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Cultural Shock and Adaptation

Michael Winkelman

Multicultural domestic and international relations create cultural shock for both immigrant and resident groups. This article addresses the nature, stages, and causes of cultural shock to provide broad guidelines for managing cultural shock experiences in a variety of circumstances. Cultural shock is described from psychophysiological and sociocultural perspectives. The nature of cultural shock experiences suggests that resolution be addressed through cognitive orientation and behavioral adjustment involving recognition of cultural shock characteristics and implementation of strategies for its resolution. Adaptive strategies for guiding constructive interventions are summarized from an integration of literature on cultural shock adaptation, cross-cultural training effectiveness, and intercultural effectiveness.

Cultural (or culture) shock is a multifaceted experience resulting from numerous stressors occurring in contact with a different culture. Cultural shock occurs for immigrant groups (e.g., foreign students and refugees [Dodge, 1990]; businessmen on overseas assignments [Walton, 1990]) as well as for Euro-Americans in their own culture and society (e.g., business institutions undergoing reorganization [Knobel, 1988]; populations undergoing massive technological and social change [Toffler, 1970]; and staff, clients, and public in schools, hospitals, and other institutions). The multicultural nature of society in the United States creates daily cross-cultural conflict and immersion, making cultural shock an important source of interpersonal stress and conflict for many. Cultural shock reactions may provoke psychological crises or social dysfunctions when reactions to cultural differences impede performance. Because our society is becoming increasingly multicultural (Schwartz & Exter, 1989), we all experience varying degrees of cultural shock in unfamiliar cultural or subcultural settings (Merta, Stringham, & Ponterotto, 1988). "[W]e all may be in need of cultural shock counseling as we attempt to deal with these new perspectives on life in American society" (Rhinesmith, 1985, p. 133).

The circumstances provoking cultural shock and the individual reactions depend on a variety of factors, including previous experience with other cultures and cross-cultural adaptation; the degree of difference in one's own and the host culture; the degree of preparation; social support networks; and individual psychological characteristics (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). The multivariate nature of cultural shock requires the development of "programmes of preparation, orientation and the acquisition of culturally appropriate social skills" (Furnham & Bochner, 1986, p. 13). My experience with programs for helping people manage cultural shock experiences comes primarily from my role as director of the Arizona State University Ethnographic Field School in Ensenada, Baja California Mexico. These experiences have shown me that helping students manage their cultural shock experiences is fundamental to their success.

My approach emphasizes that cultural shock is normal in a foreign culture environment, although those experiencing it may not recognize it or respond effectively to the problems. Effectively dealing with cultural shock requires recognition of cultural shock occurrences and

implementing behaviors to overcome cultural shock with stable adaptations. Awareness of the nature of cultural shock and the typical reactions fosters constructive intervention by providing the basis for recognizing one's own ongoing cultural shock experiences and for reframing the situations with adaptive responses and problem-solving strategies. Students in my foreign programs have reported that in the midst of cultural shock crises, they suddenly recalled that "Dr. Winkelman said it would be like this!" Frequently, that awareness was sufficient for them to normalize their experience, to reappraise their situation, and to respond in a more productive and less stressed manner.

The effectiveness of a combined cognitive and behavioral approach in managing cultural shock experiences is supported by a number of factors, including the nature of the conditions that cause cultural shock, the strategies that have been shown to improve intercultural adaptation and communication, and the effectiveness of cross-cultural training programs that are based on the social learning principles combining cognitive and behavioral approaches (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). That is, because cultural shock is caused in part by cognitive overload and behavioral inadequacies, and because intercultural effectiveness is based on understanding and behavioral adaptation, cultural shock is best resolved by a social learning approach in which new attitudes and cognitive information are integrated into behavioral transformations.

This article provides guidelines for managing cultural shock more effectively with strategies that foster awareness, learning, and adaptation. Two approaches are taken: (a) understanding the characteristics, phases, and causes of cultural shock; and (b) developing knowledge and attitudinal and behavioral strategies for overcoming cultural shock.

ASPECTS OF CULTURAL SHOCK

Cultural shock was initially conceptualized (Oberg, 1954, 1960) as the consequence of strain and anxiety resulting from contact with a new culture and the feelings of loss, confusion, and impotence resulting from loss of accustomed cultural cues and social rules. Taft (1977) reviewed a range of definitions of cultural shock and provided a summary—a feeling of impotence from the inability to deal with the environment because of unfamiliarity with cognitive aspects and role-playing skills.

Although the clinical model of cultural shock as a psychological and cognitive reaction has been dominant, the implications of cultural shock are more extensive. Cultural shock derives from both the challenge of new cultural surroundings and from the loss of a familiar cultural environment (Rhinesmith, 1985). Cultural shock stress responses cause both psychological and physiological reactions. Psychological reactions include physiological, emotional, interpersonal, cognitive, and social components, as well as the effects resulting from changes in sociocultural relations, cognitive fatigue, role stress, and identity loss. These interrelated aspects of cultural shock are considered in the following section after a summary of the phases of cultural shock.

Phases or Stages of Cultural Shock

The stages of cultural shock and its resolution have been differentiated in a variety of ways, typically emphasizing four phases or stages (Ferraro, 1990; Kohls, 1984; Oberg, 1954; Preston, 1985; but see Adler's [1975] five-stage transitional experience view and Rhinesmith's [1985] eight-stage intercultural adjustment cycle). Underlying the different labels, the four primary phases of cultural shock are typically considered to involve the following:

1. The honeymoon or tourist phase
2. The crises or cultural shock phase
3. The adjustment, reorientation, and gradual recovery phase
4. The adaptation, resolution, or acculturation phase

The phases are both sequential and cyclical. The shift from crises to adjustment and adaptation can repeat as one encounters new crises, requiring additional adjustments. One may become effectively bicultural, and then the adaptation phase is a permanent stage.

The honeymoon or tourist phase. The first phase is the typical experience of people who enter other cultures for honeymoons, vacations, or brief business trips. It is characterized by interest, excitement, euphoria, sleeplessness, positive expectations, and idealizations about the new culture. The differences are exciting and interesting. Although there may be anxiety and stress, these tend to be interpreted positively. This is the opposite of what we think of as cultural shock. This is because honeymooners, vacationers, and business people have experiences largely limited to institutions (hotels, resorts, business, airports) that isolate them from having to deal with the local culture in a substantial way and on its own terms.

The crises phase. When the honeymoon phase gives way to crises depends on individual characteristics, preparation, and many other factors (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). The crises phase may emerge immediately upon arrival or be delayed but generally emerges within a few weeks to a month. It may start with a full-blown crisis or as a series of escalating problems, negative experiences, and reactions. Cultural shock may start immediately for some individuals; for example, when they enter the enormity of JFK Airport or New York City, or the blazing Arizona heat in August. Although individual reactions vary, there are typical features of cultural shock. Things start to go wrong, minor issues become major problems, and cultural differences become irritating. Excessive preoccupation with cleanliness of food, drinking water, bedding, and surroundings begins. One experiences increasing disappointments, frustrations, impatience, and tension. Life does not make sense and one may feel helpless, confused, disliked by others, or treated like a child. A sense of lack of control of one's life may lead to depression, isolation, anger, or hostility. Excessive emotionality and fatigue may be accompanied by physical or psychosomatic illness. Feeling as if one is being taken advantage of or being cheated is typical. Becoming overly

sensitive, suspicious, and paranoid with fears of being robbed or assaulted are also typical reactions (Rhinesmith, 1985). One finds innumerable reasons to dislike and to criticize the culture. Plans for learning the language may be postponed, problems escalate, and depression may become serious; one generally wants to go home! Typical in this phase are maintenance and reparative behaviors (Wengle, 1988) designed to help reestablish one's familiar habitual cultural patterns of behavior to provide insulation from the foreign culture.

The adjustment and reorientation phase. The third phase is concerned with learning how to adjust effectively to the new cultural environment. Resolution of cultural shock lies in learning how to make an acceptable adaptation to the new culture. A variety of adjustments will be achieved during cyclical and individually unique adjustment phases. There may be an adjustment without adaptation, such as flight or isolation. Many people who go to foreign countries do not adjust to achieve effective adaptation; instead, they opt to return home during the crises phase. Others use various forms of isolation, for example, living in an ethnic enclave and avoiding substantial learning about the new culture, a typical lifetime reaction of many first-generation immigrants. If one desires to function effectively, however, then it is necessary to adjust and adapt. One develops problem-solving skills for dealing with the culture and begins to accept the culture's ways with a positive attitude. The culture begins to make sense, and negative reactions and responses to the culture are reduced as one recognizes that problems are due to the inability to understand, accept, and adapt. An appreciation of the other culture begins to emerge and learning about it becomes a fun challenge. During the adjustment phase the problems do not end, but one develops a positive attitude toward meeting the challenge of resolving the issues necessary to function in the new culture. Adjustment is slow, involving recurrent crises and readjustments.

The adaptation, resolution, or acculturation stage. The fourth stage is achieved as one develops stable adaptations in being successful at resolving problems and managing the new culture. There are many different adaptation options, especially given diverse individual characteristics and goals. Although full assimilation is difficult if not impossible, one will acculturate and may undergo substantial personal change through cultural adaptation and development of a bicultural identity. It is important to recognize and accept the fact that an effective adaptation will necessarily change one, leading to the development of a bicultural identity and the integration of new cultural aspects into one's previous self-concept. Reaching this stage requires a constructive response to cultural shock with effective means of adaptation.

Causes of Cultural Shock

Stress reactions. Exposure to a new environment causes stress, increasing the body's physiological reactions that can cause dysfunction in the rise of pituitary-adrenal activity (Levine, Goldman, & Cooper, 1972, as cited in Taft, 1977). Stress induces a wide range of physiological reactions involving mass discharges of the sympathetic nervous system, impairment of the functioning of the immune system, and increased susceptibility to all diseases (Guyton, 1986). Therefore, a normal consequence of living in and adjusting to a new culture is the experience of stress caused by both physiological and psychological factors. In a psychosomatic interaction, psychological states affect the body and its physiological reactions, which in turn increases feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, uneasiness, and so on. Cultural shock results in an increased concern with illness, a sense of feeling physically ill, a preoccupation with symptoms, minor pains, and discomforts (Kohls, 1979; Rhinesmith, 1985), and may increase both psychosomatic and

physical illness from stress-induced reductions in immune system functioning.

Cognitive fatigue. A major aspect of cultural shock and the resultant stress is cognitive fatigue (Guthrie, 1975), a consequence of an "information overload." The new culture demands a conscious effort to understand things processed unconsciously in one's own culture. Efforts must be made to interpret new language meanings and new nonverbal, behavioral, contextual, and social communications. The change from a normally automatic, unconscious, effortless functioning within one's own culture to the conscious effort and attention required to understand all this new information is very fatiguing and results in a mental and emotional fatigue or burnout. In my experience, this has been manifested in tension headaches and a desire to isolate myself from social contact, particularly in the latter part of the day as the cumulative information overload increases.

Role shock. Roles central to one's identity may be lost in the new culture. Changes in social roles and interpersonal relations affect well-being and self-concept, resulting in "role shock" (Byrnes, 1966). One's identity is maintained in part by social roles that contribute to well-being through structuring social interaction. In the new cultural setting, the prior roles are largely eliminated and replaced with unfamiliar roles and expectations. This leads to role shock resulting from an ambiguity about one's social position, the loss of normal social relations and roles, and new roles inconsistent with previous self-concept. For instance, dependence relations may no longer be supported, or conversely, a previously independent person may have to accept a dependent relationship with an authority figure.

Personal shock. I suggest the notion of personal shock as an aspect of cultural shock resulting from diverse changes in personal life. This includes loss of personal intimacy (Adelman, 1988) and loss of interpersonal contact with significant others such as occurs in separation grief and bereavement (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). One's psychological disposition, self-esteem, identity, feelings of well-being, and satisfaction with life are all created within and maintained by one's cultural system. Losing this support system can lead to a deterioration in one's sense of well-being and lead to pathological manifestations. Rhinesmith (1985) suggested that cultural shock may induce a "transient neurosis," a temporary emotional disorder, with more critical cases having features resembling acute psychosis with paranoid features (see crises phase as previously described). Kohls (1979) suggested that the major and severe symptoms of cultural shock may include withdrawal and excessive sleeping, compulsive eating and drinking, excessive irritability and hostility, marital and family tensions and conflicts, loss of work effectiveness, and unaccountable episodes of crying. Although these symptoms can characterize a variety of other maladies, if "the symptoms manifest themselves while one is living and working abroad, one can be sure that cultural shock has set in" (Ferraro, 1990, p. 143). Awareness of the pathological aspects of cultural shock permits more effective management by reducing reactions and providing the basis for insight, change, and adaptation. Personal shock is augmented by occurrences in the new culture that violate one's personal and cultural sense of basic morals, values, logic, and beliefs about normality and civility. Value conflicts contribute to a sense of disorientation and unreality, increasing the sense of pervasive conflict with one's surroundings.

Strategies for Managing Cultural Shock and Adaptation

Although some aspects of cultural shock adaptation vary as a function of individuals' characteristics, their intents and needs, and the cultural and social contexts of adaptation (Taft, 1977), others are universal. The

universal features of cultural shock require adjustments based on an awareness of cultural shock, the use of skills for resolving crises, and acceptance that some personal change and behavioral adjustment is fundamental to cultural shock resolution and adaptation. This is not to say that an individual must assimilate, but one must accommodate (acculturate), understanding the local culture and the means of adapting effectively. Adaptation requires suspending at least some culturally based reactions (practicing cultural relativism) to become more tolerant of the local culture. This does not mean that one must give up one's identity, values, or culture. Many individuals (e.g., international students) may effectively manage cultural shock without making major changes in their personality or preexisting lifestyle. The challenge is doing so in a new cultural environment that does not provide the accustomed supports.

Taft (1977) suggested that managing cultural shock and immersion in another society is a special case of human adaptation that should be addressed in the context of socialization, resocialization, and individual group relations. This requires adaptation in personality functioning to achieve emotional comfort; change in reference groups and social identity to achieve a sense of belonging; acquiring new cultural knowledge, skills, attitudes, and perceptions; and adopting new culturally defined roles to permit functional integration (Taft, 1977). Rhinesmith (1985) suggested cultural shock be resolved in a three-step process of cause diagnosis, reaction analysis, and intercultural adjustment.

A social-learning-theory approach that combines cognitive and behavioral strategies is well suited for cross-cultural training and effectiveness (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Successful management of cultural shock depends on awareness of the experience, a cognitive orientation that directs one toward successful adaptation, and the development of behavioral skills that lessen or resolve cultural shock. To successfully manage cultural shock, particularly in situations of cultural immersion, it is necessary to address a sequence of issues: predeparture preparation, transition adjustments, personal and social relations, cultural and social interaction rules, and conflict resolution and intercultural effectiveness skills. These are different points at which an individual, counselor, or trainer can assist with interventions for more effective management and resolution of cultural shock. The counselor's job is first to stabilize the individual and then to facilitate his or her adjustment to a stable adaptation through cultural learning.

Predeparture preparation. Assessment of one's ability to adapt to a new culture (e.g. Harris & Moran, 1987, Appendixes A-D; Redden, 1975; Smith, 1986) is a good first step before even going to a new culture. Not all individuals are equally prepared to accept the rigors of cultural shock and adaptation, nor are they disposed to change in the ways necessary to acculturate effectively. One needs to be realistic about the necessary changes and aware of the problems inevitably encountered in living in a foreign country.

One can minimize cultural shock by preparing for problems and using resources that will promote coping and adjustment. It is necessary to recognize that problems that occur in cross-cultural contact necessarily involve cultural shock and necessarily affect one. The tendency is to deny that cultural shock has anything to do with the problems being confronted. As an adaptation strategy, one should accept that all atypical problems during cross-cultural adaptation are caused by or exacerbated by cultural shock, and that one's typical negative reactions will be increased. This provides the perspective for reframing problems in a manner that fosters greater tolerance and implementing problem-resolution strategies.

The process of successfully adjusting to a new culture should be supported by cross-cultural training, because it broadly facilitates adjustment, skills development, performance, and effectiveness in a new culture (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Black and Mendenhall concluded that cross-cultural training enables the individual to learn skills and cultural knowledge that reduce misunderstandings and provide the knowledge basis for appropriate behavior. Both general cultural orientations to the processes of cross-cultural adaptation and specific cultural orientations to the destination culture are necessary.

Awareness of the primary value conflicts to be encountered in the new environment is essential. Value assessments are an important tool for self-awareness. If one is unaware of one's own values, then one is unprepared to manage potentially conflictive situations. A broad study of the nature of social behavior in the new culture setting is necessary to prepare for the types of behaviors to which one will have to respond.

One's attitude about the new culture and willingness to change are vital for adjustment. It is essential that one acknowledge the benefits of living in a different culture and have a positive attitude about the culture and learning experiences rather than complain or make comparisons with life at home. One must also be prepared to deal with personal rejection, prejudice, and discrimination. Cultures are ethnocentric, and their members typically view their own cultural ways as superior. Psychological preparation for this outsider status is essential, because most people immersed in a foreign culture will experience a negative evaluation of their differences and a rejection by the members of the host culture.

Transition adjustments. Successful adjustment also depends on the availability of transition resources necessary for comfortable adaptation in the new culture. The needs of physical well-being—food and security—must be effectively met if one is to meet work requirements and address subsequent needs for social relations, self-esteem, and personal development. Assistance in managing fundamentals such as food, housing, and transportation then frees the individual to focus on the cultural adaptation issues. The importance of self-efficacy in learning suggests that the individual should immediately attempt to produce foreign cultural behavior they have previously mastered in order to boost the self-confidence necessary for persisting in the novel behaviors necessary for adaptation.

Management of stress is central to cross-cultural adjustment, adaptation, and effectiveness (Walton, 1990). Because ambiguity is a major source of stress, its reduction through understanding the cross-cultural adaptation process, developing accurate and realistic expectations, and learning how to tolerate ambiguity fosters adaptation (Walton, 1990). Effectiveness in dealing with stress requires that one recognize and understand general and cultural specific forms of stress and identify lifestyle activities that help reduce stress. Walton (1990) outlined procedures for incorporating stress management into intercultural training.

Both maintenance and reparative behaviors are necessary for stress management and for maintaining one's personal well-being in conditions of cultural immersion (Wengle, 1988). Maintenance behaviors are ongoing activities that are necessary for maintaining one's cultural sense of identity and sense of well-being. Reparative behaviors are activities that serve to reestablish those vital aspects of one's self that are being lost in the new cultural setting. Maintenance and reparative behaviors may include speaking one's own language, eating the foods of one's own culture, reading books and newspapers from home, talking and interacting with home nationals, writing letters or making phone calls home, excessive sleeping, dreaming and fantasizing, or a focusing on job activities that reinforce one's sense of self. These behaviors are important ways to maintain or reestablish a sense of stability and well-

being, but may also be ways of resisting the changes necessary for adjustment to the new culture.

Personal and social relations. Managing cultural shock requires that one maintain or reestablish a network of primary relations—family or friends—who provide positive interpersonal relations for self-esteem and for meeting personal and emotional needs. My own unpublished ethnographic observations from students in foreign settings suggest that relationships with their placement families provided a primary source of support against cultural shock. The adjustment of one's family is also essential to one's own well-being because effectiveness in work requires interpersonal harmony. Emotional life may be maintained through writing letters or keeping a personal diary of feelings and experiences. Enjoying oneself in the new culture eases adjustment and helps to maintain a positive sense of well-being.

Social support networks ameliorate a variety of stressors (Cohen & Syme, 1985) and have direct application to the resolution of cultural shock and cross-cultural adaptation (Furnham & Bochner, 1986) through provision of tangible assistance; validation of self-worth through affirmation, acceptance, and assurance; and opportunities for venting emotions leading to understanding of stressful situations (Adelman, 1988). Social support may be found in "close ties" (family and friends) and in "weak ties" with those with whom one has secondary relationships. Adaptation requires satisfactory relationships and friendships with locals, in addition to fellow nationals, and international and multicultural individuals. Organizational support can be very useful, for example, clubs, social groups, sports teams, artistic and theatrical productions, social concern groups, and so forth. Activities that permit social interaction through nonverbal communication channels (e.g., dances, concerts, sporting events, festivals) provide important ways of developing social relations.

The nature of cultural social relations must be understood. For example, foreigners adapting to the United States should learn that Americans are more likely to form more superficial friendships than is typical in many countries (Stewart, 1972). Immigrants may be bitterly disappointed when they discover that Americans typically do not expect or accept the strong commitments and obligations frequently associated with friendship in other cultures.

Successful cross-cultural adaptation means that one becomes bicultural, integrating one's original identity with a new identity created in the new culture. Personal changes can be achieved by cognitive flexibility (openness to new ideas, beliefs, and experiences and the ability to accept these new conditions) and behavioral flexibility (the ability to change behavior as required by the culture). Emotional changes require more than knowledge, empathy, and understanding. One needs to simulate new behaviors and to express affective aspects (emotions, feelings) expected in the culture. For example, one may need to learn new emotional reactions (e.g., needing to be enthusiastically positive or needing to repress emotional expressions) that are not acceptable in the host culture.

Cultural and social interaction rules. Although language skills are a vital factor in being able to understand another culture, it is also necessary to learn a wide range of nonverbal communication patterns, including paralinguistic conventions; social interaction patterns; kinesics and proxemics; behavioral communication including gestures, gaze, and postures; emotional communication; interpersonal behavior patterns and rules; and patterns of social reasoning. Successful adaptation requires learning the host culture's styles of relating, communicating, reasoning, managing, and negotiating (e.g., see guidelines in Casse, 1982; Casse & Deol, 1985; Harris & Moran, 1987; Samovar & Porter,

1991). Flexibility in interpersonal styles and relations is a good general guideline for adaptation (Dodd, 1987).

Cultural adaptation requires understanding and manifesting behaviors that are understood in the host culture. One must accept the fact that cultures and the behavior of their members make sense and are logical, although the rules of logic differ from one's own culture. Understanding the culture from the participant's point of view helps to reduce stress and makes it easier to accept. One can learn aspects of a culture by studying publications on cultural and social behavior and norms (e.g., Stewart [1972] on the United States and Condon [1985] on United States-Mexico relations). Studying and reviewing written material and notes about the culture leads to a cognitive mastery that is the "best antidote for cultural shock" (Copeland & Griggs, 1985, p. 200). Participation in the daily life of the host culture is essential for cultural adjustment and adaptation, however, providing the opportunity to learn social behavior patterns by observation, practice, and questioning. For foreigners adapting to the United States, assistance in learning social behavior can be found in *Social Skills Training* (Furnham & Bochner, 1986) and programs for remedial social skills offered through some counseling centers. Because these types of programs teach basic social skills for Americans, they will directly relate to social skills necessary for social adaptation.

Conflict resolution and intercultural effectiveness skills. Successful adaptation requires accepting the fact that it is normal to face problems in a new culture and seeking solutions for problems instead of denying their existence. Adjustment to cultural shock can be eased by a problem-solving approach that anticipates difficult social situations, analyzes conflicts and identifies problems, develops potential means of resolving unpleasant experiences, and then engages in activities designed to resolve the problem. Harris and Moran (1987) suggested cross-cultural problem solving through describing, analyzing, and identifying the problem from both cultures' points of view; developing a synergistic strategy; and performing a multicultural assessment of effectiveness. Understanding the inevitable conflicts from the point of view of the host culture is a good way to relax one's own cultural definition, which views situations as problems. Developing a third cultural perspective (Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978) different from one's own culture and the host culture is useful in developing the tolerance of ambiguity and the detachment necessary to avoid being drawn into conflicts.

Effective adaptation requires that one avoid escalating the culture conflict that inevitably occurs in intercultural situations (Bochner, 1982). Attribution research (see Jaspars & Hewstone, 1982, for review) shows that when one does not know the actors or the actors' reasoning, one tends to attribute the reason for the actors' behavior to their (negative) personal traits. This attributional tendency has to be controlled in intercultural relations or conflicts will escalate. One should consciously adopt and apply a perceptual framework of cultural attribution that recognizes that culturally different actors are behaving in ways that are correct and meaningful from their cultural perspectives. It is necessary to be nonjudgmental and to practice cultural relativism—recognizing that cultural behavior is reasonable in the context of the cultural individual who produces it.

Because cultural shock derives from the distress of intercultural contact experiences, those abilities that make an individual effective in intercultural communication and adaptation should also reduce cultural shock, especially those aspects that reduce primary aspects of culture shock: stress reactions, communication problems, and disrupted interpersonal and social relations. Dimensions of intercultural effectiveness have been assessed in previous research (Abe & Wiseman, 1983;

Hammer, 1987; Hammer et al., 1978). The primary dimensions of intercultural effectiveness include the ability to deal with psychological stress, the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to establish interpersonal relationships, the ability to understand and adjust to another culture, and the ability to deal with different social systems. Cui and Van den Berg (1991) confirmed that these constructs underlie intercultural effectiveness. Their empirical analysis indicated as central communication competence, based on language skills and the ability to initiate, establish, and maintain relationships; cultural empathy, based on tolerance, awareness of cultural differences and an empathy for the culture; and communication behavior, based on appropriate social behavior and display of respect. Such studies on individuals who valued their intercultural experiences positively illustrate that intercultural effectiveness skills not only remedially address cultural shock, but also facilitate cultural adaptation.

SUMMARY

The resolution of cultural shock requires an individual plan that selects among maintenance behaviors, adjustments, and adaptations, depending on personal circumstances, resources, and goals. Resolution of cultural shock is best achieved by a proactive cognitive orientation. An analytical approach that anticipates particular personal conflicts, determines conflict causes, and implements problem-resolution processes is necessary. This requires knowledge about cultural shock and the means of resolving it, combined with knowledge about the cultural values and social relations, particularly those areas in which one will most likely experience the greatest difficulties. Learning culturally appropriate behaviors and implementing problem-resolution procedures provides the basis for effective adaptation.

CONCLUSION

There has been little systematic research to assess the relative effectiveness of a variety of theories explaining cultural shock (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Nevertheless, Furnham and Bochner (1986) have assessed the ability of various theories to account for both subtle and complicated differences in responses of different groups to cultural shock. They suggest that several theories account for a variety of factors, including locus of control, expectation (expectancy-value), negative life events, social support, and social-skills approaches. Black and Mendenhall (1990) reviewed evidence of the effectiveness of a social-learning approach to cross-cultural adaptation. The suggestions summarized earlier broadly encompass these perspectives. Needed are systematic evaluations of cultural-shock training programs to determine the factors that are most important for different types of individuals and situations.

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