

A STUDY OF INTERACTION BETWEEN LOCAL AND AFRICAN
UNDERGRADUATES IN SOME MALAYSIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

BY

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Abstract

This phenomenological study explores the interaction between local and African undergraduate students in some private universities in Malaysia. The objectives of the research were to examine the interaction among local and African undergraduate students in Malaysia, to discover the implications of this interaction as well as to examine the role of expectations during interaction between local and African students. To understand the lived experiences of both local and African students, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect this information. A sample of twelve participants was used, six local and six African students from three private universities. The sample for local students was representative of all three Malaysian ethnics: Chinese, Malay and Indian students. The sample for African students was also representative of different African countries: Tanzania, Nigeria, Uganda, Botswana, South African and Cameroon. The sample was purposefully selected based on local or African students doing their second, third or final year from the three private universities. Results show that there are various ways of interacting either within or outside the campus. There are factors influencing their interactions; positive and negative outcomes of their interactions; challenges hindering interaction, the individual experiences; expectations and intervention strategies play huge roles between local and international students in Malaysia. In conclusion, recommendations were made for the Malaysian Ministry of Education and Foreign Affairs to create conducive environment such as promoting cultural awareness and campaign. Local universities should organise enough activities or events, which can make local and African students interact more like cultural days or food fairs where both local and African students can try different dishes. Besides, it recommends for lecturers to embed in their classroom activities sort of cultural interaction and compulsory of mixture in group assignments. This is because academic activities pave ways for more interaction. These may help improve the quality and quantity of interaction among local and African undergraduates in Malaysia.

Keywords: interaction, local students, African students, undergraduates, phenomenology.