

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussion on the demographic data and self-evaluation of the ODOS students towards self-adjustment to foreign culture and academic environments (4) conclusion and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 The objective of this study

The objective of the study is to investigate the ability to adjust to a foreign environment and to compare the success of self-adjustment between batch 1 and batch 2 students in the One District One Scholarship (ODOS) Project while they were studying in France during the 2007-2008 academic year. In addition, self-evaluation of the students' attitudes towards their self adjustment was examined.

5.1.2 Subject, Instruments and Procedures

5.1.2.1 The subjects of the study were students who were studying in the ODOS Project and pursuing their bachelor's degree in France during the 2007-2008 academic year. There were two groups of ODOS students which were from the ODOS project in 2004 (batch 1) and in 2006 (batch 2). Both batches also came from various regions of Thailand like the north, the northeast, the central, the east and the south. The total number of subjects for this study was 100 students.

5.1.2.2 The study was conducted by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions, divided into 3 parts: demographic information, self-evaluation of the ability to adjust to foreign culture and academic environment and suggestions. The questions consisted of closed-ended, open-ended questions, and the Likert Scale.

5.1.2.3 The procedure started at the end of November 2008 by planning the questionnaire. Then the questionnaires were distributed to ODOS students that could voluntarily complete the questionnaire and returned to the researcher within a month's deadline by e-mail.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The result of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Demographic Information of the Participants

The results indicated that the number of the subjects consisted of males (50%) and females (50%) equally. Their ages ranged from 20 to 23 years old; however, the majority (35%) were aged 23 years old. Besides, they came from various regions of Thailand: the north, the northeast, the central, the east and the south, but most of them around 32% come from the northeast region. Again, the number of subjects from batch 1 (50%) and batch 2 (50%) was the same. Most of them had lived with their parents, both father and mother before going to France, accounting for 69%. Most participants (47.1%) prepared information about France or French language before going to France by self-studying. For the language preparation course held by the OCSC, more than half of the participants (54%) of both batch 1 (28%) and batch 2 (26%) agreed to its usefulness. The majority (41.7%) of batch 1 students had problems about communication outside the class, whereas most of batch 2 students (31.7%) had problems about the changing weather and also communication outside the class. Moreover, the majority (33.0%) of both batch 1 and batch 2 had problems about academic language.

5.2.2 Self-evaluation of the Participants' Ability to Adjust Themselves to Foreign Culture

The findings revealed that the majority of both batch 1 (68%) and batch 2 (66%) students were able to adjust themselves to French cuisine highly. Also, most of them, 58% and 54% respectively, were able to adjust themselves highly to different weather. Then, most of batch 1 (60%) students thought that they can adjust themselves highly to conversational language outside class, whereas 58% of batch 2 students felt that they can adjust themselves moderately. Both batches thought that they can make friends with the locals moderately but a few of them (10%) felt that they could not make friends with the locals. The majority of batch 1 (58%) students were able to adjust perfectly to French greetings as could the majority of batch 2 (58%) students. Finally, half of them (50%) thought that they can adjust themselves highly to French lifestyle; on the contrary, 20% cannot adjust themselves.

5.2.3 Self-evaluation of the Participants' Ability to Adjust Themselves to Foreign Academic Environment

The findings indicated that the majority of batch 1 students (46%) were able to manage their study plan highly and half of them (50%) were able to learn the language used for academic purposes moderately. Most of Batch 1 (54%) thought that they can adjust themselves highly in communicating with classmates excluding the Thais whereas the majority (52%) of batch 2 felt that they can adjust themselves moderately. Moreover, 60% of batch 1 students thought that they can communicate with the lecturer(s) or advisor(s) highly while batch 2 students thought that they can communicate with those people moderately, accounting for 52.0%. From both groups, the number of students who can adjust highly to the teaching method were the same (46%). Finally, the majority of both groups, 64% and 48%, thought that they can use the tools and facilities for academic purposes highly.

In conclusion, the findings showed that both groups of ODOS students were able to adjust themselves to foreign cultural and academic environments ranging from moderate to high. However, on some aspects like conversational language outside the class, technical terms or language used in the class, interactions with the lecturer(s) and advisor(s), and teaching method, it appears that there is a significant difference in adjustment between the two groups of respondents. That is to say, batch 1 students can perform better to these topics than batch 2 students. Although, they thought that they have some problems when they were staying in France, they are able to solve the problems and adjust themselves quite well.

5.3 DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This section concerns discussions on demographic information of the students and their self-evaluation on the ability to adjust themselves to foreign cultural and academic environmental

5.3.1 According to the demographic information, there is a difference between the age of the participants and their ability to adjust. Comparing the ability of self –adjustment of the students who are 23 years old and 20 years old, the older have an ability to adjust to new environment better than the younger because they are more mature and have more experiences. The findings seem to support the review of

literature in Chapter Two on the concept of the skill of adjustment that needs more experience.

Moreover, most students both in batch 1 and batch 2 have the same problem on cultural adjustment, communication outside the class which is related to the concept of cultural dimension by Hofstede that Thai culture and French culture are different. Since languages of the two countries are different, the majority of the students seem to have problems with academic language as well.

5.3.2 According to self-evaluation of the participants' ability to adjust themselves to a foreign cultural environment, the concept of cultural dimension by Hofstede plays a major role in this topic. The findings reveal that there is a significant difference to adjustment between the two groups of students, batch 1 and batch 2, to adjust to conversational language outside the class. That is to say, batch 1 students can perform well to adjust to that aspect. The findings support the Hofstede's concepts again. It can be said that French people are individualistic but Thais are collectivistic. Thai students enjoy living in groups especially with Thais or Asian students so there is a small opportunity to practice speaking or communicating in other languages. Nevertheless, for other areas of cultural adjustments: food, weather, making friends with the locals, there is no significant difference between two groups of students as the overall picture of both sides can adjust themselves above average. This can be said that when time goes by, they students become mature which results in high ability of cultural adjustment.

5.3.3 According to self-evaluation of the participants' ability to adjust themselves to foreign academic environment, the findings indicate that batch 1 students seem to have the ability to adjust themselves better than batch 2 students. Although batch 1 students did not take a 3-month language preparation course held by the OCSC, the majority of them can adjust themselves pretty well. The findings can support the concept of the skill of adjustment mentioned in Chapter Two.

For some aspects of academic adjustments: technical terms or language used in the class, interactions with the lecturer(s) and advisor(s), and teaching method, the findings reveal that there is a significant difference in adjustment between the two groups of students, batch 1 and batch 2, in those areas of adjustment. It seems that the language preparation course held in Thailand has less influence in academic

adjustment of the ODOS students as batch 1 students can adjust themselves better than batch 2 students. Self-concept and Self-direction also play a major role in improving oneself. The students of batch 1 are older than batch 2, and also, they have been living in France two years longer than batch 2 students. Longer duration spent in France results in high ability to adjust them to a new environment for batch 1 students. It can be seen from their suggestion for future ODOS students that adjustment is difficult at the beginning, but it is easy when they stay longer.

Therefore, batch 1 students would be familiar with the foreign academic matter more than batch 2 students because they have more knowledge both from the class and experience and they are older and more mature than batch 2 students. The findings can support the definition of adjustment that the ability to adjust is a sign of maturity as well.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study aimed at comparing the success of self-adjustment in foreign cultural setting and academic environment between two batches of ODOS students (batch 1 and 2), while they were living in France. The subjects of this study were 100 students who were pursuing their bachelor's degree in France during the 2007-2008 academic year and who were aged between 20 – 24 years old. There were two groups of ODOS students who were from the ODOS project in 2004 (batch 1) and in 2006 (batch 2). Both batches also came from various regions of Thailand like the north, the northeast, the central, the east and the south. The SPSS program version 14.0 was used to analyze the data. The findings were presented by mean of descriptive statistics such as frequency which was presented in the percentage.

The study revealed that the subjects of the both groups, batch 1 and batch 2 were more likely to adjust themselves pretty good in foreign environments both culturally and academically. However, batch 1 students' self-adjustment was better than batch 2 students. Although batch 1 did not take a 3-month language preparation course, they were able to adjust themselves well. This is because batch 1 students have been staying in France longer than batch 2 students. This is related to the concept of the skills of self-direction which is mentioned in Chapter Two that skills need to be learned or improved with practice. Another reason is that, batch 1 students are more

mature than batch 2 students in terms of having more experiences. Batch 1 students can adjust themselves quite well, whereas batch 2 students adjust themselves at a moderate level.

In addition, both groups agreed to the 3-month language preparation course which provided them with the general information about France held by the OCSC, but the course worked only for surviving at the beginning, rather than for the long-term.

Therefore, if ODOS students stay in France longer, they can have high ability to adjust themselves to a new environment. Although they did not prepare themselves much for the information of France or the language, they can learn it gradually. Without negative attitude towards a foreign culture, they can live happily in new circumstances.

5.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted within a strict time. Since the subjects were staying in France, data collection was done only by e-mail. Moreover, during the time of the questionnaire distribution, both batches of ODOS students in France were preparing for their examination, which resulted in a small sample size. Thus, it has a greater probability that the data happened to be particularly good or particularly bad which results in the accuracy of the data analysis.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Education plays a vital role in today's world. Encouraging children to study is necessary for our country; however, we should consider which educational project works and gives more profits to our nation.

This study was conducted within a strict time limit, with a small number of subjects, and also the information was only collected from the ODOS students in France only; however, there are students in another 16 countries: Japan, Germany, China, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Russia, Canada, the Netherlands, Malaysia, India, Egypt, and Switzerland that the student had selected to study. It is necessary for future research to study how well ODOS students in the other mentioned countries adjust themselves to new environments. The information should be collected at the

beginning of the ODOS project, then during the period they are studying abroad, then an evaluation of the overall project. Furthermore, the study should have more details about each case individually for a better clear picture of how successful the ODOS students adjust themselves to a new environment.