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Male Libyan Muslim Students' Perceptions of their
Sociocultural and Academic Adjustment during their Sojourn
in Winnipeg, Canada in the 1980s.

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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MALE LIBYAN MUSLIM STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration and presentation of twelve
Libyan Muslim students' perceptions of their sociocultural
and academic adjustment in Winnipeg, Canada. The major
question addressed is: How do Libyan students cope with an
unfamiliar sociocultural and educational setting?

In order to explore the students' point of view, a
qualitative research approach was employed. Two broad
interview questions were asked of each student during in-
depth taped interviews with individual students. The
transcripts of these interviews were carefully read and
examined, themes were identified, and each theme was given a
concept label which seemed to express the meaning of a given
passage.

In order to improve the credibility of the findings, two
techniques were used: member-checking and triangulation.
Member-checking entailed summarizing the main points of the
interview to each participant so that he could give further
clarification, correct misunderstandings, and confirm that
he had been understood. Triangulation is a process to
validate each piece of information against one or more other

sources. In other words, no single piece of information was given serious consideration unless it could be validated by a similar piece of information from another source - in this case, another student transcript.

Main themes presented in this study were selected on the basis of reappearance in and across student transcripts, and on "emphasis" in the sense that individual students spent far longer discussing themes which were personally meaningful to them than they did other, less meaningful areas.

Findings in the area of sociocultural adjustment present students' perspectives in three areas: Religiosity and Religious Beliefs; Friendships; and Male-Female Relationships. Academic findings present students' perspectives in four areas: Language, Language and Academic Studies; General University Studies; and Expectations versus Reality. Student coping strategies in these areas are also presented and described.

The recommendations of this study are that individual orientation sessions be available at institutions of higher education for groups of international students from the Islamic world; that pre-University English-as-a-Second

Language programs be from three to six months duration; that the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) and the sponsoring agency in Libya explain to each student individually exactly what a particular 'field of study' means in terms of the Canadian context in order to prevent disappoinment upon arrival; that student contracts regarding field of study be reviewed with individual students after first year of university/college study; that international students be encouraged to arrive at the end of one academic year in order to prepare themselves culturally, psychologically, and emotionally for the following academic year; that university staff, including professors working with international students, be given an orientation to students' cultures and religious traditions.

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Introduction

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the adjustment
process of one particular group of non-immigrant male Arab
Muslim university students - the Libyans.

The major question addressed in this study is: How do
Libyan students cope with an unfamiliar sociocultural and
educational setting?

In this study, 'sociocultural' aspects of adjustment refer
to the broad spectrum of Libyan students' non-academic life
in Canada; whereas 'academic' refers to those aspects of
adjustment which are directly related to the students'
university studies in Canada.

The Libyan students in this study are referred to as

'contract' students as they have been recruited, selected,

and sponsored by the Libyan government to study in Canada.

The Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE), based

in Ottawa, is responsible for the administration of contract

scholarship programs for these and other international

students. CBIE negotiates with governments and/or

individual companies in a foreign country, and then arranges

for education or training in Canada by negotiating contracts

with universities and colleges. Before the students

undertake their studies in Canada, they must sign a contract

and agree to abide by certain contract stipulations as set

out by their sponsors. Once students have received their

degree, they are expected to return home and work for

various sponsoring institutions in Libya - in this case,

Atomic Energy and the Secretariat of Education.

Background and Need for the Study

As Canada has become a major receiver of foreign students

since the late 1960s (CBIE, 1977), it is important for

Canadian educational institutions to make a concerted effort

to understand some of the difficulties foreign students

encounter in their attempts to adjust to a new and often
drastically different sociocultural and academic
environment. This knowledge will not only increase our
understanding of world cultures, and a variety of world
views, but it will also enable educational institutions to
appreciate varying foreign students' needs and to plan
orientation and academic programs to meet these needs.

Worldwide, there are over one million students studying in
post-secondary institutions outside of their own countries.
According to a Report published by the Special Joint
Committee on Canada's International Relations in 1986,
Canada is one of the top five destinations for international
students. Canada "together with France, Germany, the United
States, and the United Kingdom, takes about 60 per cent of
all foreign students." (Council of Ministers of Education
1986:95). As Manitoba is one of the few Provinces which has
no differential fees for international students, it is an
especially attractive destination. Indeed, in the five
years from 1982-87 only the Prairie Provinces increased
their international student population - from 6,098 in 1982-
83 to 7,217 in 1986-87. (CBIE 1987;31). We can, therefore,
anticipate that this trend will continue into the 1990s.

In the early 1980s there were 65,000 foreign students studying in Canada. As noted by Al-Yassini (1986:22), 3,854 of these students were of Arab background. These Arab students come from many different countries and cultures, including: Lebanon, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and others. Although these students come from distinct cultures, they are often lumped together in the literature as if there were no differences among them (Patai 1973; Meleis 1982; Hall 1979; Rodinson 1979). Ayman Al-Yassini of The Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE 1986) states:

> Given the low calibre of research on Arab culture and Arab students in Western institutions, there is ample room for a more constructive approach which avoids the use of cultural cliches and views the students as individuals as well as members of their own community. (p.18)

As an extensive search of the literature has failed to reveal any research on Libyan students studying in Canadian institutions, and as the media continues to perpetuate stereotyped views of Arabs in general and Libyans in particular, this study is an effort to fill this gap in the literature while at the same time attempting to alleviate misconceptions and ignorance about the Libyans.

As mentioned, the majority of Libyan students studying in
Canada are referred to as 'contract' students as each
individual student has signed a contract with the Libyan
government to complete his* academic education in a
university or college in Canada, and then return to Libya.
Therefore, although the Libyans are also visa students in
the sense that they have been issued a Student Authorization
by the Department of Employment and Immigration, they are
also unique in that they come to Canada in groups, have
signed a contract and, therefore, must adhere to contract
stipulations, such as area of study and so on.

Research Design and Procedure

In order to explore the students' point of view, and to
discover the 'lived experience' of Libyan students during
their sojourn in Canada, a qualitative 'naturalistic'

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* All the students in this study are males. Indeed, most,
if not all, of the Libyan students studying in Canada at
this time are male.

research approach was selected. As Bogden and Taylor (1975) state:

> Qualitative methods allow us to know people personally and to see them as they are developing their own definitions of the world. We experience what they experience in their daily struggles with their society .... Qualitative methods enable us to explore concepts whose essence is lost in other research approaches. Such concepts as beauty, pain, faith, suffering, frustration, hope and love can be studied as they are defined and experienced by real people in their everyday lives. (p.4-5)

Whereas quantitative research methods are most often employed to predict and explain; qualitative methods are more relevant when the aim is to understand and explore. The aim of this particular study then was to understand and explore the adjustment experiences of Libyan university students studying in Canada. The researcher made a conscientious attempt to approach this topic with an open mind in that she did not entertain any explicit preconceived hypothesis which she was hoping to prove or disprove. However, she did have an interest in finding out about the adjustment experiences of individual Libyan students.

The researcher decided on an interview study rather than on a questionnaire study because her own experiences** with

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** See Researcher's Background section in this chapter.

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these Libyan students has led her to believe that Arab students, at least Libyan Arab students, are more comfortable working on a personal verbal interaction level rather than doing "paper work" as is required by a questionnaire. This Arab student orientation to the verbal has also been noted by Meleis (1982). Indeed, Jarrahi-Zadeh and Eichman (1970) found that Arab students had the lowest rate of return of questionnaires in their study on the impact of sociocultural factors on Middle-Eastern students. Also, Libyan students in general seem, from this researcher's observations, rather suspicious when asked to note anything on paper.

In order, therefore, to uncover the Libyan students' adjustment experiences, the researcher developed two broad interview questions (Appendix A). Spradley (1979) suggests using "grand tour" type questions in the initial stage of an interview that seem to ask the participants to tell the interviewer what they think s/he ought to know about him. The intent of this type of question is to unearth what is important enough to follow up in detail.

A pilot study that consisted of one two-hour interview with one Libyan student was undertaken to field-test the questions and to practice and refine the researcher's

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interview skills. As a result of this pilot study, the questions were modified; for example, initially the first question asked students to describe their adjustment 'problems'. This word was then changed to "experiences", a more neutral term. Also, the pilot study helped refine the research instrument - in this study the interviewer herself - in the sense that it brought to her attention the need to restrain her own natural penchant for verbosity in order to listen, and actively attend to the participants' stories.

It became evident throughout the course of the actual study, that once a participant relived his experience he seemed to focus on certain areas that were of significance to him. The interviewer then used probes (Appendix B) to elicit further information, sample situations, or to encourage the participant to elaborate upon his experience.

The students for this study were selected on the basis of availability in terms of time, their willingness to partake in such a study, and their ability to provide as much detailed information as possible regarding their adjustment experiences in North American society. As the interviewer had previously taught these students in a university class, she also used her own knowledge and judgement in order to select participants who reflected the diversity of the

Libyan contract students studying in Winnipeg at the time.
For example, she selected students from both groups - Atomic
Energy students, and Secretariat of Education students; some
of the students had been here for two years at the time of
the interviews, others for six years; some students were
from Libyan cities - Benghazi and Tripoli, others were from
smaller towns/villages outside of the cities; some were
practising Muslims others were non-practising at this
particular time. There were also personality differences in
that some students had a tendency to be quiet and reflective
while others, in the subjective judgement of the interviewer
based on her acquaintance with these students, were more
verbose.   This type of selection process is referred to as
"purposeful sampling" by Lincoln and Guba (1985; 201). The
ultimate aim is to generate enough information "upon which
the emergent design and grounded theory could be based"
(p.201). This type of sampling is very different from the
concept of "population" used in quantitative and other more
conventional research:

> It is based on informational, not
> statistical, considerations.   Its
> purpose is to maximize information, not
> to facilitate generalization. (Lincoln
> and Guba 1985:202)

The aim of the present study is not to generalize, but to
explore and describe the experiences of certain Libyan

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students at a particular time in a particular place. It is, therefore, left up to other researchers who may wish to replicate this study, to determine whether the situations described herein are applicable in their particular context.

Although this type of selection process may be criticized when compared with the `representative of population' sampling undertaken in conventional studies, it must be remembered that the aim of the present study is not to generalize but to discover and understand as indepth as possible the adjustment experiences of male Libyan students now living and studying in the context of Canadian society; and, as noted by Lincoln and Guba, *context is critical in this type of inquiry and each context is dealt with on its own terms*:

> In naturalistic investigations, which
> are tied so intimately to contextual
> factors, the purpose of sampling will
> most often be to include as much
> information as possible, in all of its
> various ramifications and constructions;
> hence maximum variation sampling will
> usually be the sampling mode of choice.
> The object of the game is not to focus
> on the similarities that can be
> developed into generalizations, but to
> detail the many specifics that give the
> context its unique flavor. (Lincoln and
> Guba 1985:201)

In the above passage `maximum variation sampling' refers to

the documentation of unique variations which have emerged in adapting to different conditions or contexts.

Participants of this present study were twelve Libyan science majors studying at a Manitoba university. These students had been in Canada from two to six years. The average age of students was twenty-four years old and, at the time of this study, they were all unmarried. Also, at the time of this study, their English language skills were such that most of them were able to manage the level of English required to participate in a university program.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), twelve students are considered adequate for this type of study as "new information becomes progressively scarcer" (p.234) as the inquiry achieves focus and the more salient aspects of the the particular situation are identified. By the same token, and as was the case in the present study, information that is believed important initially is later deemed irrelevant in the sense that it does not reoccur as one delves deeper into the experiences of the study participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state:

> It is likely that, in sharp contrast to the usual situation in conventional inquiry, sampling can be terminated after a rather small number of elements

has been included; for example, in
interviewing members of a particular
group ... it is usual to find that a
dozen or so interviews, if properly
selected, will exhaust most available
information; to include as many as
twenty will surely reach well beyond the
point of redundancy. (p.235)

Indeed, Lincoln and Guba's observation regarding exhaustion
of information was confirmed in the interviews for this
study as the information which emerged during the interview
sessions did begin to become repetitive once eight or so
interviews had been completed. However, the researcher made
the decision to interview another few students to confirm
that this was, in fact, happening. Once twelve interviews
were completed, it became clear that there was indeed a
repetition of themes and experiences.

At the outset of each interview participants were asked to
sign a Letter of Consent which outlined the purpose of the
interview and how the information gathered would be used
(Appendix C). They were also requested to fill out a brief
questionnaire (Appendix D) for the researcher's own records.
Each interview was taped, and field notes were kept so that
the interviewer was able to keep track of the main points in
each session. At the close of each interview, a process
referred to as "member checking" (Lincoln and Guba 1985:236)
was carried out to increase the accuracy of the data. This

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entailed summarizing the main points of the interview to each participant so that he could give further clarification, correct misunderstandings, and confirm that he had been understood.

During the course of this research, the interviewer also kept a journal which she completed before and after each interview in order to be aware of her own feelings and possible biases. This journal, along with tapes, tapescripts, and fieldnotes, was available for perusal to the researcher's advisory committee.

After each interview, the researcher listened to the tape of the interview and read through her field notes in order to identify patterns and potential themes. Later, when all the interviews had been completed, she read through the transcripts while listening to the tapes so that she could relive the experience and gain a deeper understanding of what each student said about his adjustment experiences in Canada.

Once this initial process was completed, the researcher again read through the transcripts, identified and constructed thematic labels, and gave each theme a tentative concept label (Appendices E and H). These concept labels

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were taken from the students' own words or, in some cases, given a concept label by the interviewer which seemed to fit what was said. In order to increase the likelihood that the findings would be found credible, the interviewer used a technique called "triangulation" (Lincoln and Guba 1985:305). Triangulation is a process carried out with respect to the data in that steps were taken to validate each piece of information against one or more other sources. In other words, no single piece of information was given serious consideration unless it could be validated by a similar piece of information from another source; in this case, at least one other interview transcript.

In the next step of this process, themes were then grouped according to two categories: sociocultural adjustment and academic adjustment (Appendices F/G). As there were over nine-hundred pages of tapescripts, and approximately forty themes were identified, selection of themes presented in this thesis were based on the following considerations:

   1. Reappearance of certain themes in and across student tapescripts, and

   2. Emphasis. Some themes seemed to be given more emphasis by students. This was reflected in the amount of time individual students spent discussing certain topics.

The themes that met the above criteria were, therefore,

given priority in the sense that they form the major

headings in chapters three and four (Appendices F/G).

Themes that related to these major headings became sub-

themes and are presented within the context of relevant

major themes. Some related themes, for example, 'stress',

appear under more than one heading as students discussed

this concept in relation to many different aspects of their

adjustment. However, not every theme that arose during

student interviews is presented in this study for a number

of reasons: they did not reappear as often as themes

selected, they did not naturally fit in with the major

headings, and some themes have also been discussed more

frequently in the literature on adjustment studies and are

somewhat more obvious adjustment factors; for example: food,

finances, climate (Appendix H).

A draft copy of chapters three and four of this study was

given to a group of four Libyan students (all of whom

partook in the study) so that they could scrutinize the

outcomes and provide verification that their experiences

were accurately reconstructed by initialling their copies of

chapters three and four and returning these to the

researcher. The researcher made herself available to address

student questions regarding the contents of these chapters.

In this type of study if the outcomes and findings do not

have credibility in the eyes of those who supplied the

information, then they cannot be said to accurately reconstruct participants' experiences. Hence, this verification procedure was undertaken in the belief that this type of study is a shared agreement between the researcher and the participants. Therefore, the outcomes were negotiated with those whose experiences this study reflects.

Finally, this study is presented as a composite picture of the adjustment process of a group of young, male Libyan students. It was decided to present it in this particular way, firstly, in order to protect the anonymity of these students (Letter of Consent, Appendix C) and, secondly, because this study was not undertaken as an individual case study but rather as an in-depth look at the kinds of experiences Libyan students undergo in the process of their adjustment to a Western society, in this case Canadian society.

Limitations of the Study

The aim of this study was to seek understanding - *verstehen* - about the adjustment experiences of a particular group of Libyan university students in a particular Canadian city. The study was not undertaken in order to verify any

particular theories of foreign student adjustment, but
rather to seek understanding of the experiences of Libyan
students' adjustment. In this sense, it can be said that
the theory emerges from the data. Glaser and Strauss (1967)
refer to this discovery of theory from the data as "grounded
theory" - theory grounded in the data. As such, it is hoped
that this study will provide a "tentative frame of reference
(Glaser and Strauss 1967:132) for future studies on foreign
student adjustment.

Also, because the student sample is small - twelve students
- generalizations can only be made after similar studies
have been carried out with Libyan students in other
contexts. Only then will it be possible to say which
findings in this present study are likely to hold as
general, and which are only valid for this particular group
of Libyan students.

Definition of Terms

In this section, the researcher provides a brief definition
of terms used in this study. In Chapter Two a more detailed
definition of relevant "adjustment" terminology will be
provided.

PERCEPTION   An impression in one's
                                    mind of something
                                    perceived by the senses.

SOCIOCULTURAL BEHAVIOR   How one is expected to
                                    behave in given social
                                    situations in a particular
                                    culture.

ADJUSTMENT   The changes one has to
                                    make in order to fit in
                                    with a different or new
                                    environment, setting, or
                                    culture.

CULTURE   This refers to all the
                                    accepted and patterned
                                    ways of behavior of a
                                    given people. It is the
                                    sum total and the
                                    organization or arrange-
                                    ment of all the group's
                                    ways of thinking, feeling,
                                    and acting.
                                              (Brown 1963:3)

COPING   How one deals with new
                                    situations.

FOREIGN/INTERNATIONAL STUDENT   A person who has been
                                   issued a Student
                                   Authorization by the
                                   Department of Employment
                                   and Immigration for the
                                   purpose of study in
                                   Canada.

Researcher's Background

As I am the research instrument in this study, it seems
advisable that I present some background information about
myself in order to help the reader in his/her conclusions
regarding the validity of this study.

I am the second daughter in a family of five children and
was born in London, England. My parents who were Irish
Catholics emigrated to England shortly before their
marriage. Although I was raised in England, my upbringing
was Irish in the sense that our family lived in an Irish
neighborhood of London, and I attended Catholic schools
staffed by Irish nuns. Indeed, my parents also saw to it
that all five children obediently attended confession every
Saturday evening, in preparation for nine o'clock Mass and
Holy Communion every Sunday morning at our parish church.
Hence, religion has been a major part of my life since
childhood, and is still an area of great interest to me.

When I was around nineteen years old I entered a Catholic convent as a novice nun. A year later, I found myself living in a convent in Rome, Italy where I taught Italian children English, although I had no teaching credentials at the time. When I left the convent a couple of years later, I decided to emigrate to Canada. Even though Canada and England are not unsimilar, I went through what I now recognize as quite a definite culture shock during my first year or so in North America. I remember how confused I was at the "materialism" I perceived in North America which seemed especially significant to me as I had just left the convent. Also, the seemingly secular life-style in North America took some adjustment on my part. However, I "adjusted", and eventually married a Canadian, an airline pilot (more travelling!), and we now have two "Canadian" children. During the early years of my marriage, I attended university and obtained my Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education Degrees.

As I have lived in England, Italy, and Canada, and have travelled quite extensively in Europe, Africa, and Asia, I have developed a keen interest in other cultures, other belief systems, and various world views. However, as my first experience with the Libyan students revealed to me, I still had a long way to travel.

My first introduction to the Libyan students was when I was
hired to teach English-as-a-second language in the summer of
1983 at a Manitoba university. At this point in my career,
I was relatively inexperienced in working with international
students and, I regret to say, I had never heard of Islam. I
was also very conscious of the fact that these young, male
Libyan students had definite ideas about appropriate female
roles, and that they had only had male instructors in their
Libyan high school. However, the fact that I was a 'mother'
with children of my own was a definite asset when working
with these students as Libyan men really respect their own
mothers and, indeed, the idea of motherhood. In fact, the
Holy Koran explicitly commands that all Muslims must honor
their mother above anyone else on earth. The fact that I was
also genuinely interested in finding out about their
religion and culture added to their acceptance of me as a
person and as a teacher. Fortunately, the experience turned
out to be a great success both for the students and for me.
Indeed, some of these Libyan (Atomic Energy) students are
participants in this present study.

On the strength of my summer work with these Libyan
students, I was again hired by the same university to direct
a program for a new group of Libyan students. By that time
I had some knowledge of Islam, and a warm and friendly

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relationship with my original group of Libyan students. The
second group - the Secretariat of Education students, some
of whom are also included in this study - were also a
challenging and rewarding group.   I met them at the
airport when they arrived in Winnipeg on a snowy winter's
day in January.   I then watched them in their early
struggles to try and comprehend this strange society in
which they found themselves. Besides teaching them English,
I also comforted and reassured them through many of the
physical ailments they seemed to develop during their first
few months in Winnipeg; for example, one student felt his
hair was falling out, another developed a skin condition,
and so on. The Blue Cross Insurance Forms were handed out
and passed around as if there would be no tomorrow!

I developed a great admiration for these Libyan Muslim
students during the years I worked with them. I also
developed quite a fascination for the Islamic way of life
and, therefore, studied Islam to the extent that I now give
workshops at various conferences to introduce western
educators to this often misunderstood world religion.

When some of the students married Libyan women during their
trips back to Libya, I was asked to teach these young women
English at the local Winnipeg mosque as the students felt I

would respect the cultural differences. I did this for a period of six months in the Winnipeg mosque and thus came to know female Libyans also.

During the summer of 1985 I had the pleasure of visiting Libya and meeting one of the student's families. This made me even more aware of the drastic differences in culture between Libya and Canada. I marveled at the way 'my' students had been able to adjust to their new Canadian environment.

Researcher-Participants Relationships

Over the years I feel I have gained the trust and respect of these Libyan students. As they know that I have a knowledge of Islam, and that I have visited Libya, they feel that I am almost part-Libyan myself. During the interviews, students would refer to Canadians as 'they', often forgetting that I am also a Canadian. I also felt that they trusted me enough to be more open and honest than otherwise might have been the case. They feel that I understand their point of view. For example, after one of the interviews, I made the following observation in my journal:

> I was really surprised at Student X's openness; he's usually so reserved.

During the course of the interviews I also noticed that the students, perhaps because I had been their teacher, were anxious to give me lots of information so that I could write a very good thesis. I recorded the following entry in my journal after one interview:

> He [student] seemed a little nervous about the upcoming interview and was asking me questions about it and making comments, such as: "I hope I'll be able to help you; I'll do my best...".

In essence, I feel that students sincerely trusted me. The following entry describes my feeling about this precious trust:

> I felt flattered at Student X's trust in me. He confided in me completely. He told me that he cannot talk about these things with anyone here, not even the Libyans as nobody can really understand.

Frame of Mind of Researcher

Everyone has biases no matter how 'objective' we try to be. In this type of research study it is crucial that the researcher be aware of his/her own biases, and idiosyncrasies. To help me with this, I kept a journal throughout the period of time I was interviewing in order to keep myself in tune with my own biases. I would record my feelings and impressions both before and after each interview. For example, the following is an entry I made after my first interview:

> I relaxed as the interview progressed. I must say I was also somewhat nervous at the outset even though I tried to relax as I wanted to help Student X relax. At the beginning I made a conscious effort not to interrupt or steer the conversation. I nodded and used non-verbal encouragement a great deal. I noticed that I became more verbal towards the end of the two-and-a-half hour interview, but not too verbal, I hope.

Another entry reads:

> For some reason, I didn't feel quite as happy
> or satisfied with these interviews as I felt
> with the first one. I'm trying to figure out
> why. Perhaps it's because Student X and
> Student Y have integrated to a greater extent
> in North American life, whereas Student Z
> appears to be protecting himself from it.
> Could it be that the more religious one is
> the less apt he is to fit into North American
> society?

These kinds of entries in my journal also kept me aware of

emerging themes:

> After talking with Student X a while, it came
> to my mind (when comparing his story to
> Student Y's story which I heard the day
> before) that the less religious Muslims 'fit
> in' and 'adjust' more quickly, and to a
> greater degree, to North American society.
> Student X could be described as very
> religious; whereas Student Y describes
> himself as moderately religious.

These entries also, I believe, reflect my interest in the

students' Islamic world view and its impact on the

students' adjustment experiences. However, even though I

made these entries I was not consciously aware of this

interest during the interviews, and I do not feel I

'steered' the interviews in any way. It seems that the

students, after jumping from one topic to another in the

initial stages of an interview, usually settled on two or

three areas of adjustment that had particular relevance to

them.

I think my own frame of mind during the process of interviewing is best reflected in the following journal entry which I made half-way through the interview process:

> I am very thoughtful. The difference between the Libyan Muslim worldview and mainstream North American worldview is amazing. I feel all I can do is seek *verstehen* - understanding - of this. How can I understand their adjustment process and problems - and how can I get other people to understand these - unless I can convey an understanding of their worldview. I 'feel' this worldview. Will I be able to articulate it? That's another matter.... It will be interesting to see what emerges from all of the interviews. Thank God, I didn't go into this with preordained specific questions. What we researchers don't know boggles the mind!

Significance of the study

Research (Sharma 1973; Dunnett 1981; Wei 1982) indicates that if foreign students are able to make a successful sociocultural adjustment, they will also be more successful in their academic life.

While this study is by nature exploratory, it is hoped that it will provide a tentative frame of reference for future studies in the area of Arab student adjustment. Perhaps it will also contribute to the development of a cache of

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comparative literature on foreign student adjustment experience - from the students' perspective.

It will also add to our overall understanding of culture shock, the adjustment process, and provide insight into the differences between the Muslim worldview versus the Western worldview. This study will provide practitioners with needed insights and knowledge which will aid them in their future endeavors with Libyan students. Hopefully, the information gleaned from this research will assist those working with groups of Libyan students to understand the lived experience of these students while they are in the process of adjusting to a new and strange culture and lifestyle.

Libyan students will also benefit by feeling more understood and appreciated while adjusting to life in an alien culture if they feel that Canadians in general, and academic staff in particular, have an understanding and appreciation of their backgrounds and perspectives.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter Two of this study is a review of the literature with
a focus on adjustment studies. Chapter Three presents
sociocultural adjustment themes and students' methods of
coping with any problems arising from these. Chapter Four
focuses on academic adjustment themes and how students cope
in this area. Chapter Five contains the summary, findings,
and recommendations of this study.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Introduction

A review of the literature reveals that international
students have been a favorite topic of research since, at
least, the 1950s.   However, much of this research has been
carried out in the United States; research on foreign
students in Canada is extremely sparse.   Further, research
on Libyan students is virtually non-existent both in the
United States and in Canada.   Indeed, a computer and hand
search of the literature in Great Britain and Ireland also
revealed very little as far as studies on Libyan students in
general are concerned, and nothing as far as adjustment
studies on this student population are concerned.   This
latter discovery is surprising in that Libyan students have
been attending universities and colleges in Great Britain
for a great many years.   Hence, the literature - or lack of
literature in this area - supports the need for the present
study.

The following review of the literature is divided into five areas:

1. Terminology Review

2. Recent Studies

3. Canadian Adjustment Studies

4. Literature on Arabs and Libyans

5. Literature on Muslims in Western Society

Terminology Review

Adjustment versus Adaptation

In the various studies, it seems that the terms "adjustment" and "adaptation" are used synonymously. For example, even though they are essentially referring to the same concept - how foreign students manage to 'fit in' to a new and different environment - some researchers use the term "adaptation" (Surdham and Collins 1984; Hull 1981; Pruitt 1981; Boer 1981; Hoffman 1986; Mickle 1984; Heikinheimo 1984 ; Dunnett 1981) while others use the term "adjustment" (Lysgaard 1955; Boonyawiroj 1983; Hamouda, 1986; Khouzam, 1986; Sharma 1973; Sewell and Davidsen 1956; Perkins et al 1977).

Originally, the term "adaptation" was used in a biological sense, especially in connection with Darwin's theory of evolution and the concept of "survival of the fittest". In this sense the term "adaptation" refers to changes from generation to generation through a process called natural selection. According to this theory, whole species are said to undergo a slow process of change in order to "fit in" or "adapt" to a particular environment.

Later, according to Lazarus (1976), the concept of "adaptation" was applied in a different way:

> The biological concept of adaptation has been borrowed and changed somewhat by the psychologist and renamed "adjustment" to emphasize the *individual*'s struggle to get along or survive in his or her social and physical environments. (p.3; italics in original)

However, as Lazarus points out, this view of adjustment implies a one way process of individuals trying to change themselves in order to 'fit' into their new environment:

> The trouble with this word [adjustment] is that over the years it has come to signify making oneself fit the demands of the external world, when actually adjustment consists of two kinds of processes: fitting oneself into given circumstances *and* changing the circumstances to fit one's needs." (p.3)

As also noted by Lazarus (1976), adjustment and individual personality are inextricably linked. For example, Lazarus states that:

> ... in the same situation two people often show different kinds of adjustive processes. When exposed to social pressure, for example, one individual conforms or accommodates to it, while another acts independently. There must be some personality quality making them react different to the same kind of situation. (p.17)

Hence, adjustment would seem to depend upon the personality of the individual and how that person reacts to, and copes with, change.

While bearing the above differences between the terms "adaptation" and "adjustment" in mind, the researcher in this present study chose to use the term adjustment. The word "adaptation", perhaps because of its biological associations, seems to exude a certain air of permanence. It also seems more applicable when applied to whole species rather than on an individual/personal scale. On the other hand, the word adjustment seems more suitable when referring to individuals, and it can also be understood in terms of a more temporary state. For example, it allows for the fact that sojourners' adjustment to a new society is usually a

temporary situation while they are living in that particular

society. Once they return home to their natural

environment, any adjustments they had made to accommodate

the new society will likely disappear as they are no longer

necessary. Also, unlike adaptation, adjustment occurs

relatively fast - not over the course of generations.

Therefore, while *species* can be said to adapt; *individuals*

are more accurately described as having to adjust.

Essentially, this study is an exploration of certain

individuals' adjustment to a particular environment. In

this sense, a definition used by French et al (cited in

Coelho 1974) is closest to the researcher's own idea of

adjustment:

> Our basic notion conceives of *adjustment*
> as the goodness of fit between the
> characteristics of the person and the
> properties of his environment (p.316).

Here, adjustment is seen as the process individuals undergo

in an effort to maintain a sense of equilibrium within

themselves, and between themselves and their environment.

When this study was undertaken, the researcher had this

concept of adjustment in mind.

Culture Shock

Another term that inevitably crops up in adjustment studies is the now familiar term `culture shock'. This term was first used by Oberg (1960) to describe the distress one experiences as a result of losing all the familiar cues one has previously relied upon in one's own culture. Oberg says that culture shock "is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse". (1960; p.177)

Coelho (1981) says culture shock "is a sudden explosion of major environmental changes", and that one experiences loss in several respects: status loss; uprooting of meaning - loss of friends and family to depend upon; sensory overload and physiological fatigue (p.28). Referring specifically to the situation of foreign students, he explains that:

> ... students from developing societies
> which maintain more or less traditional
> family patterns of early industrial
> civilization even in the large urban
> areas may be much more vulnerable to
> emotional stress .... (p.28)

This vulnerability to emotional stress results in, and contributes to, culture shock.

Argyle (Bochner 1982) has extended the notion of culture shock to include:

> ... the fatigue of constant adaptation, the sense of loss of familiar food, companions, etc., rejection of the host population or rejection by it, confusions of values or identify, discomfort at violation of values, and a feeling of incompetence at dealing with the environment. (p.63)

Individuals differ greatly in their ability to adjust to a foreign culture. According to Oberg (1960), although not common, there are some individuals who cannot live in another culture as they cannot cope with the stress caused by so much unfamiliarity. However, most people are eventually able to adjust after they become more familiar with the language, symbols, and cues of the new culture.

According to Smalley (1963), language is one of the main contributing factors to culture shock:

> As the newcomer comes into a whole new world where he knows no language at all, he is stripped of his primary means of interacting with other people, he is subject to constant mistakes, he is placed on the level of a child again. (p.54)

Donald Azar (1978) underlines this point with reference to

the foreign student situation when he says:

> The problem of culture shock is often
> intensified for ESL [English-as-a-second
> Language] students, who have to adjust
> to the demands of a rigorous classroom
> and study schedule as well as to a new
> society and institution. (p.17)

To Smalley (1963), one of the most obvious ways in which

culture shock shows up is in the form of rejection:

> It may be rejection of the host country
> and   its   people,   with   endless
> complaining, carping, fault-finding ...
> (p.51)

Or, on the other hand, it may lead to rejection of the home

culture in favor of the new culture. This can be seen to

happen with people who decide to assimilate to such an

extreme that they reject everything and anything to do with

their original culture in favor of the new culture.

When international students come to study in North America,

particularly students from outside the Western Hemisphere,

they have a completely new and drastically different

environment to cope with (Surdam and Collins; 1984). Most

often, these students are, at the same time, expected to

adjust to a new and drastically different educational

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institution. Together with this, the students are also
under pressure from family and friends back home to succeed
academically. One can, therefore, imagine the stress these
kinds of situations must produce.

As Mize (1978;27) notes, foreign students are, in effect,
attempting to fit into two new cultures: the North American
culture in general, and the academic culture within the
North American culture.

Furnham and Bochner (1982) in an informative article about
the difficulties experienced by overseas students describe
an experiment carried out on various groups of foreign
students in England. The experiment – an empirical analysis
of culture shock – provides insight for research on the
adjustment difficulties of foreign students. The subjects
in this study were 150 international students studying at
English Language schools in various parts of England. They
were between 16 and 30 years old, single, had completed
secondary education, and were from middle and upper
socioeconomic classes. At the time of this experiment they
had only sojourned in England between one and five months.
The subjects were divided into three subgroups according to
geographic region of origin – Europe, southern Europe, and
the East respectively. The students from the Eastern
countries were non-Christian and included Moslem, Arabic-

speaking students from various countries, including Libya.

There were equal numbers of males and females in each

subgroup.

Students were required to fill in various questionnaires and

check lists, and the results were then analyzed by the

researchers. Findings of this study revealed that:

> The greater the disparity between the
> host society and the sojourner's
> culture, the greater the degree of
> difficulty experienced in negotiating
> everyday social situations (p.190)

Other researchers (Dunnett 1981; Hull 1981) have also found

adjustment difficulties are influenced by geographic area of

origin and how similar or different these are from the new

culture. For example, Dunnett (1981) in an extensive review

of the literature on the influence of cultural background on

foreign student adaptation states that:

> It is even more difficult for a student
> coming from a totally different culture
> to adapt than it is for a student coming
> from a culture that is similar to that
> of the host country. In other words, a
> student from Europe would have less
> difficulty adapting to American culture
> than an African or an Arab student.
> (p.82)

From these studies it would seem that adjustment

difficulties and, therefore, culture shock are greater for

foreign students whose home cultures are drastically

different from the culture of North American society.

Of particular interest is Barclay's (1978) study of Muslim

immigrants to Canada. He refers to the particular

difficulties involved in the adjustment of Muslims to North

American Society:

> ... it might be argued that Muslims in
> Canada should experience more
> difficulties than other immigrants in
> adapting to a new and non-Muslim
> sociocultural-cultural milieu since
> Islam is a highly rigid and legalistic
> religious system which imposes such
> specific requirements on its adherents
> as to allow for little flexibility or
> adjustment to varying cultural
> conditions. (p.101)

Although Barclay is discussing the immigrant Muslim

population, his findings might also apply to Muslim students

who live in Canada anywhere from five to eight years and

whose initial culture shock might be expected to be greater

than that of students from cultures more similar to that of

North America.

Coping

According to Lazarus (1974; p.250), coping is the problem-solving efforts people engage in when confronted by demands that tax their adaptive resources. This definition, which emphasizes the emotional component of coping, takes into account both the stress side of emotional adjustment and the positive side of potential gratification.

To distinguish briefly between adjustment and coping, it seems to the present researcher that while "adjustment" is the goodness of fit between a person and his/her environment, "coping" is the mechanism that one uses to maintain, and/or readjust, that fit from time-to-time as becomes necessary. The closest everyday analogy that springs to mind is that of someone trying on a new shoe. While a person is struggling to "adjust" foot and shoe to each other, s/he might use a shoe horn to help ease the foot into the new environment; or, in other words, to help the foot "cope" with the new environment. Hence, "coping" (the shoe horn) is the tool, or problem-solving strategy, one uses in order to help him/her "adjust", fit in, to the new environment.

However, as David Mize (1978) points out, although many

foreign students have developed certain coping mechanisms in

their own societies, these might not always be appropriate

in the new culture. Mize notes that Libyan students "run

all over the United States to see their buddies" (p.37) -

perhaps, as a way of handling their frustrations. Perhaps

another way of handling these frustrations is to spend a

great deal of time driving - a coping behavior which Mize

has also noticed in many Libyan students. Whether this is a

coping behavior these students have developed in response to

their new environment is unclear; but, it would seem this

might well be the case.

Coelho (1981) in a paper which examines culture shock and

high risk situations for foreign students' sojourning in

different cultural environments, also mentions the fact that

coping strategies students have learned in their home

environments may not be appropriate in a very different

academic and cultural milieu.

Referring specifically to Indian students studying in the

United States, he lists some "precursor" (p.27) family and

culture patterns typical in the socialization process of

Indian students which contribute to high-risk situations in

a United States sojourn. These socialization factors

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include the fact that young Indian children grow up in a

large extended family where they are prepared "to recognize

their place in their family's hierarchical social order"

(p.27); the extended family members are interdependent and

support each other in any life crisis; same sex friendships

are most important and "tend to be cultivated in depth and

over time for long term permanence and fidelity" (p.27).

Coelho (1981) concludes with the following comment:

> It is safe to generalize then that the
> typical graduate student from India --
> no matter how highly trained and
> academically qualified -- comes to the
> United States with a strong sense of the
> family and friendship attachments that
> are part of his sense of his identify
> and community.... The psychosocial
> transition, then from the Indian
> physical and social milieu into the
> American campus environment represents a
> major discontinuity in life style and
> social role, and a disruption of the
> natural support systems that validate
> his self-esteem. (p.27)

Coelho believes that such students are likely to suffer

major culture shock in the new environment and, therefore,

need to develop new coping strategies.

According to Hadad (1978) who undertook a preliminary study

of Muslims in Canada, in the case of Muslim students

studying in universities in North America, the Muslim

Students' Association can be seen as perhaps a haven and/or an insulation to help Muslim students cope in a seemingly hostile society:

> Also active on Canadian campuses is the Muslim Student Association of the United States and Canada (started in 1962) with headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana. Its aim is to provide Islamic nurture through education and "community" for students of Muslim countries in the hope that they will provide Islamic leadership for religious reform in their home countries upon their return. The association also attempts to provide guidance for living the Islamic life in the materialistic North American environment. (p.74)

In summary, it would seem that most people need to develop new types of coping strategies when they find themselves in situations that they have never before encountered. And, as mentioned by the above researchers, international students who come from cultures which are drastically different from the host culture - such as the Indian students in Coelho's (1981) study who were studying in the United States - have to be especially adept at developing coping strategies to help them adjust in the new environment.

The next section presents an account of recent adjustment studies.

Adjustment Studies

Recent Adjustment Studies

In 1977 Perkins, Perkins, Guglieimino, and Reiff undertook
an adjustment study of 210 international students,
representing fifty different cultures, attending the
University of Georgia. A questionnaire was developed to
elicit responses regarding subjects' adjustment problems in
their new culture.   Chinese and Indian students constituted
one-third of the respondents.   The results revealed many
differences in the adjustment process of different national
groups. For example, the Chinese students rated English
proficiency a more important problem than either the Indian
students or other respondents.   The Chinese students also
perceived educational preparation to be more of a problem
than did the Indian students.   The findings of Perkins'
study are relevant to this present study in that they reveal
that although international students have common problems,
they also have problems peculiar to their national groups.
Therefore, Perkins' study supports the need for studies on
specific national groups in order to identify significant
adjustment experiences peculiar to each group.

Sharma (1973) undertook a study to identify and analyze
adjustment problems experienced by foreign non-European

students enrolled in Universities in North Carolina. The
data for this quantitative study was gathered through a
student problem inventory. The results revealed that
foreign students of Non-European background in particular
experience traumatic culture shock in relation to their
social, academic, and emotional adjustment to North America,
and that:

> When they return home, they carry along
> with them not only the knowledge and
> skills acquired here, but also an image
> of America structured and solidified
> through   their   perceptions   and
> experiences. (Sharma 1973:136)

Results also revealed that there exists a strong positive
relationship among the academic, personal, and social
adjustment of foreign students. However, Sharma also found
that the academic problems of these students were more
severe than the personal and social problems, and that they
took a longer time to resolve. Among the most severe
academic problems were: participating in class discussion,
and preparing written reports. Among the most severe social
problems were: understanding American social customs, and
making friends with American students.

Dunnett (1981) in a quantitative study on the effects of an
English language training and orientation program on foreign

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student adaptation also emphasizes the relationship between sociocultural adjustment and academic adjustment in the lives of foreign students:

> It is believed that foreign students must make a personal and social adaptation ... in order to meet their educational goals. If the student's basic adaptation is good, then his chances of academic success are greatly increased. (p.84)

As far as sociocultural adjustment is concerned, Dunnett emphasizes that:

> It is even more difficult for a student coming from a totally different culture to adapt than it is for a student coming from a culture that is similar to that of the host country. In other words, a student from Europe would have less difficulty adapting to the American culture that an African or Arab student. (p.81-82)

He also points out the fact that, according to research, the similarity between a student's religion and the main religion in the new culture also has an important effect on adaptation (p.82).

Dunnett's findings revealed a significant difference among groups from different geographical areas of the world with respect to adaptation. He found that Middle Eastern students made the least change compared to other foreign

students in his study.   He attributes this to the fact that
their culture is farthest from American culture.

Hung Wei (1982) for her Master's thesis in Teaching English-
as-a Second Language (T.E.S.L.) undertook an interview study
with Chinese students studying at the University of
California in Los Angeles (U.C.L.A). to determine the
sociocultural-cultural survival skills they needed to adjust
to their new cultural environment.   Her findings indicated
that: Chinese students encountered much difficulty in
adjusting to U.S. society;   most Chinese needed and wanted
to learn more about sociocultural-cultural survival skills
needed for satisfactory adjustment so that they could
concentrate most of their energy and time on their studies.
These results also indicate that sociocultural adjustment is
intricately connected with academic adjustment in the sense
that if students are comfortable in a sociocultural context,
they can devote more time and energies to their studies.

In 1986 Hamouda did a case study of the academic and
sociocultural adjustment problems of 194 graduate
international students studying in the United States for the
purpose of making recommendations for curriculum
development.   Hamouda used a number of approaches to
collect data: questionnaires were distributed to students;

open-ended interviews were carried out with approximately
one third of the total number of students involved in the
study; and, in addition, personal narrative stories were
collected from some of the students. Academic problems
reported included educational system differences, language
proficiency, and university system difficulties. In the area
of sociolcultural adjustment, problems were found in the
areas of American values and customs, ethnocentrism,
language proficiency, and social isolation.

However, one wonders whether the fact that Hamouda used the
words "adjustment problems" in his study could have affected
the respondents responses.

Klineberg (1981), Pruitt (1981) and Vanegas (1981) believe
that if foreign students know what to expect in a new
environment their adjustment is aided. Pruitt (1981) did a
study on the adaptation process of African students studying
in the United States. The questionnaire Pruitt used to
gather information consisted of 175 multiple-choice
questions and four open-ended questions. Two hundred and
ninety-four African students representing fifty different
ethnic groups were involved; half of the sample were
Nigerian, and 12% were Moslem. For the purpose of this

study, Pruitt defined adjustment as "coping with one's environment" (p.119) and she states adjustment is:

> ... reflected in the extent to which an individual is comfortable and free of problems. In adjusting, the person is creating a productive and satisfying relationship with his environment while not necessarily abandoning his own cultural identity. (p.119)

Pruitt differentiates between adjustment and assimilation in that she says assimilation is:

> ... the extent to which a person interacts freely with people from the host country and adopts their culture. (p.119)

The findings of Pruitt's study revealed that extensive contact with other co-nationals, in this case with other African students, appears to be counter-productive to adjustment, and that:

> Contact and feelings of comfort with members of the host society seem to contribute to positive adjustment.... (p.123)

Another interesting finding in Pruitt's study was the high correlation between good adjustment and continuing religious belief and practice. Pruitt speculates that religious belief provides individuals with a sense of identity which

makes them feel secure. However, as she refers to "church attendance" in her study in relation to religious belief one can only assume that she is referring primarily to Christianity rather than to any other religious beliefs and/or practices.

However, Pruitt's main hypothesis in her study seems to have been supported:

> One of our main hypothesis, namely, that prior knowledge about the United States produces better adjustment, was clearly supported, especially in the area of knowledge, people, customs, and institutions. We can speculate that such knowledge combats culture shock by enabling the student to plan ahead as to how to deal with people from the host country. (p.121)

Likewise, Klineberg (1981) in his review of the practical implications of research on international student exchanges states:

> ... pre-information regarding the university and the society to which to foreign student is going is of major importance, and is often lacking. (p.5)

Regarding pre-information about the university, Klineberg notes that a student's first contact with a university may be particularly painful if s/he does not have enough

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information about how to register for courses, how to use the library, and what is expected of students (p.6).

As far as sociocultural adjustment is concerned, referring to a study he had undertaken in 1972 with Ben Brika, involving students from Third World countries attending universities in Europe, Klineberg (1981) says students reported many contacts with natives of these countries but few instances of real friendship. Indeed he states:

> ... it was the Africans and more particularly the North Africans who indicated that friendly contacts were relatively rare. (p.9)

Vanegas (1981) in an overview of the adaptation problems of Latin America students in an English language program at the State University of New York at Buffalo says:

> Expectations about Americans and the U.S. is another adaptation problem.... The Latin American student comes to the U.S. with misconceptions based on movies and magazines and expects to find ideal conditions in the new environment.

When things do not turn out as expected, feelings of hostility develop which the student then has to learn to cope with. As far as personal adjustment is concerned, Vanegas, himself a Latin American who went through an

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adjustment process when he moved to the United States,

points out that Latin Americans are used to a very tightly-

knit family environment where most activities revolve around

the family, and most single individuals live with their

parents until they are married. Males are also used to

having the women in the family take care of their needs.

Therefore, when a male Latin American comes to live in North

America this family support is not available, and is sorely

missed. Pruitt (1981), mentioned previously, also noted

that students who miss the extended family tradition of

their own culture, and lacked American friends, expressed

negative attitudes towards the United States.

Vanegas also emphasizes the fact that Latin American

students consider human relationships very important. They

find themselves lonely in North America with only

superficial contact with Americans which are further

aggravated by their lack of facility in English. The Latin

American student feels that:

> ... if he speaks and makes mistakes,
> others are going to laugh at him.
> (p.139)

As far as academic adjustment is concerned, Vanegas notes

that when such a student is not progressing well he has a

tendency to blame the teacher and the content of the course

rather than himself. Hence:

> Since he is constantly criticizing and
> questioning, the teaching staff may
> misunderstand his behavior, then the
> teachers may label him as unruly,
> critical, and unsatisfied.... [Further]
> If the Latin American student doesn't
> see and understand clearly how the
> program is helping him, he loses
> interest and adopts a very negative
> attitude. (pp.139-140)

Vanegas concludes his overview of the adaptation problems of

Latin American students by stating that these students fit

an "Instrumental Pattern of Adaptation" which has the

following characteristics:

> 1. it is typical of those students with
> clear, professional-academic objectives;
> 2. the student's major interaction and
> involvement is organized around specific
> tasks; 3. student maintains frequent
> contact with fellow nationals and family
> at home; 4. major tensions and
> adjustments are present in task
> performance; 5. there is a minimal
> social adjustment and contact with
> individuals in the host country and this
> is limited to the professional role....
> The new environment becomes merely an
> instrument for this adaptation process.
> (p.140)

In other words, according to Vanegas, these Latin American

students are not in the United States for integrative

purposes, but rather for instrumental reasons.

Some researchers have discussed the role of religion in the

adjustment process (Khalidi, 1972; Dunnett, 1981; Pruitt

1981; Crano 1986).

Khalidi (1972 cited in Dunnett 1981:92) in a Ph.D. study on

the adaptation of Far Eastern and North European students in

the United States found, amongst other things, that

similarity of a student's culture, religion, language and

friendship relations to that of the host culture have a

definite influence on adaptation.

Dunnett (1981) in a review of the literature on adjustment

studies also notes that religion plays an important role in

foreign student adjustment. He summarizes a section on the

literature related to foreign student attitudes by saying:

> Many of the attitudes which foreign
> students bring with them to the United
> States are resistant to change. This is
> especially true of cultural and
> religious values. (p.90)

Pruitt (1981) in her study of the adaptation process of

African students (mentioned earlier) notes that:

> Perhaps the most unusual results in our
> study are the high correlations obtained
> between good adjustment and maintenance

> of religious commitment. Both church
> attendance and continuing religious
> belief were predictive of adjustment....
> Apparently religious commitment also
> contributes something intrinsic to
> adjustment, providing a sense of
> identity which may make a person feel
> more secure. (p.122)

As previously pointed out, the fact that Pruitt refers to

"church" in this quotation leads one to assume that the

African students in her study were "Christians" - the

dominant religion of North American society. One wonders

whether her results would apply to followers of other

faiths; for example, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus.

Crano (1986) in a study on self-concept and adjustment

involving Latin American exchange students disagrees with

Pruitt's (1981) findings that religious practice is

positively related to adjustment:

> The results of my study indicated that
> students who practiced their religion
> more frequently had, on the average,
> lower self-concept scores and reported
> more, and more severe, adjustment
> problems .... Certainly, then, not all
> students need religious practice to aid
> in a smooth adjustment to the host
> culture. It may be that those who are
> less sure of themselves and who are more
> threatened by that which is new and
> unfamiliar are more likely to seek
> support or comfort from their religious
> practice. (p.11-12)

It should be noted, however, that whereas Pruitt's subjects

were African University students who were, in all

likelihood, in the United States for a period of years,

Crano's students were high-school aged students from

"Christian" countries in South America who were only in the

United States for one year.

Boer (1981) in an exploratory paper on the psychosocial

factors affecting the adaptation process of foreign students

to the educational subculture of the United States discusses

foreign students' network of social relations. For

information on foreign student networks, foreign students

were interviewed and asked to think of "persons who were

important to them at the time of the interview" (p.38). Boer

points out that a foreign student leaves behind a network of

psychological supports in the form of family, friends, and

colleagues once he moves to the new environment. In order

to cope in the new culture he realizes the need to create a

new social network. This new network of friends rarely

extends beyond ten persons:

> ... it appears that the international
> student derives emotional support from a
> small group of people that remains
> rather constant over time in its
> composition and sociocultural
> characters. (p.39)

Boer does not imply that this network of friends is
necessarily made up of friends from the student's country of
origin. However, it would seem that one factor that would
have an influence on the make-up of this network is whether
a student comes to the United States alone or with other co-
nationals.

As part of this study, Boer also sent a questionnaire to 152
students in 44 countries who had been accepted for study in
the United States regarding expectations and orientation of
foreign students to determine what kind of information these
students had about the United States, and what information
they still required. Sixty students returned these
questionnaires. Amongst other things, respondents reported
that they had insufficient information regarding: relations
with the opposite sex (58%), and field of study (40%). As
far as orientation programs were concerned, students
indicated that they would like these to focus more on giving
information on informal social intercourse and cross-
cultural understanding rather than on the formal type of

information usually given at such sessions. As Boer notes:

> The foreign student asks questions (or
> wants to) which orientation programmers
> do not or cannot answer; antithetically,
> orientation programs are planned to
> answer questions, sometimes elaborately,
> which interest foreign students only
> remotely or not at all. (p.36)

Hartung (1983) for her M.A. thesis did a cultural adjustment
study of Japanese High School students living in the United
States. The findings of the study were gathered through
distribution of a questionnaire to students, host families,
and American high school teachers. Interestingly enough,
results indicated that English language was not perceived by
any of the three groups as being the primary source of
adjustment problems. Items dealing with cultural
communication were ranked highest in difficulty, such as:
knowing appropriate discussion topics, making friends,
using English, knowing when someone is really a friend,
seeing students holding and kissing each other.

Hartung concludes that sociocultural difficulties are
related specifically to differences between Japanese and
American cultures.

Hull (1981), in a review of adaptation research undertaken

in the United States since 1967, states that a relatively

small number of interrelated variables have been identified

as crucial in the adjustment of foreign students in the

United States. Briefly, these are as follows:

a.   Academic variables

b.   Age and sex of student

c.   Country and culture of origin

d.   Prior international experience

e.   Duration of sojourn and expectations

Regarding the third point, Hull says:

> It seems clear that foreign students
> from particular areas of the world do
> have uniquely differing experiences in
> the United States. Not only are there
> distinctions among students from Arabic-
> speaking countries, Asians, and Western
> Europeans,   but   there   are   great
> distinctions between those coming from
> the top social classes of the homeland
> and those from the lower levels. (p.18)

Hull together with Otto Klineberg and a number of

researchers from other countries, including Brazil, Canada,

Iran, and Japan have been working on how these variables

influence adaptation since 1973 using "instruments and

methodologies made as identical as possible" (Hull 1981;18).
These researchers were:

> ... interested in knowing how these
> important variables influence the
> adaptation not only of foreign studies
> in the United States but in other
> countries as well. (p.19)

In the study undertaken in the United States, data were
gathered from foreign students at three universities in
small cities in the United States. Foreign students were
identified at each institution through a random process and
were followed through interviews during their first year of
study. The following hypothesis emerged from the data:

> Simply put, the more contact there is
> with local people [students and non-
> students], the more satisfying the
> overall sojourn experience is likely to
> be. Likewise, the more contact, the
> fewer will be the reports of negative
> factors in the sojourn. (p.19)

It was also found that students who said their contacts with
Americans were as frequent as they wished often indicated
that "they had become more positive about their home country
as a result of their stay in the United States" (p.21).

Those who reported having made "good" friends with American students, and/or who shared living quarters with Americans, reported:

> ... not only broader and more frequent interaction with Americans, but were also more likely to indicate more general satisfaction with their total sojourn experience, academically and non-academically. (p.21)

From these results the importance of contact with host nationals is evident.

Dunnett (1981), who undertook a longitudinal study involving two groups of foreign students on the effects of English language training and orientation programs on foreign student adaptation, agrees with Hull (1981) in that his findings also suggest that adjustment is even more difficult for students coming from totally different cultures:

> ... a student from Europe would have less difficulty adapting to American culture than an African or an Arab student. (p.82)

Two other important conclusions that came out of Dunnett's study are that while English Language training and orientation programs are beneficial to adjustment in general, this type of program has little effect on foreign students' emotional adjustment. It was found that during

the first semester of study students experienced a high

degree of adjustment difficulty. Therefore, those working

with foreign students in higher educational settings should

give them extra support at this time. This also has

implications for universities in the sense that perhaps too

much weight should not be put on students to attain high

marks in this crucial period of adjustment as they already

have too much to cope with at this time.

Canadian Adjustment Studies

During the past decade or so, there have been a number of

studies on the adjustment process of foreign students (Jones

1973; Heikinheimo 1982; Mickle 1984; Boonyawiroj 1983). In

this section three particularly relevant Canadian studies

will be discussed: Boonyawiroj (1983); Mickle (1984); and

Heikinheimo 1984).

Boonyawiroj (1983) in his doctoral study on the adjustment

of nine foreign graduate students studying at the Ontario

Institute for Studies in Education, in Toronto, used a

qualitative research approach to explore how these nine

students perceived their adjustment experiences.   Three

semi-structured interviews were carried out with each

student over a seven-month period. These interview sessions were taped, transcribed, and then returned to the students for their approval.

Results of this study revealed that language appeared to be the biggest problem as far as students' academic adjustment was concerned. Three of the nine students identified writing as the most difficult area, and four reported speaking as presenting them with great difficulty. Overall, students in this study found reading the easiest.

Regarding adjustment to the academic system, students found that lack of knowledge of university regulations presented difficulties. For example, one student did not know he could take less than three courses per term; another student who wanted to take four courses each term was only allowed to take two. Much to her dismay, she found out later that she could have taken four courses with the approval of her faculty advisor (Boonyawiroj 1983;97).

Partly because of language difficulties, five students reported that they found it difficult to partake in class discussions.

To help them cope with these academic difficulties students identified supportive groups which included: professors, Canadian student friends, and other non-university friends. Students also reported that a positive attitude on their part both towards learning and towards their university helped them in their effectiveness as students. Students also identified six learning strategies that they employed as international students in Canada:

> ... mastering English, managing time, forming a study group, avoiding native language use, informing professors of problems, and identifying a manageable course workload. (p.108)

Boonyawiroj also found that in the graduate students' non-academic life, homesickness and loneliness appeared to be the most significant problems. Some students also mentioned interpersonal relationships as a problem area; for example, difficulty in making friends due to language difference, or shyness.

As far as non-academic life is concerned, students identified seven factors that helped them cope in this area: pre-departure preparation and pre-university orientation; supportive groups which mainly consisted of other international students, co-nationals, family, relatives, and partners; awareness of the adjustment process, culture

shock, and so on; acceptance of cultural differences;

identification in some way with the new culture;

rationalization regarding their new situation; and

interaction with their home country by writing letters,

telephoning home, listening to music from home, and reading

printed material from home.

Boonyawiroj's study also presented some information

regarding the nine students' perceptions of Canadians. In

summary, students found Canadians superficial in

relationships; nice, and friendly - especially at the

beginning, but reserved; some also felt that other things

seemed more important than friendship to Canadians.

Kathryn Mickle's (1984) doctoral study was on the cultural

adaptation of Hong Kong students studying at two Ontario

Universities. Mickle predicted that:

> ...   successful adaptation is related
> to the number of Canadian friends, the
> amount of participation in activities
> with Canadians, tolerance of ambiguity,
> length of stay, perceived lack of
> discrimination and less strong
> identification with traditional Chinese
> culture.(D.A.Int'l. 2785A)

Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, and

adaptation was measured by self-reported satisfaction with

students' ability to speak English, and with their sojourn

and by the number of problems they experienced.   The
findings of this study supported Mickle's original
hypotheses, except for the tolerance of ambiguity results
which, according to Mickle, had to be discarded for
statistical reasons.

Findings of Mickle's study also confirm the "modified
culture contact hypothesis" which states that foreign
students who are satisfied and comfortable with their
interactions with local people and with the local culture
will indicate more general satisfaction with their sojourn
(p.84).

Hull (1981) who conducted a study on modified culture
contact hypothesis and foreign student adjustment explains
this concept as follows:

> Simply put, the more contact there is
> with local people, the more satisfying
> the overall sojourn experience is likely
> to be.   Likewise the more contact, the
> fewer will be the reports of negative
> factors in the sojourn.   (p.19)

The third Canadian study is that of Heikinheimo (1984) on
the adaptation of African and South East Asian students
attending the University of Guelph, Ontario.   This
qualitative study set out to explore and describe African
and South East Asian students' perceptions of their

academic, social, cultural, and financial adjustment. The researcher participated in thirty informal interviews to discover themes, and forty-six semi-structured interviews to see how foreign students perceive certain sociocultural and academic factors which may effect their adjustment to Canadian society. Findings revealed that family expectations, language difficulties, cultural difficulties, and financial problems contribute to academic pressures experienced by most students.

Most African students in Heikinheimo's study considered themselves free from English language difficulties except for differences in accents. No African student reported language problems in their studies once they had become accustomed to professors' acccents which usually occurred during the first semester. However, Asian students enrolled in essay writing courses expressed difficulty in this area. Most of the students reported that academic studies were their first priority.

These foreign students also spent a greater amount of time studying than Canadians as they tended to feel guilty if they did not study because of family expectations and financial pressures. Also, language difficulties in, for example, reading texts made them spend more time with their

books. Also, to compensate for loneliness and homesickness they kept busy.

Results suggest that "isolated" students study very hard and put their studies first over contact with Canadians. Results also show that most Asian and African students prefer co-national friends to Canadian friends for linguistic and cultural reasons. Studies are the main concern for most African and Asian students

The findings also suggest that social isolation from Canadians is often coupled with perceived academic, cultural and social problems. Cultural differences were perceived as a problem by a number of the students in this study. The study recommends that workshops be conducted by academic and support staff at the university to develop an awareness of foreign student difficulties. It is also recommended that orientation programs for foreign students be revised to better serve the needs of the students.

Literature on Arabs and Libyans

1. Arab Studies

In a quantitative study on the interaction, perception, and attitudes of Arab students, studying in the United States,

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towards Americans, Ibrahim (1970) sent questionnaires to measure "interaction", "perceived American attitudes toward Arabs", and "Arab students' attitudes toward Americans" to 625 Arab students studying in institutions of higher education in the United States. A total of 414 (66.2%) students returned the completed questionnaires. On the interaction between Arab students and Americans, Ibrahim found that students' nationality does make a difference in their degree of interaction with Americans. He notes that students from North Africa - Libya included - do not seem to be as interactive with Americans as other foreign students (p.33).

Findings also indicate that interaction between Arab students and Americans is connected with Arab students' age, sex, marital status, length of residence in the United States and involvement with the Organization of Arab Students in the United States and Canada (OAS):

> Arab students who are younger, unmarried, undergraduates, less involved in OAS affairs and had been in the United States longer tend to interact with Americans more. (p.33)

Regarding attitudes of Arab students towards Americans,

Ibrahim found that:

> The Arab students' attitudes toward
> Americans seem to be accentuated by a
> number of situational factors, such as:
> nationality, age, marital status,
> academic status, length of residence in
> the United States, and involvement with
> the affairs of the home country. (pp.43-
> 44)

However, Ibrahim's study also reveals that those students

who had more interaction with Americans held more favorable

attitudes towards them. In the conclusion of his study, he

states:

> It appears from the findings that the
> attitudes   of   Arab   students   toward
> Americans   seem   to   be   a   function   of:
> First,   the   students'   perception   of
> Americans' attitudes toward the Arabs.
> Second, the extent to which the students
> interact with Americans in the variety
> of   everyday   situations.   Both
> "perception" and "interaction" influence
> attitudes   toward   Americans
> independently.   There   is   little
> overlapping between the two variables in
> their   relation   to   "attitudes   toward
> Americans". (p.42)

Jarrahi-Zadeh and Eichman (1970) in a paper on "The Impact

of Sociocultural Factors on Middle-Eastern Students in the

U.S." present the results of a questionnaire study they

carried out which compared Middle-Eastern students at the

University of North Carolina with a group of American

students.   The Middle-Eastern sample included students from
Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudia Arabia, the United
Arab Republic, India and Pakistan.   The authors note that
the Arab students had the lowest rate of return of
questionnaires, and the Indian students had the highest.
Therefore, the Indian students were the largest group in the
study 52%, followed by the Arab students (32%).   Moslem
students comprised 25% of the sample.

Results revealed that:

> ... the primary problems of the Middle
> Eastern student are those of social
> adaptations (social withdrawal and
> sexual problems) and symptoms which are
> associated with an unhappy situation
> (sadness and inability to sleep well).
> (p.87)

The authors note, however, that the American students in
this study checked far more problem areas than the Middle
Eastern Students did.   They speculate that:

> The meaning of this is uncertain....
> The total conditioning of most Middle
> Eastern students is likely to direct
> them toward conquering the physical
> environment and not toward dealing with
> the inner self. A lack of goals or poor
> motivation is considered a personal
> weakness in these cultures.   Being
> disturbed by emotional difficulties is
> quite a blow to self-esteem.   Their
> society does not condone and certainly

does not encourage expressive behavior
regarding inner needs. With this lack
of psychological orientation, the Middle
Eastern student is more likely to
express his psychosocial conflicts in a
more acceptable manner, i.e., physical
complaints. It is not surprising, then,
that these students do not recognize or
openly admit to problems which American
students focus upon. (p.88-89)

In the discussion section of this study, Jarrahi-Zadeh and

Eichman state:

Our Middle Eastern students face
fantastic differences in culture,
including, in most cases, profound
differences in religion, philosophy, and
style of life. As a consequence, this
group faces enormous problems, and it is
surprising that emotional disturbance of
sever degree is not more frequent.
Studies in the literature do point to a
somewhat higher incidence of these
problems and also point to a difference
in type of reaction, i.e. more paranoid
and somatic disturbances than are found
in our own culture. (p.91)

To help alleviate some of the difficulties Middle Eastern

and other international students face while studying in

North America, the authors recommend, amongst other things,

that:

Foreign students should be strongly
encouraged to arrive a few months before
the academic year begins. This would
permit them to improve their English and
become acquainted with their
surroundings before being overwhelmed
with academic concerns. (p.93)

Meleis (1982) in an article entitled: "Arab Students in
Western Universities" explores how Arab students adjust to
western educational institutions and the western lifestyle.
He discusses some of the "major properties that characterize
Arabs" (p.440) and the resultant problems they face in
adapting to a Western environment. The following is a
summary of Meleis' findings which have relevance to this
present study:

a.   Arabs have a great need for affiliation as they come
from large extended families and extensive social networks.

b.   They are highly contextual in that they want "to develop
feelings about another person ... before beginning to deal
with cognitive matters" (p.441)

c.   They are more oriented to the verbal message than to the
written message; Arab culture is, historically, an oral
culture.   As Meleis states, when Arab students come to study
in North America:

> ... written assignments may be the first
> in their experience as students. They
> will   not   have   grown   up   with   the
> expectation of written assignments as
> have children educated in the American
> school system....   We   in   the   western

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educational system have a tendency to
bombard our students with piles of
written material, some more pertinent
than others. When we consider the
language or semantic problems some Arab
students have as well as the cultural
significance of verbal messages, it
behooves us, at least for the initial
period of adjustment, to attach careful
verbal explanation to written material.
(p.442)

d. Time has a different meaning to Arab students than to

American students:

... matters previously arranged or those
that might be regarded as pressing by
Westerners are, for the Arab, of less
importance than the matter immediately
at hand. (p.442).

e. In Arab countries a student enters a very structured and

systematic educational program where there is relatively

little flexibility and no opportunity for selection of

electives, other than major area of study. They have

learned that 'experts' are responsible for decisions

regarding education.

f. As a result of all the changes Arab students find when

studying in Western institutions, their morale is often low.

This is further compounded by loneliness and, according to Meleis, seems to manifest itself in somatic behavior:

> Instead of identifying their sense of anxiety and sense of depression, Arabs tend to substitute it with a somatic complaint. The biological framework is better understood and more readily accepted than the affective one. (p.445)

According to Meleis the above differences in orientation between Arab and Western culture can result in culture shock and inability to cope when Arab students come to study in Western institutions.

2. Libyan Studies

Although this review of the literature did not reveal any Canadian studies on Libyan student adjustment in North American society, one study (Foerster 1981) carried out in the United States was on the effects of an American educational experience on the traditional cultural values of Libyan students.

Foerster employed the use of a questionnaire to measure how group-oriented or individualistic Libyan students' beliefs and behavior were in four value areas: religion, family relations, social customs, and occupational habits. This

questionnaire was distributed to 30 Libyans studying in the United States; 30 Libyans who had studied in the United States but had now returned to Libya; and 30 Libyans who had not lived or traveled in the West, but were potential candidates for future North American study.

Results indicated that beliefs and behavior of the Libyans surveyed were more individualistic in the U.S. than in Libya; that beliefs and behavior were more consistent in the U.S. than in Libya; that having had a U.S. educational experience did not affect behavioral expressions of traditional cultural values of Libyan students. It was also found that a U.S. educational experience had no long term effects in the sense that when Libyan students returned to Libya, the home environment, any impact of individualistic attitudes acquired in the U.S. were counterbalanced by the group orientation of Libyan society. It appears that without social support in Libya, behavioral expressions of new beliefs were not maintained.

In an article published in the British Columbia Journal of Special Education (1983:255-260) Angelina T. Wong describes the experiences of six teachers who worked with a group of male Libyan students in a pre-university program at the University of Saskatchewan. Even though the teachers had

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attended a pre-service orientation which was organized to

raise their awareness about Arab culture, they found that:

> ... while the preservice training
> prepared them cognitively to expect and
> be tolerant of certain cultural
> differences, they still experienced a
> number of problems which taxed their
> patience and sense of humor. (p.256)

However, they also had many positive experiences with these

students which, according to the teachers, helped alleviate

popular Arab stereotypes.

In her article, Wong mentions two areas where the teachers

experienced "personal frustration" over cultural

differences: the Libyan versus the Western perception of

time, and the students' attitude towards women which was

perceived as extremely rigid and prejudiced when viewed

through Western eyes. It was found that while classroom

discussions and debates improved students' English it did

not have any effect on attitudes. However:

> After a period of several months during
> which the students established social,
> contacts within the local community, a
> moderation in attitude was observed. By
> then, one third of the students had
> moved out of the student residence to
> board with Canadian families. (p.258)

In a brief but informative article on the experiences of Libyan students studying in Canada, Sarah Wood of the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE; 1987) reports that:"cultural adaptation is cited by the students as one of their biggest challenges" (p.14).

In this same article, one of the Libyan students notes the difficulty students have in maintaining their religious practices in a non-Islamic society:

> ... temptation to let religion slip in a
> society that is not structured around
> Islam. However, he cited the discipline
> and teachings as helping its adherents
> not only to become independent and
> responsible generally, but to excel in
> their studies as well. (p.14)

Wood also mentions that the only complaint all students had in common was that they had to spend too much time in pre-college training programs, including English-as-a-second language programs, upon arrival in Canada.

Muslims in Western Society

As the Libyan students in this present study are Muslims,
and, therefore, their frame of reference is Islam, the
findings of three further researchers (Fahlman 1984; Hadad
1978; Barclay 1978) will also be reviewed here.

Lila Fahlman (1984) for her Ph.D. degree at the university
of Alberta carried out a study on Lebanese-Muslim students
and their teachers in Edmonton high schools. The aim of
Fahlman's qualitative study was to understand the 'lived-
world' of these students and their teachers. In order to
understand the students' perspectives, Fahlman used an
ethnographic approach which included participant observation
and in-depth interviews. Her findings indicate that
Lebanese Muslim Students experience prejudice and
discrimination at school, and think teachers have little
idea as to how to deal with the increasing numbers of ethnic
and religious minority students now present in their
schools. Fahlman urges that governments take on the
responsibility of promoting understanding and acceptance of
cultural differences, and she voices the necessity for
educators to sensitize themselves toward ethnic and

religious minority students by gaining more knowledge and understanding in order to combat our present ignorance.

Hadad (1978) in her study on Muslim immigrants in Canada makes the following points regarding the overall Muslim experience in North America:

> Islam as a total way of life is also a culture that has developed over the centuries an intricate system of laws and customs by which the true Muslim is expected to abide. Besides the religious laws, legislation includes all areas of political, social, economic and personal life down to the minutest detail. (p.76)

She further notes:

> ... essential elements of the faith are threatened in the Canadian environment, which although not hostile to the practice of Islam, does not attempt to facilitate it.... There are no minarets to call the faithful to prayer, nor is time provided for the performance of prayer during the working hours. Interviews with Muslims of different national identities showed that those who had been faithful in performing this tenet of Islam in their home country began to be slowly negligent in their fulfillment of this duty. (p.77)

Barclay (1978) in a paper entitled: "The Muslim Experience in Canada", also mentions this difficulty of keeping

one's Islamic faith in a North American context:

> In most of the Arab world the fast
> [Ramadan] is observed far more commonly
> and widely than the regular observance
> of the *salat* [daily prayers]....
> Transferred to a Christian context such
> as Canada where few at all are fasting,
> where most never even heard of Ramadan,
> and there is certainly no catering to
> it, one has a situation conducive to
> ignoring the ritual. (p.103)

He further states that:

> Muslim immigration into Canada is like
> depositing so many Islamic droplets into
> a sea of unbelief.... Further so much
> of Islamic tradition is perpetuated by
> reliance on the force of shame, that is,
> by an atmosphere of communal
> participation which is certainly
> difficult to generate when one's group
> is both few in number and scattered.
> (p.109)

Regarding which Muslims are likely to continue their

practice of Islam in this "sea of unbelief", Barclay says:

> ... the more marginal Muslims, the less
> committed to Islam, are more willing to
> give up the security of the Muslim world
> for the attractions of the unbelieving
> world. I have no data to demonstrate
> this explicitly but I present it as a
> hypothesis which should not be ignored
> in considering the religiosity and
> adaptation of the Muslim immigrants to
> Canada. (p.101)

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Specifically referring to Muslim students on Canadian

campuses Hadad (1978) states:

> Discussions with Arab students on
> Canadian campuses showed that there is
> an initial rise in the sense of Muslim
> identify among this age group upon their
> arrival in Canada. This is attributed
> by the students to their shock at
> Canadian sexual promiscuity as well as
> such practises as drinking and eating
> pork.... Religion offers refuge from the
> temptations of society. (p.93)

Hadad (1978) also observes that the sexual freedom in

Canadian society is a source of great stress for Muslims:

> Sexual freedom in Canadian society is a
> source of stress for committed Muslims,
> especially bachelors. Since Islam
> considers a sex act out of wedlock as
> adultery to be punished by stoning to
> death, even the shaking of hands with a
> woman would necessitate the performance
> of ablutions [ritual washing before
> performing prayers] for a conservative
> Muslim. (p.78).

Hadad explains that Islam:

> ... advocates the disciplining of
> sexual instincts and desires and the
> channeling of their fulfillment in the
> marriage relationship. (p.80)

Regarding other Canadian practices, such as dating, Barclay

(1978) notes:

> Dating, particularly the practice of a
> young man and a girl going off some
> place alone, is unheard of [in Muslim
> majority countries] as is the practice
> of boys and girls dancing as a single
> couple and unchaperoned. In Canada all
> of this is changed. (p.105)

Hadad describes the difficulties Muslims have in trying to

adjust themselves to the Canadian context:

> All Muslims I interviewed agreed that it
> is easier to be a Muslim in an Islamic
> country. For in Canada, the Muslim's
> commitment is tested daily and any
> justification he provides for deviation
> from the ideal and participation in a
> secularized life takes him out of the
> domain of Islam. (p.80)

However, Hadad feels that friends can help Muslims cope in

this new environment:

> ... This network of friends acts as an
> emotional and psychological ghetto that
> affirms personal identity and social
> solidarity which the suspicious Canadian
> culture... fail[s] to provide. (p.92)

Barclay concludes his article by saying:

> The balance of evidence supports the
> thesis that Islam as a religious system
> inhibits its members from full
> assimilation to the Canadian context,
> but this is as it should be since the
> Canadian context is, after all, probably
> best described as "secular Christian";
> it is not the multicultural community
> taken in any literal sense. (p.112)

It seems, therefore, that it is important to bear this
difference in belief, and in worldview, in mind when
undertaking research with students who have been raised in
an Islamic milieu as, whether they are practising or non-
practising Muslims, they still have an Islamic
consciousness.

Summary

From this review of the literature it can be seen that both
quantitative and qualitative research methodologies have
been employed in order to understand the adjustment process
of foreign students. However, the quantitative approach has
so far been more popular than the qualitative approach.

Lazarus' contention (1976:17), discussed earlier, regarding
the importance of individual personality in the adjustment
process has important implications for adjustment studies in

the sense that they should, whenever possible, take into
account the personality of the individual and the role this
plays in an individual's adjustment process. A qualitative
methodology by virtue of its nature more readily lends
itself to accommodating the viewpoint and individual
personality of participants in a particular study. The two
broad interview questions used in this present study also
allowed individual students to respond in a way in which
they were able to express their individual personality.

Even though the author of this present study was careful not
to entertain any preconceived notions regarding the Libyan
students' experiences in North America, she did anticipate
that, as Libyan society and North American society are so
different, Libyan students' adjustment to this society
would have been a challenging process.

Also, as many themes seem to appear again and again in
adjustment studies;, and as some themes, such as adjustment
to weather, food, language, and living accommodation are
somewhat obvious, the researcher in this present study did
hope to uncover less-discussed areas that have not
previously appeared in the literature. Because of her close
relationship with the Libyan students (Chapter One), she

also felt they would trust her enough to be more open and
honest than might be the case with an interviewer they were
not familiar with.

Chapter Three presents the findings on the sociocultural
adjustment of the Libyan Muslim students in this study.

Chapter Three

Sociocultural Adjustment: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the adjustment

process of twelve Libyan Muslim university students studying

in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The major question in this study is: How do Libyan students

cope with an unfamiliar sociocultural/educational setting?

In order to explore this area the interviewer asked students

to answer two questions:

1. Tell me about your adjustment experiences in Canada.

2. How have you coped with these situations?

This chapter will address the sociocultural aspects of

Libyan student adjustment, and how students have coped in

this area. Chapter Four will concentrate on the area of

academic adjustments and how students have been able to cope

in that area.

In this chapter the results are arranged in themes to

present a composite picture of Libyan students'
sociocultural adjustment experiences in Anglo-Canadian
Society. The major themes in this chapter on sociocultural
adjustment were selected based on their reappearance in and
across student transcripts, and on the basis of emphasis in
that certain themes seemed to be given more 'emphasis' than
others by students. This was reflected in the amount of
time individual students spent discussing certain topics.
These major themes form the basis of this chapter. Themes
which are not major, but which relate to major themes are
presented within the context of major theme headings.

Consequently, three major themes will be addressed in this
chapter: Religiosity and Religious Beliefs, Friendship, and
Male-Female Relationships.

Quotations from student transcripts form an essential part
of this chapter. As much as possible the interviewer has
allowed the students to speak for themselves; therefore, the
focus of this chapter is descriptive rather than
interpretative. This is in keeping with the researcher's
aim of seeking understanding - verstehen - rather than
viewing the data through the lens of preconceived
hypotheses concerning Libyan Muslim students' adjustment
experiences.

As English is the second language of these Libyan students, the researcher has, whenever necessary, inserted words - in square brackets - to clarify meanings. However, she was careful at all times not to change the students' intended meanings. In most cases, where the students have expressed their meanings in unique but understandable ways, the interviewer has left their words untouched as this self-expression underlines their perspectives and feelings regarding their adjustment processes.

Adjustment Experiences

Religiosity and Religious Beliefs

During the course of this study it became evident to the interviewer that the students' religion, Islam, had and continues to have a major impact on their adjustment to Canadian society.

Libya is a Moslem majority society. When Libyan students arrive in Canada they become a minority in a secular society with a Judeo-Christian heritage. Because Islam is not only a religion but a way of life, it is reflected in, and has an impact on, the every day lives of Moslems; for example, their interpretation of events, the way they dress, their eating habits, their daily prayers, and so on. Even though

not all of the Libyan students are practising Moslems, it
was apparent throughout these interviews that each has an
Islamic consciousness in the sense that they have been
raised in an Islamic tradition and belief system and their
world view reflects this. And, whether practicing or non-
practicing Moslems, each student's comments during the
course of our interviews reflected a deep respect for Islam,
and the Islamic way of life.

Some students were able to articulate the role of religion
in their adjustment process in Canada:

> Well, my adjustment was one hundred
> percent from my belief ... You are free
> to do everything [in Canada versus
> Libya], so only one thing protects me.
> When I came here, I was around twenty
> ... everything I could do, but the only
> thing to protect me from these things
> which I see as evil is the religion....
> Behind the adjustment was my faith.
> (Student I, pp.5,6, and 36).

> We always think and judge things by our
> religion.... So Moslems they judge,
> they say things, they look at things by
> their religion. (Student J, p.43)

Most students seem to have undergone some kind of crisis of conscience since they have been living in Canada. Because of the freedom here and the lack of societal restrictions compared to Libya, most students feel that it is difficult to be a `good' Moslem in North America. Those students who felt they had succombed to the temptations of the West feel tremendous guilt about their state:

> I used to pray, even when I came here. But not for very long, because I started to drink, and the rest of it... so that's one reason why I stopped [praying] which really shouldn't be a reason. (Student K, pp.5-6)

> Our society is, of course, religious; the traditions are religious; and here it's absolutely different and some people don't even have religions here. (Student G, p.12)

> ... I don't practice [Islam] I'm ashamed to say. I'm going to the bars and I'm going out with girls and stuff which my religion forbids. You should wait until you get married and stuff, but I can't help it. It's very difficult for me... I don't feel good about what I'm doing but I can't stop it. But I feel stronger about my religion. I respect the religious guys very much.... They give me hope, and they make me proud of my religion. (Student H, pp.14-14)

I think the hardest thing, you know, is
adapting to the society here.... I
started drinking and stuff.... It's very
tempting, especially if you don't have a
strong faith. (Student K, p.3)

When one considers the relatively restricted lives most of

these students lived in Libya, it is not surprising that

they would have difficulties adjusting to the comparative

freedom in North American society, especially as most of

them lived sheltered, family-centered lives before coming to

study in Canada as is pointed out by the following student:

I stayed very close to my family in
Libya. By 9 p.m. I would be home except
for Ramadan; then we stayed out later.
(Student E, p.15)

It became apparent during the course of this study that

there are two separate groups of students in Winnipeg: those

who are currently practicing Islam, and those who are not.

Hence, the reference to the 'religious guys' in the above

quotation. The ones who are not presently practicing Islam

refer to those who are as 'the religious guys', and they

have a deep respect for these students. However, some of

the students who are now extremely devout practicing Moslems

also had their struggles at the beginning of their North American experience:

> The religious guys – they tried other parts of life: going out, drinking, anything. But then, because they were strong in their religion, and because they realized what's good and what's bad, they went back to religion. They became really strict, like .... He used to drink and everything, but then when he realized it, and suddenly – just in one day – everything is changed. (Student G, p.25)

> The first year, maybe, I went out and had fun, whatever that is, but when you really think deeply about it... you really find yourself in deep trouble; even your studies are not going well because you feel guilty inside that you're not doing the right thing... You think deeply ... and that's why I say, the more I stay here, the more I know about Canadians, about myself... the stronger I get.... (Student L, p.17)

Some students feel that the practicing Moslems amongst them have life a little easier in North America as they are not

as liable to be involved with Canadians and Canadian culture
and lifestyle:

> You find it is a little easier for the
> deeply religious guys because they don't
> actually hang around with as many
> Canadian friends as the medium religious
> guys. They are facing less problems
> than we are.... I would say it is
> easier for them because they don't get
> into too many involvements with others,
> and that makes it easier for them.
> (Student F, p.10)

The North American experience for many of these Libyan
students has reinforced the value of their own cultural and
religious beliefs as opposed to the 'values' they see
reflected in North American society:

> I think my religion now is much better
> than when I thought of it before I came
> here. When I came here I thought they
> [Canadians] are really modernized and
> everything is good here. But now I
> think it's nice to have our religion to
> be very, very strong. You know what I
> mean? Like, no drinking, or drugs, or
> anything; that's a clean society.
> (Student G, p.14)

> Drinking is okay here, but forbidden in
> my society.... Now I understand it's
> prohibited because of its damage to
> society; its destruction of principles
> here. How it destroys the family, and
> so on.... Now I have more understanding
> of that concept. It's not just a
> religion now, but a fact of life.
> (Student H, p.39)

> ... In Libya, we hear about these things
> but we didn't see them. Here, it's like
> we see what happens when people do this
> and that; how it ruins families.
> (Student A, p.19)

Those students who do not practice their religion on a daily

basis at this time still take part in major religious

events; for example, the month-long fast called, Ramadan:

> That's one thing I do [fast for
> Ramadan]. I've been doing it for a long
> time, since I was only young....   I
> would be really, really ashamed if I
> didn't. That's one thing I never, never
> fool around with.... It's like the one
> thing that we always hang in there; it
> always, you know, keeps you going. It's
> what you believe in.   You can't just
> give it up or anything.   (Student K,
> p.18)

Students who have adopted a more Western lifestyle are

painfully aware of the fact that their beliefs clash with

the type of lives they now find themselves leading:

> I'm a Moslem and Islam is my religion
> ....   Islam is important, and it's kind
> of a strong religion, and it talks in
> many ways about society, money, life
> .... (Student J, pp.42-44)

However, when this particular student was asked how he feels

about his present lifestyle, his answer echoed the feelings

of many students:

> It bothers me, yeah, because I'm still
> thinking that way. I'm thinking like
> fooling around with women and drinking
> because it says in the Koran in Islam
> that it's bad. Logically, it's bad.
> But, I like this way. And maybe that's
> why it keeps bothering me. It's really
> tough. There's lots of guilt there....
> (Student J. p.45).

Another student explains this guilt feeling further:

> You see, if a person is a Moslem, if
> he's a Moslem and practicing Islam, most
> of his time he will be just fine ....
> But if this person is not practicing he
> will be desperate most of the time, even
> though he can pretend he's happy and he
> will go to bars or to dances, or
> whatever.... But when he comes back
> [home] again, he will talk to himself;
> he'll know exactly what he's done wrong.
> I mean we have that conscience, the
> right conscience, but sometimes the
> desire comes over .... (Student A, p.53)

Other students also mentioned feelings of guilt:

> ... because you feel guilty inside - you
> know you're not doing the right thing.
> (Student L, p.17)

> There's lots of guilt there... I just
> push it away. (Student J, p.46)

This guilt seems to be alleviated when students follow their beliefs:

> When I do things I'm supposed to, I feel very, very secure, like everything is fine.... At peace. But if I do something I'm not supposed to do, like drinking or going with girls, or doing drugs, or whatever it is, I feel very bad, and that's for sure because I've experienced some of these things. Actually, you not only feel very bad and are in a bad psychological situation, it's also very bad academically because it affects your studying; it affects everything ... (Student A, pp. 20-21).

Students also feel that they have to be constantly on guard during their stay in North America, in order to protect their beliefs and leave this country with their faith 'intact":

> I am careful you know. I have to be careful. So I have to be aware... to be strong in my belief. To remember my religion always. (Student B, p.16)

> I'm trying to be a good Moslem but I'm struggling, really I'm struggling. I hope Allah will help me to get out of this country clean - I mean, clean of sin.... It's very difficult. (Student I, p.62)

From the comments of these students, it was apparent that religious beliefs play a major role in their perception of North American society and in their overall adjustment process.

This Islamic consciousness also has an impact on students' relationships with Canadians.

Friendship

Although some of the Libyan students said they have Canadian friends, in general, the Libyans tend to remain within their group. In friendship also, the Libyans' world view and religious values seem to play a major role. There are many factors which seem to prevent the Libyans from becoming closely involved with Canadians. For example, the finer points of language, cultural differences, and different world-views seem to prevent close ties between Libyans and Canadians:

> Since we really don't know that pure English to really communicate or to meet people... we don't know meanings or expressions of being a friend here... We're still isolated. I have friends here who are Canadians, but I'm not relaxed at all; like there's still missing points so I can't say it's really friendship. It's hard to get it really because of the language, different traditions, and different thinking.... The way of thinking is different. Also, it could be the religion, because we're thinking in the Islamic way. So it's like we judge everything in our own way .... (Student J, pp.15-18)

> Moslems ... they look at things through
> their religion. So the way of thinking
> is different. (Student J, pp.42-43)

Another student put it this way:

> I don't seem to know what the difference
> is but they [Canadians] handle things
> differently from the way we do. They
> think about life differently.... So
> it's different views. (Student D,
> p.94).

Some students pointed out the more practical everyday

differences in interactions in this country compared to

Libya. For example:

> Back home when you shake hands with your
> friend, we consider that a very good
> habit that you care about your
> friend.... But, here if you shake hands
> with your friend, it's considered silly
> or something. And, especially if you
> put your arm around your friend or
> something, they consider it some other
> thing as we have already faced from
> Canadians from the very beginning. They
> thought we were `gays' or something.
> (Student F, p.2)
>
> That's why I stick with my Libyans....
> to be with Canadians ... you must be
> more materialistic .... They're much,
> much more materialistic. That means if
> they don't pay for you, you don't get
> mad. Or, if you go some place, don't
> worry, don't pay for him. Don't feel
> ashamed that you don't pay. That's, I
> guess, what I'm doing now. Now I don't
> care with Canadians; okay, I go to the

>   cafeteria, I pay for myself ... but with
>   Libyans I wouldn't do that. (Student L,
>   p.12).

Because of this consciousness of differences between

themselves and Canadians, Libyan students seem to prefer to

consult with other Libyans if they need help in any way.

When asked if he would go to his Canadian 'family' to ask

for friendly advice, one student said:

>   They don't know everything about me, you
>   see. We are completely different. They
>   are English, I am Arabic.   They are
>   Christian, I am Moslem; they are from
>   North America, I am from the Middle
>   East; so you have to consult somebody
>   else who's the same background, the same
>   religion, to be better.   (Student B,
>   p.19)

Because of these differences, the Libyans feel they would

have to give up too much if they want to be close friends

with a Canadian:

>   If you want to make friends with them
>   [Canadians]   you have to give up your
>   differences, your principles .... They
>   have, of course different culture and
>   different thinking and so on.... What
>   they think about is just going to bars
>   and so on.... I like it better to stay
>   with myself, and with my own friends
>   than just joining Canadians and giving
>   up my principles and differences.   I
>   think my principles and differences are
>   more valuable than their fun... I would
>   be troubled if I didn't have my Libyan
>   friends. (Student L, p.8)

This particular student had tried to make friends with

Canadians during the beginning of his sojourn in Canada but,

again, he found a clash of values:

> I really didn't like it because the
> situation would involve me with things
> that I don't like. The only thing they
> would ask you is to go for a beer, or
> let's go have fun. That's the way they
> think and they wait just for Friday and
> Saturday. Most of them, I mean at the
> age of nineteen or twenty, that's all
> they think about. I mean seldom you
> find let's say good guys and I think
> it's part of their culture.... (Student
> L, p.10).

Another student pointed out how difficult it is for him to

find a `worthwhile' Canadian friend:

> It's important to keep contact with your
> friends.... I know by staying alone,
> it's really very, very hard.... I have
> to struggle more and more, but sometimes
> you can't find good friends from the
> university. It's very difficult,
> especially here [in Canada], really to
> find a friend that's really valuable.
> It's really difficult. (Student I,
> p.40)

A number of students also mentioned that they have learned

to deal with Canadians in one way, while they deal with

their Libyan friends in a different way:

> With Canadians, of course, I'm trying to
> be more open-minded because they are.
> So we talk about women, drinking, drugs,
> and maybe we go to a movie.... But when
> it comes to Libyans, because of our
> beliefs, there are things we shouldn't
> be talking about. For myself, I'm
> talking about these things because
> that's the way to deal with
> Canadians.... (Student J, pp.46-51)

> Take for example, the university
> cafeteria and the people are Libyans.
> If I am going to have coffee I ask if
> anybody needs some. If they are
> Canadians, I don't bother because I know
> this is their way of life. Not selfish,
> but almost. (Student C, p.46)

Perhaps, not surprisingly in view of the above, many of the

Libyan students said they did not have close Canadian

friends:

> It's not discrimination; it's just that
> I haven't found a Canadian who can be
> really a friend up to now.... I don't
> mean that the Canadians are not
> friendly, or they are not capable of
> being friends, what I mean is they won't
> be as friendly as a Libyan; that's
> almost for sure. (Student A, p.35)

Another student who was asked whether he had Canadian

friends said:

> Now I have them, yes. Most of the ones
> studying chemistry with me. But they're
> not as close as my Libyan friends.
> Because with my [Libyan] friends I can
> talk with them; I can get mad, and do
> anything with them. But with the
> Canadians you have to be uncertain about
> what you can do with them. For example,
> I don't trust them [Canadians] you know.
> So I have to be careful with everything
> I say with them. I try to be careful
> you know. (Student E, p.26)

This idea of not 'trusting' Canadians appeared in many of

the interviews even those of students who did have some

Canadian friends.

> Libyans have more trust..... It's the
> way we're brought up. (Student K.
> pp.67-68)

> My friends know who I am. But with
> Canadians I'm trying to be more polite;
> trying to be a representative for Libya
> and for Islam. (Student E, p.27)

> I can count on the Libyans more than the
> Canadians.... I'm not expecting
> anything from my Canadian friends.... I
> have respect for some... It's kind of a
> lack of trust, or whatever. I can count
> on the Libyans more that the Canadians.
> (Student J, 31-33)

Some students contrasted the nature of Libyan friendship versus the nature of Canadian friendship. One felt that while Libyan friendship is based on trust, the lack of trust between Canadians bothers him:

> We Libyans are very emotional people....
> When we say friend we mean it's almost
> like a brother, or even more than a
> brother. So it maybe sounds like silly,
> but it's not.... I mean a friend is
> just like when you are not there it's
> like you are there because your friend
> is there and there's no problems.
> Everything he wants, (he needs is a
> better word), you are capable of, you
> should do. But I didn't see this with a
> Canadian. I didn't. Maybe I will, but
> I don't know. I haven't so far...
> (Student A, p.36)

It is interesting that this student says "a friend is just like when you are not there, you are there". The researcher recalls an incident which happened when she was teaching this group of students during their first year at the University. She noticed one student was not attending lectures. When she inquired about this, he answered: "Why should I go; the others will be there." In light of the above student's comments, this answer now makes more sense. Also, as the Libyan students do tend to miss classes quite often, perhaps it can be attributed to the closeness of their friendship in that if one Libyan attends a class, there is no need for others to attend!

Another student commented:

> We are brought up to trust everybody,
> until they show signs that you don't
> have to trust them. The first
> impression we get on everybody is they
> are very nice people and we trust them
> and open our hearts to them and we talk
> to them. We show people how we feel
> towards them. We get our emotions out.
> There are a lot of situations without
> emotions here, even if two people care
> about each other or even if they are
> friends – it is just everybody keeping
> away from the other: you have your
> limits, I have mine. (Student D, p.93)

Other students differentiated between a Canadian's idea of

friendship and a Libyan's idea of friendship:

> Friendship here is just kind of
> materialistic friendship. There [in
> Libya] it's more than that. It's
> everything. A friend is a friend... one
> who helps you in trouble, any kind of
> trouble; saves you from many things;
> advises you to do things, I mean, good
> things. Here, friendship is just you go
> together, maybe do an assignment
> together, but when it comes to trouble,
> they usually avoid it. They usually
> stay away from it. (Student L, p.15).

> To us [the Libyans] money is nothing ...
> friendship is more important than money
> (Student K, p.13)

Yet another student felt that friendship with a Canadian is

conditional in the sense that if they do something for you,

they expect something in return:

> I think they [Canadians] fit perfectly
> in the 'trade friends' [category]...
> unless you give me something, I won't
> give you that .... Let's say I missed a
> lecture, okay? He won't say it in words
> of course but that's how he sees it. He
> won't give you the notes unless you give
> him some notes for other lectures first,
> or for the final exam or whatever.
> (Student A, p.37)

> When you go to eat with any Canadian
> friend, everybody pays for himself.
> (Student E, p.32)

Another student while talking about the value Canadians
place on money, said that Libyans place a higher value on
friendship than on money. Therefore, it is nothing to ask a
Libyan to borrow some money. But he says:

> I can't ask a Canadian.... They would
> think we were taking advantage of them.
> I think, even if they have thousands of
> dollars, they would not give it.
> (Student C, p.45)

This particular student was also contrasting the nature of
Libyan friendship versus the nature of Canadian friendship.
He felt that while Libyan friendship is based on trust, the
lack of trust between Canadians bothers him.

The next section presents the students views on male-female
relationships.

Male/Female Relationships

Another difficulty that presents itself to these Libyan Muslim students during their sojourn in North America is that of male/female relationships. As these students are young men of 'marriageable' age when they come to North America, this area is particularly difficult for them to cope with; especially as they come from a culture where they have not been used to dealing with members of the opposite sex outside of the family network. Here again, as in friendship, Islam plays a major role.

Upon arrival in Canada up to the present time, the major dilemma some students face is how to behave in light of the freer male-female relationships in this society:

> It was hard at first getting used to the freer relationships between the sexes in Canada. I wondered how I should be; whether I should act like back home and just do what I came for, my studies, and return to Libya, or be with a woman and get around over here..... I haven't found the right answer - the way it goes over here. (Student J, pp.25-27)

> For Libyan Muslims to come to Canada
> when they are not married, especially,
> very important, when they are single....
> Different culture, different society,
> different religion. Entirely different.
> They used to live with their parents,
> now they have, as some people call it,
> freedom. It's really - especially for
> the people who are good Muslims - it's
> really a very, very different life
> they've got to face. And they struggle.
> They've got to struggle, and God will
> help the people who try to be good
> Moslems. And the adjustment will be
> from that - everything will be from
> that. (Student I, p.60).

Another student recalls that some 'experienced' Libyans

students who had come to Canada earlier helped the new group

of students to understand how things are in this society:

> When I came to Canada, I was 19 years
> old you know. When you go out in Libya,
> it's not for drinks and girls you know;
> there's other things. When I came here,
> two friends came to us and told us that
> the things that you think you're going
> to do, they're bad.... They're going to
> harm you. For example, girlfriends,
> alcohol, drugs. Some listened, but some
> didn't. They [a former group of Libyan
> students] explained to us about religion
> and about what's going on here in
> Canada. So I think they helped us very,
> very much... (Student C, p.18)

Many of the students raised the point that in North America

one does not distinguish between male and female in the

sense that in this culture one is expected to converse with

a woman in the same way one would converse with a man. In

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Libya, it seems, a male would make some distinction based on

sex:

> ... before I came to Canada, I had the
> concept that females and males in
> Western countries are the same. You
> have to deal with them exactly the same.
> You don't have to adjust to a certain
> way for a female, and a certain way for
> a male. So, having that idea, I didn't
> really encounter any difficulties.
> (Student L, p.23)

> We were shocked [when we first arrived];
> here was the women's rights, like
> liberation or whatever they call it. So
> here you've got to respect the woman
> because the woman is half of the society
> here.... There's no distinction between
> men and women here except she's female
> and you're male.... So it was easier
> for us to learn about women here; to
> have girlfriend, or I mean, to adjust.
> (Student J, pp.25-27)

> If I deal with males, I deal the same
> way with females. But, of course, I
> avoided making friends with female types
> because I would become weaker towards
> them .... It's easier to give up your
> culture and principles with a female....
> And this happened actually with so many
> Libyans around here, in our group. They
> get stuck; not really stuck but, you
> know, they just become weaker and weaker
> and they find themselves in difficulty
> because it's not their own culture, so
> they have to give up too many things.
> And if you give up something that you
> like, you feel guilty.... So, for
> myself, I guess I avoided women or
> having anything to do with them.... I
> usually stick with the males. (Student
> L, p.24).

As reflected in the previous student's comments, the more

'religious' students seem to avoid associating with females.

Also, in contrast to male-female relationships in North

America, the students had the following to say about Libya:

> Back home ... you're accepting what's
> going on; also you're not thinking about
> fooling around or doing anything with
> women. First, there's no chance because
> nobody's giving you a chance, and you're
> not giving yourself a chance because
> that's the way it is. So you're living
> that way until you get married....
> That's the way back home, but here it's
> really kind of different and hard; it's
> really crazier. (Student J, p.26)

Furthermore, the concept of 'girlfriend' or 'boyfriend' is

completely foreign to these students and can result in

confusion:

> In Libya, we don't have girlfriends, you
> know. I liked it the first time, but now
> I don't like it because of my religion.
> When I first came, I liked it. [When I
> first saw an unrelated, unmarried male
> and female together] I thought: what's
> going on here - she's not your wife....
> (Student E, p.17)

> We don't dare have boyfriend and
> girlfriend before marriage [in Libya].
> Here they have it. (Student G, p. 12)

Sometimes, I don't feel comfortable when
I see or when I experience any of these
relationships. You feel that you are
away from them; they are thinking other
than what you are thinking.... It is
totally different from what I am used
to, and it confuses me.... It will
always confuse me. (Student F, p.9)

To go with girls and to go to bars are
completely forbidden in my country and
its even a shame you know if my family
hears of me doing that they would be
ashamed. They would be ashamed and
shamed at the same time .... A strong
belief inside [helps]. So I am
comfortable because I know I am the
right way. (Student B, p.8)

Another difficulty students have in this culture is

adjusting themselves to the way women dress in North America

compared to Libya:

Sometimes in Western culture they do
things which are forbidden in my culture
so this is difficult.... Like the girl
is wearing, you know, a mini-skirt....
If she speaks to me, I have to answer.
I can't tell her what to wear.... In
every Moslem culture, there's a
restriction between the men and the
women. Here, there is no restriction.
(Student B, p.6)

We didn't have that much contact with
girls before you know. And we didn't
know that girls were playing [in the
gym] in shorts and T-shirts. [At first]
We didn't play any sports we just
watched the ladies.... After a while -
a few months - I didn't feel anything
anymore [sexually]. I thought something
was wrong with me .... (Student E, p.6)

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We don't have mini-skirts and stuff....
It's just, you know, like the way my
religion is; it says the women should
wear *hijab*, and not show her beauty -
just to her husband. But here it's all
open, we have to get used to it.
(Student H, p.10).

There's not the temptation in Libya,
because women are covered; here...
wherever you go, you see them so you
feel like .... (Student H, p.12)

Of course, here, when you come you find
them [women] wearing mini-skirts, and
you'll be attracted to them very much.
You want to go out with them.... You
want to have a girlfriend like
everybody. So, it's hard to be
religious here. Even if you came
religious, you'll find it very hard,
unless you're going to go back home and
get married and bring your wife here.
But, without a wife, you'll be weak.
We're human you know. (Student H, p.11)

Indeed, even the way the men behave regarding clothing - or

lack of clothing - causes confusion for some of the Libyans:

In Canada, it's open showers. [When] I
went there [to the university gym shower
room] I found all the guys naked, you
know, no clothes. I said: "Oh, what's
going on?" I ran back to my friends and
said: "Something is wrong in that room
- all the guys are naked!"... [From
then on] I just sneaked down at 6 a.m.
and went to use the women's showers....
(Student E, p.4).

>   My [Canadian] roommate changed his
> clothes in front of me. He doesn't give
> a damn.... My family didn't do that
> kind of stuff. (Student E, p.5)

Because of the temptations in North America, and the desires

of the flesh, many students have gone home to Libya during

the summer months and married Libyan women:

>   ... some of the religious ones have
> married Moslems, Libyan women. That
> probably helps it a bit I would
> imagine.... Yes, for the guys, it's
> [sex] the biggest thing.... Drinking's
> not a big, big problem. But when it
> comes to women, I mean nobody can do
> anything about it. It just comes to
> you. I mean it's built in you. That's
> the toughest complication.... That's
> why most of the guys who are married
> usually have an easier time than the
> ones who are not married. Because it's
> tough; especially, in summer. I mean,
> you go out and you see all over, women;
> they're all over the place. I think
> it's tough. (Student E, pp.42-43).

Others have to continually struggle to try to control the

desires of the flesh and live their religious beliefs:

>   Well, for a guy like me in this stage,
> at this critical age, it's really
> stressful. It's really stressful. You
> will find it stressful because as a

human being I have desires, that's why
I'm trying to get married to fulfill all
desire... This is a human life, and
everybody has these desires and you want
to fulfill them. But you have to
control them, you can't live without
controlling them.... (Student I, p.36)

Students blame much of their predicament on the mores of

North American society:

If I was in an Islamic society, or in a
religious society, where women are
properly covered, I would never think
about this [sex].... It's from all
directions, from the society, from T.V.,
at the university. It's fighting all
the time. (Student A, 13)

He further adds:

It's always, from a sexual point of
view, a struggle. The only way you can
win this battle is by getting married,
and that's what the others [the rest of
the Libyan group] are trying to do... I
hope that I can get married this summer.
If I don't I don't know what to do.
I'll probably come back here and start
looking for a Moslem; a Canadian or a
Moslem. That's a terrible way, but ....
Student A, p.14)

Other students also experience difficulties in the area of

sexuality:

Let me be more explicit.... We are guys
in a very critical age. We have
desires. In Libya you can control them.
It's not like here. In Libya it's very

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easy to control them. You will not see
a lot of this stuff.... But here you
see explicit sexuality; in magazines, in
movies... For God's sake, it's
terrible. It's very, very tough.
That's why everyone who wants to be a
good Moslem gets married. (Student I,
p.64).

I think the most difficult thing to
handle in this society is the [sexual]
desire. Even though drugs and drinking
are still there, it's small compared to
this. (Student A, p.12)

If you are living alone, one of the
problems is to go astray... especially
in this society; especially for a person
my age. It's very tempting - you
understanding what I'm saying? (Student
A, p.11)

Other students feel that their experience in North America

has given them a greater appreciation for their own religion

and their culture:

I'm very thankful to God that I came
here so I know exactly why the women are
wearing veils and these things. It's
not only for males not to be tempted,

it's also good for the women because it
keeps their dignity.   If you go to
Portage Avenue right now, you'll see
some girls that are wearing tight, very
extremely tight, pants.   I mean, it's
ugly.   I wonder if that type of girl
would say that she has dignity anymore?
Maybe she is tempting; maybe she is
attracting a lot of males.   (Student A,
p.24)

Back home, you never think about it.
It's like we respect it.   It's part of
the society.... You're not thinking of
fooling around or doing anything with
women... First there is no chance
because nobody is giving you a chance,
and you're not giving yourself a chance
because that's the way it is...
(Student J, p.25)

When, during the course of conversation, the interviewer

asked if they would even consider marrying a non-Muslim,

Canadian woman, the students responded in a way that

reflects the importance they attach to being a Muslim:

You can have a relationship here, but
marriage would be very tough....   I'd
rather raise my children in a Muslim
society.   It's easier for the children
if both parents are Muslims. (Student K,
p.45-50)

I want to marry somebody who has the
same thing with my religion, because I
want my kids to have the same religion
as me.   (Student G, p.24)

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Another student had the following perspective:

> I think that if I get married here in
> Canada, how would my life be. Do I have
> to spend all my life in the kitchen? I
> don't have to do that back home, you
> know.... Even the way a woman here
> deals with her husband and with their
> friends, it's different from back home.
> Like here, I wouldn't say that this is
> happening everywhere, but you see
> adultery more than you would see it back
> home.... Women before they get married
> they go out and have fun; they meet
> people all the time and it sort of stays
> in their system, even if they get
> married. Like me, as a person, it gives
> me insecure feelings sometimes to think
> about marrying a Canadian and staying
> here. (Student C, p.95)

For those students who do date in Canada, the experience can
leave them feeling hurt and confused:

> .... sometimes you go out with a girl,
> she might - but it's a very personal
> thing. They have different ideas
> anyway. Sometimes, when you see her
> behavior with you, it's like you're
> number one in her life, and the next day
> you find her with someone else. The
> feeling she had yesterday seem to have
> gone.... You [people] have to
> appreciate what the word 'love' is....
> It hurts a lot. (Student F, p.31)

> The first one [girlfriend] wasn't for
> long. We were much different; I
> couldn't adjust to her. But the second
> one, I knew how to deal with because I
> had experience. It's like for kids here
> when they start their first boyfriend or
> girlfriend, they have trouble because

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they don't know how to deal with it, but
it takes time. But it wasn't hard to
adjust [to my second girlfriend].
Actually, she was adjusting to me more
than I was adjusting to her. (Student
G, p.12)

Some students commented on the misconceptions Canadians hold
regarding the position of Muslim women in general, and
Libyan women in particular:

People think that women are second class
there [in Libya]. They are not second
class. They are first class; the same
as men. But they look to women here
differently. More than there. I think
that we respect women more in Libya. We
respect women: if a woman is walking
past, I respect her. If a Canadian were
around he would make problems (by
whistling at her). This is one
difference. I don't think that men and
women are equal here. They are not.
(Student C, p.61).

Many of the students interviewed held similar opinions
regarding women in Libya versus women in Canada.

Summary

Most of the students seem to have done a lot of deep
thinking about their lives in Canada compared to their lives
back home; Islamic values and lifestyle versus the secular

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Christian lifestyle of mainstream Canadian society. Some

students have reached firm conclusions about where they

belong, as is reflected in the following verdicts some have

reached:

> The more I stay in Canada, the more I
> realize I should go back home. It's not
> the country where I should live.
> (Student L, p.13).

> In Libya we can relax. But here they
> are not Moslems, and even they
> [Canadians] are not all people of the
> Book (i.e. The Bible). (Student I,
> p.57)

> ... now I know what kind of people
> [Canadians] they are. I wouldn't really
> be deceived with these concepts with
> somebody telling me ... because that's
> right, they're more organized, they have
> advances in technology and so on. But
> in basic stuff they are down. They are
> nothing. So that makes me feel that my
> culture, my principle, is much, much
> better than theirs and now I feel
> superior, not just, as before,
> inferior... (Student L, p.37)

> I spent 18 years back home- my childhood
> or whatever, but I spent my adulthood
> here [in Canada], and I think that's
> what counts.

> I don't mind staying in Canada for a few
> years, but not for long. I mean, to
> adopt the Canadian culture to myself, no
> way. (Student L, p.22)

During the course of discussions with these students and,

later, reading through the tapescripts, the interviewer

could sense the bewilderment and confusion these young men
must have felt upon their arrival in Canada, and, in fact,
that some of them still feel. However, in one way or
another they have been able to adjust and cope in this
society. Their coping strategies are presented in the
following section.

Coping Strategies

Religiosity and Adjustment

Many students explained to the interviewer that they had
actually made a conscious choice about the extent to which
they were willing to adjust to Canadian society. These
choices were based on their religious beliefs:

> Does my Lord accept what I'm doing or
> not.... We're depending on our faith in
> Islam. And Islam allows us to do some
> things and not other things. Islam
> prevents us, or protects us, from doing
> bad things.... No laws or no rules will
> keep you from doing these things, except
> one thing, your faith or your belief....
> God protects you from these things.
> (Student I, p.7)

> We gain a lot of good things but there
> are a lot of bad things that we don't
> want to gain. We try to avoid them....
> I am keeping myself strong against the
> things that I don't want.... You take
> the good things and try to avoid the bad
> things. That's it. (Student F, p.6 and
> p.23).

> I am keeping myself strong against the
> things that I don't want. (Student F,
> p.23)

> I am careful, you know. I have to be
> careful because everything starts with a
> small thing... (Student B, p.16)

> It was easy for me to control myself; to
> do the right things or the bad things.
> It was my choice> (Student J, pp.12-20)

The Libyan students in this study were very conscious of the
fact that some of the members of their own group had
succombed to the North American lifestyle:

> Sometimes you find good people, bad
> people within your group. I don't say
> bad people, but people who have
> forgotten their rules, culture... So
> you come to a point where [you ask]
> should I join this group or that group?
> You find, let's say, good people who
> just avoided direct contact with female
> types or male types, you know:
> Canadians. (Student L, p.25)

Most of the students have spent a great deal of time
reflecting upon their own values versus the values they
perceive around them:

I look at the way they [Canadians] do
it, and I try to explain this to myself
- is this the right way to do it or
not.... I don't tell myself that when I
go to a bar I have to drink because I
don't think that is right for me and it
is against my religion and against my
values.... Sometimes you see things,
but you don't want to change the way
that you are doing it because I am
content and satisfied with the way I do
it - I think this is the right way so I
don't want to change it. Probably,
other things you have to change... I
choose what to adjust to. If I find
that this is the right thing, then I
have to adjust.... But other things
.... social things, I have to compare
them with the values I have. For
example, when I go to the university and
I go to the gym you know, if I walk to
the men's locker room, you just see
everybody taking showers, like you say,
naked.... If I knew that I was going to
die if I don't do it the same way that
others do - I wouldn't do it. When you
walk in there with shorts on, everybody
is looking at you. They think you are
weird or strange. But I just don't care
about that. I think this is the way I
should do it. This is something
personal. Nobody needs to interfere
with it. Nobody has to decide for me
what to do - this is the way to do it,
so I do it.... God gave us these
certain parts of the body not to show it
to anybody else. (Student D, pp.89-90)

During the time that I am spending here,
I am learning something new - whether it
is good or bad - but it is up to
yourself to judge this thing and whether
you want to try to take it into your
system or to adjust. (Student D, p.90)

Some students see both the `good' and the `bad' in Canadian

culture. They are willing to accommodate most things except those which interfere with their beliefs:

> If I were to live [permanently] in this culture, I would do anything else but not do anything that would change my personality or my beliefs. I'd rather not be involved in this. But I like this culture. There are a lot of good things but I don't want to get into having to give up my beliefs or something; I'm not going to do that. (Student F, p.6)

> We have to resist [temptation] and sometimes we fail to resist.... It depends on you and how religious you are, and on your strong belief or weak belief. (Student B, p.7)

When students make an adjustment to 'fit in' with Canadian society, many see this as something temporary, as the following student articulates:

> I did make an adjustment.... but this is going to be temporary. (Student C, p.66a)

Friendship and Support Network

Many students said they find it easier to cope in North America because they came here as part of a group. The particular group of Libyan students studying in Winnipeg are

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an extremely close and cohesive group as is mentioned by the following student:

> You know, it's funny but I think maybe between the Libyan students all over Canada, Winnipeg is probably the best place to visit.... The Libyans who live here are very, very nice. The guys here, we're still very close to each other... very, very close.... We do lots of things together. (Student G, p.33)

Therefore, many of the students rely on one another as supports when problems arise and, indeed, to prevent problems arising:

> Prophet Mohammed says in one of the *hadiths* [traditions and sayings of Prophet Mohammed] that the wolf will not attack the sheep if they are in a group.... So, if you stay alone and if you don't mix with your people then that's it. I mean it's easier to be affected; it's much easier for you to be affected. (Student A, p.22)

> I think coming in a group is much better.... It gives you more confidence. (Student G, p.10)

Sometimes, the fact that students are in a group of co-nationals seems to inhibit reaching out to those outside of their group, for example, Canadians:

> I didn't really have to make too many adjustments because we came as a group, and we stick together so I didn't really

have to go out of our group. We didn't really deal with, at least not me, many Canadians.... I didn't really transfer completely from Libya because I still have a small Libyan group, so I feel that I'm still in Libya.... So I didn't really go out completely from my culture.... If I came alone, I would be in big trouble now. (Student L, p.20)

For many students, when they first arrived in Canada, they found the support and advice of a previous group of Libyan students extremely helpful:

There were some Libyan students here before us; they helped us. They spoke English because they had been here long enough to learn the language so they helped us with [finding] apartments, and to communicate. (Student H, p.1)

They said we should worry about school and about our religion....They explained their experience, you know. They said: "We did everything. We did drugs; we had girlfriends; we drank all the time; we went to bars all the time. But, it doesn't work. You're going to fail in future, in school. You will be like a very bad guy.".... I thought about it seriously because I was thinking about doing all this stuff, I thought it was a shame not to have a girlfriend.... But when I started going with my friends... I saw the girl is not good, you know, just – can I say it? – for sex. So, I said to myself I would try to be careful.. The first week we went to a social bar. And for the first time in my life, I danced. It was a really bad experience. (Student E, pp.19-20)

Depending on individual personalities, some students prefer to solve problems on their own, some rely on the support of

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their Libyan friends, and others tend to push their problems aside and ignore them:

> Most of the time I try to solve a problem myself - no matter how big it is. If I feel like it's out of control or I can't do it on my own, I have Libyan friends here that I can trust, and one Canadian friend I really trust.... If it is a problem in school, then you would go to anybody - Canadian or Libyan friends. But if it was a problem of social things, sort of personal things, I don't think my Canadian friends would understand it.... The [Canadians] handle things differently from the way we do. They think about life differently. (Student D, pp.91 and 94)

Perhaps the remarks of the following students are a reflection of cultural beliefs that one should not air problems in public but deal with them oneself:

> There's some problems I don't usually talk about them, most of them, when I feel they are really personal. I feel like I can handle them myself.... (Student G, p.43)

> Sometimes I don't talk about my problems. I try to solve them by myself.... Problems are something you have to deal with yourself.... (Student J, pp.31-32)

However, it could also reflect the fact that in this new situation students do not have the support network they had

in Libya and, therefore, have to develop alternative coping

strategies like self-reliance:

> Back there [in Libya] we live with our
> family almost all our lives until we get
> married and have children, but here you
> live on your own.... Here, it's like, I
> had to be independent, I had to count on
> myself.... most of the time you have to
> make your own decisions.... I think
> that's the biggest thing I learned from
> Canada, living by myself, being
> independent. (Student G, pp.19-20)

Other students try to avoid problems, or rely on co-national

friends for assistance:

> The most important thing for me is not
> to have problems. Try to avoid every
> single problem by choosing the right
> way.... Before I do something, I think
> about it first [or] go to the Libyans
> and ask about it .... (Student L,
> p.34)

> The Libyan friends, they are very good.
> They are from my background, so I
> consult them. ... Sometimes you have to
> speak to somebody or it's hard to keep
> it in your heart. You explode. (Student
> B, p.19)

> I always ask my friends what they think.
> I ask them what's the right thing to
> do.... Actually, we share our
> experiences you know. If something
> happens to a friend and they tell us,
> then we try to adapt to it. (Student E,
> p.38 and p.44)

Libyans, because we understand each other, you know. We have the same religion. Almost, we are the same families so we understand each other. More than somebody else would understand. Even this family. They don't know everything about me, you see. We are completely different. They are English and I am Arabic. They are Christian and I am Moslem. They are from North America, and I'm from the Middle East. So you have to consult somebody else who's the same background, the same religion, to be better. It's not always better, you know, but it's better anyway. (Student B, p.19)

Coping - mostly yourself - that is the most important thing...that is the first thing I would do. Then talk to friends - Libyan friends to be quite frank ... sometimes I would ask Canadians. There is one thing since we are talking frankly here, even for Canadians even if he is your closest friend, if he does a favor or something, he will remember it. Frankly, he will remember it and say that and that he did this and that. Even if he doesn't say it, he will just start getting points from him. (Student F, p.29)

I really ignored them [problems] ... generally there's not that many people to talk with and you just keep it inside yourself and it makes it worse. (Student K, p.5)

Coping with Sexual Matters

As was mentioned by the students in the first section on
male-female relationships, one of the most difficult areas
these students have had to cope with is the area of their
own sexuality. As also mentioned previously one way
students cope is by returning to Libya during the summer
break and getting married. Another way is by resisting
temptation:

> We have to resist [temptation] and
> sometimes we fail to resist.... It
> depends on you and how religious you
> are, and on your strong belief or weak
> belief. (Student B, p.7)

> It [fasting] helps because you're
> fasting for the sake of God. So by this
> you look at it like it's a spiritual
> thing. (Student H, p.12)

> Here, it's very, very tough.... That's
> why everybody who wants to be a good
> Moslem ... has to get married.
> (Student I, p.64)

> So that's why I want to get married and,
> you know, that's it for me. (Student H,
> p.31)

> If we lose our reason for our desires,
> we'll be like animals....It's important
> to keep contact with your friends... I
> know by staying alone, it's really very,
> very hard.... I have to struggle more
> and more. (Student I, p.35 and p.40)

[Students] before they come here, they should prepare themselves.... They should prepare them before they send them here. Prepare them so they'll be strong. (Student I, p.66)

I avoided making friends with female types because I would become weaker towards them than maybe with males. It's easier to give up your culture and principle with a female... So I actually avoided that... And it happened actually with so many Libyans around here in our group... They just become weaker and weaker, and they find themselves in difficulty because it's not their own culture, so they have to give up so many things. And, if you give up something that you like, you feel guilty... Or you go with them and you become a Canadian. (Student L, pp.23-24)

I play karate, and body-building. But still, still 'thinking' that's my problem. I think a lot. I don't sleep enough.... So it's really stressful. Sometimes, I don't sleep at all. It's really wearing... It's affecting me really. I hope I will get a change because it's really bad. Maybe it's loneliness... (Student I, 42)

Even though dealing with the question of sexuality seems to cause students the most stress in this culture, they also have the added worry of wondering what is happening to their families back home:

It's hard, and I always think about this. I don't want her [my mother] to die and her last wish is to see me. I would like to be with her. (Student K, p.64)

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The students who seem to be more involved in the sense that they mix with Canadians and have Canadian friends seem to cope by stressing to themselves the similarities between 'Canadian' beliefs and Islamic beliefs:

> There are things that, if you come from the religious point of view, you will find that Canadians do things that are related closely to the Islamic religion. If they tell me they are going to be here at 2 p.m. then they are here at 2 p.m..... Here there are a lot of good things that we like in Islam... (Student F, p.25)

Summary

In one way or another students seem to have developed coping strategies to help them adjust to North American society. The most common coping strategies seem to be: choosing what to adjust to based on religious perspective; relying on one's self or friends; ignoring problems; avoiding any unIslamic practices.

The next chapter will present the students' academic adjustment experiences and how they have coped in this area.

Chapter Four

Academic Adjustment: Findings

Introduction

This chapter will focus on Libyan students perceptions of

their academic adjustment in Canada and how they have been

able to cope in this area. This information is a result of

the same two questions which were used to gather the

information presented in Chapter Three:

1. Tell me about your adjustment experiences in Canada.

2. How have you coped with these situations?

The first part of this chapter presents information

regarding academic adjustment; the second part of the

chapter presents students' views on how they have coped in

the area of academic adjustment.

In this chapter, as in Chapter Three, the results are

arranged in themes to present a composite picture of Libyan

students' academic adjustment. Here also, themes were

selected on the basis of reappearance in and across student

transcripts, and on the emphasis students gave to particular

areas. For example, emphasis was mainly reflected in the

length of time students spent talking about a particular

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topic which held importance and meaning for them. In the

case of academic adjustment, the themes in this chapter

include all the main themes identified in this area. Unlike

the chapter on sociocultural adjustment, the main themes in

the area of academic adjustment were not difficult to

identify and present in full as, in general, students spent

far less time talking in this area than they did in the area

of sociocultural adjustment. Themes which are not major,

but which are related to major themes are presented within

the context of major theme areas.

The major themes presented in this chapter are: Language,

Language and Academic Studies, General University Studies,

and Expectations versus Reality. As in Chapter Three,

quotations from student transcripts form the basis of this

chapter.

Adjustment Experiences

Language

The first language of these Libyan students is Arabic - a

language they love and revere not only because it is their

mother tongue, but also because it is the language of the

Holy Koran. Arabic is a very different language from

English. In the written mode, for example, some of these

differences are: Arabic is written from right to left on the

page rather than from left to right as is English; the
written form of Arabic is written through the lines on a
page rather than on the lines; there are no capital letters;
vowel sounds and diphthongs are often left out in the
written version of Arabic and, therefore, one often finds
that Libyan students will forget to include vowels when they
write in English. They might, for example, write the name
Mohammed as 'Mhmd', but still pronounce it as Mohammed. For
these and other reasons, in general it is a much greater
task for an Arabic speaker to learn English than, say, it is
for a Spanish speaker whose first language structure is much
closer to that of the English language. Hence, it is
necessary to take these aspects into consideration when
determining the various degrees of difficulty Arabic
speakers encounter in learning English.

Although the Libyan students in this study had taken English
classes for three years in their high school studies in
Libya, they had mainly studied English grammar. Therefore,
upon arrival in Canada, they had some knowledge of the rules
of English grammar but had never spoken the language, and
they had little or no experience in listening to spoken
English, particularly the North American dialect of English.

When they arrived in this country, many students felt that

their progress in English was delayed because they were in a
group and, therefore, spoke in Arabic most of the time:

> The only thing I knew was "door", "TV",
> "ABC". Very limited. I couldn't make
> sentences... you can't do anything that
> way; like make a conversation or
> anything. Like you know individual
> words but you can't understand anything.
> [In Libya] we studied grammar. We had a
> good program, but we didn't practice the
> language. When I came here I didn't
> know anything. (Student G, p.2)

> Our problem [when we first came to
> Canada] was that we stayed together
> instead of practicing our language....
> Most of the other guys, the bad guys,
> told us we should have girlfriends to
> practice our English. I was really
> worried about school you know, whether I
> was going to pass or fail, and I spent
> most of my time with my old friends, the
> Libyans, because I didn't speak English
> at all. I just know "yes" and "no",
> that's it.... It was very bad you know.
> I thought Canada was nicer than this.
> Even when we went to school and came
> back [home] we didn't study. I spent
> all my time with my friends. I felt
> like I couldn't stay alone, you know.
> (Student E, p.2)

> Even after three months I only knew how
> to ask questions, but I didn't know the
> names of food. So, I just said: Please
> give me this. (Student E, p.5)

> When we came we didn't speak English at
> all, nothing you know. Even though we
> learned a little bit in high school
> English. We know "hello", but they say
> "hi" here and we didn't know what it

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meant, so it was very difficult.
(Student H, p.1)

In high school we studied three years of
English But it's not that good because
we didn't have contact with the English
people, speaking English. Our problem
in English is talking in English. This
is really, really a problem. I mean,
you can't make friends and talk to the
people here, and you can't live with a
family. (Student I, pp.48-49)

At the university we stayed close to
each other, you know. We congregated
all the time just the group of us who
speak our language. We stayed all the
time together.   Because there were
twenty of us together in the same class
and there were no Canadians. If there
were Canadians we would have tried to
contact them. After a while a new group
came - French students from Quebec.
Actually, for me, the contact with them
was not that much. I preferred to stay
with my own group. Because I was afraid
I would make a mistake. (Student E, p.6)

This fear of making mistakes and embarrassing themselves

also prevented students from taking an active part in class

discussions during the first year or so of their studies:

In class I was quiet most of the time.
See, even though there's something I
would like to say in the discussion or
whatever, I felt like - okay, not this
time. So it's not just the language
barrier but I think it's shyness too.
It's not only shyness, maybe its fear.
Like, if you make a mistake you know how
you feel. I think everybody was trying
not to commit a mistake so we would not

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be embarrassed in front of the others...
We were just getting used to the system.
(Student A, p.2)

Depending upon individual personalities, at the present time
in their sojourn some students feel more comfortable with
English than others:

> When I study in English, I do a lot of
> thinking in English. Sometimes when I
> am solving a problem I start talking to
> myself in English: Let's do this; let's
> do that. (Student F, p.13)
>
> Until now it [the English language] is a
> little bit hard. Not that hard, but
> when we are together we speak in Arabic
> all the time. And, you know, we hang
> around with each other a lot. And that
> is another problem and that is why our
> English is not that good. We understand
> everything but we can't speak as well.
> (Student F, p.13)
>
> We understand the lectures entirely and
> the text book. We don't use the
> dictionary much. But still, talking
> with the people, we need the practice.
> (Student I, p.50)
>
> My English was bad when I arrived, and
> even now it's so, so. (Student L, p.28)
>
> Some people they find it [language] easy
> because they don't worry about it when
> they speak. For me it's hard because I
> always think about - I don't want to
> make mistakes. When you think about it,
> it's much harder than it is. In fact,
> it's easy, but when you think about it
> it's much harder. Like it's easy for
> somebody who came from, say, Libya to

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Canada who just doesn't worry about it;
don't be shy about it and you just learn
to speak it. (Student G, p.3)

I think that we had a problem with the
language barrier - between us and the
Canadians. Sometimes you say something
and they don't understand it, or they
might understand it the wrong way. So
you always have to be cautious
especially if you are a Libyan. In
Libya, I am talking in Arabic, my own
language, and I don't have to think
about things as much as I do here when I
have to think in English. Sometimes I
have to think of something in Arabic and
compare it to see whether it will fit in
this Canadian society. How am I going
to say this in English? Is he going to
understand it? What impression is it
going to have on him? (Student D, p.76)

You think sometimes they [Canadians] are
laughing   at   you   and   they   don't
understand what you're saying. So you
try to avoid them. (Student H, p.5)

The language was the main thing when I
first came, but it's okay now. People
sometimes can't understand you. You
have to repeat yourself and sometimes
they make you say it and they don't
understand the accent. It's not clear.
You know sometimes it's embarrassing.
People, they start asking you what you
are saying. (Student B, pp.1-2)

One student mentioned that he found Canadians very helpful

once they became aware that he didn't speak English:

Canadians were really nice in that case.
They would really help. They are
patient to listen. So if you don't speak

> English fluently, they wouldn't laugh or
> make you feel embarrassed... They
> wouldn't say lousy or whatever; they
> wouldn't really even give the impression
> of getting bored. They get interested
> once you don't speak English. They
> really help and that is really helpful
> for us. (Student L, p.32)

Most students said it took them about six months to feel relatively comfortable with the language.

Language and Academic Studies

As far as language and their university studies are concerned, in general, students do not see language to be much of a problem in their scientific studies. However, problems do arise when they are required to take Arts courses. For example, when they first entered university they were required to take an English composition course along with their science courses. They found the English course difficult because of the high language requirements in such a course:

> There's no difficulty [in university
> classes] except the English language in
> English courses and that's all. (Student
> B, p.22)

> Maybe in English courses [there's a language problem], but in science courses, no. It's always differential equation, numbers, ideas in physics, so you don't use the language in physics that much. It's very, very simple language in physics and math. (Student B, p.3)

> The English language [in English courses] was my only difficulty; (Student B, p.21)

But, as far as scientific language in science courses is concerned:

> Physics is Physics everywhere and Math is Math everywhere, and in fact I find it easier here [even with the language difference], and my marks are better than my marks in my country. (Student B, p.20)

> We understand the [science] lectures entirely and the text book. (Student I, p.50).

> In general it's very simple the scientific language in Math and Physics. It's not like English literature or poetry. They are difficult. (Student B, p.22)

To help them increase their knowledge of English, the Libyan students were required to take a special English-as-a-Second Language course which had been arranged for them when they first arrived in Canada. Many students had comments to

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make regarding this pre-University ESL course:

> Actually one difficulty you reminded me
> of is the English program we had. It
> was just, I wouldn't say terrible, but
> terrible if you compare it with other
> programs. Let's say, for some students
> in other cities they have good programs
> and so on. So even in their T.O.E.F.L.
> [Test of English as a Foreign Language]
> in the first months they scored 500 or
> something like that because their
> program was well-constructed; it wasn't
> based on business. Maybe ours was a
> kind of business, or lack of
> qualification of those who were
> responsible for us. For instance, I'll
> give you an example. One of the
> teachers that we had was an engineering
> student, and if you want to teach a
> language you need a very, very qualified
> teacher. It's not any person who
> understands English. I understand
> Arabic, but I can't teach it. So I mean
> if you want to teach English you must
> bring somebody who's called teacher, an
> English teacher. You don't bring in a
> student who knows English. So I
> considered that situation to be a kind
> of business.... They must get somebody
> because I'm paying money. I came here
> just to learn not just to cheat me with
> this. So one of these teachers was an
> engineering student.... I complained.
> I almost got a suspension for that
> actually. (Student L, p.28)

> The first year at the university, we
> didn't learn lots. I mean we found we
> were going much faster than the [ESL]
> course because we were supposed to be in
> a higher level than the course they are
> giving us. And I remember for one week
> we stopped going to school [boycotted
> classes]. No, not one week, it's more
> like five days, you know, we didn't want

to go to school because we wanted to
change the system there. Yes, we said:
that's it. We need something to write.
We didn't want to read the book. It was
a simple book and we had to go through
it a long time. We said we wanted
something more advanced because we felt
that we were not doing that much work.
I guess the other [Libyan] students
before us, the course was too advanced
for them. Then they got a different
idea about us. Like Mr. L. changed his
opinion about us. He had thought we are
all the same, all of us the same [as the
other group of Libyans]. (Student G,
p.37)

For various reasons, the students did not feel their E.S.L.

course was focussing on their real needs. They also felt

they had to spend too much time studying English:

The English course took us one year and
a half; I just expected it to be for one
year, and that's it because I'm not
going to an Arts [program]. That's the
point. Let's say if I'm going to Arts I
would need a stronger program for maybe
one and a half or two years... But if
you are going to science you really
don't need to know English perfectly.
Now, for instance, so many of the Libyan
students are 'A' students at the
university. They don't really speak
English fluently. They don't know
English perfectly because when you go to
books it's just scientific language; so
what do you need? That's my opinion,
okay? The general language you could
just pick it up from magazines, or
contact with people because you don't
really need it; you're not an English
person... your major is not English.
(Student L, p.31)

Everybody was planning to study hard...
But it depends you know on the
conversation and the way to communicate
with the people. They didn't
concentrate on that; that's what I
think. So all the time they put us in
groups, like all the Libyans, so we
spoke Arabic all the time. (Student H,
p.6)

I don't need to spend two years just in
a language program. Maybe if you're in
France and you learn English then maybe
we need two years. But in Canada, what
for? One year is enough. One year
would enable me to understand, let's
say, 95 percent of my studies at least.
The English should have an "emphasis on
science". If it had that emphasis I
wouldn't waste two years of my life just
learning English and let's say, in ten
years' I just forget all about it.
(Student L, p.32)

Also, many students arrived with their own theories about

how to learn English:

Like, at the beginning, we pushed
ourselves to memorize the vocabulary and
stuff, and to understand how to read and
to concentrate on new words. But when
you speak Arabic you can communicate
really good. When you start a
conversation with the Canadians you find
it difficult to express yourself
especially if you're thinking in Arabic
and you translate into English. It
takes time, you know. (Student H, p.5)

One of the main concerns at the beginning of the students'

sojourn was to pass the infamous T.O.E.F.L. This was an

additional source of stress these Libyan students had to contend with during their first months in Canada. Indeed, passing the T.O.E.F.L. seems to be an obsession with most international students who need a minimum score of approximately 550 on the T.O.E.F.L. in order to study at a Canadian university:

> Some guys [when they first came to Canada] they just wanted to pass the T.O.E.F.L. Some of them even started to memorize all the words in the dictionary which I think is stupid. Because it's not the way to learn it. (Student K, p.39)

In the case of some of the Libyan students in this study - the Atomic Energy group - their English-as-a-Second Language class was, strangely enough, an additional source of stress in their adjustment. According to their C.B.I.E. Contract (CBIE 1985-86:49), the language training program is considered a probationary period for these students; their future studies are dependent upon whether or not they succeed in the language program. As any second-language teacher-learner knows, these are not ideal conditions for language learning. In addition, the students expressed much dissatisfaction with the teachers in their E.S.L. course. In fact, they related the following incident at the beginning of their stay which caused them to be transferred to another University within the same city:

We complained about our [ESL] teachers.
We said: "You are not qualified
teachers. You have to bring us
teachers, good teachers; you have to
change this course; this is very simple
for us". They refused the first time,
but we asked our representative from
Libya to come here and we talked to him
and in just two weeks we were
transferred to the University of ....
(Student L, p.29)

Students also felt that their mastery of English suffered

because they would speak to one another in Arabic even in

English classes:

Even my friends were complaining to our
sponsor who came from Libya. They said
they didn't like the English course
because even in the days we talked in
Arabic. The teacher spoke in English
and we in Arabic. (Student E, p.46)

We always spoke in Arabic. I used to
ask my friends in Arabic: "What's this;
what's that". I still have problems,
but I'm getting better everyday. I
hope. The only problem I had with
English is because we talked to each
other in Arabic. (Student E, p.52)

The teacher asked us to speak English
all the time, but we didn't; we always
spoke Arabic; we stuck together and we
spoke Arabic. (Student H, p.4)

From the comments of the students it appears that language

was definitely a concern to them, especially when they first

arrived in Canada. Their disappointment with their initial

ESL training is still evident even though half of these

students have now been in Canada for six years.

General University Studies

Many of the Libyan students in this study expressed their

dissatisfaction regarding their lack of orientation and

preparedness for the Canadian University system:

> When I went to university we didn't know
> anything about it. For example, how to
> choose the courses, nothing. I
> remember, we were sitting down - about
> ten or more guys, and they [the
> university staff] just picked our
> courses for us; one course was chemistry
> and I remember at that time I told my
> coordinator that I didn't like chemistry
> and I don't think I will do well in it,
> but I'd just take the first course. She
> said I had to take it as in a Physics
> major, Chemistry is required. After 2-3
> months I found out that I didn't have to
> take it, so I dropped it. I was failing
> it .... Like in a way we weren't
> trained to handle the university system
> very well; we weren't prepared for it;
> like, introduced to it. Academically,
> we were prepared but not on how to
> choose courses. Nobody knew, except
> some friends. .... One thing I just
> found out about this year is you don't
> have to declare a major in your first
> year at school. You can declare it even

in the last year. Just last Fall I found out about this. If I had known it I would have taken some general course and then become more specific. (Student K, p.24)

The problem, the biggest problem I find here - we come back to adjustment, is our system is not the same as the other country's system. (Student I, p.11)

Other factors, such as how to choose courses, when courses are offered, and the expectation that university students are independent, self-motivated learners were also new to the Libyan students:

For school you have to take the courses on time. Like, you have to take number one before number two. Also you have to watch out because some course are offered one year and not the next... Back home you don't have to do that much... our school is kind of different from here. You know what you take and ... everything is arranged by people but here it depends on you personally, individually. (Student J, p.2)

In Libya all the students would study the same curriculum. There's no choice. (Student I, p.26)

It is different from back home. Here they rely on using projectors and things like that. Back home, it is more like work in the class. Like they write on the board. The notes here - it is up to you what you take down. What is useful to you and what is not; but back home the teacher would tell you what notes to take in your notebook - the ones that he thinks are important are on the board.

You take them down from the board
yourself. (Student D, p.79)

Some of these students, the Secretariat of Education group,
were required to take Grade 12 courses in Canada before
moving into the University system. Many of them saw this as
a waste of time:

> The Canadians they have a different
> system in high school. So I took the
> high school in Libya... When we arrived
> here they took some credits from what we
> had studied but they told us you have
> four courses to take in grade twelve.
> We saw this as wasting our time. Well,
> they have another system so it's very
> difficult, but this it was very easy
> because I took them [the subjects] in
> Arabic. It was not a big difference. I
> mean Math is Math in English or in
> Arabic. It's a matter of learning the
> symbols and this kind of stuff, but the
> circle is the same. We studied Newton's
> Law for example in Physics. Chemistry
> is also the same; the basic stuff, we
> studied the basic stuff in our high
> school. (Student I, p.19)

> Actually Canadian high school is much
> lower than our education in high school
> in Libya. For example, in geography
> they just know about Canada. And they
> just take elementary math. Actually, we
> took calculus in high school. The only
> thing is in high school [in Libya] we
> take too many subjects. Now, when I
> think about it, it's too much. They
> should make an adjustment. For example
> now I think Quadaffi's taking this into
> consideration. If you want to go to
> university for example to take chemistry
> most of your high school courses should
> be in chemistry. You shouldn't have to

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take history or geography. But still, I
don't know, because the Canadians don't
know their geography. (Student E, p.39)

Some students pointed out that high school in Libya is

equivalent to first or second year university here in

Canada. Therefore, they feel they are better students here

than they were in Libya:

In fact, I find it easier here. And my
marks are better than my marks in my
country. In high school I had a very
bad time in my country to get good
marks. Too much material, you know.
What we took in high school, sometimes
we have it here in university, second
year. And this is what happened to me
in physics. High school is very hard in
Libya. It is like second year
university or first year. It's very
hard. (Student B, p.21)

A number of students expressed dissatisfaction with their

field of study which, because of their Contract agreement,

is extremely difficult to change. They feel it is

extremely important that students be allowed to study in

their area of interest. The fact that they are not given

this choice has resulted in a range of different feelings

and views:

As you know we are Libyan. We are not
supposed to change our field or area of
study. Physics and Math are my majors.
Physics and Math are not difficult.

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Physics, maybe in a way, but not Math.
Math is the same and the study is very
easy.   Just study and you'll get good
marks and keep attending the lectures
and these kinds of things and you will
get a good grade. But if you don't like
the stuff, here is the problem, here is
the difficulty. I hope if they want to
send other guys they learn to look for
what they want; what they want to study.
It's very important, you know.   It's
very, very important the students choose
what they want to study - the area or
the field.   If I get married and I have
kids, or brothers and sisters and they
want to study undergraduate overseas,
I'm not going to advise them to do it.
Believe me I'm going to stop them from
doing this. This was a mistake, really
a mistake.   It's good from one way and
it's bad; everything has its advantages
and disadvantages.   The advantages you
will see the world.   You will see a
different culture. You will get a good
experience in your personal life....
The bad thing is for the student because
of the differences in the system, in
high school and the education level.
The student will take the responsibility
for that, unfortunately. It will not be
the principal or the government or
whatever who will take the
responsibility for that but the student
will pay for the agreement between the
governments or whatever. He will suffer
the effects. (Student I, p.21)

Students have different interests so
it's really bad thing to force them to
take courses. (Student I, p.27)

I'm doing okay.   It's kind of hard
though. But I'm doing okay which is not
bad, but I still hate it.   (Student J,
p.25)

You've got to control yourself; you
know, organize yourself because you have
these studies. It should be more
important that anything else. [Is it?]
No, not for me. I hate school. I hate
physics, just here [in Canada]. It
didn't start with me like that. When I
signed the contract to study physics, I
was just eighteen. And at that time I
just wanted anything to get out of
Libya. And when I came here the first
two years were all right, but then I
couldn't handle it. (Student K, pp.19-
21)

Some students feel so completely at odds in the field they

are majoring in and, therefore, it is almost impossible for

them to motivate themselves to succeed:

I had some other ambitions, but I think
it's quite late now.... And I was told
that you can't change.... It was very
strict, only Physics.... You have a
contract and that's it. I got stuck in
it [Physics]. I should have made the
best of it. I wanted to go to
university but now I realize that it's
sometimes better for us to go to these
colleges. (Student K, pp.22 and 35)

This dissatisfaction often results in extreme stress for the

student:

It was a really heavy thing for me to
just go to school, not only to go to
classes, but to enter the university.
For example, I started a Spring Session
course about a month and a half ago, and
I've only been there [to the university]
twice or three times just to pick up my

cheque.   Otherwise, I wouldn't go there.
                    It's very stressful.   (Student K, p.25)

This particular student has apparently failed a number of

courses.   When asked about the university's response to

this, he was rather vague and mentioned that the university

thought he had a problem because of the language difference.

However, Student K did not feel language was his problem;

rather, he is unhappy in his field of study.   It is usual

for students who are not doing well to receive a letter

regarding this matter from C.B.I.E.   However, in this

particular student's case, no further action seems to have

taken place.   Under the circumstances, it is rather

surprising that he is allowed to continue in his university

studies.

Many of the students who are unhappy in their field of study

are not doing well.   Added to this burden is the knowledge

and shame that their parents are kept informed of their progress:

> They know because they get the C.B.I.E. [Canadian Bureau of International Education] reports. I feel bad, but I can't do anything. (Student K, p.57)

Upon reflection, students feel there are advantages and disadvantages to university life in Winnipeg, Canada:

> I've never been to another university but I like it here. Because here the physics department has small classes and I think this is an advantage to the student, because he can talk to the profs anytime he wants. You don't have to make an appointment. Whereas there are big classes in other universities; you can't talk to your professor. You have to go through a secretary and make an appointment and you can't see him every time you want to. Here, like anytime, you just go and see him. (Student G, p.35)

> Actually, let me tell you some good things about this country, especially in the university. It is very straightforward. You work hard and you get the marks. If you don't work hard, you don't get anything. It is like that in Libya but it's more serious here. Sometimes there in high school, in the last year there, sometimes they push you up to 50 if you happen to be five marks behind. But here, it is a little bit serious - it is very good. Besides that, here they give everything. They believe in that, even the professors themselves believe that if you are there and you work you get your marks and

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that's it. But over there, sometimes
they escape from classes. It is more
comfortable to study here because there
are a lot of holidays there and
sometimes you don't even enjoy it.
(Student F, p.11)

The life in university is not like in
high school. It's entirely different.
In high school there's calm. I mean,
it's amazing. One step can change the
whole thing. University and high school
are totally different. Let me talk
about high school. In my high school we
were very close to each other. I mean
the students were close to each other
and they liked each other, especially at
that time and age, seventeen and
eighteen; you make a lot of friends....
The best years, the best stage of my
studies was the high school stage. So
when I entered university it was
entirely different. I'm not saying in
Canada or in Libya. Maybe in Libya it
would be a little bit different because
its the same culture, but even in Libya
we have foreign students. But, to deal
with the colleagues and the instructor.
In the high school you are very close to
the professor. You ask him things and
he asks you every day if you have done
your assignment or something like that.
But in university, no. University
professors wouldn't do anything, and
because of the different students,
different nationalities here; for
example, we have Chinese, Libyan,
Lebanese, Canadian, English, French –
students from all over the world. So
everybody tries to make friends, but I
notice it's bad everybody is in his own
world. Maybe outside you'll find you
make one or two friends, but really
relationships are very weird;
everybody's for himself and doesn't care
about others. University's entirely
different from what we had in high
school. So in university you're not

going to make friends like in high
school because everybody's grown up and
has friends already. If not, he tries
to get involved with people from his own
country or something like that. You
will see Chinese always together,
Canadians together.... You'll see a lot
of different people. But, with me, I
didn't find other friends I can rely on.
(Student I, pp.44-45)

I like it here. I really like it. The
professors are very nice people. You
can talk to them often and they are
really interested when you ask them
questions or something; they understand
what you are saying. They really
understand when a student wants to
understand something. They know when
people are just trying to fool
around.... I like the academic system
here. It is very, very good. (Student
F, p.12)

Actually I have had a really good
experience with this university. Last
November, I went to Calgary for a
project in Physics – undergraduate work.
It was really a very good experience.
From all the universities in Canada and
it is called an undergraduate physics
conference. Last year it was at the
University of Calgary. And I went with
another guy, an Ethiopian, to do this
experiment. And we took our conclusion
there and we were very glad because we
got the second place award. (Student F,
p.28)

I wasn't quite happy with the courses
that we took at the collegiate (pre-
University courses}. Like I had to take
Chemistry. I don't know why I took that
course. It would have been much better
if we had taken some computer courses
instead of Chemistry.... It was a
little bit disorganized.... There is

one thing to say about high school there
[in Libya]. The courses are a little
bit tough - not at the level of a boy in
high school. Like some of the things I
took in high school [in Libya] I am
taking them now in university, in second
year. That is why a lot of students
fail in third year of high school back
home, because it is a little tough in
high school there. When I read the same
book now I don't believe that I read
this in high school. I don't think that
I remember anything. I remember taking
it, but I am just surprised how I could
have answered these questions when I was
in high school. Actually it is much
better to take the subject in English.
It is much better to study in English
than in Arabic. It is so much fun.
Well, we're not using a lot of English
in Physics. But I like doing it in
English - it is much better. I don't
know but they say that we are going to
be teachers when we go back. If they
say that we are going to teach in
Arabic, I don't know what I'm going to
do. Believe me, I don't know. It is
going to be a little bit hard. (Student
F, pp.12-13)

As noted by the following student, personal relationships
are of primary importance to most Libyan students; even in
the classroom it seems important that the student likes and
respects his teacher:

When I don't like the professor, I don't
like the course. This year we had a
professor. I don't know but in the
class when I asked her something, she
thinks I am trying to prove that she is
wrong in front of the class. I told her

once that I was not trying to prove that
she was wrong, but this thing that she
did is not quite right. We are all human
beings, and people can make mistakes -
even professors. They are not God.   So
she was bugging me all the time and when
it came to the final mark for the first
term, I expected an "A" in the course
because I did fine, but when I came to
the make, I found it was a B+ and I went
to her office and I said that I wanted
to see my exam paper. She said: Uh,
you came to see the exam paper? And she
just kind of did like this - this is
your exam paper. I looked at the paper
and there wasn't hardly anything that
she was taking marks off, only a few
things, even spelling mistakes were
marked. Can you believe that? This is
the mark, and if you want to argue go to
the Dean's Office. Actually I was going
to do that, but I said: Forget it.   I
didn't want to get into trouble, and the
best thing was just to keep away from
her.   I don't know, but generally I
haven't enjoyed the female professors
except with some exceptions like you.
(Student F, p.27)

I like it [physics] a lot.   It teaches
me a lot, not just how to think but also
how to deliver thoughts.   It is really
neat. I am doing fine in it. I have no
trouble with it. The professors are all
great to me, and I like dealing with
them.   It is really good. (Student F,
p.29)

My university life is the best for me.
I don't know about anybody else, but for
me the university life is the best
experience. I met many, many Canadians
- I like people.   I talk to men and
women and professors and discuss with
professors. (Student C, p.41)

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During the course of these interviews some students expressed how disappointed they were when, upon arrival in Canada, they found out they would not be studying in the field of their choice upon arrival in Canada. These views are expressed in the next section.

Expectations versus Reality

Some students say they were told that they could study engineering in Canada; however, once here, they were told they could only study science. This misunderstanding regarding field of study could also be attributed to the difference meanings of certain concepts in Libyan education versus Canadian education. For example, the Secretariat of Education students are expected to teach at a technical college once they return to Libya. These technical colleges offer engineering courses; hence some students assumed that they could then become engineers in Canada, then take some teacher-training courses and return to Libya to teach engineering at a technical college.

In light of the fact that they are not studying engineering, some of the students wonder why they came to Canada as they feel they could have studied science in Libya. They are particularly upset when they consider that their high school classmates who remained in Libya and attended a Libyan

university have now completed their studies and graduated:

I graduated from the high school with good marks, which allowed me to enter engineering [in Libya]. They told me I was going to study electrical engineering [in Canada]. I thought okay in Canada they have good technology, not like us. So I wanted to go and see the world to study over there; to experience the world and to get a good degree. (Student I, p.11)

The undergraduate situation in the school in Canada is the same [as in Libya]. Maybe the graduate study would be more advanced than us. Maybe because of the technology here; they have the computer and facilities here which we don't have over there. And here you find the good stuff to teach these subjects or whatever you call it, but over there maybe you don't have this. But the undergraduate, I think it's really the same over here or there; it's really the same. I didn't find any difference from what you have over there and here. The curriculum is the same. The other guys who graduated with us from high school and entered Libyan universities, by now they have finished their degree and they are working. They have been working now for two years. [How does this make you feel?] Really bad. (Student I, p.12)

I remember Mr. T., the man who was responsible for CBIE. He came to my city [in Libya] and I met him.... I asked him if I am going to study engineering [in Canada] or just science. He said: "Well, you can study engineering. It's up to you". I said: "Well, it's engineering; I am interested in engineering". Then [in Canada] they

> told me I was going to study science.
> They didn't bother to ask me, really.
> It was a good lie; they lied. This is
> an important thing. It is a disaster,
> really. I feel it's a disaster but you
> have to live with this; this is life.
> (Student I, p.16)

While the above student felt that it would have been worth

his while to come to Canada to study engineering, he feels

that for science it is a waste of time because he could

have studied science in Libya:

> It could be done in Libya. This idea I
> became sure about when we came here to
> study science.   I didn't find much
> difference. Frankly, I didn't find much
> difference. Especially in my field -
> physics or chemistry.   (Student I,.
> p.17)

Because of this lack of information, and the lack of control

students feel they have over their own choice of studies,

they have developed some rather strong opinions on studying

overseas:

> It is a bad thing to study overseas. It
> depends on politics; I mean your future
> is in the hands of other guys. They
> play with it as they want which is
> really, really bad. I feel really bad
> because my colleague over there [in
> Libya] have graduated already and I am
> still studying as I'm still second year
> which really is a terribly long time to
> go. I knew we were going to be teachers.
> This I know, but they chose us to study
> engineering. Science? We have science
> over there. We have a faculty of
> science with the same curriculum as I

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told you. Maybe engineering here is
different. But science, I say what's
the difference in science. In my point
of view there's no difference [between
the faculty of science in a Libyan
university versus the faculty of science
in a Canadian university.]. It could be
done in Libya. I didn't find much
difference. Especially in my area -
physics and chemistry. This is what I'm
facing here. Maybe to study computer,
I'm not saying the whole field of
science, maybe I'm wrong in this area.
But I'm saying what I know. (Student I,
p.14 and 17).

Students who are in Canada training to be teachers are also

convinced that what they are learning here in Canada is not

what Libyan education needs. They feel that education in

Libya should be more practical, and that this is in fact the

change the government expects these students to introduce:

If they need practical studies they will
not get this from academic study. I'm
going to teach academics. So what I
have studied here, but when I finish my
degree I'm going to teach, but I'm not
going to teach practical stuff; I'm just
going to teach academically - blackboard
and chalk. That's what I'm going to
teach because that's what I've studied.
We'll use the labs as well, but it's not
the practical they want. (Student I,
p.29)

Actually Canadian high school is much
lower than our education in high school
in Libya. For example, in geography,
they just know about Canada. And they
just take elementary math. Actually, we
took calculus in high school. The only
thing is [in Libya] in high school we

> take too many subjects. Now, when I
> think about it, it's too much. They
> should make an adjustment. For example,
> now I think Quadaffi's taking this into
> consideration. If you want to go to
> university for example to take
> chemistry, most of your high-school
> courses should be in chemistry. You
> shouldn't have to take history or
> geography. But still, I don't know,
> because the Canadians don't know their
> geography. (Student E, p.39)

Summary

Although students express a range of feelings regarding

their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with academic life in

Canada, most students expressed dissatisfaction with the

type and length of the English-as-a-Second Language program

they were required to take upon arrival in Canada. The

feelings expressed suggest that this program was perceived

by students as being too long in length, and inappropriate

to meet their needs.

Once they entered university, although students expressed

varying degrees of difficulty adjusting to the Canadian

University system, most seem content with their courses and,

in particular, with their relationships with professors.

However, students who expected to study engineering in

Canada, are still rather bitter and dissatisfied that this

expectation did not evolve into reality.

The next section of this chapter presents how students cope in the area of academic adjustment.

Coping Strategies

Language and Academic Studies

In the beginning of their sojourn, in order to cope with their lack of facility in English, students relied on a previous group of Libyan students, and on each other:

> There were some Libyan students before us; they helped us. They spoke English because they had been here long enough to learn the language. So they helped us to get apartments and helped us to communicate with the organizations here who were responsible for teaching us English. (Student H, p.1)

> At the university we stayed close to each other, you know. We congregated all the time just the group of us who speak our language. We stayed all the time together.... I preferred to stay with my own group because I was afraid I would make a mistake. (Student E, p.6)

Students realize that in order to cope with the language difference and to achieve academically they have to spend twice as much time with their books than they did in Libya:

> This year I took four courses and three of them were Math course, so I didn't really have to do that much reading,

except solving problems. But I took a
course which was an introduction to
economics. If I read the text for the
first time, I would probably understand
70% of it. If I read it another time,
then it is like 90%, and I am confident
that I know it. Like sometimes, I face
new terms that I don't know, that I
haven't come across before - I don't try
to use the dictionary to find the
meaning of the word - I try, most of the
time, to absorb the meaning from the
position in the sentence or the way that
they are trying to make it sound. It is
not a problem that I don't understand,
but I find that I have to spend more
time reading the book than an average
Canadian would. I would read it two or
three times, even. (Student D, p.77)

Most of us who are here, especially from
my group, we did very well in high
school and we worked very hard,
especially for the first year of
university and we were capable of doing
everything; we were capable of getting
very, very good marks. But I think that
it takes self-discipline trying to work
really hard because I know that my other
friends, the ones that are spending more
time with their books, are getting very
good marks and doing very well in their
courses. If you compare yourself to
them, you just know that it is the
"time" difference that others spend on
the books, and the amount of time you
do. So, I think that for the academic
level here, it wouldn't be very hard for
us to achieve good grades, except that
it is a matter of doubling our effort
more than if we were back home. Here
you probably have to do double work. We
came all the way from Libya and are
trying to get a good education here
which [by the way] I wouldn't say is
better than the education back home.
(Student D, p.82)

Some, however, do not feel that 'language' is the primary

reason for Libyan students having to work harder in Canada:

> I spend a lot of time reading here and
> studying; more than I would back home.
> Here I find myself spending twice or
> three times the amount of time I would
> spend back home. I always try to relate
> this time to the language, but I don't
> think this is the problem. High school
> is different from university - it is a
> different academic level. I don't like
> to try to relate this by saying that
> this is a language barrier which is
> making me spend more and more time on
> this subject. I just think it is like
> to academic level - it is university. I
> think that the academic program at
> university is very tense sometimes; like
> in particular courses you have to really
> work hard every day to be on the topic
> in order to get a good mark. (Student
> D, p.79)

To this day many Libyan students still do not feel totally

comfortable with the English language. For example, due to

their insecurity about writing in English, students try to

cope by avoiding, whenever possible, taking courses which

require them to produce an essay:

> I think I have the ability to write very
> good papers, but when I come to writing
> papers in English, I find that I don't
> know how to do this. You are just
> moving in a limited area; probably
> because of limited vocabulary of limited
> experience. (Student D, p.77)

> Last year, I tried to take courses that
> I didn't have to write any papers in;
> because I feel that if I have to write
> papers, I don't think I would show as
> much work as I am capable of. I would
> probably lost more marks because of
> writing that paper. (Student D, p.78)

Some students feel that they manage, one way or another, but
they're not quite sure how:

> I manage one way or another. It's hard
> to tell how I manage, but I have to
> manage. I feel that I have to manage
> and most of the time I am studying hard.
> (Student B, p.7)

General University Studies

At the beginning of their university studies, students felt

under a great deal of stress to do well academically. When

their attempts met with failure, especially in this first

very emotional period of adjustment, students dealt with

their frustration and confusion in a variety of ways: by

complaining and blaming their low marks on the teacher; by

being, perhaps, overly concerned with their physical health;

and/or by avoiding contact with their families in Libya.

> Even though I couldn't speak English,
> the second day I started arguing and
> complaining to the teacher. I couldn't
> stop complaining you know. Even the
> teacher - she was nervous when she
> talked with me. If I got my mark back,

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> if I didn't get a good mark I started to
> complain. Even though I didn't speak,
> just a little bit like this: "yes",
> "no," "that's not good..." (Student E,
> p.3)

When asked about why he complained, this particular student
said:

> I felt like the low mark came from the
> teacher, not from me. How come this guy
> gets a good mark and I study more than
> him, you know. (Student E, p.3)

Another common factor among these Libyan students when they
first arrived in Canada is that many of them developed
health problems. Problems ranged from hair falling out to
developing skin rashes and allergies:

> I got asthma [when I first arrived in
> Canada]. "Asthma" is the same word in
> Arabic. That's the only word I knew so
> all the time I kept telling the teachers
> I had asthma, you know. And the school
> wasn't that good when we first came here
> you know. First of all, they put us in
> one group. Secondly the books were not
> that good. And the teachers were also
> not good. They didn't deal with foreign
> students well. All the time they were
> worrying about their social lives.
> (Student E, p.11)

Students who felt they were not doing very well in school
coped by avoiding contact with their families in Libya:

> I didn't contact my family for almost
> one year. I just sent two letters over

the whole year. I was worried about my
school and in my [English] language I
was average so I didn't like to talk
with my family because of that.
(Student E, p.52)

Even at the present stage in their studies, which vary from

second year to fourth/fifth year, some students,

particularly those who feel they are in the wrong field of

study, are under extreme stress. Many of them cope with

this in a rather unconstructive way - that is, by not

attending classes:

It was a really heavy thing for me to
just go to school, not only to go to
classes, but to enter the university.
For example, I started a Spring Session
course about a month ago and I've only
been there [to the university] twice or
three times just to pick up my cheque.
Otherwise, I wouldn't go there. It's
very stressful. (Student K, p.25)

When asked about the university's reaction to their

difficulties, it seems that the university often jumps to

the conclusion that if a foreign student is having

difficulty, it is because of a language barrier:

I talked with them before. They know
that I'm having some problems. They
have problems with me, helping me out.
You know, like sometimes they think it's
the language.... It's not. (Student K,
p.28)

When asked whether they talk about their problems, or ask

for advice from other students, they replied:

> Sometimes, I don't talk too much to
> anybody when I have problems. (Student
> G, p.21)

> Problems? You think about them and see
> if you can solve them. If so, okay. If
> not, of course, you have each other. We
> feel like a small family here. (Student
> F, p.8)

When asked if they ever talk to Canadian students about
their academic problems, students in this study seem to
feel that Canadians do not understand the problems of an
international student:

> I know their answer. If you say that
> you have done badly in school they just
> say: Oh, don't worry about it. Nothing
> will happen. Take it again next year.
> The only thing the Canadians give you
> is: Don't worry about it because
> actually they don't care as much because
> if they fail they take it again. Nobody
> depends on them. For example, my family
> are waiting for me to have an education.
> But the Canadians don't care about their
> future. Some might not even get a job.
> (Student E, p.39)

Eventually, most students develop strategies to help them
cope academically in the university setting. In courses that
require a lot of reading, students find that to compensate

for the language difference they have to spend a much

greater amount of time reading and studying:

> This year I took four courses and three
> of them were Math courses so I didn't
> really have to do that much reading,
> except solving problems. But I took a
> course which was an introduction to
> Economics. If I read the text for the
> first time, I would probably understand
> 70% of it. If I read it another time,
> then it is like 90% and I am confident
> that I know it. Like sometimes, I face
> new terms that I don't know, that I
> haven't come across before - I don't try
> to use the dictionary to find the
> meaning of the word - I try, most of the
> time, to absorb the meaning from the
> position in the sentence or the way that
> they are trying to make it sound. It is
> not a problem that I don't understand
> it, but I find that I have to spend more
> time reading the book than an average
> Canadian would. I would read it two or
> three times even. (Student D, p.77)

> I am spending more time studying. I
> think that the self-discipline that you
> have to be really patient and fit all
> the time. You see that there are a lot
> of things that would probably distract
> you and take you away from your books,
> and you have to really manipulate
> yourself to keep away from these things.
> I think I managed to a certain degree
> but not completely. Before last year, I
> would go to the library and sit down and
> study for an hour and do some good work
> in an hour, but after an hour, I have to
> take a break and I go for 15 minutes and
> sometimes half-an-hour. If I meet my
> friends, it might take longer because we
> start talking. But this year, I spend
> more of my time studying. I am a little
> harder on myself than last year. I
> study for 2 1/2 to 3 hours and then I go

for a half hour's break. So I am just
trying to spend more time in the library
with the books than I would do in the
cafeteria or outside or some place else.
(Student D, p.79)

Most students were also quick to realize the need for a

self-disciplined approach to their university studies:

You've got to control yourself; you
know, organize yourself because you have
these studies. (Student K, pp. 19-21)

Actually, the first year I went a little
bit overboard; we were partying a lot -
actually, we should have done a lot of
other things. I don't mean that
partying is bad or anything, it is very
good for refreshment of the mind and
stuff like that. But we exaggerated
that. But now, it is much better. We
realized that, okay, you can do that,
but we also have to concentrate on other
things too. We have to learn; it's only
5 years and we have to learn something.
(Student F, p.24)

I don't think I realized [how much self-
discipline you need here] until probably
a few months after I came here. I did
not really think about it, because even
back home your mum is telling you to
work or you dad. So, when we came here
I thought that I would be the same as I
used to be back home. I would try to do
well and I would do very well. But in
the first few months I just found myself
going with a different flow; you are
here and you are trying to have fun and
you are going out and you are doing all
sorts of things because it is a new
experience, especially for me. I wanted
to know about everything; I wanted to
stick my nose everywhere to find out

what it is. So the flow took me for a
while, but after that, especially if you
have friends who are going the same way
you are, I felt that we must be doing
something right - all of us couldn't be
wrong. For both me and S. we decided
that we had to start working hard and
that we had enough fun. That's it. I
told S. that we could work at school and
have fun too. We can do it all. But
after a while, S., who is my best
friend, and I spent all out time
together so when he slowed down -
gradually, unintentionally, I found
myself slowing down too. But you come
to realize that this is not right - you
have to do everything from a religious
or social point of view; in your
conscience and your morals you are not
supposed to do these things. (Student
D, p.82)

Libyan students seem to have to be particularly self-

disciplined to study in Canada as, in Libya at exam time,

they are used to having the support of not only their

families but also of the media:

Back home, if I am really working hard,
my mum would try all the time to make me
feel better and she would keep saying
that I had to spend more time, even if
you are going to get a B+ now, if you
spend more time, you are going to get an
A. But I don't think that this is a
problem now; we have to make our own
decisions. You don't have anyone to
rely on - not your mum or your dad, or
brother. (Student D, p.81)

Back home, if it is exam time,
especially for high school for the last
year - even a month before exams start -
the newspaper starts writing about the

exams and how soon the students should start studying and how the families should try to create a good atmosphere for the student to study at home, and probably try to help them if they need it. Tutors, or anything. If it is exam time at home, you find everybody trying to help you. Your mum, your sisters, your brother, everybody just trying to create a good atmosphere for you to study. And here you have to depend upon yourself. You are the boss in everything and there is nobody that would tell you that this is wrong, or you're not supposed to do this, you're not supposed to go out now; you are to spend more time on your books. Do this or do that. Here, nobody cares; it is up to you, yourself. It depends on how rational you are to divide properly your time between studying and relaxation. There is nobody who would say that this is wrong and you are not supposed to do this. You have to spend more time with your books, or you to work harder, or I don't see you doing any work. (Student D, p.81)

Expectations versus Reality

At the beginning of their sojourn in Canada students seemed to have floundered along in a bit of a fog. This was a particularly rough time for those students who thought they would be studying engineering in Canada:

> At the beginning it was like, I forget the word - it's like confusion. You don't know exactly what you are doing. Especially when you are told a big lie - this lie: we were told we would be studying engineering. It was very stressful the first six months. (Student A, p.9)

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> I didn't know for sure that I'm going to
> stay in Winnipeg. Because they told us,
> they said that we are going to study
> engineering so when we came here they
> said: science - it's math, physics, and
> chemistry. (Student A, p.4)

When the interviewer asked students for clarification of the

above in the form of the question: You mean you didn't know

you were going to study science until you got here? The

above student answered: That's exactly right.

When asked how they had coped with this disappointment,

students expressed a seemingly fatalistic acceptance:

> I had to face reality. What can I do.
> I can't change it. I have to take these
> courses.... I felt disappointed. It's
> affecting my life, and it's still
> affecting me now, but I got over all
> these kinds of problems. (Student I,
> p.19)

> The future is darkness for me, but you
> have to do your best. I mean, what can
> you do? I mean, it's up to God or to
> the Creator to do these things for you.
> (Student I, p.21)

Hence, students' Islamic beliefs also seems to help them

cope with disappointment in the area of academic adjustment.

Summary

It seems from the above that most of the Libyans have been able to cope in the area of academic adjustment in one way or another. Some of the common coping mechanisms in this group seem to be: accepting one's fate, developing a self-disciplined approach to one's studies; spending more time studying, especially in courses where a lot of reading is required, avoiding courses that require students to write essays, and avoiding classes if one is not doing well academically.

The next chapter will present the summary, findings, and recommendations of this study.

Chapter Five

Summary, Findings, and Recommendations

Introduction

A lengthy discussion of the findings of this study has

deliberately been avoided as this study was not undertaken

in order to verify any particular theories of foreign

student adjustment, but rather to seek understanding of the

adjustment experience of a particular group of male Libyan

Muslim students studying in Winnipeg, Canada. If, and when,

further studies of this nature are undertaken with Libyan

Muslim students in other parts of Canada or elsewhere, only

then will a more exhaustive discussion of the overall

findings of these studies prove useful. In the meantime, it

is hoped that the present study will provide future

researchers in the area of Libyan student adjustment with a

tentative frame of reference for similar studies.

This final chapter is, therefore, divided into three areas:

summary of proceedings, summary of findings, and

recommendations.

Summary of Proceedings

This study was an exploration and description of Libyan students' perceptions of their sociocultural and academic adjustment to Winnipeg, Canada. The major question addressed in the study was: How do Libyan students cope with an unfamiliar sociocultural and academic setting?

As mentioned in Chapter Two many adjustment studies undertaken up to the present time have employed quantitative research methods. The present study used a qualitative research approach in order to explore and understand the adjustment process from the students' point of view. To uncover these experiences, individual in-depth interviews were undertaken with each of the twelve students who participated in this study. The interview approach is particularly relevant when dealing with Arab students as they are highly contextual, and they are more oriented towards verbal interaction (Meleis 1982). Indeed, Jarrahi-Zadeh and Eichman (1970) found that when they used a questionnaire to elicit information from Arab and other students, the Arab students had the lowest rate of return for questionnaires. Perhaps, this underlines the need for an interview approach with students from Arab (oral) cultures.

The participants in this study were twelve Libyan science majors presently studying at a Manitoba university. These students had been in Canada from two to six years at the time of the interviews.

This study is significant in that it may be a resource for educators and others working with Libyan students. It may help them to better understand the students' perspective. It may also provide a glimpse of a world-view that we in the West have yet to understand, namely the Islamic world-view. It may also provide a frame of reference for future studies in the area of Arab/Muslim students' adjustment process in North America. Perhaps it will also provide a foundation to build upon as far as Libyan students' adjustment experiences are concerned. It is hoped that it will also add to our overall understanding of the sociocultural and academic adjustment Libyan students undergo in their efforts to cope in a drastically different non-Islamic society.

Summary of Findings

The findings gleaned from this study will be presented in four sections: findings in the area of Sociocultural Adjustment, findings in the area of Academic Adjustment, Coping Strategies, and Hypotheses from Findings.

Sociocultural Adjustment

Sociocultural adjustment is of primary concern to the
students in this study. This finding complies with Sarah
Woods' (1987) informal study of Libyan students undertaken
through the Canadian Bureau of International Education. It
is also in harmony with the findings of Jarrahi-Zadeh and
Eichman (1970) who found that social adaptation was the
primary adjustment problem of Middle-Eastern students
studying in the United States:

> Middle-Eastern students face fantastic
> differences in culture, including, in
> most cases, profound differences in
> religion, philosophy, and style of life.
> (1970:91)

The findings of this present study of the Libyan students'
experiences in Canada concur with the findings of Jarrahi-
Zadeh and Eichman. Indeed, Jarrahi-Zadeh and Eichman also
make a similar recommendation to the one that the author of
this present study makes - that foreign students arrive a
few months before classes begin so that they can adjust
themselves socioculturally before beginning their academic
studies (Jarrahi-Zadeh and Eichman 1970).

The tapescripts of the interviews in this present study

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underline the importance the Libyan students attach to their sociocultural adjustment in the sense that students spent far more time addressing the area of sociocultural adjustment than they did addressing their academic adjustment experiences.

The next sections will present the findings of specific areas of sociocultural adjustment.

Religiosity and Religious Beliefs

One of the more obvious, but nevertheless most important, findings of this study is that the Islamic consciousness and traditions of Libyan students have a major impact on their overall adjustment to North American society. Also, for many of these students, their sojourn in North America has made them more appreciative of their own culture and traditions, and of their Islamic religion and heritage. In fact, there seems to be an underlying distrust amongst the Libyan students in this study for North American 'ways'. Many of the 'religious' practicing Muslims in this study feel that they have to be 'on guard' during their sojourn in Canada in order to protect themselves from the 'evils' of North American society. For the most part, students have a

strong desire to complete their studies and return home to Libya.

When Libyan students arrive in North America to study, one of the major questions for them is how to behave in this unfamiliar, non-Islamic society. For example, they deliberate on such questions as: How shall I act in this new environment? Shall I be as I was in Libya, or shall I act differently? Most of the Libyan students seem to "choose what to adjust to" based on their own world-view and Islamic beliefs.

Islam, as a religion, seems to have inhibited many Libyan students in this study from fully participating in Canadian society. For example, it inhibits the development of deeper friendships with Canadians because of a consciousness on the part of the Libyans of the different world-views and, to quote one of the students in this study, the different "ways of thinking" between Libyan Muslims and Canadians.

Regarding the tentative conclusion that Islam seems to inhibit Libyan students' full participation in Canadian society, this is in harmony with the conclusion Barclay (1978:112) drew from his study on Muslim immigrants in Canada. However, it is in direct opposition to the findings

of Pruitt (1981) who found a high correlation between good adjustment and continuing religious belief and practice. Perhaps Dunnett (1981:82) clarifies the situation when he points out that the similarity between a student's religion and the main religion in the new culture has an important positive effect on adaptation (p.82). Hence, the implication is that if the religions are unsimilar, as in the case of Islam versus the secular Judeo-Christianity of mainstream Canadian society, religion does not have a positive effect on adjustment.

It seems that many students in this study have become more religious since coming to study in Canada. This does not concur with the findings of Hadad's (1978) study which show that Muslim immigrants become negligent of their religious practices after they have lived in Canada for a while; however, she does not state the length of time her study participants have lived in Canada. Further, the Libyan students in this study know they are returning to Libya once their sojourn is over. This would, of course, make a difference. Barclay (1978) hypothesizes that it is the more marginal Muslims who seem to give up their religious practices in Canada, not the more devout Muslims. However, many of the Libyan students in this study have become practicing Muslims in Canada as "they realize the need for a

strong religion" (Student tapescript) although they were
non-practicing Muslims in Libya.

Students who are currently non-practicing Muslims, said they
feel a great deal of guilt when they are not living in
accordance with their Islamic beliefs whilst here in Canada.

Friendship

As previously mentioned, the findings of this study suggest
that the more "religious" practicing Muslims seem to avoid
interaction with Canadians. They also suggest that there is
a general lack of trust of Canadians on the part of these
Libyan students. Klineberg (1981) in a study undertaken
with Ben Brika in 1972 involving students from the Third
World, found that North African students studying in
European universities reported very few instances of real
friendship outside of their co-national group. In the
present study also, Libyan students seem to rely on their
co-national group for friendship and support during their
sojourn in Canada.

Those students in this study who do have Canadian friends
seem to stress the similarities of Canadian practices to

Islamic practices; for example, the virtue of being 'on time' for appointments is both a Canadian attribute, and is also in accordance with Islamic practice according to one student.

Ibrahim (1970) in a questionnaire study to measure interaction, perception, and attitudes of Arab students, studying in the United States, towards Americans, found that students' nationality does make a difference in their degree of interaction with Americans. He also noted that students from North Africa, including Libya, do not seem to be as interactive with Americans as other foreign students (1970:33). Although Ibrahim's findings show that age, sex, and marital status are connected with interaction between Arab students and Americans, the present study indicates that religiosity and whether one is a practicing or non-practicing Muslim are also connected with interaction between Libyan students and Canadians.

Male-Female Relationships

As many of the Libyan students had never interacted with females outside of the family circle before, the seemingly freer male-female interactions in Canada cause confusion and

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stress for these students. Also the fact that people in Canada seem to relate to each other as individuals, rather than as males or females, also impacts on the Libyan students who seem to feel that it is usual for a male to change his behavior in some way when addressing a female.

The experiences of these students suggest that coping with the sexual freedom in Canadian society is a major and ongoing challenge for many Libyan students living apart from the constraints of their own society. This is in harmony with the findings of Hadad (1978) in her study of Muslim immigrants' adjustment to Canadian society. It seems that many Libyan students cope in this area by returning to Libya in the summer, marrying, and returning to Canada with a wife.

Academic Adjustment

In general, the Islamic consciousness of Libyan students also impacts on the area of academic adjustment in the sense that Libyan students seem to have a tendency to cope with some problems by assuming a fatalistic stance, that is, by accepting their fate as the will of Allah.

Language and Academic Studies

In their academic studies, Libyan students feel they must spend twice as much time studying as they did in Libya. The reason for this seems to be the language difference, as well as the fact that their friends and relatives back home expect them to do well academically. This finding is in agreement with Heikinheimo's (1984) study on the adaptation of African and South-East Asian students attending the University of Quelph, Ontario.

As far as language for science is concerned, students did not feel that this particular area presented too much difficulty for them. For example, they were already familiar with some of the English scientific terminology from their studies in Libya. However, in a similar way to the Asian students in Heikinheimo's (1984) study, the Libyan students do have some difficulty as far as language is concerned when it comes to Arts courses, or essay-writing courses which they try to avoid because of the high English language demands.

Almost unanimously students felt the English-as-a-Second Language (E.S.L.) classes they were required to take at the beginning of their stay were inappropriate and too lengthy. This complies with the results of Sarah Woods' (1987)

informal study of Libyan students for the Canadian Bureau of International Education. Students in the present study also felt the E.S.L. teachers in their particular program lacked proper qualifications and were ill-equipped to handle the needs of their particular group. For example, students felt that they needed more 'social and conversational' English in order to meet their immediate needs upon arrival in Canada. Later, they felt they needed 'special purposes' English with a focus on their future university studies.

Because the Libyan students came to Canada in a group, and remained in this group of co-nationals during their E.S.L. classes, and depend upon each other to a great extent even up to the present time, they feel their progress in English has been delayed. Pruitt (1981) in her study on African students found that extensive contact with co-nationals appears to be counter-productive to adjustment.

General University Studies

Regarding their general university studies, students feel they were not well-oriented into how the university system works. For example, they were not sure how to choose courses, which courses were necessary to meet particular degree requirements, and which courses were offered when.

These findings are in agreement with the findings of
Klineberg (1981), Pruitt (1981, and Vanegas (1981) who, in
general, believe that if foreign students know what to
expect in a new environment their adjustment is aided.
Pruitt (1981) and Klineberg (1981) make special reference to
the importance of pre-information regarding the university
international students will be attending. Klineberg notes
the importance of having information about how to register
for courses, how to use the library, and what is expected of
students (1981:6).

Boonyawiroj (1983) in his doctoral study on the adjustment
of nine foreign graduate students studying at the Ontario
Institute for Studies in Education, also found that students
lack of knowledge of university regulations presented
difficulties. The results of the present study reinforce
the findings of these researchers.

Also, this study reinforces the need for orientations to
include a section on the expectations for university-level
students. As Meleis (1982) mentions in an article on "Arab
Students in Western Universities", Arab students usually
come from a very structured and systematic educational
system where 'experts' make choices for them regarding their
studies. It, therefore, takes time for them to adjust to a

university system, such as the one in Canada, where students are expected to make choices and decisions for themselves.

This present study reveals that personal relationships and respect for professors are very important for the Libyan students. Meleis (1982) in an article on "Arab Students in Western Universities" also stresses the point that Arabs have a high need for affiliation as they come from large families and extensive social networks. The present study would indicate that this is also true for the Libyan students.

As the Libyan students are extremely conscious of the expectations of family and friends back home, this adds to the pressure they feel to do well academically whilst in Canada.

Expectations versus Reality

Many students in this study are dissatisfied with their field of study, especially those students who thought they came here to study engineering. Apparently, the way the C.B.I.E. contract is written-up, field of study is open to different interpretations depending upon whether one judges it from the context of the Libyan educational system or the

Canadian educational system. Hence, the Secretariat of

Education students who will be teaching in technical

colleges once they return to Libya, understood that they

could study Engineering in Canada, along with some teacher

training courses, as Engineering is offered at Libyan

technical institutions. They were extremely disappointed

once they arrived in Canada and were told that they would

not be studying Engineering.

Because of their contract with C.B.I.E., some students feel

a lack of control over their own lives and decisions

regarding their study area.

Coping Strategies

Libyan students in this study have developed a number of

coping strategies in this society in order to aid in their

overall adjustment.

The Libyan students who come to study in North American as

part of a group of co-nationals use each other as major

supports during their sojourn in Canada. Hadad (1978) in

her study on Muslim immigrants in Canada notes that friends

can help Muslims cope in this new environment:

> This network of friends acts as an
> emotional and psychological ghetto that
> affirms personal identity and social
> solidarity which the suspicious Canadian
> culture ... fail[s] to provide. (p.92)

Students who are now practicing their religion find that

this is a great source of strength for them during their

sojourn in this society.

Practicing Muslims seem to cope by avoiding contact with

Canadians and surrounding themselves with other co-nationals

who are also practicing Muslims. Heikinheimo (1984)

suggests that 'isolated' students study very hard and put

their studies first over contact with Canadians. This also

seems to be true of the Libyan students.

Many students cope with the temptations of the flesh they

perceive to be present in Canadian society by returning home

to Libya during the summer break and getting married to a

Libyan woman earlier than they would have had they stayed in

Libya. For those who are not married, observance of their

religion seems to help in this area. For example,

'fasting', according to one student, helps curb the desires

of the flesh.

Regarding their academic adjustment, students seem to cope in this area mainly by becoming more self-disciplined, and spending more time with their books. Students who are not achieving academic success seem to 'cope' with this by avoiding classes, and by trying not to think about their situation. They also avoid returning home in the summer to visit their families because of the shame they feel regarding their academic endeavors. Also these last few coping strategies do not seem to be very constructive, they are nevertheless strategies used by some of these students.

In general, many of the Libyan students seem to cope whilst living in Canadian society by changing their surface behavior, but not their beliefs. Indeed, many of the students seem to have developed a 'Canadian' personality and a 'Libyan' personality in the sense that when they are with Canadians they act and talk one way, but when they are with fellow-Libyans they act and talk in a different way.

Hypotheses from Findings

A number of hypotheses for further reflection and investigation occurred to the researcher as a result of this present study. Some of these are presented in this section.

One could speculate that even though Islam seems to inhibit full participation in Canadian culture, the lives of the practicing Muslim Libyan students in this study suggest they are in one sense well-adjusted in that they are coping in the new environment very well. Many of them have married Libyan women, and are surrounded by other Muslim couples whom they draw upon for support and social interaction, even though they have chosen to isolate themselves from Canadians. Hence, they maintain a sense of equilibrium within themselves, and between themselves and their environment which is, after all, one of the basic notions of adjustment. It might prove interesting to delve deeper into this whole question of what it is to be "well-adjusted"; for example, are people well-adjusted if they are coping well in the new environment in the sense that they are achieving well academically which is, after all, what most international students are overseas to achieve, but have decided that, in order to live in harmony with their beliefs, they must isolate themselves from the mainstream of a particular society? In other words, as is the case with many of the students in this present study, can international students studying in Canada be well-adjusted if they are isolated from Canadians but are doing very well academically? Do more `religious' practicing Muslims

achieve better academically because of their Islamic
beliefs, and the self-discipline one must develop in order
to practice this somewhat `demanding' religion and way of
life? Does this self-discipline transfer over to their
academic life and, thus, help them achieve better in this
respect.

Conversely, what about students who have many Canadian
friends and are `involved' in the sociocultural aspects of
Canadian life, but who are either not achieving very well
academically, or who are, indeed, `failing' in their
academic studies? In some cases can being well-adjusted
socioculturally have a negative effect on academic
adjustment? For example, could it be that many
international students who are coping well socioculturally
may not be doing so well academically?

A study on instrumental versus integrative adjustment might
also be an interesting one to carry out in respect to the
Libyan students studying in Canada. The present researcher
hypothesizes that the findings would suggest that the great
majority of Libyan students would fall into the
"instrumental" category of adjustment.

It also occurs to the present researcher that personality factors (Lazarus 1976), and such things as "willingness to take risks", play an important role in Libyan students' personal adjustment in Canadian society. Hence, those students who are more open to new experiences and more willing to take risks would also integrate more fully into the sociocultural aspects of Canadian life.

Although this study leaves the researcher with more questions than answers, she feels that the questions are now more focused, and perhaps more relevant than they were before this exploratory study was undertaken. It is her hope, therefore, that other researchers will benefit from this initial exploration.

The next section will present the recommendations resulting from this study.

Recommendations

This section is divided into two parts: recommendations for action, and recommendations for further research.

Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations are proposed as a result of this study:

1. It is recommended that special orientation programs, or parts of general orientation programs, be developed to meet the needs of individual student groups; for example, students from the Islamic world. These orientation programs should provide:

a. Information on the sociocultural aspects of Western versus Islamic cultures.

b. Information about the education system in the target culture. Such information could include: how to choose courses; an explanation of the academic year, including Spring and Summer sessions; when courses are offered, including the fact that some courses are only offered on a rotating basis (e.g. every two years); major and minor subject area requirements, and so on.

c. Information regarding university students. This should stress the fact that university students are expected to be: self-disciplined and independent learners, self-motivated, and responsible for their own work.

International students who have been attending university in Canada for a number of years should play leadership roles in orientation programs to provide information to new groups of students and university staff.

2.   Pre-University English-as-a-Second Language programs should be less than one year in length - perhaps a three-to-six month intensive program, depending on student needs, would be most appropriate. E.S.L. classes should start out with survival/social English to meet the immediate needs of students; once this has been done, an E.S.P./E.A.P. (English-for-Specific Purposes/English for Academic Purposes) focus would be most appropriate to prepare students for their university studies. Essay writing, improvement of reading speed, and reading comprehension should be included, as well as a section on study skills. Teachers should have demonstrated expertise in working with international students as well as in teaching English-as-a-second language. Ongoing language support should be available for students during their first year of university studies. This support should be specific to university studies.

3.   C.B.I.E. student Contracts should be carefully explained to students especially in regard to what a particular field

of study means in the Canadian context as, according to the students in this study, there is some confusion in this area. For example, Secretariat of Education students seemed to understand that as they were going to teach in technical institutions in Libya they could study Engineering in Canada along with some teacher-training courses. In this way, they would be prepared to teach Engineering in a technical training institution in Libya.

Further to this, Contract students' field of study should be reviewed with student and a C.B.I.E. representative after the first year of university or college study. Some flexibility should be built into student Contracts regarding this important matter.

4. International students should arrive at least a couple of months before the next academic year begins in order to become acculturated, and to prepare themselves psychologically, socially, and language-wise for their future studies.

5. University staff, including professors, who are required to work with groups of students from other cultures, should be given an orientation to the students' culture and religious tradition. Libyan students familiar with both

cultures could be of assistance in this area.

Recommendations for further research

1. It is recommended that further (interview) studies on Libyan Muslim students in other parts of Canada be undertaken, including studies on Libyan students attending Canadian colleges.

2. It is recommended that interview studies be undertaken with other Arab students in order to develop a cache of Canadian adjustment literature on students from the Islamic realm.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

1.   Tell me about your adjustment experiences in Canada.

2.   How have you coped with these situations?

APPENDIX B

Interview Probes

Babbi (1979) suggests using the following open-ended
questions or comments to encourage the participants to
clarify or expand information provided. However, only those
which seemed to emerge naturally during particular
interviews were used together with some additional probes
which I am in the habit of using myself; for example:
Really? What do you mean? Why? How? In what way? And,
the use of silence.

Can you tell me what you mean?

Can you tell me more about that?

Anything else?

What were you thinking about?

What were your feelings?

Can you identify what helped you most at that time?

Could you give me an example?

APPENDIX C

Letter of Consent

As-salaam alaykum:

I am undertaking an exploratory investigation of Libyan
Students' Perceptions of their Sociocultural and Academic
Adaptation during their sojourn in Winnipeg, Canada, as part
of a Master of Education thesis with the University of
Manitoba.

This study will involve an interview with you in order to
learn about your adjustment experiences in Canada. The
interview will take approximately two hours of your time.
There is a possibility that a second interview might be
required at a later date. I appreciate the fact that you
are also a hardworking university student, and the interview
will be arranged at a time convenient to your busy schedule.

Your consent to participate in this study is voluntary, and
you may withdraw at any time.

The interview will be tape-recorded, with your permission,
so that I can go over the information gathered during the
interview. I will send a copy of the interview transcript
to you for your validation and approval. This material will
be kept confidential in that your name will not be used in
this study. Any reporting will be done on a group basis.
Therefore, your annonymity will be protected.

If you will like more information, please call me at 895-
0391.

Thank you for agreeing to share your experiences with me.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Fawcett

Signature of Consentor: _____

                 Date: _____

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire

Background Information

This information will be kept confidential; it is either for my information, or for reporting on a broup basis. PLEASE PRINT.

NAME: _____
       (first name)   (family name)

ADDRESS: _____

         _____
           (postal code)

Telephone Number: _____   Age: _____

Date of Arrival in Canada: _____

Have you lived in any other country? _____
 (Do not include Libya or Canada)

Where did you live in Libya:

              town   _____

              country _____

              city   _____

              other   _____

What are you studying at the university? _____
_____

Do you live: alone: _____

                  with other Libyans: _____

                  with Canadians: _____

                  other: _____

APPENDICES E, F, G, H.

Appendix E - Labelling of Themes

Appendix F - Structuring of Chapter Three

Appendix G - Structuring of Chapter Four

Appendix H - Samples of Tapescripts

APPENDIX E

Labelling of Themes

From the approximately nine-hundred pages of tapescripts of

interviews, themes were identified. Concept labels were

either taken from the students' own words, or thematic

labels which seemed to express the students' meaning were

constructed by the researcher. The following thirty-nine

themes were identified. Approximate number of reappearances

of these themes in and across student tapescripts is shown

in the right-hand column:

Thematic Concept Labels:	Approximate Number of Reappearances of Themes
Advice from experienced Libyans	6
Advantages (disadvantages) of co-national group	13
Advantages of Winnipeg versus other locations.	10
Canada versus Libya	39
Canadian Customs/Lifestyle	10
Choosing what to adjust to	27
Coping Strategies	49
*Discrimination	9
Dress	7
Effects of experience	30
Emotional first period	27
Expectations versus reality	8
*Finances	4
*Food	15
Freedom	18
Friendship	91
Gains from Experience	14

* These themes are not presented in the present study; for
explanation, see Chapter One.

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General University Studies                              70
Guilt                                                   17
Independence                                            22
Language                                                52
*Living Alone                                           16
*Living with Canadian Families                          21
Loneliness                                              16
Male-Female Relationships (cf.sexuality)                91
Money                                                    9
*North Americans Ignorance about Arabs/Libyans           9
Worldview (cf.religion)                                 95
Pre-sojourn conceptions about Canada                     9
Present feelings about Canada                           37
Religion                                                72
*Rumors                                                  6
Self-discipline                                         12
Settling down                                            8
Sexuality                                               25
Stress                                                  20
*Time                                                   11
Trust                                                   20
*Weather                                                12
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* These themes are not presented in the present study; for explanation, see Chapter One.

APPENDIX F

STRUCTURING OF CHAPTER THREE

Working from the list of concept labels, the researcher
grouped related concepts according to whether they were
applicable to sociocultural adjustment or to academic
adjustment. Main theme areas (as identified in headings
below), were selected according to the criteria mentioned in
Chapter One of this thesis, i.e. reappearance of themes in
and across student transcript, and student emphasis. The
main theme areas in sociocultural adjustment formed the
structure for Chapters Three.

Sociocultural Adjustment Themes - Chapter Three

1. Religiosity and Religious Beliefs

    - Religion
    - Worldview
    - Guilt
    - Emotional First Period in Canada

2. Friendship

    - Religion and Worldview
    - Canadian customs/lifestyle
    - Canada versus Libya
    - Trust
    - Money
    - Advantages of co-national group
    - Advice from experienced Libyans

3. Male-Female Relationships

    - Choosing what to adjust to
    - Canada versus Libya (regarding relationships)
    - Dress
    - Sexuality
    - Advice from experienced Libyans
    - Advantages of co-national group
    - Freedom
    - Loneliness
    - Stress

4. Summary
   - Effects of Experience
   - Present feelings about Canada

5. Coping Strategies

   - coping with reference to the above areas

APPENDIX G

STRUCTURING OF CHAPTER FOUR

Regarding academic adjustment, all main themes identified in
tapescripts were included in Chapter Four as this particular
area was not discussed by students in as much detail or at
as great a length as was the area of sociocultural
adjustment. Sub-themes are included as they relate to main
theme areas.

Academic Adjustment Themes - Chapter Four

1. Language

   - Advantages/disadvantages of group of conationals
   - Emotional first period

2. Language and Academic Studies

   - Language includes English-as-a-second language program
   - Self-discipline
   - General University Studies (inc. language)

3. General University Studies

   - Language
   - Stress
   - Advantages/disadvantages of university life in Winnipeg
   - Self-discipline
   - Advice from Experienced Libyans

4. Expectations versus Reality

   - Stress
   - Present feelings about Canada
   - Emotional first period

5. Coping Strategies

   - coping with reference to the above areas.

APPENDIX H

Samples of Tapescripts with Concept Labels

Concept labels for the following passages are listed in parentheses at the right-hand side of the page opposite related passage.

Except from Tapescript I (Student J, pp.1-2)

THEMES/CONCEPTS

INTERVIEWER: I want you to tell me something about your adjustment experiences here in Canada. For example, the society in Libya is very different from here; so how have you been able to adjust, to fit in, to this society? What kind of experience have you had?

STUDENT: The only thing I can say about that is the "time"; like back home there is no scheduling you know - like you don't have to do everything on time to catch wherever you're going or to do each thing on time and   (TIME) not to let things go until tomorrow or after because it doesn't work this way. So, it's like taking everything on time.

INTERVIEWER: That's a good point.

STUDENT: Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it's true, isn't it? Perhaps that's the Libyans; even when you first came, you had difficulty coming to class on time.

STUDENT: Also, for school, you
                    have to take the courses
                    on time. Like you have
                    to take number one before
                    number two, or number
                    two before number one,
                    so you mix it up like.
                    Also, you have to see
                    some courses on time.
                    What I mean is, it's   (GENERAL
                    like, it's offered this   UNIVERSITY
                    year or next year so you   STUDIES)
                    have to watch out if
                    courses are offered in
                    the summer or whenever.
                    It's not .... To be on
                    time, you know?

INTERVIEWER: So that must have been
                    really hard to get
                    used to.

STUDENT: It is - up to now, I
                    believe.

Excerpt from Tapescript II (Student K, pp. 23-24)

STUDENT: One other thing here:
                    When I went to
                    university, like, we
                    didn't know anything
                    about it. For example,
                    how to chose the courses,
                    anything. I remember,
                    we were sitting, about
                    ten or more guys, and   (GENERAL
                    they just picked our   UNIVERSITY
                    courses for us, and   STUDIES)
                    one course was
                    chemistry and I
                    remember at that time
                    I told my coordinator
                    that I didn't like

chemistry and I didn't
think I would do well
in it, but I'd just
take the first course
or whatever. She said
I had to take it as in a
physics major, chemistry
is required. After two
or three months, I found
out that I didn't have to
take it, so I dropped it.
I was failing it ....

INTERVIEWER: So somebody advised you
                   incorrectly?

STUDENT: Yeah. Like in a way we
                   weren't trained to handle
                   the university system very
                   well; we weren't prepared
                   for it - like introduced
                   to it.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean
                   "introduced to it"?

STUDENT: Like, academically, we
                   were prepared but how
                   to choose the courses.
                   Nobody except, you know,   (GENERAL
                   some friends.... Like   UNIVERSITY
                   this is one thing I   STUDIES)
                   just found out about
                   this year: you don't
                   have to declare a major
                   in your first year of
                   school. You can declare
                   it even in the last year -
                   and just last Fall I found
                   out about this. If I knew
                   I would have taken some
                   general courses and then
                   ....

INTERVIEWER: Become more specific?

STUDENT: Yeah, become more specific.

Excerpt from Tapescript III   (Student I, pp. 5-6)

INTERVIEWER: So your faith in Islam
                      has really helped you?

STUDENT: It has really helped me
                      to adjust myself in, to
                      live in, this society.

INTERVIEWER: How did it help you?
                      Could you just explain?

STUDENT: As I mentioned in my
                      speech, I said: If you
                      want to do something bad
                      or good you have to ask
                      yourself: Am I doing right
                      or wrong? Can I do this
                      in front of people or not?
                      Well, there are exceptions -
                      you have some personal things
                      you can do which are not done
                      in front of the people. But
                      they are not bad. But, if you
                      want to go and drink, for
                      example, or take a girl, or
                      something like that, I am
                      just asking myself: Can [student
                      names himself] do this stuff with
                      anybody around? Drinking is
                      not good. So you have to
                      adjust yourself to this. Well,
                      in Islam, as you know, or might
                      know, in Islam drinking is
                      forbidden; is prohibited -

little or much. It's   (RELIGION)
prohibited. So, even if
you take a glass - little
or much - it's bad. That's
my belief; it's bad. So
here drinking is a bad
habit. But if you drink
a little bit, not just to
lose your mind or something,
here they believe this is
okay. But my belief is it's
not; you cannot touch it
because if you drink a
little bit you might
drink a lot. Nobody says
you cannot. But, my   (WORLDVIEW)
adjustment - everything
here you are free to do;
the only thing to protect
me from when I came here -
I was only 20 years old -
everything I could do.
The only thing to protect
me from these things which
I see as evil is the
religion. So I can't drink
but who can protect me?
Because I believe in the
existence of God, the
creator, so I watch my
deeds. Does my Lord
accept what I am doing or
not. If not, it's a
matter of belief as I
mentioned. So that was
my adjustment and - al hamdu
lilah - [praise be to God].
I still never touch these
evil things.