learned anything from their own communication, which they had not been aware of before. Ethnocentrism was addressed briefly in order to determine if this had caused problems between the group members. The issues of adaptation were considered in order to ascertain how easy it had been for the students to become accustomed to being in a different cultural environment to their own. The final points asked were related to their overall experience of group work, and whether there were ways in which their communication could have been enhanced. They also had the opportunity to add any other information related to their cultural differences, which they felt was pertinent.

DATA ANALYSIS

First of all, the interviews were transcribed and documented by using **'I'** for interviewer and **'S'** for student. Additionally each student was given a letter ranging from **'A'** to **'I'** in order to safeguard anonymity. Each conversation was numbered consecutively in order to identify direct quotes. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher read the data several times in order to familiarise herself with the findings overall. This engagement with the data enabled a broad picture of the interviewees' responses to emerge.

The next step in the data analysis involved open coding in order to organise the findings and reduce them by labelling the various attitudes and ideas. As Lindlof (1995: 219) notes:

> without some method of categorising, tagging and sorting data the transition out of fieldwork would be as inviting as trying to enter a trackless desert without a map or guide.

Thus, coding is integral to the task of interpreting communication phenomena. Importantly, Daymon & Holloway (2002: 234) point out "your decision to create a particular code has a defining effect on what you find in your collated data". In other words, the way in which the data is coded affects what the researcher considers as the most insightful data when making decisions about what is worth keeping. Coding also requires diligence in labelling and there is a need to go painstakingly though the data in order not to miss important concepts which may be pertinent to more than one issue. For example, the researcher found that whilst examining the data in relation to the students' responses to interpersonal issues, it was apparent that some of these responses were also pertinent to cultural issues being analysed in a separate chapter. Colour coding was used in order to alert and remind the researcher of issues pertinent to both chapters. For example comments in the margins were underlined in red (Appendix IV).

At this initial stage the process was deductive as the researcher worked backwards and forwards between the data searching for relationships between the responses. For example, each separate attitude or idea was given a label and similar ideas were also given the same label. These were inscribed in the margins of the transcriptions. For example, the label 'cohesion' included concepts such as friendship, closeness, relationship, togetherness and respect, as these were actual words used by the interviewees themselves (Patton,1990). As various labels began to emerge, the researcher was able to identify and organise common themes from these initial labels such as individualism/ collectivism already expressed in the literature review (Appendix V). Further reviewing of these common themes enabled major categories to evolve such as conformity, cohesion and loyalty as these more suitably identified the pertinent concepts (Appendix VI). Importantly, throughout the analysis the researcher checked and rechecked the data to ensure that these categories had emerged from the findings.

Daymon and Holloway (2002) also draw attention to a potential limitation of having un-coded data, in that useful information may be lost because it does not fit into the chosen codes. This was overcome by searching through un-coded data for issues that may have provided further insights. This proved extremely

beneficial as two new themes came to light, those of personality and situation. These additional themes were underlined in green.

QUALITY ISSUES

In the past those involved in qualitative research attempted to demonstrate the worthiness of their work through indicating its reliability and validity, concepts which originated from quantitative methods (Schutt, 2001). However, recently, several scholars have offered alternative ways in which to demonstrate the value and importance of qualitative research which are more appropriate. For example, Marshall and Rossman (1995) suggest that the qualitative researcher needs to pay careful attention to the issues of soundness and usefulness. Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) highlight the inappropriateness of the more conventional positivist paradigm of validity and reliability and purport that credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability more appropriately reflect the assumptions of qualitative inquiry. Daymon & Holloway (2002:89) also argue:

> Validity and reliability are measurements of objectivity which is a central research issue in quantitative research. In qualitative research, however, subjectivity is the more salient research issue.

These scholars claim that these issues are embodied in notions of trustworthiness and authenticity which are essential ingredients of qualitative research. This study addresses these matters in the following paragraphs.

Authenticity is personified in two ways, firstly, by ensuring honesty in relation to the treatment of the information divulged by those involved in the research and secondly, by providing the interviewees and similar others with information which may help them to make sense of their worlds and perhaps improve it. With regard to the issue of honesty in reporting the findings, this was recognised as being essential and the researcher compiled exact transcripts of the interviews between herself and the respondents. As far as the second issue was concerned, it was not possible to provide the participants with any information from the research findings, as the study was not completed until

after they had finished their degree. Yet arguably, questioning the students about their perceptions of their interactions, with their peers who were from other cultures, may help them retrospectively in other similar situations in the future. Additionally the research report will be available to anyone who might be interested in the topic.

Trustworthiness. Daymon & Holloway (2002) suggest that by considering issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, trustworthiness is obtained. These issues are now addressed.

Credibility is important in qualitative research and can be ensured in two ways (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). Firstly, by setting out at the proposal stage the methods to be used, which was adhered to in this study. Secondly, by undertaking a member check to ensure that the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the findings were aligned with the interviewees' views, in other words, to ensure that the researcher had not misunderstood the data collected. As was explained previously, this was not possible after the data had been interpreted and discussed as the students involved had finished their studies. However, the researcher attempted to clarify issues during the interviews, particularly if the participants seemed confused or if they contradicted themselves. For example, the researcher sometimes found it necessary to reiterate the information provided by the interviewees which was beneficial for both. This not only helped to ensure that the researcher had understood as clearly as possible exactly what the interviewees had intended but also reassured the participants that the researcher's interpretations of their answers were correct. Although this helped to provide credibility for the study, it is acknowledged that this is not ideal and that credibility may only have been partially achieved.

Transferability relates to the importance of being able to demonstrate that the information gained from the investigation at hand can be transferred to other similar settings. This issue is referred to as generalisability in quantitative research and some qualitative scholars question the idea of generalisability. For

instance, Janesick (1983:51) asserts that in attempting to generalise, research takes a somewhat detached approach:

> Somehow we have lost the human and passionate element of research. Becoming immersed in a study requires passion for people, passion for communication and passion for understanding people.

In other words generalised accounts which result in a rather unconnected distant view of people are feasible in quantitative research about certain social conditions. However, for those involved in research into meaning and interpretation, she claims that generalisability falls short.

While this researcher supports this idea, she also acknowledges that it is just as important to be able to demonstrate that the knowledge gained from one research study can be transferred to another similar setting whether obtained through large-scale surveys or smaller scale interviews. While the sample in this present investigation is small and therefore cannot be said to be generalised to the population at large, there is benefit in showing its utility in similar settings. In other words, knowledge from this present study could be useful to other similar higher education establishments in the U.K. who have international students working together in multicultural small groups at postgraduate level. These institutions may find it useful to have prior knowledge of unforeseen communication problems which may arise in similar settings to this, as it might help them to provide information which would engender a more successful group experience.

Dependability refers to the degree of consistency and accuracy in the findings and this can be achieved by auditing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999). These scholars argue that all research should have an audit trail, especially if validity is not being addressed, as it enables others to judge the soundness of the research. Auditing involves highlighting all decisions made about the theories addressed, the methods to be used and the choices made with regard to the

analysis of the data collected. These issues have been addressed throughout this chapter.

Confirmability, according to Marshall &Rossman (1995:145) "captures the traditional concept of objectivity" which they suggest is an essential measure of worth in quantitative studies. While objectivity is appropriate for quantitative research it is not possible in qualitative studies due to the very nature of interpretive enquiry which brings with it the influence of the researchers' values and preconceptions (Geertz, 1973, Lindlof, 1995). According to Daymon & Holloway (2002), this can be overcome by showing clearly that the conclusions reached have come from the respondents' answers to the questions asked by the researcher and that these in turn have been related to the theories informing the investigation. This has been provided in the following discussion chapters. Confirmability also incorporates the notion of reflexivity, which is an imperative consideration of qualitative study.

Reflexivity is an essential ingredient in qualitative research. Daymon and Holloway (2002) assert that it is necessary for the researcher to critically reflect on his/her own role and preconceptions throughout the data collection and subsequent analysis and interpretation of the data. It is essential, therefore, as a researcher, to take a self- critical stance towards the participants in the study and also to any personal assumptions. Likewise, Lindlof (1995:19) asserts that the researcher "cannot claim a privileged position separate from the phenomena being studied". In other words, when attempting to understand the responses and reactions from the participants, the researcher must also acknowledge his/her own presence in the research process. The researcher has attempted to address issues of reflexivity in the following ways.

Firstly, the researcher, a white Scottish female indoctrinated into the Scottish way of life through her socialisation process, cannot possibly view the cultural values and attitudes of her multicultural students from the same cultural lenses as they do. However, having lived as an exiled Scot in the South of England for several years the researcher is aware of various cultural nuances existing between the North and the South of the U.K. For example, in the South people

are much more reserved than those in the North. This is manifest in the propensity for directness of opinions in the North or as the saying goes *calling a spade a spade* whereas in the South, there is a tendency to be less open and direct particularly at first meeting. Subsequently, from her experiences of differences in some attitudes in her own culture, the researcher is open to Johnson and Tuttle's (1990) assertions that researchers should be alert to the likelihood of surprise in the data collected in intercultural research.

Secondly, Seale (1998) asserts that in order to ensure that the practice of research is more fully reflexive, the researcher must attempt to specify her theoretical assumptions rather than using them uncritically or unconsciously. In relation to this study, the researcher acknowledges that her assumptions about cultural diversity are partially based on Hofstede's (1980) cultural variables which suggest that people from a certain country will communicate in a particular way due to their own specific cultural values and attitudes. However, Hofstede (1980) also concedes that his cultural dimensions are based on the '*predominate*' tendencies of the cultures involved. Therefore, this allows the researcher to be alert to the possibility of unpredictable responses from the students. Additionally, several scholarly criticisms from intercultural scholars and other scholars involved in small group and interpersonal research are included in the review of the literature informing this study. This also enabled the researcher to endeavour to take a more critical stance in her analysis and interpretation of her data collection.

Thirdly, there is also the matter of the interviewee/researcher relationship and the context in which the research took place. Although the students in this study were based in the same faculty as the researcher she had no previous involvement with the students before the interviews took place. This meant that the researcher had not had the opportunity to build relationships with the students which may have encouraged trust and a friendly rapport. However, she attempted to make the students feel as relaxed and comfortable as possible by asking them to view her as a researcher rather than in her capacity as a lecturer. For some students the issue of lecturer status could have been inhibiting. Yet despite this, the researcher acknowledges that the students could still have felt a

status differential which could have resulted in less openness in relation to their responses to her questions. In this respect, it is further conceded that had a research student who was of the same age as the students themselves interviewed them their answers to the issues involved could have been more candid.

With these points in mind, the researcher was aware of the need to be sensitive to the experiences of those being studied. Therefore, she felt that it was essential that the interviewees, who were from different cultures, did not feel that they were being judged in any way by the researcher, due to their differing worldviews about the issues under investigation, particularly as her own British world view could have been different to theirs. This was expressed at the start of the interviews and reiterated during the interviews on occasion when the respondents seemed perhaps uneasy or awkward at divulging their thoughts, particularly in relation to any negative feelings they had about other cultures and, in particular, the U.K. The researcher endeavoured to reassure the participants that the uniqueness of their cultural ideals and beliefs was a vital part of the study and that she was genuinely interested in their experiences as they worked together with the other students. Also she expressed that it was hoped that their input would provide valuable insights for subsequent international students coming to Bournemouth University to study. Perhaps the fact that the interviewees were happy to go ahead with their second interview was a measure of their not having felt intimidated or unhappy during the first stage interviews.

Regarding self reflection by the researcher on how the research impacted on the expression of culture among the interviewees. It could be surmised that as a result of the research, the students felt encouraged to discuss openly with each other the issues contained in the interviews. This in turn may have resulted in the students being more consciously aware of not only how they had viewed their peers but also of how their peers had viewed them which may not have emerged otherwise.

Finally, the researcher reiterates that it is vital for the researcher to be continually sensitive to the possibility of her own cultural stance unconsciously influencing the data analysis and interpretation. She has attempted to be as diligent as possible in this regard throughout this study but acknowledges that it would be impossible to see the world 'entirely' through the same perspective as those being studied.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Scholars concur that a fundamental part of all research is strict adherence to the principles of conduct that govern it. Research by its very nature is intrusive and none more so than interpretive studies, which seek to elicit the innermost feelings of those participating (Deacon, Pickering, Golding and Murdock (1999). Depth interviewing develops relationships with those who are involved, albeit transient ones. This is particularly true when more than one meeting is involved, as in this study, where two stages of interviews were conducted. It could also be said that a kind of friendship is kindled when the researcher and the participants see each other as part of their daily or weekly routine. For example, when they meet in the corridor and exchange pleasantries as often happened during this investigation, as the students were in the same faculty as the researcher. These participants have a right to expect protection from any harm to selves, be it psychological or physical. Honesty, openness and confidentiality must also be considered and all these issues have been addressed in the following paragraphs.

Freedom from Harm

This can relate to both psychological and physical harm. Psychological harm relates to the mental attitude of the participants and in this research it could have arisen with regard to the questions asked. For example, if any of the participants had not wanted to answer a question and the researcher had insisted because she felt that it was of prime importance, this lack of sensitivity would have been unethical. In this investigation this did not arise and there was a good rapport between each of the participants and the researcher. Additionally, physical

harm could arise from unsafe interview settings. This did not arise during this investigation.

Confidentiality

Before the in depth interviews took place, the purpose of the study was clearly outlined to the students in this study and they were encouraged to ask questions to clear up any misgivings they may have had. All the students interviewed appeared to be satisfied with the explanations provided. They were also assured of anonymity, in that their names would not be divulged in either the transcripts or in the analysis and that instead there names would be given a letter. Their country of origin was important, as an objective of the study was to evaluate the usefulness of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions in identifying cultural variability. This would enable the readers to more easily make the connections between the particular values and attitudes of the different cultures involved and the analysis and interpretation of the findings. The participants expressed that there were problems with this aspect of their identity being divulged.

The participants also voiced no objection to the interviews being audio recorded. The researcher assured them that the tapes would not be used for any other purpose than for the present study and that after completion of the research these would be destroyed.

Honesty

Honesty relates to the openness of information relating to the study and also to acknowledging the secondary sources provided in the investigation, which made the research possible. Honesty was achieved with regard to the participants as set out above. The true nature of the research was divulged to the participants and they were free to ask any questions they wished and to voice any misgivings they may have had. None were voiced.

The secondary sources for this study have been acknowledged using the Harvard format and can be scrutinised in the reference section at the end of the research report.

Summary

An attempt has been made to provide a sound justification for adopting an interpretive approach in this study and in particular depth interviews. The worthiness and importance of the research has also been considered together with the choice of sample and setting and the two stages of the interviews have been explained. The process of analysis has been outlined clearly and a reflexive approach has also been discussed. Finally ethical considerations pertaining to the study have been explicated. The following chapters, five and six, provide an analysis and discussion of the data.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION CULTURAL ISSUES

This is the first of two chapters which present and discuss the findings. It is important to restate the principle aim of this study, which is to explore the extent to which differences in culture might influence the ways members of postgraduate multicultural student groups work together for the attainment of a mutual goal.

The key insights that emerged from the interviews are discussed according to four themes, namely conformity, cohesion and loyalty, rules and norms, power distance, and assertiveness or nurturing. These themes relate to the principle aim outlined above and the second aim which is to analyse the usefulness of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions in identifying cultural variability in postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together towards the attainment of a mutual goal.

Additionally, the data was collected in two stages. The first stage interview with students took place three months after the students started their postgraduate degree course which coincided with the start of their group assignments. The second stage interview took place, four months later, after the students' group projects were finished and towards the end of their degrees. Transcripts were not available for two second stage interviews with students who took part in the first stage interviews. The student from Iceland returned home before the second stage interview took place and the student from Trinidad's tape was so badly distorted that it was impossible to transcribe. However, their first stage interviews provided important information about cultural diversity and have been included where appropriate. The discussion starts by presenting and discussing the concepts of cohesion, conformity and loyalty.

Cohesion, Loyalty and Conformity

According to Hofstede (1980), issues of cohesion, loyalty and conformity are essential for people from collectivist cultures because of the importance they

attach to their in-groups. In contrast, people from individualistic cultures tend not to be so group oriented and feel free to join many groups during their lifetimes. Yet arguably, studies by small group scholars in relation to western cultures such as Britain suggest that these factors could be just as essential to individualist cultures depending on the situation (Allen, 1965). For instance, cohesive groups are those groups in which there is a high degree of unity and relationships within the groups are friendly and attractive to members. This can engender a feeling of loyalty by the group members to each other. Loyalty towards each other can result in conformity because of the influence exerted by the group members to be united in their attitudes and values (Brilhart, Galanes and Adams, 2001). Literature suggests too, that collectivists lean towards relationship rather than task while individualists would be more concerned with the task (Triandis et al, 1988).

In the first stage interview, the data revealed that while all of the students, collectivist and individualist, were in agreement about the necessity for cohesion, loyalty and conformity within their groups, this was with varying degrees of conviction. For instance, regarding cohesion and loyalty, some agreed wholeheartedly that these matters were important while others disagreed. Still others were unsure as they could see both the benefits and drawbacks for small groups. In relation to conformity, all of the students supported the principle of conforming to group ideas but added that they would do so only after putting across their own points of view. This was intriguing, as several of the collectivist students expressed concern, in relation to adaptation, about having to be critical here at Bournemouth University as it was not expected in their own countries (see page 102). Regarding the task versus relationship issue, several of the students claimed that the relationship was more important while others believed the task to be so and some that both were of equal importance.

To start with cohesion and loyalty between group members, I (Japan) echoed the thoughts of several of the other collectivist students in his declaration:

> Yes, loyalty towards each other is very important. And without friendship among the students I believe we can't produce good work. We have a connection as students and classmates to be that way [loyal and cohesive] (p.6, con.94,96).

It was unsurprising, therefore, that he asserted that the relationship between the group members should come before the task (Triandis et al, 1988). However, he also admitted that this attitude was not usual for him in his working environment back home:

> Oh actually, when I was working in Japan, I didn't care about their [his colleagues] background or friendship, I just wanted to produce a good piece of work. I felt this and I knew that the other people felt this as well. So there was this goal between us. I don't think that we as students could achieve this because we are too close as students. We are too close to each other in the class room and the seminar and probably outside after work, we still have to talk (p.7, con. 98).

His remarks seem to allude to the fact that in his working environment he is rather detached from his peers and very goal oriented. This would support Hofstede's (1980) and Lustig and Cassotta's (1992) ideas about Japan being a masculine culture where competition between males is usual in the work place.

Other collectivist students were not quite so certain about cohesion and loyalty. For instance, G (China) said that cohesion and loyalty were unnecessary which provided a reason for his assertion that the task was more important than building relationships (Triandis et al, 1988). This response is surprising because good interpersonal relationships are supposed to be essential in China (Bond, 1988). It was evident that H (Turkey) was not fully convinced either of the need to be cohesive or loyal:

> Cohesion, yes, but not, you don't have to, I mean, yes to some extent but you shouldn't be too close, but yes. Here [in Britain] they don't attempt to violate each others' rights. Privacy is like a rule. If you don't obey you get punished. We are very loyal in Turkey. If there is a distance occurs between me and that person, I really try to learn what happened and try to repair the relationship (p.4, con. 48).

She seems to be asserting that while cohesion is important to an extent, a certain amount of distance needs to be maintained. On one hand, this is predictable as Turkey has a high power distance which means that status is important, thus closeness between members is not always appropriate (Hofstede, 1980). Yet on the other hand, arguably status would not be an issue in her present environment. However, her hesitancy could reflect her experience recounted in response to adaptation when she claimed that the other students had found her too open (see page 103). Furthermore, she stated that while she found the British friendly, there was a certain amount of detachment in their friendship. This could be the reason for her comments regarding privacy being a rule in Britain. It could be deduced that she was now simply trying to reconcile her own openness with what she felt was expected of her in her multicultural environment; by making an effort to get along with the other students and to behave in a way that she thought was acceptable to them. She also claimed that task was of prime importance in a group which reflects Triandis et al's (1988) research.

The students from cultures with individualistic tendencies seemed to take a more casual approach in relation when asked about their attitudes towards cohesion and loyalty:

> In a way, I think if you at least, if you like each other it helps. Loyalty is important but if I didn't agree I wouldn't give in easily. If it was a reasonable argument I would back down (p.5, con.75). B (Iceland)

> Well, yes, I guess if the relationship is important you work better together. One of the girls in our group is very quiet and we have said to her that we need her to speak out. We don't want her to feel inadequate and for her to know that we value what she has to say (p.5, con. 64). E (Trinidad)

> Yes we all seem to be really friendly which I think is kind of useful as you have to work together after all and feel comfortable with each other (p.5, con 52). D (Britain)

In other words, while there was value in getting along with the other group members, cohesion and loyalty were not necessarily prerequisites for groups; a typical individualist attitude (Hofstede, 1980). This would also support small

group scholars, such as Allen (1965), who claimed that cohesion and loyalty were not necessarily unimportant for individualistic cultures. Also for these students the relationship and the task were of equal importance. For instance, E (Trinidad) explained that while the group needed to get on well together they also had to do a good job. This was shown in her endeavour to ensure that quieter students needed to feel valued. This response did not coincide with Triandis et al's (1988) views that people from individualist cultures would put the task first.

In relation to the matter of conformity, all of the students recognised the need for group conformity but only after they had put across their own view points first. This idea was exemplified in H's (Turkey) remarks:

> Sometimes, yes. I try first to tell my own opinions and if there is no chance then I don't force it, so as not to irritate people, you know? But normally in my own country sometimes I try to be loyal, yes, because it is a kind of collectivist country so it is not good not to be so in my country, not to agree. Sometimes I am not good there because I don't agree (p.6, con.84).

Her response reflects the idea that loyalty can lead to conformity as advocated by scholars such as Janis (1983). Also it seems that this student did not always behave as she was expected to do in Turkey. This was evident too in relation to adaptation when she explained that people in her present environment found her too open and yet openness would not be a usual characteristic of someone from a collectivist culture, according to Hall (1977).

These points are also indicative of F's (China) attitude towards conformity:

> I have experienced this kind of issue [conformity] in my group already. Actually I don't say 'please to use my opinion'. I just say 'o.k. just leave it here and then maybe afterwards, we come back and we can see it again and we can see whether it is appropriate to use it or not'. But they will feel very annoyed. It's like their face will turns blush. But I will say 'oh it's just my suggestion and to be or not to be it's up to you'. But you know, finally, I think I should be mature enough to say 'it's up to you'. It's not in the real working environment. It's not like my boss will give me £1,000 more if they accept my opinion. I think in team- work some people must compromise you know.

> Otherwise it's impossible to go on. Otherwise people will feel unhappy (p.9 con.110).

Arguably, her response to the reaction by her peers demonstrates her maturity in being willing to compromise and thus conform, but also to make her own views known. Additionally, as would be the Chinese custom, she could be seen to be 'enhancing the other's face' through her conformity. This is an important part of Chinese social etiquette according to Bond (1990). Her attitude also aligns with her assertions about group relationships taking precedence over the task (Triandis et al, 1988). However, her remarks show that the student environment is also an added factor in the submission of her views.

The students with individualist tendencies all had the same attitudes towards conformity. For instance, D (Britain) and B (Iceland) remarked that they would not keep quiet if they had a strong point to make or if their conformity was going to be detrimental to the group. This attitude aligns with Allen (1965) who suggests that often group members conform due to the situation. Intriguingly, E (Trinidad) was also aware of this need for flexibility and moreover admitted that she had a tendency to take charge as she had a strong personality:

> I guess people I have worked with in the past have known that we have always had an open forum [regarding debate]. For instance they would say to me, hey, you are taking over everything and I want to say something. You come to know your faults. I have always had the tendency to take charge. (p.7, con. 82).

It could be surmised that this student's awareness of her tendency to take over should have helped her to constrain her behaviour within her group. Yet fellow group member D (Britain) remarked:

> The student from Trinidad was talking a lot and I could see that the girl from Cyprus was getting really cross because she couldn't get a word in and she said 'can I speak ?'. Personally, I don't like that sort of confrontation, I would rather wait for them to finish and then softly suggest something (p.6, con.63).

It seems that perhaps personality traits are hard to change even when one is aware of the need to do so. D's (Britain) response regarding confrontation suggests that she is not wholly 'self' oriented, as Hofstede (1980) believes is indicative of people from individualistic cultures. It could also be deduced that this was part of her personality.

During the second stage interviews, the data revealed that although the students resolved to be attentive to cohesion, loyalty and conformity, the reality was somewhat different. In relation to students from collectivist cultures where cohesion and loyalty were important characteristics, the matter seemed to be taken out of their hands. Some of their peers preferred to work individually while others said that group members often missed meetings.

With regard to conformity, despite all the students' intentions to discuss issues before making group decisions, for some this was problematic due to several factors. For instance, reasons given included intimidation by peers and lateness in starting the group assignment which left little time for debate. Those who had been able put across their own views first, compromised these to be in line with the other group members. The outcome of the importance of task versus relationship was also different from the students' avowed intentions. All of the students who had said that the relationship would prevail found that the task took precedence.

Regarding the issues of cohesion and loyalty, there was unity among the students that this had largely been abandoned. Both D (Britain) and I (Japan) responded in similar vein as exemplified by the latter:

> Mostly they did for themselves more than they did as a team. They just wanted their parts and when they finished they just give it to somebody and somebody say it was o.k. (p.2, con. 27)

Perhaps in order to develop cohesion and loyalty within a group it would be necessary to 'get together' in order to engender a feeling of unity and to build relationships between the group members. Certainly, I (Japan) voiced this notion:

> Before the presentation most of the people didn't read the other parts. But, yes, I feel it is important to be loyal and to be doing things together, thinking of each other and not individually (p.2, con. 27).

It is possible that the behaviour by the other students would have been more problematic for the Japanese student, as he suggests in his response that his collectivist roots would dictate a much more group - oriented experience (Triandis et al, 1988). Indeed his need for a more collectivist approach to 'group-ness' and a sense of togetherness was evident throughout much of this student's interviews. In contrast, the British student would have found this individualist approach to the group assignments normal practice because of Britain's individualist tendencies.

The student environment seemed to have been responsible for some of the other students' negative experiences. For instance, several of the collectivist students found that their other group members concentrated on their individual assignments so that as a group they had not met very often. According to C (Indonesia), the British and Barbados students in her group were the worst culprits for simply not turning up. It seems unsurprising that there was little sense of cohesion or loyalty between the group members if they did not meet together very often as a group. Furthermore, it could be surmised that leaving their group assignment until the last minute and not turning up to prearranged meetings would be both surprising and unacceptable for the collectivist students in their own cultural environments where group interdependence would be the norm (Hofstede, 1980). In contrast H (Turkey) complained that when her group had got together it was like a coffee gathering, which could have engendered cohesion and loyalty. Yet she felt that they should be discussing their assignment. However, this could align with her view that the task was more important than the relationship.

In relation to conformity, several of the students confessed that they had not had the opportunity to put their own ideas across before conforming as they had previously hoped. Various reasons were given. For instance, I (Japan) felt

intimidated by his group. He asserted that their disrespect for his ideas had really annoyed him at times:

> They are really confident and we highly value respect in Japanese, so we feel when they are talking, if we interrupt them or if we reject straight away we feel it is rude manners. So, but I find if I don't say anything they decide everything without asking me, so I was trying to speak, to make my comments (p.2, con.19).

Also he felt they were exasperated with him for not saying much. It seems he could not win. If he spoke they dismissed his ideas and when he did not speak they were annoyed with him. This perhaps demonstrates the difficulties people face when high context and low context cultures come together (Hall, 1977). Although given that his fellow group members were Greek, Chinese and English it seems surprising that he felt intimidated in this way. However, Triandis (1995) could provide a further rationale for this disparity in his assertions that cultures have horizontal and vertical tendencies. For instance, Triandis claimed that Japan is horizontal and therefore equality is highly valued. This was seen in the Japanese student's remarks that in his culture everyone had the opportunity to voice his/her opinions. If the other students were from collectivist cultures that were vertical they would feel free to speak out and have the confidence to do so which seemed to be the case. His lack of confidence seemed to be perpetuated by his peer's behaviour towards him:

> Yes, I wanted them to have more respect for other cultures. If you don't speak any day they make you feel you are worth nothing. Mm, yes, I feel that I am stupid, because they take over my part if I don't say something sometimes. In Japan I would ask somebody these things in turn, but here in England I don't speak. I don't make a comment or anything. I never get a turn. I never have opportunity to start talking (p.4,cons. 47,49).

It was evident that this student's group experience was a rather difficult one in some respects. His peers' behaviour towards him could arguably have caused him to 'lose face, particularly as he felt that they made him feel stupid. As purported earlier by Bond (1988, 1996) Far Eastern cultures placed a great deal of importance on 'face' issues. In this student's culture it would be normal practice to 'save a person's face' due to social harmony. Furthermore, it might be deduced that his sense of 'loss of face' was increased given that the rest of

his group were females. Japan is a masculine culture where the male would be expected to be the more dominating and aggressive sex (Hofstede, 1980).

A second reason for conformity for some students was due to lack of time as explained by C (Indonesia):

> They [the two British males] began contributing a lot, so basically we did listen to them because they came up with a lot of good ideas. So in a short time we didn't have time to argue so it's sort of 'o.k. this seems a good idea let's do it' (p.2, con. 23).

It appears that her acquiescence was necessary because of her group's reliance on the British students; their assignment was related to the British Police Recruitment Campaign and probably they would rely on the British students' command of English.

On the other hand, the group's leader appeared to be the reason for D's (Britain) group conformity:

> I think the group leader was trying to do too much of everyone's work. She felt she knew what they needed to have in each part. Obviously everyone thinks their opinion is better but sometimes she [the leader] wouldn't consider things because it wasn't the way she felt it should be done (p.3, con. 27).

From this student's response, it appears that the leader did have a tendency to discount some of the group members' ideas. Although arguably, the British student's personality could have been an added factor as she had disclosed earlier that she disliked confrontation. However, it is also feasible that the leader felt that it was part of her role to make the final decisions. Unfortunately the tape from this student's interview for the second stage was not available so that it was not possible to make a valued judgment.

In contrast, it was evident from the following students' remarks that they had conformed but only after expressing their own opinions first:

During the project I think there were some arguments because different people had different opinions. But afterwards, you know, we all had gradually compromised to agree (p.1, con. 4). A (Mauritius)

I would listen more to the others but at the critical moment, if I think it was really not right I would say 'Oh stop, I totally disagree'. You know, my opinions, I would, you know, I would express my opinion. But then I would accept their opinion, but I think I would say probably first, we can see things other ways and then we can discuss (p.1, con 4).F (China)

F (China) also expressed the view that 'self' would always take second place to the group. This demonstrated the importance for this student of interdependence within her group (Hofstede, 1980). Additionally it again provides agreement for the ideas of Bond (1988) who highlights the importance of human relationships to people from China. Her response was similar to her Chinese male counterpart, G (China), who could also see the necessity for compromise as he claimed that in the end a decision had to be made. This was an interesting response given that this student expressed disquiet at having to be critical here at Bournemouth University because of the Chinese government's strictness with regard to obedience to authority (see page 102). However, Pratt's (1991) study provides some insights into this matter. She found that when Chinese students went to Canada to study for a year, they were able to change their attitudes and behave in a similar manner to the Canadian students regarding individual rights and self - development. Arguably, the outcome of basing a culture's philosophy on engendering human relationships as the Chinese do could lead to an ability to more easily adapt to another's cultural values to some extent. Certainly, it seems a plausible reason for the Chinese students' behaviours in this study.

Interestingly, although H (Turkey) conformed to her group members' ideas in Britain, she claimed that in Turkey she was not like that:

> But, eh, naturally I am not like that, you know? I just don't want to cause trouble here (p.2, con. 24) I usually, try to agree with the ideas here if it's not too negative, you know, so I can in a way try to compromise (p.4, con. 55).

Her revelation that she did not conform in Turkey seems unusual as Turkey is a collectivist culture and in-group conformity would be usual (Hofstede, 1980). Regarding her change in her behaviour in Britain, it seems fair to suggest that it

could have been due to the communication problems she had with the other students due to her openness referred to above. She confessed that she felt offended by some of the others' reactions to her ideas. This could have resulted in her feeling more sensitive to speaking out and not 'wanting to cause trouble'. However, it could also have been due to her personality as she states above that she does not usually conform in Turkey. Certainly, Triandis et al (1988) suggested that a person from a collectivist culture, such as Turkey, who challenged the acceptance of group norms, could have a personality trait labelled idiocentrism. It was seen earlier that this student's behaviour had contradicted the characteristics of her culture in relation to being too open in her communication.

The reason for the task prevailing over the relationship for most students seemed to be due to the time factor. For many, like it or not, their group projects had been left till the very last minute and so the task became their main focus. It also reflected the individualistic culture which would prevail at Bournemouth University.

In summary, it was evident that characteristics from Hofstede's (1980) dimension of individualism and collectivism were identifiable in the students' behaviour towards each other. For instance, issues of cohesion, loyalty and conformity seemed to be more essential for the collectivist students than the individualist students as Hofstede (1980) purported. Yet initially, there was evidence to suggest that issues of cohesion, loyalty and conformity were not unimportant for the individualist students, albeit with a different degree of certainty (Allen, 1965). However, their individualist attitudes seemed to have overridden previous intentions with regard to cohesion and loyalty through missed meetings and the lack of importance they attached to their group assignments. In order to engender feelings of cohesion and loyalty, which the collectivist students desired, the individualist students needed to be much more group-oriented. Their behaviour was indicative of Hofstede's (1980) views about people from individualist cultures. Interestingly, the Japanese collectivist student asserted that he would not normally be concerned with cohesion and loyalty in his working environment. He claimed that these issues were important

between students because of their situation. This does not align with Hofstede's (1980) ideas about collectivist cultures. However, the anomaly could be related to Japan's tendency towards masculinity where competitiveness in males in a working situation was expected (Hofstede, 1980). If this were the case, it demonstrates that situation could be an important mediating factor in cultural diversity as purported by Tayeb (2001). Interestingly, small group scholars Cathcart, Samovar and Henman (1996) claimed that it was the goal achievement that led to cohesion. This seemed to be true of several of the students in this study, whether individualist or collectivist as they admitted that it was not until after their assignments were finished that they realised that they had become cohesive as a group. (This can be seen in the following chapter in the section 'first impressions of students' pages 118-128).

The situation seemed to be responsible for several of the students' conformity. For instance, some students claimed that they had conformed because they had too little time left to argue about matters. Others who had managed to put their own viewpoints across had compromised to the wishes of their group situation. The Chinese students' comments reflect Hsu's (1981) proposal that in China conformity is essential not only in interpersonal relationships but as a socially approved cultural attitude. This idea also coincides with Bond's (1988). The situation was also given as H's (Turkey) grounds for conforming as she expressed the view that she was not normally conforming in Turkey; it was simply that she did not want to cause trouble with her peers here.

Justification for group conformity, such as mixed gender groups and group members' personalities, noted by small group scholar (Shaw, 1981) could also have been mitigating factors. Interestingly, these reasons applied to some of the students from collectivist cultures too. For instance, the Japanese student who was conforming was the only male in his group, thus he may have felt pressure to conform. Both the Indonesian and British students were also in mixed gender groups. In relation to personality, it seemed that the British, Turkish and Japanese students' personalities could account for their conformity within their groups. Furthermore, there was evidence to support Douglas's (1983) view that

leadership can influence conformity as the British student claimed that her group's leader had discounted ideas put forward by the groups' members.

As far as the outcome of the task versus relationship issue was concerned; it was evident that the task did prevail in the end which aligned with Triandis et al's (1988) views in relation to individualist cultures. It was apparent from several of the collectivist students' responses that the individualist students had behaved in a very 'self' oriented way. According to Triandis et al (1988), the collectivist students would put the relationship first and certainly from their responses with regard to cohesion and loyalty this seems likely. However, it appears that the individualistic environment prevailed in this study as even if the collectivist students had wanted to develop a cohesive relationship with their peers, it would have needed to include the whole group. These findings serve to demonstrate the complexity of the issues of cohesion, loyalty and conformity and the importance of furthering research into the topic. The discussion now moves on to consider the findings related to rules and norms.

Rules and Norms

The requirement for clearly laid down rules, in order to eliminate ambiguity which might be caused by a lack of formal guidelines, relates to a culture's predisposition towards high and low uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). It seems too that cultures can be structurally tight or loose (Triandis, 1994). Additionally, Hall (1977) suggests that cultures can be identified according to either a polychronic or monochronic time orientation. Furthermore, according to small group literature, rules are those guidelines that have been formally laid down by authority. In contrast, norms are those unwritten guidelines that develop over time as group members implicitly agree or disagree with certain types of group behaviour (Douglas, 1983). It is also important to note that high and low uncertainty avoidance does not necessarily correlate with individualism and collectivism. Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance can be either individualist or collectivist and similarly for low uncertainty avoidance.

Importantly, in this study the tutor advised the students that it would be beneficial for them to draw up a list of rules or guidelines to help them as they worked together in their small groups. Some students might simply have gone along with the idea of having rules because of their tutor's suggestion. On the other hand, for those students from cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, it may have provided them with a certain amount of security, particularly as they were in a country whose culture may have been quite different from their own.

The data from the first stage interviews showed that all the students agreed that having some rules and guidelines were important for their groups. This concurrence by the students is unsurprising, as societies themselves need rules in order to avoid disorganisation. Certainly some students suggested rules helped them be efficient and structured while another group focused on ways in which they could communicate more effectively with each other, such as listening and being committed to the group. Others agreed because the tutor advised it and one student said he was relaxed about the idea of having rules to follow.

Despite the students' assertions, it was apparent that some showed a stronger inclination than others for group rules. G (China) was very forthcoming about his reasons for the need to conform to rules and adhere to authority. He explained that in his country the rules were very strict and people had to abide by them. The example he provided regarding his culture was quite informative:

> I read the news the day before [yesterday] that in high school the boys leave their hair long and the teacher asked at this moment [to have it cut] or he would cut it for them. It is very strict because we think that Westernised attitudes are wrong. So instead of people being able to wear designer clothes they find ways to make the people look the same and wear the same because it is better for our community not to have Western ideas (p.7, con. 68).

Furthermore, he stated that it was very much part of the communist teaching to adhere to authority and that he relied on rules to give him a sense of direction. Indeed his female counterpart F (China) supported his attitude saying that it was good for everybody to follow rules as it led to efficiency. Interestingly, Bond's

(1988) research found that uncertainty avoidance was the only dimension out of Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions that did not seem to have any significance for Chinese society. Yet the response by these two students suggests that China would have a high need for uncertainty avoidance. However, it could be argued that this dimension was over ridden by the importance of basic human relationships to Confucian philosophy, which would deter people from not abiding by rules. Also, research by Gudykunst and Kim (2003) was useful in providing some understanding for this anomaly. For instance, they proffered that because of the importance of the notion of the 'collective' for collectivist cultures, as China is purported to be, these cultures might well have a greater need for societal rules.

In contrast to the above students' attitudes towards rules, B (Iceland) admitted to being quite relaxed about them and preferred simply to get on with the task in hand:

> But I'm not very organised myself so I'm kind of relaxed about these things (p.5, con. 71).

It seems that his attitude was more to do with his personality than his culture's propensity for a high or low need for uncertainty avoidance or polychronic or monochronic time orientation. Personality might also have been the reason for E's (Trinidad) comments:

> I am one of those people who likes to stick to rules so that we have guidelines and direction (p.7, con. 92).

Although it is just as likely that Trinidad could have a high need for uncertainty avoidance especially with her confession earlier that she tended to take over and preferred to do things her way (see page 79).

Most of the other students agreed with E's (Trinidad) sentiments about the advantage of rules, although D's (Britain) ideas aligned more with interpersonal skills:

> The sort of thing we have talked about is the amount of effort they must put in, their commitment or how good they are at listening as well as how good they are at communicating their ideas. Some people are great at talking and find it difficult to listen to other's ideas. [...] As things go on and if there are certain problems that come up we might have to sit down and say, right maybe you should do this a bit more (p. 5, con. 52).

E (Trinidad) was also in D's (Britain) group and it can be seen from the above comments that the matters the group agreed upon were intended to help make all the members feel included. There was also an attempt to be sensitive to the members' different cultural attitudes. This was in contrast to I's (Japan) experience. While he agreed that it was probably a good idea to write out some criteria for group members, as his unit tutor had suggested, he was unhappy with some members' reasons:

> Yes, my point is I took a positive side to be strict with ourselves working hard [...]. But I heard some people thought like this is a way they can criticise each other. So you know, it's like from different view points. I thought we are a team so if we are mature enough we don't need these criteria. (p.6 con. 82).

Interestingly, his views could be said to reflect his collectivist ideals of group cohesion, loyalty and interdependence in that if everyone is pulling together rules should not really be required. Although according to Hofstede (1980), Japan has a high need for uncertainty avoidance so would require rules. However, this student's response could also be due to his present student environment as he had remarked earlier that as a student, his behaviour was different than when he was at work. On the other hand, an explanation could be due to Japan's high power distance whereby he would naturally abide by suggestions put forward by his tutor because of the status that resides in Japan between students and teaching staff (Hofstede, 1980).

The second stage interviews revealed that while the students had agreed on various rules within their groups, most had not used them. Several of the students felt that they were inappropriate in their present student environment and pronounced them a waste of time. Yet one student claimed that they had

been useful in her group. The attitudes by the majority of the students appeared to reflect scholarly views such as those by Douglas (1983) who claimed that rules normally related to the formally laid down guidelines produced by the organisation and would expect to be followed. The university did not administer the rules the students agreed with their peers. Furthermore, it seems fair to surmise that the groups had not been together long enough for their groups to develop 'norms', since group 'norms' usually develop gradually over time in accordance with the acceptable or non-acceptable behaviour between the group members (Brilhart, Galanes and Adams, 2001). This perhaps offers an explanation for the students' reaction towards their rules as they were only working together as a group in order to do their group assignments. Certainly, Thompson's (2000) idea about the looseness of norms making it easy for people to ignore rules appears to have been borne out.

G (China) verbalised his feelings thus:

> No one remembered the rules so it seemed a waste of time. In China we say speaking is speaking and doing is doing. When you speak something it is not always the same as what you actually do (p.2, con. 23).

Certainly, his comments seemed to echo the rest of the students' attitudes towards the subject and intriguingly his non-compliance with the rules belied his previous enunciation about the value and necessity for rules. Though in fairness to the students, even if they had wanted to abide by the rules, it would have had to have been a group effort or not at all. Arguably the diversity of the multicultural student groups would have meant that there would have been a mix of those who would naturally expect to adhere to the rules because of their culture's attitudes towards them and others who would not be so inclined. Indeed, this is apparent in C's (Indonesia) experience:

> Even although we started out with a structured agenda people were just not bothered. It was a group project so they think anyway in the end we will pull together and finish it. It's not really that it's your own assignment (p.3, con.33).

Like the Chinese student above, this could have been due to the present student situation which being in an individualist environment could have had an impact on the students' behaviour. For example, Britain has a low need for uncertainty avoidance and as Brilhart, Galanes and Adams (2001) assert, norms reflect societal beliefs. Yet despite this, D (Britain) explained that her group had found their guidelines useful:

> We were fine with our rules. For example, if anyone was going to be late they would let us know and we would get on with things until the person got there and then catch them up (p. 2, con. 21).

Her comments show that in mixed cultural groups it is important to be flexible and to give up one's ethnocentricity as Bennett (1998) suggests. Yet it seems that some of the rules adopted initially above had been ignored or perhaps forgotten. Arguably this was unfortunate as had these rules been followed, the group might have been prevented from being so conforming to their leader's behaviour. However, Hall's (1977) views that Britain has a monochronic time orientation was evident through the rule that people had informed the other members if they were going to be late. It also aligned with Triandis (1994) who found that loose cultures, such as Britain impose few constraints on society.

In summarising these results, it was evident that despite the students' claims at the start that rules were useful, most had not adhered to the rules and guidelines they had agreed within their groups because they felt they were inappropriate in their present student situation. Furthermore, the ideas by Douglas (1983) and Brilhart, Galanes and Adams's (2001) that group rules would be laid down by the organisation and norms would usually develop over time offered a feasible explanation for the lack of norms for the groups in this study. The students were not together long enough for norms to develop. Yet there were some cultural issues worthy of note. It was evident that the Japanese student did not appear to align himself with his culture's high need for uncertainty avoidance as advocated by Hofstede (1980). This could have been related to his present situation as he asserted that criteria were unnecessary because his group should be mature enough to act as a team. Tayeb (2001) noted that context needed to be considered in relation to cultural dimensions. Also the only student who found

considered in relation to cultural dimensions. Also the only student who found rules useful was British and yet Hofstede's (1980) views suggest that Britain has low uncertainty avoidance. However the reason for this disparity could be that the student was referring specifically to time-keeping which would reflect Hall's (1977) ideas that Britain has a monochronic time orientation. It appeared too that Triandis's (1994) ideas that loosely structured cultures, such as Britain, were relaxed about rules was appropriate for this group. The British student remarked that if group members were late they 'caught up' when they turned up. Overall, the reason for the students' behaviour towards rules arguably was due to Britain's low need for uncertainty avoidance. The discussion of the other themes now continues by addressing the data in relation to the influence of power distance on multicultural student groups.

Power distance

High and low power distance identifies the differences of acceptance or non-acceptance of unequal sharing of power within societies, thus it could have consequences for matters concerning leadership. For instance, in high power distance cultures the position of leadership would align with one's status within society and would be an officially designated position. In contrast, in low power distance cultures while people may be appointed as leaders due to their position in society, people can also become leaders because of their particular expertise or skill in leading others. Indeed, small group scholars Ellis and Fisher (1994) note that it is usual for people to emerge as leaders in leaderless groups. Hofstede (1980) also asserted that the high status hierarchy that endured in some cultures influenced the power and status within educational establishments in these countries. It is also important to be reminded that high/low power distance does not necessarily correlate with individualism and collectivism. A country can be individualist and have a high or low power distance as can a collectivist country.

The data from both interviews in this study revealed that when asked about this matter, without exception, the students claimed that in their present situation, these dimensions had little significance. Interestingly, this offers support for

Tayeb (2001) who made the point that power distance could be contextual. Yet there were instances of actual practice, in relation to power distance, which appeared to undermine the students' stated position and which related to issues of leadership.

In high power distance cultures leadership is important because of the strict status hierarchy that prevails (Hofstede, 1980). Indeed in this study, it could be surmised that leaderless groups would be problematic for those students from high power distance cultures who are used to looking to a leader for direction. Certainly it transpired that some groups had either elected a group leader or a leader had emerged.

Firstly, E (Trinidad) had been chosen as leader of her group by her peers because of her previous experience of running her own company. However, fellow group member D (Britain) claimed that at times she tended to take over and do things her way:

> Sometimes she wouldn't consider things because it wasn't the way that she felt that it should be done (p.3, con. 27).

However feasibly, the Trinidad student's behaviour could have been due to her country's propensity for high power distance and arguably she was simply behaving in a way she thought a leader should do. Also, although the British student in her group would be used to a low power distance culture she had admitted earlier that she did not like confronting people, suggesting she had a rather passive personality and would not stand up to her Trinidad peer. This would further support Tayeb (2001) who purported that personality was an important issue in cultural diversity

The second instance related to A (Mauritius) who appeared to have emerged as the undesignated leader for her group. Apparently this was not due to any preference for power on her part but because the rest of the group seemed to be disorganised. She claimed that one of the male group members simply expected to be told what to do which she felt was not acceptable behaviour in a group

assignment. Certainly from her remarks it seemed that she was an unwilling leader:

> I was trying to say this, who would do what but in the end I didn't feel I should be leading people and say do this and do that. I don't want to force them. I don't want to do that, but I had to (p.2, con.21).

Her reluctance to take over would be typical of a high power distance culture where someone would usually be appointed as leader (Hofstede, 1980). On the other hand, research on small group matters would also suggest that it was natural for someone to emerge as a leader in a leaderless group (Ellis and Fisher, 1994). Leaders keep groups on track and help them to be more efficient which seems to have been the case for this group. Certainly for the British students in A's (Mauritius) group this might have been usual.

Indeed H (Turkey) made this very point in her assertion:

> There was no leader in the group. We needed to have a leader in the group, this is most important. We need to be more organised (p.9, con. 121).

Her comments offer support for Hofstede (1980) as his findings show that Turkey has a high power distance. H's (Turkey) sentiments above also echo her thoughts earlier about her group meetings being like coffee gatherings (see page 81).

In summary, it seems fair to surmise, as the students advocate, that in a student environment, power and status are not as important as they might be in a working situation. An additional factor worthy of consideration is that Britain has a low power distance culture, thus power and status issues are not fixed simply by a person's rightful place in society as it appears to be in cultures with a high power distance. This is evident in the claim by some collectivist students about the open and supportive relationships that students have with the teaching staff at Bournemouth University which they do not have back home (see page 104).

It was evident in this study that some group members felt the need for a leader whether they were from high or low power distance cultures. For instance, it was apparent that the British student's group had chosen their leader and the student from Mauritius had emerged as leader because the group required direction. Moreover, the Turkish student claimed that her group would have benefited from having a leader to organise them. All of these points indicate that the situation needs to be taken into account when considering power distance (Tayeb, 2001). Finally, there appears to be support for the idea that a person's cultural values are so taken for granted that people are often unaware that their behaviour belies their attitudes (Neulip, 2003). This was evident in the students' declarations that power distance was not appropriate in their present environment, though they practised high power distance strategies through election of leaders. This discussion now moves on to consider the data which emerged in relation to assertiveness and nurturing

Assertiveness and nurturing

According to Hofstede (1980), the masculinity and femininity dimension refers to the different role expectations of males and females in these cultures. For instance, in masculine cultures the males are expected to be ambitious, assertive, tough and focused on material success and the females are expected to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. In feminine cultures these matters tend to be blurred. Ting-Toomey (1999) notes that these issues might influence the delineation of roles within groups with males expecting to have more power than females, for instance, in leadership roles. As was identified in relation to uncertainty avoidance and power distance, this dimension of masculinity and femininity does not necessarily correlate with any of the other dimensions.

The data in this study revealed, like the dimensions of high and low uncertainty avoidance and power distance, that as far as the students were concerned, this dimension was not appropriate in their present situation. The students simply discounted the idea that they expected the males to be more competitive than the females or that they should have more authority than the females in their

groups. This seems a fair assumption as the students were all equally ambitious, studying together in a non- competitive environment. However, some students did elaborate on the reason for their views. For instance, personality seemed to be the reason for H's (Turkey) response. She laughed heartily at the prospect of the males in her group being more prominent because they were males. However, she admitted that in Turkey there was preponderance towards male domination. She personally rejected the notion:

> I am not passive. I don't like people trying to dominate me, 'do this and do this', because I am the one (p.7, con. 99).

Her remarks echo renunciation of some of her expected cultural characteristics. in response to matters related to adaptation (see page103). It also suggests that people in collectivist cultures can have individualistic tendencies and thus offers some support for Tayeb's (2001) idea that there is a little bit of individualism and collectivism in everyone depending on the context.

I (Japan) admitted that his culture was masculine but that he had decided to put his values in this respect to one side. It seems that he had done so as the results of his interviews suggest that he was a rather passive member of his group. In Japan the males are expected to be assertive and competitive. Indeed he admitted that back home he had never had a female above him in his working life. Arguably, this lack of having a female above him could have been the reason for the problems he had encountered in his 'all female' group who were very competitive. In Japan, the females would be expected to be relationship oriented and not competitive as these students clearly had been. Also, according to Hofstede (1980), Britain is a masculine culture so the Japanese student would have had no need to change his behaviour in order to align himself with British attitudes. Furthermore, it was evident that he had also found the other members of his group just as intimidating. It could be deduced that his personality could also have influenced his behaviour which would offer support again for Tayeb's (2001) views that personality is important in cultural dimensions.

In summary, arguably the student situation undoubtedly had a bearing on the outcome of the masculinity and femininity dimension. Furthermore, it was unsurprising that the students felt that the dimension was inappropriate fo. understanding or characterising them as student groups. All of the students, whether they were from masculine or feminine cultures, were ambitious as their goals were to achieve a master's degree. In relation to the Turkish and the Japanese students' responses, it seems that personality was also a factor worthy of consideration.

In summarising the findings related to these four themes, it was evident that Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions were useful in providing understanding for some of the differences in cultural characteristics between the students in their multicultural group settings. Furthermore, it appeared that the most appropriate dimension was that of individualism and collectivism. The issues of cohesion and loyalty were abandoned totally because of the individualist attitude that seemed to prevail among many of the students at Bournemouth University (Hofstede, 1980). On the other hand, in relation to conformity, all of the students in this study, whether from individualist or collectivist cultures, declared that they had conformed to the other group members' attitudes. While this would be usual behaviour for collectivist students, the British student's conformity would not be usual for someone from Britain as suggested by Hofstede (1980). However a feasible explanation could have been due to her groups' leader, supporting Douglas (1983) who suggested that in Western cultures leadership could influence conformity. However, the British student's conformity could also have been related to her passive personality as could the Turkish student who conformed here in her present situation but did not do so back home in collectivist Turkey. Yet arguably, the individualist environment of Bournemouth University was a likely mediating factor. It seems fair to surmise that even given the fact that the student environment contained many international students from several different countries, the British cultural norm of individualism prevailed.

In relation to Hofstede's (1980) dimension of high and low uncertainty avoidance, it seemed that despite the students having drawn up rules because

their tutor had advised it, most had simply forsaken their rules asserting that they were not appropriate in their present situation. This seemed a fair appraisal as these rules were not formal and arguably, the groups had not been together long enough for 'norms' to have developed. Additionally, according to Hofstede (1980) Britain has low uncertainly avoidance so that lack of rules are not necessarily seen to be problematic. As stated in relation to individualism and collectivism, the students' acquiescence in relation to this dimension could have been due to influence from the British individualist environment in which they were studying.

Interestingly, the students also asserted that Hofstede's (1980) high and low power distance dimension was inappropriate in their present student situation. Yet some of the characteristics of this dimension were apparent within the groups in the form of leadership. For instance, one group had appointed a leader, while another student had emerged as leader of her group and a third student had claimed that her group would have benefited from a leader. Arguably, these examples serve to demonstrate that a person's cultural values are so taken for granted that people are often unaware that their behaviour belies their attitudes. However, it has to be noted that even in individualist cultures, leaderless groups are thought to be less effective than those with leaders, particularly if these groups have not worked together before as in the student's situation. There was evidence to suggest that the British students expected someone to emerge as leader in order to organise issues. It could also be deduced that Britain's propensity towards low power distance would permeate university life and thus influence the students' present situation. For instance, if Britain had a high power distance it could be surmised that the student groups would have had leaders.

With regard to Hofstede's (1980) remaining dimension of masculinity and femininity the students asserted that the former was inappropriate in their present situation. Certainly, this was a fair assumption as all of the students, whether from masculine or feminine cultures, were ambitious in studying for their masters' degrees. It seems they had no reason to compete with each other, a characteristic of this dimension, as they were all reaching for the same goal. It

was also apparent that personality could be a mitigating factor when addressing issues related to this dimension. Furthermore, Hofstede's (198) assertion that Britain was a masculine culture was questioned and it was suggested that the anomaly in this respect could be due to cultural evolution as purported by Smith (2002).

This concludes the discussion and interpretation of the findings in relation to Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions. The following chapter six continues the discussion by addressing the data that emerged from matters arising in relation to adaptation.

CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION INTERPERSONAL FACTORS

This analysis now moves on to discuss the key issues which emerged from the interviews in relation to aim three of this research which was to explore the contribution of interpersonal factors namely adaptation, ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, uncertainty and anxiety, stereotyping and first impressions. These are analysed under the following headings: adaptation, ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, and first impressions of group members. The discussion proceeds with the theme of adaptation.

Adaptation

As the literature review indicated, adaptation is a crucial factor for people who travel to other countries in order to live, whether for study or work. Certainly successful adaptation appears to engender a feeling of belonging as people come to terms with the differing cultural codes of their new environments.

Willingness to adapt to a host culture, therefore, would seem to be an essential first step in the process of adaptation and it could be argued that in coming to the UK to study in the first place, students have already made that mental adjustment in terms of being willing to change.

During the first stage interviews the data revealed that all of the students recognised the necessity of adapting to the host culture, although this was stated with varying reservations and depths of conviction. Attitudes towards and experiences of the process of adaptation differed from willingness to accept and adapt to aspects of British society as a primary factor, willingness to accept and adapt to British academic conventions (such as thinking critically), an awareness of the need to adapt but having a fear of being able to adjust and finally an openness towards and tolerance of cultural norms of the multicultural student environment.

In relation to willingness to accept and adapt to aspects of British society, it was evident from F's (China) remarks that she was aware of the importance of being open to experience aspects of her new culture:

> If I don't want to change it's useless of come here, you know. I think the main purpose of come here is absorb something of the thinking and reasoning of the British people. It is not all to study in Bournemouth University (p.5, con.62).

Her comments suggest that her adjustment will involve both psychological and socio- cultural factors as Ward and Searle (1991) have noted. For instance, at a psychological level, the student indicates the necessity to understand the attitudes and values of the British, whereas at the socio cultural level, she recognises that there are differences between the British culture and her own culture that she seems keen to experience. According to Anderson (1994), successful adaptation relies upon how the person chooses to respond to the new environment and given this student's initial thoughts, her adaptation seems likely to be successful

For other students, their main concern was their ability to think critically, an essential skill when studying in British academic establishments. A (Mauritius), C (Indonesia) G (China) and I (Japan) all expressed this as their most significant adjustment factor and responded in similar vein to A (Mauritius) who explained:

> [In Mauritius] we just sit there and take it in. We are not asked our opinion or anything so we just take information in. Here we are asked to, like, participate a lot more and to be critical (p.2, con. 28).

This student's remarks highlight one of the main differences between education in Western and Eastern societies, that is, the freedom to speak their minds (Hofstede, 1980). Indeed this idea was captured in G's (China) comments about his Chinese culture:

> The government sets the rules and the people simply abide by them (p.3, con. 31).

It could be argued that for these students the psychological differences were of the greatest concern. This is understandable, given that their lack of experience in debating issues could have an impact on the success of their degree. Furthermore, Mak et al (1999) noted that students are often more anxious about aspects related to their educational success than socio cultural aspects. However, awareness of cultural differences shown by the students above and a willingness to overcome them is an important first step in successful adaptation according to Kim (1988).

A third attitude related to a fear of being able to adapt successfully was voiced by H (Turkey). One of the reasons she gave was the diversity of cultures among the students:

> This is bad you know. If everyone was British I would know everybody o.k. and what I expect. But everybody is different. So I am actually unhappy in terms of this. Although I have some British friends, but if they were all British I would know what to do and I would be more comfortable but I am not (p.3, con. 42).

To some extent her comments illustrate her feelings of 'culture shock' and uncertainty and anxiety as she faces a situation she has not anticipated Oberg (1960). It could be argued that she had prepared herself for the differences between Turkey and Britain but not for her present multicultural environment. To add to her discomfort she had already experienced a negative reaction from some of her peers because of the way she had communicated with them:

> Yes, I would have to change. I am sometimes too rude for people here, sometimes too much open than they are. I feel you know they think 'oh what is she doing here or what is she saying ?' (p.4, con. 54).

Arguably, her comments could demonstrate her knowledge of the British propensity towards openness and freedom to voice one's opinions and that she was simply exercising her prerogative in that respect. Indeed she mentioned that she had British friends back home in Turkey, so perhaps being open was something she was accustomed to when she was with them. Certainly openness would not be thought of as a typical facet of Turkish behaviour where indirect communication would be the norm (Hall, 1977). Indeed if Hall's views were

plausible and the students to whom H (Turkey) was referring were from high context cultures, it would be understandable that they found her approach too intrusive. Although her anxiety is obvious, so too is her awareness of the problem and this together with her willingness to adapt should help her to overcome her initial feelings of unease (Berger and Calabrese, 1975).

In contrast, it was evident that some students were open to and accepting of their multicultural student environment. B (Iceland) and E (Trinidad) admitted that their familiarity with British values helped in this respect. Indeed both students expressed the idea that their countries were a mix of individualism and collectivism. Interestingly, B (Iceland) explained that it was the younger generation in Iceland who tended to embrace individualistic values rather than the traditional collectivist ones which were typical of the older generations. These remarks relate to the possibility of cultural evolution voiced by several scholars namely Hofstede, 2001, Smith, 2002, and Neuliep, 2003. Significantly, in relation to the Icelandic student's comments, Hofstede (2001) suggested that reasons for cultural evolution included age and generation.

On the other hand, E's (Trinidad) acquaintance with British values was due to her mixed race family as her mother was British and had been raised in Britain. She asserted also that Trinidad still held some of its old colonial values. This perhaps lends support to the ideas by some scholars that Hofstede's dimensions are not necessarily opposites. For example, Neulip (2003) and Gudykunst (2003) reason that it is feasible that characteristics from both individualism and collectivism coexist within each type of culture. Furthermore, this student, together with others, expressed surprise by the friendliness of both peers and staff at Bournemouth University:

> We don't have the huge support systems that you have here, but then you are more of an international university. Back home we don't have this. The whole study support is probably something that's new. We don't call our lecturers by their first names (p.3, con. 46).

Her remarks offer support for Ting-Toomey (1999) who stressed that adaptation was a two way process in that the host culture's receptivity was also essential.

According to Ting-Toomey, cultures need to view outsiders as guests in order for them to feel positive about their new environment.

Finally, while it was obvious that D's (Britain) adaptation process would not entail learning about the host culture's values it could be reasoned that she too would need to make some adjustments in order to communicate effectively in her multicultural environment. Indeed she said that she was surprised at seeing so many foreign students. However, she also asserted that she was sure that her travels to foreign climes would help her adjust to her new multicultural environment.

The second stage interviews revealed that for some students, adaptation had been partial and yet others said that the multicultural student environment helped them to adapt more easily. However, there were others who found that adjustment was difficult because of lack of confidence to speak out.

Those who had confessed that their adaptation had been partial were A (Mauritius) and G (China) who responded thus:

> Yes, well, I think, eh for some, well, I can't adapt everything. There are some things that I still do my way because I feel more comfortable with that. But at the same time I try to adapt (p.4, con. 57). A (Mauritius)
>
> I would learn more but keep my culture (p.6, con.67). G (China)

Both responses echo the view by Bennett (1998) that adaptation is often additive rather than substitutive, particularly for those whose intention is not to stay long term. Certainly both students had confided their intention to return home shortly after their studies were finished. Additionally, A (Mauritius) confessed that adaptation was made easier because the students all had the same goals, an important issue which had been noted by Mak et al (1999). This student made the point too that adapting was less complicated because her course friends were international and understood what it felt like to be away from home. Arguably this latter point could be the reason for her feeling that she did not have to adapt completely. Furthermore she asserted:

> If we were in a work environment, I mean, out there is the real world I am sure it would be different (p.5, con 65).

It seems that in her present student environment, the psychological and socio cultural factors highlighted by Ward and Searle (1991) that could have been problematic had not been so relevant for this student.

The student environment appeared also to have helped F (China) and H (Turkey) in their adaptation. For instance, F (China) found adaptation easier because although she offered her own views on issues under discussion, she was willing to give in to the other group members' ideas. She claimed to have done so because her job had not depended on her doing otherwise. Also she commented that her age and previous work experience had helped her to be more flexible. H (Turkey) responded in similar vein. Apparently, she had been able to overcome her initial fears about her multicultural student environment but proposed that in a working situation she may have found adaptation more troublesome:

> If I was in London, maybe working, it would be hard I think. But now maybe, yes, it is o.k. Yes, this is the worst situation than here. You have to make profit, you know, for the company, so it must be really hard (p.8, con 109).

It could be surmised that her experience thus far seems to offer support for Ting-Toomey's (1999) views that identity change is incremental as the person adapts to the host culture and the formation of social networks.

Despite C's (Indonesia) admission earlier that being critical might be difficult for her, she found the transition easy because her country was half Indonesian and half Western. Also she divulged that she was cognisant with Western ways due to her previous experience in a foreign studies' university:

> I would say it's not difficult but it's not, eh, the way I would like to live, certainly when I finish I will go back home (p.5, con. 50).

It could be reasoned that while in a foreign studies university she had been aware of the Western norm to argue and debate issues but was unable to do so in her own culture because it was not part of her culture's norms. Now that she was in a situation where it was the norm she had found it easier than anticipated. The only student who appeared to have found it difficult to adapt was I (Japan) who found it hard to interact with his group because of his lack of confidence. Also, he alluded to the fact that his links with his many Japanese friends might have added to this problem:

> I don't know if I am lucky or unfortunate. I've got a lot of Japanese friends as well in England around me, so I talk to them a lot. I feel that I am acting like some Japanese English person here and then when I go home I talk to them as a Japanese, so if I stayed longer and I had only English people around me I think I would change (p. 5, con 59).

His remarks raise the point that effective adaptation does seems to be dependent on how the person chooses to respond to the new environment as asserted by Anderson (1994). Surrounding himself with people from his own culture would appear to be distancing himself from both the psychological and socio cultural issues which, according to Ward and Searle (1991), are so important if one is to adapt effectively. His attitude also gives scope for the argument that people whose visits are short term usually do not have the motivation to adapt (Aitken, 1973).

Finally, D (Britain) had also had to make certain adjustments in order to communicate effectively with her peers:

> I found that in meetings you would talk a lot slower than you normally would do because you are conscious of them speaking another language. So you might get less done because you are using time to speak at a level that everyone can understand. So things would take a bit longer. And also waiting for other people to speak because you want to make sure that they understand (p.1, con.9).

Her remarks show her sensitivity to her peers and awareness of the difficulties people might have as they attempt to communicate in a second language. Perhaps as she had asserted earlier, her travels abroad had helped her to be more

aware of some of these important issues. Also her reference to having to wait for others to speak could also be related to Hall's (1977) ideas that high context cultures tend to need time to assess the situation before voicing how they feel.

In summary it was evident that some of the students in the study were more anxious than others about their ability to adapt to their new environment. None the less, all of the students were aware that adapting to the new cultural environment would be beneficial as they worked together. This offered support for several scholars who concurred that in order to adapt effectively people must be motivated to learn the new cultural codes and change accordingly (Anderson, 1994, Kim, 1988, Nolan, 1998).

It seems too that difficulties in adapting initially by the students could have been due to their lack of understanding the importance of psychological and social factors in relation to the new environment. According to Mak et al (1999) and Ward and Searle (1991) these were necessary prerequisites to successful adaptation. For instance, those students who found the transition from their own culture to the British one relatively simple seemed to be due to either, previous knowledge of British cultural values, or determination to experience what it was like to be and think like the British. Others appeared to experience psychological barriers due to their realisation that they were required to take a more critical approach to their studies, which was not expected of them in their own culture. Also one student was troubled by the diversity of cultures among the students as she had not envisaged such a multicultural environment and was anxious that she would not be able to cope such diversity.

Yet, most of these barriers seemed to have been overcome as the students became more familiar with each other and participated in their new cultural environment (Kim, 1988). Indeed several students expressed the view that their multicultural student environment had assisted in their adaptation. For example, all the students had the same goal and many shared a common bond in being international and thus English was their second language. This meant that they were not as afraid about making mistakes during interaction with others due to language differences as they might have been had they been in the minority.

Some students also expressed that age and experience had been invaluable as they worked together. Additionally, several made the point that it might not have been so easy to adapt in a working environment. Furthermore, it seems that the friendly and supportive climate at Bournemouth University engendered by both their peers and the teaching staff was extremely beneficial in helping the students to feel more comfortable. This latter point offers support for Ting-Toomey (1999) who noted that adaptation was not a one- way process where the newcomer was the only one expected to change and that the host culture also needed to be amenable to the newcomer. This seemed a reasonable point to make, as it was the newcomer who had left the security of his or her own known environment, often to travel many miles to unknown territory. As Ting-Toomey (1999) noted it could be a turbulent or an exhilarating experience.

Indeed for one student it seemed to be a turbulent experience. He confessed that he found it hard to interact with his group because of his lack of confidence. His remedy appeared to be to surround himself with Japanese friends both within and out with university. Arguably, this would have hindered his ability to gather knowledge about and thus familiarise himself with his host culture and fellow peers which according to Mak et al (1999) were essential if one was to adapt successfully. However, it seems fair to surmise that as Mak et al (1999) suggest, people are not always aware of the necessity for socio cultural competence. It could be argued that most people would perhaps be more concerned about the language barrier. This could offer an explanation for this student's propensity to gravitate towards his own culture as they all spoke his language.

Interestingly, only two of the students mentioned that while they were prepared to learn about their new cultural environment, they were not prepared to adapt completely. This offered agreement with Bennett's (1998) ideas about the difference between adaptation and assimilation. Bennett made the point that people whose intention was not to stay long term would be unlikely to go though a process of assimilation whereby they would not give up their cultural beliefs completely. Indeed it was the intention of most of the students interviewed, to return home either immediately their studies were completed or after gaining work experience for a year. Finally, Anderson's (1994) view that

successful adaptation was dependent on the way a person chooses to respond seems a fair assessment overall of the students' adaptation in this study. It appears that matters of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism can also have a bearing on the effectiveness of a person's adaptation and this discussion now proceeds by considering the data which transpired from the students' responses to these matters.

Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism

The literature suggests that the effectiveness of one's adaptation is closely linked to ethnocentrism, and like adaptation, willingness to be culturally relative is essential during interaction with people from other cultures. However, the difficulty in relation to ethnocentrism and cultural relativism is two fold. Firstly, people often assume that others think in the same way as they do, and secondly, people are often unaware that they are behaving in an ethnocentric manner. These concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism were explained to the students during the interviews to prevent any misunderstandings.

During the first stage interviews, the data showed that some of the students were willing to try to overcome their ethnocentrism, while others were not. Those who were willing to be less ethnocentric also acknowledged that it would not be easy. The diversity of views included the right to have own values due to one's upbringing, making little effort due to the student environment, difficulty in being able to change deeply held beliefs, and the ability to be flexible.

The students who expressed the view that they had a right to keep their own cultural values were A (Mauritius) and H (Turkey) although their reasons were different:

> I think it is o.k. to have them [own attitudes and beliefs] because that is the way I've been brought up. I think the British are very easy going. They do accept other cultures. Maybe not twenty years ago but they certainly do now. It is changing (p.4, con 50). A (Mauritius)

In relation to A's (Mauritius), response above, Bennett (1998) would suggest that when a person is unwilling to give up their ethnocentricity it could be due to feelings of being an outsider and thus it would be a way of protecting their ethnic identity. Certainly this could be the case for this student, despite her suggestion that her resistance to being culturally relative was due to Britain's flexibly, as her following response shows:

> Yes, the fact that they are more open [the British]. It doesn't mean that we have to confront people. I don't prefer that way. The culture I was brought up in was not like that so I found it difficult. Sometimes I had a dilemma. If I think like that back home they would think I was being impolite (p.5, con.75).

Perhaps her difficulty in being able to be open could have made her feel as if she was an outsider. Her remarks also offer for support for Lee and Ward's (1998) claim that collectivist cultures are more likely to be ethnocentric than individualist cultures, particularly given that she claimed that the British, an individualist country, were 'easy going', in other words were flexible. Hall's (1977) research is also pertinent here, in that he purports that high context cultures, such as Mauritius, are not used to the openness of communication by low context cultures such as Britain.

On the other hand, H's (Turkey) reason for not having to be culturally relative seemed to be due to her student environment, in which she suggests she had the option of keeping herself to herself:

> Ah for anyone, yes, if, I think, if I had to live more, you know like working here, or other things I would be more, eh, focused on that area [cultural relativism]. But because, you know, I am studying now so I prefer to be ethnocentric (p.4, con. 52).

Interestingly, her remarks are reflective of Mak et al (1999) who asserted that often people focus solely on successful goal attainment to the detriment of socialising altogether.

In contrast, to these two opinions, E (Trinidad) felt that on the whole the British tended to be ethnocentric because they were well known in the world.

Those who were willing to be culturally relative but agreed that it had its difficulties responded in several ways. For example, I (Japan) admitted that he felt at times that he would never be able to change his attitudes because it seemed that the differences between the various cultures were so vast. On the other hand, C (Indonesia) agreed with B (Iceland) who felt that he probably could be more culturally relative but recognised that his deeply held beliefs would not be easy to change:

> [...] You still tend to cling on to your own things. Still you don't do things differently that would upset. You try to be, you know, have acceptable behaviour and all that stuff (p.3, con. 48).

His comments support scholars who purport that cultural attitudes are so deeply entrenched that they are hard to shift (Neulip, 2003).

Conversely, the Chinese students, who both were aware of the necessity to be less ethnocentric, approached the issue from different perspectives. The first student was worried about his inability to be more critical and his female counterpart was anxious about the prejudice she felt was directed towards her by some of her group members:

> In the seminar discussion it is something I have difficulties with. People always discuss things very heavily. In our culture we are not used to argue a lot (p.4, con. 43). G (China)

> Yes, I just think if I keep, you know, myself to say 'oh you British I think have a prejudice against me' I think it is impossible to work well (p.5 con.68).
> F (China)

However, both students seemed to be aware that it was important to surmount these obstacles in order to work more effectively in their groups, which suggests that they would work at being more culturally relative.

Finally, while D (Britain) had experienced few problems she added that it was rarely simple:

> But that has to be the same for everyone and it certainly isn't easy at times, especially when you think you are right (p.2, con. 27).

Her views exemplify the dilemma posed by ethnocentricity in that by its very nature it is an extremely difficult hurdle to overcome. A person's values and attitudes can be so deeply entrenched that it is often assumed that they are correct and are shared by all (Dubinskas, 1992).

The data from the second stage interviews revealed that despite the acknowledgment by most of the students of the necessity to be less ethnocentric and more culturally relative, their predetermined attitudes were not always easy to uphold. Those who were willing to be more culturally relative but envisaged problems found that it had not been easy. Others confessed to having been ethnocentric despite their assertions to be otherwise and others who said that they felt it was unnecessary to be culturally relative found the reverse.

To begin with the students who found it difficult to be culturally relative, I (Japan) declared:

> It was very difficult, extremely difficult. I realise some part of their individualism [his group members] and they are confident. I knew I should have talked more, I should have been more confident but when we start meeting, we, I just can't (p.4, con.57).

His comments show his struggle in being able to transcend his own cultural values and indeed this is even more apparent in the following remarks:

> I think this is not only between Japan and English, I think also Japan and other US or Western people which is individualistic because we highly value the group. We think we are part of the group and we have to respect all the people and before we start talking we should try to understand what they say and as long as it makes sense we have to understand this opinion even if I don't agree with it (p.3, con.38).

His allusion to his other group members being individualistic in their behaviour towards him is surprising, given that they were Chinese, English and Greek and according to Hofstede (1980), both the Chinese and Greek would be collectivist and group oriented like himself. However, it was possible that they were able to transcend the limits of their own cultural norms and become more individualistic because they were studying in an individualistic British

university. Also it could be deduced that the Japanese's lack of confidence was due to his personality. However, Bennett (1998) offers further understanding into this matter. Bennett (1998) asserts that a person's unwillingness to give up one's ethnocentricity could be due to feelings of being an outsider and wanting to protect one's ethnic identity. This could have been the reason for this student surrounding himself with his Japanese friends rather than mixing with the other students.

On the other hand, G (China) felt that he had been culturally relative:

> Yes [not ethnocentric] because I try to avoid conflict and try to avoid argument (p.4, con. 35).

Yet according to Bond (1988) his response would be a typical reaction by someone living in China as the Chinese avoid conflict because of the importance of basic human relationships in their society. In other words, it seems that his behaviour had been ethnocentric despite his feelings to the contrary. This offers support for Dubinskas (1992) who says that people are often unaware that they are behaving ethnocentrically. Interestingly, his reaction was different to his female counterpart F (China) who explained:

> Actually, you know, I don't think I am Chinese, you are British so I must act as a Chinese. I would behave as other people, like the British people or something (p.6, con.76).

Her remarks appear to reflect her earlier need to overcome her feelings of prejudice by the other members of her group and that by trying to act like a British person she will do so. Also arguably she would offer her own opinions on issues just as the British do which is in contrast to her Chinese counterpart above. Perhaps the reason for the variance of attitudes in respect of these two Chinese students was due to life experience or age which Tayeb (2001) argued needed to be included when considering cultural characteristics. For instance, the male student had come straight from university in China to study here in Britain, whereas the female student had five years work experience and during that time had worked many miles from her home.

Another student who had hoped to overcome any ethnocentric tendencies was C (Indonesia) but she claimed she had found otherwise:

> Mmmm I think in the end, yes, [being ethnocentric] because I finished early and also I am quite impatient. Nobody was concentrating on it so I had to say, 'you do this, you do that, let's do this'. I am sorry about that but they were not doing the work and I was very anxious (p.4, con 45).

Certainly her anxiety could have been due to her country's high need for uncertainty avoidance as opposed to the British whose need for uncertainly avoidance was relatively low (Hofstede, 1980). Although it could also be deduced that her impatience was due to her personality as she also admitted:

> I am the sort of person, I always like to do things on time and get organised long before, as soon as I can. Yes, it is better because if something unforeseen happens you then have time to do something about it. If you wait till the last minute it isn't always possible (p.1, con.12).

Indeed, personality could have been a reason for D's (Great Britain) declaration that she had left the others to do 'their own thing', particularly given the fact that she seemed to be passive at times. Although in fairness, her attitude could just as easily have been due to Britain's individualistic tendencies and ability to cope with uncertain situations (Hofstede, 1980).

Finally, of the two students who had asserted that they were entitled to be ethnocentric, A (Mauritius) confessed that she had to change her ideas, albeit slightly, to be in line with her other group members:

> Well I think it is not that extreme, I don't think they [her group] did things that were very different from mine. I feel that I am the one who has to adapt to the new culture, so I can't think that I ever did that [behaved ethnocentrically] (p.5, con. 49).

Arguably, despite her views earlier that the British were flexible, it could be that her multicultural student group had necessitated her change in behaviour as other cultures may not have been so flexible. For example, Lee and Ward (1998) claimed that collectivist cultures were more likely to be ethnocentric

than individualist cultures. The other student, H (Turkey), who had expressed the view earlier that she could choose to be ethnocentric because of her student environment, simply asserted that when people were under pressure it was natural to forget to try not to be ethnocentric. This offered support for scholarly views that ethnocentrism was often a natural fact of life (Dubinskas, 1992, Hofstede, 2001).

In summary it was evident that most of the students in this study were aware of the benefits of overcoming their ethnocentric tendencies. Although it was apparent too that being culturally relative was not an easy matter for a variety of reasons. This was unsurprising as research suggested that ethnocentrism was a universal trait due to the fact that enculturation was an inherent part of a person's belief system (Neulip, 2003).

Indeed the students in this study highlighted several variances in cultural attitudes between themselves and their group members that had proved problematic. For instance, one student had found it hard to embrace the British ideal of openness and being confronting because it was not usual in her culture and it made her feel uncomfortable. This had resulted in her asserting that she had a right to keep her cultural values. However, it transpired that she did change some of her attitudes to be in line with those of her group, thereby overcoming some of her ethnocentric inclinations. This would offer support for Bennett (1998) who purported that effective communication relied upon people being culturally relative rather than ethnocentric. In contrast, a student who had avowed to be culturally relative found herself being ethnocentric because of her impatience and anxiety regarding her group's relaxed attitude towards their assignment.

Some students asserted that the differences were so vast between the cultures that they would never be able to change due to lack of confidence for some and for others the inability to think critically. The student who had difficulties in his group due to lack of confidence was the Japanese student. His main contention was that the other group members had a tendency to be individualistic and that they did not value the group as a whole. He claimed that in his culture group

members respected each other. However as was pointed out above, some of the other group members were also collectivistic and they seemed to have coped competently in their new individualistic environment. Indeed arguably, in order for this student to be less ethnocentric he would have to align himself with British attitudes as the other students in his group seemed to have done. The other student, who was Chinese and unused to taking part in critical debate, was anxious about the depth of discussion expected in his group. Yet he felt he had not been ethnocentric, as he had managed to avoid conflict and confrontation with his peers. However, this would be normal behaviour for the Chinese suggesting that he had been ethnocentric. This offers support for Hofstede's (2001) ideas that it is often difficult to see ethnocentric behaviour in one's self.

It seems that several of the situations outlined above could also be related to Hall's (1977) high/low context communication which suggested that people from high context cultures were expected to communicate in ways which maintained group harmony, sometimes to the extent of not divulging their true feelings about issues. In contrast, people in low context cultures, such as Britain, were expected to communicate in ways that were consistent with their feelings. This was apparent in the student who found it difficult to cope with the openness of her peers and the other student who had problems with their relaxed attitude towards work. Similarly it could also have been relevant in the case of the students who found it difficult to communicate in a critical way as they were used to simply accepting what they were taught, rather than considering the pros and cons.

Lee and Ward's (1998) ideas about collectivist students being more likely to be ethnocentric was only borne out in some cases, as the data from this present study suggested that while some collectivist students did tend to be ethnocentric others did not. It was also evident that some of those with individualistic tendencies behaved in an ethnocentric manner. Yet another explanation for those who had been ethnocentric could have been related to Hofstede's (1980) assertion that cultures could have either a high or a low level of uncertainty avoidance. For example, the student from Indonesia could have had a high level of uncertainty avoidance hence her anxiety that her peers seemed unconcerned

about their group assignment. In contrast, the British student would be likely to have a low level of uncertainty avoidance and would not perceive it as unusual to leave the others in her group to cope alone. The final theme that has emerged out of the interpersonal issues in this study is that of the initial impressions the students had of their fellow group members. These include matters related to uncertainty and anxiety, stereotyping and first impressions and a discussion of the insights generated through the interviews now continues.

First impressions of Group Members

The literature proposes that initial impressions of others can influence adaptation and subsequent interaction and includes interpersonal matters of stereotyping, first impressions, uncertainty and anxiety. Initial impressions are often based on factors such as stereotyping or implicit personality theories and can be either positive or negative. An added difficulty is that negative first impressions are often difficult to shift and could cause a person to be anxious and uncertain. However, a way of overcoming uncertainty and anxiety is to focus on similarities rather than differences as these commonalities may help to develop a bond with others. All of these issues are included in the following analysis.

First of all, it was apparent from the data that the students' groups had been chosen in a variety of ways. Some students had been allowed to choose their group members, others had been 'taken out of a hat' and some groups included those who had been left after the other groups had been formed. Additionally, these small groups were chosen from the larger seminar groups to which they had been assigned at the start of their studies. This meant that the students had been together for three months and thus knew each other to a certain extent. This could be beneficial or not depending on their individual experiences. There were varying reactions to the way in which the groups had been chosen. Those who had been able to choose their group members were pleased. However, the reaction of the students who had chosen their groups out of a hat was varied; some were pleased because the mix seemed fair while others thought it unprofessional. Lastly, those whose groups were formed from the

students who were left expressed extreme disquiet, mainly in relation to cultural factors.

The students who had been able to choose their group members included A (Mauritius), B (Iceland) and C (Indonesia). Unsurprisingly all of these students' initial impressions of their groups were optimistic and these also aligned with their stereotypical views of their peers which had been positive. This offers support for scholars such as Hargie (1997) who asserts that stereotyping enables people to predict the behaviour of others and thus helps to reduce uncertainties. Although C (Indonesia) confessed to having some reservations about her own ability:

> I'm not anxious, but what if I don't really understand or it takes me a long time to understand what the task is, and they think and because of the language barrier other members of the group will think I am not contributing? That's what really worries me (p.5, con 83).

When asked how she might overcome her fears she said she would talk to her group about her worries and by working harder than the others she would understand more. This seemed a good strategy, as it was important to gather information about each other in order to reduce uncertainty and anxiety (Berger and Calabrese, 1975). By discussing her fears with the others at the initial formation stage it should prevent misunderstandings later. Indeed she divulged at the end of her second interview, that as she became more familiar with the other members of her group she had felt more relaxed, resulting in her being able to express herself without too many problems. However, she also admitted at the same time, that despite her initial optimism at being able to choose her group, it had been a rather negative experience:

> I would say if I had another chance I would prefer not to work with the same people. We just choose the people we think we can get along with, and maybe who has good English (p.1, con. 5).

Her remarks could indicate the importance of being aware of not relying too much on one's implicit personality theories when forming impressions of

others. For instance, Bruner and Tagiuri (1954) note that people should question the validity of their implicit theories as there can be a tendency to assume that if a person has one or two positive attributes, their other attributes will also be positive. When asked about her overall experience with her group she admitted that the British students were too relaxed with regard to work:

> The British are nice to be friends, really, we can play together but not working together. They leave things till the last minute, always, and they are too laid back, not worrying about things. Mm, in the end everything was very rushed. But I don't really feel sad about it, even although it was the lowest mark I got, I think it is O.K (p.3, con. 29).

It was apparent that despite some of the problems she had regarding her groups' lack of focus on their group assignment that C's (Indonesia) was a reasonably positive one.

In contrast, the other students who had been able to choose their group members, both A (Mauritius) and B (Iceland), expressed few feelings of anxiety. Although Gudykunst and Kim (2003) claimed that it was important to search for similarities rather than focusing on differences it was evident that the students in A's (Mauritius) group had decided to utilise the differences to the group's advantage:

> But now at the moment everybody in our group is quite different and we are actually taking advantage of that because each one is good at something else. Each one is good at his/her own thing and we intend to take advantage of that and actually each focus on what we are good at (p.5, con. 66).

In other words, rather than seeing the differences in a negative light their intention was to pull their resources. However, there were also similarities between the group members which may have added to their confidence; they were all over twenty- one years of age and all had work experience. Indeed A (Mauritius) volunteered that she could not foresee any communication problems between the group members because of these issues. Yet she confessed that as the time quickly drew near for the submission of their assignment there seemed to be no sense of urgency among her group members. Everything had been left

till the last minute which she found worrying. This could relate to her culture having a high need for uncertainty avoidance as asserted by Hofstede (1980). However, she also admitted that by the end of the group assignment her group had become closer despite the various problems they had, as the following response demonstrates:

> By the end of the project, well it doesn't, at the end we are closer. Of course sometimes we are tense but we can cope with that, yes [...]. At the end after the project we just get along with each other very well. It didn't really affect the group relationship (p.1, con.5).

She also expressed the view that she had found her group experience easier mainly because they were so many international students on her course:

> We are students here. We have the same goals and most of my course mates are international students. And so we have the same feelings about being away from home. That is what makes us understand each other I think. A friend of mine is an undergraduate student from Germany and he gets depressed because the majority are British and they never get together with him (p.5, cons. 65,67).

It appears from A's (Mauritius) comments that the multicultural student environment had a positive influence on her experience.

The four students whose groups were chosen out of a hat were D (Britair.), E (Trinidad), F (China) and I (Japan). It was also evident that and D (Britain) and E (Trinidad) were in the same group. They explained too that the different cultures, sexes and British students had been divided equally between the groups in order to provide fairness which helped to relieve the anxieties of some of the students. Arguably it was important that British students were divided equally among the groups for two reasons. One reason was that the students' assignment was related to the British Police Force and the other was that it was just as essential for British students to work with people from other cultures as it was for the foreign students to work with the British students.

Although D (Britain) and E (Trinidad) were pleased with their chosen group, they both expressed the need to consider some of their group members'

personalities. However, the focus of their remarks was on different group members. For instance E (Trinidad) commented thus:

> And then, you know we looked at, was everyone happy with who they were working with in terms of personalities? One of the girls in our group in particular, is very quiet and we did say to her that she needs to speak up a little bit more. She is typically Asian and is very quiet and we are all so loud, she really needs to speak up a little bit more and come out of her shell (p.5, con. 62).

Interestingly, while she referred to this student's personality as being quiet, it could also be surmised that the basis for her attitudes were aligned more to her own stereotypical views of the student as being typically Asian. Indeed, Hall (1977) suggested that in collectivist cultures, such as these, members were expected to communicate in ways that would maintain group harmony. Also openness would not be a natural characteristic, according to Gudykunst (1998). It was surprising that E (Trinidad) was not aware of these cultural idiosyncrasies because her own culture might also be expected to use high context communication. However, this discrepancy could be due to her acknowledgment earlier that her culture tended to be flexible. It could also be reasoned that the student's silence was a reaction to finding the loudness of her peers rather intimidating.

On the other hand, D's (Britain) misgivings were directed towards E (Trinidad) because she was worried that the Trinidad's confident demeanour might result in her taking over the group decisions because of her previous work experience. She had also been chosen to lead the group as he had run her own business back home. Indeed her fears were founded to a certain extent, as she had seemed to exercise her power as a leader and had ignored issues she deemed inappropriate (see page 83). However, overall, D's (Britain) group experience was a positive one:

> I enjoyed working with people and seeing how different people from other cultures worked. I feel a lot more comfortable now about talking to people from different cultures. However, if we had spent more time doing things as a group we could just have reviewed things afterwards and it would have been better, but that was our bad time planning rather than anything to do with cultural differences. (p.6,con.52,57).

Her last remarks are interesting and perhaps serve to demonstrate that people are indeed ethnocentric and are unaware that others may do things differently (Neuliep, 2003).

One of the other members whose group had been chosen out of a hat was I (Japan) and he was rather disparaging about the way his group had been chosen as he asserted that it was not professional. His initial impression of his group was one of nervousness and uncertainty which for the Japanese is difficult to cope with as they have a very high need for uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). He explained:

> It is quite hard, and I, I'm quiet because I couldn't find a space to start talking. And when I was quiet they pick on me and say, why are you quiet? Speak up, blah, blah, blah (p.5, con. 70).

He added that he felt that they should take turns in speaking and said that in Japan it was normal to take time to think about the issues which was reflective of Hall's (1977) ideas about high context cultures. Furthermore he also stated that he found his groups' straight talking very direct, adding that it was shocking and very offensive for him. His confidence seemed to be tested further in his assertion that he had the feeling that his group expected people to be able to cope alone which he admitted he found difficult and was causing him some anxiety. For a collectivist person, this type of individualism would not be usual as collectivist cultures are very group-centred (Hofstede, 1980). Worthy of mention were his stereotypical views of the British:

> Older people I found quite kind to foreigners except the very old who probably have past quarrels and a history of Japan so haven't a good image of Japan. But young people are quite aggressive almost I feel they are prejudiced sometimes, mmm that's what I think (p.2, con. 28).

Initially his response appeared to be a rather general observation about the British rather than about his group in particular. However, the following comments helped to clarify the matter:

> I felt when I started this course I don't speak a lot in the lectures and seminars but I even if I say some thing, some short sentences, they really don't care (p.2, con 34).

These remarks give cause to consider that part of this student's lack of confidence could be due to his negative expectations of his present environment. The point is that negative first impressions can discourage future interaction and as Ting-Toomey (1999) asserts people naturally want to appear attractive or credible. The student's reaction to being ignored could also be related to 'face issues' asserted by Bond (1988, 1996) to be a vital part of Far Eastern philosophy. If the student had suffered 'face loss' it would almost certainly affect his confidence, especially as in Japan it would be usual to 'try hard not to cause anyone to lose face' (Ting-Toomey, 1999:75). Furthermore, according to implicit personality theories (Bruner and Tagiuri, 1954). This student's negative impressions due to stereotyping could have prevented him from taking a more optimistic view of his group. Although, when asked about his group experience overall he explained:

> Once we finished we come more closer than just before the presentation. Everyone was very nervous then and we had some trouble (p.1, con.3).

It seems that despite his lack of confidence and the various problems he had experienced his group experience had been a reasonably good one.

The other student whose group had been chosen 'out of a hat' was F (China) although she confessed that before the group was formed she had tried to form her own group. This could have been due to her misgivings about some of her peers. She claimed that her expectations of a class system and prejudice towards the Chinese and Asian cultures had been realised in part, with half of the people she met being kind and the others biased. Her initial impressions are outlined further:

> Actually we have two other Japanese and me and we have a British and a Greek and at the beginning they just think we are Easterners [the British and the Greek]. Maybe our language capabilities are not good enough or maybe our thinking is not good enough, so they two just communicate with each other, just regardless of us. But for me I am not going to do nothing. I will

> try to something to prove that I am venerable to talk with. I think it depends on different people. But I do believe the British people do have this perception against Easterners. They think we are less capable of doing something or thinking, something like that (p.4, con. 60).

Her response appears to reflect the idea that first impressions are often subject to people seeking to confirm and seek out information that supports their views Bruner and Potter (1964). Perhaps her awareness of the discrimination caused by class distinction in her own country and knowing that Britain was class oriented may have caused her to expect her stereotypical images to be confirmed. This could have resulted in a self- fulfilling prophecy, causing her to behave towards the others as if they had indeed reacted to her in a discriminatory way. Moreover, her male counterpart G (China) had not found any discrimination and asserted that the people here were friendly to foreigners. He explained further that in China there was discrimination by the Western part of his country towards those in the Eastern part, but since he was from the West he had not experienced this. It could be deduced that since he had not experienced discrimination in his own country he did not expect to do so in this country.

Yet F's (China) intention to 'talk' with her peers would be a positive step as communicating with others could help to reduce anxieties (Berger and Calabrese, 1978). Certainly, when asked at the end of her second interview if the communication between herself and her group had improved, she asserted that there had been conflict and many arguments between both sides. However, in the end her peers had been interested in her views and they had been able to compromise. She also inferred that age had been a factor in their arguments as the younger group members had tended not to want to listen and had been impatient at times. This would have been a further annoyance for the Chinese student as listening is an important concept for countries whose values are based on Confucian philosophy (Bond, 1988). In referring to the divide between the students in her group due to cultural diversity she confessed:

> So this gap is set by ourselves, but I think you know, in future, you know, we can solve this, the differences in culture (p.8, con.105).

Her comments provide an optimistic outlook for multicultural students working together by serving to demonstrate her acknowledgement that difficulties due to cultural diversity can be overcome. It also highlights the importance of 'mindful' communication put forward by Ting-Toomey (1999).

The two remaining students G (China) and H (Turkey) had been the ones left after the others had chosen their group members. G (China) admitted that when he heard about the groups he was panic- stricken. The four British people had formed a group and left the other five who were not British to be together without any consultation with the other members:

> This is not good but these four people do not say anything they just form a group but one of them speak just to release the message. But when the one people speak to the other, one say we want to join you, and form a group with mixed culture. The other people seem to disagree with this kind of thing but not heavy argument. Richard [the unit tutor] say the four need to separate (p.5, con.52).

It seems evident from his response that the way people perceive one another can determine the way they behave towards them (Hargie, 1997). Arguably, the British group were behaving in a rather ethnocentric manner and perhaps this was also due to their implicit personality theories. They could have perceived difficulties working with students from other cultures due to language differences and ways of doing. However, once the situation was rectified by the tutor, the student's anxieties had been reduced somewhat. When asked about his group experience overall, G (China) explained thus:

> You do not need to obey the other cultures or the other people don't have to obey you. I think all the members should find a middle way, they sho'.ld be flexible. You don't have to always satisfy the other cultures. I don't think people want to make trouble in their groups (p.4, con 45).

His remarks support his earlier ideas about conformity when he asserted that it was important to compromise (see page 84). He also expressed the view that his group experience had been a positive one.

The other student who had been left after the others had chosen their group members was H (Turkey) who was worried about being left to work with three other Asian students. Initially, it seemed that there was little she could do about her situation. Not only was she worried about her group, she was concerned also about her tendency to take over:

> Actually they were all Asians so we are more, you know, it is easier to communicate [all from similar cultures] But I think I am a little bit pushy, and you know sometimes like a leader you know, 'you do it' and I am trying to stop myself because people don't like it (p.5, con. 70).

The student's remarks appear to highlight the dilemma a person might have to face in a multicultural environment. Arguably Turkish and Asian cultures would embrace collectivist characteristics so would normally be group centred which would be an advantage, but they would possibly also look to a leader for direction. In these cultures status is also important and thus it would be unusual for a group member to simply assume the role of leader, especially if they were all considered to be equal as in their present student environment. Hence this student's concern that she was taking over. Yet it would seem that a leader would be required in such a group. However, the situation changed because two of the group members left and the remaining members had the opportunity to split into other groups. H (Turkey) expressed her feelings thus:

> Now it is better, because everybody knows what to do, yes it is a better group. Yes it is good (p.5, con. 72).

Her remarks are unsurprising given her cultural tendencies towards collectivism and her reticence earlier at having to lead. Yet despite her optimistic attitude she explained, at the end of her group assignment, that her group had needed a leader in order to co-ordinate matters and thus work more effectively together. This could be reflective of the high power distance in Turkey (Hofstede, 1980). When asked about her overall group experience she explained that her main problem was with the language difference and trying to explain herself clearly:

> Usually, yes, it's because of the language. Firstly because you sometimes mean something but the other person understands something else. But I think I usually experience it with British students, not the other cultures,

> because they [the other cultures] in a way understand everybody is struggling (p.1, con.16).

Her remarks point to the idea that people do need to be mindful in their communication and to be culturally relative by trying to put themselves in the other person's place (Ting-Toomey, 1999). It seems that the other international students were able to be more understanding because English was their second language and they knew what it was like to be misunderstood because of language barriers. However, H (Turkey) enjoyed her group assignment despite the various problems that had arisen and claimed that her relationship with her group was much closer by the end.

In summary it was apparent that initial impressions had influenced the ways in which the students communicated with each other. Both positive and negative stereotyping had been unhelpful resulting in the wrong choices being made for some and lack of confidence for others. These initial impressions could have been due to the student's implicit personality theories. For instance, the assumption that because people get on well together as friends, they will work well together also. Furthermore, it was evident that the ways in which the groups had been chosen also influenced the students in various ways, from being optimistic due to having chosen group members personally, to being convinced and anxious because of being the students simply 'left' after the other groups had been formed.

The anxiety expressed by some students seemed to be due to their lack of confidence in relation to their multicultural environment. For instance, although one student was pleased to have been able to choose her group she was also worried about the language barrier between herself and her group and whether the other group members would think she was not contributing enough. Another student was anxious because of his lack of confidence in being able to communicate competently in his group. He claimed that the other students seemed to take an individualist approach to the group which he found difficult because he was used to the collectivist ideal of interdependence and consideration for others. It was evident too that the students who had simply

been 'left till the end' were concerned because the cultural mix of their groups did not include any British students. However, it was clear that Gudykunst and Kim's (2003) assertions regarding the importance of similarities being helpful in relieving feelings of uncertainty and anxiety seemed to have been borne out. For instance, many of the students were international so shared a common bond in that respect and they were all working towards the goal of attaining a degree in a non- threatening non- competitive environment. Others were able to change their groups which helped to overcome their initial fears.

It seemed too that there was a possibility of stereotyping having led students to use their implicit personality theories in their initial attitudes towards their groups. For instance, one student had been confident that her chosen group would work well together because they all got on well, but found the contrary. She admitted that she would not choose to work with the same people again. Similarly, other students seemed to have had negative expectations about their groups due to feelings of prejudice and discrimination, which appeared to have been confirmed and for others it was the cultural mix of their groups that had resulted in their initial apprehension. However, it seemed that being determined to communicate with the others in a more positive way helped to overcome the students' initial worries, a positive step according to Berger and Calabrese (1978).

Furthermore, all of the students shared the view that despite the various hurdles they had to overcome, their group experience had been an encouraging one. Indeed one student asserted that overall her group experience was positive even although it was the lowest mark she received during her time at Bournemouth University. Arguably, the fact that the British students were great to have as friends compensated for the various problems she encountered and would no doubt help in her adaptation process. Other students expressed the view that despite some tense times, their multicultural environment had been a mitigating factor as they shared the same feelings of being away from home and were also more able to understand each others' difficulty at times, in expressing their views. This would also assist in easing their adaptation. The British student also enjoyed the multicultural group environment and asserted that she had learned a

lot from her experience. It seems too that despite a lack of confidence by the Japanese student to speak out in his group and the stressful times he had with his peers, he felt that his group had become closer after the assignment was finished. The Chinese students had found that compromising was the most fruitful way to overcome difficulties experienced, agreeing that flexibility and being able to accept others' differences was the way to solve cultural diversity.

Overall, there appeared to be some evidence in this study to support the idea that interpersonal factors, namely, ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, uncertainty and anxiety, stereotyping and first impressions had a bearing on the adaptation process of the postgraduate students as they worked together in multicultural groups. Furthermore, it was also apparent that several factors aligned with Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions.

First of all, a prerequisite to successful adaptation was willingness and motivation to do so and it was apparent that all of the students in this study demonstrated eagerness to adapt to their new multicultural student environment. Although initially, certain reservations were expressed in being able to do so effectively including factors such as, diversity of cultures, a fear of not being able to be critically minded and an openness to tolerate new cultural norms, it was apparent that many of these barriers had been overcome leading to an easier adaptation.

Interestingly, an important factor in being able to overcome their problems was the students' multicultural environment. The common bond of being in the majority, rather than the minority, as international students, had helped the students adapt more readily for several reasons. One of the significant issues was that for many of the students English was their second language which resulted in them not being afraid to speak out for fear of not being understood by their peers. Another common factor was that they had previous work experience and were mature, that is, over twenty - one years of age. Furthermore, several expressed the view that their adaptation had been easier because they were students and not 'out there' in a working environment. Apparently Bournemouth University had also helped in their adaptation as the

staff had made the students feel especially welcome and were very supportive and more approachable than back home. The cultural norm, expressed above, of not being able to have opinions on issues and the clear divide between student and teacher in their own countries could be said to align with Hofstede's (1980) high/low power distance dimension.

In relation to ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, some of the students had found it difficult to overcome their cultural tendencies although they were willing to do so and others expressed an intention to keep trying. Since many were from collectivist cultures where group-ness was a natural fact of group life, it was difficult for them to adopt the much more relaxed 'self centred' approach of individualist Britain. It was frustrating for these students to have to deal with peers who had a tendency to leave their group assignment till the last minute as it added to their anxiety. It seems fair to suggest that this difference in behaviour between the students' expectations could be related to Hofstede's (1980) individualism/collectivism dimension. Also the different ways in communicating could have added to some of the students' discomfort as they were not used to communicating in the open way of the British as identified by Hall (1977). Perhaps the Chinese students' determination to overcome the barriers they faced in relation to being more culturally relative was related to the Confucian ideal of the importance of good interpersonal relationships and social harmony. Likewise this could also have been the reason for the Japanese student's lack of assertiveness in his group as he could simply have been trying to 'fit in' with his groups' expectations.

Finally, it was evident that the initial first impressions the students had of each other influenced their perceptions of their groups. Some students' views of their groups were positive while others were quite nervous and in some instances this was due to their stereotyping and implicit personality theories. However, it was apparent that as the students had become more familiar with each other many of their initial anxieties had been overcome and all of the students acknowledged that their group experience had been a positive one. It was also evident that several issues could be associated with Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of

individualism/collectivism, high/low uncertainty avoidance and high/low power distance.

This completes the discussion and interpretation of issues especially those related to interpersonal factors in the adaptation process of postgraduate multicultural groups. The following concluding chapter seven synthesises and appraises the issues which have emerged from chapters five and six and considers the contribution this study has made to existing theoretical perspectives on intercultural communication matters. Limitations of the study are also addressed and recommendations are offered for future research.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The principal aim of this study is to explore the extent to which differences in culture might influence the ways in which multicultural postgraduate student groups interact together. From a review of pertinent literature a further two aims emerged: firstly, to evaluate the usefulness of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions in identifying cultural variability in postgraduate multicultural student groups as they work together, and secondly, to explore the contribution of interpersonal factors namely, ethnocentrism/cultural relativism, uncertainty and anxiety reduction, stereotyping and first impressions to the adaptation process of multicultural student groups working together.

Initially a synthesis of the data from the two interviews is provided in relation to cultural and interpersonal issues. This is followed by a consideration of the contribution this study has made to existing research. Finally the limitations of the study are addressed and recommendations are offered for future research.

Cultural Issues

In order to explore the influence of culture on multicultural student groups, Hofstede's (1980) dimensions were utilised together with other relevant intercultural cultural studies and a synthesis of noteworthy issues contained in the data from this present study is now provided.

It was evident in this study that the most prominent dimension of Hofstede's work was that of individualism and collectivism. There were several behaviours that reflected the cultural variances between the students and which could be related to this dimension. For instance, the collectivist group members were much more group-oriented than their individualist counterparts. They expected their groups to be cohesive, loyal and conforming whereas the individualist group members did not consider these issues to be a priority. Certainly, the individualist students acknowledged the usefulness of these concepts regarding their groups but this was not with the same strength of conviction as the collectivist students. In relation to conformity in particular, it seems that within

Western cultures, such as Britain, this is often prevalent in mixed gender groups or influenced by leadership. Personality can also lead to conformity as can the group situation in Western societies. Indeed the students present situation seemed to be the most significant factor for the disparities between the collectivist students' expectations and the actual behaviour experienced. For example, several prearranged meetings were missed and often these students had been left 'to their own devices'. Several of the collectivist students who had avowed to utilise their prerogative to be critical had little opportunity to do so because of the lack of time available to complete their group assignments. It was also apparent that the importance of the task took precedence over the relationship within all the groups. Arguably, overall the individualist student environment appeared to have had a profound influence on the students' group behaviour in this study.

A second dimension of Hofstede's is that of high/low uncertainty avoidance which highlights the importance of and adherence to rules within society. It was evident in this study that despite being advised by the tutor that group rules would be useful, few of the students had bothered to use the rules they had drawn up at his behest, claiming that rules were inappropriate in their present situation. Yet initially, it seemed that most of the students demonstrated a reasonably high need for uncertainty avoidance. For example, some claimed that it was important to have an agenda with which to work and others suggested that rules provided direction and efficiency. However, a mitigating factor could have been that Britain has a low need for uncertainty avoidance. Arguably, even if some students had preferred to follow their groups' rules, this would have been impossible unless all the group members had agreed to do so.

A third dimension of Hofstede's is that of high/low power distance and relates to the acceptance or otherwise of unequal distribution of power within societies and leadership take prominence in high power distance cultures. In this present study, all of the students asserted that this dimension had little significance for them in their present situation. Yet despite their claims, there were instances of practice of leadership by some student groups which seemed to weaken their stated position. For example, the norms associated with high power distance

could have been the reason for the insensitive behaviour by the student who had been appointed leader of her group. High power distance could also have been the reason for the student who reluctantly emerged as leader of her group as in her culture leadership is bestowed. Furthermore, the Turkish student bemoaned the fact that her group had not had a leader which was normal practice in Turkey. These examples support the notion that often people are unaware that they are displaying their cultural characteristics. Furthermore, the fact that Britain has a low power distance and this study took place in a British university could have had an impact on the students' behaviour.

Masculinity and femininity is the fourth of Hofstede's dimensions and relates to the clear divide between males and females within cultures. As with the previous two dimensions, the students in this study asserted that this dimension was irrelevant in their present environment. The students simply discounted the idea that males should be more competitive and ambitious than the females. This seemed hard to argue with, given the fact that both females and males were studying for their masters' degrees at Bournemouth University which suggests that they were all ambitious and would arguably exercise their propensity for competition later when in the working arena.

Characteristics reflective of Bond's (1988) Confucian Dynamism dimension were evident in some of the behaviours by the students from Far Eastern cultures. For instance, it was apparent that there were some situations in which the students' behaviour was related to 'saving the other's face' and also 'protecting one's own face'. The matter of social harmony was also apparent in the lack of conflict by some of these students and by others in their readiness to acquiesce to the groups' views despite having their own opinions on issues. Yet, the individualist environment could also have had a bearing on this dimension. Arguably, the students resorted to utilising 'face' strategies because of the openness of the communication within Britain which might have caused them embarrassment and thus loss of face. A synthesis of interpersonal issues is now provided.

Interpersonal Issues

Adaptation requires people to be motivated and willing to learn the cultural codes of their new environment and it was evident that the students in this study had adapted well to their new situation. Yet at the start, adaptation had been more problematic for some than others, essentially because they were unprepared for some of the cultural differences between their own countries and those of Britain. The students who were confident that their adaptation would be easy were prepared with previous cultural knowledge of British values and were determined to experience what it would be like to be British. However, others were initially hampered by feelings of inadequacy due to reasons such as, the inability to take a critical stance regarding their studies, fear at lack of confidence to speak out, and the unexpected cultural diversity among the students. Yet it turned out to be the multicultural environment that had been particularly important for several of the students in easing their adaptation as they shared several commonalities. For instance, many were from other cultures, thus English was their second language. There was the added advantage of maturity in age and previous work experience. Some also asserted that adaptation was easier in their present student environment than in a working environment because of the lack of competition here. It was also apparent that the support by teaching and support staff at Bournemouth University was a significant factor in overcoming several of their initial fears.

While the issues of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism were relevant to adaptation it was clear that it was difficult for the students to give up their ethnocentrism despite the benefits and willingness to do so. It was evident that a key factor was the different ways in which the students were used to communicating. The collectivist students were used to an indirect approach to communication and were uncomfortable at the more open way of communicating practiced by their individualist peers. Other factors such as a lack of urgency by the British students in starting their assignments and failing to turn up for prearranged meetings demonstrated a typically individualist ethnocentric tendency. Overall, it is clear that the students were ethnocentric

despite their resolve to be otherwise which demonstrates that giving up one's cultural ways of doing is not an easy matter.

Successful adaptation can depend on first impressions as these often include relying on one's implicit personality theories and stereotyping which may influence the view one has of another. This in turn can result in anxiety and uncertainty. It was clear in this study that the students' first impressions of their prospective groups created mixed reactions initially, especially for those who were anxious at the way the groups had been chosen. The students who had been left at the end after the other groups had been chosen were particularly anxious, however, their tutor intervened to ensure a fair mix of cultures thereby relieving the uncertainty they felt. It was apparent too that stereotyping was a detrimental factor for some students whose negative expectations of prejudice were confirmed. Yet these students' determination to overcome these aspects helped them to feel positively about their groups. Another student said that it was essential to find 'a middle ground' so that people from all cultures had to compromise. All of the students agreed that despite the difficulties encountered during their group project they had been able to adapt to the various nuances of their multicultural student environment. Their student environment and their group experience had been a positive one with good relationships between peers apparent at the finish. This chapter now continues by addressing the contributions this study has made to existing research.

Contributions to existing research

Cultural Issues

The results in this study offered some support for Hofstede's (1980) ideas on cultural dimensions, although the most significant dimension was that of individualism and collectivism. Interestingly, this particular dimension had been prominent in a myriad of studies conducted by several scholars, such as, Gudykunst and Kim (2003), Lustig and Cassotta (1992) and Triandis et al (1988). Although there was some evidence of the other dimensional characteristics shown in the student's behaviour this was not as prominent as that of the individualism and collectivism dimension.

To start with individualism and collectivism, Hofstede's (1980) ideas about the importance of the in-group to people from collectivist cultures and the 'self' orientation of people from individualistic cultures were borne out in this study. This was particularly noticeable in relation to issues of cohesion, loyalty and conformity which were vital prerequisites of group behaviour for the collectivist students. In contrast, the individualist students were rather single-minded, focusing on their individual assignments to the detriment of working with their peers on their group assignments. Indeed one collectivist student asserted that everyone had individual assignments to complete not just the students from individualist cultures. This type of behaviour was reflective of Hofstede's (1980) individualism/ collectivism dimension and arguably was due to Bournemouth University being in Britain where individualistic characteristics prevailed. This offered support for Tayeb (2001) who maintained that the situation was an essential requirement when utilising cultural dimensions. However, Mc Sweeney's (2002) criticism of Hofstede, contesting the view that IBM only had one organisational culture across the various countries involved was not supported in this study. The students in this study were from various cultures and yet the British cultural values of Bournemouth University were undoubtedly the prominent ones, despite the cohort of students being predominately from other cultures. This gives credence to Hofstede's views.

Yet, it was notable that there were disparities in relation to the concepts of cohesion, loyalty and conformity. With regard to cohesion and loyalty, there was a discrepancy in the Japanese student's attitude towards these concepts as he expected the students in his present environment to be cohesive and loyal, although he claimed that this was not usual in his working environment back home. This did not align with Hofstede's ideas about the group centred-ness of people in collectivist cultures. However, Hofstede's (1980) dimension of masculinity/ femininity provided a reason for this anomaly by suggesting that in Japan, males were expected to be competitive within a working environment. Arguably, this might not engender norms of cohesion and loyalty in the workplace. In relation to conformity, the British student confessed that her group tended to conform which would not be usual behaviour for this

individualist student as a member of her group (Hofstede, 1980). However, it seemed that this was due to the leader of the British student's group who seemed to have used her prerogative as appointed leader to discount some of the group members' ideas. This offered agreement with Douglas (1983) who suggested that leadership influenced conformity in Western societies.

Furthermore, personality was also mooted as a reason for conformity by people in Western countries by Shaw (1981) and the British student admitted that she did not like confronting people, suggesting certain passivity in her character. Also personality could have been the reason for the inconsistency in the behaviour of the student from Turkey who claimed that although she conformed here, due to the student situation, she did not conform back home, even although she admitted that it was expected behaviour there. According to research by Triandis et al (1988) a plausible explanation could be related to a personality trait called idiocentrism whereby people from collectivist cultures went against their in-group norms. These examples of personality offered further support for Tayeb's (2001) view that there was a little bit of individualism and collectivism in everyone. Interestingly, the Icelandic student claimed that his country too embraced both individualist and collectivist characteristics which was due to the influence of American cultural values, particularly regarding the younger generation. Similarly, the student from Trinidad asserted that her country was a mix of these two characteristics because people still held on to old British colonial values. These examples support the idea of coexistence of cultural values also espoused by Tayeb (2001) and Triandis (1995).

Finally, Triandis et al's (1988) views about individualist cultures being task oriented and collectivist cultures relationship oriented were borne out in this study. Although the collectivist students expected the group relationship to take precedence, it was apparent that the task had prevailed because of the tardiness of the individualist students in working on their group assignments. It was evident that their behaviour superseded the preferences of the collectivist students.

With regard to Hofstede's other dimensions of high/low power distance, high/low uncertainty avoidance and masculinity and femininity, the students claimed that none of these dimensions were appropriate in their present student environment. Although it was evident in some instances that the students' responses belied their assertions, these dimensions did not seem to be as pertinent for the students in this study as individualism/collectivism. Regarding the high/low power distance dimension, there was some evidence of leadership being utilised in some of the groups. It seemed too that the cultures involved aligned with Hofstede's (1980) views on high power distance cultures as these students came from Mauritius, Turkey and Trinidad, the latter embracing characteristics of both individualism and collectivism. Yet it was just as likely in this study that the views by small group scholars Bormann (1976) and Ellis and Fisher (1980) were relevant as they suggested that leaders often emerged in leaderless groups due to the fact that they provided unity and direction. However, according to Hofstede (1980), Britain has a low power distance with an egalitarian view of leadership and where participation by all group members would be the norm, even in a group with a leader. Thus, it could be argued that the low power distance culture of Bournemouth University influenced the lack of need for an appointed leader within the students' groups in this study as the individualist students would simply expect everyone in the group to participate equally.

Hofstede's (1980) dimension of high/low uncertainty avoidance was also deemed as inappropriate as few of the students had bothered to adhere to the group rules they had drawn up. Yet, the reason could have been because Britain has a low need for uncertainty avoidance resulting in the British students being able to work without strict group guidelines (Hofstede, 1980). Indeed this could be said to have been the reason for the individualist students' propensity to miss prearranged group meetings. In contrast, the students from cultures with a high need for uncertainty avoidance would find this difficult if they needed to have matters clarified. While small group scholars Brilhart, Galanes and Adams (2001) proposed that it was usual for groups to develop 'norms' of behaviour, this was unlikely in the groups in this study as norms are usually developed over time and the students in this study were not together long enough to do so.

Interestingly, in this study the two Chinese students concurred that rules were a vital part of communist teaching and which that they had to strictly adhere. They also stated that rules gave them a sense of direction. One of the criticisms levelled at Hofstede by McSweeney (2002) was his view that the uncertainty avoidance dimension should be downgraded because Bond (1988) had found it to be insignificant within Chinese society. In view of the students' remarks it could be argued that it was only insignificant because Chinese society does not have a choice as to whether or not they should adhere to societal rules as he himself expressed on page 88.

With regard to the masculinity/ femininity dimension, it was apparent that the student environment was a mitigating factor in the appropriateness of this dimension as the environment was a non-competitive one. Students were not competing with one another, and as far as the group assignment was concerned, all of the students had to pull together ultimately. However, there appeared to be a disparity in relation to Hofstede's (1980) assertion that Britain was a masculine culture and thus competition from females in the workplace would not be part of British cultural norms. Arguably, several of the British female students studying for their master's degree were doing so in order to prepare themselves for working in the competitive environment of today's work arena. This provides support for Smith's (2002) assertions that cultures do change and evolve over time. Although to be fair to Hofstede (2001), he did not dispute the idea of cultural evolution but rather presumed that it was a slow process. Certainly it seems that not all masculine cultures have changed as quickly as Britain. For example, the Japanese student's acquiescence to the views of his female counterparts was due to his present situation as he claimed that in Japan, a masculine culture, he had never had a female working above him.

In relation to Bond's (1988) Confucian Dynamism dimension, later changed to long/short term orientation by Hofstede (2001), there was evidence to support Bond's views. It could be surmised that both the Chinese and Japanese students' behaviour was due to the importance of utilising face saving strategies as purported by Bond (1988, 1996) and Ting-Toomey (1999). Also on several occasions their behaviour was indicative of the Confucian ideal of maintaining

social harmony and ensuring good interpersonal relationships with others. These instances also aligned with Pratt's (1991) study highlighting the flexibility of Chinese students studying in Canada. Also Confucianism is purported to equate with conformity, which could have accounted for the conformity by the Far Eastern students in this study.

Overall, it was apparent with regard to aim two of this study, that an evaluation of the usefulness of Hofstede's (1980) study revealed that the dimensions were indeed helpful in providing reasons for some of the cultural differences in the students' behaviour in their multicultural groups. It was also noted that the individualism /collectivism dimension was the most prominent one in this study. It was evident too that both personality and situation were significant mediating factors in the interaction between the students in their multicultural environments. Taking personality first, Hofstede (1980) admitted that personality was a key issue in cultural variability although he did not account for personality in his own study. Furthermore, this present study supports scholars such as Hollan (1992) who claim that because the self-concept is derived from personal and social experience it may not coincide with the self-concept that is culturally formed. Additionally, Tayeb (2001) proposed that personality must be included in intercultural studies in order to provide a more holistic approach. This study provides support for scholars such as Triandis et al (1988) who are contributing to intercultural research by addressing issues such as personality which appears to have a mitigating influence on expected cultural characteristics.

With regard to situational aspects, it was clear that the behaviours by the collectivist students in this study were influenced by the individualist culture of Bournemouth University, thus arguably, the situation was a mitigating factor in the student's interaction within their multicultural groups. This seems feasible as group work is influenced and dependent on all of the group members. The majority of the students in this cohort were from countries other than Britain and yet within their multicultural groups, their cultural norms were superseded by the cultural norms of the British students. This provided additional support for Hofstede who suggested that all the IBM employees embraced the cultural

values of the IBM organisation despite the fact that they were from different cultures and throws doubt on Mc Sweeney's (2002) argument that this was contestable.

Finally, there was some evidence of cultural evolution in this study. Firstly, with regard to the view by Hofstede (1980) that Britain was a masculine culture and thus competition by females in the workplace would not be usual. Secondly, the Icelandic student who claimed that the young people in his country now embraced many individualist attitudes due to the influence of American values. These results lend support for scholars such as Tayeb (2001) who assert that the main advantage of using cultural characteristics for analysing data is in allowing comparisons to be made which enables identification of similarities and differences which was evident in this study. It is suggested that the information garnered from this study would be beneficial for Bournemouth University in offering guidelines regarding the ways in which cultural variability might influence multicultural student groups as they work together. Guidelines could be included in induction programmes for both postgraduate international and British students and also for teaching staff alike. This conclusion now considers the contributions made to existing research in relation to interpersonal issues.

Interpersonal Issues

A third aim of this study is to explore the contribution of interpersonal factors namely, ethnocentrism/cultural relativism, uncertainty and anxiety reduction, stereotyping and first impressions, to the adaptation process of multicultural student groups working together. It was evident in this study that the data revealed support for several previous intercultural studies.

To start with adaptation, all of the students were willing and motivated to adapt to their present situation, supporting research by various scholars (Anderson 1994, Kim, 1988 and Nolan, 1998). Yet in order to do so effectively, the students required knowledge of psychological and social aspects of their new cultural environment according to Mak et al (1999) and Ward and Searle (1991). This was borne out in this study. Those who were confident in adapting

had prior knowledge of British cultural vales and were prepared to experience social aspects of British life. In contrast, it was evident that psychological and social factors were barriers that several of the students had to overcome in order to ease their adaptation process. Indeed most of these barriers had been overcome as they became more familiar with both the British values and the various cultural values of the students in their multicultural environment. This provided support for Kim (1988) and Ting-Toomey (1999) who claimed that adaptation was only possible through interaction. Furthermore, several students asserted that their student environment had assisted in their adaptation process as the students were working towards the same goal and were not in competition with each other which might not have been the case in a working situation. Additionally, they were all mature students who had previous work experience which helped them to be more flexible. It was evident too, that Bournemouth University helped in easing the students' adaptation suggesting agreement with Ting-Toomey (1999) that adaptation was a two way process between the host culture and the newcomer. Yet for one student, adaptation seemed to remain a rather turbulent experience due to his lack of confidence (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Anderson's (1994) views that a person's adaptation was dependent on the way he/she chose to respond seems to have been relevant for this student as he surrounded himself with students from his own culture rather than mixing with the other international students. Interestingly, some students asserted that they would adapt only in so far as they had to, but not at the expense of giving up their own cultural values. This supported Bennett (1998) who proposed that people would only assimilate, in other words give up their own cultural values completely, if their intention was to stay long-term. It was the intention of these students to return home after their studies.

It was surmised that issues of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism could influence the adaptation process and it was evident that the students in this study agreed that it was essential to be more culturally relative (Bennett, 1998). However, this was not an easy matter and the issue of Hall's (1977) high/low context communication provided some understanding into the communication difficulties faced by students in this regard, in their multicultural environment. For instance, some of the collectivist students were unused to the directness of

the individualist British students making their interaction with them uncomfortable at times. Additionally, high/low context communication could have been the reason for the difficulties some of the collectivist students continued to have regarding taking a critical stance within their groups. There was support too for those scholars who noted that often people were unaware of their ethnocentric behaviour and assumed that others thought in the same way as they themselves did (Dubinskas, 1992, Hofstede, 2001, Neuliep, 2003). For instance, the collectivist student from Japan complained that his group had a tendency to be individualistic, even although he was in an individualistic culture. The Chinese student claimed he had not been ethnocentric and yet had avoided conflict and confrontation in his group, a typical Chinese characteristic. It was evident too that the individualistic students behaved in a typically individualistic way towards their collectivist peers regarding their group assignment. Yet, it was feasible that Hofstede's (1980) high/low uncertainty avoidance dimension could also offer a reason for a person's ethnocentric behaviour. For example, the student from Indonesia expressed impatience and anxiety because of her groups' lack of concern regarding their assignment which could have been due to her country's need for high uncertainty avoidance. In contrast, the individualist students reflected the British propensity for a low need for uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980).

Finally, it was deduced that first impressions could have a bearing on peoples' adaptation. Indeed, it was evident in this study that this had been the case. Initially, the students' first impressions of their prospective group members had caused some students to be and anxious and uncertain supporting Berger and Calabrese (1975). There was also evidence to suggest that some of the students sought information to support their stereotypical views as purported by Bruner and Potter (1964). These students envisaged having to contend with prejudice and discrimination among their peers and found this to be the case. Yet, as the students communicated with each other their anxieties were somewhat reduced as indicated by Trenholm and Jensen (2000). Also Gudykunst and Kim (2003) suggested that it was useful to focus on the similarities rather than the differences between people. It was evident in this study that the students had done so as they mentioned on several occasions that their adaptation was made

easier because of their multicultural student environment and the commonalities that existed between them. It was apparent that the idea that people use their implicit personality theories when judging others was borne out in this study (Bruner and Tagiuri, 1954). For example, one of the students admitted that she had misjudged her group members by assuming that because they were friendly and spoke English they would work well together. However, it transpired that she had been wrong in her judgement and her group experience had been a rather difficult one. Furthermore, Bond's (1980, 1996) and Ting-Toomey's (1999) ideas that people in Far Eastern cultures used self- presentation to maintain social harmony and thus maintain everyone's face in society were useful in this study. These scholars provided a feasible explanation for the behaviour of the Chinese and Japanese students in this study who continually acquiesced for the sake of group harmony.

Overall, it was apparent that despite the various initial difficulties the students in this study faced in relation to adaptation, without question they asserted that their multicultural assignment had been a positive experience. They claimed too that it was not until the end of their group assignments that they realised their groups had become closer and thus arguably cohesive. This lends support for Cathcart, Samovar and Henman (1996) who stated that often it is the satisfaction of the goal achievement that leads to group cohesion.

In relation to the third aim of this study it was evident that the interpersonal issues explored were indeed useful in providing insights into the adaptation process of the multicultural student groups in this study. It was clear that there were several pertinent interpersonal issues that had a bearing on the adaptation process of the students. A significant factor was the requirement of being equipped with both psychological knowledge and understanding of social factors within the new culture. Furthermore, it was through interaction that the students were able to reduce their anxieties and uncertainties. However, communication was not without its difficulties as some students found the open and direct way of the individualist students in this study hard to cope with (Hall, 1977). Clearly knowledge of these matters by people from both individualist and collectivist cultures would alleviate problems they might have to face with

strangers. The value of focusing on similarities rather than the differences was apparent as the students had found several commonalities within their multicultural environment which had helped them to feel less uneasy at finding such a diversity of cultures with which to contend. Additionally, the acceptance of the newcomers by the host culture was a significant factor in ensuring a smoother adaptation. Although the advantages of being culturally relative rather than being ethnocentric were obvious, the students in this study found this difficult to achieve. Yet this was unsurprising as it appears that all peoples everywhere have a tendency to assume that everyone thinks in the same way. It was evident too that first impressions could influence a person's adaptation, due to stereotyping and ones' implicit personality theories and that a key to overcoming problems in this regard was to communicate.

Exploring these particular interpersonal issues in this study was beneficial as the information gleaned from the students provided further understanding of the problems multicultural student groups have to face as they adapt to a new cultural environment. It is surmised that the findings in relation to these issues would be useful to Bournemouth University in suggesting ways in which communication might be improved for international students as they attempt to adapt in a multicultural student environment.

Limitations

There were several factors that contributed to the limitations of this study. Firstly, while a great deal of information was provided through using in depth qualitative interviews, the results of this study need to be treated with caution due to the small sample size. The consequence of a small sample is that it does not provide ideas that are generalisable to a wider university population (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Secondly, whilst the issue of group loyalty did not appear to influence the students' responses regarding their peers in this study, their comments could have been tempered somewhat because of the researcher's position as lecturer at Bournemouth University. This could have been illuminated had there been an

opportunity to interview whole groups of students, rather than students from various groups, as it would have been possible to compare the various responses. While non participant observation might also have been a useful tool in this regard, there was the potential disadvantage of the Hawthorne effect (Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) whereby those being observed temper their behaviour in order to be in line with what they assume is required by the observer

A further limitation was the totality of the multicultural environment for this cohort of students. It seemed that the British students were very much in the minority. It could be argued that if this had been reversed and the international students had been in the minority it may well have made a difference to their experience. The students may not have felt so cocooned among what they saw as 'their own folk' resulting in many more cultural and language barriers.

Finally, there was the issue of openness of communication that transpired during the interviews and which could have limited some of the responses by the collectivist students. Some asserted that although they had managed to be more open in their communication with the other students as it seemed to be the norm in Britain, it had been quite difficult for them. Perhaps this could have resulted in these students tending to be less open towards the researcher during their interviews.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations for future research that have transpired from this study. The issue of personality emerged as being an important mitigating factor when anomalies were discovered between expected cultural behaviour and actual cultural behaviour. It is suggested that it is important to include the issue of personality in future intercultural research as this would enable a more complete approach to issues of cultural dimensions as asserted by scholars such as Tayeb (2001).

Additionally, it was evident that the student situation in this study had an influence with regard to the appropriateness of three of Hofstede's (1980) dimensions. It would be beneficial to further this present research by conducting interviews with students both during their stay at university and then later after working in Britain for some time. This would be possible by conducting a longitudinal study. International students could be interviewed at the end of their studies at British universities to discover the impact their cultures had on their multicultural group environments. They could then be interviewed a year later after working 'out there' in multicultural group settings. A comparison could be made as to the extent of the differences between these two situations. The findings would be useful in educating students as to the differences they might expect to find between working in multicultural groups in a non competitive student environment and doing so in a working environment.

It would also be useful to conduct similar multicultural group studies to this present one within universities in collectivist cultures, to determine the extent to which the situation had an impact on individualist students' behaviour.

It is also suggested that this present study could have been enhanced by using triangulation as a method. A much larger sample could have been targeted initially using a survey method to determine the extent to which students could be typified under Hofstede's dimensions. The most significant responses could then have been addressed more fully by using a qualitative method of in depth interviews. Focus groups could be problematic for those students who were used to high context communication and who required time to think about issues (Hall, 1977). Furthermore, this type of method is beneficial as it enables checks to be made as to whether different data sources and different methods allow the same conclusions to be reached (Silverman, 2001).

Conversely, the advantage of using a qualitative study initially, such as this present one, would enable hypotheses to be made which could subsequently be tested using a quantitative research strategy (Bryman, 2004). For example, in this study it was apparent that the issue of 'conformity' for some of the collectivist students did not necessarily mean total submission to a group's ideas

but rather an airing of views and then reaching a compromise. To other collectivist students it did mean relinquishing one's own views to those of the group (Hofstede, 1980). Additionally, one of individualist students in this study asserted that she did not like group confrontation which according to Hofstede was not a typical individualist trait. As was evident in this study, in these cases personality and situation could have been the reasons for the anomalies. Consideration of these issues in a social survey would enable a more thorough study.

This finalises this exploration into the influence of cultural variability on members of multicultural student groups as they work towards the attainment of a mutual goal. It is evident that much more research into multicultural groups is required in order to bridge the gap between cross cultural research and multicultural research and also European research needs to be increased. This study has been a very modest step towards this process, but clearly with the continuing trend in people travelling abroad to study and work it is almost certain that people will find them selves included in multicultural group settings. Ongoing research is vital in order to understand and share with others the nuances and intricacies that are part of multicultural environments.

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METROPOLITAN POLICE

Working for a safer London

Campaign planning pitch.

The Brief

METROPOLITAN POLICE

MEDIACOM
closer

1. Market Background

Sir Robert Peel founded the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in 1829.

It currently employs 25,550 officers, 10,800 civilian staff and 844 traffic wardens in London. These are spread across 33 Borough Operational Command Units (BOCUs), covering an area of 620 square miles and with a population of 7.2 million people.

There are also various specialist units that work across the capital or fulfil a national role. Under Specialist Operations, there are grouped tasks such as intelligence, security, royal & diplomatic protection and the investigation of serious crimes such as terrorism, racial and violent crime.

There are also separate specialist units that include Traffic, Air Support, Public Order, Mounted Branch, and Thames Division.

METROPOLITAN POLICE

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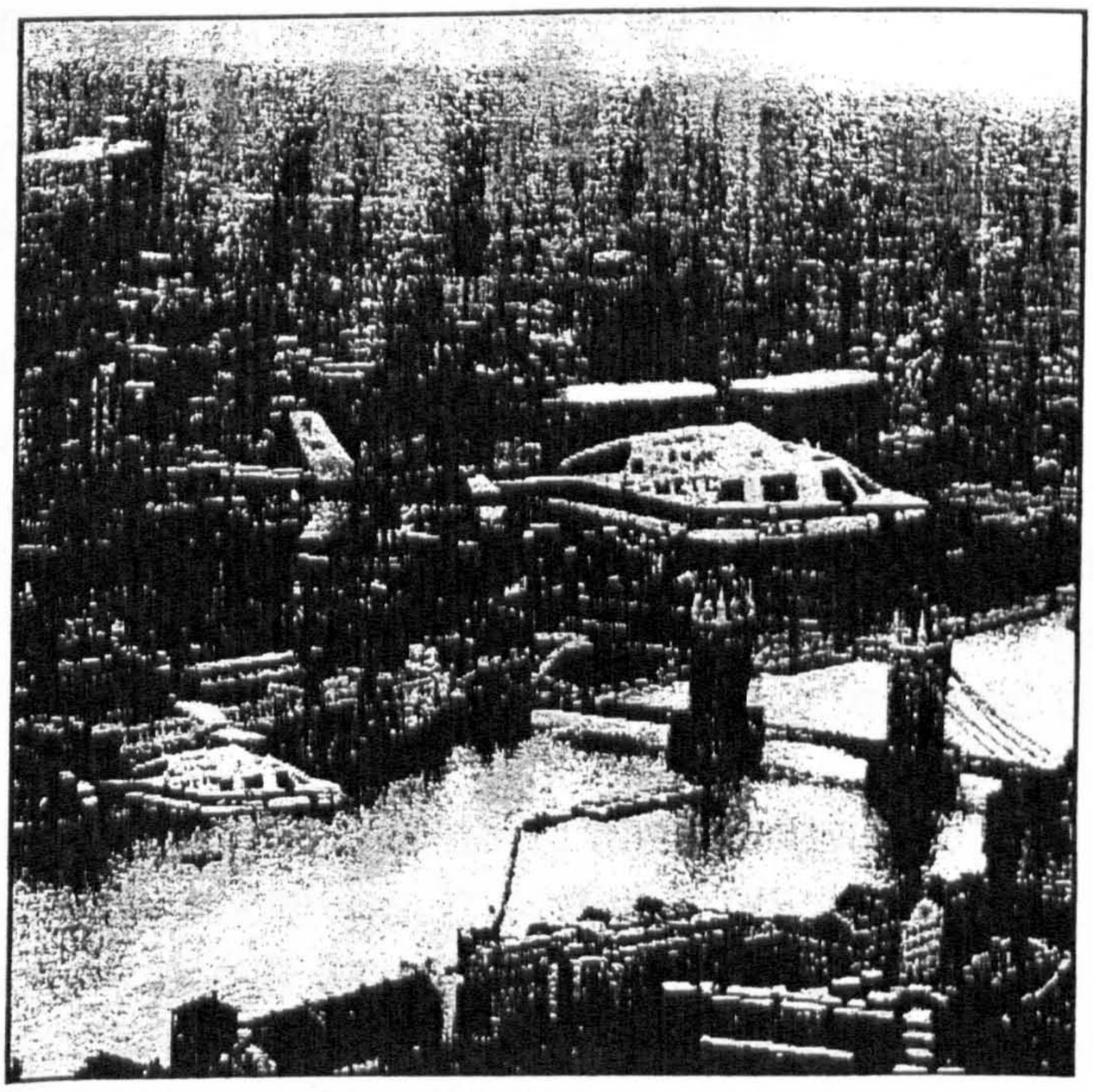
Thus candidates joining do, in the medium term have a very wide choice of potential career routes within the MPS.

London itself is one of the world's major multi ethnic urban areas. It attracts huge numbers of day visitors in addition to the 7+ million inhabitants. These visitors come for both work and pleasure related reasons. Over 3 million overseas visitors travel to London each year on holiday. Like all large cities it has a crime problem. Much of the crime is opportunist and very small scale. However in the last 10 years organised crime has become more established and sophisticated. The publics' perception of crime does not reflect reality; most people believe there is a high risk of crime occurring to them when, in reality (statistically speaking) there is a very low risk. The groups most at risk of suffering a crime are young people (17-24) and criminals themselves!

2. Bringing you up to date

The MPS has undergone major changes over the past few years and this need to be communicated more clearly in order to attract a broader range of recruits into the service.



Restrictions that previously existed - such as the minimum height - no longer do, and the MPS are actively seeking to recruit more women and people of all classes and races. Indeed, stringent targets have been put in place to ensure that under represented groups are targeted for recruitment.

These under represented groups include Asians, Black Britain's, Gays and other ethnic minorities. Another commonly held assumption – that the MPS only recruits straight from school is

also no longer the case: on the contrary, as can be seen from the case histories in the appendix, previous experience is welcomed. The qualities of self-discipline, quick thinking, adaptability and common sense can be just as important as academic qualifications. The MPS really do believe they have jobs for people from all type of background, others perceptions do not currently fit this reality.

Trends in modern urban society mean that the following (often disparate) considerations are deemed important when people consider starting and changing careers or moving jobs.

Fast routes to career success

The chance do be challenged

Job security

Variety of experiences

The total salary package (not just the pay)

Balancing work and social life

Clearly some of these issues are more pertinent specifically for the MPS than others.

As can be seen from the Market Background, the MPS offers a wide diversity of job opportunities that are there for the taking. The fact is that within the MPS you really can do almost anything.....
Got stable hands?...what about the mounted police?
Caring nature?...what about community policing?
An eye for detail? ...what about forensic policing?

It may be worth noting the massive amount of 'coverage' the police service receives, much of it not controlled by them. Newspapers seem to run stories of various kinds daily (see some recent examples in the appendices) and there has been an explosion of TV programmes (factual and fictional) featuring the police service in numerous manners. The net result of all this? We are not sure, but probably it means many people have strong (though

sometimes misguided) views about the police force even though they have never sought them.

3. The job offer

For the first two years all new recruits are probation constables and are on exactly the same level. They receive high quality training and opportunities for self-evaluation. For these two years the job will involve a considerable amount of work 'on the beat' literally walking/driving in London being visible and available to serve the public. Duties are undertaken alongside a more experienced officer. It will also mean getting familiar with the necessary back up paper based work, processing arrests and preparing some Material to assist in court cases. Inevitably the job has aspects of the routine but also times when the unexpected occurs and probation offices will have to respond (e.g. in emergencies). After the two year probation/training period there are excellent systems in place to ensure rich & rewarding careers for those with the right aptitude and (as importantly in the 21st century) the right attitudes. Recruits who are willing and able to take control of their jobs and further their careers really can get fulfilment from being part of the MPS.

4. The competition

Until quite recently the MPS would not really have appreciated that they are operating in a competitive recruitment marketplace. Relatively high levels of employment in the last eight years or so has highlighted this to them by exacerbating the decline in application numbers. The most obvious substitute employment is other police forces around the country and the other uniformed services like the fire brigade and ambulance service. The armed forces too are a close competitor particularly for the younger age groups. But increasingly more significant to the MPS, given its stated desire to broaden its recruitment base, are any other career opportunities being offered that require the same kinds of basic skills, common sense, determination and integrity the MPS are looking for.

The prevailing atmosphere which tends to see public service jobs as 'lower' in some ways to those in the commercial sector also pose problems for MPS recruitment.

5. The Task

The problem facing the MPS is that policing is not seen as an aspiration based career for many.

For others the police force is simply something they do not consider simply because they are black or gay or…think they are not right

The overall aims of the Metropolitan Police Service *recruitment are* to better position the Service & to achieve recruitment targets in the short, medium & long term. The marketing objectives are as follows:

- to create an "*employer of choice*" status by promoting the MPS as a career for the 21st century
- to promote an of the MPS as a first class employer of integrity, professionalism and equal opportunity
- to increase the size of the potential recruitment pool by better focussed targeting & relevant promotional activity
- to sow the seeds of interest to prepare & build the recruitment pool for the future
- to improve the image & status of the police officer, thus helping to improve the retention of current officers

METROPOLITAN POLICE PAY ADVICE
POLICE OFFICERS

PAYMENTS	£	BENEFITS	£
Basic pay (per annum) after 18 weeks training including London weighting and allowance	£25,221	Free rail travel Excellent pension scheme Access to sports and social club 21-29 days paid annual leave (depending on length of service) Great working environment Exceptional career opportunities	

For more information, visit our website, or call our recruitment line: Mon-Fri 8am-8pm. Sat 9am-3pm.

www.met.police.uk - 0845 727 2212

TOTAL DEDUCTIONS

Will be credited to

Although it is difficult to predict future requirements, it is expected that there will be an ongoing requirement for approximately 2,000 constables per annum. Whilst there is also a need to recruit civilian staff and senior officers, this brief concentrates solely on the recruitment of constables for the MPS.

Whilst there is a large scale ongoing COI (Central Office of Information) campaign promoting public service as a valuable career, the MPS must continue to "build its REPUTATION" in a **responsive manner**.

METROPOLITAN POLICE

MEDIACOM closer

Agencies are asked to consider how the MPS might utilise the communication channels at its disposal to best achieve the objectives laid out above.

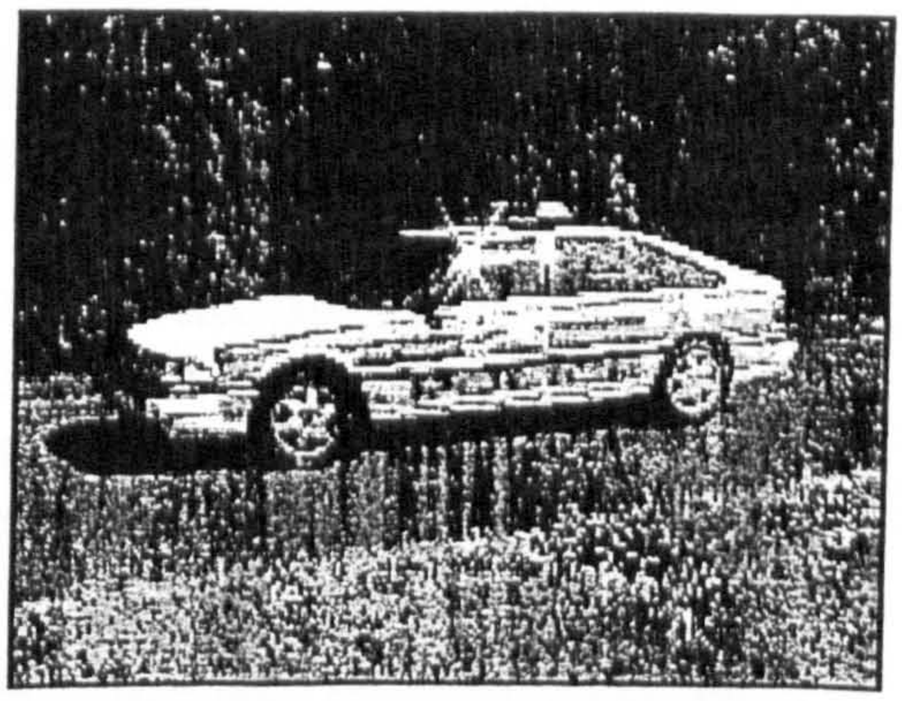
Proposed budget for the first year's campaign is £2m. This figure must include all additional costs resulting from any proposed plan and include production costs. It excludes agency fees.

6. Targeting

The MPS recruitment policy aims to reflect, as closely as possible, the diverse communities of London *in the Met's staff &* management.

It is clear from the profiles of current constables & officers included in the appendix that the MPS attracts its employees from a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences & communities. However as stated earlier certain groups are under represented and this is an issue that must be addressed.

Whilst the MPS is responsible for policing in London, its recruitment activity is national to ensure that the highest quality officers are recruited for the Service. Whilst some recruits are drawn from the armed services, it is important to ensure a breadth and depth of recruitment takes place. As a result, constables also come direct from school or university, as well as from commercial backgrounds.



As such, no specific targeting information is available to agencies beyond a need to attract quality applicants from all walks of life, including those from minority backgrounds. Agencies are asked to demonstrate how their strategies will cut through to relevant audiences, encouraging a change in attitudes and an increase in the recruitment pool for the MPS.

7. Requirements - this was the students task - your task is on page 12

Each agency is required to demonstrate how the calibre of its strategic thinking will add quantifiable value to the Met's recruitment success.

The Met has limited budgets, and agencies are asked to demonstrate genuine innovation in communication planning to add resonance to the campaign.

Each agency should present media strategies for the period June 2002 – June 2003.

Presentations should last no more than 30 minutes. There will also be a 15-minute Q&A session. All team members are welcome to present.

The pitch should be a persuasive outline of your agencies response to the following.

Main insights into the MPS. Your proposed strategy. The proposition or core thought/s. Communication objectives. Media & creative recommendations. And evaluation of the plan. A creative brief is expected and only 'indicative creative' material is sufficient.

All recommendations should be rigorously justified. Any additional research undertaken is at the discretion of the individual agency.

It may be useful for agencies to consider various levels of response to this brief. At the broadest level we have the population who the MPS serve and from whom the pool of potential recruits comes. Next we have applicants and from this pool the MPS must recruit the numbers required. And finally we have current members of the MPS who need to be retained in order for the service to offer the high quality service demanded of it in the 21st century.

Please note additional information may become available to each agency during the preparation process.

METROPOLITAN POLICE

MEDIACOM
closer to clients

Detective Superintendent

I've been in the Service for 17 years, joining straight from university in 1981. I wanted to join the Met specifically because of the diversity of work the capital offers: in my opinion it has greater opportunities, and it also has it's own responsibilities because more public events happen here, all of which offer unique policing. I'm not sure at first my parents wanted their daughter in the police service, but I don't think today they could be any prouder of me.

Coming straight from University I did find the discipline a difficult adjustment to make when I went to Hendon, and I also found the physical training very demanding. However, not only can I look back now and see how everything I learned at Hendon has played a significant part in my career. And that goes for the friends I made there too: even though so many of us have followed very different career paths in the Met, we're all still very close and support each other. It's also useful because we give each other different perspectives on the service and our roles.

My career progressed quite rapidly after constable rank. Most of my career has been spent in CID where I've had the opportunity to investigate offences ranging from theft to murder and have been Senior Investigating Officer on both National and International investigations.

For me, it's always been the intellectual challenge that's been the main motivator for me. I think the really exciting thing about the service today is that more than ever I see people open to new ideas and to change itself. The service is constantly moving forward, so you never feel like you're standing still either.

Chief Superintendent

I manage some 300 people, of which over 200 are police officers and the remainder are civilian support staff. I'm also directly responsible for a resource budget of over £1 million.

A typical day starts with briefings on events that have occurred during the night. This could be anything *from details of a serious crime* to a report of a vulnerable missing person. Much of my day is then taken up with meetings, whilst also reviewing the progress of all our current investigations.

There is also a strong strategic emphasis to my role which requires looking at long-term policing issues. It's rare that I know exactly what I'll be doing throughout the entire day, and it's extremely rare that two days are ever the same. If I'm at New Scotland Yard looking at, for instance, an aspect of police policy, it's not unusual that an incident on the division will throw my plans for the rest of the day.

I would like my career to remain as satisfying and rewarding as it has been for the past 22 years. I'm presently looking forward to attending the Strategic Command Course at the National Police College, and hope that'll act as a stepping stone to a higher rank and increased responsibility.

Appendix – Profiles:

Constable 1

I joined the service in 1990, and from very early on in my career I felt my true strengths lay in community policing. Building close links with people out in the community is, to me, the one thing I can do as an Officer to make a real difference.

During the five years I've been with the service I've worked hard to develop the trust and support of the community, particularly those from Pakistan and India who at the time had a frosty, even hostile, relationship with the Service.

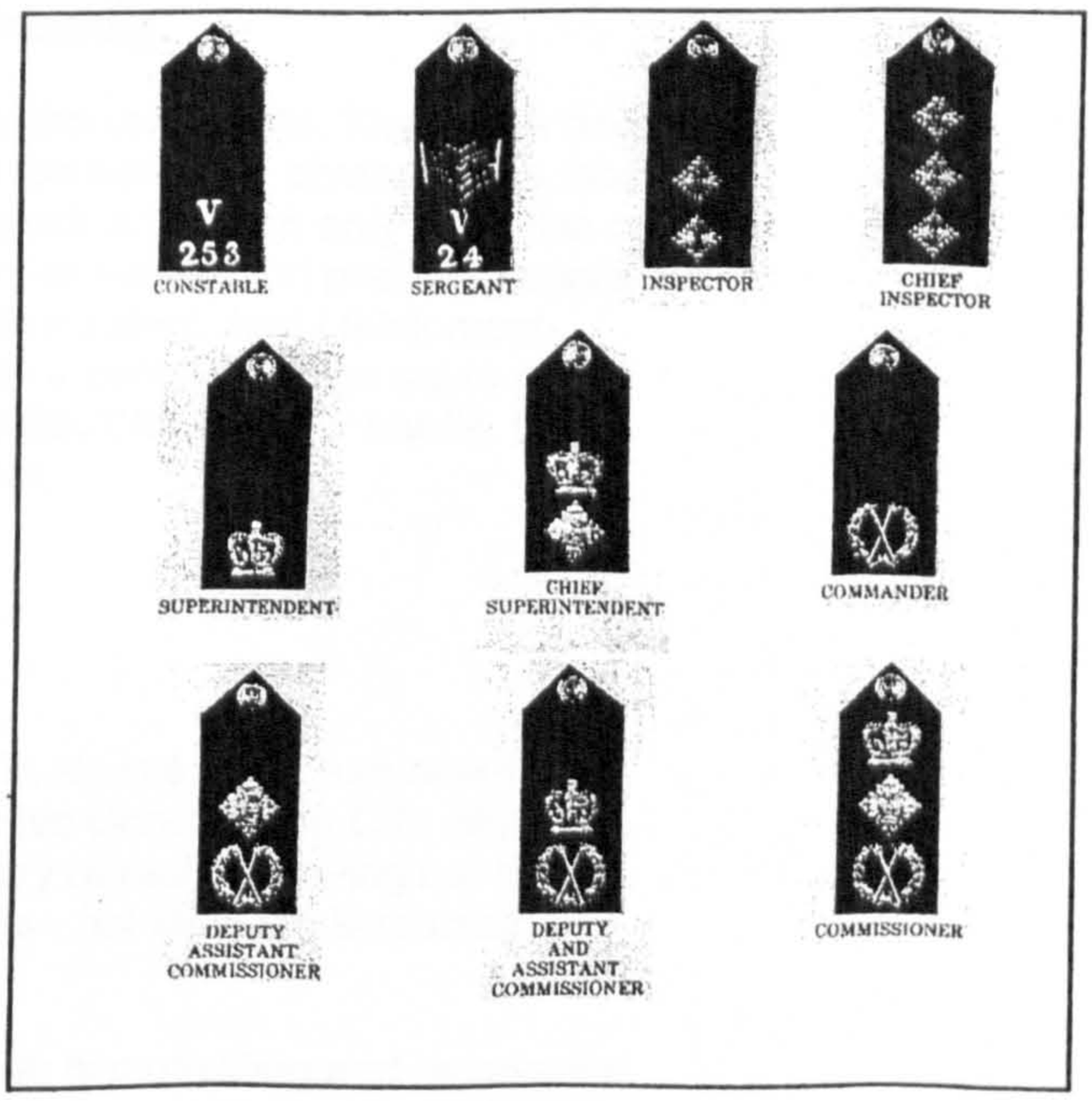
I'm very proud to say that over the years I served as a Dedicated Sector Officer the Service gained a much closer relationship with the ethnic communities in the area, and we established a degree of trust that wasn't there before. What's more, we made big in-roads into reducing robbery, burglary, benefit and drug-related crime in the area.

By the time I moved to another station, almost everyone locally knew me personally, and many residents trusted me enough to consult me on sensitive and delicate matters in my weekly surgery. I knew I was doing something right when I won the Community Constable of the Year Award two years running

Constable 2

I was 28 before I joined the Met, so I guess my background is probably quite different from most officers. I worked in financial services for twelve years, but being a police officer was always there at the back of my mind. Then we had a lot of changes happening within the company I was working for, and I thought 'This isn't actually what I want to be doing' and went for it.

It was weird going through the selection process. I was used to interviewing people, so it was quite strange being on the other side of the table. I have to admit, I was quite surprised when they invited me back, but I think they want to see people who are worldly wise - I think the more clued-up you are before you start the job, the more prepared you are for it.



Hendon, I think, is a shock to any body's system. There is time to enjoy yourself, but you're not there to enjoy yourself and it is really intensive - but it does pay off. It's a great environment, but I did feel really apprehensive when I left. I was quite worried about confrontations: you deal with minor things in a bank, but out on the street, when it's for real it's another story.

When you do encounter aggression from the public, people are really shouting at the uniform, not you personally, and you'd be really letting yourself down, and the profession, if you bit back. I've had points on my licence and I know what it's like to be on the receiving end of the police, so if

someone's going off I don't take it to heart, I just let them get on with it. The important thing is you always feel you've got the back up of your team, so you know no matter what happens, you've got support.

Constable 3

I had done quite a lot of things before I became a Police Officer at 32. After University I went into advertising, but soon knew working in an office environment wasn't for me. So, I went self-employed, running my own upholstery company, but, after a while, I really missed contact with people, and wanted to be more involved in the community. Then the nanny of a client of mine told me she was going for a job in the Met, and we got talking, and I decided I'd go for it too. Unfortunately she didn't get in, but I did!

I don't think being a woman goes against you. Yes, in some situations you have to be realistic and think a 16 stone bloke is more equipped to do something than a 9 stone woman, but sometimes you can diffuse a situation - men wind each other up, and most men actually don't want to fight a woman.

My ambition is to become a detective and so Crime Squad, where I'm working now, will give me the right experience to be the stepping stone to CID. Specialising in Burglary and Robbery is tough - it's hard not to take your work home with you - but it's also really stimulating.

I think the Met's public image is about ten years out of date. The media don't actually have access to most of the information about us, obviously, as most is confidential, so what does get into the papers is so often only a fraction of the truth. I've worked, and do work, with a lot of really good people - people who actually really care about people and their safety. And I think most people in their heart of hearts know we're not a bunch of thugs out to get them - just a bunch of people with a really difficult task on our hands. I just wish people were more open to admitting that.

Detective Sergeant

My present role is quite a departure for me. In all, I've spent just over nine years in the Service, the majority as a Detective Constable in CID. Moving into a uniformed Sergeant's role has been very refreshing, giving me the chance to develop a whole range of new skills - not least my leadership ability.

The most testing and stimulating part of the job is motivating and developing the officers in my team - encouraging them to take a proactive view of police work, and think about how they would like their careers to develop. Seeing other people get on is one of the most rewarding aspects of my work.

I've also found great support from the general public, which also makes the job worthwhile. I've had people come up to me in the street and shake my hand and tell me what a good job they think police officers do and interestingly it's only been other Asian people who've said the Service is no place for an Asian woman. I hope in the future that will change, and I have seen really positive steps to ensure sexism and racism isn't tolerated any more, so I have every confidence that it will.

Detective Superintendent

I've been in the Service for 17 years, joining straight from university in 1981. I wanted to join the Met specifically because of the diversity of work the capital offers: in my opinion it has greater opportunities, and it also has it's own responsibilities because more public events happen here, all of which offer unique policing. I'm not sure at first my parents wanted their daughter in the police service, but I don't think today they could be any prouder of me.

Coming straight from University I did find the discipline a difficult adjustment to make when I went to Hendon, and I also found the physical training very demanding. However, not only can I look back now and see how everything I learned at Hendon has played a significant part in my career. And that goes for the friends I made there too: even though so many of us have followed very different career paths in the Met, we're all still very close and support each other. It's also useful because we give each other different perspectives on the service and our roles.

My career progressed quite rapidly after constable rank. Most of my career has been spent in CID where I've had the opportunity to investigate offences ranging from theft to murder and have been Senior Investigating Officer on both National and International investigations.

For me, it's always been the intellectual challenge that's been the main motivator for me. I think the really exciting thing about the service today is that more than ever I see people open to new ideas and to change itself. The service is constantly moving forward, so you never feel like you're standing still either.

Chief Superintendent

I manage some 300 people, of which over 200 are police officers and the remainder are civilian support staff. I'm also directly responsible for a resource budget of over £1 million.

A typical day starts with briefings on events that have occurred during the night. This could be anything from details of a serious crime to a report of a vulnerable missing person. Much of my day is then taken up with meetings, whilst also reviewing the progress of all our current investigations.

There is also a strong strategic emphasis to my role which requires looking at long-term policing issues. It's rare that I know exactly what I'll be doing throughout the entire day, and it's extremely rare that two days are ever the same. If I'm at New Scotland Yard looking at, for instance, an aspect of police policy, it's not unusual that an incident on the division will throw my plans for the rest of the day.

I would like my career to remain as satisfying and rewarding as it has been for the past 22 years. I'm presently looking forward to attending the Strategic Command Course at the National Police College, and hope that'll act as a stepping stone to a higher rank and increased responsibility.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FIRST STAGE **APPENDIX 11**

The following interview guide outlines the key issues in this study.

The questions will act as primary prompts

(1) GENERAL INFORMATION RE: CULTURAL ISSUES

Which country do you come from?

How long have you been in Great Britain?

Did you come to Britain simply to study?

How long do you intend to stay here?

What sort of impressions of the British people did you expect to find?

Did these impressions turn out to be true/false?

Did you expect to have to change your behaviour to be able to live happily in Britain?

Have you had to change in any way due to the differences in cultures?

What would you say were some of the main differences between living in Britain and in your own country?

Have you found the British people sensitive to the fact that your ways of doing are in some ways different to theirs?

Did you expect that if there were differences in the way you communicated with others that you should change to be more like the British?

Ethnocentrism means that we expect others from different cultures to see the world from the same view point as we do. I should add that we are all ethnocentric to a certain degree. Have you found this idea to be true here in Britain?

The opposite of ethnocentrism is cultural relativism which means that we see the world according to the cultural values, attitudes and beliefs of the country we are in. Have you found that you have been able be culturally relative?

Did you come to Britain with any preconceived views, stereotypes of the British?

Were you aware of some of the British cultural values before coming to Britain ?

(2) INFORMATION RELATED TO GROUP WORK

Were you able to choose the people you wanted to work with on your group project?

What were your initial perceptions / feelings about the other group members?

Do you feel anxious or uncertain about working closely with any of the other group members?

If so, can you tell me why?

How will you try to overcome your uncertainty or anxiety?

Do you tend to look for similarities between you and others you don't know well, or are the differences between you the factors that seem to stand out from the others?

Do you think that it might help you to feel more comfortable if you tried to look for issues that could bring you together, i.e. similarities?

Would you say that to be successful in your group project, it is essential to have a feeling of togetherness/ friendliness between the group members?

Do you prefer to work in a group where the rules of the group are made very clear and formally laid down at the start or are you happier when there are no formal rules and these emerge as the group feel they need them?

Do you believe that as a group member you should be loyal to decisions made by the group members even if you don't really agree with them?

How important to you is conformity within the group?

Do you expect to give up your own interests for that of the group?

When working with others in your group would you put the relationship or the task first?

Why is the relationship/task more important?

Do you think that all members should have equal status in the group?

Do you expect the males to be more competitive than females in your group?

Can you foresee any problems developing with regard to the group project due to communication difficulties?

Is there anything that you would like to tell me about your experience so far with the group members?

INTERVIEW GUIDE **APPENDIX 111**
SECOND STAGE

(1) INFORMATION RELATED TO GROUP WORK

How would you describe the relationship/feelings between you and the other group members by the end of the project?

Looking back on your time together, were there any particular problems that arose in the way you communicated which you would say were related to cultural differences?

In relation to conformity, did you find that you simply conformed to the other members' viewpoints or not?

Did you find that there was a sense of loyalty between the members of your group?

Regarding cohesion, did you find that the group were cohesive? That is friendly and a shared sense of unity among the members?

Did you find that the group members put the relationship or the task first?

Was it helpful to draw a up a list of rules as your tutor suggested?

Would it have been helpful to have had more rules than you actually had?

Do you feel that you had to take more care in the way you communicated with the other group members, due to cultural differences, because you were working together for a specific purpose, rather than say, while you were in your usual seminar group.

Did you learn anything about your own communication with the other members which you weren't aware of before? For example - looking back were there times when you found yourself behaving in an ethnocentric way? (explain ethnocentrism again if required) If so why was this do you think?

Was it easy or difficult to adapt to the British way of life?

Have you tended to do things the same way as you would back home whenever possible?

What sort of things about the British culture did you find were difficult to overcome?

Would you say that overall your experience in working with the group was a positive one?

Are there any ways in which you think communication between the members could have been improved?

Did you enjoy the experience of working with others from different cultures?

Is there anything else which you would like to add in relation to cultural differences?

I refers to interviewer's questions **JAPANESE STUDENT** **APPENDIX (IV)**
S refers to the student's responses

Concepts relevant both to adaptation and cultural dimensions: underlined in red ink
Potential emergent themes underlined in green

I 29. In order to adapt did you expect to have to change your behaviour to be more like the British,

S 30. Yes, yes I thought so.

I 31 In what way did you feel you would have to change?

S 32 Yes, Mmm. In terms of my study I have to push myself harder and talk more because from our nature, we don't speak a lot. One word explain everything from my back ground. Or we think people talking a lot, they have an image of untrust. People who are quiet say something, only one word, we think is more trustworthy.

high context culture - value silence. Trust too much/all untrustworthy i.e. low context cultures like UK.

I 33 So did you find this difficult, the fact that we tend to talk a lot?

S 34 I felt when I started this course I don't speak a lot in the lectures and seminars but I even if I say some thing some short sentences, they really don't care.

important re adaptating successfully re 6.B.

reflects above - silence gives people time to think

I 35 Really, in what ways do you mean?

S 36. Ehh, no, no they care I haven't got, I can't have the power over my sentences if I don't speak a lot so I am trying to change my behaviour and find a gap to you know to start talking.

I 37. Good, that's great. So what would you say then were some of the main differences between your culture in Japan and our culture here in Britain?

S 38. Oh I think this is not only between Japan and English I think Japan and other US or Western people which is individualist because we highly valuethe group and we think we are one part of the group and we have to respect all the people, and before we start talking we think we should try to understand what they say and as long as it makes sense we have to respect this opinion, even if I don't agree with it. You know sometimes their opinion makes sense, it's not wrong I don't agree, but it's not wrong, so we believe we have to respect these opinions, however, when I talk something they criticise, I mean in positive way, you know.

importance of group over the individual.

group valued respect for group even if disagree so loyalty here?

I 39 Yes that's the way we are we like to debate and discuss the issues.

Again important in order to adapt.

S 40 Yes they discuss a lot and like telling me their opinions.

I 41 Do you think that's good?

S 42 Yes I think this is a good way to improve myself probably this is from my nature. Sometimes I find it hard to accept or I felt they were aggressive to me this is how I feel.

Perhaps personality??? But could be culture - refers to notice (32 above) could be additional theme?

I refers to interviewer's questions **TURKISH STUDENT** **APPENDIX V**
S refers to the student responses

Concepts relating to adaptation and cultural dimensions underlined in red
Additional themes underlined in green

I 45 Are there any other values which are different?

S 46 We are more friendly and family oriented, and loyalty is important. They don't attempt to eh violate other's rights here. It is really different than my country. It is the big difference I think. You know.

I 47 Can you explain what you mean a little more fully ?

S 48 Yes, It is like a rule, you know. It is like a rule in terms of this situation in school if you violate a rule I don't know, you can be punished. This is something like that. In my country you have to preserve these relationships you know you have that responsibility. So this is bad. I can tell you this is a big difference. Yes we are really friendly and loyal. I give value to people and I really try to learn what happened if there is a distance occurs between me and that person. So I try to learn what happened and try to repair the relationship. Everybody is the same I think, so this is the big difference.

I 49 So are you saying that people and relationships with these people are
I important for you?

S 50 Yes yes it is true, for me

I 51 Ethnocentrism means that it is quite difficult for other people to change their attitudes and values. Do you think that it might be difficult for you to change your attitudes to be like the British?

S 50 You mean for British people?

I 51 Well, no for everyone when they visit another country. For example being here do you feel that you should try to change your way of thinking to be more like the British?

S 52 Ah for anyone. Yes if, I think if I had to live more, you know like working here, or other things I would be more ehm more focused on that area. But because, you know I am studying now so I prefer getting more ethnocentric

I 53 So are you saying that if you were staying here for longer you feel that you would have to make an effort?

S 54 Yes I would have to change. I am sometimes too rude for people here. Sometimes too much open and they are and I feel, you know, oh what is she doing here or what is she saying so ohhh ?

Big difference between GB and Turkey was friendly

Key values
Friendly
family oriented
loyalty.

culture shock re adaptation - environment applying in GB Turkey - responsible for good relationships

Precious relationships

Friendly loyal

Give value to people

Repair the relationship

People / relationship important

Student situation, wanted a difference.

Too open - yet lack comfort in communication Turkey not usually open???

could be personality??

ADDITIONAL THEMES??

MAJOR THEME - COHESION (IE FRIENDSHIP, RELATIONSHIPS FAMILY LOYALTY (GIVE VOLUE TO PEOPLE.

I refers to interviewer's questions **TURKISH STUDENT** **APPENDIX VI**
S refers to the student responses

Concepts relating to adaptation and cultural dimensions underlined in red
Additional themes underlined in green

1.

I 45 Are there any other values which are different?

Key values
Friendly
Family oriented
Loyalty??

S 46 We are more friendly and family oriented, and loyalty is important. They don't attempt to eh violate other's rights here. It is really different than my country. It is the big difference I think. You know.

Big difference more friendly in Turkey. COLLECTIVISM

I 47 Can you explain what you mean a little more fully ?

CULTURE SHOCK RE adaptation — Environment in 6.13. different People in Turkey responsible for good relationships COLLECTIVISM

S 48 Yes, It is like a rule, you know. It is like a rule in terms of this situation in school if you violate a rule I don't know, you can be punished. This is something like that. In my country you have to preserve these relationships you know you have that responsibility. So this is bad. I can tell you this is a big difference. Yes we are really friendly and loyal. I give value to people and I really try to learn what happened if there is a distance occurs between me and that person. So I try to learn what happened and try to repair the relationship. Everybody is the same I think, so this is the big difference.

PRESERVE relationship
Friendly loyal
GIVE VOLUE to people
Repair the relationship
COLLECTIVISM

I 49 So are you saying that people and relationships with these people are important for you?

S 50 Yes yes it is true, for me.

People / relationships important

I 51 Ethnocentrism means that it is quite difficult for other people to change their attitudes and values. Do you think that it might be difficult for you to change your attitudes to be like the British?

S 50 You mean for British people?

I 51 Well, no for everyone when they visit another country. For example being here do you feel that you should try to change your way of thinking to be more like the British?

*

Student Situation makes a difference no need to try?

S 52 Ah for anyone. Yes if, I think if I had to live more, you know like working here, or other things I would be more ehm more focused on that area. But because, you know I am studying now so I prefer getting more ethnocentric

Keep to own ways - not good re adaptation?

I 53 So are you saying that if you were staying here for longer you feel that you would have to make an effort?

S 54 Yes I would have to change. I am sometimes too rude for people here. Sometimes too much open and they are and I feel, you know, oh what is she doing here or what is she saying so ohhh ?

too open in Turkey re content not usually open??

could be personality ???*

HIGH CONTEXT USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH COLLECTIVIST CULTURES??

ADDITIONAL THEMES ?*