

Sociocultural Adaptation, Educational Ecosystem and Quality of Life among the International Students Community in Malaysia

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i16/18733> DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i16/18733

Published Date: 08-10-2023

Abstract

The difference in culture and education system makes the international student community adapt to the social changes, thus affecting their quality of life. Therefore, this study intends to examine the level of sociocultural adaptation and the Education ecosystem on the quality of life of the international student community in Malaysia. This study used quantitative methods with an exploratory research approach. 428 respondents were randomly chosen from five research universities: Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Data were analysed descriptively and inferentially based on the objectives of the study. Overall, the study's findings show that the level of sociocultural adaptation is low, which is 55.1%, the educational ecosystem is high which is 57.2% and the quality of life is high, 52.1% among the international student community. In conclusion, the findings of this study show that international students in Malaysia experienced a good educational ecosystem and quality of life but have challenges adapting to socio-cultural. Therefore, higher education institutions in Malaysia need to pay attention to balanced development among the international student community to ensure that they can achieve well-being as outlined in the Fourth and Fifth Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: Sociocultural Adaptation, Educational Ecosystem, Quality of Life, International Students, Higher Education

Introduction

Internationalisation has become the main goal of higher education in the 21st century. The

international student market is expected to increase year by year. They would like to study abroad to get a better education. Knight (2015) many universities worldwide seek international teaching, research programs and service because they want to attract more international students. Similarly, globalisation had an impact on higher education institutions in Malaysia. The development of Malaysia's economy has improved cultural exchanges between countries worldwide. Therefore, university in Malaysia has become a popular choice for international students to study abroad. According to statistics, until 2020, Malaysia had more than 100,000 international students from China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Iran, Maldives, Nigeria, Sudan, Yemen, India, Botswana, Thailand and Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020). Thus, the well-being of foreign students has become a serious issue. Academic support, comfortable living arrangements, psychological needs and satisfaction of international students need to be considered in ensuring their well-being during studying in Malaysia. According to Rizvi (2010), perceptions of the advantages of transnational education are the motivation and purpose of international students to pursue higher education because it might be a key part of their professional identity. The fourth Sustainable Development Goal, which ensures inclusive and equitable education, becomes the main reason for some students to study abroad. Going overseas for various sorts of education offers better opportunities to encounter various cultures, religions, landscapes, and foods.

The World Health Organization defines quality of life (QOL) as an individual's perception of their life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. Standard indicators of the quality of life include wealth, employment, the environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, social belonging, religious beliefs, safety, security and freedom. There are many different contexts for QOL, such as those in international development, healthcare, politics, and employment. Erez and Gati (2004) the traditionally assumed unilateral causal approach will likely be redefined as bidirectional. Therefore, students are not the only ones who should make adjustments to adapt. To meet large numbers of students from outside the host country, universities must understand the adaptation of international students and make adjustments. Universities are competing to attract international students because of the relationship between income and recruiting international students. Universities provide more targeted services and organisations in different ways to adapt to this huge group, and the process of institutional adaptation is called the internationalisation of education. Students who arrive in Malaysia are immediately confronted with educational differences in language patterns and society's ingrained cultural and educational levels, which are difficult for international students to adapt to. The sociocultural adaptation and educational ecosystem status greatly impact international students, affecting not only their studies' success or failure but also the host country's international image. Therefore, this paper will explore the level of sociocultural adaptation, educational ecosystem and quality of life among the international student community in Malaysia.

Literature Review

Higher Education in Malaysia

Malaysia's main goal is to create a higher education system that is among the leading education systems in the world and enables the country to compete in the global economy. The goal of becoming a regional education hub by 2020 (The Economic Planning Unit, 2010) was revised and upgraded to an international higher education hub with the release of the

new Malaysia Education Blueprint - Higher Education 2015-2025 (MEB(HE) 2015-2025) strategy document (Ministry of Education, 2013). The Malaysian higher education system officially began in 1959 with the establishment of the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Since then, the development of Malaysian higher education has been closely linked to the country's social development and needs. In modern Malaysia, international factors such as globalisation, internationalisation, and trade in higher education have influenced the Malaysian higher education system (Morshidi, 2010). There has been a strong focus on developing higher education after establishing the Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia (MoHE) on March 27, 2004 (Dobos, 2011). In May 2013, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the MoHE merged to accelerate the transformation and harmonise the strategic education plans of both ministries. Two years later, the MoHE was reestablished in 2015 to meet human resource development needs (Sack & Jalloun, 2017). However, it was abolished after the 14th General Election in May 2018 in line with the new Malaysian agenda. The MoHE also introduced other policy documents: National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2 Beyond 2020: Intensifying Malaysia's Global Reach: A New Dimension and Internationalization Policy for Higher Education 2011 to promote internationalisation. Phase 2 of the strategic plan aims to improve further the foundation, approach, and action plan for the internationalisation agenda at the regional and international levels (Azman et al., 2014). Meanwhile, the internationalisation policy focuses on six core strategies: student mobility, staff mobility, academic programs, research and development, governance and autonomy including social inclusion and cultural engagement (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011). The 2015-2025 MEB (HE) was unveiled in 2015 as a continuation of the 2013 Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025. The MEB (HE) 2015-2025 covers all aspects related to the management and development of higher education, including internationalisation. The essential objective of the MEB(HE) 2015-2025 is to place the Malaysian higher education system among the top higher education systems in the world and enable the Malaysian higher education system to compete in the globalised world.

Socio-cultural Adaptation

Research on the well-being of international students has focused on various topics. One is cultural adaptation pressure because international students are often unfamiliar with Malaysian customs, beliefs, values, language, and food. Berry and Sam (1997) state that this may cause psychological stress to international students. Many studies on foreigners show they have challenges adapting to food, language, living environment, dealing with people, and work-related and non-work-related (Aycan, 1997; Young-Chul, 1996). Therefore, international students at all levels of education also encounter similar challenges. Hurst and Carson (2021) stated that international students pay more attention to the meaning of life than local students and have used these reflections to ease the pressure of cultural adaptation. International students experience insecurity and depression because they lack social networks and societal associations. Besides day-to-day affairs, and dealing with academic demands, international students face positive and negative experiences which significantly affect the process of the educational ecosystem (Ramsay et al., 1999). Personality factors and societal support influence international students' psychological adaptation (Ward & Searle, 1991). Students who fail to adapt psychologically often face depression, mood disturbances, and mental stress. Close interaction with the local students develops a social network that promotes sociocultural and psychological adaptations (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). The ability to negotiate with and adapt to the local culture is Ward and Searle (1991)

a socio-cultural adaptation. Numerous significant factors enhance the socio-cultural adjustment of international students. Church (1982) study findings illustrated that acquaintances with local students increase satisfaction and tend to decrease feelings of homesickness.

Cecilia (2012) examines cross-cultural communication in the international study program and the adaptation of international students to Japanese culture. It reviews and outlines existing international curricula and national education policies in response to Japan's growing number of international students. Although the growth of the international student population is a positive development, many studies investigating the adaptability of international students have consistently emphasised that it is difficult for students to adapt to the life of the local people. Some studies indicate that international students experience more adjustment problems than domestic students and have limited resources to deal with them (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). Novoselova et al (2020) stated that major stress, adaptation, and communicative competence indicators increased among respondents from different ethnic and cultural groups. Marino et al (2017) the factors that affect the sociocultural adaptations of international students currently studying in Batangas Province, Philippines. The study showed significant differences in adaptive behaviour based on age, sex, length of stay and religion. The study also recommends facilitating educational and cultural exchanges to adapt to development and increase mutual understanding among students. Their findings suggest that the best coping mechanism for international students is to gradually learn the local language, make friends and consider visiting beautiful places nearby. Lou and Zhang (2021) believe that with the advancement of global economic integration, the internationalisation of higher education is constantly improving. Researchers have studied the cross-cultural adaptation of international students from different perspectives such as intercultural psychology, intercultural communication, and social psychology. It provides a theoretical basis for the university management of international students and summarises several predictors of cross-cultural adaptation through different models observed among international students.

Educational Ecosystem

International students often face various challenges adapting to new teaching and learning systems. Research on international students shows that many students face difficulties with the educational ecosystem because their previous educational background and experience differ from the educational ecosystem of the local country (Sovic, 2008). In addition, international students face challenges adapting to teaching, learning and assessment methods (Yu & Wright, 2017). Much of the literature on the academic adaptability of international students has adopted the “deficit framework”, which highlights the weaknesses of adapting to a new environment (Tran, 2013). In contrast, less literature emphasises the role of higher education institutions in providing an inclusive academic environment for international students. According to Sanford (1968), three major conditions are responsible for students’ development: readiness, challenges, and support. He proposed that challenges and support should be part of learning and development. Challenges and support are crucial for effective development. There should be a balance between challenges and support. Unequal challenges and supports usually lead to unsatisfactory adaptation. A lack of academic challenges can make students feel easy and satisfied, causing them to stop studying. Next, McFaul (2016) found that international students prefer to interact with one another and find it difficult to make friends with local students. Racist behaviour can also affect international

students, and cultural differences amplify discrimination against visible minorities (Brown & Jones, 2013). Punitive visa laws are one of the obstacles for Chinese students in the United Kingdom (Bamber, 2014).

Zhang (2004) stated that the different education systems, different academic demands and interaction with local students are the major challenges for international students. The educational ecosystem process for international students is more complex because of the multidimensional obligations and difficulties of understanding a distinct system and culture. International students who adapt well to the environment tend to have better educational outcomes (Rienties et al., 2012). Without the support of friends and family, international students often feel isolated in unfamiliar cultures. When students face too many challenges without adequate support mechanisms, they may go into depression and psychological stress. The study concluded that challenges play a vital role in students' academic lives to enhance their reflections and academic motivation. However, at the same time, academic support is critical to help students cope with the demands of challenges. Challenges provide opportunities for students to learn to face difficulties, promote their problem-solving and decision-making skills, and polish the potential among students to contend with different conditions by showing resilience. The universities try to emphasise the importance of inculcating intellectual characteristics among students. They anticipate students developing independence, behaviour flexibility, and coping strategies (Dalton, 2008). Preparation for academic success refers to a student's readiness to enrol and study in universities. This preparation motivates the students and helps them cope with the challenge of academic demands (Conley, 2007). Research has shown that many other factors contribute to student's readiness for university education, such as time management, motivational factors, background, and self-concept (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005). The student preparation process should be comprehensive, covering all aspects of understanding the admission process, financial issues and determinations to guarantee success (Conley, 2007). He also stated that students should fully understand a country's climate and study program.

Methodology

This study used quantitative methods with an exploratory research approach to examine sociocultural adaptation, educational ecosystem and quality of life among international students community in Malaysia higher learning institutions. 428 respondents were randomly chosen from five research universities: Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Every respondent needed to answer a questionnaire with four sections, section A for the demography of the respondent, section B for sociocultural adaptation, section C for educational ecosystem and Section D for quality of life. The research instrument used in this study was adapted and modified according to the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale by Furnham & Bochner's, 1982; Education Ecosystem by Campbell, 2015 and Quality of Life by WHO Quality of Life Scale-Brief. Data were analysed descriptively using SPSS to examine the level of sociocultural adaptation, educational ecosystem and quality of life among the international student community in Malaysia's higher learning institutions. The gathered data were analysed descriptively using the statistics package SPSS for Windows.

Result and Discussion***Respondents Demographic Profile***

This section discusses the demographic information of the respondents who participated in this study. It consists of gender, age, nationality, marital status, educational institution, current enrollment of education level and field of study. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents who participated in this study.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=428)

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	210	49.1
Female	218	50.9
Age		
< 21 years old	79	18.5
22 - 25 years old	236	55.1
26 - 29 years old	90	21.0
30 years old >	23	5.4
Nationality		
China	283	66.1
Indonesia	42	9.8
Bangladesh	29	6.8
Pakistan	21	4.9
Nigeria	18	4.2
Yemen	13	3
India	9	2.1
Sri Lanka	5	1.2
Egypt	4	0.9
Iran	2	0.5

South Korea	2	0.5
Marital Status		
Married	193	45.1
Single	235	54.9
Institution		
Universiti Putra Malaysia	106	24.8
University of Malaya	76	17.8
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	56	13.1
Universiti Sains Malaysia	98	22.9
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	92	21.5
Current Enrollment of Education Level		
Undergraduate	122	28.5
Postgraduate	306	71.5
Field of Study		
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	274	64.0
Science & Technology	146	33.1
Health & Medicine	8	1.9

Based on Table 1, the distribution of respondents in terms of gender shows that 218 respondents were female and another 210 respondents were male. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were aged between 22 and 25 years old, which is 236 respondents, followed by 90 respondents aged 26 to 29 years old, 79 respondents aged 21 years old and below, and the remaining were respondents aged over 40 years old which was 23 respondents. The average age of respondents who participated in this study was 24 years. Regarding countries distribution, the highest number of respondents who participated in this study were from China which was 283 respondents, followed by 42 respondents from Indonesia, 29 respondents from Bangladesh, 21 respondents from Pakistan, 18 respondents from Nigeria, 13 respondents from Yemen, 9 respondents from India, 5 respondents from Egypt, 2 respondents from Iran and 2 respondents from South Korea.

Next, the distribution of respondents based on marital status shows that the majority of respondents are single which was 235 respondents and another 193 respondents were married. In terms of educational institutions, the number of respondents from Universiti Putra Malaysia was the highest which was 106 respondents, followed by 98 respondents from Universiti Sains Malaysia, 92 respondents from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 76 respondents from the University of Malaya and 56 respondents from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Regarding the current level of study, the majority of respondents are postgraduate students which were 306 respondents and another 122 respondents were undergraduate students. Meanwhile, in terms of fields of study, the number of respondents studying arts, humanities and social sciences is the highest, which was 274 respondents, 146 respondents studying science and technology and only 8 respondents studying health and medicine.

Level of Sociocultural Adaptation, Educational Ecosystem and Quality of Life

Sociocultural Adaptation

The level of sociocultural adaptation of international students in Malaysian higher education institutions was measured using the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale by Furnham and Bochner's (1982). The scale was adapted and modified based on the context of the study. There are 33 items with 5 points Likert scale which were 1=very not competent, 2=not competent, 3=average, 4=competent and 5=very competent. There were three negative items which were items 11, 13 and 14. Table 2 shows the items and mean for the sociocultural adaptation scale.

Table 2

Sociocultural Adaptation Scale

No.	Items	Mean
1.	Getting used to the local climate.	4.22
2.	Getting used to the local food.	4.01
3.	Adapting to the local accommodation.	3.99
4.	Getting used to building relationships.	2.63
5.	Getting used to managing your academic responsibilities.	4.09
6.	Speaking in a culturally appropriate manner.	2.45
7.	Understanding host language.	2.55
8.	Reading and/or writing host language.	2.64
9.	Getting used to the pace of life.	4.10
10.	Getting used to the population density.	4.01
11.	Face difficulty in understanding the accent (English) of the Malaysians.	4.12
12.	Communicating with people of a different ethnic group.	2.64
13.	Face difficulty to speak English rather than my own language	4.15

14.	Face difficulty to change my (verbal behavior) tone and accent when a cross-cultural interaction requires	2.45
15.	Understanding what is required from you at university.	4.17
16.	Coping with academic work	4.08
17.	Following rules and regulations	2.56
18.	Expressing your ideas in class	4.11
19.	Dealing with staff at the university (administration)	2.64
20.	Face difficulty to communicate with people from other countries when I am in Malaysia.	2.51
21.	Making yourself understood to others	2.45
22.	Using the transport	2.60
23.	Living away from family members overseas/independently from your parents	4.04
24.	Going to social events/gatherings/functions	4.07
25.	Making friends in Malaysia	2.57
26.	Understanding jokes and humor	2.55
27.	Adapting to local etiquette	2.59
28.	Adapting to academic programs and courses.	4.05
29.	Adapting to lecturers' teaching methods.	4.12
30.	Adapting well to the university.	4.08
31.	Seeking help from classmates.	4.16
32.	Always finishing assignments on time.	2.45
33.	Participating in the discussions in class.	4.08

Based on Table 2, the high mean shows a good sociocultural adaptation while the low mean shows the opposite. Overall, the mean for the sociocultural adaptation scale was mostly below ($M < 3.00$). The items 'getting used to the local climate' ($M=4.22$), 'understanding what is required from you at university' ($M=4.17$) and 'seeking help from classmates' ($M=4.16$) were the items with the highest mean. While the items 'speaking in a culturally appropriate manner', 'making yourself understood to others' and 'always finishing assignments on time' were the items with the lowest mean ($M=2.45$). Next, Table 3 shows the level of sociocultural adaptation among international students in Malaysian higher education institutions.

Table 3

Level of Sociocultural Adaptation

Variables	N(%)	Min	SD
Low	236(55.1)	1.44	0.497
High	192(44.9)		

The level of sociocultural adaptation was divided into low and high. The determination of sociocultural adaptation was based on the total score of the sociocultural adaptation domain. The mean total score for the sociocultural adaptation domain was 116.09. Then, the mean of the total score is divided into two ranges which were 116.08 and below representing a low level of sociocultural adaptation while 116.09 and above represents a high level of sociocultural adaptation. Based on Table 3, most respondents (55.1%) have a low level of sociocultural adaptation with an average value (SP=0.479).

The study findings show that international students face challenges in adapting to sociocultural norms in Malaysia. The items 'speaking in a culturally appropriate manner' and 'making yourself understood to others' have the lowest mean (M=2.45), showing that language proficiency was their main challenge. International students face the challenge of understanding the local English accent (GulRaihan & Sandaran, 2017) because of different regional accents due to the influence of the mother tongue and it causes difficulty in understanding their English and vice versa. In addition, communication was the primary key to adapting to the culture. Failure to communicate well will undoubtedly affect their interaction with the local community. Zhang and Goodson (2011) close interaction with local students promotes sociocultural and psychological adaptation.

Educational Ecosystem

The level of the educational ecosystem of international students in Malaysia was measured using the Educational Ecosystem Scale by (Campbell, 2015). The scale was adapted and modified based on the context of the study. There are 33 items with 5 points Likert scale which are 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree. Table 4 shows the items and mean for the educational ecosystem scale.

Table 4

Education System Scale

No.	Items	Mean
1.	Asking lecturers for help when you have problems with your studies.	4.37
2.	The program offered by the university is up to date	4.36
3.	The program offered by the university is industry relevant and needs	4.46
4.	The University provides enough endowment funds that offer scholarships to international students	4.63
5.	University provides opportunities to gain cultural experiences	4.56
6.	The university provides research grants to students	4.43
7.	The visa application process is easy	4.52
8.	Affordable university fees	4.37
9.	The university encourages students to get involved in a community project	4.43
10.	The school library has abundant study materials, references, and convenient search facilities.	4.54
11.	The number of classrooms is guaranteed, clean, well-lit, well-ventilated, and fully equipped.	4.48
12.	Dormitory, gymnasium, leisure spot, campus for students with enough, clean, suitable equipment	4.47
13.	The University's information system and website are regularly updated and easy to access.	4.50
14.	The management staff is capable of working, managing, and serving well.	4.52
15.	The university regularly organizes the repair and maintenance of facilities.	4.50
16.	The university has completed, convenient, and easy-to-search information and instruction charts.	4.52
17.	The university regularly organizes to collect students' opinions on the quality assessment of living and learning conditions.	4.43
18.	The university regularly checks and evaluates the quality of facilities serving students' learning and activities.	4.42

19.	The university regularly renovates and modernizes facilities for the living and studying of students.	4.54
20.	Students' questions and feedback are listened to, responded to, and handled quickly and properly by the University.	4.54
21.	The service staff has a working spirit, is considerate, ready to guide and answer students' questions.	4.47
22.	The service staff always do their job right.	4.40
23.	The number of services arranged reasonably, fully, and convenient to answer questions of students.	4.48
24.	Information related to learning and activities is provided to students fully and promptly.	4.46
25.	The time to answer and answer questions of students is done on time and quickly.	4.37
26.	The facilities were provided exactly as committed.	4.40
27.	Students are satisfied with the facilities of the University.	4.43
28.	Students are satisfied with the faculty's service attitude.	4.41
29.	Students are satisfied with the commitments and efforts of the University.	4.44
30.	Community around university supportive and friendly with international students	4.31
31.	Lecturer at university very competent and highly educated	4.42
32.	Supervision with supervisory committee or academic advisor very effective and helpful	4.35
33.	Lecturers encourage students to develop high quality research	4.42

Based on Table 4, the high mean shows a good education system while the low mean shows the opposite. Overall, the mean for the education system scale was mostly above ($M=4.00>$). Item 'university provides enough endowment funds that offer scholarships to international students' ($M=4.63$), 'university provides opportunities to gain cultural experiences' ($M=4.56$), 'the school library has abundant study materials, references, and convenient search facilities', 'the university regularly renovates and modernises facilities for the living and studying of students' and 'students' questions and feedback are listened to, responded to, and handled quickly and properly by the University each have the highest mean for the system scale education which was ($M=4.54$). While the items 'the program offered by the university is up to date' ($M=4.36$), 'community around university supportive and friendly with international students' ($M=4.31$) and 'supervision with the supervisory committee or academic advisor very

effective and helpful' ($M=4.35$) has the lowest mean for the education system scale. Table 5 shows the level of the education system of international students in Malaysia.

Table 5

Level of Educational Ecosystem

Variables	n(%)	mean	SD
Low	183(42.8)	1.57	0.495
High	245(57.2)		

The level of the educational ecosystem was divided into low and high. The educational ecosystem level was determined based on the total score of the educational ecosystem domain. The mean total score for the educational ecosystem domain is 146.94. Then, the mean of the total score is divided into two ranges which were 146.93 and below representing a low level of the educational ecosystem while 146.94 and above representing a high level of the educational ecosystem. Based on Table 5, most respondents (57.2%) have a high level of the educational ecosystem with an average value ($SP=0.495$).

The study's findings show that international students can cope well with the educational ecosystem in Malaysia. The educational ecosystem of higher education institutions in Malaysia was friendly to international students in response to the Ministry of Higher Education policy. Turning Malaysia into an education hub that attracts international students is one of the goals of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (Ministry of Education, 2013). Therefore, every university in Malaysia provides the best services for international students. The internalisation of the higher education system in Malaysia generally started by importing and imitating foreign structures and models to attract international students (Wan & Morshidi, 2018). Then, a more complex collaboration between public universities in Malaysia and other countries benefited local and international students in formal and informal co-curriculum. It not only improved international student management but also increased visibility and attracted new markets of international students (Wan & Doria, 2021). That was why international students that participated in this study have a high level of the educational ecosystem.

Quality of Life

Quality of life was measured using the Quality of Life Scale by the WHO Quality of Life Scale-Brief. The scale was adapted and modified based on the context of the study. There were 26 items with 5 points Likert scale which are 1=very unsatisfactory, 2=not satisfactory, 3=neutral, 4=satisfactory and 5=very satisfactory for items 1, 2, 15, 16, 17,18,19,20,21,22,23 ,24 and 25 while 1=not at all, 2=a little, 3=a moderate amount, 4=very much and 5=an extreme amount for items 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13 ,14 and 16. There are three negative items which were items 3, 4 and 26. Table 6 shows the items and mean for the quality of life scale.

Table 6

Quality of Life Scale

No.	Items	Mean
1.	How would you rate your quality of life?	4.59
2.	How satisfied are you with your health?	4.47
3.	To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?	2.25
4.	How much do you need any medical treatment to function in your life?	2.30
5.	How much do you enjoy life?	4.36
6.	To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?	4.37
7.	How well are you able to concentrate?	4.49
8.	How safe do you feel in your daily life?	4.29
9.	How healthy is your physical environment?	4.47
10.	Do you have enough energy for everyday life	4.44
11.	Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?	4.42
12.	Do you have enough money to meet your needs?	4.53
13.	How available to you is the information that you need in your day-to-day life?	4.50
14.	To what extent do you have the opportunity for leisure activities?	4.51
15.	How well are you able to get around?	4.45
16.	How satisfied are you with your sleep?	4.52
17.	How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities	4.51
18.	How satisfied are you with your capacity for work?	4.40
19.	How satisfied are you with yourself?	4.49
20.	How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?	4.44
21.	How satisfied are you with your sex life?	4.36
22.	How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?	4.47
23.	How satisfied are you with the conditions of your living place?	4.49
24.	How satisfied are you with your access to health services?	4.39

25.	How satisfied are you with your mode of transportation?	4.45
26.	How often do you have negative feelings, such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?	1.82

Based on Table 6, a high mean shows a good quality of life while a low mean shows the opposite except for items 3,4 and 5. Overall, the mean for the quality of life scale is mostly above ($M=4.00>$). Item 'How would you rate your quality of life?' ($M=4.59$), 'do you have enough money to meet your needs?' ($M=4.53$) and how satisfied are you with your sleep?' ($M = 4.52$) were the items with the highest mean. While the item 'to what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?' ($M=2.25$), 'how much do you need medical treatment to function in your life?' (2.30) and 'How often do you have negative feelings, such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?' ($M=1.82$) had the lowest mean for the quality of life scale. Next, Table 7 shows the quality of life among international students in Malaysia.

Table 7

Level of Quality of Life

Variables	n(%)	mean	SD
Low	205(47.9)	1.52	0.500
High	223(52.1)		

The level of quality of life was divided into low and high. Determining the quality of life is based on the total score quality of life domain. The mean total score for the quality of life domain is 108.11. Then, the mean of the total score is divided into two ranges which were 108.10 and below representing a low quality of life while 108.11 and above representing a high quality of life. Based on Table 4.8, most respondents (52.1%) have a high quality of life with an average value ($SP=0.500$).

The study's findings show that international students in Malaysia's higher education had a good quality of life. In contrast, Yan (2020) reported that international students in the United States felt pressured by immigration policies that the United States government introduced because the new rules had created fear in international students and affected their mental well-being. Adapting to new educational and social environments can affect international students' wellbeing (Yan, 2020). Self-help coping strategies used by international students in Malaysia are useful in managing their acculturative stress (Saravanan et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Overall, international students in Malaysian higher education institutions have a low sociocultural adaptation level but a high level of the educational ecosystem and quality of life. This study has contributed knowledge in the community development field by proving that achieving the community development goals requires the cooperation and readiness of the community itself and support from development agents. In the context of this study, sociocultural adaptation is seen as an effort carried out by the community itself, which is the international student community. While the educational ecosystem is seen as the

environmental support development agents provide through higher education institutions. These two entities need each other to achieve the community development goal of quality of life. Therefore, higher education institutions in Malaysia need to pay attention to balancing development among the international student community to ensure that they can achieve well-being as outlined in the Fourth and Fifth Sustainable Development Goals.

Acknowledgement

The authors are thankful to the Universiti Putra Malaysia for the Putra Grant – GP/2018/9653200 award for the financial support and to those involved in this research. Some of the data and contents in this paper were excerpted from the research on Challenges Identification and Strategies Development in Enhancing Internationalization Policies of Higher Education in Malaysia.

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