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**The Relationship between Proactive
Personality and Cross-cultural
Adjustment on International Students in
South Korea:
Mediating Role of Cultural Intelligence**

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The Relationship between Proactive Personality and Cross-cultural Adjustment on International Students in South Korea: Mediating Role of Cultural Intelligence

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Abstract

Adjusting to a new culture is a stressful process, and international students face various problems, such as stress, anxiety, isolation, and depression due to poor psychological and sociocultural adjustment to the new unfamiliar environment. This study explored the relationship between proactive personality and Cross-cultural adjustment with the mediation role of cultural intelligence (CQ) in South Korea. The sample of 167 international students studying in South Korea universities completed measures of cultural intelligence (CQ), proactive personality, psychological and sociocultural adjustment (together cross-cultural adjustment). The results showed that international students' cross-cultural adjustment is significantly related to cultural intelligence and proactive personality. Additionally, cultural intelligence is found to fully mediate the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment. The study suggests that cultural intelligence training and support services should be provided to facilitate the cross-cultural adjustment of international students.

Keywords: International students in South Korea, Cross-cultural adjustment, Cultural intelligence; Proactive Personality

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I. Introduction

The number of international students attending universities in South Korea has experienced a significant increase in recent years (Bailey, 2020; Jung & Kim, 2017; Lee &). According to data from the National Institute for International Education (NIIED, 2021), the number of international students studying in South Korea rose from 3,963 thousand in 2000 to 78,050 in 2009, reaching 152 thousand in 2021.

Studying abroad offers various positive outcomes for students, including self-awareness and personal growth (Cooper & Newsome, 2016; Rana et al., 2020). It also provides opportunities for better professional pathways (Chen et al., 2021; Stone & Petrick, 2013). However, adjusting to a new culture presents challenges for international students, resulting in increased stress, anxiety, isolation, and depression due to poor psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Chen, Lin, et al., 2021; Hartini et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2020). These difficulties arise from cultural shocks and uncertainties in the unfamiliar environment (Chen et al., 2021; Rana et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2019).

Previous research suggests that variables such as "cultural intelligence" (CQ) and "proactive personality" have a positive relationship with the

psychological and sociocultural adjustment, collectively known as cross-cultural adjustment, of international students.

“Cultural intelligence” is defined as the capacity to successfully adjust to diverse cultural contexts and is particularly relevant to cross-cultural studies. It comprises four facets: cognitive CQ, metacognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Previous studies have found a positive relationship between cultural intelligence (CQ) and cross-cultural adjustment (Ang et al., 2007; Huff, 2013; Lee & Sukoco, 2010; Templer et al., 2006). For example, Ward et al. (2008) found that motivational CQ was associated with fewer psychological symptoms and sociocultural adjustment problems, while Harrison and Brower (2011) linked CQ to better psychological adjustment. Huff et al. (2014) emphasized the importance of motivational CQ for expatriate adjustment in cross-cultural situations, suggesting that individuals with higher motivational CQ are more likely to invest effort and energy into adjusting and performing well in overseas assignments. Furthermore, studies have shown that individuals with high levels of metacognitive CQ (Sri et al., 2010; Ward et al., 2011) and behavioral CQ (Rana et al., 2020) experience fewer cultural adjustment problems, resulting in better overall adjustment.

“Proactive personality” is defined as an individual who is relatively

unaffected by situational forces and actively brings about environmental change (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Proactive individuals demonstrate proactive behaviors consistently across different situations and time, seeking opportunities and utilizing resources to create meaningful change in their environment (Parker et al., 2010). Research has shown positive associations between proactive personality and various outcomes, including network building (Thompson, 2005), career initiative (Seibert et al., 2001), problem prevention (Parker et al., 2010), motivation to learn, activity involvement, work adaptation, and individual creativity (Jiang, 2017; Kim et al., 2010; Major et al., 2006).

In the cross-cultural context, proactive personality has been found to be positively related to cross-cultural adjustment (Hua et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2020). Proactive sojourners during sociocultural adjustment tend to establish personal relationships with peers and supervisors through information-seeking and social networking (Hua et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2013), resulting in greater psychological comfort and sociocultural adjustment (Hu et al., 2020). Moreover, research on sojourners' adjustment has shown that stronger networks are positively related to their adjustment and psychological well-being, while sojourners with low proactive personality may experience social isolation and more adjustment problems due to their hesitation to interact and build new connections with host country nationals (Caligiuri & Lazarova,

2002;Hua et al., 2019; Wang & Kanungo, 2004). However, there is limited empirical research in the cross-cultural literature that has specifically examined the role of proactive personality in cross-cultural adjustment (Hua et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2020; Ren et al., 2013).

In one of the limited studies, Hu et al. (2020) examined the mediating role of cultural intelligence in the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment among international students in China. They found that proactive personality is positively associated with cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment. Their findings are consistent with those of previous studies, which suggest that individual dispositional characteristics influence cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment (Earley&Ang, 2003; Gong & Fan, 2006).

Hu et al.'s (2020) study is one of the first trials of the role of proactive personality in cross-cultural adjustment with the mediating role of cultural intelligence. They noted that some of the limitations of their study were the samples, which primarily consisted of students from Asian and African countries, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other countries or regions. Additionally, the results from the single study conducted by Hu et al. (2020) may not fully capture the complexity of the connection between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment, even with the mediating role of cultural intelligence.

Moreover, Hu et al. (2020) did not consider the possible role that local language proficiency or length of stay in the host country might play in the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment with the mediating role of cultural intelligence among international students. For example, in their research on expatriates in Japan, Huff et al. (2014) found that length of stay in Japan significantly predicts cross-cultural adjustment. Additionally, previous studies have argued that local language proficiency (host country language proficiency) is one of the variables that can predict cross-cultural adjustment (Huff, 2013; Presbitero, 2017; Yu et al., 2019).

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the roles of "cultural intelligence" and "proactive personality," which are suggested to have a positive effect on the psychological and sociocultural adjustment (together, cross-cultural adjustment) of international students, and expand the current literature in South Korea.

II. Literature Review

1. Cross-Cultural Adjustment Definition

Terms like adaptation, adjustment, and acculturation are similar concepts that are often used synonymously to broadly describe the process of people adjusting to a new environment. Adler (1975) views cross-cultural adjustment as a sociocultural process and acquisition of knowledge about the new culture, such as the language, habits of the native people, food, customs and history. Ruben and Kealey (1979) define cross-cultural adjustment as the general psychological well-being and self-satisfaction to a new environment after the initial anxiety and distress which characterized culture shock have passed.

According to Hannigan (1990) usually adjustment is a harmony between individual and environment that achieved through changes in the individual's knowledge, attitudes, and emotions about his or her environment. In summary, based on the definitions that have been cited , this research uses the term "cross-cultural adjustment" as a psychosocial concept which has to do with the process of achieving emotional well-being (psychological adjustment) and the ability to "fit in" to the new environment (sociocultural adjustment)(Ward, 1996; Ward et al., 2001).

2. Cross-Cultural Adjustment Theories

1) Culture Shock and the U-curve Theory

The cross-cultural adjustment literature has suggested various frameworks, and one of the most influential models in the literature is "Culture Shock" (Lysgaard, 1955 as cited in Ward et al., 1998). This model introduces a U-shaped curve that explains the adjustment of sojourners in a new cultural setting. According to the U-shaped curve model, the "honeymoon" stage begins at the top of the U, where the sojourner experiences confusion and frustration about the new culture, resulting in maladjustment. Finally, the "recovery" stage occurs, where the sojourner accepts the new culture and adjustment takes place.

A few years later, Oberg (1960) supported Lysgaard's view by introducing the term "culture shock." Oberg described culture shock as an "occupational disease" suffered by individuals who are suddenly introduced to a culture that is very different from their own. According to Oberg, culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, such as customs, gestures, facial expressions, or words (p. 177).

Oberg (1960) described four stages of culture shock. The first stage is the "honeymoon" stage, which lasts from a few days to six months. During this stage, sojourners experience fascination and optimism about the new culture, and the differences between their own culture and the new culture are hardly noticed. The second stage is characterized by hostile and emotional attitudes toward the host country, and the differences between one's own culture and the new culture become more visible (e.g., language difficulties, different customs, and rules), leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation. The third stage is characterized by increased language knowledge, the ability to understand customs and rules in the new culture, and the ability to meet and communicate with host nationals. Finally, the fourth stage involves the acceptance of the routines and customs of the new culture, and adjustment is as complete as possible in the new cultural environment.

The "U-curve" and "culture shock" theory are still dominant in the field; however, these classic theories of adjustment have been widely criticized in the literature. For instance, Church (1982) argued the lack of support for a "honeymoon stage" at the beginning of cross-cultural adjustment and described the U-curve hypothesis as "weak," "inconclusive," and "overgeneralized" (p. 542). Supporting this claim, Furnham and Bochner (1986) acknowledged the early stage as the most stressful period which decreased over time. Furthermore, in their longitudinal study to identify multiple trajectories of first-

year international students' adjustment in U.S. universities, Hirai et al. (2015) concluded that the U-curve theory (first excitement, followed by distress and recovery stage) did not occur among their participants. (Also see López & Margarita, 2021).

2) Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Another cross-cultural framework that has gained wide attention is social learning theory (SLT) which integrates cognitive and behavioral theories and conceptualizes cross-cultural adjustment as a learning process. According to social learning theory, Sojourners begin to acquire the ability to behave appropriately in new culture by learning the features of the culture and acquire the sociocultural skills which results in the increased positive and decreased negative consequences of the behavior leading to better adjustment to the host culture (Berry, 1992; Black & Mendenhall, 1991).

Social learning theory as presented by one of its major authors, Bandura and Walters (1977) asserts that in addition to individuals learning based on the consequences of their actions, individuals can also learn and behave based on their observations of other people's behavior and associated consequences and by imitating the modeled behavior. Based on both actual and vicarious experience, the authors suggest that people are capable of the control of how to

respond in various future situations.

In the context of cross-cultural adjustment which places an individual in a situation in which many past behaviors and associated consequences are no longer appropriate and new sources of modeled behavior are different from the past, Black and Mendenhall (1991) explained that, social learning theory provides an explanation of U-curve pattern of adjustment and the impact of individual differences on cross-cultural adjustment. In addition, because the shift from culture shock to adjustment is a function of the individual's ability to learn and reproduce new behaviors can shorten the time of adjustment. For example, an individual with a higher desire to build relationships with host nationals would reach adjustment in a shorter time than a person with a lower desire to build relationships with people in the new culture (Church, 1982; Black & Mendenhall, 1991).

3) Psychological and Sociocultural Adjustment Theory

The most prominent adjustment theory in literature is developed by Colleen Ward and her colleagues drawing on their own empirical research on sojourners and international students to provide an overarching conceptual framework for the study of cross-cultural transition and adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1993; Ward, 1996; Ward et al., 2001). According to Ward and

colleagues, psychological and sociocultural adjustments encompass the main components of cross-cultural adjustment and are highly interrelated and influence each other (Hirai et al., 2015; Searle & Ward, 1990; Sheng et al., 2022). The components are as following:

1. Psychological adjustment refers to psychological and emotional well-being and can best be understood within a stress and coping framework.
2. Sociocultural adaptation refers to the ability to “fit in” or negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture and is best explained within a social learning approach.

Ward and Kennedy (1993) framework on psychological and socio-cultural adaptation has borrowed heavily from two divergent traditions in the “culture shock” field and it is underpinned by the work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) on stress and coping, and is exemplified by the research of Berry and colleagues on acculturation and adaptation (Berry & Kim, 1988; Chataway & Berry, 1989). The second tradition is based on Argyle’s (1980) social skills model which has been popularized by Furnham and Bochner (1986) in their culture learning approach to cross-cultural transition.

The ‘stress and coping’ approach presents cross-cultural adjustment as a psychological process of coping with the stress that can accompany substantial life-changes and environment factors influenced by aspects of individual copingstyles, personality, locus of control, tolerance of ambiguity

and how individuals or an ability to cope with change (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Hirai et al., 2015a; Meza & Gazzoli, 2011; Rana et al., 2020; Ward et al., 2001). In other words, psychological adjustment is regarded as an active process of managing stress in order to adjust to one's environment, On the other hand, the 'social-learning approach' proposes that problems of cross-cultural adjustment result from lack of understanding of host culture rules and routines of behavior (Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

Therefore, cross-cultural adjustment is a process by which sojourners learn new cultural knowledge, acquire new skills and behavior to gradually fit and function normally in the host cultural environment (Masgoret & Ward, 2006), thus in this sense, it can be contended that sociocultural adjustment may improve as a result of language ability, cultural knowledge, the length of stay and the amount of interaction with host nationals (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Li & Gasser, 2005; Peltokorpi, 2008; Shu et al., 2020b; Ward & Kennedy, 1992).

Literature review on psychological and sociocultural adjustment shows satisfactory results using (Ward & Kennedy, 1993) framework for students 'adjustment which are sample of present study. For instant, previous researched examined psychological and sociocultural adjustment on students in New Zealand, and found that social difficulty, life changes, extraversion, and satisfaction contacting with host nations predict psychological adjustment

while expected difficulty ,cultural distance , Length of residence in the host culture , language proficiency predict sociocultural adjustment (Searle & Ward, 1990, Ward & Kennedy, 1992).

For distance, in their study with students from 17 Asian countries, Li and Gasser (2005) indicate that contact with the hosts and self-efficacy were both related to students' successful sociocultural adjustment. Furthermore, Yu et al. (2019) indicated that; while a low level of perceived discrimination influences both psychological and sociocultural adjustment, contact with host national students and host language proficiency improve the quality of sociocultural adjustment.

3. Proactive Personality

The proactive personality concept was originally developed by Bateman and Crant (1993) and focuses on the person-environment link which describes individuals who seek opportunities and information to intentionally and directly have an impact on the world around them. Hence, these individuals take action to influence their environments until meaningful changes occur (Crant, 2000; Fuller & Marler, 2009; Seibert et al., 1999).

Proactive people are proactive across multiple contexts and over time, regardless of the contingencies of a situation. On the other hand, they show

initiative, take action, and persevere until solve problems in their environment (Parker et al., 2010). Furthermore, individuals who are more proactive have a better sociocultural adjustment and perform better in various settings(Wang et al., 2013).In comparison, individuals with low proactive personality are hesitant to interact and build new connections with host country nationals, result in, social isolation and more adjustment problems (Hua et al., 2019).Several lines of study demonstrate that proactive personality is positively related to network building(Thompson, 2005), career initiative (Seibert et al., 2001)problem prevention (Parker et al., 2010) motivation to learn, activity involvement, work adaptation and individual creativity (Major et al., 2006;Kim et al., 2010; Jiang, 2017) .

In relation to the cross-cultural adjustment, sojourners face lots of demands abroad, but instead of desperately reacting to these stressors, they could proactively meet the challenges and shape their lives in the novel environment. For example, Parker et al. (2010) highlighted the critical role of proactive behavior in sojourner literature, such as: acquisition of knowledge and information about the environment (e.g. school, work) to reduce uncertainty by understanding, predicting, and controlling the environment, while Ren et al. (2013) argue that proactive people are more motivated to engage in tactics such as building new networks, and acquiring more information to adjust effectively to new culture. In another study of proactive

personality, Hua et al. (2019) found that proactive international students build personal relationships with peers and supervisors via information seeking and social networking. Furthermore, Hu et al. (2020) shows that individuals with proactive personality tend to show more psychological comfort and sociocultural adjustment during international assignments.

In addition, Stahl and Caligiuri (2005) included both personal disposition and contextual factors on expatriate problem and emotion-focused coping strategies to stressors while on international assignments and found that problem-focused individuals actively manage the person-environment relation to fit the personal needs, through acquisition of knowledge and social networking. Stahl and Caligiuri (2005) also argue that for adjustment in a cross-cultural setting, a problem-focused approach is more effective.

4. The Four Facets of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Relocating to a new and foreign culture can be an unpleasant experience, and people often feel confusion and stress while adjusting to the new culture or communicating with host nations (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Ang et al., 2007). The acquisition of new knowledge, motivating to engage to the new culture and adapting the behaviors that are consistent with that culture are crucial components of cross-cultural adjustment. In the model

proposed for this study, Cultural intelligence (CQ) represents a multidimensional individual attribute that “refers to a person’s ability to adapt effectively to a new cultural context” (Earley & Ang, 2003, p. 59).

Accordingly, during cross-cultural adjustment, those with higher CQ have a better ability to understand culture-related knowledge, more appropriate strategies to cope with cross-cultural challenges, greater motivation to engage, and employ more appropriate verbal and nonverbal cues when interacting with people from different cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ng, Van Dyne, & Ang, 2009).

CQ has been expanded to include narrower sub-dimensions for each of the four main facets (see Van Dyne et al. 2012). These sub-dimensions include: Cognitive CQ is define as having relevant knowledge about the target culture, metacognitive CQ is being able to process that knowledge and knowing how to adapt and apply that knowledge, motivational CQ explains intrinsic interest, extrinsic interest and self-efficacy to use that knowledge, and behavioral CQ is to utilize appropriate verbal and nonverbal cues according to knowledge in various cross-cultural contexts (Ang et al., 2015; Van Dyne et al., 2012, 2017). Facets are described in details as following:

1) Cognitive CQ

The first facet of Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to knowledge structures and is consistent with Ackerman's (1996) intelligence-as-knowledge concept, which argues for the importance of knowledge as part of the intellect (Ang et al., 2007, p.337). In other words, Cognitive CQ represents understanding about the norms, habits, and traditions of different cultures obtain from experience and education. Cognitive CQ is refers to gaining specific cultural information such as basic knowledge about the legal, economic, and social systems along with the cultural values of other cultures (Berry, 1994b; Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1994).

Those with high cognitive CQ understands the rules or expectations of the culture, and can behave and communicate in ways that are accepted in the culture, which in turn improves the ability of the individual to interact appropriately with people in other cultures (Ang et al., 2007; Brislin et al., 2006; Huff et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2012). In addition, cognitive CQ can help to reduce uncertainty and anxiety during cross-cultural interactions with host nations (Ang et al., 2020). Another aspect of cognitive CQ is flexibility and the capability to inductively reorganize one's self concept, to rephrase it, understanding other cultures may involve abandoning pre-existing conceptions of how and why people behave as they do in one's own culture, along with, the capacity to reframe one's own self-concept (and the concept of others) in a new cultural context (Earley, 2002).

Thus, individuals with high cognitive CQ not only delay judging the new cultural setting (as right or wrong) but also allow themselves the normally uncomfortable state of not knowing until more knowledge and understanding obtained about target culture, which result in lower levels of stress during interaction with host nations and cross-cultural adjustment (Ang et al., 2007; Brislin et al., 2006; Earley, 2002).

2) Metacognitive CQ

The second facet of Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to higher-level cognitive strategies that people employ to acquire and comprehend cultural information and take control over culturally related thought processes. In other words, metacognitive CQ leads individuals to adapt and revise their coping strategies to achieve desired outcomes in cross-culturally diverse situations (Earley, 2002; Ang et al., 2007). Individuals with high metacognitive CQ are aware and sensitive about other cultures' values, and they effectively tend to plan their culturally diverse responses to be relevant to different cultural context (Brislin et al., 2006; Earley, 2002; Huff et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2012; Triandis, 2006; Van Dyne et al., 2012). More specifically, there are three subdimensions of metacognitive CQ that individuals with high CQ use in cross-cultural settings, Such as, self-awareness, planning, and use of cognitive

strategies (Ang et al., 2020).

The awareness aspect of metacognition is important to CQ because it helps individuals to be aware of how their own culture influences their interactions with people from different cultures and after understanding that state, determine the need for further study or practice before mastering the skills to effectively adjust in cross-cultural context. In planning, one must determine the goal and devise a plan to achieve it; which means developing effective plans before interacting with people from different cultures.

The use of cognitive strategies in metacognition includes; the knowledge of which and how to use interactional strategies in certain situations and the knowledge of when these various strategies will be effective (Williams, 2008; Ang et al., 2020). According to statements above, metacognitive is an important facet of CQ because the skills of self-awareness, planning, and using cognitive strategies are crucial for understanding the foreign culture and managing effective behavior to adjust better cross-culturally.

3) Motivational CQ

The third facet of Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to a person's interest and desire to adjust to new cultural settings. To clarify further, having knowledge of other cultures is not sufficient; but one must be motivated and

interested in engaging with the new culture in order to develop a culturally appropriate response (Earley, 2002; Ang et al., 2004). There are three subdimensions of motivational CQ which individuals with high CQ use in cross-cultural settings, such as, intrinsic interest, extrinsic interest and self-efficacy. The intrinsic interest aspect of motivational CQ explains the satisfaction of interacting with people from various cultural backgrounds. Individuals with high motivational CQ, tend to get "self-generated benefits" from their interactions with people from other cultures which are important because they are not dependent on others or on the situation. In other words, they have motivation to experience new cultures and interact with people from other cultures due to internal enjoyment and not external factors.

On the other hand, the extrinsic interest aspect of motivational CQ refers to variable-dependent benefits which are external factors that drive individuals to involve in cross-cultural experiences to gain external reward due to their contribution in cross-cultural settings (Van Dyne et al. 2012; Ang et al., 2020).

Another important aspect of motivational CQ is self-efficacy, which according to social learning theory refers to the judgment of own capacity to perform in the different situations and engage in a problem-solving and strategic approach to overcoming obstacles (Bandura, 1986).

In relating self-efficacy to motivational CQ, individuals with high

motivational CQ are more open and tend to persist in integrating cultural knowledge and strategies into guided action in a new culture and do not disengage after experiencing early failures in the adjusting process (Failure is likely to occur in the adjustment process). Moreover, they tend to have more confidence in their cross-cultural effectiveness and adjustment capabilities (Ang et al., 2007, 2020; Bandura, 2002; Earley, 2002; Templer et al., 2006).

In sum up with above statements, people with high motivational CQ have a strong efficacy and motivation to engage in new and varied cross-cultural encounters and use their knowledge to interact with people in the new culture, and they are expected to be successful in cross-cultural situations. Therefore, the motivational facet of cultural intelligence is an important aspect of cultural intelligence, and if motivational CQ is weak, successful cross-cultural adjustment might not occur.

4) Behavioral CQ

The last facet of Cultural intelligence (CQ) is behavioral CQ that is defined as the ability “to generate the behaviors needed to reflect cognition and motivation” (Earley & Ang, 2003, p. 10). A high CQ person may be able to understand what is appropriate in a given culture (cognitive CQ) and feel motivated (motivational CQ), but he will be unable to move forward, if the

appropriate response is not in his behavioral repertoire. As such, it is important for a person to have the behavioral CQ in order to not only willing to try and learn new behaviors, but has an aptitude to determine where new behaviors are needed and how to execute them.

Additionally, the behavioral element of CQ captures an individual's capability to enact behaviors that are adaptive (Ang et al., 2007; Earley, 2002; Williams, 2008). In other words, behavioral CQ explains the capability of giving appropriate responses (verbal and nonverbal) in a cross-cultural context when interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

There are three subdimensions of behavioral CQ which individuals with high CQ use in cross-cultural settings, such as verbal behavior, nonverbal behavior and speech acts. The Verbal behavior is defined as flexibility in vocalization, including accent and tone (e.g. Learn proper pronunciation of target language), nonverbal behavior is explained as flexibility in communication via gestures, facial expressions, and body language (e.g. eye movements, how close stand to others), and speech acts is defined as flexibility in using words to communicate specific types of messages such as greetings, invitations, apologies, pledge ,gratitude and disagreement (Van Dyne et al., 2012; Huff et al., 2014; Ang et al., 2020).

Due to the salience and visibility of behaviors during social interactions, the three behavioral subdimensions of behavioral CQ are

extremely important for adjustment from the viewpoint of observers (Ang et al., 2003; Ang et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Gudykunst et al. (1988) emphasize the importance of using both verbal (words and tones) and nonverbal (gestures and facial expressions) culturally appropriate behavior in cross-cultural settings. In a nutshell, people with high behavioral CQ are able to try and learn behaviors that are effective in a cross-cultural context, and they have a broader range of verbal and nonverbal capabilities, such as words, tone, gestures, and facial expressions when interacting with people from other cultures.

Cultural intelligence is a relatively new construct, but according to past studies has shown clear evidences that CQ positively influences international students' sociocultural adjustment and psychological adjustment. With the importance of cultural intelligence documented, researchers are extensively trying to understand why some people are better able to communicate with individuals from other cultures. Prior study on cultural intelligence (CQ) shows that overall and all four facets of CQ are important to cross-cultural adjustment. For example, Lin et al. (2012) found that both overall CQ and all four aspects of CQ were positively related to cross-cultural adjustments after controlling for language ability, while Huff et al. (2014) indicated that motivational CQ was positively related to all three cross-cultural adjustment factors (work, general, and interaction) over and above the Big Five personality

dimensions.

Moreover, Presbitero (2017b) showed that overall CQ was positively related to psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Research on international students also shows similar result, for example, Rana et al. (2020) conducted a study in India to examine the relationship between the different facets of cultural intelligence and psychological adjustment of international students. The authors concluded that behavioral cultural intelligence has a direct and positive relationship on the psychological adjustment of international students, although no significant relationship has been found between the metacognitive, motivational, cognitive cultural intelligence and psychological adaptation.

In another research on international students ,Thompson (2018) states that international students experienced many cultural differences and distress while studying abroad, however, the international students who had higher emotional and cultural intelligence and a better understanding of the American culture, were able to adjust better cross-culturally.

5. Present Research

Present research uses the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a model for this study, for several factors: First, it is a sophisticated and comprehensive model,

because it builds in cognitive, motivational, and behavior facets of adjustment which can be increased with experience, practice and training (Brislin et al., 2006; Chew et al., 2019; MacNab & Worthley, 2012; Ott & Michailova, 2016; Rehg et al., 2012; Şahin et al., 2014). Second, CQ is based on Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) theoretical framework of multiple loci of intelligence and presents clear and precise developments of intelligence. It consists of metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral facets and is different than personality and values (Ang et al., 2007; Ang et al., 2015; Ng et al., 2012; Thompson, 2018).

Therefore, results demonstrate that CQ has a unique explanatory power in predicting cross-cultural adjustment and solving cross-cultural issues (Ang et al., 2007; Brislin et al., 2006; Groves & Feyerherm, 2011; Hong et al., 2021; Lee & Sukoco, 2010). Last, evidence shows that while CQ shares similarities with social and emotional intelligence, is conceptually and empirically distinct from them, such as emotional intelligence and social intelligence involves a set of abilities and skills that allow us to solve problems in a familiar cultural context and with people who are culturally similar to us.

Hence, in cross-cultural settings, neither social intelligence nor emotional intelligence considers the abilities required for individuals to manage cross-cultural situations; however, CQ specifically focuses on the abilities needed to deal with a culturally diverse context. As a result, CQ is not

specific to any particular culture and it is consider being “culture free” and can apply to any given cross-cultural context (Ang et al., 2007; Brislin et al., 2006; Ang et al., 2015; Ng et al., 2012).

III. Theoretical Framework

1. Proactive Personality and Cross-cultural Adjustment (Psychological and Sociocultural Adjustment together)

According to literature, studying abroad is a stressful path, and international students encounter various difficulties such as, adjusting to the new lifestyle, learning the language and getting familiar with norms and habits of the people in the new culture. Therefore, International students need to cope with stress and adjustment difficulties to have a better psychological adjustment (Black et al., 1991; Hua et al., 2019; Huff et al., 2014).

Proactive personality is refers to “a stable disposition to take personal initiative in a broad range of activities and situations” (Seibert et al., 2001, p. 847) and people with a proactive personality have a problem-focused approach and tend to show initiative, take action, and persevere until solve problems in their environment (Caligiuri, 2000; Parker et al., 2010; Hu et al., 2020).

Prior research demonstrates that to cope with stress and adjustment difficulties, proactive people's information seeking and resource acquisition assist them through the processes of predicting, making sense of their environment, and learning their place in a foreign culture. Additionally, proactive individuals are motivated to engage in resource-acquisition strategies

to facilitate a more effective international transition (Farh et al., 2010; Ren et al., 2013).

On the other hand, expatriate literature indicates that social networks and social support are positive predictors of expatriate adjustment and psychological well-being, whereas adopting a positive outlook on problems provides the necessary emotional resources to help expatriates feel better about themselves and their circumstances (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002; Farh et al., 2010; Wang & Kanungo, 2004). Therefore, when expatriates face adjustment problems in their new surroundings, social networking enables individuals to deal with the environment in a more positive frame of mind, resulting in increased motivation and energy to adapt to the new environment (Quinn et al., 2012).

However, according to this research knowledge, there is still a lack of empirical research on the relationship between proactive personality and psychological adjustment; therefore, this study aims to expand the literature by investigating the relationship between proactive personality and psychological adjustment. Accordingly, this research assumes that individuals with a proactive personality will cope with stress more effectively and show better psychological adjustment.

Further, findings in the literature consistently show that social support facilitates sojourners' adjustment (Farh et al., 2010; Takeuchi, 2010). For

example, those with higher proactive personality are more motivated to engage in tactics to adjust effectively through acquisition of knowledge and social networking (Ren et al., 2013; Thompson, 2005). Also, they would seek out opportunities to learn the language of the new culture, make friends with natives, and establish relationships in order to gain access to the resources and assistance needed for better adjustment (Abdul Malek & Budhwar, 2013; Hua et al., 2019).

On the other hand, individuals with low proactive personality are hesitant to interact and build new connections with host country nationals, result in isolation and more sociocultural adjustment problem (Hua et al., 2019).

Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) highlighted that expatriates who form ties with coworkers in the host nation are able to alter their work environment through active social networking, hence facilitating their adjustment to the new environment. Further, Hua et al. (2020) examined the relationship between international students' proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment. Specifically, they discovered that proactive personality was positively related to academic and sociocultural adjustment.

However, despite these findings, proactive personality lacks testing in the cross-cultural adjustment context. Therefore, this current study tries to answer the question of whether proactive personality contributes to

international students' adjustment.

2. The Mediating Role of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

In the cross-cultural literature, CQ has been identified by prior research as an effective mediator during the process of adjusting to a new cultural context. For example, overall CQ fully mediated the positive relationship between satisfaction with life, general and work adjustment, the BIG FIVE personality dimensions, performance, leadership, multicultural experiences, and cross-cultural adjustment (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Hu et al., 2017; Kim & Van Dyne, 2012; Lee & Sukoco, 2010; Presbitero, 2017; Ward & Fischer, 2008). Thus, prior research suggested that CQ could be considered a mechanism to explain the relationship between proactive personality and people's psychological health (Kim & Van Dyne, 2012).

To adjust better in a cross-cultural context, proactive people are assumed to increase their knowledge about the target culture by learning the norms and costumes of the target culture, which increase their cognitive intelligence (CQ) and finally influence the effectiveness of their social and psychological adjustment.

Proactive personality should also be related to motivational CQ, in that proactive people are motivated to learn new things and persevere until they

solve problems in their environment, which increases their motivational CQ and allows them to engage in a problem-solving and strategic approach to overcoming obstacles in a cross-cultural setting, which leads to better psychosocial adjustment.

Further, proactive people look ahead to the future and plan to anticipate needs, problems, and possible outcomes by changing themselves and/or their environment (Parker et al., 2010). Therefore, proactive people plan and envision strategies to control their environment which increases their metacognitive CQ and leads to more effective reactions relevant to cross-cultural context.

Finally, behavioral CQ will mediate the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment, in that proactive people are more likely to take action until meaningful changes occur and they tend to control the environment for personal achievement; furthermore, proactive people will try and learn new behaviors, which increase their behavioral CQ, which therefore leads to better psychosocial adjustment.

IV. Research Model and Hypothesis

Control Variables

Language proficiency and length of stay in a host country are reported to influence sojourners' cross-cultural adjustment (Abdul Malek & Budhwar, 2013; Bui et al., 2020; Nunes et al., 2017; Presbitero, 2016). Therefore, these two variables were included in this study's model as control variables, to account for the influence the two variables could have on the hypothesized relationships.

Control Variables: Students' Korean language proficiency and length of stay in South Korea.

Research Model

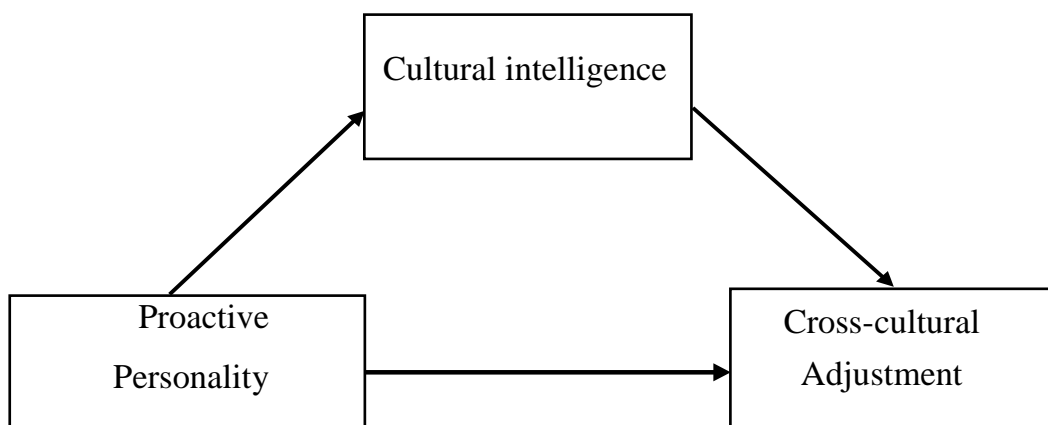


Figure 1. Research Model

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Based on proposed framework, this study assumes that international students with a proactive personality will show a better psychological adjustment and sociocultural adjustment when controlling the language proficiency (Korean language) and length of stay in Korea. Accordingly, this study also hypothesize that CQ has a mediating effect on the relationship between proactive personality and psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Therefore, following research questions and hypothesis proposed for present study:

- RQ1: what is the relationship between proactive personality, cultural intelligence and cultural adjustment?
- H_{a1}: There will be a statistically significant relationship between proactive personality, cultural intelligence and cultural adjustment.
- RQ2: Does cultural intelligence (CQ) mediate the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment?

- Ha2: Cultural Intelligence (CQ) will mediate the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment.

V. Methodology

Participants and Procedure

Participants were international students studying (several nationalities) at one of South Korean universities. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Sungshin Women's university, scales of the all variables and demographic questionnaire were transcribed in English onto an online survey from Moaform and distributed to international students' e-mail, Instagram, Facebook and personal connections as a link to complete anonymously. The online survey also included a consent form, which described privacy and confidentiality of the participants' responses as well as a background to the purpose of the study. The order with which individual measures were organized onto a excel file as follows: the 6-item Proactive Personality scale (Seibert et al. ,1999), 12-item Cultural intelligence scale (Ang et al. ,2004), 12-item Psychological adjustment (Wang ,2010) and 12-item sociocultural adjustment scale (Wilson and Ward ,2010) (together 24-item measured cross-cultural adjustment) and 6-item Korean language Proficiency scale(NIIED, 2022)., and lastly, the demographic questionnaire (e.g., gender, age, native language and length of stay). The survey took around 10 minutes and participants received a small gift (i.e., a gift card worth 1000 KRW) for

completing the survey.

167 international students completed the online survey. There were 48 (28.7%) males and 119 (71.3%) females who completed the online survey. The international students were between age 19 to 39 and the average age was 24 years old ($SD = 4.7$). The length of stay were between 0 to 10 years and the average of length of stay in Korea was 2 years ($SD=1.05$). The international students were from countries with different languages, mainly 68% (27.4% were English language speaker, 14% Persian language speaker , 9% French language speakers, 7% Spanish speakers,7% German speakers, 3.6% Polish speakers) and 32% other languages specific to Europe, Africa and Asia were represented in this study. There was no missing or deleting data (See table 1 for a frequency table of all demographic information represented in the study).

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Participants

| Variable | n | % |
|-------------------------|-----|------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 48 | 28.7 |
| Female | 119 | 71.3 |
| Age | | |
| 19-23 years | 85 | 51 |
| 24-28 years | 58 | 34.8 |
| 29-33 years | 15 | 9 |
| 33-39 years | 9 | 5.2 |
| Length of Stay in Korea | | |
| 0-6 months | 65 | 38.9 |
| 7-12 months | 49 | 29.3 |
| 1-4 years | 38 | 22.8 |
| 5-7 years | 11 | 6.6 |
| 7-10 years | 4 | 2.4 |
| Native Language | | |
| English | 46 | 27.4 |
| Persian | 23 | 14 |
| French | 15 | 9 |
| Spanish | 12 | 7 |
| German | 12 | 7 |
| Polish | 6 | 3.6 |
| Other Languages | 53 | 32 |

Note. N=167

Measuring tools and Scales

Proactive Personality Scale

Proactive Personality contains of six items adapted from the Proactive Personality Scale developed by Seibert et al. (1999). This study measured the reliability of the Proactive Personality scale which showed an acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha=.77$). Participants indicated their level of agreement with the items on a 5- point Likert-style scale. More precisely, from "1" which refers to "strongly disagree", to "5" which refers to "strongly agree". Sample items included the following: "I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life" and "If I believe in an idea, then no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen".

Cultural Intelligence Scale

Cultural Intelligence contains of 12 items adapted from the Cultural Intelligence Scale developed by Ang et al. (2004). The study found internal consistency reliabilities for overall facets of the CQ (Cronbach's $\alpha=.794$). All of the items in this section of the questionnaire are Likert-scaled where participants asked to indicate their level of agreement with the items in the statements. More precisely, from "1" "strongly disagree", to "7" "strongly agree". Higher sum scores of the CQS will indicate higher cultural intelligence.

Sample items included the following: “I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds,” (meta cognitive CQ) “I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.,” (cognitive CQ) “I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.,” (motivational CQ) and “I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it” (behavioral CQ).

Cross-cultural Adjustment (Sociocultural Adjustment Scale and Psychological Adjustment)

Cross-cultural adjustment scale contains of 2 scales which are Sociocultural Adjustment and Psychological Adjustment. Sociocultural Adjustment is 12 items adapted from the Sociocultural Adjustment Scale developed by Wilson and Ward (2010). This study measured the reliability of the Sociocultural Adjustment scale which showed a relatively high internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha=.85). The items were presented in a Likert-style and participants indicated their level of difficulty. Specifically “1” refers to “no difficulty”, whereas “5” refers to “extreme difficulty”.

However, due to positively worded items on sociocultural adjustment which higher sum scores of the sociocultural adjustment indicate higher Sociocultural adjustment ,I reversed coded each score as following: “5” refers

to “no difficulty”, whereas “1” refers to “extreme difficulty”. Sample items included the following: “Building and maintaining relationships” and “Working effectively with other students”.

Psychological Adjustment Scale

Psychological Adjustment was 12 items adapted from the Psychological Adjustment Scale by Wang (2010) and indicated a relatively high internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.89$). All of the items on the questionnaire structured as Likert-style where participants asked to indicate their level of agreement with the items in the statements. More precisely, from “1” refers to “Strongly disagree”, whereas “5” refers to “strongly Agree”. However, due to mix wording of statements which the first three questions were positively worded and the rest of them were negatively worded, for questions 1-3, the scaling was reversed where “1” refers to “strongly Agree”, whereas “5” refers to “Strongly disagree”. Sample items included the following: “I feel I am able to do my schoolwork as well as most other international students”, “Overall, I am satisfied with myself and my life after I came to Korea”, “I cry more than I used to since I came to Korea”.

Korean Language Proficiency Scale

Korean Language Proficiency was measured by 6 items adapted from the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK), which is a standardized Korean language test that serves as a standard for admission and graduation for universities in Korea (NIIED, 2022). The Korean Language Proficiency Scale indicated a high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$). All of the items on the questionnaire structured as Likert-style which ranged from "1 = Very Poor" to "5 = Excellent" (i.e., higher score refers to higher level of proficiency in Korean language). Sample items include "Able to carry out basic conversations related to daily survival skills such as self-introduction, purchasing, ordering food, etc." and "Able to perform basic linguistic functions necessary to use various public facilities and maintain social relationship, not experiencing significant difficulty in routine life."

A complete list of measures used in this study, number of items for each measure, coefficient alpha reliabilities, mean and standard deviation are listed in Table 2. (Descriptive statistics performed using SPSS)

Scales of all the measures is listed in Appendix.

Table 2*Description of Study Measures*

| Variable | No. items | Reliability (alpha) | Mean | SD |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|------|------|
| Proactive Personality | 6 | .774 | 3.8 | .566 |
| Cross-cultural Adjustment | 12 | .892 | 2.3 | .759 |
| Psychological Adjustment | 12 | .858 | 2.2 | .673 |
| Sociocultural Adjustment | | | | |
| Cultural Intelligence | 12 | .794 | 5.3 | .672 |
| Korean Language Proficiency | 6 | .906 | 3.1 | .991 |

VI. Results

The two purposes of this study were: first investigate the relationship between international students' proactive personality, cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment in South Korea; second, examine the mediation role of cultural intelligence in the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment. With a social learning and stress and coping approach, this study focused on how above factors influence international students' cross-cultural adjustment to South Korea. The research questions are:

1. What is the relationship between proactive personality, cultural intelligence and cultural adjustment?
2. Does cultural intelligence (CQ) mediates the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment?

Upon completing the collection of questionnaire data, the raw data from the questionnaires were exported from Moaform into Microsoft Excel where cleaned and processed the data. There were no missing data and participants answered all the questions. Next, the cleaned raw data transferred into SPSS to conduct the quantitative analyses.

This research performed the descriptive statistics for central tendency, the frequencies, reliability, standard deviation and mean for the questionnaire items. For hypothesis testing, the study conducted a Pearson correlation to

confirm the relationship between proactive personality, cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment.

Next, this research analyzed the mediating effect of cultural intelligence in the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment using the PROCESS Macro mediation model analysis proposed by Hayes (2015) through the SPSS and the bootstrap was set 5000 times to verify statistical significance.

Results of Hypothesis 1.

Ha1: There will be a statistically significant relationship between proactive personality, cultural intelligence and cultural adjustment.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between proactive personality and cultural intelligence. There was a significant positive relationship ($R = .302$, $p < .001$). Next, the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment was found to be significantly positive ($R = .173$, $p < .05$). Moving on to the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment, a positive correlation was found ($R = .476$, $p < .001$).

In conclusion, the research findings support the first hypothesis, which proposed a significant relationship between proactive personality, cultural

intelligence, and cultural adjustment. (See table 3).

Table 3

The Relationship between Variables (Pearson Correlation)

| Variables | 2 | 3 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|
| 1.Proactive Personality | .302*** | .173* |
| 2.Cultural Intelligence | | .476*** |
| 3.Cross-cultural Adjustment | – | – |

*Note:** p<.05

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Results of Hypothesis 2.

Ha2: Cultural Intelligence (CQ) will mediate the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment.

For testing the hypothesis 2, this study performed a mediation regression test on SPSS using Andrew Hayes PROCESS Macro model 4 analyses with Proactive Personality as the independent variable, cross-cultural adjustment as dependent variable and cultural intelligence as mediator. Length of stay in Korea and Korean language proficiency also added as covariance (control variables).

Results indicated that the regression model of proactive personality predicting the dependent variable, cross-cultural adjustment was statistically significant ($F(3, 163) = 2.54, p = .045, R^2 = .044$). This means that a 1 unit increase in proactive personality results in a .0177 level increase in cross-cultural adjustment ($B = .177, t(163) = 2.01, p < .05$). The explanatory power of proactive personality for cross-cultural adjustment was 4%.

Next, the regression model of proactive personality predicting cultural intelligence was statistically significant ($F(3, 163) = 11.2, p = .0009, R^2 = .168$). 1-unit increase in proactive personality resulted in a .292 unit increase in cultural intelligence ($B = .292, t(163) = 3.38, p < .001$). The explanatory power of proactive personality for cultural intelligence was 16.8%.

The regression model with cross-cultural adjustment as the outcome variable and proactive personality and cultural intelligence as the predictor variables was statistically significant, and the explanatory power of proactive personality and cultural intelligence for cross-cultural adjustment was .238 ($F(3, 163) = 12.69, p = .0000, R^2 = .238$). A 1-unit increase in cultural intelligence resulted in an increase in cross-cultural adjustment of .457 units ($B = .457, t(163) = 6.42, p < .001$), and after controlling for the effect of cultural intelligence, a 1-unit increase in proactive personality was resulted in .043 increase in cross-cultural adjustment ($B = .043, t(163) = .530, p = .596$), but this was not statistically significant.

In summary, the effect of proactive personality on cultural intelligence was statistically significant ($B=.292$, $t(163)=3.38$, $p<.001$), and the total effect of proactive personality on cross-cultural adjustment was also statistically significant ($B=.177$, $t(163)=2.01$, $p<.05$). At this time, controlling for the indirect effect of cultural intelligence, the effect of proactive personality on cross-cultural adjustment was not statistically significant ($B=.043$, $t(163)=.530$, $p=.596$). Therefore, it can be seen that cultural intelligence fully mediates the effect of proactive personality on cross-cultural adjustment. The full mediation model in which proactive personality affects cross-cultural adjustment via cultural intelligence explained 23.8% of the change in cross-cultural adjustment.

Furthermore, in order to verify whether there is a significant mediating effect the bootstrapping method was performed 5,000 times. The study found an indirect effect of Proactive personality on Cross-cultural adjustment through the mediator variable Cultural intelligence (BootSE =.0497, BootLLCI =.0448, BootULCI =.2395). The indirect effect coefficient for Cultural intelligence was .1339, suggesting that a portion of the effect of Proactive personality on Cross-cultural adjustment is mediated through Cultural intelligence. The bootstrap analysis provides a 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect (.0448 to .2395), which does not include zero, indicating a statistically significant indirect effect. In other words, Cultural intelligence fully mediates the

relationship between Proactive personality and Cross-cultural adjustment.

In conclusion, the research findings support the second hypothesis, which proposed Cultural intelligence as a mediator in the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment (See tables 4, 5 and figure 2).

Table 4

Verification result of mediation effect

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | B | SE | t |
|--|---------------------------|---------|------|------|
| Proactive Personality (Total Effect) | Cross-cultural Adjustment | .177* | .087 | 2.01 |
| F(3,163) = 2.54,P=.045,R ² = .044 | | | | |
| Proactive Personality | Cultural intelligence | .292*** | .086 | 3.38 |
| F(3,163) = 11.2,P=.0009,R ² = .168 | | | | |
| Cultural intelligence | Cross-cultural Adjustment | .457*** | .071 | 6.42 |
| Proactive Personality (Direct Effect) | Cross-cultural Adjustment | .043 | .081 | .530 |
| F(3, 163) = 12.6,P=.0000,R ² = .238 | | | | |

*Note:** p<.05

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Table 5

Mediating effect significance verification

| Mediation Analysis | Effect | SE | 95% CI (Lower) | 95% CI (Upper) | Significance |
|---|--------|------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Indirect Effect of Cultural Intelligence | .133 | .049 | .044 | .239 | Significant |

*Note:*BOOT=5000

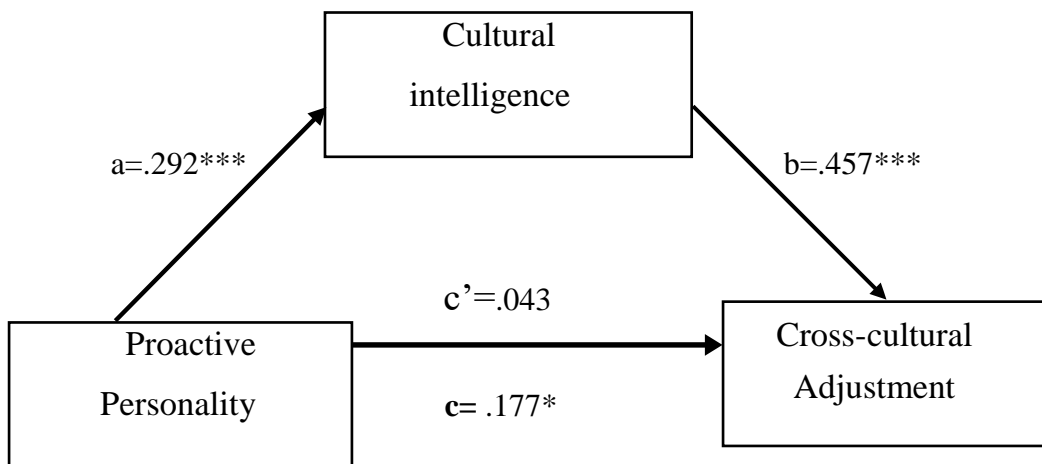


Figure 2. Mediating Effect of Cultural Intelligence in the relationship between Proactive Personality and Cross-cultural Adjustment

VII. Discussion

This study explored the relationship between Proactive Personality and Cross-cultural adjustment with the mediation role of Cultural intelligence and more specifically, investigated the role that Proactive personality and cultural intelligence played in Cross-cultural adjustment (Psychological and Sociocultural adjustment).

In Hypothesis 1, there was a significantly positive relationship between proactive personality and cultural intelligence. Past research suggests that international students who have Proactive personality was positively related to cross-cultural adjustment (Huff et al., 2014; Hua et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2013 ; Thompson, 2005) which are consist with this research in a sense that proactive people are more likely to engage in cultural learning behaviors and have better cross-cultural adjustment.

In Hypothesis 2, cultural intelligence mediated the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment. As a result the relationship between proactive personality and cross-cultural adjustment is fully mediated by cultural intelligence. Past research suggests that cultural intelligence has a significant mediation role in cross-cultural studies and the result of this study also was consists with those studies (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Hu et al., 2017; Kim & Van Dyne, 2012; Lee & Sukoco, 2010;

Presbitero, 2017; Ward & Fischer, 2008).

Further, the result of this study indicates that proactive personality does not directly affect cross-cultural adjustment and only through cultural intelligence can influence cross-cultural adjustment. Therefore, in order to increase international students' cross-cultural adjustment, it is more effective to intervene to increase cultural intelligence rather than proactive personality.

These findings have several implications in a sense that this study uncovers the working mechanisms of CQ on proactive personality and cross-cultural intelligence. In this manner, CQ is identified as one of alternatives through which proactive international students adjust to Korean culture.

Counselors who work in a cross-cultural environment should also apply the faucets of cultural intelligence into their individual and group sessions and develop international students' ability to navigate and adjust to cross-cultural situations. Also, Korean Universities should provide support to international students by providing counseling sessions and student support services such as cross-cultural training through cultural intelligence skills to facilitate their international students' cross-cultural adjustment. Previous studies show that international students respond well to cross-cultural training provide by host universities (Hartini et al., 2017; Sit et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2019).

In individual and group therapy session, counselors may apply

different strategies to develop international students' cultural intelligence, such as:

First, develop international students' cultural awareness by encouraging them to be aware of their own cultural background, biases, and assumptions and reflect on how their cultural upbringing has shaped their perspectives and behaviors. Recognize that cultural differences exist between their cultural and host culture (Korea) and approach the differences with curiosity and openness.

Second, educate international students' about different culture by discussing about their history, customs, traditions, values, and communication styles and encourage them to engage in conversations with other international students from diverse backgrounds to gain a broader understanding.

Third, cultivate empathy in international students and encourage them to understand other people experiences and perspectives and develop active listening and validate others' emotions and viewpoints to build connections and fosters a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.

Fourth, encourage to engage in intercultural interactions by seeking opportunities to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds through participating in cultural events, joining multicultural organizations, or engaging in intercultural exchanges.

Finally, teach how to communicate effectively by being aware of

language barriers, non-verbal cues, and different communication styles and the ability to adapt their communication approach to ensure mutual understanding and respect.

Cultivating cultural intelligence is an ongoing process and encourages international students to continuously seek opportunities for learning, self-reflection, stay informed about current cultural issues and engage in multicultural training programs are necessary to build the skills necessary to interact effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Although this study makes several contributions, it also had several limitations which should be addressed in future research. First, this study was unable to obtain the number of sample international students that had hoped for this due to several reasons (time limitation, the way of collecting of data) which might affect the result of the study. Furthermore, the sample size of this research is small, therefore may not represent the population of international students in Korea. Future researchers can extend the time of collecting data and distribute the survey through survey agencies to get better sampling size.

Second, cross-cultural adjustment is a complex process influenced by multiple factors, such as cultural distance, social support and etc. This study did not take environmental factors into account. Recent studies have suggested the importance of environmental factors such as influence from host country nationals, family support on international students' cross-cultural adjustment

(Takeuchi, 2010). Similarly, the cultural distance between Korea and other countries should be considered in future studies. Prior research indicated the negative relationship between higher perceived cultural distance and lower cross-cultural adjustment (Demes & Geeraert, 2013).

Third, the Future research should also provide translation of the survey for different languages, because more than half of participants surveyed were not fluent in English, the study ran the risk of creating confusion in having a survey written completely in English.

Fourth, this study measured overall cultural intelligence and this is not clear which facets of cultural intelligence is more effective in cross-cultural situations. Future research should measure facets of cultural intelligence separately to have a clearer picture of mechanism of each facet on cross-cultural adjustment.

Fifth, prior research has demonstrated a significant relationship between psychological and sociocultural adjustment, indicating their interdependence and mutual influence (Hirai et al., 2015; Searle & Ward, 1990; Sheng et al., 2022). In this study, psychological and sociocultural adjustment was assessed collectively as cross-cultural adjustment. However, the specific correlation between these two constructs remains unclear. Hence, future studies should investigate them as distinct factors to gain a clearer understanding of the variables and their individual impacts.

Lastly, by using self-report data, this study may not have received true results of the participants and hence might suffer from common survey bias. Nevertheless, in the vast majority of cross-cultural studies, self-report data is regarded as the primary instrument and has the potential to encompass a larger sample size than what could be feasibly analyzed through observation or alternative methodologies.

Spite of limitations of study, this is one of the first studies that tested the international students' proactive personality, cultural intelligence and on cross-cultural adjustment in South Korea. Further, this thesis empirically showed that cultural intelligence plays a critical role in international students' cross-cultural adjustment. And, added to proactive personality and cross-cultural literature.

This study contributed to understanding the international students' cross-cultural adjustment to Korea and hopes to captivate more research in the cross-cultural adjustment literature in South Korea.

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Abstract in Korean

한국에서 유학하는 국제 학생의 능동적 성격과 이문화 적응의
관계: 문화지능의 매개역할

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새로운 문화에 적응하는 것은 스트레스가 많은 과정이며, 유학생들은 새로운 낯선 환경에 대한 심리적, 사회문화적 적응의 부족으로 스트레스와 불안, 고립, 우울과 같은 다양한 문제에 직면하게 된다. 이에 본 연구에서는 한국에서 유학하고 있는 외국인 학생들의 이문화적응에 관심을 가지고, 능동적 성격과 이문화적응의 관계를 문화지능이 매개하는지 살펴보고자 하였다. 이를 위해 한국에서 공부하고 있는 167명의 유학생들을 대상으로 능동적 성격, 문화지능, 심리적/사회문화적 적응 척도를 실시하였다. 연구결과, 유학생의 이문화적응은 문화지능 및 능동적 성격과 유의미한 관련이 있는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 문화지능은 능동적 성격과 이문화적응 간의 관계를 완전 매개하는 것으로 나타났다. 이는 국제 학생들의 문화 간 적응을 촉진하기 위해 문화지능 훈련 및 지원 서비스가 제공될 필요가 있음을 시사한다.

주요어: 한국에 유학중인 외국인 학생, 이문화적응, 문화지능, 능동적 성격.

APPENDIX
SURVEY MEASURES GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS

Proactive Personality Scale

Responses given based on a 5-pt rating scale 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

1. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.
2. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.
3. I excel at identifying opportunities.
4. I am always looking for better ways to do things.
5. If I believe in an idea, then no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.
6. I can spot a good opportunity long before others.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Scale

Responses given based on a 7-pt rating scale 1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree

Meta Cognitive CQ

1. I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.
2. I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is

unfamiliar to me.

3. I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.

Cognitive CQ

4. I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.

5. I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.

6. I know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviors in other cultures.

Motivational CQ

7. I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.

8. I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.

9. I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.

Behavioral CQ

10. I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

11. I change my nonverbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.

12. I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

Sociocultural adjustment Scale

Responses given based on a 5-pt rating scale 5=no difficulty, 1=extreme difficulty

1. Building and maintaining relationships.
2. Managing my academic responsibilities.
3. Maintaining my hobbies and interests.
4. Working effectively with other students.
5. Gaining feedback from other students to help improve my performance.
6. Finding my way around.
7. Interacting with members of the opposite sex
8. Expressing my ideas to other students in a culturally appropriate manner.
9. Adapting to the pace of life.
10. Changing my behavior to suit social norms, rules, attitudes, beliefs, and customs.
11. Accurately interpreting and responding to other people's emotions.
12. Dealing with the bureaucracy.

Psychological adjustment Scale

Responses given based on a 5-pt rating scale 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree (Question 1 to 3 scores reverse coded)

5=Strongly Disagree, 1=Strongly Agree

1. I feel I am able to do my schoolwork as well as most other international students.
2. I feel I am able to do my schoolwork as well as most other Korean students.
3. Overall, I am satisfied with myself and my life after I came to Korea.
4. I often feel like I am a failure since I came to Korea.
5. I am not as confident as I used to be since I came to Korea.
6. I cry more than I used to since I came to Korea.
7. I often can't sleep well after I came to Korea.
8. Sometimes I feel I am treated differently in an uncomfortable way because I am a foreign student.
9. I often feel lonely and isolated since I came to Korea.
10. I am more irritable than usual.
11. I feel uncomfortable to adjust myself to Korean cultural environment.
12. I feel more anxious than I used to since I came to Korea.

Korean Language Proficiency Scale

Responses given based on a 5-pt rating scale “1 = Very Poor” to “5 = Excellent”.

1. Able to carry out basic conversations related to daily survival skills such as self-introduction, purchasing, ordering food, etc.
2. Able to carry out simple conversations related to daily routines such as making phone calls and asking for favors, as well as using public facilities in daily life.
3. Able to perform basic linguistic functions necessary to use various public facilities and maintain social relationship, not experiencing significant difficulty in routine life.
4. Able to understand easy parts in news broadcasts, newspapers, and understand and use expressions related to social and abstract subjects relatively correctly and fluently.
5. Able to understand and use expressions related to even unfamiliar aspects of politics, economics, society, and culture.
6. Able to perform linguistic functions necessary for research and tasks in professional fields relatively correctly and fluently