An Empirical Investigation into the Effects of Cross-Cultural Education on Attitude Change and Readjustment of Jordanian Engineers

by

Wendy Hilary Bataineh

B.A. (Hons) Social Studies, University of Hull, England, 1978
Diploma in Education, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan, 1981

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Education (Educational Psychology) at Yarmouk University.

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Renzi Bulbul
Chairman

Dr. Yaqub Abu Helu
Member

Dr. Lutfi Lutfiya
Member
ABSTRACT

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Wendy H. Bataineh, MA. (Educational Psychology), Yarmouk University, 1983

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of cross cultural education on the attitude change of Jordanian engineers with respect to commonly held cultural values and to investigate the readjustment of those engineers into their own society. The following questions were posed:

1. Are there any significant differences in the attitude changes and/or readjustment of Jordanian engineers due to either the cultural environments in which they undertook their higher studies (Arab, Western & Eastern Countries) or due to the length of time (0-3 years, 4-10 years, 11 or more) since the engineer returned to Jordan?

2. Are there any significant differences in the attitude changes and/or readjustment of Jordanian engineers due to either the marital status or due to the original socialization (village/city) of the engineers?

3. Are there any significant differences in the attitude changes and/or readjustment of Jordanian engineers due to their religion, age or sex?
The study utilised a questionnaire developed by the researcher, which in effect constituted three dependent measures: section one measuring Jordanian engineers, "attitudes toward social relations and family life," section two measuring their "readjustment", and section three which measures their "attitudes toward economic, religious and political matters." The instrument utilised a Likert-type scale on which a score of one indicated strong agreement with the item and a score of five strong disagreement. The items themselves were statements which either represented commonly-held cultural attitudes or expressed general satisfaction with and adjustment to Jordanian society. The reliability was calculated using the Split-Half reliability method and the Spearman-Brown correction formula. It was found to be 0.952 on section one, 0.864 on section two, 0.855 on section three, and 0.903 for the questionnaire as a whole.

1,600 questionnaires were distributed in the Amman and Irbid districts throughout November and early December, 1982. Of the 568 questionnaires returned by the middle of January, 508 were found suitable for analysis and their respondents became the subjects of the study. 240 engineers had graduated from Arab countries, 181 from the West and 87 from the East.

The data collected was analysed using two way and one way analyses of variance and the t-test using the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences and the facilities of the University of Jordan's Computer Centre with the following results:

On the attitudes of Jordanian engineers toward social relations
and family, significant differences (p < 0.05) were found due to the cultural environment in which the engineers studied and due to the length of time since the engineer returned. Significant differences were also found due to the marital status of the engineers, their original socialization, religion and age. No significant differences were found due to sex. Post hoc comparisons using Schef- fes' method indicated that graduates from both the West and the East were less in agreement with traditional attitudes toward social relations and family life than graduates from Arab countries. The multiple comparisons also indicated that engineers who had graduated in the last three years were less in agreement with the commonly held attitudes than those in the 4-10 year group, who were also less in agreement than those engineers returning more than 11 years ago. Younger engineers in the first three groups (21-25yrs, 26-30yrs and 30-35yrs) agreed less with traditional attitudes on social relations and family life than those over thirty-five years. Single engineers were less in agreement than married engineers, and those brought up in the city were less in agreement than those socialized in the village. Christian engineers also agreed less with the traditional attitudes toward social relations and family life than Moslem engineers.

On the other attitude measure, attitudes toward economic, religious and political matters, five of the variables were shown to produce significant differences (p < 0.05). Neither religion nor the original socialization of the engineer were found to be significant. Post hoc comparisons using Scheffes' method indicated that engineers graduating from the East were less in agreement with the prevailing Jordanian attitudes toward economics, religion and politics than
those graduating from Arab or Western countries. Engineers returning in the last ten years were less in agreement than those who returned eleven years ago or more. Single engineers were less in agreement than married engineers and males less than females. Younger engineers (26-30 years) were less in agreement than older ones (over 35 years).

On the measure of readjustment, there were significant effects ($p < 0.05$) due to the length of time since the engineer returned, the engineers' marital status and their religion. The cultural environment in which the engineer studied was not found to have a significant effect on the engineers readjustment; an important finding in terms of the purpose of this study. Neither sex, age nor the original socialization of the engineer were found to have significant effects on the readjustment of the engineers. Scheffes' method of multiple comparisons indicated that with respect to the length of time since return, engineers in the first two groups (0-3yrs, 4-10yrs) were less readjusted than engineers returning over eleven years ago or more. Single engineers were less readjusted than married; Moslems, less than Christians.

The researcher recommends that longitudinal research needs to be undertaken in this area involving pre and post testing of the subjects with respect to their attitudes and adjustment; before commencing the sojourn, on returning and some years later. The researcher also recommends that due to the complex nature of attitude formation and the necessity of studying many variables simultaneously, a study should be undertaken which is able to study the combined
effect of several variables, such as the independent variables of this study on the Jordanian engineer's attitudes and readjustment. It would also be useful to contact Jordanians who have chosen not to return and undertake a comparison between their attitudes and those of returnees. Finally, some responsibility and direction for Jordanian students studying overseas should be taken on a national level so that the maximum utility can be derived from their sojourn.