

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF SOME OF THE PROBLEMS OF
IRANIAN STUDENTS ATTENDING OKLAHOMA
STATE UNIVERSITY

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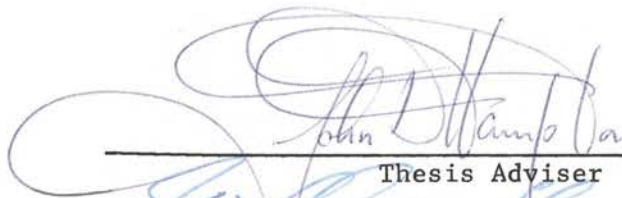
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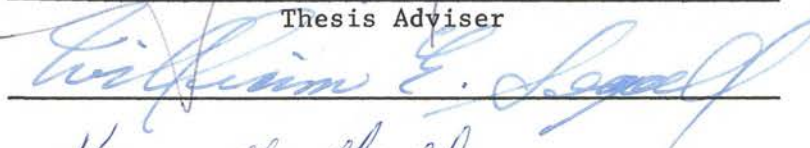
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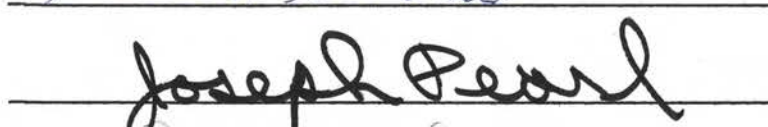
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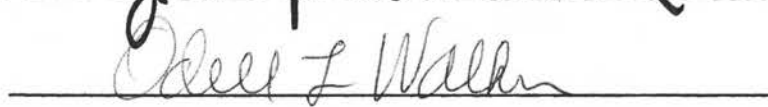



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Definitions	5
Assumptions and Limitations	6
II. SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE	8
Hypotheses	14
Summary	15
III. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION	16
Other Sources	17
Procedure	18
Statistical Treatments	19
Reliability and Validity	20
IV. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS	22
Part One	22
Part Two	24
Part Three	25
V. DISCUSSION	28
Observations	30
Conclusion	31
Suggestions	31
SELECTED REFERENCES	34
APPENDIX A - PILOT STUDY	35
APPENDIX B - INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE	44
APPENDIX C - GRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF SELECTED RESULTS	49

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
I. Number of Students in Universities and Higher Educational Institutes	2
II. Number of Students, Universities and Higher Educational Institutes	2
III. Distribution of Those Iranian Students Abroad Who Departed in 1972-1973 School Year by Major Field of Studies	11
IV. Distribution of Those Iranian Students Who Departed in 1972-1973 School Year by Sex and Country	12
V. Length of Stay in the U.S. and Happiness	42
VI. Indicated Happiness and Adjustment	43
VII. Length of Stay and Degree of Adjustment	43

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the important problems facing Iran today is the lack of sufficient higher educational facilities. In the fall of 1972 Tehran newspapers reported that approximately 100,000 high school graduates had applied for admission to colleges and universities in Iran but only about 8,000 were accepted. The Iranian government has encouraged the creation of new institutes of higher learning and in some cases has provided financial assistance for establishment of such institutes. Within the last ten years, the number of institutes of higher learning has increased more than fivefold and the number of students in higher education has increased more than four times (see Tables I and II). But yet, the demands are so great and the facilities so limited that only about one out of ten of the high school graduates can continue their education in Iran; therefore, they must go elsewhere.

One of the alternatives of these individuals interested in continuing education is to seek such education abroad. A conservative estimate of 40,000 Iranian students are now attending schools abroad. A few of them are financed by the Iranian government, some receive financial assistance from national or international organizations, but the great majority are supported by their families or are self supporting. Many must work part time as they are going to school and most find it

necessary to work during their "off time" in order to save money for the following school year.

The following tables show the growth of the number of students and the number of Iranian universities and colleges. (Iran Almanac and Book of Facts, 1973, p. 400).

TABLE I
NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES

Academic Year	Total	Women	Men
1962-1963	24,456	4,183	20,273
1971-1972	97,338*	28,869	68,469

TABLE II
NUMBER OF STUDENTS, UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES

Item	1962-1963	1972-1973
Number of Students	24,456	208,000*
Number of Universities and Higher Educational Insti- tutes	27	158

*These figures show a growth of more than 100% in the number of Iranian students. The Ministry of Higher Education sources and Iran Almanac do not agree on the total number of Iranian students in the school year, 1972-1973 (see page 10).

Aside from financial problems, the Iranian students studying abroad are faced with numerous other problems. For example, the problem of learning a foreign language; the problem of living and working in a different culture; the problem of being away from home, family and friends; and the problem of socialization and adjustment are among the most important of these problems.*

Statement of the Problem

Each year about 16,000 students participate in the foreign language examination held by the Iranian Ministry of Higher Education to select qualified students and give them passports. Of this group more than 14,000 take English examinations hoping to go to America, England, and Canada, mainly. About eight percent of the students who come to America and thirty percent who go to England cannot "adjust" or find it impossible to successfully continue college and return to Iran after a short period of time.**

In addition to the students who return to Iran soon after arrival, there are a number who stay longer, work and go to school, are to a degree successful, but not enough to complete a college degree. These students also return to Iran. There is no information available on the

*The Iranian students interviewed, the international students' advisor at Oklahoma State University and the Iranian students' supervisor have made similar statements about problems of Iranian students.

**Mr. Masoud Fatemi, Director, Office of Students Abroad, Ministry of Higher Education, Tehran; interview by Miss Maryam Moftakhar on behalf of the author on April 28, 1974. According to the Office of Student Affairs, the withdrawal rate of the American students at Oklahoma State University has been less than 4% each semester.

number of these individuals, the reason(s) for their return, and what happens after they return to Iran.

Those who are able to stay and successfully complete a college degree are not free of problems. Some of them choose not to return to Iran because their education and their professional preparation have not been geared for their future in Iran. Some who return to Iran are soon disappointed with the lack of facilities in their specialized areas or lack of general reception to them and return to become permanent residents of a Western country. For example, 1,250 Iranian doctors are now in West Germany and 1,000 in the United States. There are a total of 4,500 Iranian doctors abroad. This group totals about one third of the number of Iranian doctors. (Iran Almanac and Book of Facts, 1973, p. 402)

It is therefore of great importance to consider the problems experienced by Iranian students abroad. This investigator is interested in discovering some of the important problems with which the Iranian students are faced. Related to this problem is the extent of adjustment of Iranian students to the American culture, their perceived effect of the said adjustment on their success or failure, their changes of attitude toward American people, their desire to stay in the United States or return to Iran upon completion of college, and their opinions and impressions of their fellow countrymen in the United States. Related to the question of adjustment are the students' prior knowledge about the American culture and about the American system of higher education and their specific knowledge about the universities and colleges to which they go, their degree of familiarity with the English language, and the

extent to which they are willing and able to associate with their American counterparts.

Definitions

Adjustment. Morris (1973) defines adjustment in the following way: adjustment "like adaptation in biology, refers to an individuals' relationship with his environment -- the ways he attempts to achieve harmony between his drives and desires and the demands or restraints of the environment" (p. 426). This investigator accepts Morris' definition and adds that the adjustment of the Iranian students, as perceived by them and in the context of this investigation, also includes "recognition and acceptance of the new environment."

Iranian Students. The individuals attending Oklahoma State University in the Spring Semester of 1974 who are citizens of Iran.

Adjust Properly. The individual's ability to recognize and to accept the new environment, the ability to achieve harmony between his drives and desires and the demands or restraints of the environment, making friends in the new environment and being happy to live there.

Prior Knowledge. The Iranian student's accurate information about the American language, culture, and social institutions before leaving Iran.

Success in College. A grade point average of no less than 2.5 or "above average" standing at the university and also the ability to complete a degree program within the normal time limits.

Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions and limitations are made by the investigator and are based on educational psychology theories.

1. That the variables of adjustment, success, etc. are important and their examination will hopefully contribute to the formation of solutions.

2. That the intrasubject variables, such as student age, sex, college level, socio-economic background, etc. are not as important in the outcome of this study, as are intersubject variables, such as the individual's ability to use English, ability to adjust properly, and ability to perceive.

3. That Iranian students attending Oklahoma State University are not in any way different than those attending other colleges or universities in America.

4. That a descriptive study such as the present one will in no way be conclusive but only a step in the direction of understanding problems of adjustment as seen by Iranian students and indicated reasons for success and failure.

5. That the criteria under consideration can be measured with an acceptable degree of reliability in most cases and by the method described on pages 16 through 21.

6. That the study will have greater validity because the interviews and observations will be conducted only by the investigator, himself an Iranian.

7. This study is limited to Iranian students and does not consider any other international students. Although the problems of international

students might be similar, this investigation is an attempt to explain problems perceived by the Iranian students.

8. This study is descriptive and does not attempt to show causation.

9. This study is limited to Iranian students attending Oklahoma State University and therefore, limited in applications to similar populations. The problems of Iranian students in different kinds of universities, different locality, university, and community situations might be somewhat unique.

10. The questions and definitions used are based on the findings of a pilot study of the population (see Appendix A) and are limited to those factors considered important by the subjects who participated in the pilot study. The Iranian students themselves suggested the physical, environmental, personal, and other factors to be considered related to adjustment.

11. This study is limited to the description and explanation of the adjustment, success or failure and the attitudes of Iranian students as perceived by them. No attempts are made to use standard tests of personality, attitude, or adjustment. In short, the Iranian students' perceptions are considered the only criteria important in this descriptive study.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Educational psychology research findings point to the individual's adjustment as one of the most important requirements for success. Morris (1973) among others, uses adjustment to mean a "well-rounded child or the happy and successful adult" (p. 426). Problems are created, according to Morris, because of stress, anxiety, frustration, and conflict. In short, the lack of adjustment.

A survey of appropriate literature by this investigator failed to show any similar studies of the Iranian students' problems. There are a few studies, however, about the problems of international students in the United States.

Noesjirwan (1970) concluded that the Asian students are, compared to Australians, "significantly more dependent on authority, less independent in their thinking, and depend more on memory" (p. 393) in their college work.

Mehta Rama (1970) studied a group of western educated Hindu women and concluded that those Indian women who had western backgrounds and attended mission schools in India accepted and adjusted better to the American culture than those who were "plunged from the old framework into the new" (p. 15).

A study conducted by Deutsch (1970) was reported in The International Education and Exchange. Deutsch suggested that more investigation is needed about different nationalities and their problems in the United States.

Maxwell (1974) discussed some of the problems of foreign students at American universities. Students' note taking, reading assignments, writing papers, taking examinations, etc. were discussed. She said, "An Asian student writing an argumentative paper may have much trouble since his background requires him to defer to authority and discourages forthright expression" (p. 304).

In a recent interview survey of the study habits of foreign students at Berkley, Lin (1973) found that students from Taiwan tended to devote almost all of their time to reading and studying, including weekends. Students from Hong Kong, however, took a more relaxed approach and tended to put off studying, socialized more, and like many U.S. students, crammed desperately just before exams and papers were due (p. 303).

Hie Sung Lee (1973) studied the international students' self-concept and their academic and nonacademic adjustment to the university, students' self-concept and their attitudes toward the international center, students' self-evaluation of the levels of difficulty in adjusting to the university setting, students' self-evaluation of their ability to use the English language, and the relationships of these variables. Lee concluded that there is a significant correlation between the international students' self concept and their frequency of participation in the various activities held by American students ($p < .01$).

Most of the subjects whose native language is not English, evaluated their ability to use English language as "fluent" in given categories; i.e., speaking, reading, understanding lecture, taking notes, writing papers, and participating in class discussion. Despite their "fluency," participation in class discussion was evaluated "poor" by nine out of 86 students (p. 4749-A).

Willard (1973) studied problems perceived by international students enrolled in public junior colleges in Illinois and compared these with problems of international students enrolled in a public university in

Illinois. He concluded that the problems perceived were significantly different in the "sub-scales financial aid, health services and English language" (p. 1662-A). Problems perceived by international students on campus less than twelve months were not significantly different from the problems perceived by international students on campus twelve months or longer. "International students who speak English as a language of first preference perceived problems significantly different from international students who do not speak English as a language of first preference" (p. 1662-A).

Studies about Iranian students abroad are mainly concerned with the number of students outside of Iran, numbers and percentages of students in each foreign country, and number of students in each field of specialization. These studies are conducted by the Iranian government.

The Ministry of Higher Education Institute for Research and Planning in Science and Education's Statistics of Higher Education in Iran (March, 1974) reported the following general information concerning Iranian students in Higher Education:

As of February 1, 1974, there were 123,114 students studying in eight Iranian government universities and 140 other institutes of Higher Learning. The 34 private institutes of Higher Learning have a total of 30,254 students. The eight state universities have a total of 48,858 and 106 government or semi-government institutes of higher learning have a total of 44,002. In the Iranian year, 1351 (March 21, 1972 - March 20, 1973) a total of 2,121 Iranian students went abroad for higher education. Of this group 1,918 were male and 203 were female (p. A).*

Table III shows the distributions by major field of studies. Table IV shows the distributions of students by country of residence.

*The information given is translated by the author from Persian.

Statistics of Higher Education in Iran (March, 1974) presents the following tables (pp. 249-250).

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF THOSE IRANIAN STUDENTS ABROAD
WHO DEPARTED IN 1972-1973 SCHOOL YEAR
BY MAJOR FIELD OF STUDIES

Field	Women	Men	Total
Medicine	14	123	137
Law	0	6	6
Social Sciences	40	140	180
Humanities	33	49	82
Education	0	2	2
Natural Science and Math	57	53*	310
Agriculture	57	51	53
Engineering	31	981	1,012
Fine Arts	17	91	108
G.C.A.**	16	215	231

*Upon closer examination of other sources, it was discovered that the number should be 253 not 53.

**Courses required by British universities before accepting the students.

TABLE IV
 DISTRIBUTION OF THOSE IRANIAN STUDENTS WHO
 DEPARTED IN 1972-1973 SCHOOL YEAR
 BY SEX AND COUNTRY

Country	Women	Men	Total
United States	83	974	1,057
England	60	597	657
France	29	55	84
Italy	5	113	118
India	4	48	52
Austria	0	10	10
West Germany	1	11	12
Canada	4	16	20
Other Countries	17	94	111
Total	203	1,918	2,121

It should be noted that there are a number of discrepancies between two of the most "reliable" sources, the Iran Almanac and the official publication of the Ministry of Higher Education. For example, the Almanac reports 208,000 in higher education in the school year 1972-1973. In the following school year, 1973-1974, the Ministry reports 123,114 students in higher education. There could have been a decline in the enrollment, but a decline of nearly 85,000 is hard to believe particularly when these and other sources agree that there is a trend of fast

growth both in the number of schools and the number of students. The total number of the institutes of higher learning in Iran is given as 148 by the Ministry and 158 by the Almanac.

The Iran Almanac and Book of Facts (1973, p. 402) provides the following information.*

There were an estimated 40,000 Iranian students abroad in the school year, 1972-1973. Only 18,035 of them held student passports. In the United States there were 42.4% of the students, 24.1% in West Germany, 9.9% in England, 6.6% in Austria, 4.9% in France and the rest in other countries. Ninety-three percent of the students abroad are male but the number of female students is increasing every year (sic).

Out of the 18,035 students on student passports studying abroad in 1972-1973 school year, 96.5% were themselves paying for their education and 3.5% were on Iranian or foreign scholarships. At the time of their departure from Iran, 3.1% of them held B.A. degrees, 1.3% M.A. degrees, 3% Ph.D. degrees, and 7.5% were below high school diplomas. The rest, about 85%, were high school graduates. Iranian students studying abroad are mostly interested in engineering, medicine and agriculture.

The Iranian Ministry of Labor and Office of Employment's official publication (1351, March, 1971 - March, 1972) reported the following for the Iranian year ending on March 20, 1972:

To determine the need for graduates at the institutes of higher learning of the country, a specific investigation was conducted. Questionnaires were sent to 28 institutes of higher learning. One institute announced no vacancies and four did not reply. The following information is based on the 23 completed questionnaires:

1. A total of 523 job possibilities are indicated.
2. All of these job possibilities are given to graduates of colleges abroad.
3. 69% of all job possibilities are in Tehran and 31% in the provinces.
4. The salaries offered range from 3,000 - 8,000 Rials (\$430 - \$1140 per month) depending on the degree, work experience, and the location.

In addition, some of the institutes have offered such fringe benefits as insurance, housing, and travel expenses.

*The information provided is based on 18,035 students holding student passports, not the total of 40,000.

Another unpublished paper of the same Ministry reports that in the Iranian year, 1352 (March 21, 1972 - March 20, 1973), 406 students abroad have corresponded with the Office of Employment.

It is hoped that the background information provided helps the reader appreciate both the scope and the depth of the problems related to Iranian students abroad. Many Iranian students have to go abroad for higher education. Iran needs the services of the students who have completed their education and yet, little accurate information is available about the Iranian students abroad. Studies about the Iranian students abroad are conducted by the Iranian government and relate to only less than fifty percent of the total number of students abroad. None of the studies available related to the problems of the Iranian students in the United States.

Hypotheses

The investigator, having observed the social interactions of a group of Iranian students, conducted a pilot study (Appendix A) of another group and established the following hypotheses to allow for measurement of the scope of the problem.

Main Hypothesis

The majority of Iranian students have little accurate information about American colleges and universities and about American culture prior to arrival in the United States.

Sub-Hypotheses

1. The majority of Iranian students are not able to adjust properly to the new environment.
2. There is a correlation between their prior knowledge and adjustment.
3. There is a correlation between their adjustment and success in college.

Summary

This investigation is an attempt to describe some of the problems of Iranian students in the United States. It is to find if the Iranian students have any problems. The investigator is also interested in discovering whether Iranian students have accurate information about American colleges and universities and about American culture prior to arrival in the United States; if the Iranian students are able to adjust properly, if there is a correlation between their prior knowledge and their adjustment, and if there is a correlation between their degree of adjustment and success in college.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The method of investigation was a combination of observations and interviews. This technique allowed the use of interviews to provide a better opportunity for the investigator to analyze the meanings and also provide a chance to observe the subjects in a "natural" setting and to observe their interaction with American as well as Iranian friends. The interview schedule was based on the following additional rationale:

1. The students could talk in detail about their feelings but did not have to write statements.

2. Questions and obscure concepts were explained if necessary.

3. Open ended questions were answered more completely so that no misunderstanding could result because of incomplete answers.

4. Interview sessions gave the investigator a better opportunity to establish rapport with his subject.

5. The investigator was able to give a better introduction to the research, explain the need for it, and probe for some answers if necessary.

6. The interview was held at the convenience of the subjects, at home, at work, at the university, or at their offices.

The interview questionnaire was based on the opinions expressed by the Iranian students as reported in Appendix A. The interview was an attempt to collect relevant data in five subject categories:

1. Biographical information such as age, sex, college classification, etc.
2. Prior knowledge about American culture and higher education.
3. Indicated happiness, adjustment and success.
4. Attitude toward American people.
5. Attitude toward self and other Iranian students.

The observations included such factors as the students' tendency to associate with Iranians and/or Americans, students' reference group, appearance (dress, hair style, etc.) and socialization style (American or Iranian) of interaction (pp. 30-31).

The interview questionnaire is given in Appendix B. The observation notes were made as soon after the interview as possible on the back of each questionnaire.

Other Sources

Other sources consulted for this investigation included the following:

1. The International Students' Adviser at Oklahoma State University.
2. The Director of the Office of Students Overseas, Iranian Ministry of Higher Education, Tehran, Iran (p. 3).
3. The Director of the Office of Manpower for Colleges and Universities of the Iranian Ministry of Higher Education (no reply).
4. The Supervisor of Iranian students in the United States, Washington, D. C. (p. 3).
5. Publications from the Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Labor, and the Office of the Prime Minister (pp. 10-14).

Interviews were held with the International Students' Adviser at Oklahoma State University to obtain related information about Iranian students. The Director of the Office of Students Overseas, the Director of the Office of Manpower, and the Supervisor of the Iranian Students in the United States were each sent a letter requesting pertinent information. Letters were also sent to the Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Labor, and the Prime Minister's office requesting publications concerning Iranian students abroad. Attempts were made to have someone interview the authorities at the Ministries on behalf of the investigator.

Procedure

The present study was carried out in three parts. Part one was an observation of a group of Iranian students attending Oklahoma State University. Part two was a questionnaire, interview pilot study of ten randomly selected Iranian students to determine their definitions of attitudes, success and adjustment of Iranian students (see Appendix A). What follows is a description of the third and the main study of Iranian students.

In a number of meetings with the International Students' Adviser at Oklahoma State University, the general topics for investigation were discussed. The list of names, addresses, telephone numbers, countries of citizenship, college classifications and major fields of studies of all international students were obtained. The author then prepared a list of names of all 94 Iranian students attending Oklahoma State University. A letter was sent to each of the Iranian students explaining the purpose of the study and inviting them for an interview on the 22nd

of April. In addition, the author joined the meeting of the Iranian Students' Club on April 19th and announced the study and invited students for interviews. Forty-seven Iranian students were interviewed between April 19 and May 1. In the meantime, a second letter was sent to all Iranian students thanking them for participation in the study and asking them to take the time to participate if they had not done so. On May 1st an additional ten Iranians were interviewed. Since the interview schedule contained the names, those who had not participated in the study were telephoned and asked to indicate a convenient time and place for the interviews. Eight were interviewed between May 2 and May 16. At this point every Iranian on campus was contacted at least twice. Some had clearly indicated that they did not wish to participate in the study. Others had expressed some reservations about answering some of the questions* and some said they would participate but never did. At this point it was decided that the total population of Iranian students willing to take part in the study (N = 65) had in fact participated.

Statistical Treatments

It was felt that a study such as this must mainly describe and explain the findings. No need was there to go beyond the following procedures.

1. Total numbers, percentages, modes, medians, means, and ranges are given when appropriate.

*One of the questions (Q. 17) asked about their plans after graduation. There was a considerable reservation to answer this question since they felt the data might be used against those who are not planning to return to Iran.

2. Tests of significance were used for differences between individuals on a number of variables related to the hypotheses.

3. Correlations between "prior knowledge" and "adjustment" and also "adjustment" and "success in college" were obtained.

Reliability and Validity

To assure an acceptable degree of reliability, the following steps were taken:

1. (A clear introduction to the investigation and instruction for participation was given to all participants.) The questions were asked and the definitions explained in Persian language so that ambiguity and misunderstanding due to levels of English were eliminated.

2. (The investigator alone conducted all interviews and observations to assure consistency.)

3. To test the students' response stability, some of the questions were asked in a variety of different ways.

4. A number of outside sources such as the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Labor and the Office of Students' Supervisor were asked to provide information concerning the students' success and failure, adjustment, etc. The answers were compared with those of the students' for accuracy and dependability.

In an attempt to have a valid study, the following steps were taken:

1. One group of Iranian students (five - nine) were observed socially during the months of October and November, 1973 on eighteen different occasions and problem factors related to the investigation were considered and discussed.

2. A pilot study of a group of ten randomly selected Iranian students was conducted in which similar questions were asked and the students were asked for their definitions of terms used in this investigation.

3. The International Students' Advisor at Oklahoma State University was interviewed on three different occasions and asked his opinion about relevant items and categories.

4. Three Oklahoma State University professors (in Educational Psychology, in Psychology and in Sociology) were asked to review and comment on the interview questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The results of this investigation are reported in three parts. In addition, Appendix C provides a graphic presentation of the results of questions dealing with the subject of investigation. Part One is the presentation of the results of the hypotheses. Part Two reports significant findings that were not hypothesized. Part Three is a detailed description of the results of all questions.

Part One

Results of Hypotheses

The main hypothesis, "The majority of Iranian students have little accurate information about American colleges and universities and about American culture prior to arrival in the United States," was supported. Question eight was, "How familiar were you with the American system of higher education?" The students perceived themselves this way:

Poor	18%
Fair	60%*
Good	20%
Excellent	2%

*Any information at all was considered fair. No information whatsoever was considered poor. These definitions were consistent in all answers related to the hypothesis.

Question nine asked, "How would you rate your knowledge of the specifics about this university?" These are the results:

Poor	23%
Fair	31%
Good	43%*
Excellent	3%

Question twelve was, "What was the level of your information about the American culture when you came?" The students rated themselves this way:

Poor	25%
Fair	49%
Good	25%
Excellent	2%

Sub-hypothesis A, "The majority of Iranian students are not able to adjust properly to the new environment," was also supported. When asked, "Do you feel you have adjusted to the American culture?" they answered:

Yes	37%
No	15%
Somewhat	43%
Not Sure	5%

Sub-hypothesis B, "There is a correlation between their prior knowledge and adjustment," was not supported. The correlation between students' familiarity with the American system of higher education and his adjustment was $r = .01$. The correlation between the students' knowledge of specifics about this university and his adjustment was

*Upon closer questioning, it was found that many who rated themselves "Good" did not in fact have any information about the university degree requirements.

$r = .12$, and the correlation between the students' level of information about the American culture and his adjustment was $r = .01$. None of these correlations are statistically significant ($N = 65$).

Sub-hypothesis C, "There is a correlation between their adjustment and success in college," was not supported. The correlation between the students' adjustment and success in college was $r = .20$. This correlation was not statistically significant ($p < .05$, $N = 65$). However, had the correlation obtained amounted to $r = .21$, it would have been significant ($p < .10$, $N = 65$).

Part Two

Other Significant Findings

1. There is a significant ($r = .37$) correlation ($p < .01$) between the students' prior knowledge about the American system of Higher Education and their knowledge of specifics about this university.

2. There is a significant correlation ($r = .44$, $p < .01$) between the number of friends and relatives the students have had in the United States and the number of American friends they have had prior to departure.

3. There is a significant ($r = .53$) correlation ($p < .01$) between the number of Iranian friends and family members the students have had in the United States and familiarity with the American culture prior to arrival.

4. There is a significant ($r = .59$) correlation ($p < .01$) between the number of American friends that the students have had in Iran prior to departure and their level of familiarity with the American culture.

5. There is also a significant ($r = .38$) correlation ($p < .01$) between the students' level of English language and their familiarity with the American culture prior to departure.

Part Three

Report of Findings (General)

Sixty-five useable interview questionnaires were completed. Of these respondents, sixty-one (94%)* were male and only six percent female. Eighty-eight percent of the students were less than twenty-nine years old, but thirty-seven percent were graduate students. Eighty-two percent came from Iranian cities of more than 100,000 population. Fifty-eight percent have been here less than three years.

Only eighteen percent rated their English good or excellent when they arrived. The rest said their English was poor or fair. Seventy-eight percent indicated poor or fair familiarity with the American system of higher education and fifty-four percent indicated such familiarity with this university prior to arrival. Fifty-eight percent had not had any American friends in Iran but only fifteen percent reported that they had no Iranian friends who had been in the United States. Seventy-four percent indicated poor or fair knowledge of American culture prior to arrival and fifty-five percent said they did not have a cultural shock when they arrived.

When asked if they are happy here, about the same percentage indicated they were as those who said they were not (twenty-six percent

*All fraction percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

and twenty-five percent, respectively). Thirty-eight percent considered themselves below average or average in their college work. Sixty-eight percent attributed their success to personal reasons and the rest to physical, environmental and other reasons.* Sixty percent said they will return home immediately after graduation but only two percent said they will stay here for good.

When asked about what effects there have been on their attitude toward the American people, twenty-two percent said it has become more positive, twenty-six percent said it has changed to negative, twenty-five percent said it has remained the same and twenty-eight percent said it has become mixed. Eighty-five percent said they were somewhat aware or very aware of the differences between the American and the Iranian system of education; the rest were not aware or not sure. Twenty percent indicated they had not adjusted to the American culture or they were not sure. Forty-three percent said somewhat adjusted or completely adjusted. Forty-eight percent strongly agree or agree that one has to approve of the American way of life in order to adjust.

About half of the students (fifty-two percent) said they have to go back to Iran after graduation, but eighty-three percent said they would go home after graduation if they had a choice and eighty-six percent said one has a moral obligation to return home.

In questions 25 through 20, students were asked to select personal, physical, environmental or other factors related to their success as

*Based on the content analysis of the answers given in the pilot study, personal factors were defined as those related to individual students' unique qualities. Physical factors were defined as material and fiscal. Environmental factors were defined as social and cultural.

the most important attributes. The group was about equally divided in three of four attributes named above. The only exception was physical factors chosen by three percent to fifteen percent on each question. Sixty-nine percent indicated their success was attributed to personal reasons and forty-five percent said personal reasons slow their progress.

The last question was open ended and students were asked to comment generally on the attitudes, adjustment, and success of Iranian students in the United States. The answers were content analyzed for key words, variety or unanimity of ideas, and also for possible relation between self-concept and judgment of others. These are the findings:

1. Thirty-two percent of the students declined to comment.
2. Twenty-five percent made positive general comments saying:
 - A. Most Iranian students are successful.
 - B. Most Iranian students realize they must adjust.
3. Forty-three percent made negative general comments:
 - A. Iranian students do not associate with Americans and they always stay with their own Iranian groups.
 - B. Most Iranian students do not adjust because they do not associate with Americans.
 - C. Few Iranian students associate with Americans, adjust, and are successful.

In each case the majority of the students reflected their own feelings to the group. Most of those who had indicated that they themselves had adjusted believed that others had also adjusted. Similarly, if they had said they were not happy, successful, or adjusted, they indicated the same for others.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The Iranian students' attitudes toward this investigation were generally found to be negative. Many of the students resented being asked about their level of knowledge of the English language or knowledge of the American culture. The students considered asking such questions as their grade point average, their happiness here, their attitude toward American people, and their adjustment probing into their privacy. The questions to which they objected most strongly were first about their plans to stay here or return to Iran after graduation and second, the question asking them to comment about the adjustment of other Iranian students. They considered both these questions unfair and none of the investigator's business.

Since the accuracy and dependability of the study was considered a function of the participants' willingness to take part in the study and to answer questions frankly and candidly, the students who were not willing to participate in the study were excluded. Although there could have been a significant difference between those who participated in the study and those who did not, the fact that twenty-nine students were not willing to take part in the study for any reason was considered sufficient not to insist on their participation.

No attempts were made by the investigator to determine possible differences between those who participated early in the study (N = 47)

and those who came later or did not participate. It was noted, however, that all those who had been present at the meeting of the Iranian Club on April 19, 1974, to whom the investigator had made a personal appeal, participated in the study and expressed a desire to be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

The investigator did not have any way of searching for systematic differences between those who participated in the study willingly and those who did not. The within group differences of those who participated early and those who came later was also neglected by the investigator. These were considered two of the shortcomings of the study.

Other shortcomings of the study were:

1. That the investigator was asking questions that had to be answered after the fact and had to rely on the students' memory as to how it was before the student came.

2. No attempt was made by the investigator to determine the students' level of knowledge of the English language, of higher education, of this university, or the American culture in Iran prior to departure. A longitudinal study would have been more appropriate.

3. The investigator neglected some of the Iranian social and cultural factors related to the privacy of the individual and bluntly asked students about their happiness, success in college, and future plans. Some answers may have been biased because of these social and cultural factors and therefore, may not have been specific and truly representative.

Some of the questions suggested by the pilot study group were not favored by the majority of the population interviewed. These included

questions about cultural shock and about reasons for happiness in and adjustment to the American way of life.

A great majority of the students were not informed about the fact that there is an orientation program held by the Ministry of Higher Education in Iran for students who want to go abroad. The students who were "informed" either by Iranian friends who had been in America or by American friends seemed better adjusted as a group than those uninformed.

The fact that the investigator had been a college instructor in Iran and was identified with the authorities and was investigating Iranian students caused some misunderstanding. Although the investigator assured the students of the confidentiality of their statements, the students seemed to feel that the information gathered this way might be used against them in some manner in the future. The lack of information about the Iranian students studying in American on the part of the Iranian government agencies was emphasized and attention called to it.

Observations

During the interview, this investigator observed the students' appearance, his or her confidence, familiarity with English language, association with Iranian and/or American friends and noted the following:

1. Most Iranian students dress in a fashion similar to the American students.
2. There seems to be a general lack of confidence in association with Americans and in the opinions expressed.
3. Most Iranian students use very little or no English outside of the classroom and when they do not have to use it. The majority, however, are able to speak, read and write English sufficiently for their college work.

4. The most interesting observation made was that in all but one case the Iranian students associated with Iranian friends at the University and outside. All Iranian students preferred to join the group of other Iranians and speak in Persian language.

Conclusion

The majority of the Iranian students at Oklahoma State University rated themselves low on the information about the American system of higher education, knowledge of specifics about this university, and level of information about American culture. The majority of the Iranian students indicated that they are not able to properly adjust to the American culture. If the number of students who return to Iran soon after arrival, as reported by the ministry officials is added to those not adjusted, there are even a greater majority not adjusting to the American culture.

There were no significant correlations found between students' prior knowledge and the students' indicated adjustment.

The correlation between indicated adjustment and indicated success in college is worth noting (p. 24).

During this investigation, it was found that there are no reliable sources about the number of Iranian students in the United States, about their status in this country, and about many problems with which they are faced. Much research is needed to determine more specifically the problems of Iranian students attending American universities.

Suggestions

This investigator has conducted a limited research on the Iranian students attending Oklahoma State University. If this sampling is

representative of the total population of Iranian students abroad, and there are no reasons to believe otherwise, most Iranian students lack accurate information about the American system of higher education and about the universities to which they go. The following are suggested:

1. The Iranian government should inform the Iranian students going abroad of the orientation programs being held for them and insist on their participation.

2. The families of the Iranian students should request information from colleges and universities to which the students are going.

3. The students themselves should make sure that they are informed about colleges and universities, that they have sufficient knowledge of the English language, and knowledge of American culture.

5. Finally, much more research is needed to determine the problems of Iranian students studying abroad and to find remedies for them. Some specific areas of research are outlined below:

A. Complete surveys of the number of Iranian students studying abroad, their fields of studies, their rates of returning to Iran, etc. should be made.

B. Studies should be conducted in Iran prior to students' departure about their level of English language, familiarity with American colleges and universities, and familiarity with the educational system in America.

C. Longitudinal studies of the Iranian students' problems and the possible effects of these problems on students' performance should be conducted.

D. Experimental studies about the adjustment or lack of adjustment of the Iranian students in America as well as in other countries should be conducted.

E. Studies should be conducted to find remedies for many problems that the Iranian students face.

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APPENDIX A

PILOT STUDY

Introduction

The investigation reported here is a pilot study to determine the definition of "adjustment to the American culture" as given by a small sample of Iranian students attending Oklahoma State University in the spring of 1974. This investigator has long been interested in the question of the adjustment of the said students and its possible relationship with their success or failure in college.

This is the second phase of a three phase study undertaken for the investigator's Doctoral thesis. The study, when completed, will be a description of the problems of the total Iranian population attending Oklahoma State University and will discuss such factors as attitudes, happiness, success, and adjustment of the Iranian students.

The Need

The Iran Almanac and Book of Facts (1973, p. 402) reports that according to the Prime Minister, "there are 40,000 Iranian students studying abroad. Approximately forty-two percent of them are attending colleges and universities in the United States." It has been said that the students studying here are successful in college if they are informed about the American colleges to which they go, if they have sufficient knowledge of the English language, if they are happy here and if they are able to "adjust" to the American culture. Without attempting to show causation, this study will inquire about the students' definition of adjustment, their attitudes, their perception of success and failure and their explanation of the influencing factors. It is hoped that the study will be of use to the Iranian authorities responsible for sending

students abroad, the colleges accepting the students, the families of the students, and the students themselves.

Upon the examination of psychological and social abstracts at the Oklahoma State University Library, this investigator was unable to find any studies related to this subject. There are a number of unpublished theses by Iranian graduate students to which we had no access. The Iranian Ministry of Higher Education has a number of publications in the Persian language dealing with the statistics about Iranian students abroad.

Method of Investigation

This pilot study combines an interview schedule with observation. The interviews are all conducted in Persian by the investigator. The observations are made during the interviews at their homes, at the Student Union Cafeteria, or other convenient places. The factors include their knowledge of English language, associations with Iranian or American friends, living and working situations, and their apparent happiness or frustrations.

The list containing names, addresses, telephone numbers, countries of citizenship, fields of studies, and college classifications of all international students attending Oklahoma State University was obtained from the Office of International Students' Adviser.* Ten Iranian students were randomly selected from the said list and were invited for an interview by letters and by phone at a time and place of their convenience.

*The author is grateful to Mr. D. Wilson for providing the list and for his cooperation.

The following interview schedule was conducted and, when necessary, the questions were explained in more detail:

1. How long have you been in the United States?
2. Do you consider yourself to be happy here?
3. Give three important reasons why you are happy here.
4. Give three important reasons why you are not happy here.
5. Do you think you have adjusted to the American culture?
6. What, in your opinion, are important factors in your adjustment?

Please name three most important in order.

7. Do you think you have to approve of the "American way of life" in order to adjust?

8. Do you think one has to adjust to be successful in college?

9. Please comment generally about the adjustment of Iranian students whom you know.

Immediately after each interview, notes were made on additional observations made by the investigator. These notes, made on the back of each interview form, were related to the previously mentioned factors. The results of the interviews and the observation notes were then carefully studied by the investigator and outlined in the following manner:

Results (Tables are Given on Pages 42 and 43)

1. How long have you been in the United States?

less than one year - 2

one to three years - 5

three to five years - 2

longer than five years - 1

2. Do you consider yourself to be happy here?

yes - 2

no - 2

somewhat - 5

not sure - 1

3. Give three important reasons why you are happy here.

The reasons given were somewhat varied in wording but content analysis revealed striking similarities in the following categories. Reasons for being happy in order of importance:

A. Freedom (personal and social)

B. Educational opportunities here

C. Opportunities to travel, make new friends, and add to one's general knowledge of the world.

4. Give three important reasons why you are not happy here.

Reasons for not being happy in order of importance:

A. Being away from home, family and friends

B. Of equal importance were: not happy with the attitude of the Americans toward foreigners and not happy with life in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

5. Do you think you have adjusted to the American culture?

Yes - 3

No - 2

Somewhat - 4

Not sure - 1

6. What, in your opinion, are important factors in your adjustment?

Please name three most important in order.

Here, reasons were classified in four categories: personal, physical, environmental, other.

Personal - 8

Physical - 0

Environmental - 2

Other - 0

7. Do you think you have to approve of the "American way of life" in order to adjust?

Strongly agree - 2

Agree - 4

Neutral - 1

Disagree - 3

8. Do you think one has to adjust to be successful in college?

Yes - 6

No - 4

9. Please comment generally about the adjustment of the Iranian students whom you know.

The comments were studied first to learn what is the feeling of the individual subject toward others and second, what feelings there are toward self. In general, comments about the adjustment of others are extremes.

Others adjust - 4

Others do not adjust - 6

The important factors contributing to the adjustment of others were said to be: flexibility, interest, and motivation. Factors related to

lack of adjustment of others were said to be: lack of interest to associate with Americans, always staying with their own minority groups, and language problems.

It is interesting to note that even the students who felt others are able to adjust criticized them for lack of interest to associate with Americans. Self adjustment and lack of adjustment were reflected to a considerable extent on feelings toward others. Seven out of ten said that they have adjusted; the same seven either felt others had also adjusted or agreed that other students have adjusted to a certain extent.

Discussion

The majority of the students questioned (seventy percent) felt that they have adjusted to the American culture. Sixty percent agreed that one has to approve of the American way of life in order to adjust. Only half of the subjects who said one has to approve of the American way of life in order to adjust indicated that adjustment is necessary for success in college.

There are general inconsistencies in a number of cases. Questions are answered independently of one another, but in some areas, there seem to be more of an agreement. These are:

1. The majority (eighty percent) agree that reasons for adjustment could be classified into three general categories: personal, physical and environmental,

2. Eighty percent said that personal capacity and flexibility are most important factors in adjustment.

3. All students preferred their own group and always sat at the same table, discussed their own problems, and spoke in Persian language.

No other conclusions are reached by the investigator. The purpose of the study has been to describe and explain, not to show causation. The other purpose has been to obtain the definition of adjustment to the American culture. This definition should include:

1. acceptance of the American way of life,
2. association with American people, and
3. consideration of personal, physical, and environmental factors.

TABLE V
LENGTH OF STAY IN THE U.S. AND HAPPINESS

Are you happy here?	less than 3 years	more than 3 years
yes	2	1
no	1	0
somewhat	4	1
not sure	0	1

TABLE VI
INDICATED HAPPINESS AND ADJUSTMENT

Adjustment	Happy	Unhappy	Not sure
Adjusted	6	1	0
Not adjusted	1	0	1
Not sure	1	0	0

TABLE VII
LENGTH OF STAY AND DEGREE OF ADJUSTMENT*

Adjustment	Less than 3 years	More than 3 years	Total
Adjusted	5	2	7
Not adjusted	2	1	3
Total	7	3	10

*Somewhat adjusted is included in adjusted. Not sure is included in not adjusted.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name _____ 2. Sex
male female
3. Age (Last Birthday)
less than 24 24-28 29-35 older than 35
4. College Classification
fr. so. jr. sr. grad. special
5. What is the population of your home town?

less than 25,000 25-50 thousand 50-100 thousand more
6. How long have you been in the United States?

less than one year one to three years three to five years longer
7. How would you rate your English when you arrived in the United States?

poor fair good excellent
8. How familiar were you with the American system of higher education?

poor fair good excellent
9. How would you rate your knowledge of the specifics about this university?

poor fair good excellent
10. How many American friends did you have in Iran

none 1 - 3 4 - 6 7 or more
11. How many Iranian friends or relatives did you have who had been in the United States?

none 1 - 3 4 - 6 7 or more
12. What was the level of your information about the American culture when you came?

poor fair good excellent

22. Do you have to go back to Iran after graduation?

yes

no

23. What would you do if you had a choice?

stay here

go home

24. Do you think one has a moral obligation to return home?

yes

no

25. If you are happy here, please give three important reasons:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

26. If you are not happy here, please give three important reasons:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

27. Please name three important cultural differences:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

28. Please name three important factors that contribute to your success:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

29. Please name three factors that slow your progress:

A. _____

B. _____

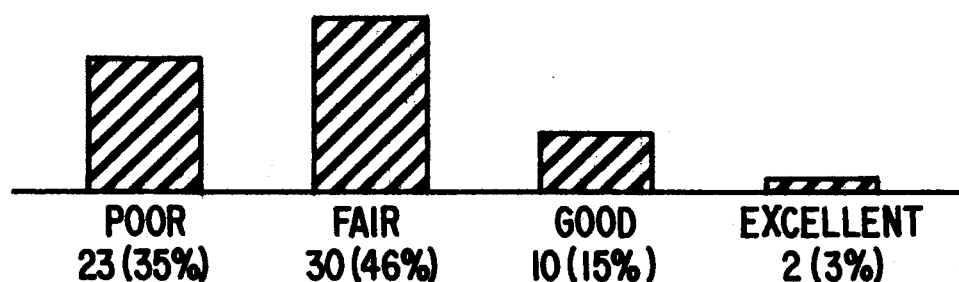
C. _____

30. Please comment on attitudes, adjustment, and success of Iranian students.

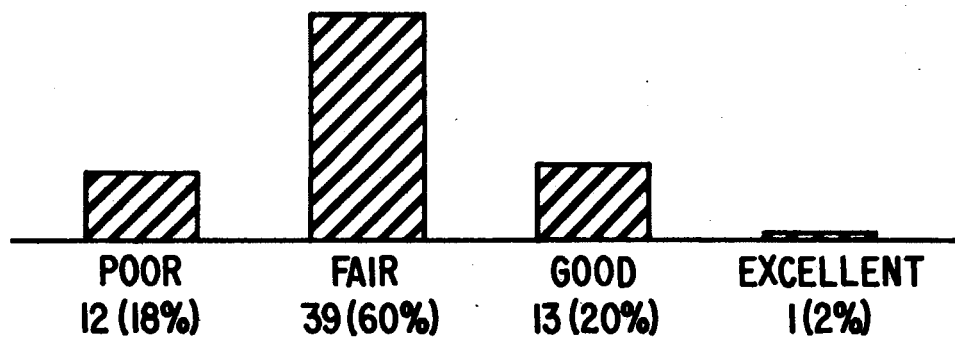
APPENDIX C

GRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF SELECTED RESULTS

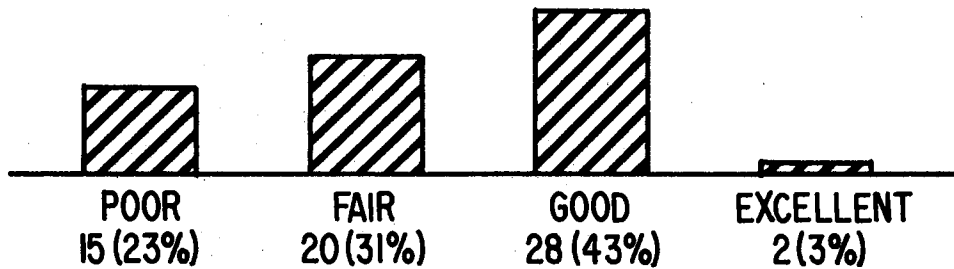
**I. HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR ENGLISH
WHEN YOU ARRIVED IN THE U.S.?**



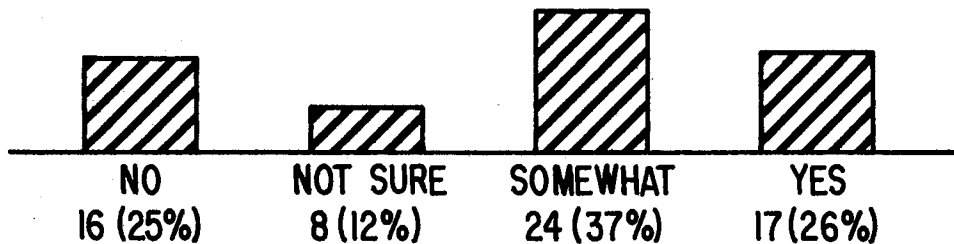
**2. HOW FAMILIAR WERE YOU WITH THE
AMERICAN SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDU-
CATION?**



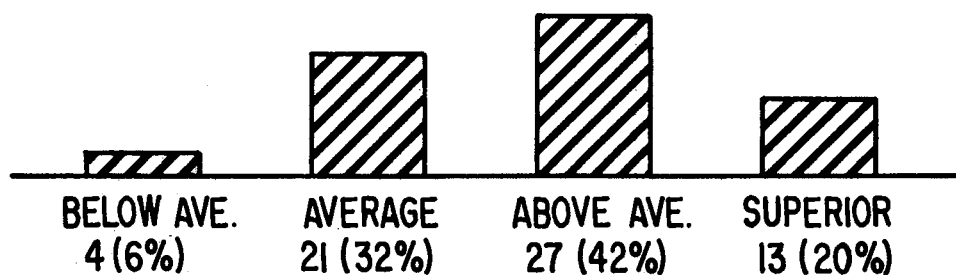
3. HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPECIFICS ABOUT THIS UNIVERSITY?



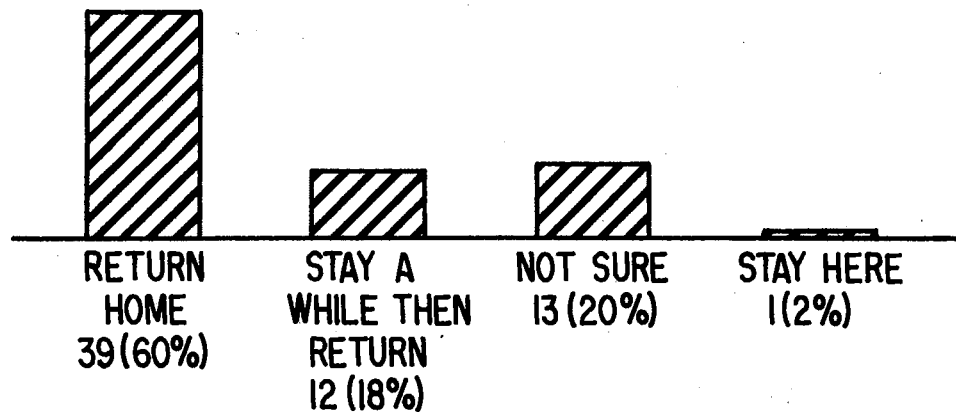
4. ARE YOU HAPPY HERE?



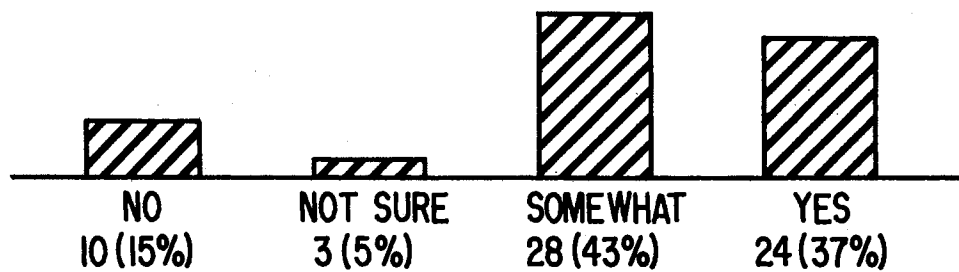
5. ARE YOU SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR COLLEGE WORK ?



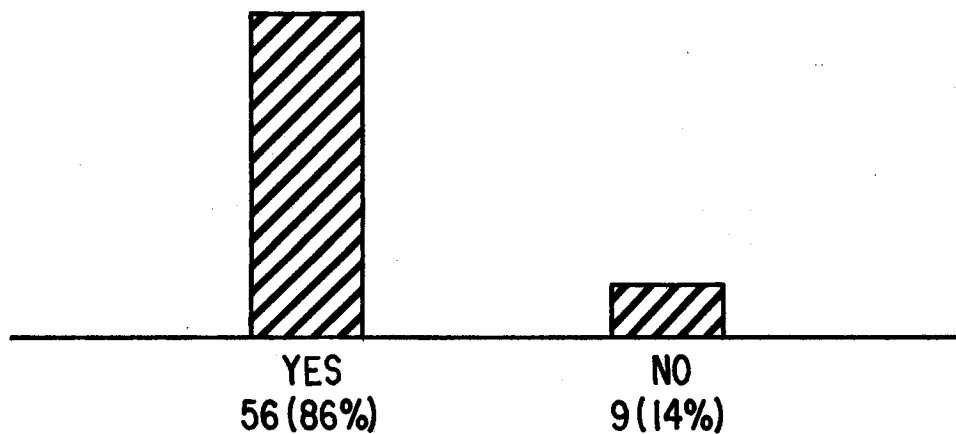
6. WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS AFTER GRADUATION ?



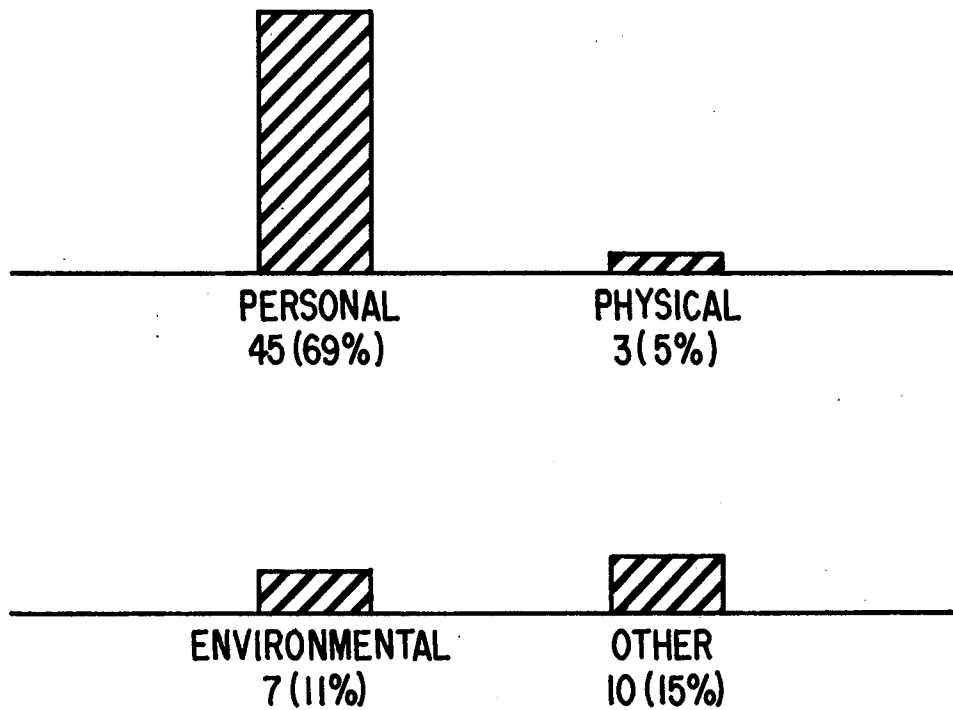
**7. DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE ADJUSTED
TO THE AMERICAN CULTURE ?**



**8. DO YOU THINK ONE HAS A MORAL
OBLIGATION TO RETURN HOME ?**



9. PLEASE NAME THREE IMPORTANT FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR SUCCESS.



VITA

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