Cultural Differences in the Effect of Social and Digital Mass Media Usage on International Students' Adaptation in a New Environment

A Quantitative study

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ABSTRACT

International students compose a group of the society that intrigues many academic experts. Considered as the future of every country, the students are steadily and continuously prepared for future endeavors in the numerous academic institutions around the world. Many of them, however, are forced to overcome additional obstacles during their educational adventure. The decision to study abroad is followed by different types of difficulties which can considerably hinder the students' successful graduation. Various factors contribute to the international students' smooth process of adaptation to the new environment. One of them is the use of technology. Undoubtedly, probably the most rapidly developing branch is part of almost everybody's everyday life, including international students. Social media platforms have adopted our digital profiles which allow people to communicate in a new, interactive way. Meanwhile, the digitalization has motivated different sources of information to make their content available online. Thus, nowadays, international students are offered opportunities that could affect their adaptation in a new country in different directions. This study aims to investigate how the use of digital media affects the level of adaptation. In line with that, the cultural aspects of individuals are taken into major account that could possibly influence the relation between the two variables. Thus, this thesis asked: "How does digital media usage affect the adaptation of international students and what is the moderating role of the individualism and collectivism characteristics?" The research inquired students that were currently living in a foreign country (N=151) about their usage of social media platforms and digital mass media sources. Three types of digital media were considered – from the home and host country and other international. Credible scales were used to measure the students' individualism/collectivism and level of adaptation. The main findings indicated that international students' social media to communicate with host-nationals and with other internationals significantly and positively influence their level of adaptation. Moreover, the research found out that the individualism score can serve as a moderator when considering the relationships between digital mass media usage from the home country and the international students' level of adaptation, as well as between social media to connect with the home country and international students' level of adaptation. Overall, the study implies that digital media usage and the individualistic/collectivistic characteristics are solid factors that should not be neglected when analyzing the international students' adaptation to a new environment. Furthermore, it provides different nuances that could help future analyses on this essential topic.

KEYWORDS: Adaptation, Digital Mass Media, Social Media, Individualism rate, International Students

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1. Introduction

The evolution of technology and the process of globalization have greatly contributed to a more connected and globalized world and have given people countless opportunities outside of their own countries. Nowadays, numerous people are embarking on the challenge of settling down in a new foreign environment which might be a difficult task. Unsurprisingly, one of the biggest groups of sojourners is the one of international students, which experience while staying abroad is fundamentally important to explore. This change of the environment, followed by a process of adaptation is the main cause for continuous stress and less enjoyable experience among many international students (Demes & Geeraert, 2015), who need not only to create a social network but also to continuously search information and be updated about their new environment (Sin & Kim, 2013). According to the "Migration data portal" more than 4.8 million students were studying abroad in 2016 (International students, n.d.), which solely includes the students who own a non-resident visa status or the so-called student's visa but not the ones coming from countries with no visa requirements (e.g. EU residents studying in another EU country). Hence, the number is even bigger, making the importance of studying international students and their adaptation essential.

Meanwhile, the progress of technology has brought new and more convenient tools for distant communication which have given the process of adaptation different perspectives and dimensions (Cemalcilar, Falbo & Stapleton, 2005). Statistically, almost half of the world population, or 3.8 billion in particular, are expected to use a smartphone by the year 2021 (Takahashi, 2018). Similarly, the number of Social media users is constantly growing. The users of Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, and many others are currently around 2.7 billion with no expectations the grow to stop (Statista, n.d.). These technological communication channels serve as a mediator for the international students and give them the chance to regularly keep in touch with their family and friends, as well as to obtain political, cultural and social information (Cemalcilar et al., 2015). Furthermore, the process of digitalization is remarkable nowadays. More and more businesses and organizations develop their portfolio online to make it more accessible and transparent and thus to shape better their near- and long-term future. The impact of digitalization is astonishing; many authors have compared the process with the industrial revolution from the last century (Parviainen, Tihinen, Kääriäinen & Teppola, 2017). The process of reporting the content of mass media platforms' work as a digital form rather than a paper form is widely accepted and is constantly evolving throughout different Mass Media sources (Parviainen et al, 2017). These sources of valuable information have all understood that neglecting the process of digitalization could put them in the position of losing market share in highly competitive markets.

The topic of this research is indeed, the consequences of the international students' use of technology and to what extent it affects their adaptation process. The motivation that triggers the ambition for conducting this project is grounded on the socio-humane consequences that it could bring. Students who feel comfort and convenience in their academic tasks and social life during their study are more likely to finish with success their programs and consequently to find their professional realization (Perrucci & Hu, 1995). Previous studies have proven the importance of Digital Media usage for the adaptation of international students. As indicated in a recent paper, there is a significant influence of the Social network sites' usage on the students' adjustment in foreign countries (Lin, Peng, Kim, Kim S., & LaRose, 2011). This and other studies have taken into account the students' Social Media communication with both, the home country and the country they are currently living. On one hand, there are claims that interaction through Social media sites with individuals from the students' home country is negatively related to their adaptation (Rui & Wang, 2015). On the other hand, communication with nationals from the host country is considered as beneficial and positively related to the adjustment process (Rui & Wang, 2015). The societal importance of the study is indicated by the research of the cultural characteristics of individuals and how they influence the interaction between social and digital media usage and the process of adaptation. Additionally, the results can play a role in tackling the problem with the adaptation of international students in an earlier stage and avoiding the harsh stress conditions in the universities. Finally, the international students themselves can be provided with better awareness of this sensitive topic and how exactly it can be influenced. Undoubtedly, social media is one of the most convenient and used tools when international students face difficulties related to their adaptation to a new environment. Lately, studies have focused on how students use social platforms to maintain their old and new social interactions, to obtain social capital, and to adapt more easily (Lin et al., 2011). The influence of digital media usage over the adaptation process is what is already known in this project. Nevertheless, because of some ambivalent results in previous studies (Ju, Moyi & Shoham, 2016), further research would be beneficial for clarifying the existing facts. Therefore, the eventual results will not only contribute to a better understanding of the so essential subject but also help the society and scientists to improve their awareness about the topic and be prepared to implement new methods for dealing with the issue.

Furthermore, there are several research gaps in the topic that this study will aim to fill up. First of all, the connection between the usage of digital mass media and the process of adaptation has been analyzed based on immigrants and sojourners perspectives (Ju et al., 2016). The international students' adaptation is widely examined mainly through the lens of social media usage, but there is not enough information about the students' digital mass media usage. Therefore, the current research will try to contribute with new findings in this track by obtaining and, consequently,

comparing the results from both, social media and digital mass media usage. Second, the communication of international students with other international communities, as well as the usage of multinational and global mass media has been analyzed with a focus on the influence of the stress levels of the students, but not on the adaptation process as a whole (Park, Song & Lee, 2014). Based on that, the students' communication with other international communities in the nuance of both, social media and digital mass media is an existing research gap. This study will aim to fill it by comparing the results from all three types of international students' communication through digital media. Last but not least, the cultural background of the individuals is a very important element when it comes to adjusting to a new environment. A potential factor that could affect the relation 'media usage – adaptation' is the culture from which the students are coming and the extent to which they have embraced the models of their new culture (Lin, et al., 2011). This project will take into account one of the six cultural dimensions created by prof. Geert Hofstede – individualism vs collectivism, which is mostly related to the integration of individuals to a new environment into primary groups (Hofstede, 2011). Recent studies have explored individualism vs collectivism in relation to Social network activities (Lin, et al., 2011). However, in these previous academic works, the individualism vs collectivism issue has been measured on a national level, neglecting the possibilities for exceptions in the existing sample. In contrast to this fact, this master thesis' project is examining the cultural differences on an individual level, referring to the argumentation of Triandis and Gelfand (1998), who claimed that the two levels of cultural differences are analytically independent of each other. Moreover, although this study aims to measure the individualism rate on a personal level, it is important to mention that one of the goals of the project is to include a significant amount of people from countries with a low individualistic score (collectivists). By doing so, it will be considered the fact that most of the studies about the influence of individualism vs collectivism dimension on the people's behavior have been conducted with participants from western countries i.e. individualists (Darwish & Huber, 2003). Since the individualism vs collectivism dimension is widely accepted as one of the best methods to investigate the influence of cultural characteristics on individuals' behavior and actions (Lin et al., 2011), there are strong arguments that triggered the adoption of the method in this study, in order to measure its moderating effect on the relation between international students' digital media usage and their adaptation. Therefore, an attempt to fill in another research gap will be made by exploring the process through the perspective of the respondents' collectivistic or individualistic personality traits.

It is very important to fill in these research gaps and, therefore, to contribute to a better awareness of the topic by applying new findings in the research area. As mentioned already, the use of social media affects in different ways the international students' adaptation to a new environment. Moreover, based on the exposed facts, the intended study can explore the influence of

international students' usage of digital mass media on the same process, and finally, to test to what extent do the individualism and collectivism change the interaction between these two variables. Thus, the research question of the study is composed as follows:

How does digital media usage affect the adaptation of international students and what is the moderating role of the individualism and collectivism characteristics?

In order to give an answer to this research question, the project will use a survey with a sample consisting of international students.

2. **Theoretical framework**

In this section, the theoretical framework of the research is reviewed, considering all the concepts used in the study. To begin, the process of adaptation is described. Furthermore, the different dimensions of digital media are explained. Finally, the concept of individualism and collectivism is developed with a clear distinction between them. Last but not least, the emerged hypotheses of the research question are indicated in the corresponding sections.

2.1 Adaptation

The adaptation is viewed as complex acculturation processes driven by people's desire to build ties with the country which they are currently occupying on one hand and to conserve their connections with the home country on the other hand (Bierwiaczonek & Waldzus, 2016). On the contrary, Cemalcilar, Falbo, and Stapleton (2005) describe adaptation as an effect of acculturation. They refer to the needs that are required for living in a new environment and, similarly, emphasize on the importance of maintaining the home and host country's values in the process (Cemalcilar, Falbo & Stapleton, 2005). Commonly, the adaptation process is taken as a bi-dimensional phenomenon. The socio-cultural adaptation refers to the ability to fit in with the social life in the new culture. On the other hand, psychological adaptation refers to the student's well-being in the new country and is dealing with the stress of an intercultural change (Bierwiaczonek & Waldzus, 2016). In this study, the adaptation is measured as an unblended phenomenon through a revised adaptation scale (Demes & Geeraert, 2014), which, however, consists of measurements of both, the socio-cultural adaptation and psychological adaptation of international students. As these two dimensions of adaptation are defined to be interconnected, they can be mixed and serve as one source of information for a model (Cemalcilar et al., 2005). One of the biggest concerns of the newcomers is to adjust their daily life to the new environment as soon as possible after arriving at the new place. The activities, public services and utilities that are vital and urgently required for a normal life most often strongly differentiate from the way they are searched, found and executed in the home country. Therefore, this project takes into consideration the socio-cultural dimension of the adaptation, which is strongly related to most pragmatic, functional and behavioral facets to a new culture (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). On the other hand, the emotional condition and well-being of the newcomers is another important point for the whole process of adaptation and needs to be studied. Thus, the psychological scope of adaptation is weighed in this study, since it is related to the level of the newcomers' satisfaction and happiness, on one hand, and anxiety or uncertainty, on the other, related to their new place and environment (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). Along with this, studies have proven the

strongest stressors and circumstances that put pressure on international students' representatives (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). First and foremost, the language barrier is probably the biggest and first-appearing issue for international students. It is associated with both, the socio-cultural and psychological adaptation since in case of insufficient proficiency level it can cause not only an academic inconvenience but also problems with the socialization of the person (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Similarly, the academic performance is related to an educational stress which is also a potential stressor. The expectations that the students usually have for the new study facilities or educational system for instance, sometimes are not justified. Besides, the students' performance is another possible nuance that can bring worries. The teaching style in the new place can also cause pressure or inconvenience in the students' behavior (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Moreover, as internationals and representatives of different cultures, races, and nations, international students are potential victims of discrimination and socio-cultural stressors (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Above all, communication is an essential factor in the adaptation process. Understanding as much as possible from the culture of the new country substantially affects the emotions, the adjustment and the adaptation process (Sawyer & Chen, 2012). Meanwhile, the connection with the home country, either directly (friends, family) or figuratively (television, movies, mass media), has a proven effect by strengthening and maintaining essential cultural values during the residence in a foreign country (Cemalcilar et al., 2005). The cultural values gained and maintained by communicating with host nationals and host country are much more examined than those that are a consequence of the connection with the home country (Cemalcilar et al., 2005). Hence, this study aims to fill in the existing gap and to contribute for a better understanding not only to the communication with the host country but also to that with the home country and its individuals.

2.2. Digital mass media

In the following two sections, a previous theory about digital mass media and social media concerning international students and their process of adaptation is discussed. Subsequently, the relevant connection with the current research is made in order to form the corresponding hypotheses.

When talking about digital media, two main types are taken into account in the current study. First, digital mass media give information to the people through diverse mediated sources such as radio, television, newspapers, internet news sites, sport and entertainment sites, and magazine articles (Ju et al., 2016). Consuming digital mass media is a one-way communication process in which the consumer absorbs the information without responding actively and taking part in the process of sharing information. Hendrickson and Rosen (2017) describe mass media as "the

channels that carry mass communication" and emphasize the tools used for the dissemination of this communication. Except for smartphones, they mention also tablets and smart television, which help to improve the interaction of international students' mass communication. In the analysis of this research, the importance of mass media used by international students is underlined, especially that of the host country. However, even though it is described as one of the important conditions for better adaptation process of international students, the authors highlight the lack of information and the necessity for further analysis of this issue. It was pointed out as a gap that this research will aim to fill in. Unlike the Social media news feed, where one can see not only the desired news information but also personal data and shared content from friends, the mass media sources expose only information that is selected and processed in advance and is specifically committed to one or a limited number of topics. Nevertheless, the mass media channels nowadays offer sources of information from countless topics and with different ways of exposure. Numerous studies investigate why, how, and in which way the people use mass media channels when they are in a foreign country. Studies have shown a strong influence of sojourners' mass media usage on their adaptation. In his research, Lee (2005), showed data which supports the claim that immigrants, including sojourners, consume both type of mass media, from their own country and information channels from the host country. He further mentions the level of mastering the local language as a strong variable regarding mass media usage. One who doesn't know the language the local people speak is more likely to rely on mass media to learn what he or she needs to know, rather than to communicate with local people (Lee, 2005; Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017). After conducting his study, however, it is not completely clear how international students respond to this type of communication. Moreover, because of the heterogeneous findings in the field (Lee, 2005), it will be more than useful to examine the phenomenon one more time, with a focus on the group of international students, which will be the main object of this project. The analysis of Elias (2013) pays attention to the affection of television and the Internet on the young immigrants' social and cultural adaptation. Based on its information, television, on one hand, is most effectively used for the purpose of learning the host country' language. Also, highly important, based on the insights of this research, is the presence of the Internet as a source of shaping the immigrant's personality. Overall, it provides the young immigrant with beneficial cultural, emotional, and social resources for keeping up the personal prosperity and well-being. Furthermore, Chang et al., (2012) found out that international students, on one hand, rely on host digital mass media for goods and services of first necessity such as food, weather information, jobs, and local traveling. For other things (for instance news), on another hand, they use mainly digital mass media from their home country. These findings are supported by Ju, Moyi, and Shoham (2016), who consider the general digital mass media usage as a key player in helping newcomers to improve their attitude towards the new environment, either with learning the local

language or with receiving vital information. They emphasize, however, that the improper use of digital mass media (at the great extent the media from the home country) can possibly threaten the successful adaptation of the newcomers. This point will be examined in details later in the analysis. Probably the most obvious and understandable need of information for international students is that of academic information. In order to take care of their academic performance, be informed about course assignments, and last but not least, take advantage of ongoing processes and promotions posted on online platforms, the international students need to check regularly the online databases of the respective institution (Chang et al., 2012). The digital mass media usage related to the academic performance of the international students is both at high importance, and a great necessity and, therefore, builds the grounds for successful integration and adaptation of every international student.

Like other types of sojourners, international students experience a significant amount of stress factors and different levels of culture shock. The everyday life information that the global mass media provides is a key element in overcoming these unpleasant conditions. The Sin and Kim study (2013) suggests the top five information topics searched in internet sites to be: finance, health, news of one's home country, housing and entertainment. When referred to events in the home country, the obtained information builds upon an existing identity, linked to one's country. The evolution of the technology industry has given people the opportunity to preserve connectedness with the home environment in different forms. By connecting to their home country via digital mass media channels, international students manage to form kind of a virtual "rescue island", on which they can go occasionally or whenever they need to (Gomes et al., 2014). Thus, the ethnic communication with the home country to some extent gives emotional support in that it helps the newcomers to escape from feelings such as loneliness and anxiety (Ju, et al., 2016). Moreover, the usage of ethnic digital mass media has a direct positive influence on the preservation of the home cultural distinctions that are the basis of the national identity (Cemalcilar et al., 2005). Logically, in a recent study, it was found that almost half of the investigated international students use some kind of a digital mass media channel on a daily basis (one among reading online newspapers, watching TV or listening online radio) (Cemalcilar et al., 2005). The existence of influence of the home - related mass media on the international students' behavior and adjustment is supported by various researches (Chen, 2010; Gomes et al., 2014; Sin & Kim, 2013). Many of them, nevertheless, reach the conclusion that even though digital mass media related to the home country brings sentimental emotions to its consumers, more often it hinders the process of adaptation to a new environment by immigrants, including international students. Chen (2010), suggests that a higher level of home-related mass media exposure leads to a lower level of acculturation and adaptation process in a long term, and vice versa. The same conclusion reached Park, Song, and Lee (2014), stating that using mass media

from the home country impedes the adaptation. In the same way, Sin & Kim (2013), infer that this kind of mass media usage can help immigrants in the first moments of their sojourn, but its longtime usage most frequently interferes with their adjustment efforts. One more proof in this track with similar findings can be found in the study of Lee (2015). He implies that even though the usage of home mass media helps immigrants to conserve their home values and traditions, the general affection towards the long-term adaptation in a new environment is negative, mostly because by doing so, they miss the opportunity to obtain more valuable information about the host country and culture (Lee, 2015). As the main reason for consuming home digital mass media, he points out the poor local language skills. However, his research is on immigrants and it cannot be confirmed that the same applies to international students, as they are usually prepared in advance with the needed language skills (Cemalcilar et al., 2005). Although there are many studies based on the influence of the use of home mass media, most of them deal with the experience of immigrants. The findings about international students' affection on the adaptation towards the new environment are considerably less, therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing additional information about the topic. Consequently, based on what was mentioned above, the following hypothesis was structured:

H1: There is a negative relation between the international students' use of Digital Mass Media from the home country and the students' adaptation to a new environment.

By the same token, host digital mass media expose international students to the new and larger environment through different channels (Ju et al., 2016). Elias (2013) implies that most of all, the Internet and television play a bigger role in this process. The television, on one hand, is one of the best sources for learning the local language. Additionally, it provides the international students a valuable information that helps them to shape their identity to match the local demands. The Internet, on the other hand, is the most relevant and easily accessible method for obtaining important information that can support the students' cultural, emotional and social demands (Elias, 2013). Hendrickson and Rosen (2017), also highlight the strong effect of the host mass media usage by implying that the ability to communicate as efficiently as possible with local people is positively influenced by consuming host digital mass media such as online television, online newspapers, and radio. Chen (2010) describes strong claims that the continuous usage of host digital mass media is positively related to the intercultural adaptation by immigrants. Even though his findings are about immigrants, considering his sample of young people, there is a strong possibility that his conclusions apply to the group of international students as well. Moreover, there is an evidence that the more time the international students have spent in the host country, the more often they use local digital

mass media to serve their needs (Chang, Alzougool, Reeders, Berry & Gomes, 2012). Considering that the more time one spends in one country, the more adapted to its environment he or she will be, this assertion implies that the host digital mass media usage is directly and positively related to the process of adaptation. In addition, Lee (2015) claims that there are two main reasons why immigrants use host related mass media – to help the acculturation and to search for an information related to the local culture and norms. These intentions not only help and delight the immigrants' personal needs but also give them a clearer picture of what they can expect from the surrounding environment (Lee, 2005). Also, the host digital mass media turns out to be very important for international students' educational concerns (Park et al., 2014). It can provide them with sources and information that cannot be obtained from other places. As it was already mentioned, the educational concerns are one of the potential stressors for international students (Smith & Khawaja, 2011) and it is crucial for both, the students and the educational institutions to prevent the lack of educational information to cause stress and to hinder the adaptation process. Generally, this form of communication helps the students to learn more about the local culture, traditions, beliefs, and to understand better the local political system, social norms, and rules. Moreover, it requires less effort and social cost (Ju et al., 2016). Meanwhile, different studies suggest and produce evidence that the host digital mass media can actually hinder the process of adaptation (Raman & Harwood, 2008). Ju et al. (2016) imply that the ambivalent findings in the literature can be due to the different content in the various mediated channels. Some of them, pursuing commercial and marketing goals, can launch information that is exaggerated, overly dramatic or highly extreme. In this way, the newcomers can be misguided and, consequently, their adaptation complicated (Ju et al., 2016). Hence, definitely, there is a relation between the use of host digital mass media and the adaptation of international students. The role of this project is to test one more time this relation and to provide straight and reliable findings. Consequently, the following assumption was made:

H2: There is a positive relation between the international students' use of Digital Mass Media from the host country and the students' adaptation to a new environment.

Similarly, the global international digital mass media is a tool that could influence the behavior on a person that is abroad. Recently, globalization became a widely used term when explaining the international information flow nowadays. With globalization, internet news, sports, and entertainment sites became more accessible than ever. Now is easier than ever to follow even the local events on international media channels such as BBC or DW. In this kind of environment, international students face an opportunity to use a wide range of digital platforms with the help of which to adjust better to the new country or just to make their life easier with the obtained

information. By using only one device, it is possible for them not only to make their communications more interactive and diverse but also to consume essential news information from the home country, the host country, and the global mainstream (Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017). Additionally, the process of globalization helps for the creation of people's new identity, which is beyond their geographical and national boundaries (Gomes, Berry, Alzougool & Chang, 2014). This new identity could be the base of the foundation of a smooth and easy adjustment period when someone is living in a new environment. In their research, Wanta, Golan, and Lee (2004) claim that international mass media channels are responsible for shaping the public opinion of their consumers. By sharing almost 40% of the news content, international news sources have a significant implication in the people's daily life and, respectively, effect on their mood. Most of the international mass media consumers, consequently, form positive feelings and perceptions towards the objects of the shared news (Wanta et al., 2004), which, logically, can lead to a positive adaptation process. Furthermore, in his study, Mahtani (2008) points out that people who are currently living in a foreign country would like to use international mass media source in which they can see their own ethnic, cultural and racial values that create their identity. Moreover, the Internet helps international students to find what they need for accomplishing their assignments, projects, and education. Studies have proven the positive effect of the Internet when used as a mass media on the socio-cultural and psychological comfort and prosperity of international students (Lin et al., 2011). However, most of the available literature looks at the digital mass media and the Internet only as a source of information for newcomers and have hardly touched upon the effect that they have on the adjustment process (Chen, 2010). Nevertheless, based on the assumption that international students consume international mass media mostly for entertainment (Lin et al., 2011) and to fill in gaps related to their study, the following relationship was predicted:

H3: There is a positive relation between the international students' use of global and international Digital Mass Media and the students' adaptation to a new environment.

2.3 Social Media

On the other hand, the social media is viewed as a mobile or web-based mechanization that consists of two-way communicative platforms through which people and groups of people can easily distribute, generate, and comment different types of information (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). Simplified with the process of digitalization and the explosion of smartphones' availability which brought Internet access everywhere and at any time, the communication through social media platforms made the passive consumers and Internet users proactive and enthusiastic

participants of the process of creating and sharing information online. With social media, people are no longer only an "audience", bystanders and consumers of information, but active users who create, share, and circulate their own or adventitious online content (Zhao, 2016). Examples of social media tools are programs such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Viber, and Skype. With the great variety of different social network sites that were launched after 2002, the use of these applications became a global phenomenon (Boyd & Ellison, 2010). This phenomenon gave to people communication opportunities that were completely unfamiliar to the public at this moment (Boyd & Ellison, 2010). The new technologies such as smartphones and tablets, together with all these innovative social platforms shaped the basics for building a completely new world of communication, where the interaction among people is easier, faster, more reliable and trustworthy. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasize how social media became what we all know it today. According to them, the creation and evolution of the web blogs at the end of the last century is the reason why we have such a diversity of social media platforms today. With the improvement of the accuracy and speed of the Internet, later on, the concept of sharing information online became more popular and put the bases of the social network sites such as Facebook and MySpace (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In their further analysis, they describe social media as a bi-dimensional phenomenon combining social presence and media richness. This statement at great extent describes the notion of social media. Its main purpose should be to remain social and to provide appropriate conditions for enriching people's culture and communications. Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2010), on the other hand, investigate the role of social media in the educational process of the students. The findings of their research proved the growing significance of the Internet and, in particular, social media platforms for the students' better performance in the university. By using Twitter and other platforms in educationally relevant ways the students became more engaged and their grades increased (Junco et al., 2010). Considering the fact that education is the main reason for international students to be in the foreign country, the positive development of their study would be one of the strongest assistants for a better adaptation in the new place. Therefore, in this study, there is a proof for the direct impact of the Internet and social media platforms' usage on the process of education and indirect impact on the process of adaptation of international students. Other studies have proven the significance of social media in academic assignments. It has been noted that there are many different ways for international students to implement social media in different discussions, by sharing their ideas with other peers and maintaining academically relevant discussions (Zhao, 2016). Another important role of social media is related to its effect on several dimensions of the everyday life of international students, including the searching of information, transnational connections and socio-cultural integration (Zhao, 2016). Except for the educational relevance of the Internet and social media, Sin and Kim (2013) suggest that information seeking is another main reason for using

electronic services. Zhao (2016) claims that many international students use Facebook as a reliable source for "social and political events". One possible explanation could be related to the possibility that social media gives to personalize the content showing in everyone's personal page. Seeking and reading information for the themes that relate only to what one is interested in attracts everyone who doesn't need redundant information that could serve as a distraction. A great example of this kind of individuals is international students. There have been many studies about the role of social media in the socio-cultural integration of the people. Gomes (2015) implies that social media platforms provide a unique opportunity for international students to fit into a new society by using a variety of tools provided by each platform. Consequently, by using these opportunities, the international students increase their chances for a better integration and thus, release the stress levels and the feelings of loneliness (Zhao, 2016), which again directly could affect the process of adaptation. Also, social media is a protagonist in creating and maintaining transnational connections (Hall & Sivakumaran, 2014). Different authors imply that one of the main purposes of social media is exactly building and cultivating connections from different countries, which would be difficult to control otherwise.

In today's digitalized world social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are a great example of channels that provide opportunities for maintaining the relationship with individuals who are already present in people's offline social circle (Ju et al., 2016). Therefore, social media is one of the easiest and most convenient methods for international students to communicate with their friends and family who are living back in the students' home country. Another study confirmed that the strongest motivation and the biggest reason for international students to use social media is to communicate with co-nationals, including friends and family (Hall & Sivakumaran, 2014). Zhao (2016) supports that claim by asserting that by doing this, the international students create "imaginary bonds with their homelands". Studies, however, have shown that the interaction with individuals from their own country (co-nationals) have a different impact on the international students' adaptation process (Rui & Wang, 2015). On one hand, co-nationals are able to provide psychological comfort and emotional assistance to the international students and, thus, to reduce the anxiety and the stress levels. With all new video and non-verbal features, digital technology provides people a type of communication that creates intimacy and shared mutual experiences with a stronger sense of connectedness (Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017). On the other hand, home connections are not aware of the host environment, culture and people's behavior. Thus, communicating with co-nationals may decrease the students' assurance in recognizing the local values and predicting the local's behavior (Rui & Wang, 2015). Moreover, spending too much time communicating with co-nationals significantly decreases the chances for international students to interact with host nationals and, thus, to adapt better. Bierwiaczonek and Waldzus (2016) also

acknowledge the possible double role of the communication of international students with their family and friends from the home country. Their young age and supposed temporary stay in the host country make them less likely to live in the new country with their family. Consequently, the family and friends provide social support remotely in order to facilitate the students' acclimatization (Bierwiaczonek & Waldzus, 2016). There are studies, however, which claim that the greater the amount of family care a student receives during his or her stay while abroad, the greater the acclimatization difficulties for a student in the host country are (Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017). With their findings in this track, Hofhuis, Hanke, and Rutten (2019) confirm that the more contacts with home relations through social network sites the students create, the more loneliness and homesickness they will experience. Another important fact is that co-nationals, generally, don't have enough information about the environment in which the student is currently living (Rui & Wang, 2015). That means that even knowing and sharing something that could be helpful for improving the student's adaptation process, there is a big probability for the dissemination of misleading information and biased knowledge (Rui & Wang, 2015). Moreover, communication with co-nationals is always virtual, either through a chat and audio/video calls or via emails. The virtual form of communication can't guarantee the same experience as the real face to face communication with people around you can. The digital technologies, thus, could barely replace the real-world interaction (Zhao, 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formed:

H4: There is a negative relation between international students' Social Media usage to connect with co-nationals and the students' adaptation to a new environment.

Interpersonal host communication is essential because it brings the students valuable information related to the host culture, and convenience to create new relationships and, therefore, a sense of acceptance and attachment (Ju et al., 2016). The communication with host-nationals could be, to some extent, stressful for international students, especially for those who are not familiar with the host culture and don't master the local language (Rui & Wang, 2015). However, the digital media could help these people by providing anonymity, excluding the necessity of physical contact, by adjusting the tempo of communication and interaction, and by allowing the newcomers to use both, text and images in their communication messages (Ju et al., 2016). Broadly speaking, social media platforms provide less stressful and more pleasant interpersonal communication climate for international students (Ju et al., 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Besides, social network sites can be extremely helpful for international students to strengthen their relationships with people from their course, the university, and the host country in general (Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017; Hofhuis et al., 2019). In addition, from the first year in universities, many of the students start being members of

social groups in popular social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, where a considerable part of the community is composed of students from the country that they currently inhabit (Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017). With opportunities like these, the students feel more accepted and comfortable in a foreign country. Zhao (2016) points out that, recently, educational institutions have difficulties in sharing information to their students. Therefore, social media platforms have become the perfect tool for helping universities to reach their students on one hand, and for students to find the information they need for their study, on the other hand (Zhao, 2016). In addition, there are studies which have proven that the more time the international students are living in the foreign country, the bigger is the probability for them to use social media in relation to host nationals and to reach information from the host country (Chang et al., 2012). The authors of this research found out that using social media platforms to connect with host nationals is considerably helpful for international students in the moment of loneliness. Especially in the first months of their residence there are several models of loneliness, including personal loneliness because of the missing family, as well as social loneliness and cultural loneliness, caused by the lack of appropriate cultural and linguistic environment (Chang et al., 2012). After conducting around 200 interviews with international students, the authors revealed that two-thirds of this group tackle all kinds of loneliness by communicating with host nationals through social media. Thus, the following allegation was predicted:

H5: There is a positive relation between international students' social media usage to connect with host-nationals and the students' adaptation to a new environment.

However, communication with host-nationals and local people is sometimes quite not easy, especially in terms of language. In many cases, the representatives of a particular nation don't speak English at a level that is good enough for having free and constructive communication. Assuming only that most of the educational programs abroad are conducted in English, it is quite important for international students to interact with people from other countries who speak English fluently and thus, to improve their adaptation process. Findings infer that international students form social communities that are not necessarily composed of fellows from their own country. Alternatively, they form a mix of social networks from different cultures, religions, and identities (Gomes et al., 2014). Chang et al. (2012) suggest that while abroad, some of the international students count on social media platforms such as Facebook to read international news and communicate with students from other countries as well. Zhao (2016) adds that among the different norms about social media, it is extensively accepted by international students as a tool for maintaining relationships with people from various nationalities. Undoubtedly, universities are places with people from many different

places and cultures. However, all of them face identical problems and rely on similar means for tackling the existing difficulties. Besides the fact that all of them don't speak on their mother tongue, they must handle numerous social and economic obstacles, new bureaucratic system, the behavior of the local residents and the loneliness that is a natural effect of their home's abandonment (Rosenthal, Russell & Thomson, 2006). Logically, most of the international students communicate with people who share identical troubles and conditions. They create some kind of an inner community in which they feel safe and understood by sharing identical problems with others in the group (Zhao, 2016). Specifically, there are numerous groups in Social Media platforms with members from all over the world who can, at any time, share a valuable experience that can be helpful to the international students (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Moreover, these interactions contribute to the easier and flawless formation of the students' identity, which is one of the most important aspects in their sojourn (Bierwiaczonek, Waldzus & Zee, 2017). To sum it all up, the international students' social media usage to connect with other internationals align to a great extent with the purpose of social media, stated by its foundation two decades ago, that its mission is to create transnational connections among people which can bring value and meaning to their communication (Boyd & Ellison, 2010). Social Media communication with other internationals, for international students is an interaction with people with a similar background. Therefore, the assumption that these relationships will cause positive consequences on the students' behavior suggests the following hypothesis:

H6: There is a positive relation between international students' global communication through Social Media and the students' adaptation to a new environment.

2.4 Individualism and Collectivism

In this section, a previous theory about the cultural dimension "individualism/collectivism" in relation to international students and their process of adaptation is discussed. Subsequently, the relevant connection with the current research is made in order to form the corresponding hypotheses.

Among the six dimensions of cultural differences determined by prof. Hofstede (Hofstede, 2011), the individualism versus collectivism dimension seems to be most suitable for testing to what extent it affects the adaptation process of international students. The main reason for this is the fact that individualism and collectivism are mostly related to understanding the variation in people's level of development and thus, to their adjusting behavior (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012). The differences between the two types of cultural norms in people's behavior and character can significantly influence their actions and adaptiveness. The individualism, on one hand, suggests that

everyone is expected to provide care only to him- or herself and his- or her most close people such as family and relatives. It is expressed as a cultural model, highlighting individual freedom and sovereignty. The collectivism, on another hand, indicates that individuals are born into expanded cliques and societies which look after them in exchange for devotion and loyalty. The collectivistic cultures, generally, indicate a social model of keenly connected individuals who identify themselves as autonomous representatives of a group (Lin et al., 2011). Most of the available literature and scientific projects describe this cultural dimension in a similar way. The people who define themselves as individualists have "I" – consciousness and strive for personal achievements; they have private thoughts and actions independent and different from others; take care of themselves and close relatives only; they have a strong identity, know their weaknesses and strengths and use all of this to pursue a win at any cost, and, last but not least, their managed tasks prevail the existing relationships (Shulruf, Hattie & Dixon, 2003; Darwish & Huber, 2003; Hofstede, 2011; Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012). On the contrary, the people who are collectivists have "we" – consciousness and discourage individuals to stand out. They accentuate on the loyalty to the group to which they belong and, respectively, the group thoughts and decisions are predominant and at a higher rank than the individual ones. They focus on hierarchy and tend to change themselves based on the exact situation for the good of the group, and also, their relationships exceed the personal engagements (Shulruf, et al., 2003; Darwish & Huber, 2003; Hofstede, 2011; Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012).

The culture characteristics of individuals are highly important elements which inevitably and naturally influence one's behavior. Moreover, these characteristics can give different directions of one's actions and, consequently, form his/her life in a certain way. The consequences of these undertaken actions sometimes can be of a great significance. Even though prof. Hofstede first developed the cultural characteristics of people and respectively nations in a modern study-scale (Hofstede, 2011), the conception of individualism and collectivism has a long history which can be traced to the time of ancient Greece (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998). In their book *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*., Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) describe how do the cultural characteristics form and develop in a human being. According to them, everyone brings within him- or herself programmed models of thinking, behaviors, and feelings that have been acquired throughout the person's life. The origin of these models lays in the different social layers which compose the environment everyone inhabits. The programming, of course, begins with the family and the social norms that it delivers to the children. The neighborhood and the groups with friends are other sources of cultural education. Furthermore, the school, where people spend most of their time in a period when they form their characters is another main contributor to the formation of the social and cultural basis. Last but not least, the workplace and the living community initiate the perception of cultural norms that are the fundamentals of people's behavior, attitudes

and mental state (Hofstede et al., 2010). Based on all this, it can be concluded that people are inevitably connected with the cultural norms which they have adopted from the different experiences in their lifetime. However, even though it seems that people are dependent on those norms, and their cultural characteristics are, to some extent, unchangeable, everyone has the potential to diverge from those culture patterns and choose the way he or she reacts to the surrounding environment (Hofstede et al., 2010). Consequently, different studies emphasize the importance of these choices and, specifically, how the cultural characteristics of individuals impact various major aspects of life, such as economics, the intention to save, innovations, pregnancy choices, investments, charity decisions, and others (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012). Considering the fact that all these aspects are part of the current and mainly future experiences of international students, it turns out that it is highly important to investigate how the culture characteristics, more specifically, collectivism and individualism, affect the students' behavior, attitudes, and actions not only with relation to their adaptation but also regarding their future commitment to all these aspects of life.

Even though the collectivist/individualist characteristics have been explored as a guideline for different recommendations for intercultural mediation (Darwish & Huber, 2003), there is not enough information about the impact of individualism/collectivism on the relation between Social and Mass Media usage and the process of adaptation of international students. The scarcity of findings related to the relationship "individualism/collectivism – international students" indicates the necessity of doing the research in this project, in order to improve the understanding of the topic and mainly to reveal what is the role of the culture characteristics in forming the relation between digital media usage and the adaptation of international students. Rosen, Stefanone, and Lackaff (2010) point out that the country of origin and, more specifically, the international students' home country's culture is a potential component that can impact their adaptation. Moreover, the cultural norms of the host country are also an element at high importance for their adjustment (Rosen et al., 2010). Considering the fact that digital media is a significant part of international students' daily routines and that the adaptation depends not only on the surrounding conditions but also on people's individual approach and their personality traits, it is logical to conclude that the culture characteristics influence both, the digital media usage and the process of adaptation, and most importantly, have moderating effect on the relationship between these two variables.

A considerable dispute about the Hofstede's scale for measuring individualism versus collectivism is the fact that the assessment is on the country level rather than on a personal level (Shulruf, et al., 2003). His findings are based on study executed in 76 countries (Hofstede, 2011) and the results compare countries, which indicate that people in these countries are perceived as homologous (Shulruf, et al., 2003). To consider the heterogeneity in countries' representatives, this

project uses a scale that measures the individualism vs collectivism on an individual, rather than on a country level (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998), in order the research to reveal valid and credible results.

Sawyer and Chen (2012) infer that the differences in individualistic and collectivistic cultures are crucial when people communicate and behave in a certain way. The Hofstede's individualism vs collectivism dimension assumes that based on the cultural characteristics of individuals, there are "patterns of thinking, feeling and acting" that can model people's behavior in a certain way and steer it in a given direction (Wilson, 2011). In parallel to this, the relationships summarized in hypotheses 1 to 6 are more or less moderated by the individualistic and collectivistic traits of the person. Studies have confirmed that due to the individuals' cultural characteristics there are differences in the way people use social network platforms for communication (Sawyer & Chen, 2012). All in all, individualism and collectivism dimension relate to the level of which individuals are involved in groups and how they communicate with these groups.

On one hand, people with low individualism score (collectivists) aim to maintain contacts with family, close friends, and relatives, rather than to create new contacts with others (Sawyer & Chen, 2012). In these cultures, people have developed strong and loyal connections not only with their initial family but also with representatives of their extended family, such as aunts, grandparents, cousins, and uncles. These relatives keep in touch and protect each other in exchange for unconditional loyalty (Hofstede, 2011). This type of communication between the members of society makes them value less the importance of freedom. Unlike the individualistic approach, which assumes that the freedom provides settings for achieving self-achievements, in collectivistic societies the individuals' freedom is taken as a danger to the harmony inside the groups (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012). Moreover, Gorodnichenko and Roland (2012) infer that in collectivistic societies, the geographical mobility is not a frequent phenomenon and when it happens, the individuals keep strong relationships by trying to help each other with all possible means. Similarly, Darwish and Huber (2003) imply for the representatives of collectivistic societies that they demonstrate not only loyalty and devotion to the group but also an indisputable emotional dependence on their groups. That can be easily referred to the situation in which a collectivistic person is far from the home and he or she remains strongly attached to his/her friends and family at home, as well as to all habits and activities from his/her home daily routine. Furthermore, people with collectivistic characteristics tend to make fewer friends than those with individualistic traits (Darwish & Huber, 2003). Often, they prefer to rely only on already existing friendships, especially on the closest friends, relatives, and family. Shulruf et al. (2003) analyze the so-called "familial" domain and conclude that it is widely associated with collectivistic societies. It guides people to use an indirect style of communication, by which one tries to keep harmony in the relationships even at the cost of restrained emotions and desires. In such cases, the collectivists treat the relationships in the same way as those in their family

or closed groups. By the same token, the authors emphasize the emotional connectedness which collectivists demonstrate. In addition, the study talks about the decision-making process. Most of the time, collectivists prefer to consult with friends, relatives or other representatives of the group to which the individual belongs, before taking a decision. Considering the fact that the international students are bounded with many obligations and different decision-demanding situations, there is a strong reasoning to predict that this is one more reason for them to preserve the relationship with the home country both, by communicating with friends, family, and close groups, and by using home digital mass media. Considering the findings from the exposed literature, the following two hypotheses were formed:

H7.1.: Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between the usage of Digital Mass Media from the home country and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores low on individualism, the relationship is stronger.

H7.2.: Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between Social media usage to connect with co-nationals and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores low on individualism, the relationship is stronger.

On the other hand, people with high individualism score (individualists), communicate with a high number of individuals and want to be seen by the others, rather than to cultivate their already existing social network. Individualistic cultures maintain very loose ties between individuals (Hofstede, 2011). Consequently, everyone in this kind of societies is expected to take care of himself/herself. Another feature of the individualism dimension is the expected and shared personal opinion on every occasion (Hofstede, 2011). When growing in such a culture, the individuals have learned how to express themselves, their opinions and desires, and how to be independent and to rely mainly on themselves. As opposed to the collectivistic societies, here the responsibilities prevail over relationships. Nevertheless, in their study, Sawyer and Chen (2012) claim that in relation to social and digital media usage, individualistic people aim, not only to be seen by as many people as possible but also to meet new people and make new friends. Moreover, Darwish and Huber (2003) have found firm ascertainments in this aspect after investigating more than 500 participants. The results from their research imply that individualistic societies are allied to several cultural characteristics, including low interest in in-group activities and issues, mental distance from the group people usually belong to, self-confidence with competition, and others. As opposed to collectivists, individualists can make friends easier and without much efforts, they have better approach when entering new societies, communicate more flexibly and effectively with people from

new social groups, and feel free to shift between different societies (Darwish & Huber, 2003). The reason behind contacting people from the new place someone is inhabiting, or behind the usage of digital mass media from the new country, is related to the desire for learning new information and experiences that will put the person in a better position and to stand out. The motivation to stick out is a primary goal to individualists and to achieve it, they don't hesitate to put themselves out of their comfort zone and to communicate with new people from different societies (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012). Similarly, the consumption of international digital mass media and the relationships with other internationals followed by quick and successful adaptation process seems to be directly affected by the cultural characteristics of individuals and, particularly, dependent on their individualism score (Sawyer & Chen, 2012). Moreover, very often, being in a new country and communicating with people from different cultures is widely perceived as a risk or experiment. Individualistic societies are much more likely to undertake experiments or take risks when it is about the individual's own decision or way of life (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012; Wilson, 2011). Similarly, the movement to a completely new environment, exploring new territories and taking exciting adventures, or the so-called geographical mobility, are activities which can be referred to the risks and experiments. It is proven that the geographical mobility is higher in an individualistic society, where the people tend to explore the new territories by taking extrovert and expressive communicative decisions, often related to the locals (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012). Last but not least, in their book *Cultures and Organizations* (2010), Hofstede et al. conceptualize the attitude of individualistic people towards their initial groups such as family and friends after leaving their home. According to them, people with individualistic characteristics weaken the connection with their family and most close friends from the home country and, very often, end the relationships with them completely. Considering the consequences of these actions, the individualists who are in a foreign country, put their efforts in communicating with people with similar destiny as internationals, and with local people who can be useful to them for facilitating the process of adaptation.

Eventually, it is expected that for international students with individualistic traits, the effects on the relation between digital media usage and the process of adaptation are stronger compared to those with collectivistic traits. Based on the above mentioned:

H7.3.: Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between the usage of Digital Mass Media from the host country and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores high on individualism, the relationship is stronger.

H7.4.: Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between Social Media usage to connect with host-nationals and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores high on individualism, the relationship is stronger.

H7.5.: Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between the usage of global and international Digital Mass Media and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores high on individualism, the relationship is stronger.

H7.6.: Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between global communication through Social Media and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores high on individualism, the relationship is stronger

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Figure 1. Conceptual model for Individualism/collectivism as moderator of the relationship between Digital mass media and Social media use and Adaptation.
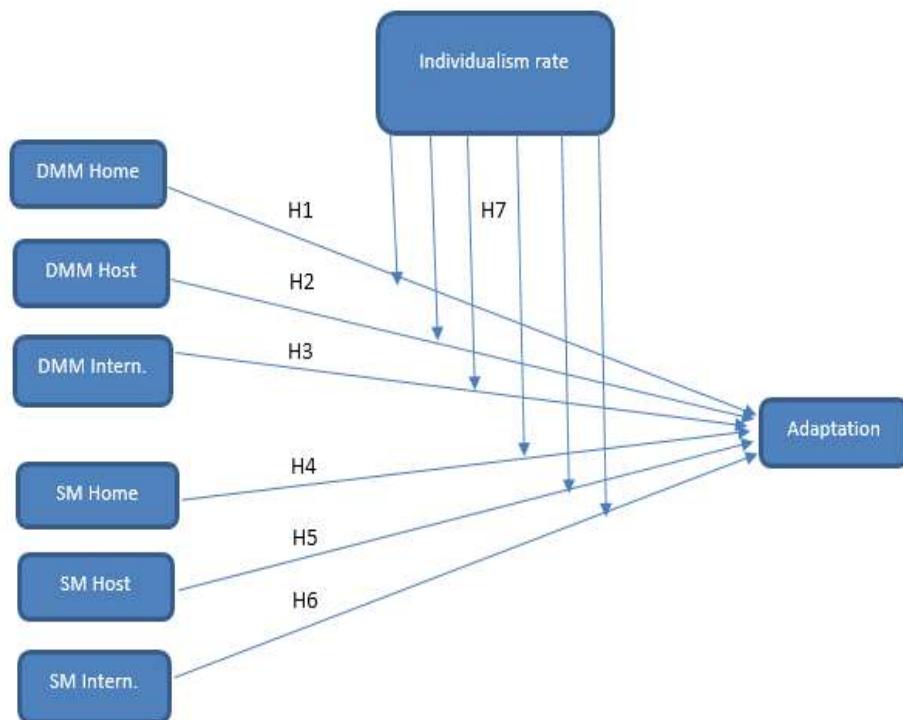
3. Methodology

3.1 Design

The aim of this research was to examine the effect digital media usage has on the process of adaptation, and how the relationship between these two variables is influenced by the individuals' individualism/collectivism. To be capable of efficiently examining this and give an answer to the research question "*How does digital media usage affect the adaptation of international students and what is the moderating role of the individualism and collectivism characteristics?",* and to test the applied hypotheses, a quantitative method in the form of a classic survey research was conducted by testing a prediction model. First and foremost, the survey research is one of the best methods available to a researcher who is concerned with collecting original data for describing a sample that is too large to be analyzed directly (Babbie, 2011). The formulated research question can be answered through a statistical analysis and it is possible to generalize from the obtained data, thus, a quantitative approach is more suitable for this research (Mathews & Ross, 2010). Moreover, surveys are most often used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory goals and are used in studies that have individuals as elements of research. Besides, by disseminating the questionnaire, the respondents were able to take part in this study, regardless of geographical location (Babbie, 2011). In addition, the project aimed to find traits that were stated and formulated beforehand, the process had already fixed strategy and the researcher knew what is investigated (Mathews & Ross, 2010). Therefore, the study aligns with the characteristics of quantitative research methods. Thus, quantitative analysis with survey research seems to be the most appropriate method for answering this research question.

3.2 Sample

The sampling frame of the survey allowed a certain type of target population to be included. Considering the fact that the research aims to analyze the adaptation process of international students, only representatives of this sample category were examined as units of analysis. To be more specific, the approximate number of 150 - 200 respondents was taken as a sufficient sample size. The questionnaire was designed with the online software Qualtrics and the obtained results were analyzed by SPSS. The survey was conducted with the use of a convenience random sampling with Bachelor, Ph.D., Master, and Pre-master international students, living in a foreign country. The study took place in May 2019 and had a target to gather respondents aged between 18 and 35. Firstly, the survey consisted of 196 respondents in total. After finishing the process of data collection, the questionnaire was revised and participants who don't fit the criteria to be current

students in a foreign country were screened out. 30 participants were deleted, resulting in a sample of 166. Moreover, there were 15 respondents who had not answered all the questions. In order to avoid ambivalent results in further analyses, these respondents were screened out as well. Consequently, the final sample consisted of 151 respondents. Finally, the revised data was directly downloaded from Qualtrics without any invalid entries and transformed for immediate work with SPSS.

The majority of International students who filled out the survey (N = 151) were females (66%), whereas 34% were males. The age range of the sample was between 19 and 36, whereas the majority of respondents (61%) were between 22 and 25 years old. The sample had respondents from 46 different nationalities. Most of them had Bulgarian nationality (21%), followed by Germans with 11% and Greeks - 7%. In comparison, 19 countries were in the list with countries that the students currently reside in. The country which the participants in the survey mostly reside in was Netherlands (64%), followed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with 10%. 8% of them were currently inhabiting Germany. The answers of the question "How long have you been living there" (host country), which is used as a control variable in this study, showed that most of the students (39%) have been in their current country from exactly one year. 16% have lived in the host country for about two years and 13% of them – four years (Appendix A). Logically, corresponding to the time that most of the participants have spent in the host country, the level of education that most of them were currently completing was master's degree with 70% of respondents. 25% of the students were persuading a bachelor's degree, 1% Doctoral Degree and 3% other (Appendix B).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents (N = 151)

Variable	Value	Count	Percent
Gender	Male	51	33.8 %
	Female	100	66.2 %
Education	University (Bachelor or equivalent)	38	25.2 %
	University (Master or equivalent)	106	70.2 %
	University (Doctoral or equivalent)	2	1.3 %
	Other	5	3.3 %
Home country	Bulgaria	32	21.2 %
	Germany	16	10.6 %
	Greece	11	7.3 %

	Other	92	60.9 %
Host country	Netherlands	96	63.6 %
	United Kingdom	15	9.9 %
	Germany	12	7.9 %
	Other	28	18.6 %
Proficiency in English	Elementary proficiency	1	0.7 %
	Limited working proficiency	6	4.0 %
	Professional working proficiency	30	19.9 %
	Full professional proficiency	70	46.4 %
	Native or bilingual proficiency	44	29.1 %
Age	19 – 21	23	15 %
	22 – 55	92	61 %
	26 – 36	36	24 %

	Range	Mean	SD
Stay in host country	18	2.54	2.13

3.3 Procedure

The survey's conceptual model consisted of three dimensions. First, the usage of digital media represents the independent variable in the model. It was created to be divided into two independent variables with three dimensions each. On one hand, the use of social media platforms was analyzed based on home, host and international usage. On the other hand, the operation with digital mass media (internet news, sports, and entertainment sites) was tested based again on home, host and international type of usage. Second, the adaptation process of international students refers to the dependent variable in the research. Finally, the moderating effect of collectivism and individualism was tested.

By creating a questionnaire as an instrument that was designed to extract information that is useful for the analysis, the connection between the independent and the dependent variables was tested, together with the moderating effect of the individualism and collectivism characteristics on this connection. The questionnaire itself contained 74 questions, divided into different categories. All questions were mandatory and phrased to avoid mistakes and language barrier difficulties. Most of

the questions were framed in Likert scales in order to provide results which are easier to estimate and test. For more details, see Appendix C.

The first lines visible after opening the link of the survey were intended to show gratitude of the respondents' participation, followed by a short description of the questionnaire's goal. Afterward, the time needed to fill in the study was mentioned and an email for feedback or questions was exposed. After that, a clear consent form was applied, together with assurance for confidentiality and anonymity. The participants needed to agree with the consent form in order to proceed with the questionnaire. Next, the participators were asked if they are currently students living in a foreign country. If some of them gave a negative answer, he or she was directed to the end of the survey. The aim of this question was to sift out the respondents who do not fit the requirements of the study. This question was purposely applied at the beginning of the questionnaire, in order to give the participants well-adjusted and adequate experience in the project.

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to assess the adaptation level of the respondents with the use of a specific Adaptation Scale that consists of twenty questions (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). The scale was divided into two sections with ten questions each. The first section measured the socio-cultural adaptation of participants, whereas the second one intended to test the psychological adaptation of the international students. The results from the scales, taken together, gave an overall assessment of the level of adaptation to the new environment of the participants.

The second part of the survey was designed to estimate the respondents' cultural characteristics, more specifically, their individualism and collectivism level with the use of a Culture Orientation 16-item Scale (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998). The items were mixed up and after completion, the dimension's items were calculated to create a final collectivism vs individualism score.

The third part of the questionnaire examined the social media and digital mass media usage with the host country, home country and another country, different than the other two. First, it was asked about an estimation of the frequency of total usage of social media and digital mass media for any purposes. In the question about social media consumption, the participants were exposed to a matrix with 13 different social media platforms and they were supposed to indicate how often, in general, they use any of them. There was also an option to show that the platforms are not used at all. The same question was applied about the overall digital mass media usage, with a matrix consisting of eight different mass media channels. Afterward, there were also two questions about how often the students spend time generally in social media platforms and using digital mass media. These four questions played the role of introduction to the following sections in which was intended to test the social media and digital mass media usage with home, host and other countries.

Fourth and last part of the survey asked about general demographic questions such as age, level of education, country of origin, and country of current residence. Due to the difference in the amount of time that the respondents have spent in the host country before filling in the survey, the estimated adaptation could vary and therefore the study would not produce reliable results. To tackle this problem, a question related to the period of time they have spent in the host country was applied and this segment was used as a control variable. Moreover, another potential problem with estimating the adaptation level of the respondents is countries differences (Germany and Netherlands are more similar than India and Netherlands) which should have been taken into consideration in the later analysis, since inaccurate results can be otherwise produced.

Presumably, the surveys are solid on reliability, by asking people the same questions with the aim to obtain similar kind of information every time they are applied (Babbie, 2011). Except following this rule, the questions from this questionnaire were carefully structured with precise wording construction (Babbie, 2011), in order for the reliability of the study to be guaranteed. Moreover, the sample of the study was formed by representatives of as many different countries as possible. Thus, the diversity of the sample was assured, and the issue related to the cultural similarity of the students' countries of origin was tackled. Furthermore, with the aim the validity of the research to be ensured, the survey consisted of questions related entirely to the three dimensions of the conceptual model – digital media, adaptation, and collectivism vs individualism. Moreover, to define the level of adaptation, a particular Adaptation Scale (Demes & Geeraert, 2014) was used and to determine the individualism/collectivism characteristics, a Culture Orientation Scale (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998) was applied. Thus, to a great extent, the validity of the survey research was ensured (Babbie, 2011).

3.3.1 Data collection

Both online and offline methods were employed in order to collect the data. When it was used with an online approach, the survey was distributed via different social media platforms, through emails or direct instant messages platforms and various social media application, such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. In order the sufficient number of respondents to be reached, different steps were taken, such as inspecting a variety of Facebook students' groups and looking in different internet international students' blogs. These sources of information provided a diverse sample with respondents having different characteristics and demographics. In the online method for gathering responses a personal message, together with the link for the survey was sent. The message contained a short description of the survey's goal and information about the researcher with a request for cooperation. Even though it is a widely used method for gathering participants, there was not a demand for a further spread of the questionnaire, in order to avoid a snowball effect. One of the reasons for using these channels is the cost of the research. Considered also as an advantage, by

producing a comparable response rate, the price of an online survey is considerably lower than that of a conventional mail survey (Babbie, 2011). The offline approach began with selecting students on the campus of Erasmus University Rotterdam personally, by asking them if they are International students and whether they are willing to participate in this research. In the further process, the offline and online approaches merged when the selected International students scanned a QR code which directly gave them the survey on their smartphones' screens. In a case in which the participant was not able to scan the QR code, a link with the survey was sent to him or her later the same day. The main criteria for participating in this research was the respondents to be current students, who live in a country different than their home country.

3.4 Measures

In order to clarify the research question and examine the predictions made by creating the hypotheses, the variables were structured in various item scales. All scales in the study have been modified to 7-point Likert scale for coherence and to facilitate further analysis.

3.4.1 Pre-Test

The online survey was created with the help of the online software Qualtrics.com. In order to make the survey clear and flawless, a test-questionnaire was sent out to four respondents who had different countries of origin, age, and cultural characteristics. The aim of the test-questionnaire was to test the survey for mistakes and to check whether the respondents have a clear view of the questions. Thus, some of the participants were not international students, in order to expand the standpoints on which the survey is tested. The subsequent feedback turned out to be valuable and very applicable, as it made the questionnaire more understandable and straightforward. The shared evaluation led to changes in several questions that were implemented immediately. The improved version of the questionnaire was disseminated at the beginning of May 2019.

3.4.2 Adaptation level

The goal of this study was to assess the adaptation level of International students based on social and digital mass media usage. In order to do so, the level of adaptation was measured through a validated Adaptation scale (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). The reliability of the scale, consisting of items of both, psychological adaptation, and socio-cultural adaptation, has been guaranteed in two different samples (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). The possible answers to the items in the 7-point Likert scale ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for psychological adaptation, and from "extremely dissatisfied" to "extremely satisfied" for the items about socio-cultural adaptation. The

participants were asked to personally assess items such as: *Excited about being in the country in which I am studying; Sad to be away from my home country* and to measure how adapted they feel about the conditions in the host country in items such as: *Climate (temperature, rainfall, humidity); Natural environment (plants and animals, pollution, scenery).* Five out of twenty items in the Adaptation scale were reversed in order the scale to assess the items in one direction. Consequently, the reliability test showed that the scale is reliable with Cronbach's alpha α = .86 (Appendix D).

3.4.3 Individualism and Collectivism.

As it was already described and clarified in the previous chapter, the individual's cultural characteristics are a weighty influencer of his or her behavior and attitudes. In order to measure the level of individualism and collectivism of the participants in this study, a specific Culture Orientation scale was adopted (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998). The authors have mentioned the importance of implementing the multimethod assessment, including beliefs items, assessment of the social status of the self, measuring the social distance, and others. The scale was designed to assess the individualism/collectivism traits by using sixteen items, eight individualistic and eight collectivistic statements, which were mixed and demanded answers in a 7-point Likert scale. The items were assessed as 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree and were in the form of a matrix table with sentences such *as I'd rather depend on myself than others; My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me,* etc. (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998). The sixteen questions were implemented in the questionnaire in order to cover the key dimensions of the assessment of individualism and collectivism, including *Family integrity; Sociability; Emotional distance from in-groups; Competition; Self-reliance and Interdependence* (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998). Moreover, the executed Culture Orientation scale considered also the varieties of individualism and collectivism by admitting that the most prominent aspects that differ among all kinds of the two culture dimensions are the corresponding values of vertical and horizontal social interactions (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998). Therefore, the sixteen questions in the scale comprised all the variations of the individualism and collectivism dimensions. Furthermore, the eight items that were considered "collectivistic" in the individualism/collectivism scale were reversed in order the scale to measure one individualism score. Consequently, the reliability test showed that the scale is barely reliable with Cronbach's alpha α = .59. Therefore, relying on the prediction "if item deleted" in SPSS, the item "*My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me*" was removed in order to improve the reliability of the scale. With fifteen remained items and after running reliability test once again, the individualism/collectivism scale turned out to be reliable with Cronbach's alpha α = .61 (Appendix D).

3.4.4 Social Media usage

The research is concentrated on the usage of social media in general, not on a limited amount of social media platforms. However, in order to measure which are the most used platforms among International students, the participants were given an introduction question regarding how often they use several social media platforms. On a scale from "never" to "every day", the students assessed 13 different platforms. The selection of the particular platforms was based on a list of social media platforms with most subscribed users, created by Wikipedia. In the further process, the respondents had to answer the essential question about the frequency of using social media platforms with both, people from the home country and connections native to the host country, and last but not least, with other internationals.: *How often, in general, do you spend time using Social Media platforms to communicate with people from your home country/host country/other internationals?*

3.4.5 Digital mass media usage

Similarly, the aim of the project was to measure the digital mass media in general, but not only several mass media channels. Nonetheless, there was also an introduction question to assess which type of digital mass media channels are used by International students mostly and how often. On a scale from "never" to "every day", the students evaluated eight different digital mass media channels. Furthermore, again, to the participants was shown the essential questions to evaluate their usage of digital mass media from the home and host country, and lastly, the usage of international digital mass media.: *How often, in general, do you spend time using Digital Mass Media (TV, News, Sports, etc.) from your home country/host country/global and international?*

3.4.6 Demographics

Participants were asked to answer questions about their demographics – level of education, nationality, country of current residence, age, and gender. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the time spent in the host country is a prominent factor that could influence the process of adaptation, therefore the data from the question "how long have you been living there" (in the host country) was added as a control variable. Detailed information about the demographic characteristics was already exposed.

3.4.7 Control variable

Miglietta and Tartaglia (2008) talk about the influence of the time spent in the host country on the process of adaptation. The length of stay is a prominent factor that could impact the attitude

towards the new environment, making the individual more adaptable (Miglietta & Tartaglia, 2008). Moreover, Sümer, Poyrazli, and Grahame (2008) confirm this assertion by proving that the longer an individual lives in the new environment, the more adjusted and better he feels. Thus, the data from the question "How long have you been living there (host country)" was added as a control variable in the model.

4. Results

The data of this study were analyzed by 12 linear multiple regression analyses in SPSS. In order to check how the use of social media and digital mass media influences the process of adaptation, six linear multiple regressions were conducted. Meanwhile, to test whether the relationships between the usage of social media platforms and digital mass media channels by international students and their adaptation in a new environment is moderated by the individualism and collectivism characteristics, the effect of variables' interaction in another six multiple moderation regression analyses was considered and analyzed. Tests for normality were conducted in order to check the distribution of the variables' data. The dependent variable "Adapt. level" and the moderator "Individualism rate" showed a perfect distribution of the data (Appendix E). The independent variables related to the usage of digital mass media to the home country, host country and international indicated normally distributed data. The other three independent variables – social media usage to connect with people from the home country, host country, and other internationals were with non-normal distribution, with most of the data concentrated in the right angle of the histograms (Appendix F). However, the histograms showed that there is enough variance of the data provided and the further analysis with the variables was considered possible.

4.1 Digital mass media usage and adaptation of international students

4.1.1 Digital mass media from the home country

A linear regression analysis with the adaptation level of International students as criterium and frequency of using Digital mass media from the home country as a predictor was conducted. The regression model was not found to be significant (R^2 = .002, F (1, 149) = .26, p = .614). Thus, the usage of Digital mass media from the home country had negative but not significant influence on the level of adaptation of International students ($b*$ = -.04, p = .614). Based on the multiple regression model from the control variable *How long living in the host country,* the model showed insignificance (R^2 = .002, F (2, 148) = .15, p = .865). The usage of Digital mass media from the home country, after controlling for the control variable, had a negative but insignificant effect on the level of adaptation of international students ($b*$ = -.04, p = .608). The control variable *How long living in the host country* ($b*$ = -.02, p = .850) also had no influence on the adaptation process, whereas it showed a negative correlation with the model's criterium *level of adaptation.* Therefore, H1, *"There is a negative relation between the international students' use of Digital Mass Media from the home country and the students' adaptation to a new environment."*, was rejected.

4.1.2 Digital mass media from the host country

In a similar manner, a linear regression analysis with the adaptation level of International students as criterium and frequency of using Digital mass media from the host country as a predictor was conducted. The regression model was not found to be significant (R^2 = .002, F (1, 149) = .28, p = .601). Thus, the usage of Digital mass media from the host country had no significant influence on the level of adaptation of International students (b^* = .04, p = .601). Based on the multiple regression model from the control variable *How long living in the host country,* the model showed insignificance (R^2 = .002, F (2, 148) = .16, p = .853).

Table 2: *Summary of linear regression analysis for H2 with adaptation level as dependent variable (N = 151)*

Variable	B	S.E.	b*	t	p
Digital mass Media Host	.02	.03	.05	.54	.590
How long have you been living there	-.01	.03	-.02	-.21	.833
R^2 = .002					

Therefore, H2, *"There is a positive relation between the international students' use of Digital Mass Media from the host country and the students' adaptation to a new environment."*, was rejected.

4.1.3 International digital mass media

Last but not least, linear regression with the adaptation level of International students as criterium and frequency of using International and global Digital mass media as a predictor was conducted. Again, the regression model was not found to be significant (R^2 = .005, F (1, 149) = .70, p = .406). Thus, the usage of international and global Digital mass media had no significant influence on the level of adaptation of international students (b^* = .07, p = .406). Based on the multiple regression model from the control variable *How long living in the host country,* the model showed insignificance (R^2 = .005, F (2, 148) = .36, p = .699).

Table 3: *Summary of linear regression analysis for H3 with adaptation level as dependent variable (N = 151)*

Variable	B	S.E.	b*	t	p
International Digital mass media	.03	.04	.07	.83	.406
How long have you been living there	-.01	.03	-.01	-.17	.867

$R^2 = .005$

Therefore, H3, *"There is a positive relation between the international students' use of global and international Digital Mass Media and the students' adaptation to a new environment.",* was rejected. For more details, see Appendix G.

4.2 Social media usage and adaptation of international students

4.2.1 Social media to connect with the home country.

A linear regression analysis with the adaptation level of international students as criterium and frequency of using Social media to connect with people from the home country as a predictor was conducted. Based on the multiple regression model from the control variable *how long living in the host country,* the model showed insignificance ($R^2 = .006$, $F (2, 148) = .45$, $p = .639$).

Table 4: *Summary of linear regression analysis for H4 with adaptation level as dependent variable (N = 151)*

Variable	B	S.E.	b*	t	p
Social Media Home	.05	.05	.08	.93	.352
How long have you been living there	-.003	.03	-.01	-.11	.909

$R^2 = .006$

Therefore, H4, "*There is a negative relation between international students' social media usage to connect with co-nationals and the students' adaptation to a new environment*.", was rejected.

4.2.2 Social media to connect with the host country

A linear regression analysis with the adaptation level of International students as criterium and frequency of using Social media to connect with people from the host country as a predictor was executed. The regression model was found to be significant (R^2 = .14, F (1, 149) = 24.52, p < .001). Thus, the usage of Social media to communicate with people from the host country had a significant positive influence on the level of adaptation of International students (b^* = .38, p < .001). Based on the multiple regression model from the control variable *How long living in the host country,* the model showed significant effect (R^2 = .14, F (2, 148) = 12.31, p < .001).

Table 5: *Summary of linear regression analysis for H5 with adaptation level as dependent variable (N = 151)*

Variable	B	S.E.	b*	t	p
Social Media Host	.19	.04	.38	4.96	.000
How long have you been living there	-.01	.03	-.04	-.48	.632

R^2 = .14

The control variable *How long living in the host country* (b^* = -.04, p = .632) showed a negative correlation with the model's criterium *level of adaptation* but with no significant influence on it. Thus, H5, *"There is a positive relation between international students' social media usage to connect with host-nationals and the students' adaptation to a new environment."* was supported.

4.2.3 Social media to connect with other internationals

Similarly, a linear regression with the adaptation level of International students as criterium and frequency of using Social media to connect with other internationals as a predictor was conducted. The regression model was found to be significant (R^2 = .07, F (1, 149) = 10.48, p = .001). Thus, the usage of Social media to communicate with other international individuals had a significant positive influence on the level of adaptation of International students (b^* = .26, p = .001). Based on the multiple regression model from the control variable *How long living in the host country,* the model showed a significant effect (R^2 = .07, F (2, 148) = 5.36, p = .006). The Social media to connect with other internationals, after controlling for the control variable, had a significant effect with positive direction on the level of adaptation of international students (b^* = .26, p = .001). The control variable *How long living in the host country* (b^* = -.04, p = .591) had no influence on the adaptation process,

whereas it showed a negative correlation with the model's criterium *level of adaptation.* However, H6, *"There is a positive relation between international students' global communication through social media and the students' adaptation to a new environment."* was supported.

For more details, see Appendix H

4.3 Individualism/collectivism as moderator

Six multiple regression analyses were conducted in order to determine if the students' cultural characteristics (individualism and collectivism level) have a moderating effect on the relation between social media and digital mass media use, and the level of adaptation. Social media and digital mass media usage were used as independent variables, level of adaptation subscale as a dependent, and Individualism score subscale was implemented as moderator.

4.3.1 Digital mass media usage from the home country and the international students' level of adaptation

First, regarding H7.1 the interaction effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship between Home Digital mass media usage and the level of adaptation was tested. Thus, a linear moderation regression analysis was conducted. The regression model was not found to be significant after controlling for the control variable (R^2 = .05, F (4, 146) = 1.84, p = .123). The standardized variables representing the main effect *Z.Digital mass media Home* (b^* = -.13, t = -.15, p = .878); *Z.Individ.rate* (b^* = .01, t = .16, p = .876) and the control variable *Z.How long have you been living there* (b^* = -.01, t = -.07, p = .946) were not found to be significant. However, the standardized variable *Moder.DM.Home.Indiv,* representing the interaction effect of the model, showed a significant moderating effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship as mentioned above (b^* = -.22, t = -2.64, p = .009).

In figure 2. below, it can be seen the moderation effect that individualism/collectivism has on the predictive effect of Home Digital mass media usage on the level of adaptation of international students. The relationship turned out to be negative – higher the individualism score lowers the predictive strength that Home Digital mass media usage has on the level of adaptation. In other words, the more individualist international student is, the less effect his Home Digital mass media use is going to have on his adaptation process in the new environment. Thus, considering the obtained output, H7.1., *"Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between the usage of Digital Mass Media from the home country and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores low on individualism, the relationship is stronger."* was partially supported.

Figure 2. Two-way interaction effect of individualism/collectivism and Home Digital mass media usage on adaptation level of International students (N=151)
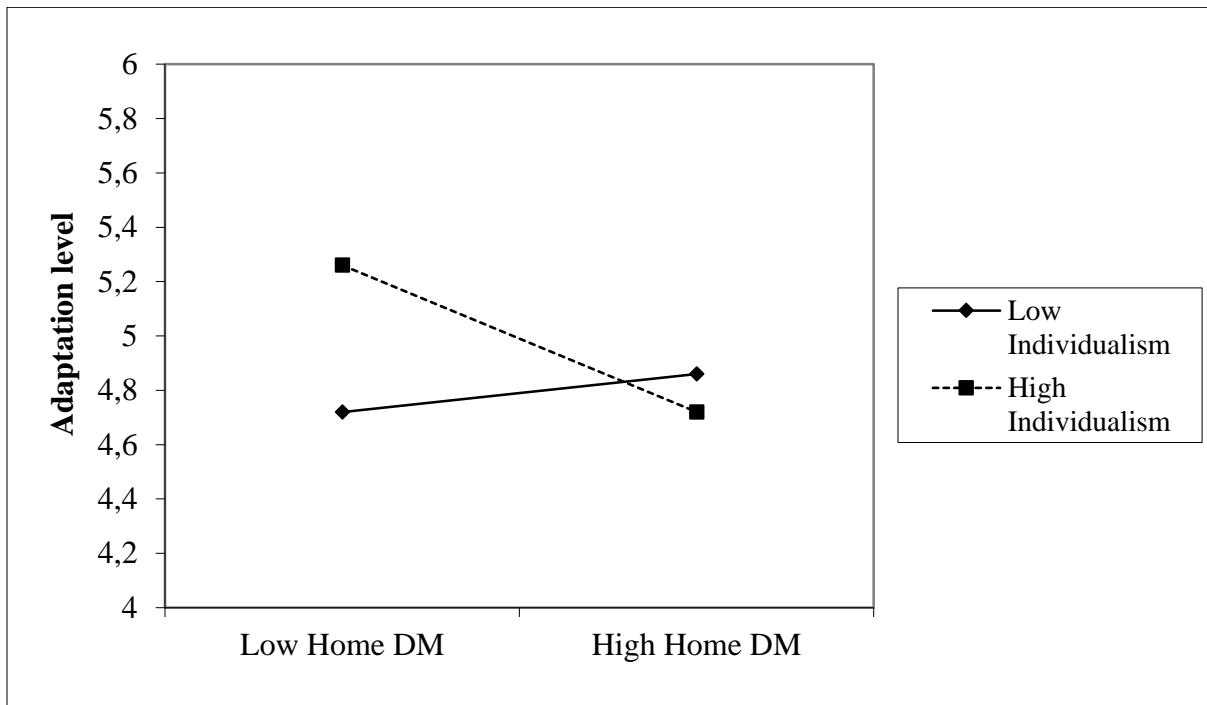
4.3.2 Social media to connect with the home country and International students' level of adaptation

In terms of H7.2, the interaction effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship between Social media to connect with the home country and the level of adaptation was tested. Thus, a linear moderation regression analysis was conducted. The regression model was not found to be significant after controlling for the control variable (R^2 = .05, F (4, 146) = 1.73, p = .147). The standardized variables representing the main effect $Z.Social\ Media\ Home$ ($b*$ = .17, t = 1.89, p = .061); $Z.Individ.rate$ ($b*$ = .05, t = .62, p = .537) and the control variable $Z.How\ long\ have\ you\ been\ living$ $there$ ($b*$ = -.02, t = -.18, p = .854) were not found to be significant. However, the standardized variable $Moder.SM.Home.Indiv,$ representing the interaction effect of the model, showed a significant moderating effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship as mentioned earlier ($b*$ = -.21, t = -2.34, p = .021).

In figure 3. below, it can be seen the moderation effect that individualism/collectivism has on the predictive effect of Social media usage to connect with people from the home country on the level of adaptation of international students. The relationship turned out to be negative – higher the individualism score lowers the predictive strength that social media to communicate with people from the home country has on the level of adaptation. In other words, the more individualist international student is, the less effect his social media use to communicate with individuals in the

home country is going to have on his adaptation process in the new environment. Thus, considering the obtained output, H7.2., *"Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between Social media usage to connect with co-nationals and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores low on individualism, the relationship is stronger."* was partially accepted.

Figure 3. Two-way interaction effect of Individualism rate and Social media usage to connect with people from the home country on adaptation level of International students (N=151)
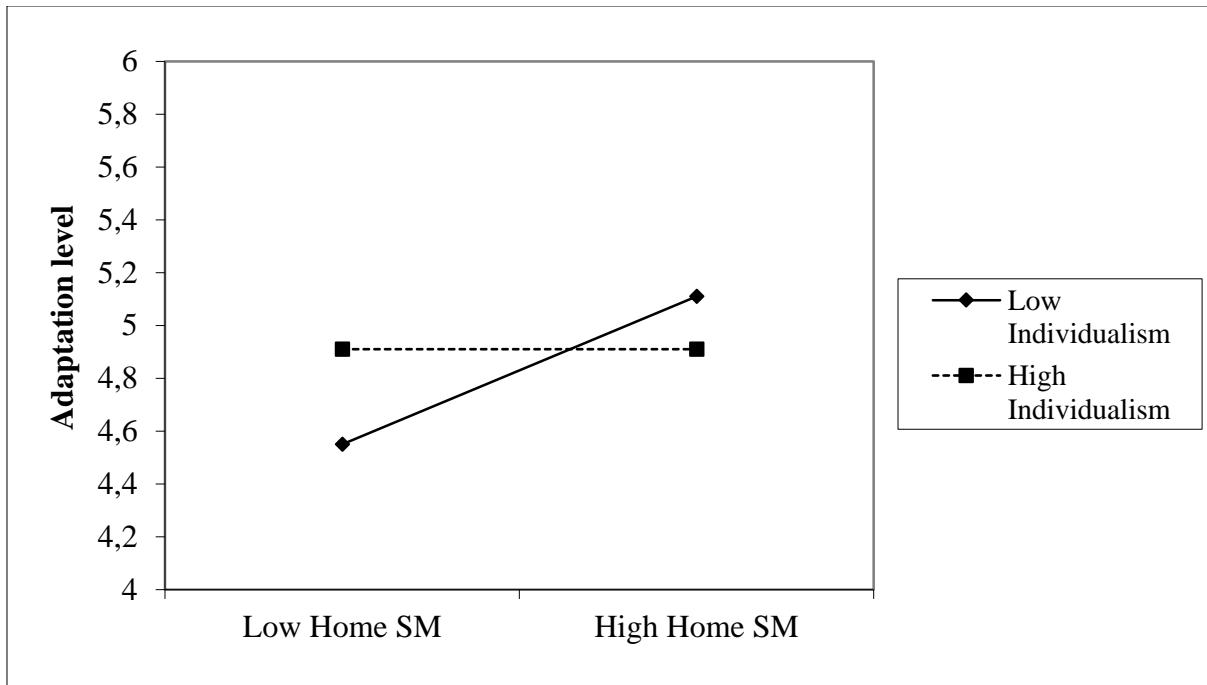
4.3.3 Digital mass media usage from the host country and the international students' level of adaptation

In terms of H7.3. the interaction effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship between Host Digital mass media usage and the level of adaptation was tested. Thus, a linear moderation regression analysis was conducted. The regression model was found to be insignificant after controlling for the control variable (R^2 = .004, *F* (4, 146) = .13, *p* = .969).

Table 6: *Summary of linear regression analysis for H7.3 with adaptation level as dependent variable (N = 151)*

Variable	B	S.E.	b*	t	p
Moder.DM.Host.Indiv.	.01	.07	.01	.14	.893

Variable	B	S.E.	b*	t	p
Z.Digital mass media host	.04	.07	.05	.58	.564
Z.Indiv.rate	.03	.07	.04	.43	.669
Z.How long have you been living there	-.01	.07	-.02	-.21	.832

$R^2 = .004$

Therefore, based on the obtained information, H7.3., *"Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between the usage of Digital Mass Media from the host country and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores high on individualism, the relationship is stronger."* was rejected.

4.3.4 Social media to connect with the host country and International students' level of adaptation

In terms of H7.4. the interaction effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship between Social media to connect with the host country and the level of adaptation was tested. Thus, a linear moderation regression analysis was conducted. The regression model was found to be significant after controlling for the control variable ($R^2 = .15$, *F* (4, 146) = 6.62, *p* < .001).

Table 7: *Summary of linear regression analysis for H7.4 with adaptation level as dependent variable (N = 151)*

Variable	B	S.E.	b*	t	p
Moder.SM.Host.Indiv.	.07	.07	.08	.97	.332
Z.Social media host	.29	.06	.38	4.87	.000
Z.Indiv.rate	.04	.07	.05	.55	.584
Z.How long have you been living there	-.03	.06	-.04	-.54	.589

$R^2 = .15$

However, the standardized variable *Moder.SM.Host.Indiv,* representing the interaction effect of the model, showed an insignificant moderating effect of individualism/collectivism on the above-mentioned relationship (*b** = .08, *t* = .97, *p* = .332). Therefore, based on the obtained information,

H7.4., *"Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between Social media usage to connect with host-nationals and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores high on individualism, the relationship is stronger."* was not supported.

4.3.5 International Digital mass media usage and the international students' level of adaptation

Similarly, regarding H7.5. the interaction effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship between International and global Digital mass media usage and the level of adaptation was tested. Thus, a linear moderation regression analysis was conducted. The regression model was found to be insignificant after controlling for the control variable (R^2 = .009, F (4, 146) = .32, p = .863).

Table 8: *Summary of linear regression analysis for H7.5 with adaptation level as dependent variable (N = 151)*

Variable	B	S.E.	b*	t	p
Moder.DM.Intern.Indiv.	-.04	.06	-.06	-.67	.501
Z.International digital mass media	.05	.07	.07	.82	.411
Z.Indiv.rate	.03	.07	.04	.42	.677
Z.How long have you been living there	-.01	.07	-.01	-.1	.920

R^2 = .009

Therefore, based on the obtained information, H7.5., *"Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between the usage of global and international Digital Mass Media and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores high on individualism, the relationship is stronger."* was rejected.

4.3.6 Social media to connect with other internationals and the international students' level of adaptation

In terms of H7.6. the interaction effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship between Social media to connect with other internationals and the level of adaptation was tested. Thus, a linear moderation regression analysis was conducted. The regression model was found to be significant after controlling for the control variable. (R^2 = .075, F (4, 146) = 2.96, p = .022). The

standardized variable representing the main effect *Z.Individ.rate* (b^* = .08, *t* = .97, *p* = .333) and the control variable *Z.How long have you been living there* (b^* = -.04, *t* = -.49, *p* = .618) were not found to be significant. The main interaction with the variable *Z.Social Media International* (b^* = .28, *t* = 3.41, *p* = .001) was found to be significant. However, the standardized variable *Moder.SM.Intern.Indiv,* representing the interaction effect of the model, showed an insignificant moderating effect of individualism/collectivism on the above-mentioned relationship (b^* = .04, *t* = .53, *p* = .600). Therefore, based on the obtained information, H7.6., *"Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between global communication through Social media and the students' adaptation to a new environment. When a student scores high on individualism, the relationship is stronger."* was not supported.

For more details, see Appendix I.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test whether individualism and collectivism characteristics strengthen or lessen the relation between social media and digital mass media usage and the adaptation of international students. In order to further investigate the potential relationships, first, it was looked at the relationship of the digital mass media use of the international students and their corresponding adaptation process. Second, it was investigated how is social media usage related to the adaptation of international students. In a next step, it was looked at what was the effect of individualism and collectivism traits on the relation between social media and digital mass media use and adaptation, if that increased or decreased the potential relationships. Furthermore, the question regarding the duration of residence in the host country was used as a control variable.

As reported by the results section of the project, in accordance to the previously stated expectations, social media usage to connect with people from the host country significantly influenced international students' process of adaptation in a positive direction; social media usage to connect with other internationals significantly influenced international students' process of adaptation in a positive direction. These findings coordinate with previous studies that have concluded that using social media platforms to communicate with host nationals and other internationals is useful for international students to reach information for the host country, strengthen their experience in the university, tackle issues such as loneliness and, generally, feel more accepted and comfortable in the foreign country (Ju et al., 2016; Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017; Zhao, 2016; Chang et al., 2012). Moreover, the findings from this study confirm the conclusion of Rosenthal et al. (2006), that most of the international students communicate with people who share identical troubles and conditions and, consequently, that makes them feel understood and being a part of a community.

Before all else, it was intriguing to find out if individualism/collectivism level of the international students has a moderation effect on the relationship between their social media and digital mass media usage and level of adaptation. To begin with, partially accepting this study's prediction, the results of this analysis found out that the individualism score had a negative moderating effect on the relationship between digital mass media from the home country and the level of adaptation of international students. Strictly speaking, the more individualists the international students are, the less influence their home digital mass media usage is going to have on their level of adaptation in the new country. However, the model was not found to be significant, after controlling for the control variable, which means that even aligning with the initial expectation of the model, further research is needed to confirm the obtained results. This fact is considered as

one of the main limitations of the study, which could be improved by using a bigger sample in the future research. Therefore, the study's findings partially support the stated hypothesis of the current research that there is a stronger moderating effect for the students who are collectivists than for students who are individualists on the relationship between their home digital mass media usage and level of adaptation.

In a similar manner, although the overall model of the moderation effect of individualism/collectivism on the relationship between the international students' social media usage to connect with co-nationals and the level of adaptation was not found to be significant after controlling for the control variable, the moderating effect of individualism/collectivism, however, showed a significant negative influence on the above-mentioned relationship. More specifically, by partially supporting this study's hypothesis, it became clear that the more individualistic characteristics international students possess, the less effect their social media to communicate with co-nationals is going to have on their level of adaptation in a new country and all the way around. These findings align with the results from previous studies, that talk about the strong relation between collectivists and people from the home country (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012; Sawyer & Chen, 2012; Darwish & Huber, 2003; Shulruf et. al., 2003). It was confirmed that the so-called "we-consciousness" that has been developed in collectivistic societies assumes that the connection between people is strong enough and their communication will not weaken even when one person of the group is far from home. The collectivistic students stay emotionally connected to the home and that reflects by strengthening the influence that their social and digital media use has on the level of adaptation.

In accordance to the study's findings, no other moderation effect was found of the individualism/collectivism on the relationships between social and digital mass media use to connect with host-nationals and other internationals, and the level of adaptation. Rejecting the corresponding assumptions, the study could not predict a moderation effect of individualism/collectivism on the above-mentioned relationships. This suggests that there are other reasons that influence the adaptation of international students, not covered by this project and further analysis is needed to find out more about the students' global and host communication.

Based on the scarcity of previous research and literature about the topic, the influence of digital mass media on the process of adaptation was considered as a main research gap that this study aims to fill in. The results of the conducted analysis in this project didn't support the initially stated expectations that digital mass media usage plays an important role in shaping the process of adaptation of international students while in a foreign country. First, even though the digital mass media usage from the home country aligned with the study's assumption and showed a negative impact on the level of adaptation, the exposed interaction was considered insignificant. On the same

term, the analysis could not predict a relationship between the digital mass media usage from the host country and the level of adaptation of international students. Last but not least, similarly, the interaction between international digital mass media usage and international students' level of adaptation was considered insignificant and the exposed initial assumption of the study was rejected. Another important insight is that the duration of residence in the host country does not alter the effect that international students' digital mass media usage has on their level of adaptation. The three models mentioned above were insignificant even when tested with the control variable. There could be found an explanation about the insignificant results in the respondents' reasons for using digital mass media. First, in the three types of digital mass media usage: home, host and international, the participants implement the internet technologies, online tv, podcasts, etc. in order to find general info that will make their life easier. Considering the fact that information can be searched and found in every kind of digital mass media, it is possible that home, host and international digital mass media have been used for the same purpose and their usage does not turn the adaptation process to one direction or another. Furthermore, the second most significant reason for using the three types of digital mass media is the clear "curiosity". This conclusion aligns with the findings of Chang et al. (2012) who infer that international students use digital mass media to keep actions that have been part of their life before the sojourn. Using digital mass media for actions that do not influence their attitude towards the new environment are not supposed to affect the process of adaptation (Chang et al., 2012). Referring to these recommendations it could be given a logical explanation of the insignificant relationships between the usage of international, home and host digital mass media and the adaptation level of international students.

In the same way, the findings of the conducted analysis did not support this study's assumption that social media usage to connect with people from the home country hinders the adjusting period of international students in a new environment. By rejecting this study's expectation, online communication with co-nationals did not play an important role in international students' process of adaptation. Moreover, the duration of residence in the host country did not influence this relationship as well, confirming that, for their adaptation period in a new country, it does not matter how often do the international students communicate with people from their home country. The reason for these findings could be the essence of the globalization process and its consequences, described by Gomes et al. (2014). In today's high-tech and fast-developing world, people do not cease the relationship with their families, closest relatives and friends. With the help of technologies, people who live abroad can easily include whoever they want into their daily life. It does not matter how far the person is when there are opportunities such as video calling, group chats, group video calling and sharing experiences including pictures and videos (Gomes et al., 2014). Furthermore, now is easier than ever for people, including international students to travel around

the world, also to go back to the home country in order to spend time with their family and friends. Opportunities like these give people a feeling that, even away from home, their family and friends are part of their normal everyday life and, consequently, the communication with them does not hinder their adjusting period in the new country.

However, deriving from this study's results, it can be concluded that the communication with host-nationals and other internationals significantly improves the international students' sojourn and helps for the better adaptation in the new environment. Unlike the use of mass media, social media communication is considered as the future of the interpersonal interaction (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Nowadays, the conversations between people are easily held in instant message applications. There are opportunities to build communities within the social media platforms via group chats and shared documents. As it can be seen from the results, the most used social media platform from the respondents in this study is WhatsApp, an instant message application (Appendix J). Moreover, private chatting and group discussions are the two most used social media features from international students (Appendix K). This is in line with the assumption of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and confirms the suggestion that social media platforms are the future of communication, and they are used more and more to interact with people from the same surroundings. Therefore, with this significant relation between social media usage to connect with host-nationals and the level of adaptation, this study confirms results from other studies and supports the hypothesis of this project that the communication with people from the host country helps international students to adapt better in the new environment (Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017; Zhao, 2016; Chang et al., 2012).

In a similar manner, private chatting and group discussions are the most frequent activities regarding social media usage for international students when communicating with other internationals. The results support the ideas of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and confirm that when interacting with other internationals, the students seek to keep in touch and generally network with other people. To stay in touch with other internationals often is caused by the need to discuss issues related to the available assignments and, generally, to the educational process. In this sense, the study aligns with the findings of Junco et al. (2010), who infer that social media platforms become more and more valuable for international students to maintain their performance in the university. The communication with other internationals is preferred by many of the students because they, basically, share a common destiny by being strangers in a new country (Cemalcilar et al., 2005). As stated by Kietzmann et al. (2011), the communication with other internationals in social media gives support and specific knowledge about vital issues. Thus, it can be concluded that, in all cases, social media usage to connect with other internationals could predict and positively influence the level of adaptation of international students.

5.2 Limitations and Further Research

It is important to highlight a few important limitations that are worth commenting and could help improving further research in this field. To begin with, the amount of time and recourses available made it hard to include a very big diversified sample. Although the goal of the data collection was to aim at respondents that are currently international students, a considerable number of participants in the survey turned out to had already completed their education. Thus, even though the number of participants (151) was enough to conduct the research, a bigger sample is required in order to make generalizations and more reliable assumptions about the whole population group of international students. Meanwhile, the sample consisted of international students that have spent different time in the host country. To have a better estimation of the adaptability variable, students that have spent the same amount of time in the host country should be considered in order to provide the most precise results. If future studies are to be conducted, the ratio of host and home country differences should be similar and combinations of the two should be selected carefully depending on cultural and other differences such as language, religion, traditions, and geographical differences. Thus, the results of the survey research would become more reliable and valid. Moreover, the length of the questionnaire was repellent for some of the respondents. Considering the reliable feedback from a participant, the sections in the survey consisted of similar questions with small differences which made the participants bored and uninterested. This resulted in almost 50 of them to not finish the survey. Besides, except the duration of residence in the host country, the study did not include other variables that could influence the outcome, as all the demographic questions showed insignificant correlation with the dependent variable "level of adaptation". Even though the conducted pilot test of the survey received a valuable feedback that helped to improve the questionnaire, a pilot test with a larger sample could have helped at a bigger extent with more detailed comments and evaluation. Another minor limitation was the fact that more than a half of the participants (66.2%) were female. That could hinder the reliability of the research and harm the final results, indicating that they don't apply with the same extent to males. Finally, the time frame of the project could also play a main role in the findings. In order to obtain more reliable results, a longitudinal study could be a more appropriate option, as the recurring actions and analyses over a long period of time are a more credible source of information.

5.2.1 Theoretical implications

Taking into account the results of this research, it can be implied that the knowledge gap in communication and cultural studies in relation to digital media usage, individualism/collectivism and the adaptation of international students has been narrowed down. Previous studies have focused mainly on the effect social media usage has on the adaptation process of international students. This

study chose to undertake a research in a broader scope, testing the effect digital mass media has on the level of adaptation. Moreover, recent studies have primarily looked at the students' communication with home and host nationals, but not in the communication with other internationals and the usage of global digital mass media. Last but not least, an existing research gap was considered the role of individualism/collectivism in the relationship between digital media usage and level of adaptation. By proving that individualism/collectivism has a moderation effect on both interactions, "home digital mass media – adaptation" and "social media to connect with co-nationals – adaptation", this study provides a new understanding of how one of the dimensions of the cultural characteristics influences the social and digital mass media usage and, consequently, how it affects the process of adaptation of international students. These findings can support other researchers in their work as well as the academic community regarding the way in which international students use social and digital mass media, how their cultural characteristics navigate their "digital" actions and how all this affects their adjustment in a new country. Moreover, universities' administrations can implement the obtained results in new activities, with the aim to help international students in their first moments of sojourn. Although not all of the hypotheses were accepted as true and most of them were rejected, the implications for further theoretical investigation illustrate that social media usage to connect with host-nationals and with other internationals significantly affects the level of adaptation of international students. Furthermore, this study tested relations that have not been tested in previous research – individualism/collectivism score as a moderator between digital media usage and level of adaptation. Even though only two significant moderations were established, the findings give a rise to other studies to generate additional research and to explore the relationships further.

5.2.2 Practical implications

Everyone as an international student faces similar problems with clashing the new culture and environment. Being away from home for a long period of time for the first time, doing a lot of assignments and tasks, managing the time in and out of the campus, together with dealing with the allurement to party, play games and procrastinate, are obstacles that can easily lead to stress or burnout (Dorsett, 2017). Helping students and professionals with the findings from this study, brings a significant scientific and practical importance of the project. By having the international students well adapted, engaged and enjoying their stay in the new country, the chances of their further successful professional realization significantly increase (Dorsett, 2017). Moreover, mastering the skill to acclimate to a different country and new environment assures an effective and creative life; it is a strong precondition for success and would make the life of the student easier and more enjoyable (Latipov, Ziyatdinov, Demidov, Gerasimov & Zaostrovtseva, 2017). By analyzing how

students' attitude towards social and digital mass media usage affects their process of adaptation the project tried to give a clearer view of the global issue of the adaptation to a new environment. Furthermore, organizations can use the information from this study to implement new courses in their programs, considering the fact that the students are their future employees. Conducting their own research about the adaptations of international students and what hinders or supports the process could be very costly and time-consuming. Understanding the role of social and digital mass media in the adjustment process of their future workers can save them money and avoid damages of their reputation, and loss of opportunities in the existing market (Latipov et al., 2017). Based on this project and its findings that the cultural characteristics, in some cases, can influence the process of adaptation of international students, universities and organizations can rationalize the way they have used this knowledge and implement it as an additional instrument in order to predict the students' behavior in different situations and by completing tasks and assignments. The organizations' human resources divisions can make use of such findings by navigating their future employees towards the most appropriate engagements, based on their cultural traits.

5.3 Conclusion

To conclude, the answer of the study's research question, "*How does digital media usage affect the adaptation of international students and what is the moderating role of the individualism and collectivism characteristics?*" is not unique and straightforward. It was proven that the more often international students communicate with host nationals and other internationals via social media platforms, the better adapted they will be. However, the study could not find a direct effect of social media usage to connect with co-nationals and of the three dimensions of digital mass media on the level of students' adaptation. Furthermore, the cultural characteristics showed a significant moderating effect only on two relations, including home digital mass media and adaptation, and social media to connect with co-nationals and adaptation. However, by considering the individualism/collectivism as a moderator, the thesis proved that this cultural dimension should not be neglected in future analyses. Moreover, it helped to narrow down the existing knowledge gap and managed to establish a scientifically credible foundation that could further contribute to the better understanding of this topic.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Duration of stay in the host country

How long have you been living there? (in years)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	59	39.1	39.1	39.1
	1.5	3	2.0	2.0	41.1
	11	1	.7	.7	41.7
	19	1	.7	.7	42.4
	2	24	15.9	15.9	58.3
	3	16	10.6	10.6	68.9
	3.5	4	2.6	2.6	71.5
	4	20	13.2	13.2	84.8
	5	11	7.3	7.3	92.1
	6	1	.7	.7	92.7
	7	1	.7	.7	93.4
	9	1	.7	.7	94.0
	Less than 1	9	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Appendix B – Current level of education

What level of education are you currently completing? - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor	38	25.2	25.2	25.2
	Master	106	70.2	70.2	95.4
	Doctoral	2	1.3	1.3	96.7
	Other, namely:	5	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Thesis survey

Q44 Hello and thank you for participating in this study!   The goal of this survey is to inquire about Digital Media usage and the level of adaptation of current international students who are living in a foreign country. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. The information will be used as part of academic research for a Master Thesis in the program Media & Business at Erasmus University Rotterdam.   The survey will take approximately 8-10 minutes to fill in. In case you are interested in the results and have additional questions, feel free to contact me via email: 510483ye@student.eur.nl. Before answering the survey, please read and confirm the Consent form below.

Consent Form

   There are no risks related to participation in this research. Yet, your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without consequences. Be assured that your data will be treated confidentially and anonymously. Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to participate in a survey. You are always free to stop the process at any point.   By continuing with this questionnaire, I agree to these terms.

Q44 Are you currently a student living in a foreign country?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you currently a student living in a foreign country? = No

Q13 Living in a new environment often demands mastering new skills and adapting to a new culture. Considering the experience from the country in which you are currently living, please indicate to what extent do the following statements refer to you?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Excited about being in the country in which I am studying (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Out of place, like you don't fit into the host country's culture (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A sense of freedom being away from my home country (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sad to be away from my home country (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Nervous about how to behave in certain situations (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lonely without my home country, family and friends around me (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Curious about things that are different in the host country (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Homesick when I think of my home country (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Frustrated by difficulties adapting to the country I am currently living (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Happy with my day-to-day life in the country I am currently living (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q14 Considering the experience from the country in which you are currently living, please indicate to what extent do you feel satisfied with the following conditions?

	Extremely dissatisfied (1)	Moderately dissatisfied (2)	Slightly dissatisfied (3)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (4)	Slightly satisfied (5)	Moderately satisfied (6)	Extremely satisfied (7)
Climate (temperature, rainfall, humidity) (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Natural environment (plants and animals, pollution, scenery) (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social environment (size of the community, pace of life, noise) (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Living (hygiene, sleeping practices, how safe you feel) (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Practicalities (getting around, using public transport, shopping) (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Food and eating (what food is eaten, how food is eaten, time of meals) (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social norms (how to behave in public, style of clothes, what people think is funny) (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

People (how friendly people are, how stressed or relaxed people are, attitudes toward foreigners) (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Friends (making friends, amount of social interaction, what people do to have fun and relax) (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Language (learning the local language, understanding people, making yourself understood) (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I'd rather depend on myself than others (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important that I perform better than others around me (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a classmate/collaborator gets a prize, I would feel proud (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Parents and children must stay together as much as possible (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Winning is everything (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The well-being of my associates/classmates is important to me (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often do "my own things" (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Competition is the law of nature (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To me, pleasure is spending time with others. (11)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required (12)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me (13)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused (14)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel good when I cooperate with others (15)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by the people around me (16)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Individualism/Collectivism

Start of Block: General Digital Media usage

Q16 Please indicate:

	How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes?						
	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Sometimes (4)	Often (5)	Very often (6)	Every day (7)

Facebook (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Instagram (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Twitter (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
YouTube (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Skype (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Email (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
WhatsApp (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Facebook Messenger (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Viber (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Snapchat (11)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pinterest (12)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Any other: (13)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q17 Please indicate:

	How frequently do you use the following Digital Mass Media channels in your daily routine?						
	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Sometimes (4)	Often (5)	Very often (6)	Every day (7)

Online TV (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online radio (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online newspapers (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online magazines (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Podcasts (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
News sites (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sport sites (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Any other (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q46 How often, in general, do you spend time in Social Media platforms?

○ Never (1)

○ Very rarely (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Occasionally (4)

○ Often (5)

○ Very often (6)

○ Every day (7)

Q19 How often, in general, do you spend time using Digital Mass Media? (TV, Internet News, and Sports sites and apps)?

○ Never (1)

○ Very rarely (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Occasionally (4)

○ Often (5)

○ Very often (6)

○ Every day (7)

End of Block: General Digital Media usage

Start of Block: Social Media - home country

Q20 How often, in general, do you spend time using Social Media platforms to communicate with people from your **home country**? (chatting, video/audio talking with friends and family, and others)

○ Never (1)

○ Very rarely (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Occasionally (4)

○ Often (5)

○ Very often (6)

○ Every day (7)

Q21 How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people from your **home country**?

	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Sometimes (4)	Often (5)	Very often (6)	Every day (7)
Private chat (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Group chat (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Private calls (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Video calls (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emailing (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Just browsing profiles (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Interacting with profiles (tagging, commenting, liking, sharing, posting) (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q22 Which type of activities can be mostly associated with your behavior when using Social Media to communicate with people from your **home country?**

☐ Keep in touch (1)

☐ Stay up to date with news and current events (2)

☐ Fill up spare time (3)

☐ Find funny or entertaining content (4)

☐ General networking with other people (5)

☐ Share photos or videos (6)

☐ Share my opinion (7)

☐ Promoting ideas (8)

☐ To meet new people (9)

☐ None of them (10)

☐ Any other: (11) _____

Q23 To what extent do you agree that the use of Social Media for communication with people from your **home country** is helpful to your acclimatization to the new environment?

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Disagree (2)

○ Somewhat disagree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat agree (5)

○ Agree (6)

○ Strongly agree (7)

End of Block: Social Media - home country

Start of Block: Digital Mass Media - home country

Q24 How often, in general, do you spend time using Digital Mass Media (TV, News, Sports, etc.) from your **home country**?

○ Never (1)

○ Very rarely (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Occasionally (4)

○ Often (5)

○ Very often (6)

○ Every day (7)

Q25 How frequently do you use the following Mass Media channels from your **home country**?

	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Sometimes (4)	Often (5)	Very often (6)	Every day (7)
TV (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Internet news and apps (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sports news and apps (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online radio (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online newspapers (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Podcasts (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q26 Which type of activities can be mostly associated with your behavior when using Digital Mass Media in relation to your **home country?**

☐ Keep in touch (1)

☐ Find info (2)

☐ Share interests (3)

☐ Curiosity (4)

☐ Find info for studying (5)

☐ Old habits (watching TV series) (6)

☐ Fill up spare time (7)

☐ Browsing for new ideas (8)

☐ None of them (9)

☐ Any other (10) _____

Q27 To what extent do you agree that the use of Digital Mass Media from your **home country** is helpful to your acclimatization to the new environment?

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Disagree (2)

○ Somewhat disagree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat agree (5)

○ Agree (6)

○ Strongly agree (7)

Q28 How often, in general, do you spend time using Social Media platforms to communicate with people, native of **the country you currently reside in**?

○ Never (1)

○ Very rarely (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Occasionally (4)

○ Often (5)

○ Very often (6)

○ Every day (7)

Q29   How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people, native of **the country you currently reside in**?

	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Very often (6)	Every day (7)
Private chat (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Group chat (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Private calls (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Video calls (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emailing (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Just browsing profiles (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Interacting with profiles (tagging, commenting, liking, sharing, posting) (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q30 Which type of activities can be mostly associated with your behavior when using Social Media to communicate with people, native of **the country you currently reside in?**

☐ Keep in touch (1)

☐ Stay up to date with news and current events (2)

☐ Fill up spare time (3)

☐ Find funny or entertaining content (4)

☐ General networking with other people (5)

☐ Share photos or videos (6)

☐ Share my opinion (7)

☐ Promoting ideas (8)

☐ To meet new people (9)

☐ None of them (10)

☐ Any other: (11) _____

Q31 To what extent do you agree that the use of Social Media for communication with people,
 native of **the country you currently reside in**, is helpful to your acclimatization to the new
environment?

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Disagree (2)

○ Somewhat disagree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat agree (5)

○ Agree (6)

○ Strongly agree (7)

Q32 How often, in general, do you spend time using Digital Mass Media from **the country you
currently reside in**?

○ Never (1)

○ Very rarely (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Occasionally (4)

○ Often (5)

○ Very often (6)

○ Every day (7)

Q33 How frequently do you use the following Mass Media channels from **the country you currently reside in**?

	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Sometimes (4)	Often (5)	Very often (6)	Every day (7)
TV (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Internet news and apps (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sport news and apps (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online radio (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online newspaper (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Podcasts (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q34 Which type of activities can be mostly associated with your behavior when using Digital Mass Media in relation to **the country you currently reside in?**

☐ Keep in touch (1)

☐ Find info (2)

☐ Share interests (3)

☐ Curiosity (4)

☐ Find info for studying (5)

☐ Old habits (watching TV series) (6)

☐ Fill up spare time (7)

☐ Browsing for new ideas (8)

☐ None of them (9)

☐ Any other (10) _____

Q35 To what extent do you agree that the use of Digital Mass Media from the country **you currently reside in** is helpful to your acclimatization to the new environment?

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Disagree (2)

○ Somewhat disagree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat agree (5)

○ Agree (6)

○ Strongly agree (7)

Q47 While abroad, international students are sometimes in touch with people who, similarly to them, are currently not in their home country. In the next questions, these people are designated as *other internationals.*

Q36 How often, in general, do you spend time using Social Media platforms to communicate with **other internationals**?

○ Never (1)

○ Very rarely (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Occasionally (4)

○ Often (5)

○ Very often (6)

○ Every day (7)

Q37 How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with **other internationals**?

	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Very often (6)	Every day (7)
Private chat (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Group chat (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Private calls (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Video calls (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emailing (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Just browsing profiles (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Interacting with profiles (tagging, commenting, liking, sharing, posting) (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q38 Which type of activities can be mostly associated with your behavior when using Social Media in relation to **other internationals?**

☐ Keep in touch (1)

☐ Stay up to date with news and current events (2)

☐ Fill up spare time (3)

☐ Find funny or entertaining content (4)

☐ General networking with other people (5)

☐ Share photos or videos (6)

☐ Share my opinion (7)

☐ Promoting ideas (8)

☐ To meet new people (9)

☐ None of them (10)

☐ Any other: (11) _____

Q39 To what extent do you agree that the use of Social Media for communication with **other internationals** is helpful to your acclimatization to the new environment?

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Disagree (2)

○ Somewhat disagree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat agree (5)

○ Agree (6)

○ Strongly agree (7)

Q48 *International* Digital Mass Media for the next questions refers to Mass Media channels which originate neither from your home country nor from the host country.

Q40 How often, in general, do you spend time using **international** Digital Mass Media such as TV channels and News/Sports sites?

○ Never (1)

○ Very rarely (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Occasionally (4)

○ Often (5)

○ Very often (6)

○ Every day (7)

Q41 How frequently do you use the following **international** Mass Media channels?

	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Very often (6)	Every day (7)
TV (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Internet news and apps (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sport news and apps (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online radio (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Podcasts (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online newspapers (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q42 Which type of activities can be mostly associated with your behavior when using **international** Digital Mass Media?

☐ Keep in touch (1)

☐ Find info (2)

☐ Share interests (3)

☐ Curiosity (4)

☐ Find info for studying (5)

☐ Old habits (watching TV series) (6)

☐ Fill up spare time (7)

☐ Browsing for new ideas (8)

☐ None of them (9)

☐ Any other (10) _____

Q43 To what extent do you think that the use of **international** Digital Mass Media is helpful to your acclimatization to the new environment?

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Disagree (2)

○ Somewhat disagree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat agree (5)

○ Agree (6)

○ Strongly agree (7)

End of Block: International Digital Mass Media

Start of Block: Demographics

Q3 What is your gender?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Other (3)

Q4 How old are you? Please enter in numbers.

_____

X→

Q5 What is your nationality?

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

X→

Q6 In which country do you live now?

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

Q7 How long have you been living there? (in years)

_____

Q8 What is your highest achieved level of education?

○ High school (1)

○ Bachelor (2)

○ Master (3)

○ Other, namely: (4) _____

Q10 What level of education are you currently completing?

○ Bachelor (1)

○ Master (2)

○ Doctoral (3)

○ Other, namely: (4) _____

Q11 In what program are you currently enrolled?

_____

Q12 On a scale from "Elementary proficiency" to "Native/Bilingual proficiency", please indicate what is your level of English proficiency?

○ Elementary proficiency (1)

○ Limited proficiency (2)

○ Professional proficiency (3)

○ Full professional proficiency (4)

○ Native/bilingual proficiency (5)

End of Block: Demographics

Appendix D – Reliability tests

Adaptation scale

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.857	.863	20

Individualism/collectivism scale

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.610	.611	15

Appendix E – Normality tests
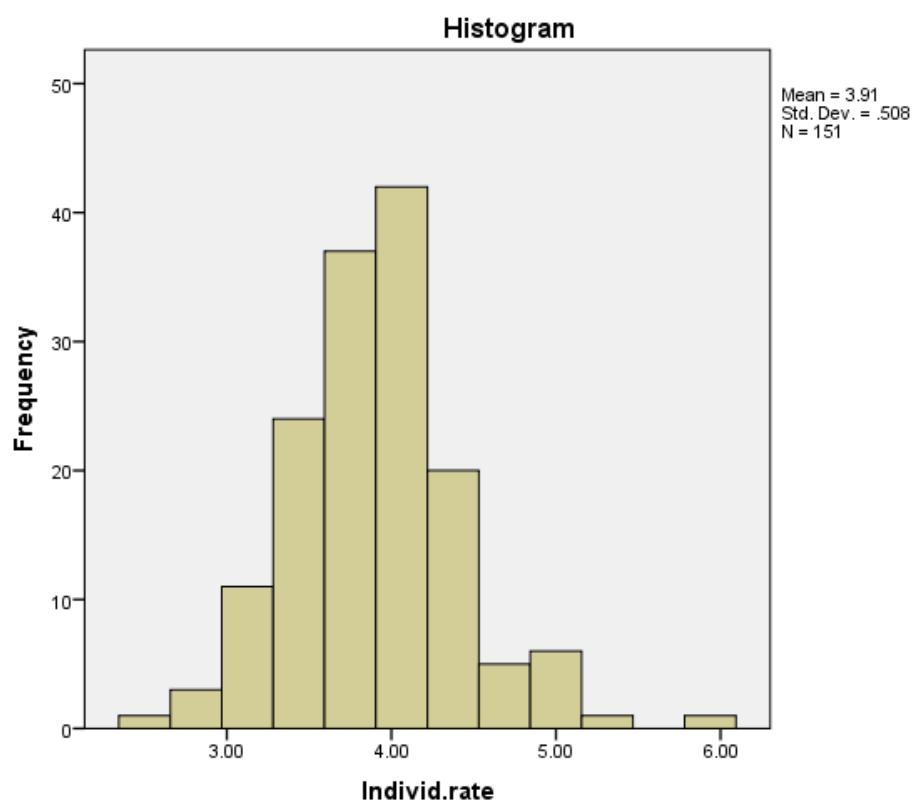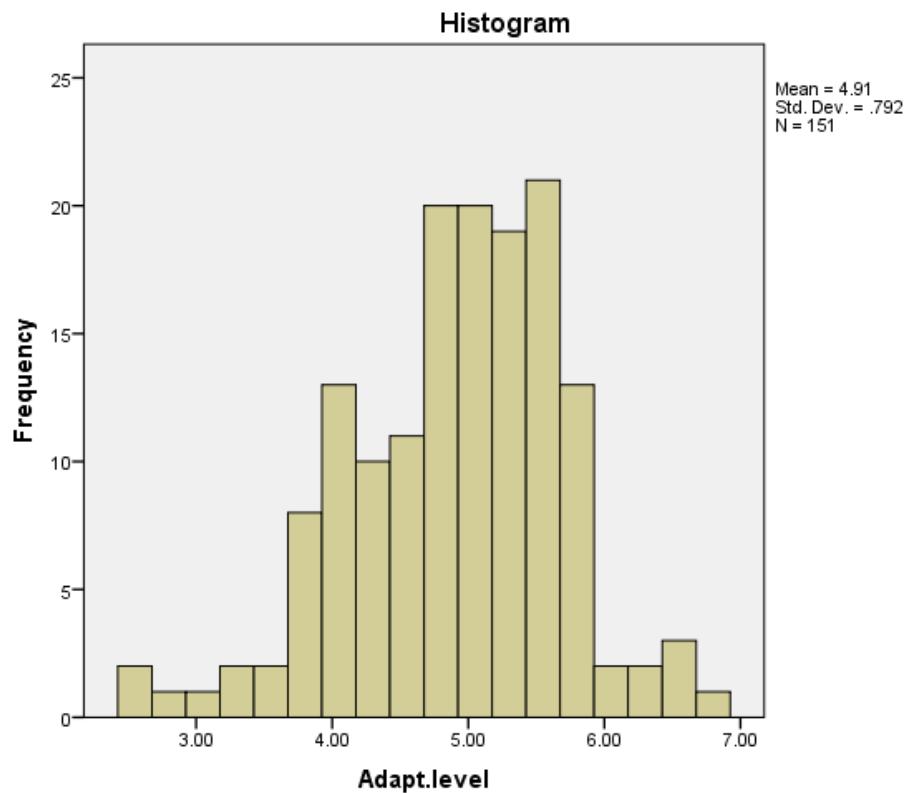
Appendix F – Normality test of variables related to Social media and Digital mass media usage

Histogram

Mean = 5.94
Std. Dev. = 1.277
N = 151

How often, in general, do you spend time using Social Media platforms to communicate with people from your home country? (chatting, video/audio talking with friends and family, and others)

Histogram

Mean = 4.05
Std. Dev. = 1.831
N = 151

How often, in general, do you spend time using international Digital Mass Media such as TV channels and News/Sports sites?
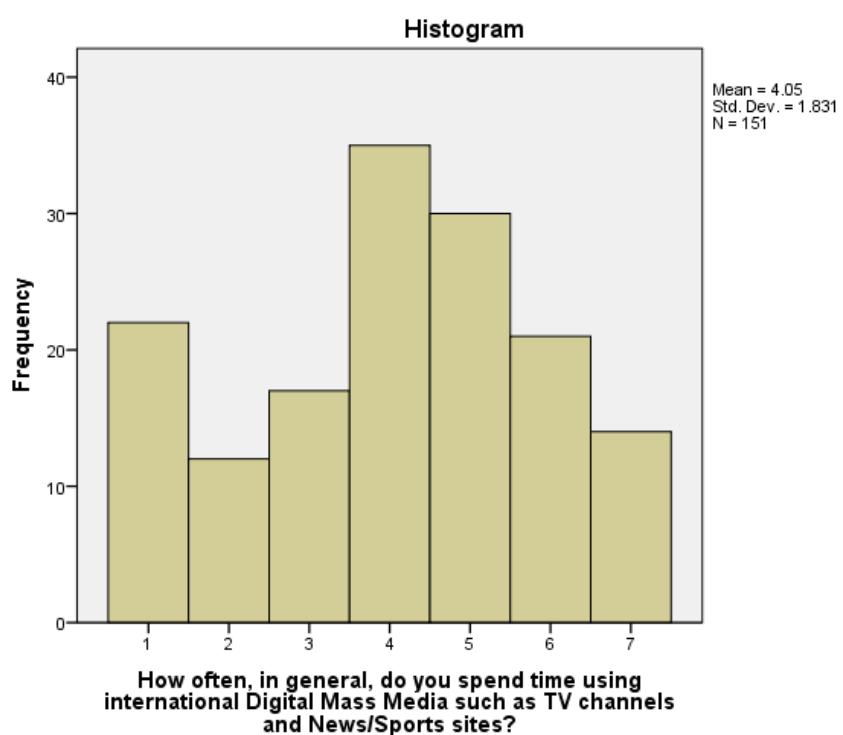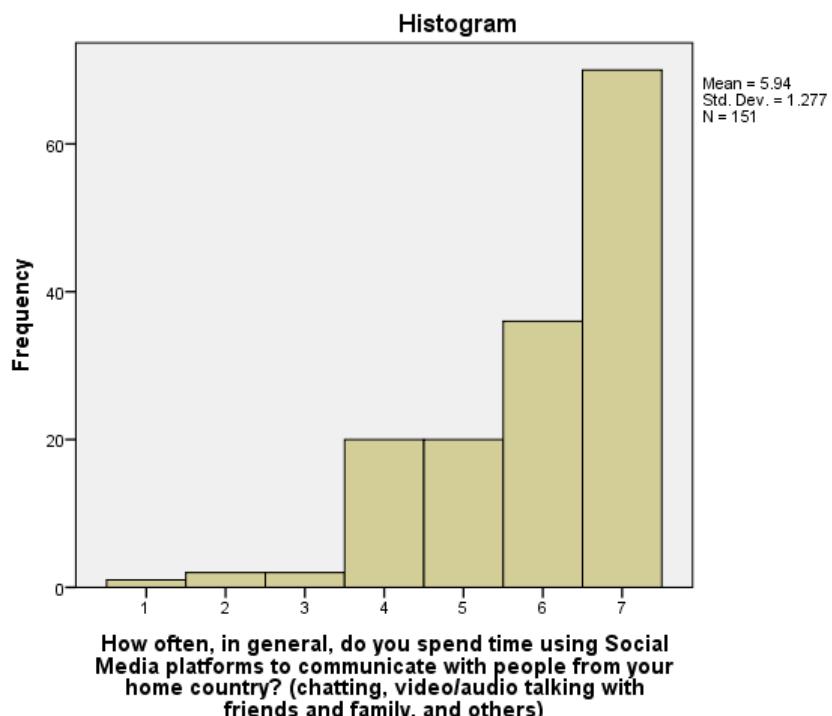
Appendix G – Regression analysis "Digital mass media – Adaptation level" after controlling for the control variable

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.044[a]	.002	-.012	.79663	.002	.145	2	148	.865	1.874

a. Predictors: (Constant), How long have you been living there? (in years), Digital mass media Home

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.046[a]	.002	-.011	.79656	.002	.159	2	148	.853	1.852

a. Predictors: (Constant), How long have you been living there? (in years), Digital mass Media Host

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.070[a]	.005	-.009	.79548	.005	.360	2	148	.699	1.878

a. Predictors: (Constant), How long have you been living there? (in years), International Digital mass media

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Appendix H – Regression analysis "Social media – Adaptation level" after controlling for the control variable

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.078[a]	.006	-.007	.79500	.006	.449	2	148	.639	1.855

a. Predictors: (Constant), How long have you been living there? (in years), Social Media Home

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.378[a]	.143	.131	.73836	.143	12.311	2	148	.000	1.801

a. Predictors: (Constant), How long have you been living there? (in years), Social Media Host

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.260[a]	.068	.055	.77002	.068	5.359	2	148	.006	1.941

a. Predictors: (Constant), How long have you been living there? (in years), Social Media International

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Appendix I – Moderation analyses

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.220[a]	.048	.022	.78327	.048	1.848	4	146	.123	1.857

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years), Zscore(Indiv.rate),

Moder.DM.Home.Indiv, Zscore: Digital mass media Home

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Correlations Zero-order	Partial	Part	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.886	.064		75.847	.000	4.759	5.013					
	Moder.DM.Home.Indiv	-.165	.063	-.216	-2.641	.009	-.289	-.042	-.219	-.214	-.213	.978	1.023
	Zscore: Digital mass media Home	-.010	.065	-.013	-.154	.878	-.139	.119	-.041	-.013	-.012	.961	1.040
	Zscore(Indiv. rate)	.010	.065	.013	.157	.876	-.118	.138	.033	.013	.013	.973	1.028
	Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years)	-.004	.064	-.006	-.068	.946	-.131	.122	-.013	-.006	-.006	.995	1.005

a. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.061[a]	.004	-.024	.80138	.004	.134	4	146	.969	1.865

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years), Zscore(Indiv.rate), Zscore: Digital mass Media Host, Moder.DM.Host.Indiv

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	Correlations	Collinearity Statistics

Coefficients

		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.911	.066		74.970	.000	4.782	5.041					
	Moder.DM.Host.Indiv	.010	.071	.011	.135	.893	-.130	.149	.015	.011	.011	.977	1.024
	Zscore: Digital mass Media Host	.038	.066	.048	.578	.564	-.092	.169	.043	.048	.048	.983	1.017
	Zscore(Indiv.rate)	.028	.066	.036	.428	.669	-.103	.160	.033	.035	.035	.971	1.030
	Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years)	-.014	.066	-.018	-.213	.832	-.144	.116	-.013	-.018	-.018	.991	1.009

a. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

				Std. Error of the	Change Statistics					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.094[a]	.009	-.018	.79934	.009	.322	4	146	.863	1.877

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years), Zscore: International Digital mass media, Zscore(Indiv.rate), Moder.DM.Intern.Indiv

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.913	.065		75.372	.000	4.785	5.042					
	Moder.DM.Intern.Indiv	-.042	.063	-.056	-.674	.501	-.166	.081	-.050	-.056	-.056	.979	1.022

Zscore: International Digital mass media	.054	.065	.068	.824	.411	-.075	.183	.068	.068	.068	.994	1.006
Zscore(Indiv .rate)	.027	.066	.035	.417	.677	-.103	.157	.033	.035	.034	.984	1.016
Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years)	-.007	.066	-.008	-.100	.920	-.136	.123	-.013	-.008	-.008	.991	1.009

a. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
					Change Statistics					
1	.213[a]	.045	.019	.78449	.045	1.729	4	146	.147	1.816

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years), Zscore(Indiv.rate), Moder.SM.Home.Indiv, Zscore: Social Media Home

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	4.869	.066		73.531	.000	4.739	5.000					
Moder.SM.Home.Indiv	-.143	.061	-.206	-2.340	.021	-.263	-.022	-.146	-.190	-.189	.847	1.180
Zscore: Social Media Home	.136	.072	.171	1.885	.061	-.007	.278	.077	.154	.152	.793	1.260
Zscore(Indiv .rate)	.041	.067	.052	.618	.537	-.091	.174	.033	.051	.050	.913	1.095

Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years)	-.012	.064	-.015	-.184	.854	-.139	.115	-.013	-.015	-.015	.996	1.004

a. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
					Change Statistics					
1	.392[a]	.153	.130	.73867	.153	6.618	4	146	.000	1.833

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years), Zscore(Indiv.rate), Zscore: Social Media Host, Moder.SM.Host.Indiv

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Upper Bound	Correlations Zero-order	Correlations Partial	Correlations Part	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics VIF
1 (Constant)	4.918	.061		81.171	.000	4.798	5.038					
Moder.SM.Host.Indiv	.071	.073	.080	.974	.332	-.073	.215	.125	.080	.074	.862	1.160
Zscore: Social Media Host	.298	.061	.376	4.868	.000	.177	.419	.376	.374	.371	.970	1.031
Zscore(Indiv.rate)	.036	.065	.045	.549	.584	-.093	.164	.033	.045	.042	.862	1.160

| | | -.033 | .061 | -.041 | -.542 | .589 | -.153 | .087 | -.013 | -.045 | -.041 | .992 | 1.008 |
| Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
					Change Statistics					
1	.274[a]	.075	.050	.77221	.075	2.955	4	146	.022	1.976

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years), Zscore(Indiv.rate),

Moder.SM.Intern.Indiv, Zscore: Social Media International

b. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Correlations Zero-order	Parti al	Part	Collinearity Statistics Toler ance	VIF
1 (Constant)	4.906	.063		77.319	.000	4.781	5.031					
Moder.SM.Intern.Indiv	-.030	.057	-.043	-.526	.600	-.141	.082	.001	-.043	-.042	.964	1.038
Zscore: Social Media International	.222	.065	.280	3.408	.001	.093	.350	.256	.271	.271	.939	1.065
Zscore(Indiv.rate)	.062	.064	.078	.972	.333	-.064	.189	.033	.080	.077	.972	1.029

Zscore: How long have you been living there? (in years)	-.032	.064	-.040	-.499	.618	-.158	.094	-.013	-.041	-.040	.980	1.021

a. Dependent Variable: Adapt.level

Appendix J – Most used social media platform

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Facebook	151	5.47	-.732	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Instagram	151	5.77	-1.474	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Twitter	151	2.16	1.492	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - LinkedIn	151	4.11	-.227	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - YouTube	151	5.73	-1.295	.197

Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Skype	151	3.07	.783	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Email	151	6.09	-1.630	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - WhatsApp	151	6.05	-1.920	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Facebook Messenger	151	5.63	-1.073	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Viber	151	2.50	1.099	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Snapchat	151	2.28	1.318	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Pinterest	151	2.34	1.193	.197
Please indicate: - How frequently do you use the following Social Media platforms for any purposes? - Any other:	151	1.95	1.898	.197
Valid N (listwise)	151			

Appendix K – Most used communication tool

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people, native of the country you currently reside in? - Private chat	151	5.44	-.859	.197
How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people, native of the country you currently reside in? - Group chat	151	5.01	-.797	.197
How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people, native of the country you currently reside in? - Private calls	151	3.86	-.009	.197
How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people, native of the country you currently reside in? - Video calls	151	2.84	.717	.197
How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people, native of the country you currently reside in? - Emailing	151	3.91	-.045	.197

How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people, native of the country you currently reside in? - Just browsing profiles	151	4.15	-.228	.197
How frequently do you perform the following Social Media actions when communicating with people, native of the country you currently reside in? - Interacting with profiles (tagging, commenting, liking, sharing, posting)	151	4.03	-.174	.197
Valid N (listwise)	151			