

Impacts of Culture Shock on Intercultural Communication: Experiences of International Students in Cameroon

Japhael Mgoma Jambo

Pan African university of translation, Interpretation, Transborder Languages and Intercultural Communication (PAUTRAIN)

Advanced school of interpreters and interpreters (ASTI), University of Buea, Cameroon

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-7610-5780>

japhaelj@gmail.com

Article History

Received: 2024-07-21

Revised: 2024-09-17

Accepted: 2024-11-20

Published: 2024-12-24

Keywords

Culture shock

Cultural sensitivity

Cross-cultural communication

Cameroon

Foreign students

Intercultural communication

How to cite

Jambo, J. M. (2024). *Impacts of Culture Shock on Intercultural Communication: Experiences of International Students in Cameroon*. *Journal of Innovations in Art & Culture for Nature Conservation and Environmental Sustainability*, 2(2), 372-399..

Copyright © 2024 The Author(s)



Abstract

This study investigates the interplay between intercultural communication and culture shock among foreign students in Cameroon. In an increasingly interconnected world, individuals moving across borders for education, work, or personal reasons often experience culture shock a phenomenon arising from exposure to unfamiliar cultural environments. Drawing on recent research, the study examines the challenges and opportunities faced by 31 foreign students as they navigate cultural differences in communication styles, non-verbal cues, societal norms, and other cultural elements. Through survey analysis, the findings highlight the stages of culture shock, the roles of cultural elements in its manifestation, and its impact on students' academic and social integration. Furthermore, the study explores how intercultural communication skills and social support systems facilitate adaptation and help mitigate culture shock. By focusing on the experiences of foreign students in Cameroon, the research provides valuable insights for educational institutions, student support services, and researchers, offering strategies to enhance intercultural communication and foster inclusive learning environments for international students.

Introduction

The rise of globalisation has advanced a surge in international educational opportunities globally. It draws students from across the globe to pursue academic dreams in diverse

cultural landscapes. This influx not only enriches university grounds with a diversity of perspectives but also presents a substantial challenge known as culture shock (Furnham & Bochner, 2006). Foreign students often grapple with considerable sociocultural adjustments which impacts not only their academic performance but also their ability to communicate effectively with peers, professors, and general cross-cultural interactions in their daily basis (Sánchez-Sánchez et al., 2017). This study therefore explores the insinuations of culture shock on intercultural communication. It uses Cameroon, a nation with a rich and distinct cultural heritage, as a case study. Henceforth, the study aims to elucidate the broader complexities of intercultural communication within the context of international education by examining the specific challenges foreign students face. Moreover, drawing on recent studies (Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013; Shieh, 2014; Tamimy, 2022;) the study probes into how cultural shock disrupts communication patterns, hinders engagement, and necessitates targeted strategies to cultivate successful intercultural dialogue. This study aspires to equip individuals with the tools to navigate cultural transitions and foster meaningful intercultural interactions during their studies in foreign environments by perpetuating the two concepts of intercultural communication and cultural shock on the perspective of international education.

Study Questions

- i. *What are the stages and elements involved during culture shock in relation to intercultural communication?*
- ii. *What are some specific intercultural communication challenges do foreign students face due to culture shock?*
- iii. *What are the strategies and recommendations to foreign students in coping with intercultural communication barriers?*

Study Objectives

- i. *To explore the stages and elements of culture shock experienced by foreign students in relation to intercultural communication.*
- ii. *To investigate the specific intercultural communication challenges foreign students, face as a result of culture shock.*
- iii. *To identify and evaluate the strategies foreign students use to cope with intercultural communication barriers caused by culture shock.*

Overview of Cameroon

Cameroon is often called "*Africa in miniature*" due to its extensive geographical and cultural diversity. This case study provides a unique example of intercultural complexity. Its terrain spans from coastal plains and savannahs to dense tropical rainforests. This makes it a backdrop for a rich array of ethnic groups, numbering over 250, each with distinct languages, customs, and traditions (Nyamnjoh, 2022). This remarkable ethnic variety is mirrored in the country's official languages, French and English, though the two languages reflect its colonial

past under both French and British administration. That situation has fostered a unique bilingual and bicultural society (Njeuma, 2021). The interplay between these diverse cultural elements influences daily interactions and national identity which on the other side presents both opportunities and challenges for intercultural communication. While Cameroon's ethnic diversity is a source of cultural richness and vitality, it also necessitates the ongoing efforts to bridge gaps between different cultural groups and promote unity amid diversity (UNESCO, 2022). Additionally, the socio-economic disparities, such as uneven development and health issues, further impact intercultural relations by highlighting and sometimes exacerbating existing inequalities (see Zong, 2023; Neba, 2024). Consequently, Cameroon's complex intercultural landscape illustrates both the strengths and tensions inherent in a society marked by such profound diversity and multiculturalism. Hence, the management of cultural differences is crucial for stimulating social cohesion and national harmony.

Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock

Culture shock is a term initially coined by Oberg (1960). According to him, culture shock refers to the disorientation and psychological discomfort that individuals experience when they encounter a culture enormously different from their own. It often occurs when a person is immersed in a new cultural environment with unfamiliar social norms, values, practices, and expectations. This phenomenon includes psychological disorientation characterised by confusion, anxiety, or stress from challenges such as understanding new social cues, language barriers, and differing routines. It also involves emotional reactions like frustration, homesickness, and isolation as individuals struggle with the differences between their native and host cultures (Palamarchuk & Vaillancourt 2021).

In fact, culture shock is characterised by the notion of *Reverse culture shock*. It refers to the emotional and psychological challenges experienced when returning to one's home country after spending an extended period abroad (Gaw, 2000; Raja et al. 2023). Thus, it happens upon reintegration into a familiar but now somewhat foreign environment. It often involves the same feelings as that of culture shock such as disorientation, frustration, or alienation as individuals struggle to readjust to the norms, values, and daily life of their own culture. Recent studies highlight that reverse culture shock can be more intense than initial culture shock because people often expect their home culture to feel familiar but discover that both they and their environment have changed during their time away (Jack, 2014; Mustafa, 2022; Raja et al. 2023). On top of that, culture shock unfolds in typically stages which are (i) the honeymoon phase (initial excitement); (ii) the negotiation phase (frustration and adjustment challenges); (iii) the adjustment phase (gradual adaptation); and (iv) the mastery phase (effective functioning within the new culture) (see – Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Lysgaard, 1955).

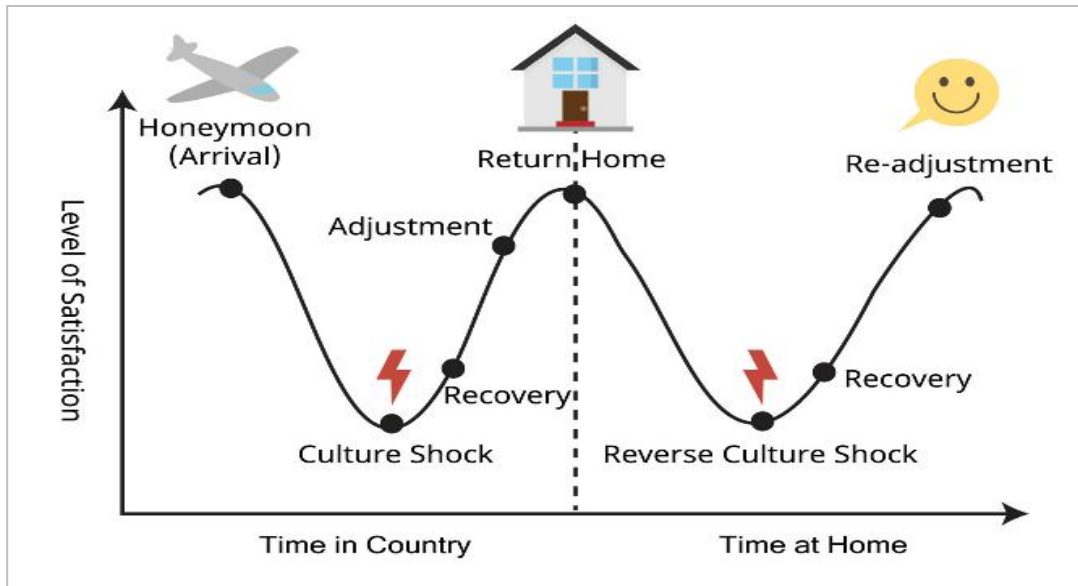


Figure 1: Stages and elements of culture shock and reverse culture shock

Source: Daenphetploy (July 25, 2021). from <https://www.vecteezy.com>

Moreover, culture shock underscores the impact of cultural differences on personal identity and social interactions. Hence, it discloses how variations in customs, values, and behaviours affect one’s comfort and integration (Mustafa, 2022). In addition, it often involves strategies such as seeking social support, learning about the new culture, and developing cross-cultural communication skills so as to facilitate smoother transitions and mitigate negative impacts (Searle & Ward, 1990). As well, personality, open-mindedness and self-awareness play a great role in culture shock, for example, Takeuchi et al. (2001) highlight the role of personality traits, such as openness to experience and cultural sensitivity, in influencing individual’s susceptibility to culture shock. In general, culture shock can be broadly defined as a psychological state that occurs when an individual is immersed in a culture that is significantly different from their own. It is characterised by feelings of disorientation, confusion, anxiety, and homesickness. These feelings often arise from the challenges of navigating a new culture, including language barriers, unfamiliar customs, and different social norms.

Acculturation

Allport (1954) defines acculturation as an interpenetration of two cultures, each changing as a result of contact. Also, Nickerson (2024) describes acculturation as the course of action by which a culture adopts the customs and ideas of another culture. Hence, it is a sort of learning and adopting the values, behaviours, and traditions of another group or society. Cole (2024) defines acculturation as the process in which individuals or groups, particularly from minority or immigrant cultures, adopt the practices and values of a dominant or majority culture, while still preserving aspects of their original cultural identity. Referring to those depictions, acculturation can be expansively defined as a process of social,

psychological, and cultural change that occurs when individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds come into prolonged and direct contact. This contact can lead to the adoption of new cultural behaviours, values, and beliefs, while simultaneously maintaining elements of their original culture. In essence, acculturation is a dynamic process of cultural exchange and adaptation. It involves the balancing of one's cultural identity with the need to integrate into a new cultural environment. As a matter of fact, one of the effective repair mechanisms of culture shock is acculturation, this phenomenon involves the exchange and integration of cultural elements between groups. This can include adopting new customs, language, food, and social practices from the host culture while maintaining aspects of one's original culture (Berry, 1997). Additionally, Berry (1997) identifies various acculturation styles that individuals adopt when encountering new cultures, those styles are firstly, integration; maintaining their own culture while engaging with the new one. Secondly, separation; distancing themselves from both their own and the new culture. Thirdly, assimilation; adopting the new culture while relinquishing elements of their own and finally, marginalisation; failing to fully integrate into either their own or the new culture.

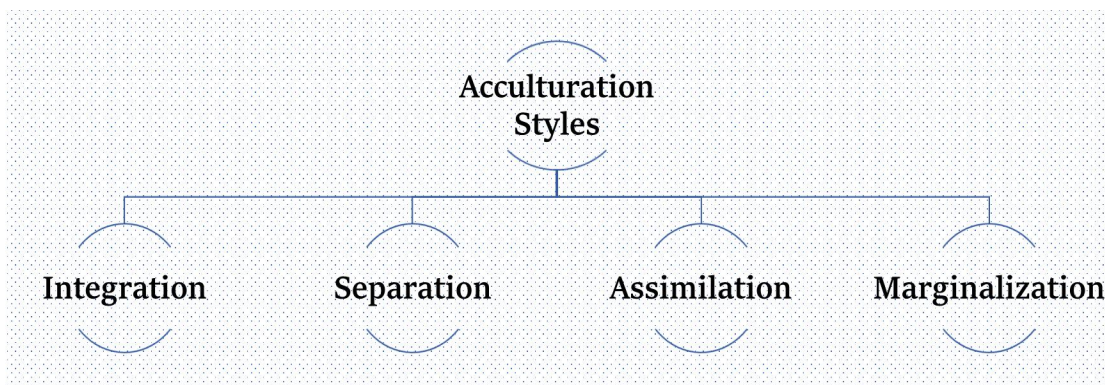


Figure 2: Acculturation styles

Intercultural Communication

Hall (1959) defines intercultural communication as a process of sending and receiving messages between people of different cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Bennett (1998) claims that it is the process by which people from different cultural backgrounds attempt to communicate with each other. In the same vein, Samovar et al. (2000) assert that it is a field that seeks to understand how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate with each other. Therefore, it can be argued that intercultural communication is the course of communication between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds. It encompasses understanding, interpreting, and responding to messages that are shaped by different cultural values, beliefs, and behaviours. It also entangles the exchange of ideas, information, and messages across cultural boundaries. Generally, this variety of communication can occur in various settings, such as business, education, travel, and social interactions. See also (Samovar et al., 2018; Chen, 2021)

In fact, recently, intercultural communication has evolved from its traditional focus on interactions between individuals from different nationalities to encompass a broader and more comprehensive perspective in recent research. To ensure a smooth intercultural interaction, there are some crucial strategies such as developing cultural competence by acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective communication across cultures (Sarwari, et al. (2024); understanding power dynamics as it is essential to manage power dynamics in intercultural communication; recognition of inherent power imbalances that may exist between cultural groups can significantly influence communication and cross-cultural interactions in various situations (Hannerz, 2018). Moreover, engaging in critical self-reflection by acknowledging one's own cultural biases and assumptions is vital for successful intercultural communication (Mitchell, 2023). Moreover, recent research highlights several key aspects of intercultural communication for instance, the rise of technology especially social media and the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has increased the frequency and complexity of intercultural interactions (Nguyen, 2022). Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on social justice in intercultural communication for example the recent scholarship that advocates for critical intercultural communication practices that promote equity and social justice across cultures (Dooly & Rubinstein, 2017). Generally, intercultural competence is now being examined in diverse contexts beyond national cultures, including within organisations, online communities, and among marginalised populations. This further broadens the scope of intercultural communication and research (Chen, 2014). To all intents and purposes, intercultural communication is not merely about understanding different cultures; it is about actively engaging with them in ways that nurture mutual respect, promote inclusivity, and navigate the complexities of our interconnected world in our globalised society.

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

According to Bennett (1998), Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, ICC refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. It involves navigating the complexities of an increasingly diverse society marked by different cultures, philosophies, and lifestyles (UNESCO, 2013). Scholars have proposed various definitions of ICC over time. For instance, Byram (1997, 2021) describes it as the ability to interact and communicate with people who speak a different language and come from a distinct cultural setting (p. 1). Therefore, ICC refers to the ability to effectively communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. It therefore involves understanding and appreciating cultural differences, adapting one's communication style to suit different cultural contexts, and effectively managing cultural misunderstandings. Besides, ICC is essential for effective interaction across cultural boundaries as it incorporates a deep understanding of cultural differences and the skills needed to navigate them. ICC begins with cultural awareness and knowledge, where individuals recognise the norms, values, and practices that influence communication in

different cultural contexts (Hoff, 2020). This awareness forms the foundation of ICC as it allows individuals to be conscious of their own cultural biases and to understand the specific cultural contexts of those they interact with. Beyond awareness, ICC also involves linguistic and non-verbal communication skills. These supplies kit out individuals to use language appropriately and interpret non-verbal cues accurately in various cultural settings (Byram, 1997). Another crucial aspect of ICC is the development of attitudes that foster positive intercultural interactions. To develop those attitudes individual should cultivate openness to engaging with different cultures; empathy to understand and share the feelings of others; and ethnocultural relativism (Deardorff, 2006). Theoretical models, like Deardorff's Pyramid Model and Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence both highlight the progression from attitudes and knowledge to the skills necessary for effective communication (Deardorff, 2006; Byram, 1997). These models accentuate the importance of flexibility, adaptability, and cultural sensitivity in achieving ICC.

Link Amid Intercultural Communication & Culture Shock

Aulia et al. (2023) argues that intercultural communication and culture shock are deeply intertwined concepts as they significantly influence each other reciprocally. Wherein, intercultural communication often serves as a source of culture shock because through it, individuals encounter differences in communication styles, non-verbal cues, and social norms within a new culture may experience confusion, misinterpretations, and frustration (Zhou et al., 2018; Smith, 2020). On the other hand, intercultural communication skills are essential tools for managing culture shock for instance, effective communication including active listening, open-mindedness, and cultural sensitivity, they aid individuals to bridge communication gaps. This foster understanding and reducing frustration (Chen & Starosta, 2014). Moreover, the relationship between these two concepts also extends to how culture shock impacts intercultural communication. Negative emotions such as anxiety, stress, and frustration, commonly associated with culture shock, hinder one's ability to communicate effectively with individuals from the new culture (Ward et al., 2020). This is associated with a reduced willingness to interact, as negative experiences may result in reluctance to engage in further intercultural communication. This matter potentially obstructs an individual's integration and interactions into the new culture. Taken as a whole, intercultural communication act as both a source of culture shock and a means of managing it.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in several key theories and models. Firstly, the U-Curve Theory of Adjustment (Lysgaard, 1955) explains the emotional trajectory foreign students experience, moving from initial excitement to crisis, and eventually toward recovery and adjustment as they adapt to their new environment. Secondly, Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory by Gudykunst, (1995). It is pertinent in managing the psychological factors of anxiety and uncertainty as it highlights how effective intercultural communication occurs when

individuals can reduce uncertainty to manageable levels. Furthermore, Berry's Acculturation Model (1997) offers insight into how students navigate their cultural identity, choosing strategies like assimilation or integration to cope with differences. As part of this adaptation process, Kim's Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory (1988) emphasises the dynamic, cyclical nature of cultural adjustment, which involves stress, coping, and eventual growth. Finally, Face-Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1988) underscores the importance of managing face social image during intercultural interactions, particularly in conflict situations, where foreign students must navigate how to maintain self-image while respecting Cameroonian cultural norms. These theories collectively provide a comprehensive framework for analysing how culture shock impacts the communication experiences of foreign students in Cameroon.

Methods

The study used a quantitative approach with a structured questionnaire to explore how culture shock effects intercultural communication among foreign students in Cameroon. The surveys were administered to assess their experiences and adaptation strategies. The collected data were statistically analysed to identify the relationship between the intensity of culture shock and the effectiveness of intercultural communication.

Research Design

The research design for this study is a cross-sectional survey utilising a structured questionnaire to explore the implications of culture shock on intercultural communication among foreign students in Cameroon. This provided a representation of participants' experiences and perceptions.

Population

The populace for this study consists of a total of 31 foreign students enrolled in various universities across Cameroon. These students represent a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, nationalities, and academic disciplines. So, it is a comprehensive sample for examining the effects of culture shock on intercultural communication. Population is sufficient to capture the varied experiences and challenges faced by students as they navigate a new cultural environment and its impact on their communication and adaptation processes.

Sampling Technique

In this study, purposive sampling was employed to select participants from the population of foreign students in Cameroon. This non-probability sampling technique was chosen to ensure that the sample specifically included students who have had significant intercultural experiences and challenges while studying in Cameroon. Purposive sampling allowed for the selection of individuals who could provide rich, relevant data on the implications of culture

shock on intercultural communication by deliberately targeting students from diverse cultural backgrounds and academic disciplines.

Data Collection Instruments and Analysis

The study collects data using a structured questionnaire with sections on communication challenges, stages and elements of culture shock, adaptation strategies, and emotional impact, measured on a 5-point Likert scale. A pilot test was done to guarantee the questionnaire's reliability and validity. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics to summarise responses and inferential statistics to explore relationships and patterns by using SPSS software. Results are reported with tables and visualisation and interpreted within the context of existing literature to understand how culture shock effects intercultural communication and adaptation among foreign students in Cameroon.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting this study, several ethical considerations were rigorously addressed to ensure participant protection and research integrity. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Confidentiality was maintained through anonymisation and secure data handling to protect participants' identities. The study was designed to minimise potential psychological distress, with a culturally sensitive approach to respect the diverse backgrounds of participants.

Results and Discussion

Demographic information of respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Gender		Age		Length of stay in Cameroon	
	Female	Male	21 - 30	31 - 40	1 - 5 months	more than 1 year
Count	15	16	20	11	3	28
%	48.4%	51.6%	64.5%	35.5%	9.7%	90.3%

The demographic data reveals a relatively balanced gender distribution, with 48.4% identifying as female and 51.6% as male with a slight male majority. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (64.5%) fall within the 21–30 age range, while 35.5% are aged between 31 and 40. This suggests that younger adults make up the larger portion of the sample. Regarding the length of stay in Cameroon, a significant 90.3% of the respondents have been living in the country for more than one year, while only 9.7% have stayed for a shorter period of 1–5 months. This implies that the majority of respondents have had substantial exposure to the local culture which directly influence their insights and perceptions.

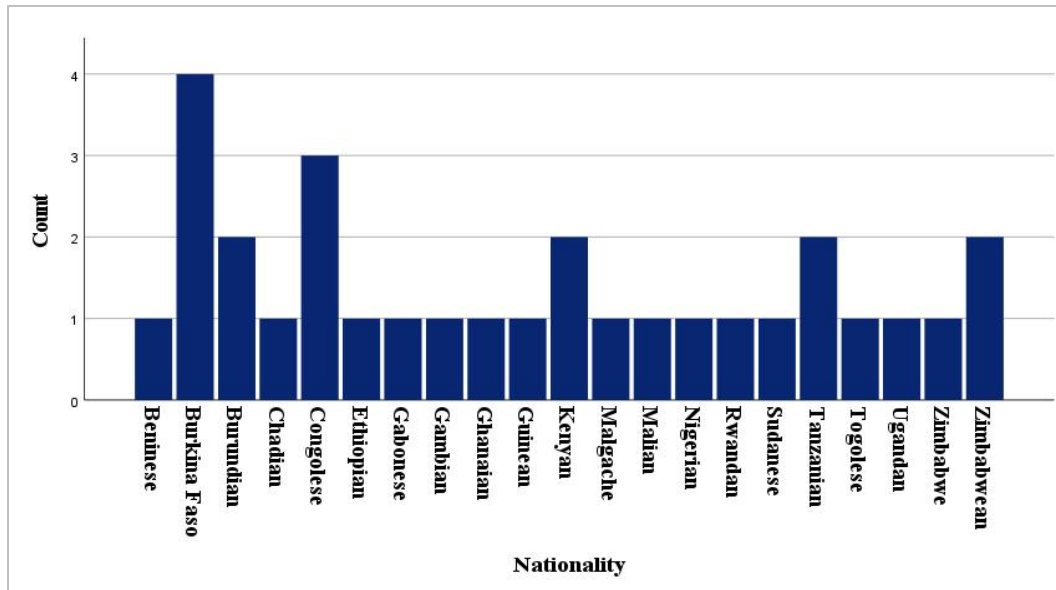


Figure 3: Distribution of Participants by Nationality

The nationality distribution of respondents in this study reveals a diverse display of backgrounds, with the most significant representation coming from Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe, 4 participants each. Additionally, respondents from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania are notably represented, while the rest of the sample includes individuals from a variety of other African nations, such as Benin, Chad, and Ghana, among others. This diversity is crucial as it allows for a broader analysis of how different cultural backgrounds and experiences influence the adaptation process. The wide range of nationalities represented in the study provides a comprehensive view of how individuals from different parts of Africa navigate and respond to the cultural environment in Cameroon.

Stages and Elements of Culture Shock

Stages of Culture Shock in Orientation to Intercultural Communication

(i) Honeymoon phase

Table 2: Data on honeymoon phase

	Excitement before arrival in Cameroon					Frequency of initially communication challenges				
	Extremely excited	Moderately excited	Not at all excited	Slightly excited	Very excited	Not at all	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Very frequently
Count	11	4	5	3	8	6	7	6	9	3
%	35.5%	12.9%	16.1%	9.7%	25.8%	19.4%	22.6%	19.4%	29.0%	9.7%

The data highlights varying levels of excitement among students before arriving in Cameroon. A significant 35.5% (11 respondents) were extremely excited, 25.8% (8 respondents) were very excited, and 12.9% (4 respondents) felt moderately excited. In contrast, 16.1% (5

respondents) reported no excitement at all, and 9.7% (3 respondents) felt slightly excited. Overall, over 61.3% of students experienced high excitement levels before their arrival. However, regarding initial communication challenges, 22.6% (7 respondents) often faced difficulties, 29.0% (9 respondents) sometimes encountered challenges, while 19.4% (6 respondents) reported rare difficulties. Additionally, 9.7% (3 respondents) experienced challenges very frequently, and 19.4% (6 respondents) reported no communication challenges. This indicates that 60.3% of students encountered communication difficulties, reflecting a typical shift from initial excitement to the reality of communication barriers during the honeymoon phase of culture shock.

(ii) Negotiation Phase

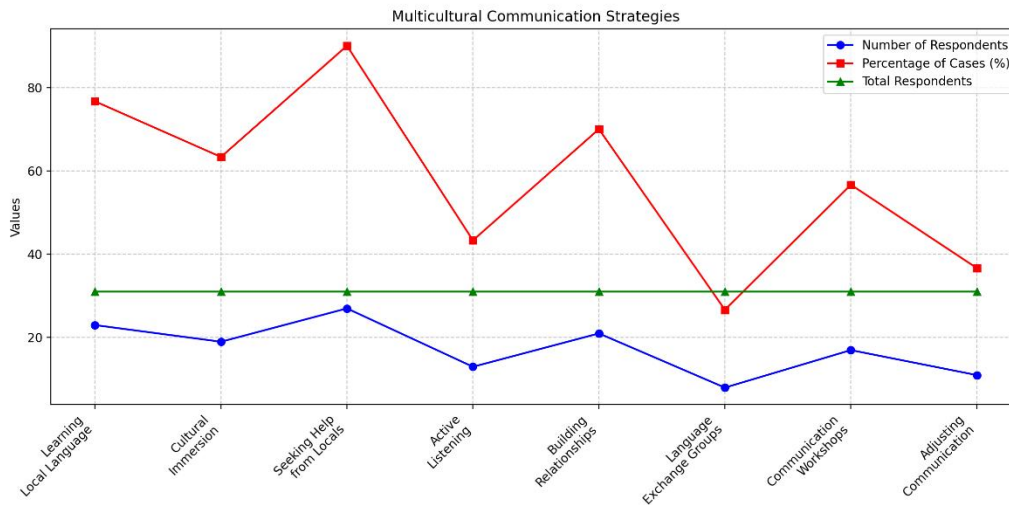
Table 3: Data on accounts to negotiation phase

	Extent of experienced frustration or difficulties in communicating with locals					Specific communication challenges faced				
	Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very much	Minor challenges	Moderate challenges	None	Severe challenges	Significant challenges
Count	7	10	5	3	6	9	5	5	7	5
%	22.6%	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	19.4%	29.0%	16.1%	16.1%	22.6%	16.1%

A significant 74.2% of respondents reported frustrations in communicating with locals. Specifically, 32.3% (10 respondents) experienced moderate frustration, 22.6% (7 respondents) faced extreme frustration, and 19.4% (6 respondents) felt very frustrated. Only 9.7% (3 respondents) reported slight frustration, while 16.1% (5 respondents) felt no frustration at all. These frustrations often emerge as initial excitement fades, revealing challenges like language barriers. Regarding specific communication challenges, 29.0% (9 respondents) faced minor issues, such as difficulty with local accents, while 22.6% (7 respondents) encountered severe challenges, including complete language breakdowns. Additionally, 16.1% (5 respondents) experienced moderate challenges related to cultural misunderstandings, and another 16.1% (5 respondents) faced significant challenges in complex social or academic contexts. Lastly, 16.1% (5 respondents) reported no challenges at all. These findings illustrate the diverse experiences of intercultural communication during the adjustment phase.

(iii) Adjustment phase

Table 4: Common strategies used in adjustment stage



The graph reveals that "Seeking Help from Locals" is the most effective strategy, with 90% of cases and 27 respondents, indicating a strong reliance on local assistance for communication. Other strategies like "Learning Local Language" and "Building Relationships" also show significant engagement, with 76.67% and 70% respectively. In contrast, strategies such as "Language Exchange Groups" and "Adjusting Communication" have lower engagement levels, at 26.67% and 36.67%, suggesting that these methods may need more promotion or support to enhance their effectiveness in multicultural communication.

(iv) Mastery phase

Table 5: Outcomes after application of above strategies (table 4) in adjustment stages

Adjustment Element	Count	%
Increased use of local language	17	56.67%
Enhanced non-verbal communication	21	70.00%
More frequent use of cultural norms	14	46.67%
Adaptation to local communication pace	9	30.00%
More culturally sensitive communication	27	90.00%
Improved clarity and simplicity in language	25	83.33%
Increased patience and understanding	26	86.67%

Respondents in this stage showed significant shifts in communication, emphasising cultural adaptation and interpersonal skills. The most notable change was toward culturally sensitive communication (90%), followed by clearer language use (83.33%) and increased patience (86.67%). Enhanced non-verbal communication (70%) and greater use of the local language (56.67%) were also common, while fewer adapted to local conversational pacing (30%). Overall, these changes reflect a conscious effort to integrate local norms and improve cross-cultural communication in the Cameroonian context.

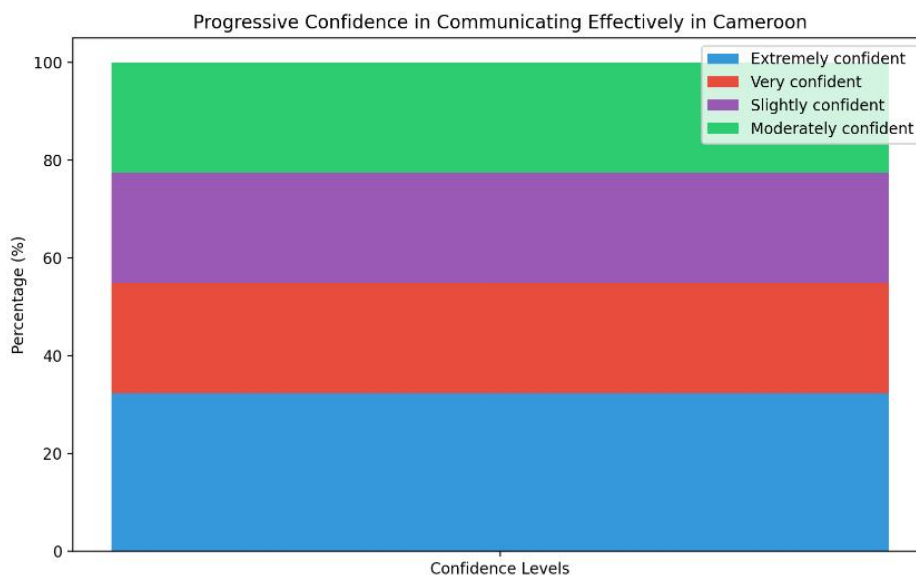


Figure 4: General confidence after all the stages of cultural shock

The results from the "Mastery Phase" questionnaire indicate diverse confidence levels in communicating effectively in Cameroon among the 31 respondents. Ten individuals (32.3%) reported being "extremely confident", while seven (22.6%) described themselves as "very confident" and another seven as "Moderately confident." Additionally, seven respondents (22.6%) felt "Slightly confident." This distribution shows that while 54.9% feel highly competent, a significant portion is still developing their skills and adjusting to local communicative norms.

Generally, the data illustrates how initial excitement often transitions into communication challenges and gradual adaptation, highlighting the relationship between culture shock and communication. During the honeymoon phase, 61.3% of respondents felt highly excited, but this enthusiasm often leads to difficulties, with 60.3% reporting early-stage challenges. This shift signifies how overconfidence can hinder effective intercultural communication due to the inability to grasp local linguistic or cultural cues, resulting in misinterpretations and frustrations. In the negotiation phase, 74.2% reported frustrations due to issues with accents, slang, and cultural nuances, emphasising that effective communication requires more than just language proficiency; it necessitates an understanding of local context and non-verbal

cues. As individuals enter the adjustment phase, they adopt strategies to overcome barriers, such as seeking help from locals (90%) and learning the local language (76.67%). Building relationships (70%) and engaging in cultural immersion (63.33%) also play crucial roles. However, strategies like joining language exchange groups (26.67%) are less common, indicating areas for improvement in community-driven language learning. By the mastery phase, respondents reported notable advancements in communication, with 90% indicating increased cultural sensitivity and 70% improved non-verbal communication. Nonetheless, only 30% felt fully adapted to the local communication pace, underscoring the challenges of mastering conversational nuances in a foreign culture and highlighting the need for ongoing learning and adaptation.

Elements of Culture Shock in Relevance to Intercultural Communication

(i) Dressing and outfit

Table 6: Perceptions on local dressing styles and local outfit

local dressing style in Cameroon compared to what you are accustomed to.					
	Familiar	Neutral	Unfamiliar	Very Familiar	Very Unfamiliar
Count	4	9	11	3	4
%	12.9%	29.0%	35.5%	9.7%	12.9%

The data reveals that the largest group, 35.5% (11 respondents), found the local dressing style "Unfamiliar," indicating significant differences in clothing culture. Meanwhile, 29% (9 respondents) took a "Neutral" stance, feeling neither too familiar nor unfamiliar with the style. Smaller groups reported the style as "Familiar" (12.9%, 4 respondents) and "Very Unfamiliar" (12.9%, 4 respondents), reflecting contrasting experiences. Additionally, 9.7% (3 respondents) found the local style "Very Familiar," suggesting that a few respondents felt highly accustomed to it.

(ii) Traditional Cuisine and Beverages

Table 7: Reactions to Cameroonian traditional cuisine and beverages

Initial reaction to the traditional Cameroonian cuisine and beverages					
	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Negative	Very Positive
Count	7	9	6	5	4
%	22.6%	29.0%	19.4%	16.1%	12.9%

The data in the tables above, the largest group, 29% (9 respondents), had a "Neutral" reaction, suggesting they neither particularly liked nor disliked the local food and drink. A notable portion, 22.6% (7 respondents), expressed a "Negative" reaction, while 19.4% (6 respondents) had a "Positive" experience. Fewer respondents reported extremes, with 16.1%

(5 respondents) reacting "Very Negative" and 12.9% (4 respondents) reacting "Very Positive." This distribution indicates a variety of responses, with a significant number feeling ambivalent or slightly negative toward the local cuisine, though a smaller but notable group reacted positively.

(iii) Common Mannerisms and Gestures

Table 8: Perception of common mannerisms, politeness and gestures

Perception on the common mannerisms and gestures used by people in Cameroon					
	Appropriate	Inappropriate	Neutral	Very Appropriate	Very Inappropriate
Count	12	2	8	5	4
%	38.7%	6.5%	25.8%	16.1%	12.9%

The data shows that, a substantial majority, 38.7% (12 respondents), found the mannerisms and gestures "Appropriate," reflecting a favourable view of local non-verbal communication practices. Additionally, 16.1% (5 respondents) deemed them "Very Appropriate," further supporting the idea that many respondents appreciated the local customs. A smaller portion, 25.8% (8 respondents), took a "Neutral" standpoint, suggesting some ambivalence or lack of strong opinion about the mannerisms. In contrast, only 6.5% (2 respondents) found them "Inappropriate," and 12.9% (4 respondents) considered them, "Very Inappropriate". This distribution highlights a predominantly positive view of Cameroonian mannerisms and gestures, with most respondents feeling comfortable or accepting of the local communication style.

(iv) Communication, Local Languages and Dialects

Table 9: Experience in communication local languages and dialects

Experience of communicating in Cameroon, considering the local languages and dialect					
	Difficult	Easy	Neutral	Very Difficult	Very Easy
Count	4	3	6	5	1
%	12.9%	9.7%	19.4%	16.1%	41.9%

The responses regarding the experience of communicating in Cameroon reveal that, a significant majority, 41.9% (13 respondents), found the experience "Very Easy," indicating a strong level of comfort with communication in this multilingual context. Additionally, 19.4% (6 respondents) felt "Neutral," suggesting a balanced or mixed experience. In contrast, 12.9% (4 respondents) reported it as "Difficult," and 16.1% (5 respondents) experienced it as "Very Difficult." Only a small fraction, 9.7% (3 respondents), deemed it "Easy." the data, hence, suggest that while some challenges exist, many respondents successfully navigate the

linguistic diversity in Cameroon, with a majority feeling confident in their communication abilities.

(v) Beliefs and religious practices

Table 10: Observations on the religious practices and beliefs

Observations about the religious practices and beliefs prevalent in Cameroon					
	Different	Neutral	Similar	Very Different	Very Similar
Count	1	6	9	3	11
%	3.2%	19.4%	29.0%	9.7%	35.5%

The responses regarding religious practices in Cameroon show that the largest group, 35.5% (11 respondents), found the practices "Very Similar" to their own, indicating a strong alignment with local beliefs. Additionally, 29% (9 respondents) felt the practices were "Similar." However, 19.4% (6 respondents) maintained a "Neutral" viewpoint, suggesting indifference toward the similarities or differences. A smaller percentage found the practices "Very Different" (9.7%, 3 respondents) or "Different" (3.2%, 1 respondent), indicating some notable distinctions. Overall, this data highlights the potential for shared values and beliefs within Cameroon's diverse religious landscape.

(vi) Local Laws and Regulations

Table 11: Experiences on local laws and regulations

Local laws and regulations in Cameroon compared to those in home countries					
	Lenient	Neutral	Restrictive	Very Lenient	Very Restrictive
Count	8	7	7	5	4
%	25.8%	22.6%	22.6%	16.1%	12.9%

Respondents' assessments of local laws and regulations in Cameroon reveal mixed opinions. Notably, 25.8% (8 respondents) described the laws as "Lenient," suggesting a more relaxed legal environment, while 22.6% (7 respondents) found them "Restrictive," indicating concerns about legal constraints. Additionally, another 22.6% expressed a "Neutral" attitude, reflecting uncertainty about the matter. Fewer respondents viewed the laws as "Very Lenient" (16.1%, 5 respondents) or "Very Restrictive" (12.9%, 4 respondents), suggesting extreme perceptions are less common. Overall, the data indicates a varied understanding of local laws, with some feeling more at ease and others expressing apprehension regarding regulatory strictness, shaped by personal experiences.

(vii) Non-Verbal Cues and Signals*Table 12: Interpretation of non-verbal cues and signals*

Non-verbal communication cues and signals in Cameroon?					
	Clear	Confusing	Neutral	Very Clear	Very Confusing
Count	10	4	5	6	6
%	32.3%	12.9%	16.1%	19.4%	19.4%

Respondents' interpretations of non-verbal communication cues and signals in Cameroon show that, a plurality of 32.3% (10 respondents) found these cues "Clear," indicating a positive grasp of the local non-verbal communication styles. However, a significant number, 19.4% (6 respondents), rated their understanding as "very clear", suggesting that a portion of respondents felt particularly confident in interpreting non-verbal signals. Conversely, 19.4% (6 respondents) also perceived the cues as "Very Confusing," alongside 12.9% (4 respondents) who described them as "confusing." Additionally, 16.1% (5 respondents) expressed a "Neutral" perspective. While many respondents are comfortable with non-verbal communication in Cameroon, a considerable minority experiences confusion.

(viii) Social Norms and Etiquette*Table 13: Understanding of social norms and etiquette*

Social norms and etiquette observed in Cameroon upon arrival					
	Familiar	Neutral	Unfamiliar	Very Familiar	Very Unfamiliar
Count	8	7	6	9	1
%	25.8%	22.6%	19.4%	29.0%	3.2%

Respondents' understanding of the social norms and etiquette in Cameroon upon arrival reflects a diverse range of experiences. A substantial portion, 29.0% (9 respondents), found the social norms "very familiar", and 25.8% (8 respondents) felt the norms were "Familiar," this suggests either a strong prior understanding of local customs or some level of awareness or comfort with the cultural practices. Conversely, 19.4% (6 respondents) described their understanding as "Unfamiliar," while a smaller group of 3.2% (1 respondent) expressed feeling "Very Unfamiliar" with the social norms. A notable 22.6% (7 respondents) maintained a "Neutral" perspective, suggesting either a lack of strong feelings or mixed experiences regarding local etiquette. The data indicates that while many respondents have a solid grasp of Cameroonian social norms, a significant portion still navigates unfamiliarity and ambiguity in their understanding of local customs.

Discussion

Impacts of Culture Shock on Effective Intercultural Communication

(a) Disruption of Communication Patterns

The survey results reveal that a significant number of respondents experienced communication difficulties attributable to cultural differences, with 29.0% indicating that they found interactions “slightly difficult” and 19.4% labelling them as “quite difficult”. This observation is consistent with existing literature, which underscores the notion that culture shock can lead to misunderstandings rooted in divergent communication styles. For example, students from low-context cultures may struggle to interpret indirect forms of communication prevalent in high-context cultures like Cameroon (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2017). Such disruptions in communication patterns not only hinder comprehension but also impact the establishment of rapport among individuals. In academic contexts, where clarity and understanding are paramount, indirect communication can lead to misinterpretations and frustrations. This challenge underscores the need for foreign students to become aware of and adapt to local communication styles to facilitate smoother interactions.

(b) Cultural Misunderstandings

The data indicates that an overwhelming 80.6% of respondents have encountered misunderstandings due to cultural differences in communication styles, with “occasionally” being the most frequently reported response (35.5%). This statistic emphasises the amplifying effect of culture shock on the likelihood of miscommunication. Non-verbal cues and the intricacies of direct versus indirect communication are critical elements in this dynamic. For instance, gestures that may be benign or familiar to students from their home cultures could be misinterpreted within the Cameroonian context, complicating interactions and leading to further misunderstandings (Hall, 1976; Ardener, 1981). The necessity for students to adapt their communicative behaviours to align more closely with local norms becomes evident, as such adaptability is essential for fostering understanding and minimising the potential for cultural misunderstandings.

(c) Language Barriers

The findings reveal that 43.3% of respondents felt that language barriers “somewhat hindered” their communication. This aligns with the assertions made by Takeuchi et al. (2001) that language barriers can exacerbate culture shock, limiting students’ ability to articulate their thoughts or grasp subtleties in discussions. In the context of Cameroon, where a multitude of languages and dialects coexist, this linguistic diversity presents additional challenges, particularly for students navigating academic environments that may oscillate

between French, English, and local dialects (World Bank, 2023; Fokwang, 2013). The complexity of language use in such settings reinforces feelings of frustration and isolation, as students may find themselves ill-equipped to participate effectively in both academic and social interactions. The inability to communicate fluently can further deepen their sense of alienation, creating barriers that hinder integration and cultural exchange.

(d) Emotional Rollercoaster

Culture shock often engenders a broad spectrum of negative emotions, which can significantly impede communication. Students frequently report feelings of anxiety, frustration, and anger, leading to withdrawal or hesitance to engage in social interactions (Takeuchi et al. (2001). Such emotional turmoil diminishes students' confidence and willingness to participate in discussions, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of isolation that exacerbates their challenges. Bennett (1993) posits that these emotional fluctuations can cloud judgment and sensitivity in intercultural interactions, further perpetuating misunderstandings. As students grapple with their emotional responses, they may find it increasingly difficult to navigate the complexities of communication, ultimately hampering their overall intercultural competence.

(e) Focus on Differences and Stereotyping

The heightened awareness of cultural differences can lead students to engage in stereotyping or overlook commonalities that could foster connections (Bennett, 1993). This tendency to focus on perceived differences may create barriers to genuine engagement with the host culture, as students become preoccupied with what separates them from locals rather than identifying shared experiences and values. Additionally, a lack of cultural knowledge can result in misunderstandings and negative assumptions, further obstructing the development of meaningful relationships. This fixation on differences can inhibit students from fully embracing their new environment, limiting opportunities for cultural exchange and deeper understanding.

(f) Reduced Confidence

The unfamiliarity with social cues and communication styles can significantly undermine students' confidence in intercultural settings. This fear of misunderstanding or being judged can deter active participation in discussions, thereby limiting their learning and integration into the social fabric of the host culture (Shieh, 2014). The cumulative effect of diminished confidence can lead to a disengaged and isolated experience, where students may feel unable to contribute meaningfully to conversations or activities. This disengagement can create a barrier to personal growth and development, as confidence plays a crucial role in navigating the challenges of intercultural communication.

(g) Cultural Humour Misfires

Cultural differences in humour often present significant communication barriers. Misunderstandings or perceived offensiveness stemming from cultural jokes can hinder rapport-building efforts among students and locals. This highlights the imperative need for cultural awareness and sensitivity in social interactions (Samovar et al., 2017). Navigating the nuances of humour requires an understanding of context, timing, and cultural references, which may differ markedly from one culture to another. Without this awareness, students may inadvertently alienate themselves or create friction in their interactions, undermining efforts to establish positive relationships.

(h) Homesickness and Isolation

As previously noted, culture shock can exacerbate feelings of homesickness, which in turn contributes to social isolation. The reluctance to engage socially can create a negative feedback loop, where students withdraw from interactions, leading to increased frustration and misunderstanding, as posited by Furnham and Tresize (1983). This cycle can severely hinder their ability to acclimatise to the new environment, making it challenging to develop a sense of belonging. The emotional weight of homesickness can overshadow the positive aspects of the cultural experience, further entrenching students in feelings of loneliness and disconnection.

(i) Hindrance to Intercultural Competence

The inability to adapt communication styles and manage emotions can stymie the development of intercultural competence (Chen & Starosta, 2014). Students may find themselves struggling to navigate the complexities of the Cameroonian cultural landscape, hindering their ability to cultivate the empathy and understanding essential for effective communication. This difficulty is exacerbated by the negative emotions triggered by culture shock, leading students to cling to their cultural practices and beliefs, thereby inhibiting their capacity to adapt and learn from their experiences (Bock, 1970). Such resistance to cultural adaptation can stifle personal growth and diminish the richness of their intercultural experience.

1.1.1. Positive Perspective of Culture Shock

Culture shock, while often perceived as a challenging experience, presents several nuanced implications for intercultural communication that extend beyond its immediate difficulties. One notable aspect is the emotional and psychological stress that arises during this transition. Individuals frequently experience a decline in their initial excitement, leading to frustration and anxiety as they confront communication barriers, with 74.2% of respondents reporting such feelings during the negotiation phase. This emotional turmoil can hinder effective

communication, as individuals may withdraw or avoid interactions altogether, resulting in isolation and further complications in their intercultural exchanges. Moreover, communication barriers and misunderstandings can significantly impede effective dialogue. Data indicates that 16.1% of respondents faced severe challenges, including complete breakdowns in understanding, often due to differences in language, idiomatic expressions, and non-verbal cues. Such misunderstandings can lead to conflicts and misinterpretation of intentions, which necessitates time and effort to navigate and decode cultural nuances effectively. Additionally, culture shock can foster the formation of stereotypes and cultural biases, as individuals may perceive the host culture negatively when confronted with unfamiliar norms. Approximately 16.1% of respondents expressed frustration regarding politeness conventions, illustrating how cultural misunderstandings can reinforce prejudicial attitudes that obstruct open, unbiased interaction.

On the other hand, the adjustment phase signals a critical opportunity for adaptation and cultural integration. While individuals may experience growth in their communication skills – such as improved clarity in language (83.33%) – the potential for over-adaptation poses a risk of cultural loss, where individuals feel disconnected from their cultural identity. This tension complicates the authenticity of intercultural communication, as individuals navigate the delicate balance between embracing new cultural norms and maintaining their heritage. Additionally, varying perceptions of local norms, including dressing and cuisine, can lead to tension and alienation, further complicating efforts to establish rapport with local communities. Despite these challenges, the process of navigating culture shock ultimately fosters significant cognitive and personal growth. Many individuals report enhanced patience and understanding (86.67%), which promotes constructive intercultural dialogue. Improved non-verbal communication skills (70%) and adaptability also emerge as vital outcomes of this process, as respondents learn to adjust their communication styles to fit diverse cultural expectations. However, the slow pace of communication adjustment remains a concern, with only 30% of respondents feeling adequately adapted to local conversational rhythms. This delay can prolong feelings of awkwardness in interactions, hindering the development of fluid dialogue. Finally, the long-term implications of culture shock often culminate in profound cultural integration. As individuals progress from the honeymoon phase to mastery, they cultivate a deeper understanding of both the host culture and their own, resulting in a unique intercultural competence that enhances their ability to communicate across cultural boundaries. This gradual adaptation not only facilitates more meaningful and effective exchanges but also encourages cross-cultural learning and mutual respect, as individuals share insights and experiences that enrich their interactions. Overall, while culture shock presents challenges, it serves as a catalyst for growth, empathy, and improved intercultural communication.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The case of foreign students in Cameroon vividly illustrates the profound impact of cultural shock on intercultural communication. Disrupted communication patterns, emotional challenges, and a heightened focus on differences can create significant barriers to effective interaction. However, this is not an insurmountable obstacle. By acknowledging the challenges and implementing targeted strategies, educators and institutions can create a supportive environment that fosters intercultural competence. Developing pre-departure training programmes that address cultural differences, communication styles, and coping mechanisms for culture shock can equip students with the tools they need to navigate their new environment. Additionally, fostering intercultural dialogue within the classroom and promoting interaction with the local community can help students bridge the cultural gap and develop a deeper understanding of Cameroonian culture. The lessons learned from Cameroon hold relevance for international education worldwide. As the global student population continues to grow, a focus on mitigating culture shock and fostering intercultural communication becomes increasingly important. By creating supportive learning environments that bridge cultural divides, we can empower foreign students to thrive in their academic endeavours and become effective intercultural communicators, enriching not only their own educational experience but also the tapestry of international education as a whole.

Based on the findings, there are several strategies that can enhance the experience of foreign students to overcome culture shock. Firstly, pre-departure training through setting realistic expectations about life in hosting country. This includes provision of insights into cultural norms, customs, and challenges. Such preparation boosts cultural awareness and equips students with coping mechanisms. Secondly, language skills training so as to reduce language and communication barriers. This strategy equips individuals to interact confidently. Additionally, buddy programs can also be used to create a robust support system by pairing foreign students with local counterparts. This facilitates social connections and cultural guidance. It is evident that, regular interaction with a local companion enhances language acquisition and offers authentic cultural experiences, which can reduce feelings of alienation (Chen & Starosta, 2014). Furthermore, inciting open communication is also crucial since it allows individuals to express frustrations and seek support from other people such as peers and mentors. This furthers the sense of community and belonging because clarifying misunderstandings through direct communication is instrumental so as to navigate social situations effectively (Chen & Starosta, 2014). Moreover, focus on the positive aspects during the interactions aids persons to adjust and embrace opportunities for learning and growth. Finally, establishing personal routines such as maintaining regular sleep, healthy eating, physical activity, and stress management techniques can help foreigners to manage stress and maintain stability during their adjustment (Marsella, 1992; Ward et al., 1998).

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author Bio note

Japhael Mgoma Jambo is a Tanzanian educator and communicator with a passion for fostering intercultural understanding. He brings a wealth of experience in education languages, intercultural communication, and cross-cultural studies. With a keen interest in language learning, cultural exchange programs and educational technology. Japhael is dedicated to creating inclusive and enriching learning environments.

References

- Ardener, E. (1981). Grounding communication in the social world. In E. Ardener (Ed.), *Social anthropology and language* (pp. 1–17). Academic Press.
- Aulia, M., Fitriasia, D., & Haquq, R. M. (2023). Understanding culture shock and its relationship to intercultural communicative competence. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 10(3), 1420–1433. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i3.31074>
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Toward a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21–71). Intercultural Press.
- Bennett, M. J. (1998). Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication. In M. J. Bennett (Ed.), *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings* (pp. 1–34). Intercultural Press.
- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), 5–34.
- Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M. (1990). Cross-cultural Training Effectiveness: A Review and a Theoretical Framework. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(1), 113–136.
- Bock, R. (1970). The effects of culture shock on the international student. *The Journal of Social Issues*, 26(3), 169–180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1970.tb00029.x>
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Heinemann.
- Chen, G. M. & Starosta, W. J. (2014a). Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis. *Communication Studies*, 65(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2013.855204>

- Chen, G., & Starosta, W. J. (2014b). *Foundations of intercultural communication* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Cole, N. L. (2024, September 13). *Understanding acculturation and why it happens*. ThoughtCo. Retrieved October 24, 2024, from <https://www.thoughtco.com/acculturation-definition-3026039>
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalisation. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266.
- Dooly, M., & Rubinstein, C. V. (2017). Bridging across languages and cultures in everyday lives: An expanding role for critical intercultural communication. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 18(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2017.1400508>
- Fokwang, T. E. (2013). Language, culture and society: The challenges of language and culture in Cameroon. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(4), 158–163.
- Furnham, A., & Tresize, P. (1983). *The psychology of culture shock*. Routledge.
- Furnham, T., & Bochner, S. (2006). *Culture shock: Psychological reactions to unfamiliar environments*. London: Routledge.
- Gaw K. F. (2000). Reverse culture shock in students returning from overseas. *Int. J. Intercult. Relat.* 24, 83–104. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(99\)00024-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(99)00024-3)
- Gudykunst, W. B. (1995). Anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory: Current status. In R. L. Wiseman (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory* (pp. 8–58). Sage.
- Hall, E. T. (1959). *The silent language*. Doubleday.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Books.
- Hannerz, U. (2018). *Cultural complexity: Studies in the social organization of meaning*. Columbia University Press.
- Hoff, H. E. (2020). The evolution of intercultural communicative competence: Conceptualizations, critiques, and consequences for 21st-century classroom practice. *Intercultural Communication Education*, 3(2), 55–74. <https://doi.org/10.29140/ice.v3n2.264>
- Jack, A. A. (2014). Culture shock revisited: the social and cultural contingencies to class marginality. *Sociological Forum*, 29(2), 453–475. <https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12092>

- Kim, Y. Y. (1988). Communication and cross-cultural adaptation: An integrative theory. *Multilingual Matters*.
- Lysgaard, S. (1955). Adjustment in a Foreign Society: Norwegian Fulbright Grantees Visiting the United States. *International Social Science Bulletin*, 7, 45–51.
- Marsella, A. J. (1992). Culture Shock: A New Perspective on Culture and Communication. *Communication Research*, 19(1), 13–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009365092019001002>
- Mitchell, S. (2023, October 21). Understanding what is cultural self-awareness: A primer. *Self-Improvement Matters*. Retrieved October 24, 2024, from <https://selfimprovementmatters.com/what-is-cultural-self-awareness/>
- Mustafa, Y. (2022). A review of Culture Shock: attitudes, effects and the experience of international students. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 21(3), 4–25. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v21i3.18>
- Neba, A. (2024). *Cameroon: A Geographical and Economic Overview*. University of Yaoundé Press.
- Nguyen, H. L. (2022). "The role of social media in intercultural communication: A critical review." *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 51(2), 121–135.
- Nickerson, C. (2024, February 13). *What is acculturation and why it happens*. Simply Psychology. Retrieved October 24, 2024, from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/acculturation-definition.html>
- Njeuma, M. (2021). Linguistic Diversity and Cultural Unity in Cameroon. *African Studies Review*, 64(1), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2021.10>
- Nyamnjoh, F. (2022). Cameroon's Complex Identity and Politics. *Journal of African Studies*, 78(2), 115–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0021859X.2022.2075625>
- Oberg, K. (1960). Culture shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments. *Practical Anthropology*, 7, 177–182.
- Palamarchuk, I. S., & Vaillancourt, T. (2021). Mental Resilience and Coping with Stress: A Comprehensive, Multi-level Model of Cognitive Processing, Decision Making, and Behavior. *Frontiers in behavioral neuroscience*, 15, 719674. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnbeh.2021.719674>
- Raja, R., Ma, J., Zhang, M., Li, X. Y., Almutairi, N. S., & Almutairi, A. H. (2023). Social identity loss and reverse culture shock: Experiences of international students in China during

the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.994411>

Rienties, B., & Tempelaar, P. (2013). The relationship between acculturative stress and academic performance of first-generation immigrant students. *Journal of International Students*, 3(2), 164–180.

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., & McDaniel, E. R. (2017). *Communication between cultures* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., & McDaniel, E. R. (2017). *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. Cengage Learning.

Sarwari, A. Q., Adnan, H. M., Rahamad, M. S., & Abdul Wahab, M. N. (2024). The requirements and importance of intercultural communication competence in the 21st century. *SAGE Open*, 14(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241243119>

Searle, W., & Ward, C. (1990). The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14(4), 449–464.

Shieh, G. (2014). The lived experiences of international students in Taiwan: A cultural shock narrative. *Journal of International Students*, 4(4), 425–442.

Tamimy, S. N. (2022a). The effects of culture shock, intercultural competence, and social support on international students' mental health and academic adjustment. *Journal of Research in Education and Society*, 12(1), 1–17.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). The management of face concerns in intercultural conflict. In Y. Y. Kim & W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Theories in intercultural communication* (pp. 213–235). Sage.

UNESCO. (2022). *Languages in Cameroon*. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/countries/cameroon/languages>

Takeuchi, S., Imahori, T. T., & Matsumoto, D. (2001). Adjustment of criticism styles in Japanese returnees to Japan. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25(3), 315–327. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0147-1767\(01\)00006-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0147-1767(01)00006-2)

Ward, C., Bochner, S., & Furnham, A. (2020). *The psychology of culture shock* (7th ed.). Routledge.

- Ward, C., Masgoret, A. M., & Cassie, R. M. (1998). The ABCs of acculturation. In *The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology* (pp. 211–223). Cambridge University Press.
- Zhou, Y., Jindal-Snape, D., Topping, K., & Todman, J. (2008). Theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(1), 63–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701794833>
- Zong, L. (2023). Economic Disparities and Development in Cameroon. *African Development Review*, 35(4), 72–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12567>

JINCES is co-published and affiliated to the Centre for History, Culture, Arts, Languages and Innovative Education (CHCALIE) of the Pangasinan State University, Philippines



Our Affiliate Partners



Philippine Association of
Research Practitioners,
Educators and Statistical
Users, Inc.



Department of Sculpture
Technology, Takoradi
Technical University,
Ghana



Indonesia Scholar
Research & Publishing,
Indonesia



CHCALIE, Pangasinan
State University,
Philippines



World Federation of
Zervas Art Clubs, Greece



Club for UNESCO Arts and
Letters in Achaia, Greece



Department of
Educational Innovations in
Science & Technology,
KNUST, Ghana



Department of Indigenous
Art & Technology, KNUST,
Ghana