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Learning Experiences and Learning Expectations of Libyan Master’s Students at a UK University: Intercultural Adaptation and Identity

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Research Aims

- To explore Libyan students’ perception of their previous educational and socio-cultural experiences.
- To investigate how Libyan master’s students adjust and adapt to a western learning environment.
Research Questions

- What are the main **challenges** that Libyan students encounter?
- To what extent do their previous experiences educationally, socially, culturally and politically affect their strategies for adaptation and development?
Methodology

- Qualitative study
- Case study approach
Sampling and data collection

- Purposive sampling
- Snowball sampling
- Questionnaire - 30 participants: 15 males and 15 females
- Interview (semi-structured) - 14 participants - 5 males and 9 females
- Observations
Data analysis

- Thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Gibbs, 2007)

  - Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP)
  - Newcomers’ dispositions and backgrounds
Legitimate Peripheral Participation

• The challenges that Libyan students facing in the UK
  • Fear
  • Feeling out of touch
  • Gender challenge
• Libyan students’ backgrounds
  • Avoidance of contact
  • Antagonism
Fear
I encountered fear in dealing with people, fear from new things. I was in a box. I didn’t know anything, and everything was done by my father. I found myself needing to be responsible on everything; I didn’t know even how to walk in the street. My father prevented me from walking on the street even if the place isn’t too far. He took me in his car, he guided me. Even all the documentation that related to my study, registration for a new semester, results, photocopy papers and if I needed any document from my tutor, my father would go to speak to him, not me. My father said ‘There is no security, no safety and kidnapping women is widespread in the country and on university campus.’ Before, he didn’t come with me in university campus. (Fatima1)
Feeling out of touch

Outdate curriculum

I was embarrassed when I said that in 2012, I had studied ‘Pascal language’. It was dated and isn’t used any more in computing. I am doing The “Designing Websites” module that needs knowledge of language programs to design a website such as Java. I didn’t study these languages in Libya. My English and international colleagues studied that language. The use of e-learning and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Libya were in the early stages even before the 2011 conflict; however, the post-conflict situation has held back the ICT progress. (Laila2)
The impact of culture

- Gender challenge
  I didn’t go to the tutorials with male tutors. I can’t stay with him alone in a room. This is part of our habits and customs. I explained that to my tutor and I suggested attending my female friend with us, but he didn’t accept that. (Aziza2)
The social impact of the conflict

- Avoidance of contact

While I interacted with my Libyan colleagues who were anti-Gaddafi, we started fighting. Therefore, I prefer not to speak to them. (Sara3)

Before the 17th revolution, I used to enjoy my life with Libyan friends, but I don’t anymore. I prefer to join the international students or British students rather than other Libyans. I don’t want problems. (Sara1)
Conclusion

- Legitimate peripheral participation is not a linear process because Libyan students as newcomers encounter many challenges.

- Libyan students bring the rifts to the community as a result of post-conflict and ongoing unrest situation.

- The post-conflict and ongoing unrest environment has social impact on the educational experience of Libyan students.
References


Thank you very much

Any question?

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