Chapter- V

Discussion

The present research, examined the prediction, moderation and mediation effect of acculturation experiences, cultural intelligence and social support on acculturative stress among north Indian engineering students in Warangal district, south India.

More specifically, present research work examined the –

(a) Prediction effect of- Acculturation experiences, cultural intelligence (viz. strategy, knowledge, motivation and behavior) and social support (viz. emotional support, informational support, companionship support and tangible support) on acculturative stress.

(b) Moderation effect of- Cultural intelligence (viz. strategy, knowledge, motivation and behavior) and social support (viz. emotional support, informational support, companionship support, and tangible support) on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress.

(c) Mediation effect of- Social support (viz. emotional support, informational support, companionship support and tangible support) on the link between cultural intelligence and acculturative stress.

The obtained findings in view of hypotheses of the present research work have been discussed below.

1. Acculturation experiences and acculturative stress

Prediction effect

Hierarchical multiple regression models suggested acculturation experience as significant predictor of acculturative stress (Table- 16). Those students who had lower levels of acculturation experiences were more likely to report acculturative stress (Table- 16). Current findings are in full agreement with the earlier reports on
acculturative stress at western cross-cultural context (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Yijälä, 2011; Kuo & Roysircar, 2004; Miranda & Matheny, 2000; Mui & Kang, 2006; Ouarasse & Vijver, 2005; Vergara, Smith, & Keelela, 2010; Wilton & Constantine, 2003; Wrobel, Farrag, & Hymes, 2009). Therefore, in the first predictive hypothesis in which acculturation experiences was hypothesized as a predictor of acculturative stress stands confirmed.

The students with lower acculturation experiences reported high acculturative stress because being new in the host culture they are facing several stressors (viz. language, behavior, food pattern, homesickness, cultural practices and discrimination) at starting phase of acculturation process. Therefore, students feel uncomfortable in contacting and interacting with the member of host culture. Acculturation experiences are positively associated with coping abilities during acculturation. Thus, students with high acculturation experiences may solve, these issues in a better way by his/her coping abilities.

2. Cultural intelligence and acculturative stress

**Prediction effect**

Hierarchical multiple regression models revealed that dimensions of cultural intelligence viz. strategy, knowledge, motivation and behavior were significant predictors of acculturative stress (Table-17). Further, students with lower levels of strategy, knowledge, motivation and behavior reported higher acculturative stress (Table-17). Therefore, in the second predictive hypothesis in which cultural intelligence was hypothesized as a predictor of acculturative stress stands confirmed.

It may be explained that, students do not have any idea to stay in the host culture for which period of time. The student do not have any idea about the duration of stay in host culture. At the outset they feel problem in assessing their profile and lose in the
host culture. They are not aware about them self, about others and about situation. Those who change his/her mindset easily faced less acculturative stress then those who are right as for as there mindset is concert. These factors are root cause of problematic issues during interaction with host culture members (Dyne, Ang, Ng, Thomas, Tan & Christine, 2012). Therefore, students reported low strategy with higher acculturative stress.

However, students might have some knowledge about economic, legal and political system of host culture. But knowledge of social norms, cultural practices, religious beliefs, socio-linguistic rules and verbal Vs non-verbal communication rules may be lacking. These factors also play negative role during interaction with host culture members (Dyne, Ang, Ng, Thomas, Tan & Christine, 2012). Consequently, students reported low knowledge with higher acculturative stress.

Students may feel happy with tangible support (accommodation, e-library, workshop, campus selection, etc.) given by institutions. On the other hand they feel hesitation in interacting with the members of the host culture because of the native cultural identity. This fact is responsible for maximization of acculturative stressors (Dyne, Ang, Ng, Thomas, Tan & Christine, 2012). Thus, students reported low motivation with higher acculturative stress.

Students may face problem in vocalization (viz. pronunciation, pitch, accent, etc.) and expression of verbal behavior (viz. affection, interest and formality), non verbal behavior (viz. body language, formal Vs informal clothing, facial expressions and physical gestures) and manner of communication (viz. using of appropriate words, the degree of directness, and the force of speech acts, etc.) related issues. These factors are responsible for behavior rigidity at host culture (Dyne, Ang, Ng, Thomas, Tan & Christine, 2012). In additional to it, behavior rigidity is responsible maximization of acculturative stressors. Thus, students reported low score of behavior with higher acculturative stress.
Moderation effect

A. Strategy

Strategy was found as significant moderator on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress (Table- 18). It may be explained that, acculturation experiences are positively linked with awareness of cross cultural situation, behavior of host culture member (Tarique & Takeuchi, 2008). Further, higher acculturation experiences are responsible for appropriate evaluation of mental map regarding cross cultural interaction (Tay, Westman & Chia, 2008). Therefore, the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress will remain lesser due to the increasing length of acculturation experiences and high score on strategy (Figure-10). Thus, the first moderating hypothesis viz. “strategy aspect of cultural intelligence would moderate the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress” has been accepted.

B. Knowledge

Knowledge was found as significant moderator on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress (Table- 19). The reasons may be attributed to the fact that, acculturation experiences are positively linked with the knowledge of social norms, cultural practices, religious belief, socio-linguistic rules and verbal Vs non-verbal communication rules of the host culture (Ang et al., 2007; Shannon & Begley, 2008; Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & lepaks’s, 2005; Crowne, 2008; Tay, Westman & Chia, 2008). Therefore, the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress will remain lesser due to the increasing length of acculturation experiences and high score on knowledge (Figure-11). Hence, second moderating hypothesis i.e. “knowledge aspect of cultural intelligence would moderate the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress” has been accepted.
C. Motivation

Motivation was found as significant moderator on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress (Table- 20). This may be explained by the fact that, confidence to interact with host culture members is positively associated with acculturation experiences (Ang et al., 2007; Tarique & Takeuchi, 2008; Tay, Westman & Chia, 2008). In addition to it, students solve interaction related frustration by increasing score of motivation and acculturation experiences. Therefore, the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress will remain lesser due to the increasing length of acculturation experiences and high score on motivation (Figure-12). Hence, third moderating hypothesis i.e. “knowledge aspect of cultural intelligence would moderate the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress” has been accepted.

D. Behavior

Behavior was found as significant moderator on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress (Table- 21). It may be explained that, vocalization, expression of verbal and nonverbal behavior and communication manner related issues are negatively associated with acculturation experiences (Ang et al., 2007; Shannon & Begley, 2008; Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Iepaks’s, 2005; Crowne, 2008; Tay, Westman & Chia, 2008). In addition, students with higher score on acculturation experiences and behavior have better ability to cope with acculturative stress. Therefore, the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress will remain lesser due to the increasing length of acculturation experiences and high score on behavior (Figure-13). Hence, fourth moderating hypothesis, “behavior aspect of cultural intelligence would moderate the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress” has been accepted.
3. Social support

**Prediction effect**

Hierarchical multiple regression models revealed that the dimensions of social support viz. emotional support, informational support, companionship support and tangible support were significant predictors of acculturative stress (Table-22). Further, students with lower levels of emotional support, informational support, companionship support and tangible support were reported higher acculturative stress (Table-22). Therefore, third predictive hypothesis, social support would emerge as predictor of acculturative stress has been accepted.

It may be explained that, lacking of trust, approval, encouragement and affection are responsible for frustration during acculturation. Further, prolonged frustration is responsible for maximization of stressors during acculturation. In addition, emotional support is an important factor for cultural adjusting and coping with acculturative stress (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Consequently, students reported low emotional support with high acculturative stress.

Lacking of career advice, guidance and suggestions from members of host culture are responsible for maximization of stressors (viz. language barrier, lack of opportunities) during acculturation. Informational support positively associated with adaptation (Apker & Ray, 2003). Therefore, students reported low informational support with high acculturative stress.

Students with low companionship support face unpleasant interaction or lacking of communication with host culture members. These factors are responsible for isolation and loneliness. These problematic issues caused chronic stress during acculturation. Therefore, students reported low companionship support with high acculturative stress.
Lacking of material and service assistances from others (host culture members) are responsible for maximization of stressors in acculturation process. Therefore, students reported that low tangible support with high acculturative stress.

The present findings are in full agreement with the earlier reports on acculturative stress in different cross-cultural setting (Abdulahad, Graham, Montelpare, & Brownlee, 2014; Amason, Allen, & Holmes, 1999; Geeraert & Demoulin, 2013; Han, Kim, Lee, Pistulka, & Kim, 2006; Haymes, Martone, Muñoz, & Grossman, 2011; Li, Hofstetter, Wahlgren, Irvin, Chhay, & Hovell, 2014; Tartakovsky, 2007; Ye, 2006; Yeh & Inose, 2003).

**Moderation effect**

**A. Emotional support**

Emotional support was found as significant moderator on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress (Table- 23). It may be explained that, acculturation experiences are positively associated with emotional support. Further, emotional support is negatively associated with occurrence of stress during acculturation. Therefore, the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress will remain lesser due to the increasing length of acculturation experiences and high score on emotional support (Figure-14). Thus, fifth moderating hypothesis, “emotional support aspect of social support would moderate the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress” has been accepted.

**B. Informational support**

Informational support was found as significant moderator on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress (Table- 24). It may be explained that, high scores of acculturation experience generate higher informational support. Higher
informational support is responsible to cope with stressors in acculturation process. Therefore, the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress will remain lesser due to the increasing length of acculturation experiences and high score on informational support (Figure-15). Thus, sixth moderating hypothesis, “informational support aspect of social support would moderate the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress” has been accepted.

C. Companionship support

Companionship support was found as significant moderator on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress (Table-25). It is possible that, higher length of stay in host culture is responsible for higher companionship support. In addition, students with higher companionship support may solve isolation and loneliness at host culture. Therefore, the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress will remain lesser due to the increasing length of acculturation experiences and high score on companionship support (Figure-16). Hence, seventh moderating hypothesis, viz. “companionship support aspect of social support would moderate the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress” has been accepted.

D. Tangible support

Tangible support was found as significant moderator on the link between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress (Table-26). It is may be explained that, acculturation experiences are positively associated with material and services assistance from host culture members. Further, tangible support positively linked with cross-cultural adaption. Therefore, the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress will remain lesser due to the increasing length of acculturation experiences and high score on tangible support (Figure-17). Hence, eighth moderating
hypothesis, viz. “tangible support aspect of social support would moderate the relationship between acculturation experiences and acculturative stress” has been accepted.

**Mediation effect**

**A. Emotional support**

Cultural intelligence is negatively associated with acculturative stress (Table-27, Figure-18). Cultural intelligence is positively associated with emotional support (Table-27, Figure-18). Further, emotional support is negatively linked with acculturative stress (Table-27, Figure-18). Furthermore, total effect of cultural intelligence on acculturative stress reduced when emotional support was included in model (Table-27, Figure-18). Moreover, indirect effect of cultural intelligence on acculturative stress through emotional support was found statistically significant (Table-27, Figure-18). The hypothetical mediation model showed statistical good model fit (Table-27). Therefore, first mediating hypothesis, “emotional support would mediate the relationship between cultural intelligence and acculturative stress” has been accepted. It may be explained that, students may faced awareness of self and others mental process and behavior, evaluations of mental map regarding interaction and low confidence to interact with host cultural members related issues. These factors are responsible for difficulties to cope with stressors during acculturation. Students solve these stress coping related difficulties during acculturation by high emotional support.

**B. Informational support**

Cultural intelligence is positively associated with informational support (Table-28, Figure-19). Further, informational support is negatively related with acculturative stress (Table-28, Figure-19). Furthermore, total effect of cultural intelligence on acculturative stress reduced when informational support was included in model (Table-28, Figure-19). Moreover, indirect effect of cultural intelligence on acculturative stress through
informational support was found statistically significant (Table-28, Figure-19). The hypothetical mediation model showed statistical good model fit (Table-28). Therefore, second mediating hypothesis, “informational support would mediate the relationship between cultural intelligence and acculturative stress” has been accepted. It may be explained that, knowledge of social norms, cultural practices, religious belief, socio-linguistic rules and verbal Vs non-verbal communication rules are lacking. These issues are responsible for maximization of stressors during acculturation. Students solve these issues by high informational support.

C. Companionship support
Cultural intelligence is positively linked with companionship support (Table-29, Figure-20). Further, companionship support is negatively associated with acculturative stress (Table-29, Figure-20). Furthermore, student reported that total effect of cultural intelligence on acculturative stress reduced when companionship support was included in model (Table-29, Figure-20). Moreover, indirect effect of cultural intelligence on acculturative stress through companionship support was found statistically significant (Table-29, Figure-20). The hypothetical mediation model showed statistical good model fit (Table-29). Therefore, third mediating hypothesis, “companionship support would mediate the relationship between cultural intelligence and acculturative stress” has been accepted. It may be explained that, students faced vocalization, expression of verbal and non-verbal behavior, communication manner related issues. These factors are responsible for adjustment related problems. Students may solve these issues by high companionship support.

D. Tangible support
Cultural intelligence is positively linked with tangible support (Table-30, Figure-21). Further, tangible support is negatively associated with acculturative stress (Table-30, Figure-21). Furthermore, student reported that total effect of cultural intelligence on
acculturative stress reduced when tangible support was included in model (Table-30, Figure-21). Moreover, indirect effect of cultural intelligence on acculturative stress through tangible support was statistically significant (Table-30, Figure-21). The hypothetical mediation model showed statistical good model fit (Table-30). Therefore, fourth mediating hypothesis, “tangible support would mediate the relationship between cultural intelligence and acculturative stress” has been accepted. It may be explained that, students with low cultural intelligence faced adjustment related issues. Students may cope with adjustments related issues by high material and service assistance from host cultural members.