

PSYCHOLOGICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL IMPACT OF LANGUAGE LEARNING CHALLENGES ON THE WELL-BEING OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

*Iryl DA. Nungay

**Charlie M. Santos

***Maribel R. Gabuat

****Miguel A. Dumapias

*****Shirley B. Salgado

*****Rommel S. Hernandez

*****Manuel R. Malasmas

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Corresponding Author: Iryl DA. Nungay; Email: nungayiryl388@gmail.com; doi: 10.46360/globus.edu.220251013

Abstract

Background: In a globalizing world, international students encounter many difficulties in adjusting to a new academic and cultural setting, with the language being one of the most prominent ones. Effective communication in a foreign tongue is imperative to the academic achievement, integration into the society, and general well-being. The language acquisition in difficulties befall to many students, though, which results in anxiety, diminished the confidence, and social relationship difficulties. These difficulties have the potential to affect their emotional well-being, study performance, and belonging. Considering the increase in the international population of students in Manila, the current study attempts to look at the psychological, emotional, and behavioral consequences of language acquisition issues in hopes that the results would contribute to enhanced support structures as well as improve the learning experience of foreign learners.

Result: The findings show that the international students in Manila tend to view the language learning as a positive experience, considerably by improving their motivation, confidence, and social integration. The majority of the respondents strongly supported that the learning a new language enhanced their self-concept, school performance, appreciation of culture, and social relations with peers and teachers. Yet there were still some students who were continued to experience difficulties in communication and skill acquisition. In general, the results shows that the psychological, emotional, and behavioral advantages of language acquisition while some placing a premium on sustaining support to enable learners to conquer language-related challenges and settle completely into their new setting.

Conclusion: The study highlights that while international students in Manila experience significant psychological, emotional, and behavioral benefits from language learning, challenges in communication and adaptation remain. Strengthening support systems and language programs can further enhance their well-being, academic success, and cultural integration.

Keywords: Psychological, Emotional, Behavioral, Language Learning, Challenges, Well-Being, Foreign Students.

Introduction

The growing number of international students in higher learning institutions has shed light on their challenges in acclimatization to a new linguistic environment. Language learning issues can have profound effects on their psychological, emotional, and behavioral well-being (Alharbi & Smith, 2018). Foreign students face a language issues, which translate to academic problems, social alienation, and increased of stress levels (Skromanis et al., 2018). These pose a challenge to their emotional well-being, confidence, and capability to participate in school and social life (Heng, 2019). Research has demonstrated that restricted language proficiency can result in anxiety, frustration, and feelings of exclusion, which can make it more difficult for the students to integrate into their new environment (Vitasari et al., 2010). The psychological effect is stress and self-doubt, whereas the emotional consequences tend to be homesickness, loneliness, and not belonging (McLachlan & Justice, 2009). Behaviorally, language challenges can lead to a decreased of class participation, social withdrawal, and a general decrease in the academic achievement (Ibragimova & Tarasova, 2017). Overcoming these kinds of language barriers is imperative in fostering the health of the foreign students. Successful language training, psychological counseling, and supportive learning approaches can be a ease in these challenges. By grasping the psychological, emotional, and behavioral influence of language learning challenges, the schools can initiate more efficient support mechanisms to a build on the overall health and academic achievements of foreign students (Jiang & Zhang, 2021; Wang, Derakhshan, & Zhang, 2021).

Methods

Research Design

The descriptive correlational design was used in this

*,****,*****St. Bernadette of Lourdes College, Philippines.

**Manila Central University, Philippines.

,**City University of Pasay, Philippines.

*****Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Philippines.

study, which, according to McBurney and White (2009), is ideal for research seeking to present an overall picture of what currently exists and to analyze the interconnection between variables. Study.com (2022) explains that the design does not include any treatment or intervention among participants but observes and analyzes data as it unfolds naturally.

Respondents of the Study

This research involved 398 foreign students from different foreign schools in Manila as its major respondents. The results would assist in creating a strategies and knowledge directed towards the improving the well-being of foreign students, especially towards managing issues related to language learning challenges.

Instruments of the Study

The research applied a self-designed survey questionnaire, which was examined for validity by three experts and pre-tested. Since the tool was an adopted standard questionnaire with proven validity and reliability, further content validation and pre-testing were not considered necessary. According to Siegle (2015), a minimum of 0.70 reliability score is needed for attitude measurement tools in research.

Result

Demographic Profile

Based on the frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic profile, the most dominant age group is (50.0%) of the respondents were between 12 and 15 years old, with a total of 199 participants from the three chosen international schools in Manila. Gender-wise, the greatest representation was from male respondents, who numbered 223 individuals, constituting 56.0% of the population. In terms of native language, the majority of the respondents (87.7%) were Chinese by first language, numbering 349 individuals. Finally, in language learning, 48.2% of the respondents (192 people) had learned languages other than Chinese and English.

Conclusions of Language Learning Difficulties on the Well-Being among International Students

Psychological Factors

The results indicate that the majority of the respondents were strong in agreeing on the statements pertaining to their self-assurance, eagerness, and emotional health towards the acquiring a second language. The top-rated statement showed that the learners felt comfortable in using and applying their new language, followed closely by the enthusiasm and greater confidence towards the learning, respectively. Being assured of communication, being able to control anxiety, and feeling confident with another language were highly

ranked. The only statement that had an agree rating was about satisfaction with progress and achievements in language learning. Overall, the answers reflect a very positive view of language learning experiences.

The result of this section is inclined to the study of Jiang, Yuen, & Horta (2020) stating that Students' satisfaction may be seen as the degree toward which their encounters in the new country exceed their goals in terms of the achievement of personal objectives and the occurrence of adequate acculturation. It also means that it is a subjective assessment of a student's degree of perceived pleasure and adaptability to the new sociocultural setting.

Emotional Factors

The findings show that the respondents were in strong agreement with the statements concerning and overcoming their fear, confidence building, and establishing a sense of belonging in the learning of a second language. The most highly rated statement was based on their achievement in overcoming fear in language learning, then feeling overwhelmed by their performance at school and developing an interest in other cultures. Respondents also indicated greater trust in others, comfort with communication, and the capacity to convey thoughts and feelings in their new language. They also indicated increasing motivation and enthusiasm for continued language study. The lowest-scoring statement, however, though still rated as strongly agree, was one of overcoming fear in communicating with foreign-language speakers. In general, the results point to a positive social and emotional effect of language study.

Link with the study, the quality of life on campus is a predictor of international students' happiness. Wang, Derakhshan, & Zhang (2021) included the discussion on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement or factors that is also related in this study in assessing how international students are influenced by learning language difficulties. Cognitive engagement refers to the state of being both mentally stimulated and emotionally invested in the task at hand. Emotional engagement refers to the feelings of commitment and connection that students have to the work that they are doing. Lastly, behavioral engagement is the actual tendency of students to participate in activities and teaching—cited from Mercer (2019). Research shows that overseas students from East Asia have a hard time adjusting to life in predominately white universities (PWI) in the United States. If the students' home culture is vastly different from that of the host country, they may have a more difficult time adjusting, which can have a negative effect on their health and academic performance.

Behavioral Factors

The results showed that the participants significantly agreed that the acquisition of a new language had improved their knowledge, thinking skills, and rapport with their fellow students, teachers, and language culture being acquired. The participants also felt encouraged to learn other languages and pleased with improvements they had made in writing, oral, and comprehension skills. Further, the learning of a new language was believed to influence learning about other beliefs and cultures. The only sentence that was rated as agree was that concerning the enhancement of skills and abilities. The overall findings indicate that language learning has a positive cognitive, social, and cultural effect on learners.

Similarly, behavioral engagement is the actual tendency of students to participate in activities and teaching - cited from Mercer (2019). Research shows that overseas students from East Asia have a hard time adjusting to life in predominately white universities (PWI) in the United States. If the students' home culture is vastly different from that of the host country, they may have a more difficult time adjusting, which can have a negative effect on their health and academic performance. Studies have shown that acculturative stress, perceived bias, homesickness, language ability, and other variables can all contribute to difficulty in adapting to a new environment.

Table 1: Conclusions of Language Learning Difficulties on the Well-Being Among International Students

	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Psychological Factors			
1. I am happy to learn a new language.	4.63	0.73	Strongly Agree
2. I am satisfied with my progress and achievements in language learning.	4.06	0.63	Agree
3. I am filled with motivation in understanding.	4.37	0.61	Strongly Agree
4. I have overcome the difficulties in learning new language.	4.36	0.80	Strongly Agree
5. I am happy to apply and speak in my new language.	4.73	0.52	Strongly Agree
6. I am confident in explaining matters using my new language.	4.51	0.68	Strongly Agree
7. I have developed confidence in my knowledge and skills in adapting new language.	4.49	0.75	Strongly Agree
8. I now feel at ease understanding a different language.	4.37	0.69	Strongly Agree
9. I have developed or improved my self-esteem.	4.63	0.61	Strongly Agree
10. I have managed my anxiety in overcoming learning a new language	4.48	0.63	Strongly Agree
Category Mean	4.46	0.67	Strongly Agree
Emotional Factors			
1. I have overcome my fear in learning new language.	4.67	0.60	Strongly Agree
2. I have overcome my fear in communicating with others whose language is different.	4.11	0.50	Strongly Agree
3. I have developed trust with what others are telling me.	4.58	0.56	Strongly Agree
4. I have overcome my fear in being isolated or judged from others.	4.35	0.69	Strongly Agree
5. I feel confident in speaking in my new learned language.	4.49	0.64	Strongly Agree
6. I have developed interest in other countries cultures, language, etc.	4.64	0.61	Strongly Agree
7. I can now express my thoughts and feelings using my new learned language.	4.50	0.63	Strongly Agree
8. I now feel belong with others and communicating with them seems easy and comfortable.	4.53	0.69	Strongly Agree

9. I feel more excited, motivated, and passionate to learn another language.	4.46	0.57	Strongly Agree
10. I feel overwhelmed with the results of my academic performance.	4.65	0.55	Strongly Agree
Category Mean	4.50	0.60	Strongly Agree
Behavioral Factors	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
2. Learning a new language enhanced my knowledge and understanding.	4.64	0.69	Strongly Agree
3. Learning a new language improved my skills and capabilities.	4.13	0.50	Agree
4. Learning a new language improved my critical thinking skills that can be applied in different situations.	4.62	0.74	Strongly Agree
5. Learning a new language improved my values towards myself and society.	4.28	0.67	Strongly Agree
6. Learning a new language improved my interests in other culture.	4.34	0.74	Strongly Agree
7. Learning a new language improved my interests in other people's beliefs.	4.35	0.67	Strongly Agree
8. Learning a new language influenced me to learn another language.	4.53	0.57	Strongly Agree
9. Learning a new language developed my relationship with other people, particularly my fellow classmates and teachers.	4.58	0.56	Strongly Agree
10. Learning a new language developed my relationship with the country of my new learned language.	4.46	0.69	Strongly Agree
11. I am impressed with my learnings and improvements in writing, speaking, and listening to the new language.	4.48	0.64	Strongly Agree
Category Mean	4.44	0.65	Strongly Agree

Legend: 1.00-1.80 – Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 – Disagree; 2.61-3.40 – Neutral; 3.41-4.20 – Agree; 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree

Conclusion

The results show the major of psychological, emotional, and behavioral advantages of language acquisition for international students. Increased of confidence, motivation, and sense of belonging were reported by the respondents, showing that the overcoming communication barriers is beneficial to their well-being as a student. Learning a new language also made them more critical thinkers, helped them form a better social relationship, and be more appreciative of the cultures, encouraging personal and academic development. Though the majority of the students were in agreement with the positive effects of the language learning, others still complained about the communication and skill achievement difficulties. The findings highlight the necessity of the ongoing support mechanisms that target the language-related challenges in order to positively enhance the overall adjustment and performance of students in an overseas learning setting.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest by the authors in this manuscript.

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