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THE IMPACT OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS ON CULTURAL ADAPTATION DURING STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

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Acronyms

CI   Cultural Incident

CIT   Cultural Incidents Technique

HSBC   Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation

SAVS   Škoda Auto Vysoka Škola (Škoda Auto University)

SS   Summer Semester

WS   Winter Semester

Introduction

Student mobility programs have now become very popular amongst the international student community. Students from secondary school and universities travel to study in one of their partner institutions abroad. These student exchange programmes were introduced with an intention to increase the understanding and tolerance towards other cultures among the students. Nowadays it is quite common for students to attend short-term intensive programs, where students spend time learning mostly about the host country, their culture, language etc. Their stay last from weeks to months. In the long-term programs, students spend one or two semesters at their partner institute in a foreign country participating in the host university study programs, taking lessons, completing courses, and sometimes even degrees in an area of a selected profession. These exchange programmes provide free movement and education exchange between universities and institutions for eligible students. These help students to advance their language skills and enable them to study and work in an international sphere. According to the information on Erasmus program website, more than 5000 institutions from 37 countries take part in this Erasmus program, where 6 million students have been benefited since its inception in 1987.

The main subject of study for this thesis is a particular institution participating in the Erasmus program from Czech Republic – Škoda Auto University (SAVS), Mladá Boleslav. The study aims to find out how well the students travelling from different parts of the world for the purpose of study adapt to the local conditions. The thesis intends to find out how easy or how difficult it is for the students to get acclimatized to the new environment, including life and study, and to identfify various factors, which influences their adaptation process, in order to propose recommendations for the international and study department to help future arriving students foster adaptation to the life and study in Mladá Boleslav and the Czech Republic.

It is highly predicted that adaptation processes for many students can be quite hard. Given the fact, the local culture in Czech Republic is unique for many of them coming from very different cultural backgrounds; factors that adds to the uniqueness are language, food, religion, rules, regulations, standards and climate. These factors

may have a significant impact in the adaptation process during their stay in Czech Republic. Students travelling to Czech Republic may experience various incidents influenced by local behaviors, which may possibly have a positive or negative impact on their adaptation process and may influence their approaches, perceptions and behavior in the future. Those kinds of incidents are known as critical incidents and are an important factor in the student self-advancement. Critical incident technique (CIT) was used for the purpose of collecting data related to critical incidents faced by student during their stay in Czech Republic. Data collection was conducted in the form of personal interviews and feedback forms, following which the collected data was categorized according to the commonalities and patterns that exist in them. Observed patterns and clusters were justified with concepts from culture theories developed by culture experts.

This research is divided into two parts, a theoretical part followed by a practical part. Under the theoretical part, in the first chapter there will be a brief introduction to Culture - Diversity, Culture shock, Intercultural communication and competence. These factors play a major role in deciding the students' cultural adaptation process to become a successful venture. Culture theories are also discussed here which would be later used as a reference in theoretical part. The second chapter deals with the Critical incident technique (CIT). The practical part begins with the third chapter which deals with data analysis. In the fourth chapter, after closely studying the students' overall study experience at SAVS with the help of CIT, outcomes will be recommended to the international office with proposals to help them improve the adaptation process of international students.

The proposals will help students from various culture and social groups to easily adapt to the Czech culture so that all they take back with them to their homes are good memories and pleasant experiences.

1   Cultural adaptation

According to Akli, student exchange programs should be recognized as the center of cultural diplomacy as they can establish intercultural dialogue (2012, pg. 32). People from different walks of life come together to share their knowledge and experiences and benefit from each other. For some students their experience may be rewarding and they find it as a beguiling experience, they may be easily acquainted to the new and vibrant environment. The adaptation process for these type of students is uncomplicated. They get easily adapted to the local conditions and they would not find it difficult to understand the local culture, in fact they would find the commonalties with their home culture and host culture soon after their arrival. It is not always a pleasant experience for the other group of students visiting a foreign country for the first time, they do not tend it fit in the new ecosystem very easily where most of the participating students have different cultural background and brought up in a different environment. This may lead to clash of ideas and yields negative results and the chances are most likely that these students may change their overall perception towards other nationalities.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the various aspects that might influence the students' adaptation process - such as cultural diversity, communication and competence. In addition, how these aspects acts as a mutant for the students who already feels comfortable with the host culture and for the other students who finds it to be complicated.

1.1   Culture

Hofstede stated, "Culture is to a human collectivity what personality is to an individual. Culture is a collective mental programme" (1980, pg.21). Communities are build up with people having identical cultural characteristics. These cultural characteristics are defined by various influences including geographical, spiritual and agricultural considerations. From the very beginning, culture has played a major role in human evolution. Culture directly or indirectly influences human needs. Quoting from Christopher Earley an example for how things take different place in

different cultures is depicted as follows, At the Heathrow airport the HSBC bank has put an signboard advertisement with a picture of grasshopper that say "USA—Pest, China—Pet, Northern Thailand—Appetizer" this helps us to understand human needs are purely based on culture (2004).

Certain cultures are built on a framework; the people of the respective culture are expected to follow this, which make them unique. On the other hand, these complex framework leads to confusions and misunderstandings when a new person from a different culture is introduced to this strata. Approaching any culture with a predefined and stereotypical mind-set is quite dangerous and may not be a fruitful experience for the guest and for the host as well.

To give an outlook of how cultural differences can be quite an issue in cross cultural adaptation process, a comparison from the text "The Culture Map" by Erin Meyer is mentioned here where the author shares her experience with the Indian culture. Meyer states, at first the person from other culture visiting India may feel extremely uncomfortable and strange during his/her initial days of the stay. There are some behaviors of Indians, which are observed as extremely strange for the outsiders, one such behavior is the popular Indian signature half nod during a conversation. This habit of Indians is very peculiar and unique that most of the outsiders do not understand and after spending few more days, they will figure out that it means neither agreeing nor disagreeing and it is used to continue the conversation without expressing your response or agreement about the topic. Not to forget few other behaviors such as eating without a fork or a spoon, excluding beef from the diet, saying no thanks and sorry to the family members and the list goes on. Initially these behaviors might sound very strange for outsiders, once they open their mind and start to mingle with the locals to discover their culture and reasons behind their behaviors they will be able to understand them and they fell less strange about their behavior. During the later stages, they acknowledge the differences in cultures and they may even become advocates of the culture (2016, pg.29).

Culture may directly denote as a set of behaviors or guide lines the human societies are clinged to and have been passed down generation after generation with changes made to them in order to easily adhere to them as time changes. Nevertheless, never in the history had our human species living across the planet experienced same culture in a particular period in two different sizeable area of land.

When looked from a broader angle the idea of culture is misleading, it all seems to be the same but when we try to have a closer look it is never the same. Basic software is designed with some framework to perform and control some specific actions. Cultures are set of collective programming for smooth operation of communities' daily life that is specifically designed to suit the needs of their people spread across a defined land mass.

Tom Freston quoted "Travel early and travel often. Live abroad, if you can. Understand cultures other than your own. As your understanding of other cultures increases, your understanding of yourself and your own culture will increase exponentially." (Kirtland 2017, pg. 16), Understanding a culture is a key thing that enhances a student's adaptation process. Understanding of a culture doesn't necessarily mean only finding the similarities in cultures, but also to embrace the differences in them so the students will become tolerant to cultures different than their home culture. In the up coming sections, research will be pacing towards the differences across cultures in terms of diversity, cross cultural communication, culture shock and other dimensions of cultures.

1.2   Cultural diversity

Most of the cultures are not the same as they were few years before and it is obvious from the fact that there are not two cultures that exactly resembles each other. These differences in culture contribute towards cultural diversity. Thus, cultural diversity refers to, where people with different culture or ethnic groups co-exist with in a specific piece of land or in the whole planet. According to Kelli Green, globalization has paved way for few decades now, people from various culture now started studying and working together, which help organizations to avoid uncertainties since they have a work force from varied cultural background that allows them to view problems from a varied perspective (2002, pg. 1).

According to The United Church of Canada published article in 2011, nowadays culture can be classified as multi-cultural, cross cultural, inter cultural and trans cultural models. In multicultural societies, people tend to live along with one another. In multiculturalism, the concept of dominance or majority do not exist. It includes people from distinct cultural groups with equal cultural status. With slight superficial

and polite social interactions, everything goes well within the multicultural society. Often celebrations take place without any deep learning. People are interested only in representation and there is no interest in learning from each other.

Cross-cultural communities is another kind of cultural model. Here people go further beyond the multiculturalism and try to build a bridge between them where they can share, listen and learn from each other. There is a sense of contrast or comparison that still exist between them. Yet the differences are understood and acknowledged.

The next type is intercultural model, communities has comprehensive mutuality, reciprocity, equality, freedom and diversity. The members of this community are keen in building relationships, interactions, mutual respect and equality. This helps the members of this society to have a deeper understanding when compared to the other models. There is an impact of other cultures in their lives, sometimes the members of this model get to know their culture better, and some change during the course and some learn the value of the community.

The last model is transcultural model. Developing a new culture by combining elements of more than one culture results in transcultural model. It is often represented by communities of people with global exposure. This state is dynamic and changes continuously through transformation or transition as a result of interactions and exchange. Here the relationship of power is based on language and history

From the author's personal experience with Erasmus students at SAVS , students come from countries like Russia, Italy, Finland, Portugal, Germany, Spain, Turkey, Slovakia, Austria, Belgium, Nigeria, Ghana, Pakistan, Lithuania etc. Most of the times the number of foreign students in the class is larger than local students and almost every one of them are from different countries. According to Taras, This is a good sign on cultural diversity existing in the classroom but if this has an adverse effect, the condition may become worse (2011, pg. 1).

1.3   Inter-cultural communication

Intercultural communication involves the sharing of information across different cultures and social groups, including individuals with different religious, social,

ethnic, and educational backgrounds. It seeks to understand the differences in how people from a variety of cultures act, communicate, and perceive the world around them. A group is said to be international not just because they represent different countries but also they represent different culture and they speak different language. Ludwig Wittgenstein said, for many of the people limit of the words in their language is the limit of their world, Martland (1975).

While communication is the basic relationship established among the people, not everybody clearly understands others if they speak in their own language. Students try to communicate with each other in English regardless of different accent, slang and usage of words, which is influenced by their mother tongue. Some international students may not speak any language fluently other than their native language. In many European countries, English is not always the language of instruction at schools and colleges. Some of the students never had a chance to learn and practice English even at intermediate level at their schools or universities.

Language is not always the only problem. The way student communicate with each other is important. According to Meyer, there are cultures that can be categorized as low context and high context cultures. In low context cultures, good communication is always about precision and clarity. Messages are repeated to make sure it has reached all the participants. Where as in high context culture a good communication is with nuances and layers. Reading the air or reading between the lines is very common in high context cultures. The key message is not always expressed directly but implied indirectly. Repetition is not advised, as it may be lead to misunderstandings, often people consider it as offensive. This high context culture tends to have a great history and people here adapt and learn to communicate with each other in high context. On the other hand, the countries with short history and the culture being dynamic tend to be on the low context side of the coin. Usually these low context countries are said to be more diverse. The high context culture countries that are located near the low context ones have more cultural diversity than the ones on the extreme side. With this context Americans convey messages more explicitly and more outrageous when compared with the U.K- British (2016, pg.39).

According to Rowney, non-verbal communications also play a vital role in the adaptation process. When these nonverbal communications are misunderstood, it

may lead to severe irreparable damage (2007, pg. 71). Often students misunderstand each other because of the different non-verbal communication concepts. Especially when it comes to nodding to convey yes or no is often not conveyed properly. Same in case of making hand gestures, touching others during a conversation, maintaining distance with others during a conversation can take totally a different meaning in different cultures. Interrupting others during a conversation may seem normal in some cultures while it is perceived as a rude behavior in other.

Therefore, the inference of these communication methods signifies the importance of having a clear understanding about how cultures communicate. The perspective of students caused by a self-drawn reference line from one's own culture causes drastic problems if not taken into consideration. While performing the study, attention to be payed looking for incidents experienced by students that are influenced by intercultural communiation.

1.4   Inter-cultural competence

Another main factor that influences the cultural adaptation process when speaking about intercultural communication is the intercultural competence. According to Deardorff, Intercultural competence is divided into three major components namely knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is supplemented by five values (2011, pg. 65)

(1) Intercultural attitudes - people's attitude towards other social groups
(2) Knowledge - about social processes
(3) Education - critical cultural awareness
(4) Skills of interpreting and relating - ability to relate and interpret events from other cultures
(5) Skills of discovery and interaction - ability to acquire new knowledge, real time communication / interaction, critical cultural awareness, level of knowledge about cultural studies

These five values are interrelated and the cultural expert who framed a popular model called Byram's Intercultural competence model says, "The basis of intercultural competence is in the attitudes of the person interacting with people of another culture." It is the base for other four values to proceed further. It is important

to understand the attitude of the students towards other cultures. It is an integral part of the thesis to closely observe the cultural adaptation process and help the exchange programs to achieve their intentions of making students more understanding and tolerant towards other cultures.

1.5 Culture shock

Decoding culture shock has a greater importance. Culture shock is a phase where the people knowingly or unknowingly go through the certain stages mentioned below and if the students are not properly guided and educated throughout their stay, it will not be a pleasant experience for them. Oberg stated, "Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (1960, pg. 142). It is primarily caused due to moving from one place to another suddenly. Culture shock is like a fierce sea, everybody will try to crossing but a very few make it to the other end and others fail by either sinking or struggling to find a way out and getting lost at the end.

Human beings tend to react adversely if they are introduced to a very new environment they have never experienced before. It is a feeling of anxiety created after missing all familiar things around them which they were used to. There are certain behaviors that people visiting a foreign culture may find it difficult to understand, like greeting someone, leaving tips at the restaurants, accepting and refusing something, getting things done by subordinates/superiors, etc. The strange feeling people experience after doing these basic and day-to-day actions are mainly due to the awareness level of the culture people are visiting. Always the strange feeling is followed by fear and frustration. This will lead to creating a negative impression about the host culture and this is called stage of rejection. Next comes regression where a group of people from a culture join together and try to find faults and complain about the host culture. Criticism on the host culture sometimes exceeds the limit, always performed without any clear analysis. Stereotyping the host culture without trying to understand the reasons that lie behind their behaviors is a serious problem with these people.

1.5.1 Stages of culture shock

Students may encounter different critical incidents (CI) in each stage of the cultural adaptation process. So having a clear understanding about the stages of cultural

adaptation is of high importance. According to the text by Black, J. Stewart, and Mark Mendenhall, cultural shock has four stages and follows a shape of U curve when tried to portray it in the form a graph, degree of adjustment takes the x-axis and time period takes the y-axis (1991, pg. 225-247).

Degree of Adjustment
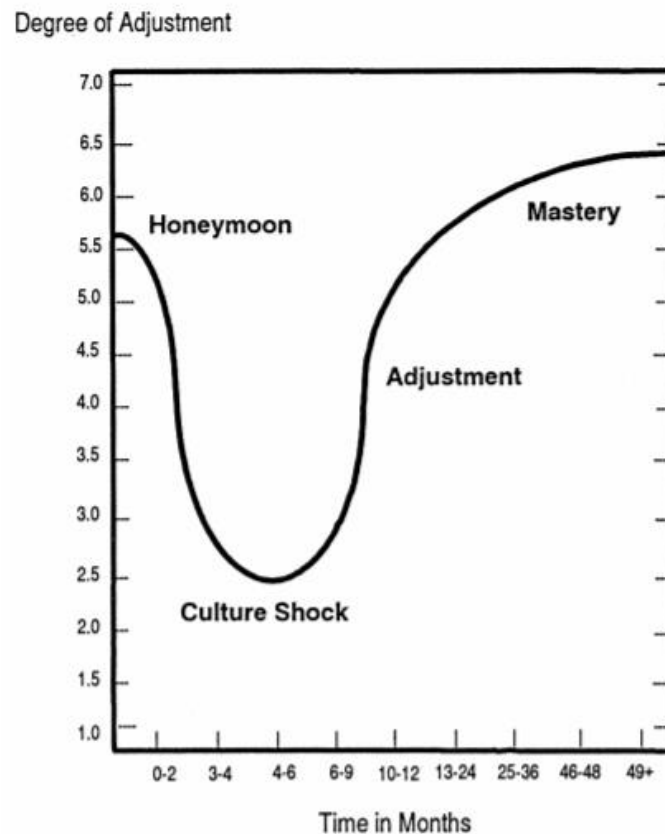
Fig.1 The U-Curve of cross-cultural adjustment

Source: *The U-curve adjustment hypothesis revisited: a review and theoretical framework (1991, pg. 227)*

First stage – Incubation alias honeymoon stage. Person who is in the first stage may find few or more things to be interesting as he/she may not have seen or experienced things before in his or her own culture. People generally stay positive and curios. Few of them may even idealize the host culture

Second Stage – Culture shock stage. The second stage advances with the interest towards the host culture developed during the first stage gradually decreases. Feeling of discontent, impatience, frustration and anger develops.
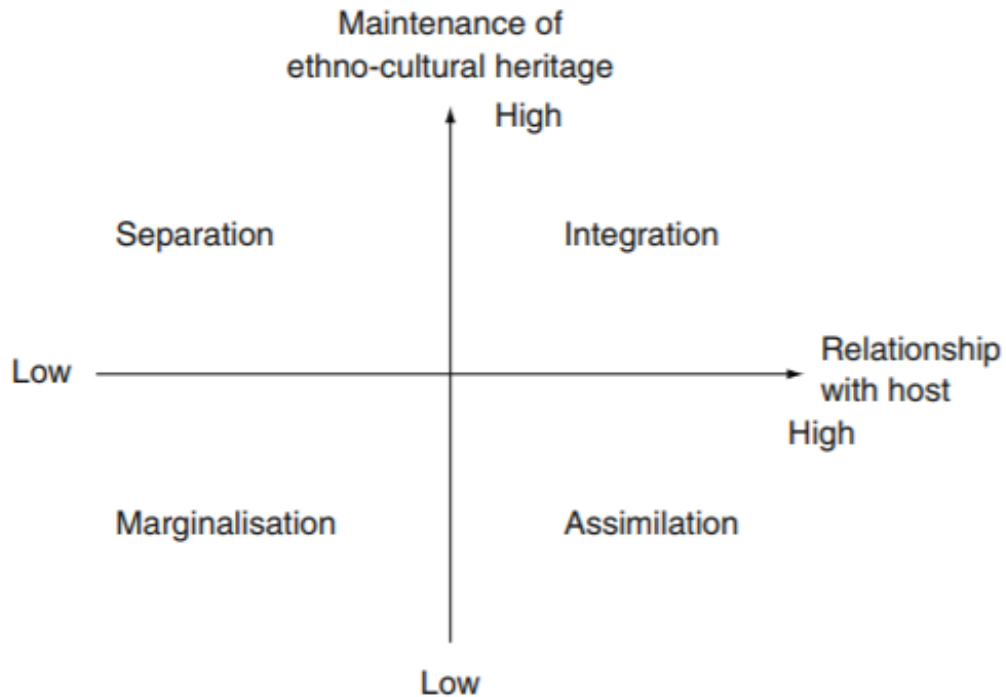
16

People start feeling they are incompetent. This is due to the transition between the old habits/methods from home culture to the host culture.

Third Stage – Adjustment stage. People generally feel more relaxed and tries to find the sole purpose of their stay in the host culture. This stage is a result of developing a sense of understanding of the new culture. Psychological balance is attained in this stage. People get new directions and feels more familiar with the new environment.

Fourth stage – Adaptation or Mastery stage. This is when people tend to find them more adapted and integrated to the new culture. A new sense of belonging is achieved. People realize the host culture has both bad and good things to offer. They approach the host culture in a more objective way to establish goals for living.

According to Prakash Upadhyay, there is a one more condition of reverse culture shock arises when the students leave the host culture and go back to their home culture, where everything seems to be bit different and sometimes it will be hard to digest the fact that few things were better in their foreign culture (2018, pg. 113). Even close inhabitants like friends and family will experience a lot of changes in the student's behavior, who has got back home. It is because of the cultural adaptation process the student had gone through.

Transition from one phase to another is not an easy task, the person has to approve and accept the changes so he can adapt to the local conditions and standards. However, this depends from person to person and the impacts they had due to the critical incidents they experienced during each phase. It will take some time to realize the facts by analyzing why it happened in the first place and what may be the reason and can it be avoided and preparing oneself to face this kind of situation in the future. Once the student has answers for these questions the transition process will be easier and the student finds it comfortable to be back to the pavilion.

Maintenance of
ethno-cultural heritage
High

Separation   Integration

Low ——————————————————→ Relationship
                                    with host
                                    High

Marginalisation   Assimilation

Low

Fig.2 Berry's bi-dimensional model of acculturation for immigrants and ethno cultural minorities.

Source: Social Markers of Integration: What matters most to Singaporeans? (2015, pg. 41)

The transition rate and period depend on the individual and the incidents that shapes their adaptation process. According to Leong (2015, pg.39) "Acculturation refers to changes in attitudes and behaviors arising from first- hand contact with members from another ethno- cultural community". John W. Berry first introduced this acculturation model in the field of social psychology. According to Berry's point of view the people from foreign cultures has to balance two things at the same time to successfully overcome the hurdles in the cultural adaptation process, maintaining his or her own cultural heritage from home country and engaging with the members of the host culture. The individual may head in four different directions based on the different combinations of the two above-mentioned factors. The four orientations of acculturation are Integration, Assimilation, Separation and Marginalization. Different

combinations of these orientation may take the student anywhere in one of the four quadrants in the figure below.

Each quadrant represents a different facet and process of intercultural contact and outcome. The top right quadrant indicates that students have mastered to maintain both the cultural identity – heritage at the same time. They still want to maintain their link to their home culture and engage further in practicing the host culture. This approach is called **integration**. The top left quadrant indicates that students have decided to follow **separation** acculturation approach. The students who fall under this quadrant want to maintain their strong links to their home culture and have no interest or very little interest to learn and practice the host culture. They would stick together with other students of same ethno centric cultural background. The next quadrant is the one on the lower right side; the students who fall in this quadrant will try not maintain any contacts or ties to his or her home culture. This approach is **assimilation**. They actively try to build a rapport with the members of host culture and completely cutting of their ties to the home culture. The lower left quadrant represents the students who follow **marginalization** approach. They are neither interested to maintain their home cultural heritage nor they take any initiative to learn about the host culture.

1.6   Culture theories

Anthropology is a discipline of studies related to culture. Several anthropologists attempted to understand how culture and societies work. Anthropologist like Richard Lewis in his work developed the concept of classifying cultures as Linear active, Multi active and Reactive. Cultures are classified under these major groups based on the core values the cultures are based on. Those core values give characteristics to those cultures. This model was developed to help the managers by guiding them working and communicating across cultures. This model explains how the one's culture affects his/her way of thinking and responding (1996, pg.52).

Linear-actives — cultures classified under this section, the people have certain special characteristics that differentiate them from other cultures such as planning, scheduling, organizing, pursuing action chains, doing one thing at a time. European

cultures like German, Swiss falls in this group and U.S. also follows this cultural aspect.

Multi-actives — cultures classified under this section, the people can multi-task, they plan their priorities based on importance and the thrill they experience from it and not based on a time schedule. Italian, Latin American and Arabic cultures fit in this group.

Reactives — culture classified under this section, to these people being respectful and courteous are two main things they prioritize. They listen quietly and carefully to the person on the other side during a conversation. Cultures like Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese and Korean are in this group.

Lewis model would be used later in this research, in order to find out if there exists any relation between the national profiles and critical incidents. By doing so, the reason behind their action can be justified and it helps to find the solution to improvise the adaptation process for the future students
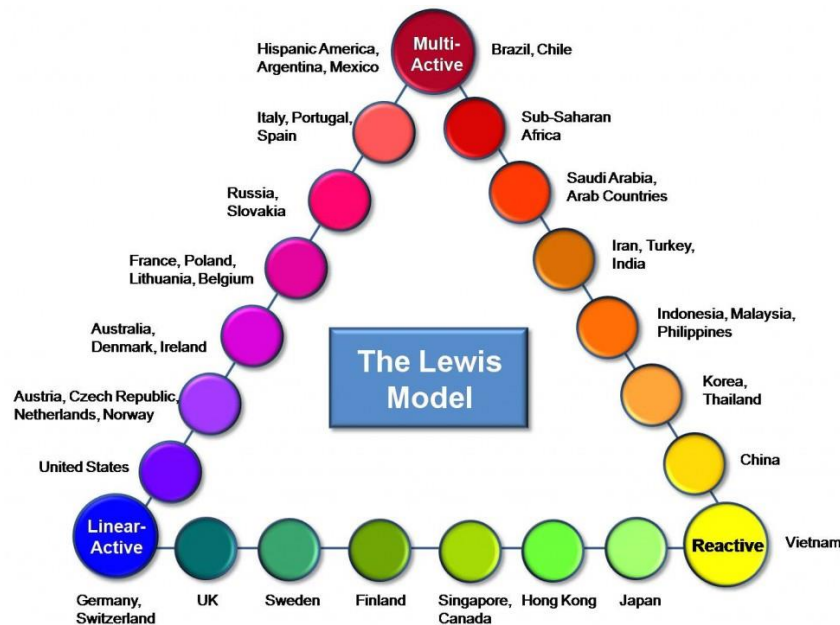
Fig.3 The Lewis model

Source: *Multicultural Adaptive Systems (2014, pg. 7)*

Another well-known Dutch culture expert Geert Hofstede introduced a culture model known as **six-dimension model**. Geert Hofstede introduced a framework that is used widely in providing cross cultural communication training. He first developed this model by conducting a survey participated by employees of IBM working across the globe. Later the research was refined and more target groups were surveyed. From this research, he was able to find how the values in professional environment are influenced by national culture. According to Hofstede insights official website information, "The Hofstede model of national culture consists of six dimensions. The cultural dimensions represent independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries (rather than individuals) from each other". The six dimensions are as follows,

Power distance index — How power distribution works in a society is mainly defined here. If the power distance index score of a country is lower than the other, it is understood that the country that has the lower score has a close-knit working framework where the higher authorities work closely with their sub-ordinates. Unlike the country that has the higher score has a stronger sense of hierarchy

Individualism vs collectivism — this dimension has a straightforward meaning, it compares cultures based on ones preference to have a loosely or closely-knit social framework. In individualistic society, individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families unlike in collectivistic societies; individuals can expect members outside their immediate family circle like relatives to take care of them in exchange for loyalty

Masculinity vs femininity — this dimension compares national cultures based on how cultures prefers to achieve goals, either by being competitive or by being co-operative. Competitive cultures are tough whereas the cultures with high femininity scores are tender

Uncertainty avoidance index — this dimension compares cultures based on their perception of facing uncertainties. Some cultures want to have control over future and they do not feel comfortable in an environment without strong codes of beliefs and behavior in place, they follow very conventional and orthodox approach towards everything. These cultures score high in uncertainty avoidance index. The cultures

with low scores follow a laid-back approach. They value the practice more than the principle and they go along with the flow. They have a more relaxed attitude compared to countries with high uncertainty avoidance scores

Long-term orientation vs short-term normative orientation — this dimension compares cultures based on how the cultures prioritize their past (tradition) amidst the challenges faced in the present and to be faced in the future. A culture is defined to have long-term orientation or short-term orientation based on how strong are their links to their past. The countries with low scores have strong affinity to honor their long-standing traditions and look modern changes with suspicion while the countries with high scores follows a pragmatic approach and they encourage modern efforts to propose changes for the future

Indulgence vs restraint — this dimension compares culture based on their take on gratification. If the culture allows its members to enjoy life to the fullest and having fun, it is said to be indulgent. Restraint cultures suppress and regulates gratification with social norms.

One additional theory to be discussed here is about the basic human needs with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this might be useful in the data analysis part to find the right reason for the reaction from the students subjected to a critical incident. Geert Hofstede while discussing about the national culture in four-dimensional model, stated that his four dimensional model have relations to the fundamental problems faced by all of the human societies (1983, pg. 46). It is predicted that the critical incidents faced by students, influenced by sudden exposure to a new environment followed by the symptoms as explained in the culture shock theory may result in loss of hope in the adaptation process. They students should remain motivated for a pleasant experience. According to McLeod, in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Abraham Maslow proposed a five stage model consisting basic needs of a human being to stay motivated. The five basic needs as stated by Maslow are psychological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization (2007, pg.2).

Fig.4 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Source: McLeod (2007, pg. 2)

Biological and Physiological needs – access to essential things like food, water, air, place, warmth, rest, sleep, etc.

Safety needs – factors that ensure safety of an individual like security, law, rules, freedom, stability, etc.

Social Needs – factors gives the feeling of belongingness like friends, family, romantic relationship, etc.

Esteem needs - factors that satisfies the esteem needs like self-respect, sense of achievement, status, etc.

Self-Actualization needs – factors like personal potential realization, personal growth, experiences, self-satisfaction, etc.

If the participants feel or experience that they have been deprived of these basic needs, they may possibly stop trying to adapt to the local environment and their venture abroad may not be a successful one. The Lewis model, Hofstede's six-dimension model and the Berry's bi-dimensional acculturation model and Maslow's hierarchy of needs to be used for tagging the responses collected from the students under certain categories in the data analysis section. This will be useful to find

answers to the question, why students felt or reacted in such a way they have described their experience during the response collection process.

Throughout this chapter, the factors that plays pivotal roles in student's cultural adaptation while visiting a foreign country during an exchange program is discussed in a detailed manner. As discussed earlier in chapter 1, culture and its diversity has its own advantages and limitation during a student exchange program given that the other factors like Intercultural communication, Intercultural competence and culture shock makes things better or worse. The advantages of a multicultural group can be realized only through good communication and good communication requires a clear understanding of the other cultures, its rules and guidelines, beliefs, sentiments, art, rituals etc. In the next chapter, how critical incident technique (CIT) will help this research to find a solution to the problem statement mentioned in the introduction will be discussed in detail.

2   Critical incidents

This thesis uses critical incidents as a method of data collection and analysis. Critical incidents are situations with a crucial significance to one's future life, which they have encountered any time in the past. A critical incident is usually a revelatory moment, a turning point in their lives that remains in their memory with maximum details and for a long time. Critical incidents can be both positive (felt happy, proud, self-satisfied) and negative (felt annoyed, insulted, embarrassed, humiliated). It may be a problematic, confusing, and sometimes amusing situation. According to Sarah these are not some ordinary situations, which people normally tend to forget, these stay in their mind forever and has an impact on their future behavior or decision making (2008, pg. 7). In this chapter, more insights in the effects of critical incidents and the role they play during the stay of students in exchange program is provided, as well as operationalization and utilization of critical incident techniques for social research in general, and for research in intercultural domain in particular.

2.1   Critical incident technique

According to Butterfield, the usage of critical incident technique (CIT) can be traced back to 70 years ago, it was first used in Aviation Psychology Program of the United States Army Air Forces in World War II by Flanagan. CIT was also used in the field of psychology to study nurses role in providing treatment to rehabilitation patients, counselling, education and teaching, marketing, organizational learning, performance appraisals and in social works (2005, pg. 476). Initially CIT helped the air force to select and classify their air crews and also to identify the reasons for not learning to fly with 1000 eliminated candidates from training school as respondents. It was based on the analysis of the reports of elimination process done by the training school. It was found that the reasons stated by the instructors of the program to eliminate the candidates were nothing but clichés and stereotypes. On the other hand, they managed to find other significant causes of the problem. This study helped the air force in the future to frame guidelines for selecting pilots. Later the study was adhered to find the reasons behind failures of bombing missions. The technique was used by the American air force to identify the reason behind the failures during several other missions as well.

Flanagan describes the critical incident technique (CIT) as a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior that will help them to solve practical problems and develop broad psychological principles.

CIT has been continuously used for over more than 50 years by several researchers in their work under similar names as follows: the critical incident technique, critical incident analysis, critical event technique, critical incidents technique, critical incident exercise, critical incidents, critical incident study technique, critical incident report and critical incident reflection. The fact is that all the studies previously mentioned were only the outgrowth of the study done by Flanagan. The usual practice is, description is set as per Flanagan overview of CIT and in the later parts the study is moved concentrated to a specific field like job analysis, General CIT and nursing etc. This technique has also got its limitation such as; it will be ineffective or less result yielding if the respondents were not providing valuable information.

According to Butterfield, Flanagan conceptualized CIT into five different steps (2005, pg. 486):

(1) Ascertaining the general aims of the activity being studied
(2) Making plans and setting specifications
(3) Collecting the data
(4) Analyzing the data
(5) Interpreting the data and reporting the results

Ascertaining the general aims of the activity being studied: The first and foremost thing to be done is to identify the aim or objective of the student exchange program before stepping into other activities as it is very important to understand the basic purpose of the study and it is expected to address two important questions – the overall objective of the activity and the expected accomplishment of the person who is engaged in the activity. Flanagan always described the way to find the aim of the activity can be determined by asking experts in the area of study, also by reaching out to the workers who are involved in core fieldwork. Multiple enquiries to be made and the most repeated mentions to be sorted and expert opinion is to be asked to freeze the aim – objective.

Making plans and setting specifications: Talking about the limitations of the CIT, in this case the students may not understand have a clear understanding, may deviate from the scope of the research due to misconceptions. To get the most valuable information-input the person who is conducting this study must inform the participants with clear instruction and ensure all the participants are on the same level of understanding. Responsible persons who are conducting the study to be given clear overview of the plan and to be made sure that these persons are also given same - required set of instruction as well.

Collecting the data: This step is involves collection of data by the experts either in the form of questionnaire handed to the respondents or gathering data from the experts, the important points they have in their minds about the study. Flanagan prefers the experts to collect data through individual interviews or focus groups, questionnaires and record forms. Flanagan made it clear that in a CIT study the sample size is determined by the number of critical incidents observed or reported and not determined by the number of participants, the incidents mentioned should cover the area of field of study.

Analyzing the data: The most difficult and important part according to the field experts is analyzing the data as there are being many incidents recorded it is difficult to go through all the recordings and classify it. There is actually no hard and fast rules to do this step. The main thing to be kept in mind is to categorize the recorded data in a useful manner and not compromising on the comprehensiveness, specificity and validity. The advised procedure is first to determine the frame of reference and then formulate the categories and finally determining the level of specificity.

Interpreting the data and reporting the results: The last one in the pipeline is interpreting and reporting the recorded data. For effective interpretation and reporting the researchers must start by determining the decisions made and what specific observations were noted and how was the data collected and classified, according to the previous four steps. Usually the mistakes are not done during the study but on interpreting the analyzed data in the right method. Limitations and the nature of judgments to be made explicitly mentioned. This will help others to understand the credibility and trustworthiness of the performed study.

The CIT is a type of qualitative research with a very naturalistic approach to the subject. This implies that the researchers study things in a very natural setting trying to make sense or interpret it in the same way how people submit their responses. People responses are collected through individual interviews or through a recruited survey and most often a focus group is included in the agenda.

CIT is a qualitative method where the problems are explored/ addressed and taken forward with a holistic approach with a thorough analysis. During initial days when qualitative studies are not popular researchers found very difficult to conduct the study. Now people are familiar with these kinds of studies and they are also aware of the importance of these studies. However, the researchers must be well aware of the study and techniques to successfully conduct the research otherwise the researchers would find it difficult to interpret or analyze the data. Researcher should be able to explain the difference between relevant and irrelevant responses. Focus should be on the critical incidents that either enhances or disturbs the aim of the activity or the program, responses are collected by personal interviews, telephone interviews and written questionnaire forms. Collected data should then be categorized and sorted with labels, these categorized data is then used to fulfil the expectations of the study.

Even though the approach remains the same from the advent of this process this technique has been adapted to various fields and streams. CIT is mainly used as an analysis tool in intercultural communication, psychology, medicine, military and nursing; now it has evolved and used as an investigation tool in various industries. Using an evolved form of CIT is understandable as a necessity but many experts suggest that keeping CIT in its original form like how Flanagan envisioned is inevitable. It is equally important follow the tradition and maintains its consistency and credibility. This would help to strengthen the fact that CIT method is trustworthy and reliable. Consistency also implies standardization of terminologies and processes. It will be hard for any researcher to find so many terminologies related to a single technique if consistency is not maintained.

This CIT is widely used in studies for more than five decades and it still holds good. By ensuring that these standardized procedures are followed strictly, this technique could be put in continual use in the future and In particular CIT can be used in

various cultural adaptation process to identify the key issues and propose proper solution based on the responses received.

2.2 Critical incidents technique in study abroad and exchange programs

CIT is widely used now days in education sector to enhance the cultural integration process of students from a foreign culture living in a host culture. From a similar research done by Philipsen in 1992, for an instance when a student from a particular culture let say Finnish culture visiting states and being hosted by an American family. Finns are occasionally stereotyped for their silence and shyness whereas the Americans has a different approach towards communication as Finns; they say lack of adequate communication is a sign of unhealthy and non-supportive relationship. And in our case if the student is reserved and always finds time to be alone and relax in his/her room which is very normal in his/her culture, it may seem to the host that the student is either homesick or he/she doesn't likes to be with them. And usually the host family would ask the student if there is any problem which would be a total surprise for the student.

Butterfield mentioned there are numerous researches and studies related to cultural adaptation and using CIT as the major tool, conducted in the field of education & teaching (2005, pg. 481). CIT proves to be a flexible and versatile tool that can be used to improve the current standards, find efficient and effective alternatives, and identify the root cause and suggesting solution to rectify the issues.

The cultural adaptation process for students is heavily influenced by above mentioned factors described under chapter 1 and in this chapter it is described, how the CIT is used to identify the most relevant influential factors by collecting responses from the students to know. This will help us to know how far they have coped up to the local conditions and also how to use these collected data by CIT to further develop the research and to find answers to the research questions mentioned during the introduction as the main objective of this diploma thesis. The results will also verify if the assumed hypothesis is right or wrong for this particular case.

3 Methodology

The first part of this chapter provides information about the organization where the survey was conducted - SAVS and additional information about the activities in SAVS, the second part is devoted to the description of the study participants.

3.1 Information about the organization

Place of interest for this study is Škoda Auto Vysoká Škola (SAVS) situated in the heart of a humble Czech town - Mladá Boleslav. This institution was established in the year 2000 with primary focus on economics and management studies. This is one of its kind university, which is owned by one of the largest car manufacturers in the continental Europe, headquartered in Mladá Boleslav - SKODA AUTO a.s., one of the major concerns under the Volkswagen Group. The university offers nine courses in total. Four courses in the bachelor's program, four courses in the follow-on master's program and a MBA program for professionals. It has collaborations with University of Applied Sciences Steyr, Austria for double degree program. Students can spend 5 semesters at their university and one semester at the partner university and likewise in master's program students can spend 3 semesters at home and 1 semester at the partner university.

Students during their bachelor's program have to take part in mandatory internship for successful completion of the course. Students can spend a semester abroad with participating universities and institutions from Europe and Asia. Since 2005 ŠKODA AUTO University has been a part of the Erasmus programme. The programme is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union and focuses on the mobility and cooperation of higher education institutions in Europe. The programme also supports cooperation of higher education institutions with foreign companies. In 2007 Škoda Auto University received the Erasmus Extended University Charter. All study programs at Škoda Auto Vysoká Škola are accredited by Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)

Academic departments at ŠKODA AUTO VYSOKÁ ŠKOLA include Department of Languages and Intercultural Competences; Department of Logistics, Quality and Automotive Technology; Department of Economics and Law; Department of

Marketing and Management; Department of HR Management; Department of Informatics and Quantitative Method; and Department of Finance and Tax Law.

Find below the table for more details about the institution

Table 1. Details of the Institution

Academic year 2017/2018	Number
Number of students in bachelors study program	864
Number of students in masters study program	204
Number of unsuccessful students in bachelors study program	117
Number of unsuccessful students in masters study program	31
Number of students took mandatory internship	117
Number of graduates in bachelors study program	146
Number of graduates in masters study program	52
Number of teaching staff in the university	114
Number of accredited study programmes	9 (4+4+1*)
Number of incoming students for semester abroad programs	24

Source: Annual report 2017

Role of international office

The International Office of Škoda Auto Vysoká Škola is responsible for international activities and the development of international cooperation. International office is also responsible for coordinating semester abroad and internship abroad programs. They assist students from the application process until their arrival at Czech Republic. They also conduct various events and meetings where both local and foreign students can actively participate get to know about each other's culture.

Role of study affairs department

Role of study department is to assist students and faculties with enrollments, registration and other study related affairs and activities.

Mladá Boleslav

Mladá Boleslav (Jungbunzlau in Deutsch) is a middle-sized town situated in the central bohemian region in Czech Republic. It has approximately 50,000 inhabitants and the town is on the left side of the banks of river Jizera. Mladá Boleslav is home

to lot of renaissance arts and architecture. This is one of the richest Czech town mainly due to the presence of car manufacturer ŠKODA AUTO. It has famous theatres, museums, parks, stadiums and other tourist attractions. It is referred as Jerusalem of Jizera by Jacob Bassevi von Treuenberg. Mladá Boleslav has its twin towns namely Dieburg - Germany, King's Lynn – UK, Vantaa – Finland, Kolomna – Russia and Pezinok – Slovakia. Mladá Boleslav have its own football and ice hockey teams that participates in the national leagues

3.2   Information about the participants

Country of origin of participating students : Germany, Italy, Ghana, Nigeria,
                                                Turkey, Russia, Austria,
                                                Finland, Slovenia, Slovakia,
                                                Bosnia-Herzegovina, Portugal

Number of students in summer semester : 11

Number of students in winter semester : 13

No of male students : 13

No of female students : 11

Major languages spoken by students : English, German, Italian &
                                       Russian

Average age range of students : 21 - 29 years

Field of study of the students : Business Administration, Sales
                                  & Marketing, Finance,
                                  Banking and Accounting,
                                  Logistics

Below is the national culture comparison by Geert Hofstede (Hofstede Insights), this six dimensional model compares the major nationalities of incoming students with Czech culture. This gives a brief overview of the differences in the national cultures.
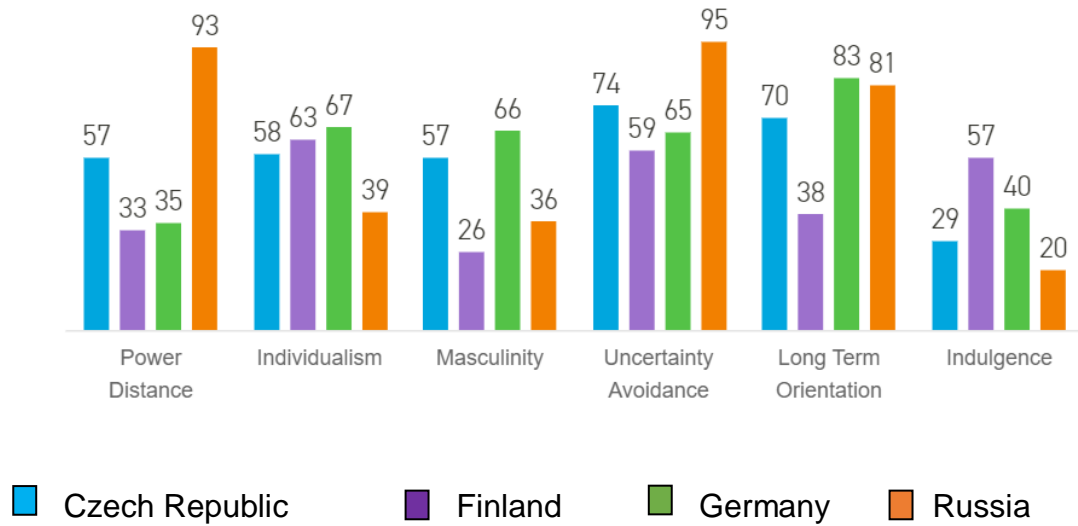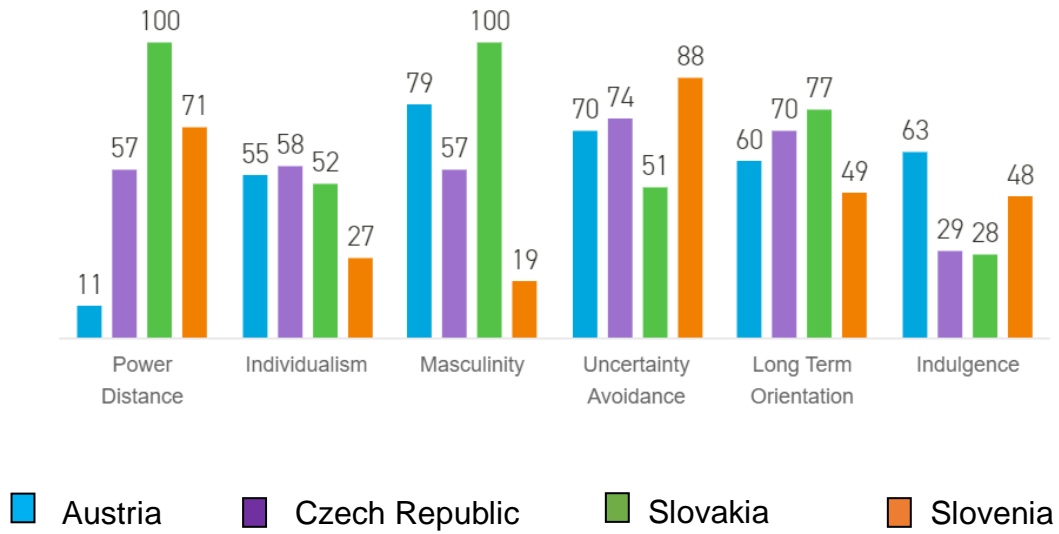
Fig.5 Hofstede national culture comparison – Czech, German, Finnish, Russian

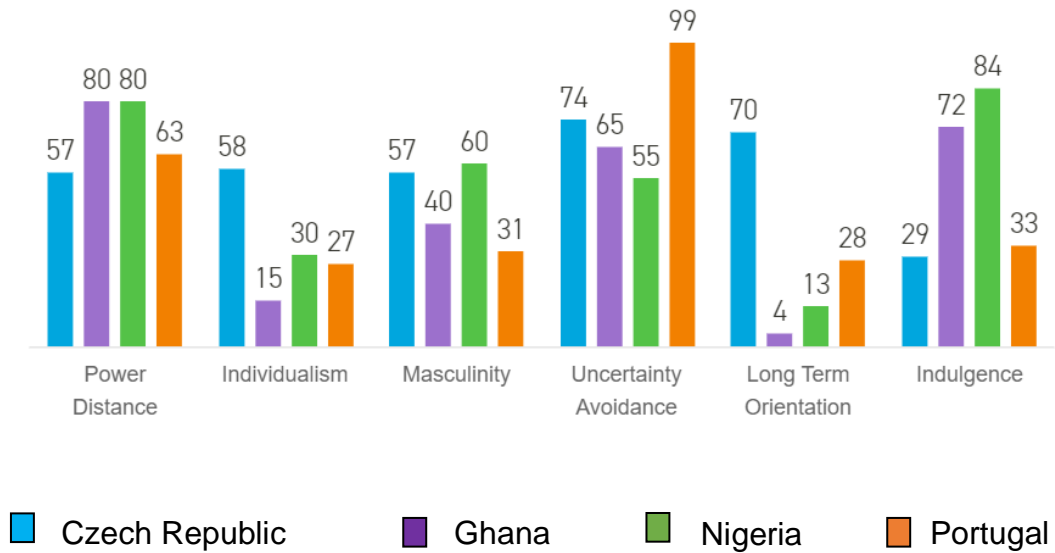**Source: Geert Hofstede - Hofstede Insights (2018)**
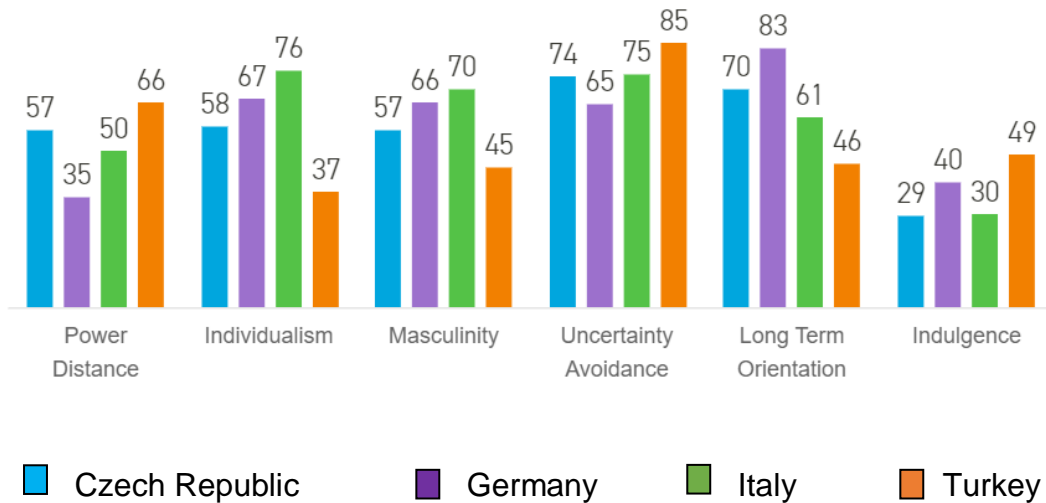
Fig.6 Hofstede national culture comparison - Czech, German, Italian, Turkish

Source: Geert Hofstede - Hofstede Insights (2018)

Fig.7 Hofstede national culture comparison - Czech, Slovak, Austrian, Slovenian

Source: Geert Hofstede - Hofstede Insights (2018)

Fig.8 Hofstede national culture comparison - Czech, Portuguese, Ghanian, Nigeria

Source: Geert Hofstede - Hofstede Insights (2018)

From the figures 5 - 8, the differences in cultures of participating students are shown. Areas where Czech culture shows more contrast than the participating cultures are power distance index – this may cause clashes in communication with the teachers, professors, non-teaching staff, etc. , uncertainty avoidance index – students may expect things to be in more orderly fashion or even they might feel the standards here are more stringent in terms of uncertainity avoidance and individualism vs collectivism – this may yield to disruption in co-operation with peers, neighbors and colleagues. While performing the data analysis, attention to be payed for these details.

3.3   Data collection

There were multiple events aimed at fostering the international student adaptation organized by International office such as orientation program - to help the students getting adapted to the new environment, welcome dinner with buddy program participants, ŠKODA Museum and factory tour, tour to Prague & Liberec, pub quiz, ice hockey matches, international dinners, etc. where most of the students actively took part in. These events were used as a platform to establish initial connection with the students.

The response sheet (annex no. 1) was distributed during the orientation program and responses were collected from the participating students for detailed studying. Questionnaire is formatted in a way that students are provided with a typical example for critical incidents faced by students on exchange programs and moving to explicit questions asking what, when, where, why, who and how the critical incident happened during their stay. After few weeks' time from the orientation programme, students were asked to submit their responses for the questionnaire. This was also done electronically by a survey website tool. The link of the survey website is shared to the participants and the results are collected electronically. Personal interviews were conducted for few participants, important information from the interview was written down and later used in the data analysis. During the whole process, the students were met three times in each semester in regard of this topic.

The total number of responses for the questionnaire are 40. On average two incidents were mentioned by each respondent.

Table 2. Data collection methodology

Data collection method	No. of responses
Questionnaire – response sheet	19
Personal interviews	7
Online survey	14
Total	**40**

4 Analysis of collected critical incidents

Collected data will be consolidated and commonalities in the data to be found and categorized them under major clusters. The main purpose behind collecting these responses are to learn from the critical incidents experienced by current participants, help the future students of the institution and help them have a better stay.

4.1 Categorization of critical incidents

The collected data for this study can be clustered in different categories based on reflection of the incident as explained by the student and possible reasons for the CI to take place. The categories are as follows; Language barriers, Religious views, Safety issues, Cultural norms (tipping, addressing people),Communication (Communication with teachers, Communication with the international office and study department) and Racism
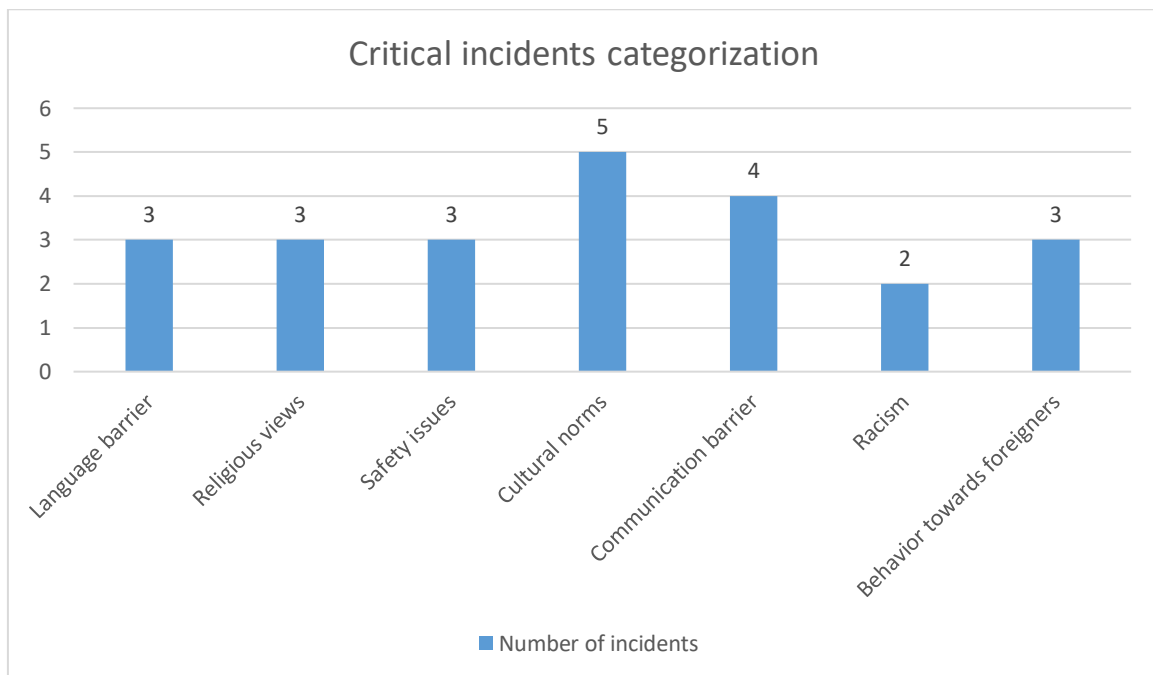
Fig.9 Critical incident categorization

Language barrier

One student from Austria mentioned her experience as, "Me and my friend were in Prague, we didn't had any coins to use the ticket vending machine so we headed to the ticket counter near the metro to get the tickets and there was a lady standing behind the counter who don't speak English, she was saying something to us and we couldn't understand a bit. We tried our best to understand her but nothing worked out. She started shouting at us and then the person standing next offered us help. He told us she need a change of two Czech Crowns, as she cannot give us the balance for the money we gave. However, the whole conversation wasn't just about the change, which I was sure of. Later we asked the same person when we met him later in the tram why was she yelling at us for a simple issue and he told she was complaining about how the tourists are annoying, ignorant, without bringing exact change for their tickets, and not able to understand whatever she has to say. The person admitted that she was wrong and she should have never have used those words. He apologized for her ignorance."

One German student shared his experience during his internship at SKODA Auto, "People know I can't speak or understand Czech, even though some of them were speaking in Czech during business meetings or workshops, it totally upsets me when I find myself lost in the conversation. People aren't aware of their surroundings"

Another incident faced by an Italian student where she felt helpless due to the language barrier, "I was travelling in a bus to a small town near Mladá Boleslav. A girl sitting beside me started to bleed from her nose. I did not understand the situation because everyone around me were speaking in Czech. I was so confused and I did not know what to do. I felt so anxious. I really wanted to help the girl but it was not possible for me because of the language barrier. This incident made me realize that I should learn the language to be able to communicate with people." While this incident can also be categorized under self-realization according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Religious views

One Italian student shared his experience that he faced due to the difference in religious views, "We used to attend this lecture every week, the professor seems to be an easy going person, he handles the class in a very interesting way, one day we were doing an activity and he mentioned most of the Czechs are atheist and some even swear on religion, he turned to me and said he knows a Italian swearing which compares swine and the deity. I really felt very strange in that situation"

One incident reported by a Bosnian student is "Me and other Bosnian students were invited for the international dinner. We decided not to go there because we are not used to eat pork. Then I received a call from one of the Erasmus student and he asked if we are coming as they are waiting for us to join them. I told him the reason for not joining sand he said it is not a problem and there are other items as well that does not have any traces of pork. At last we decided to go there and we really enjoyed the night". Same incident was reported by a student from Turkey.

Safety issues

One of the students shared an incident about how he was tried to be tricked by two unknown strangers "Two random guys in a luxury car stopped in the middle of the road and called me for a help, they showed me a business card and said they are from Germany and they need money to refuel their car as their credit card is not working. They gave a fake gold ring and said they would like to exchange the fake gold ring for some money. I gave the ring back and fled from the scene." The student mentioned that he was always reminded himself to be careful as he felt that this incident caused threat to his safety.

Other student from Germany shared his experience "We were coming back from Prague from the main train station and then a guy appeared out of nowhere and started to talk towards us and then he suddenly started to shoot at the bushes with a gun he had with him. We ran away from the scene as quick as possible. We saw a patrol vehicle that went passed the scene and even after noticing what happened at the scene they didn't care to stop."

One of the students from Turkey had a bitter experience during her stay here, she shared her experience that she faced during her visit to a shopping center at Mladá Boleslav, "We were once doing our weekly grocery shopping at Kaufland and suddenly there were group of men in their late twenties surrounded us and started to shout in Czech. One of them took his mobile phone and started recording video. We were three girls from turkey and we did not understand them, neither of us speak Czech we were panicked and nobody standing near offered us help. Then we somehow managed to flee the scene. We never saw them again. We did not understand what made them agitated and made them behave like that. Since they can clearly see ourselves as foreigners, they just wanted to do things to frighten us."

Thus all three above mentioned incidents directly relate to the safety issues the students experienced during their stay in Czech Republic. This also proves the fact, for the students to stay focused factors like safety as explained in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs plays a major role in the students' adaptation process

Cultural norms

One of the student from Turkey shared her experience about a wedding she witnessed in the country during her stay. She mentioned "I witnessed a wedding that took place in Charles Bridge and I was shocked to see the number of people who attended the ceremony was not more than five including the bride and the groom" the wedding ceremony here is different from her culture and she expected it to be grand and filled with people. Main reason for this incident to happen is due to the differences in rituals performed across cultures. Ceremonies like wedding, birthdays, etc are celebrated in different manner. Some cultures take it seriously and follow the traditions as per the knowledge passed down to them from their ancestors, while others simply ignore the age old practices and follow things which seems to be more practical and economical to them. According to the Hofstede 6-D model (Fig. 6) comparing two countries Czech and Turkey, Czech culture emphasizes restraint character. Czechs do not spend their time and money in leisure as much as Turks do. This may also one of the reason behind the response registered by the student as a critical incident she faced during her stay in Czech Republic

Found below is the critical incident shared by a Russian student about his initial hesitation to address his Professor with the first name. "My Professor offered me to call him by his first name and also with out addressing any salutation; I couldn't call him like how he wanted to call me, I remained calling him as Professor."   According to Hofstede 6-D model (Fig 5), Czech culture is more egalitarian compared to Russian. Hierarchical cultures stresses on a fact that subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. While in egalitarian culture the sense of authoritative leadership only comes into play, only if needed. Students must be informed on this so they don't feel as the odd one out during their stay as a student or working as an intern during their stay.

One incident shared by a student which was due to the lack of awareness about local way of leaving tips at restaurants, One of them said, "We were in a burger place for dinner. We went straight to the cash counter once we finished eating our dinner and started paying one by one. It was my turn, she gave me the bill and I handed over the money without saying anything. She asked me something in Czech, I did not understand anything so I nodded my head that put a huge smile on her face and she said a big thank you in Czech. I was still standing next to the cash counter to get my remaining balance and without handing my change back, she started addressing other people standing next on the line. I was confused and I asked for the change back. She was very confused as well. The person sitting next to us invited himself and offered help. He told us we have to say how much we would like to tip her when we are paying our bills. She thought the remaining change as her tip. The place where I come from we tip after the waitresses once she gives back the remaining balance."

One of the critical incident faced by a Italian student at the Czech post office is "My father had sent a parcel for me from Italy, I was expecting the parcel would come to my door step as my father paid for the premium services- option. The Czech post website didn't had any tracking information about my parcel and one day there was

a receipt near the floor mat outside my apartment. I didn't recognize it as it was slightly tampered and soiled. My friend got me that receipt saying it has my name on it. I was shocked to see how careless the post personals are. When I called the local post office they told they don't know any details about a parcel in my name. Then I have to get my friends help to locate the parcel and it was somewhere in a depot far away from the town"

One of the response shared by a Nigerian student from Italy is, "I felt really awkward after getting to know how Czech people are aware of their history and past events. They are good at remembering all the popular events, names, personals, that had happened over a century. I used to go lunch with my classmates and they start to share their detailed nation's history whenever they are asked, where as I am sitting still with very limited knowledge of my nations past and history." This incident gave a **self-realization** to her about her knowledge about her country. This is a positive sign where the differences in cultural norms has helped a student to realize the fact that she needs to improve her knowledge in certain aspects.

Communication barrier

One incident shared by a German student encountered with a Czech faculty is, "I registered for an event that took place in university and the organizer saw me on the way to the event hall and she told me I am made it to the event on time and I replied her back in a funny way "Yes! I am German". She took it seriously which I meant purely in a funny manner. She replied me back how my reply is relevant to her statement" This indicates the fact people take things seriously when their cultural identities are involved.

One Incident as explained by an Italian student encountered during a conversation with his peers, "Once we were at a café with some Czech students and we ended up talking about cars in general, one of the guy told us there is a saying in Czech that all the cars that names start with F – FIAT and all French cars are inferior in terms of quality. It provoked my self-esteem when the students tried to make fun of a brand that symbolizes my nation's pride. I decided to steer the topic away. I tried not to react and I did not show any interest in the topic so the people would understand. People should be aware of the consequences before they say anything.

I would never make this kind of mistake in my future stays abroad." This student handled the situation in a matured way but it does end up always in a smooth manner. Clearly, communication barrier plays a major role in this situation and that explains why the student consider this instance as a critical incident.

Above mentioned incidents can also be explained with the human basic need of self-esteem as explained in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, incidents like this may hinder the adaptation process if they ever feel their esteem is being threatened.

One Turkish student while sharing her experience on how her attempt to make a conversation with her neighbor failed despite several genuine attempts made." From the beginning, we are staying in an apartment and there is a family living next to us. We have seen them multiple times at their doors and we were always trying to have a conversation with them but the man and his wife in their late 40s would never try to talk to us. They use to nod their heads and start minding their business. They never cared to stop for 5 minutes and talk to us. It was the same till the end of our stay there." This could be explained with Hofstede model of national culture, According to Hofstede 6-D model (fig. 6), Czechs try to stay in their close circle of immediate family and their friends. Czech culture has a high preference for a loosely knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. Even though it mainly relates to the failure in communication with the neighbors, it also proves the Hofstede culture dimension of individualism vs collectivism.

One Erasmus student from Germany was sharing his experience how he felt when he did not receive adequate status information about his application to study in SAVS for the winter semester. He felt that, international office kept waiting to inform the applicant about the acceptance of his application until the last moment or until the information is requested by the applicant himself. However, according Hofstede Czechs are more prepared to avoid uncertainties in their daily lives as well as in their professional lives. It is stated that countries exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. In these cultures, there is an emotional need for

rules (even if the rules never seem to work); According to the Hofstede 6-D model (Fig. 5), this case of German student may be peculiar. He thinks it is always Germans who are punctual and follow the rules than any other culture around the world. Reality is Czech scores even higher than the Germans. Nevertheless, this can be justified by the **Lewis model** of reactive, multi-active and linear active classification. Germany sits exactly on the point of linear active classification whereas Czech sits between mullti-active and linear active points but only U.S is between the two national profiles. This means Germans have stronger affinity to planning and scheduling than Czechs do.

Racial differences

There is one incident shared by student from Ghana which he experienced because of the racial difference, "I was sitting in the university cafeteria and eating my lunch. There were two female students inside the canteen, watching me the whole time I was inside the canteen. I totally understand that people react in a different way when the happen to see a person with darker skin complexion and different facial features but I felt total uncomfortable when people stare at me while I am eating"

He also shared his experience when he was travelling to a nearby town called Semily where people asked him several strange questions like, " I felt weird when people started to ask if had a house in my country and do I have a mobile phone and even some of them wanted to touch me to feel what it is like to touch a black person's skin."

Czech's behavior towards foreigners

A Turkish student experienced a critical incident during her trip to a Czech town of Karlovy Vary. "We went to Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic with my friends. We saw a dog tied up outside when we was about to enter a museum. The weather was very cold and the dog was cold, she was shaking. So we tried to cover the dog with something warm to help and we started looking for the owner. In the meantime, we got the dog to make a sound so we can find the owner. About 5-10 minutes later, the owner of the dog came with his son with anger. At first he spoke Czech and then tried to speak English when he realized that we were foreigner .When he was

supposed to thank us, he just said the dog was used to the cold weather. And his little son was looking bad at us. We went from there as a shock, and after this incident, I realized that Czech people were rude and especially treated foreigners worse." As per Hofstede culture comparison tool (Fig. 6), Czechs in general have strong individualistic character embedded in their culture. when offered help, locals may simply refuse it for the above mentioned reasons.

An incident shared by a student from Italy, where students were discussing with the professor in Czech and few minutes later she found herself totally lost in the conversation. "I was attending a lecture with my friends from Erasmus group along with few Czech students. Suddenly one student raised a doubt in Czech language and the professor started to explain the student in Czech language. The whole conversation lasted about 5 minutes. I started feeling that my presence is neglected; I expected from the professor to convey me what the discussion is about, which unfortunately was not done by him."

One German student shared her experience which was the only positive response received in the whole study, " I really like SAVS in terms of student – professor relationship, classroom ambience, examination patterns, modules, timetables, academic information system, tolerance and acceptance. These things are very different from Germany and I feel Czech Republic is progressive especially SAVS has a futuristic approach to teaching learning process. However, I feel the older generation is still more attached to their traditional way of doing and getting things done. It can be witnessed in shopping centers where the que is a mile long in the cash counter where the self-service kiosk is empty. I am also aware that, in Germany even the millennials are still considering to adapt cashless payment for their daily shopping. In that way Czech culture is pragmatic compared to German".
The Lewis model supports this fact. Czechs are flexible, pragmatic and more open to accept changes when compared with German profile.

Table 3. Critical incident categorization

Critical incident categorization	No. of incidents
Language barrier	3
Religious views	3
Safety issues	3
Cultural norms	5
Communication barrier	4
Racism	2
Czech's behavior towards foreigners	3
Total	**23**

From table 3, 23 out of 40 responses are categorized under the major clusters and remaining 17 incidents were found to have no relevance with the host culture. It is evident from the nature of the incidents shared, the students exhibit no sign of moving in any orientation as described in the Berry's acculturation model. When each incident is examined closely, it proves that they are aware of the cultural differences and how its impacts their daily lives during their stay in Czech Republic. This may be due to the proper guidance provided by the international office during their course of students' stay in Czech Republic. Students are also aware of the fact that their stay is significantly shorter and they eventually return to their homes with new experiences gained from this venture abroad, therefore not exhibiting any specific acculturation path.

Like every other culture, Czech culture is different. Students should be made aware of the factors that cause the differences. They should be prepared and informed about the reality and potential incidents they may happen to face when they are in Czech Republic. In the next chapter it will be discussed about how to utilize the categorized data for drafting proposals that would benefit the international office and also the students on making the most out of their stay in Czech Republic.

5   Proposal for international office

Expected outcome of the research is to propose the essential changes to be done to improve the current situation of adaptation process for foreign students visiting SAVS on Erasmus – student exchange programs. Proposal to be drafted with critical findings from the data analysis part of the research as key inputs. This can help students to prevent situations that affect their adaptation process and enhances their experience during their stay in Czech Republic.

The Proposal is created based on critical incidents experienced by the students who studied in SAVS during the 2018 - winter and 2019- summer semesters. Data was collected from 23 students with the help of CIT technique, as mentioned in the chapter 2 and it was then processed by categorizing them under clusters as described in chapter 3 with the help of culture theories introduced by culture experts like Richard Lewis and Geert Hofstede. The processes related to drafting of training material will be discussed in detail under this chapter.

When drafting proposal for the international office at SAVS, optimum flow and consistency to be maintained from the beginning till the end. The new proposals when implemented should not make the students and the staff at international office to feel overwhelmed or confused due to the complex structure that makes them difficult to cope up with the adaptation process. From the data analysis section, it is evident from the fact that there are certain patterns found among critical incidents with similar characteristics, which are then categorized under clusters. Critical clusters with most number of responses to be addressed with high importance and the clusters with lowest number of responses to be prioritized as least important. Newly proposed structure should accommodate the above-mentioned fact of developing new initiatives on top of the existing modules to give a better picture of the overall adaptation process. After introducing the upgraded adaptation module in the upcoming semesters, expected outcome would be increased quality of stay experienced by new students compared to the old students (WS-2018 and SS-2019). Thus, further scope of this research is identified here.

Proposals are drafted with the most important cultures taken into consideration as suggested in the previous section. Initiatives to overcome the barriers caused by

language issues, lack of knowledge of other culture among participating students, cultural differences influenced by local standards are address as key issues while drafting the proposals.

Proposals to update the existing module based on the findings are as follows,

Prior to arrival
- New tool to track the application process directly by the students - This requires international office to constantly update the students application status and information to be made available for disposal.
- Request may be passed to partner organizations to conduct a preliminary workshop for the students in their home universities to give a heads up on what to expect from the exchange program
- Handouts (e.g. First step brochure) to be updated with current information – Annex no. 2.
- Information related to local standards like services offered at post office, processes related to sending and receiving parcels, buying a ride ticket in the local transportation system to be included in the handouts.

On arrival
- If possible Czech interpretation assistance to be provided in situations like opening a new bank account, post office related errands, visa related assistance at ministry of internal affairs, finding accommodation, setting up data connection (Wi-Fi), etc. List of places where students can get things done by communicating in English to be attached to the revised version of handout.
- Culture scale test (Annex no. 3) with focus on intercultural competence to make the students aware of their level of knowledge about other cultures, this should be conducted during the orientation week – to be customized with data relevant to participating student national culture profiles.
- Workshop about Czech culture with the help Hofstede 6-D model. Participants cultures to be compared and key differences are to be pointed out – i.e., areas most prone to create misunderstanding within the group

- Cross-cultural trainings to be provided by international office to departments that are in direct contact with the students e.g. Study affairs department. The content should focus on avoiding misconceptions that may happen due to the cultural differences.

- During the international dinners, International office staff to volunteer and ask students if they have any dietary restrictions like Kosher, Halal, allergies, etc. Should there be any students who has those restrictions they are to be informed prior about the restricted contents in the food.

- Students should be informed about the strong sense of individualism associated with the Czech culture; students may encounter events where the locals may refuse a student offering to help with a genuine intention.

- Students (especially students from Africa) should be informed about things to be kept in mind when travelling in the interior parts of the country, where some of the residents may have never come across a person with a darker skin complexion

- The students should be informed about taking precautions when they are travelling alone in the country and to be informed about areas that prone to cause threat to their safety

- Students to be consulted about their expectations and preferences before planning the tours to other parts of the country (e.g., Trip to Liberec)

- Outdoor activity like camping in the woods with opportunity to stay overnight to be considered as it may provide a chance for students to get to know each other better than in the conventional university set-up.

- Testimonials in the form of videos can be collected from the previous students and played to the incoming students during the orientation program

Nearing the end of the programme

- Feedback to be collected at least twice during their study to track their experience to get deeper insights about the adaptation process. This will help the international office to avoid problems in the future, that are faced by current students

- One more feedback round might be considered after students return to their home universities (perhaps after certain period of time when impressions are being processed and digested)

6   Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to focus on cultural adaptation process of incoming students via Erasmus program to Škoda Auto University, It intended to find out how well the students travelling from different parts of the world for the purpose of study adapt to the local conditions. For this purpose, a study on critical incidents students encountered during their stay was conducted in SAVS with the help of questionnaires, surveys and personal interviews. Based the findings, proposals were formulated with recommendations to improve the current situation

The students who arrived to the institution start uninformed, in most cases very few of them attended orientation courses in their home universities. Everything around them was new and the stages of culture shock approach them one by one once they started adapting to the local ecosystem. It is evident that critical incidents experienced by the students at SAVS have drawn a significant influence from the intercultural differences related to cultural encounters influenced mostly by communication & language barriers, religious differences and adherence to local standards. Hence, visiting students required individual approach and perhaps the existing module with improvisations (proposals) along with an active buddy system could be the best solution to address the issues.

With the help of the study results and recommendations, the future students with the assistance of international office may easily cope up with the local conditions and be able to understand the reasons behind the actions and reactions of the local/host culture-people. This will help them to understand the Czech culture so they will have a pleasant experience during their stay in the country and this experience will make them aware of things to expect in their futre ventures abroad.

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Figures and Tables

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Appendices

Appendix No. 1 Critical incident form

Source: Sieglová, D. 2018. Course: Module 1 – LS 2019. Critical incident form.

www.savs.moodle.cz

CRITICAL INCIDENT FORM   ERASMUS STUDENT

This study focuses on collecting "critical incidents", situations with a crucial significance to your future life. A critical incident is usually a revelatory moment, a turning point in your live that remains in your memory with maximum details and for a long time. Critical incidents can be both positive (you felt happy, proud, self-satisfied) and negative (you felt annoyed, insulted, embarrassed, humiliated). We are interested in any such moments related to your study in Czech Republic that happened prior to or during your stay and made you somewhat a different person.

In the box below, recall and describe **CRITICAL INCIDENTS** which:

- Made you stop and think
- Made you change your attitudes or beliefs
- Opened a new opportunity for you
- Made you to change your habits
- Increased your awareness – when you made a new realization
- Meant a threat or emergency
- Was difficult to handle
- Included a conflict or communication problem
- Was particularly demanding
- Made a strong impression on you
- Made you feel inadequate
- Made you feel ashamed or embarrassed
- Made you feel confronted
- Made you step out of your comfort zone
- ... any other situation that you find significant...

Provide a detailed description of the incident. Please, include all basic information - **WHERE** and **WHEN** it happened, **WHAT** happened, and **WHO** were all the participants.

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

Reflect on the incident. **WHY** do you think it happened?

...

...

...

Describe **YOUR ROLE** in the incident. What kind of **DECISIONS** did you have to make?

...

...

...

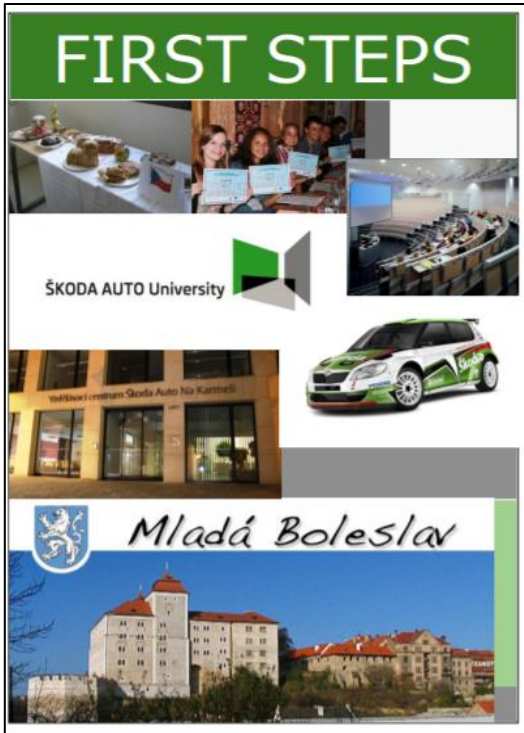Re-evaluate the incident. What did you **LEARN** from it? Would you do anything **DIFFERENTLY** next time?

...

...

...

Explain **HOW** this incident affected your **FUTURE LIFE**

...

...

...

AGE _____ GENDER_____ HOME COUNTRY _____ LENGTH OF
STAY IN CZECH REPUBLIC _____HOME UNI_____STUDY
MAJOR_____ YEAR OF STUDY_____REASON FOR STUDY ABROAD

Appendix No. 2 First steps brochure

FIRST STEPS

ŠKODA AUTO University

Mladá Boleslav

INTRODUCTION

You have decided to study at ŠKODA AUTO University and have already received an offer for a place on your chosen study programme. The aim of this brochure is to make your first steps as a student at ŠKODA AUTO University a little bit easier. The brochure provides you with all sorts of information to make your start a successful one.

We wish you success with your studies and entertaining student life at ŠKODA AUTO University.

FACTS ABOUT ŠKODA AUTO University

History

ŠKODA AUTO University was founded in 2000 as the first and so far the only company university in the Czech Republic. Its founder ŠKODA AUTO is seated in Mladá Boleslav and is one of the most important and most dynamically evolving companies in the Czech Republic and one of the largest brands of the Volkswagen group.

Since 2005 ŠKODA AUTO University has been a part of the Erasmus programme. In 2007 ŠKODA AUTO University received the Erasmus Extended University Charter.

ŠKODA AUTO University successfully passed the accreditation process of the American Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs in the year 2014, obtaining a prestigious institutional ACBSP accreditation according to all its standards. ACBSP accreditation is clearly beneficial both for students and graduates of ŠKODA AUTO University, adding a new dimension to their education and opening a path to other markets beyond Europe.

Study programmes

Bachelor degree
- Business Administration and Sales
- Business Administration and Operations, Logistics and Quality Management
- Business Administration and Financial Management

Master degree
- Corporate Finance Management in the Global Environment
- Marketing Management in the Global Environment
- Business Administration and Operations
- Law in the Global Business Environment

Preparation course
- Czech language and culture for foreigners

1 200 students from the Czech Republic and other countries

Location

The university is located in the old historic part of the town and is easily reachable from the main bus station, the train station Ml. Boleslav-Město, and by car.

Town of Mladá Boleslav

Mladá Boleslav lies 50 km north-west of Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. It is located on the perimeter of one of the most beautiful areas known as the Bohemian Paradise, which is a tourist area with many castles, chateaus, ruins and view-towers and other places of interest.

The town has a history older than a thousand years. After the second half of the 10th century prince Boleslav II founded a castle on the junction of the Jizera and the Klenice. A medieval town was established around the castle and has gradually developed over the years.

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The town's recent history is strongly connected with the automotive industry. According to the last census, Mlada Boleslav has 44,000 inhabitants and one third of them are employees of ŠKODA AUTO a.s.

ŠKODA AUTO

Few car companies can claim more than 100 years of continuous history. Our company is considered to be the third oldest in the world after Ford and Benz. In 1895 a bookseller V. Klement and a mechanic V. Laurin established a workroom for repairing bicycles. Four years later they constructed their first motorbike and in 1905 the first car was released under the name Laurin and Klement. In the period between the two world wars the company went through a tumultuous development, especially in 1925, when it became the part of Škoda company. After the Second World War the state was unwilling to invest monetary funds into Czech Business. In 1989 the Velvet Revolution swept communism from power, which resulted in a change of government. The following year the opportunity for innovation was opened and new business contacts were established. Essential reconstruction required financing and experience. A few large car companies put forward their plans and solutions. The best solution came from the Volkswagen Group and after its acceptance the corporation had 100 percent ownership.

University structure:

Partner institutions:

Partner universities within the EU:	Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Portugal, Island, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Croatia
Partner universities outside the EU:	China (Shanghai, Dalian), Russia, USA, India
Partners companies:	Audi Germany, Škoda Auto Deutschland, Volkswagen Germany, Bentley Motors Ltd., Škoda Auto United Kingdom, VW United Kingdom, VW Group Ireland, Škoda Auto Slovakia, VW Slovakia, VW Shanghai, VW Beijing, Audi Changchun, Škoda Auto India Private, VW Moscow, Audi Soul

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Address: ŠKODA AUTO University
Na Karmeli 1457
293 01 Mladá Boleslav
Czech Republic

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT STUDIES

Academic year

The academic year is always divided into two semesters - winter and summer. Each semester lasts 12 weeks (with the exception of the 5th semester which is shorter). The end of the winter semester is followed by a five-week examination period.

Throughout the academic year, it is necessary to continuously monitor the information and instructions of the Study Affairs Department / International Office which is sent to your AIS email account (Academic Information System).

Teaching

Classes at university are very different from classes at secondary schools as they are divided into two parts – lectures and practical seminars. Lectures take place in the main lecture halls and unlike practical seminars, they are sometimes not compulsory, however, this is defined by each lecturer individually. Students often perceive lectures as bothersome and counterproductive, whereas they are the main source of information for practical seminars and exams. Although they might not be exactly entertaining, attending them is worthwhile, because lecturers have a tendency to remember students who are particularly active. One university lesson equates to 90 minutes and some courses have two consecutive blocks which are 180 minutes in length and, with a break of 15 minutes. Except for in the first semester, schedules are created by students themselves and the application for creation of schedules is only launched on certain dates.

Credit system

Courses at ŠKODA AUTO University are evaluated using the credit system. Students may choose courses and create a study plan based on the rules of the specific study programme.

Bachelor studies
Studies are complete after obtaining at least 180 credits in the specified structure. At least 168 credits must be obtained from the specified group of obligatory courses for the relevant field of study, of which 20 credits for the course of English language with target level of at least B2 and 17 credits for a second foreign language with a target level of at least A2. For all international students of the Bachelor's degree programme in Czech language, with the exception of Slovaks and international students who have successfully completed their studies at a Czech or Slovak secondary school or have submitted a certificate of Czech language exam for foreigners with a level of at least B2 SERR, the second foreign language shall be Czech language for academic purposes. These students can choose a third optional language course if they wish. In addition, students must obtain at least 12 credits from optional courses specific for the given field of study, which are typically scheduled for the 6th and 7th semester and their current offer is updated before registration for courses for the given semester. It is obligatory for students to complete at least one course taught in English during their studies. Internship is a mandatory part of the curriculum for full-time study.

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Bachelor's degrees are awarded upon completion of:
- at least 180 credits gained in the manner set out by the field of specialisation
- the state exam;
- the successful defence of the Bachelor Thesis.

Master studies

Studies are complete after obtaining at least 120 credits in the specified structure. At least 105 credits must be obtained from the specified group of obligatory courses for the relevant field of study, of which 18 credits for a foreign language course with target level of at least C1. In addition, you must obtain at least 15 credits from optional courses specific for the given field of study. At least 10 credits of the total 120 must be obtained in courses taught in a foreign language. The Master's study programme is concluded with a state exam, which includes the defence of the Diploma Thesis. Students of the Master's programme register for the state exam after having obtained 120 credits and finishing and submitting their Diploma Thesis.

Master's degrees are awarded upon completion of:
- at least 180 credits gained in the manner set out by the field of specialisation;
- successful defence of the Diploma Thesis;
- the state exam.

Academic Information System (AIS)

The first important step you need for your studies at ŠKODA AUTO University is to become familiar with the Academic Information System (AIS) is.savs.cz. This system is used for all communication between students and the university. The AIS can be used to find the office hours of teachers, timetables (your own, your classmates', teachers' or classroom schedules), the status of your studies, the number of completed courses, obtained credits and many other useful pieces of information. The system also stores documents of the Study Affairs Department (applications for scholarships, change of study mode etc.) and documents related to individual courses etc. As well in the document server is placed a folder for foreign students (Document tree > International office > Information for international students).

Another important AIS element is your e-mail account which is created for all students at the beginning of their studies. We recommend that you check it regularly as all important notifications regarding your studies are sent here. It is also possible to forward your mail to a personal e-mail account.

We also recommend that you regularly read the notice board, where you can find lots of other important information (e.g. job opportunities, lost and found items, accommodation and much more).

An important information channel for students is also the university Facebook page - www.facebook.com/savs.mb, where you can find all the latest information about current events and activities.

ISIC/ALIVE card
- entry to the Mediatéka and computer classrooms
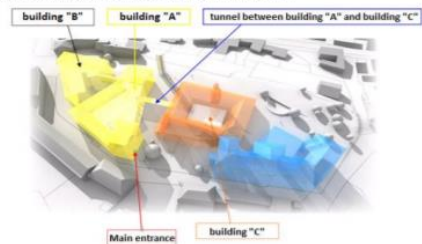- to pay for lunch or to use the copy machines

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- the ISIC/ALIVE card is available for every ŠKODA AUTO University student for free

Orientation of the university campus
- the campus is divided into three parts – buildings "A", "B" and "C"
- use to orientation maps located near to stairs in each floor

Building "A"
- main area of ŠKODA AUTO University
- all lectures, classes, lessons are undertaken here
- the two main auditoriums (A014 and A015) are located on the ground floor
- the canteen is next to the main entrance

Building "B"
- can be accessed from building "A" via the glass passages
- International Office and the Student union office

Building "C"
- former piarist monastery with the church of St. Bonavertura
- to get here use the underpass from building "A" – next to reception in building "A" go to basement and the through tunnel to building "C"
- the library and Mediatéka (study room equipped with PC´s)

In order for you to find your way around the campus you should become familiar with the numbering of the rooms.

- A229 – „A" represents the building, „2xx" means floor, „x29" is the room number
- A229 – „A" building, 2nd floor, room no. 29
- note: A-103 is not first floor, but „-" means the classrooms in the basement

---

Mediatéka
- mediatéka is a study room equipped with computers and copy machines
- located in Building „C"
- for entry use your ISIC card
- for study purposes it is possible to use the computer classrooms in building "A" if there are no scheduled classes

Copy machines
- the ISIC card can be used as a copy card
- you can credit your ISIC card at the top up machine on the second floor, opposite the Study Affairs Department
- please not the top up machine does not provide change
- it is only possible to obtain credit for copying and not for lunch

Lockers
- lockers are provided for bags, coats and personal items
- located in the basement of building "A"
- keys are available at reception
- if you lose the key then you will be fined 50 CZK

Library

The library is located in building 'C'. Upon your first visit to the library, it is necessary to register by completing a form. After that, you will be allowed to borrow virtually any of books, and the loan period is two months. After it expires, it is possible to extend it by one month (or after personal consultation with the librarian for even more). If you do not extend the loan period (via e-mail, phone or in person), you risk large fines. If the loan period is overdue, you will be notified via e-mail, after which the book must be returned within 10 days, or you must get the loan period extended. The books with a green dot in the upper part of the front cover are on one day loan only. The library is fairly well equipped and every student usually acquires the desired titles. The library also has a reading room, where (unlike the media library) everyone can study in a truly peaceful and quiet environment.

Internet

You will find free access in the study room (mediatéka) or in the computer classroom in the university building and there is free wi-fi on campus.

Wi-fi named: VCNK
Password: karmel2010

Student Union

The Student Union was founded in 2008 as a civic association to develop and organise sporting and cultural activities for students at ŠKODA AUTO University.

Activities:

- language courses (English and German)
- football Tuesdays
- floorball Wednesdays
- volleyball Tuesdays

- bowling
- fitness
- trips
- discos
- school magazine

- lectures
- guest speakers

Contact: facebook.com/savssu
susavs@seznam.cz

School canteen
- weekdays only
- prices for lunch between 30 – 50 CZK
- brunch 8:30 – 9:45
- lunch 10:30 – 14:00
- the card for lunch can be added from 8:30 – 9:45
- provided by Eurest; **www.eurest.cz**

RESIDENCE ISSUES

Residence permit

Different residence permit may be needed for entering the Czech Republic and staying in the country, depending on the nationality of the individual and the reasons for entering the country.

EU citizens

EU citizens don't need a residence permit. However one of the obligations ensuing from the Act on the Residence of Foreign Nationals for citizens of the EU, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, or Switzerland is the "reporting requirement" in the event that the length of the intended stay in the Czech Republic is longer than 30 days. In this situation, within 30 days of entering the Czech Republic, an individual is required to report his/her presence to the appropriate Foreign Police Department that holds jurisdiction in the location of his/her stay in the Czech Republic, unless your accommodation provider (a hotel or a student dorm) reported your arrival on your behalf.

Non-EU citizens

Non-EU citizens will need to apply either for long-term visa/long-term permit for the purpose of studying at the Czech Embassy or consulate in the country of permanent residence. Information providing you with the visa process are included in the document which has been sent to you with Notification of Admission called "Additional information for international applicants and applicants who received previous education abroad".

Make a distinction between a long-term visa and a long-term residence permit!

	Long-term visa for the purpose of study	Long-term residence permit for the purpose of study
In Czech	Dlouhodobé vízum za účelem studia	Dlouhodobý pobyt za účelem studia
Valid for	12 months	12 months up to 2 years
Basic information	It is not possible to change the purpose of the stay.	It is possible to change the purpose of the stay.
	Long-term visa is stuck on a travel document.	Holder of long-term residence permit receives biometric card.

Applicants for a long-term visa must submit all required documents on the date of submitting the application. In case you fail to submit all required documents, you will need to book a new appointment via the VISAPOINT. This will prolong the process considerably. If an applicant applies for a long-term residence and does not provide all documents on the day of the appointment, another appointment can be booked outside the VISAPOINT system.

Obligations upon arrival

Registration at Foreign Police Department

Upon arrival, students from non-EU countries are obliged to **register after arrival within 3 working days** with the Foreign Police, if it has not been done by the accommodation provider. Students from EU countries have the same obligations. We recommend that students register in person.

Within 3 working days of entering the Czech Republic, all foreign students arriving to receive a long-term residence permit are obliged to report to the Ministry of the Interior office in person for the purpose of carrying out activities associated with issuing a biometric residence card.

If you left a telephone contact number upon filing your application, you shall be contacted at this number to arrange an appointment for having your biometric data collected, or else, to collect your residence card. If you did not provide a contact phone number or Ministry officials are unable to contact you, you shall be invited in writing to provide your biometric data, or to collect your residence card within a specified time limit. In this case, you can arrange an appointment at the Ministry in advance by telephone.

Foreign Police (Department for Asylum and Migration Policy)

Address: Štefánikova 1304
Mladá Boleslav

Tel.: 974 820 680 (incl. telephone appointments)

Opening hours: Mo, We: 8.00 – 17.00
Tu, Th: 8.00 – 14.00
Fr: 8.00 – 11.00 (only for clients with an appointment)

The appointment at the Ministry officials can be arranged in advance over phone contact (as well from abroad). Otherwise you registration will be processed while-you-wait.

Official language is only Czech. Some officers are able to talk English however, we recommend that you prepare for the appointment or you have accompaniment. Students accepted for studying in English will have possibility to be accompanied during the Orientation week.

Registration for waste collection fee

As of 1st January 2013 a new amendment to the Act n. 565/1990 Sb. about the local fees for municipal waste collection has come into force. According to the act **foreigners with residence in Mladá Boleslav are obligated to pay the waste collection fee**.

All foreign nationals registered at the Foreign Police in Mladá Boleslav staying in the Czech Republic (in Mladá Boleslav) **for more than 6 months** per calendar year have to register for the charge of waste disposal.

Sanctions for late or incomplete payment:

The fine for late payment may amount up to 5 000 CZK, unless the fee is paid on time. The fee may be assessed for up to 3 former years and late payment may also involve additional administration fees of up to 50 % of the fine.

The charge of waste disposal is about 400 CZK/year.

The payer has the duty to inform or the duty of the payer to report to the fee administrator the existence of facts resulting in the commencement (within 15 days after the registration at the

Foreign Police in Mladá Boleslav) or a right to exemption from the fee payment within 15 days of such a fact occurred.

As well as the payer is obliged to **report to the fee administrator the existence of facts resulting in change or termination** (it is e.g. in case you decide to leave Mladá Boleslav in long-term, usually after study termination) of the duty to pay within 15 days of such a fact occurred.

Unless the payer informs the fee administrator about the existence of facts resulting in change or termination, sanctions for late or incomplete payment will be charged.

To register for the charge of waste disposal is possible:

- in person in the office no. 304, 3rd floor in Mladá Boleslav City Municipality (address: Komenského náměstí (square) 61, Mladá Boleslav)
- electronically – the enclosed form must be filled, signed and sent in format pdf at krizkovar@mb-net.cz

The City Municipality sends every April and October postal money order at address specified at the register form. The payment can be transferred half-yearly (2 x 200 CZK) or yearly (1 x 400 CZK).

It is recommended checking up-dated information at www.mb-net.cz

With respect to tax administration, the documents and meetings are only written/conducted only in Czech. Therefore, the application must be submitted in the Czech language.

The application form is available in excel document on http://www.mb-net.cz/komunalni-odpad/ds-1006/archiv=0&p1=1016.

Obligations during studying

1. Applying for an extension of your long-term visa/long-term permit

When: within 120 days and at least 1 day prior to the expiry date of the previous residence permit. If the last day of validity of the long-term visa or long-term residence permit is a non-working day (Saturday, Sunday, holiday), the last day the application may be submitted by a foreign national is the closest PREVIOUS working day. In the event that the end of the validity period is a working day which is not an office day, the application for validity extension of a long-term residence permit may be submitted for mail delivery on the last day of this period. This does not apply to applications that must be submitted in person; these applications must be delivered to the Ministry of the Interior no later than on the last day of the validity period. The fact that the last day of the validity period is a working day but not an office day, cannot generally be considered a reason, regardless of the cause, to prevent a foreign national from submitting the application. For this reason, all applications must be submitted in advance. **Where:** at the relevant office of the Ministry of the Interior. **How:** in person, by registered post or through an authorized representative.

What are the requirements of an application for an extension of a long-term visa/long-term permit?

1) Travel document; 2) study confirmation for following semester; 3) accommodation confirmation; 4) confirmation of sufficient financial resources for your stay; 5) confirmation of medical insurance in the Czech Republic; 6) minors need to submit their

statutory representative´s consent with the minor´s stay in the Czech Republic; 7) 2 photographs if your appearance has changed.

Important: If you want to know when you can get the study confirmation for following semester look at the Directive "Enrolments" Art. Early Enrolment.

The documents submitted with the application must not be older than 180 days, except for the travel document, birth and marriage certificates and the photograph. **Please note** that you must always submit either the original document or its copy authenticated by a notary public!

2. Reporting changes

It is your legal duty to report changes related to your residence!

Foreigners are **required to report changes to their address, last name, marital status, travel documents and residence documents** related to their stay in the Czech Republic, such as their residence card. Changes are reported at a relevant office of the Ministry of the Interior. **Where:** at the office of the Ministry of the Interior where you belong according to your new address. **When:** within 3 days from the date when the change occurred. **How:** in person or through a representative with the power of attorney.

3. Information related to the long-term residence permit for the purpose of study

How do I find out if my application has been processed?
If your application has been approved, you will find its reference number listed online at www.imigracniportal.cz. Also, the relevant office of the Ministry of the Interior will contact you unless you contact them first. If the processing of your application is suspended or the application is rejected, the Ministry of the Interior will send you a registered letter with the information about the result.

How is a biometric residence card issued?
If you find out from the website of the Ministry of the Interior that your application has been approved, you are advised do try to get an appointment for biometrics as soon as possible. After providing your biometric data, you will be given a date when you can return for your residence card. The approval of your application for a long-term residence permit becomes legally effective on the day you receive your residence card. Therefore, you need to pick up your residence card in person within 60 day from providing your biometric data. **Please note** that if you do not pick up your card within this deadline, the processing of your application will be suspended! In order for the decision on your application for a permanent residence permit to become legally effective, you need to waive your right to appeal at the office of the Ministry of the Interior.

4. I am a student of ŠKODA AUTO University and I will be going home for the summer holiday and returning back in September. How should I proceed to extend my stay in the Czech Republic?

There are two options:

A. Before the expiration of the previous long-term visa/residence permit, submit an application for extension of your stay, not earlier than 120 days and at least 1 day prior to the expiry date of the previous residence permit. (If the last day of validity of the long-term visa or long-term residence permit is a non-working day (Saturday, Sunday, holiday), the last day the application may be submitted by a foreign national is the closest PREVIOUS working day. In the event that the end of the validity period is

a working day which is not an office day, the application for validity extension of a long-term residence permit may be submitted for mail delivery on the last day of this period. This does not apply to applications that must be submitted in person; these applications must be delivered to the Ministry of the Interior no later than on the last day of the validity period. The fact that the last day of the validity period is a working day but not an office day, cannot generally be considered a reason, regardless of the cause, to prevent a foreign national from submitting the application. For this reason, all applications must be submitted in advance.) If your request will not be processed before your departure, cancel the proceedings and request a renewal of the proceedings after you return back to the Czech Republic. Based on the cancellation of the proceedings, apply for a so called "interim visa/residence sticker" at the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy. This sticker certifies your application and legality of your stay in the Czech Republic until your application has been officially processed. During this period, this sticker allows the holder to travel to/from the Schengen area. Maximum validity of the temporary sticker is 90 days.

B. Inform the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of your scheduled departure and provide them with your contact details so that they can contact you if necessary. Agree specifically with the clerk on your method of communication and how to proceed in the event your application will be processed while you are abroad or if any other documents need to be supplied for the purposes of the proceedings.

Remember that if you do not respond the notices and communicate with the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy / Alien Police, your application will be rejected within the due period.

5. **General information**

Loss of a travel document or a biometric card
It is obligatory to report the loss of a travel document immediately!
Where and when: report the loss immediately to the Police and within 3 days also to the relevant office of the Ministry of the Interior. **How**: in person or through your representative with the power of attorney.

Correspondence
The authorities may send you a registered letter with important information. The letter is considered delivered 10 days after its arrival to your post office, even if you do not pick it up after receiving a notification. It is also necessary to mark your mailbox and bell with your name, so that the mail carrier can reach you.

What happens if my mail carrier cannot reach me because I have not marked my mailbox with my name or because I do not live at my address?
The contents of the letter will be published in the form of a public announcement on the official notice board of the relevant office of the Ministry of the Interior and also on the ministry´s website. **Please note** that this letter will be considered delivered to you on the 15th day after this publication on the notice board. Please report your change of address or the extension of your rental agreement in due time!

Recommendation
Always carry your biometric residence card and medical insurance card with you when you are in the territory of the Czech Republic.
Do not pay for things that you can arrange on your own or with the help of the Ministry of the Interior.

Give your power of attorney only to people you trust!
Don't be afraid to try to arrange things on your own.
Visit www.imigracniportal.cz

Sending documents by post
If you send a document to the Ministry of the Interior by post, use REGISTERED post only and keep the receipt. It is your proof of the fact that you sent the letter.

The information line of the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic – answers only general questions in Czech and English. It does not provide information on specific case or the status of the application.
Phone: +420 974 832 421, +420 974 832 418
Email: pobyty@mvcrz.cz, www.imigracniportal.cz

PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT LIVING IN MLADÁ BOLESLAV

Accommodation

Pension Uno
Address: Nádražní 287, Čejetičky, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
web: uno.mbfirmy.cz

- app. 3 km far from the university
- fully equipped rooms
- parking
- the price for students is app. 2 700 CZK
- bus stop and main railway station nearby

Accommodation Na Karmeli
Address: Českobratrské náměstí 75, 29301 Mladá Boleslav
The price for students is app. 3 800 CZK
Contact: vjindrakova@seznam.cz

Private Flats in Mladá Boleslav
If you decide not to accept accommodation through the school then you can arrange to rent a private flat. The prices in Mladá Boleslav are about 7 500 CZK (without electricity and water fee) a month for a one room flat with a separate kitchen and bathroom, referred to as a one-plus-one.

Public transport

How to get around in Mladá Boleslav
- wide network of public buses
- from Pension UNO to ŠKODA AUTO University – bus line A (every 15 minutes)
- bus timetables can be found at **www.dpmlb.cz/index.php?page=jizdni-rady (only in CZ)**
- **map of bus stops on www.dpmlb.cz/dokumenty/2012-06-30/planek_120630.pdf**
- price for students per fare = 8 CZK

Telecommunications
There are three main providers in the Czech Republic and they usually offer mobile tariffs, prepaid services and mobile internet connection.

O2 Homepage: **www.o2.cz/osobni/en/**
T-Mobile Homepage: **http://t-mobile.cz**
Vodafone Homepage **www.vodafone.cz**

Foreign Currency Exchange Offices

Exchange office (shopping centre Kaufland)

- address: U Stadionu 1276, Mladá Boleslav
- in the shopping centre Kaufland
- transport link - bus line A, bus stop "KAUFLAND"

Exchange office
- address: třída T. G. Masaryka 841, Mladá Boleslav
- located on the main road – T.G.Masaryk, bus stop "U SPORTU"
✓ we recommend that you use the wide coverage of cash machines to get best exchange rate EUR/CZK
✓ exchange rate approximately 1 EUR = 27 CZK

Library of Mladá Boleslav
- located on Václava Klementa close to Česká Spořitelna
- annual fee 100 CZK for students
- 6 week loan period (can be extended)
- more info can be found at **www.kmmb.cz** (in Czech, English and German)

Culture

CineStar
- biggest cinema in Mladá Boleslav
- located in Bondy Centrum
- wide selection of films in English with Czech subtitles
- prices: 159 CZK for 2D and 199 CZK for 3D
- more info at **www.cinestar.cz**

Theatre
- Palackého Street 263
- Performances are only in Czech
- ticket prices range from 90 to 300 CZK
- programme info at **www.divadlo.cz/mdmb**

Dům Kultury (Culture House)
- Street Dukelská
- social events and balls are regularly held there
- more info at **www.divadylko-nadlani.cz**

✓ for more information about cultural events in Mladá Boleslav is available at the Infocentre Mladá Boleslav (**Železná, 107**) or website **www.kulturamb.eu**

Shopping

Bondy Centrum
- shopping centre located in the centre of Mladá Boleslav
- address: Tř. Václava Klementa 1459, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
- opening hours daily 9:00 – 21:00

- nearly 70 shops, supermarket Billa
- restaurants, cinema, bowling centre and bars
- homepage **www.bondy-centrum.eu**

Olympia

- located on the outskirts of the town
- address: Jičínská 1350/III, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
- open daily 9:00 – 21:00
- more than 50 shops, restaurants and cafes
- includes the supermarket Albert
- homepage **www.olympia-mb.cz**

Lidl

- two supermarkets in Mladá Boleslav
- address 1: Jičínská 1369, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
- address 2: Zahradní 1052, 293 06 Kosmonosy
- open daily
- **www.lidl.cz/cps/rde/xchg/lidl_cz**

Kaufland

- supermarket mainly for groceries
- open daily 6:00 – 22:00
- **www.kaufland.cz/Home/index.jsp**
- address: U stadionu 1276, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
- McDonalds is next to the supermarket

Tesco

- open **nonstop**
- address: Havlíčkova, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
- **www.itesco.cz/cs/obchody-tesco/extra-mlada-boleslav/**

Sport

Fitness Bunkr

- 1 session is 69CZK
- 1 month membership 990 CZK
- address: Havlíčkova 1000, Mladá Boleslav 293 01
- **www.fitnessbunkr.cz**
- opening hours daily   MO – FR 7:00 – 21:00;
                        SA – SU 10:00 – 20:00

Move Energy

- group classes
- Zumba, Yoga, Tae-Bo, Pilates, Flexi – Bar, Flowin etc.
- 1 class is 70 CZK
- for reservation +420 777 936 780
- **www.moveenergy.cz**

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Golf Mladá Boleslav

- golf green, golf academy, sauna, solarium, massage and restaurant
- pricelist
  www.golfmladaboleslav.cz/data/cenik.pdf
- **www.golfmladaboleslav.cz**

Swimming pool Mladá Boleslav

- address: Na Celně 1456
- length 25 m
- web **www.bazenmb.cz**

Football in Mladá Boleslav

- 1st league club FK Mladá Boleslav
- ticket prices 80 – 140 CZK
- homepage **www.fkmb.eu**
- possibility to hire a training pitch

Ice Hockey in Mladá Boleslav

- ice hockey match ticket prices 85 CZK
- address of Ice Hockey Stadium: Viničná 31, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
- homepage of hockey club **www.bkboleslav.cz**
- public ice skating (in summer in-line)

Food & Drink

Potrefená Husa

- wide selection of beers and wines
- delicious local cuisine and grill specialties
- address: Tř. Václava Klementa 445, Mladá Boleslav, 293 01
- 150 meters from Bondy Centrum
- **www.phmladaboleslav.cz**

Kebab house

- original Turkish kebab and oriental cuisine
- address: Mladá Boleslav, tř. Václava Klementa 1459
- in Bondy Centrum
- daily open

Steak House

- best grilled steaks in Mladá Boleslav
- address: Krátká 905, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
- **www.olympiacentrum.cz/steak-house/**

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Pizzeria Giovanni

- traditional Italian cuisine
- opening hours: daily 11:00 – 23:00
- address: Mládežnická 1117, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav II
- pizza delivery

Restaurant Zlatý kohout

- in the historical old town
- Czech cuisine specialities
- address: Staroměstské náměstí 15/31, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav
- **www.zlatykohout.cz**
- separate smoking and non-smoking sections
- Wi-Fi, and summer terrace

Forum

- restaurant and club
- disco every Friday and Saturday 20:00 – 4:00
- **http://forum-mb.cz**
- address: 17. listopadu 1296, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav

Angkor

- Cambodia and Thai restaurant
- homepage **www.angkorwat.cz/**
- address: Železná ulice 51, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav

KFC

- fast-food in Bondy Centrum
- address: třída Václava Klementa 1459, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav

McDonald´s

- address 1: U stadionu 1276/II, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav 1 (next to Kaufland)
- address 2: Jičínská 1359/3, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav

Onyx Café

- coffee bar
- web www.onyxcafe.cz
- address: Na Kozině 1 (5 min. from school)

Café Burget

- coffee bar
- web **www.cafeburget.cz**
- address: Komenského nám. 85 (2 min. from school)

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Tips for Trips

Mladá Boleslav´s Castle (Mladoboleslavský hrad)

- built in the 12th century
- located in the old town
- museum of Mladá Boleslav
- exhibitions "Memory of The Town", "The Country and its Changes in The March of Time", "Arms - Military weapons"
- Opening hours
  May - October 9am - 12am, 1pm - 5pm **November - April** 9am-12am, 1pm–4pm
- entrance fee 40 CZK (app. 1,50 EUR)
- **www.muzeum-mb.cz**
- address: Hrad 1 - Staroměstské náměstí, Mladá Boleslav 293 01

Church of St. Havel (Kostel Sv. Havla)

- built in the late Gothic style in 1539
- in the 18th century it was rebuilt in the Baroque style
- Renaissance and Baroque tombstones from the original cemetery inside
- address: Náměstí Míru 1387, Mladá Boleslav, 293 01

Town Hall (Radnice)

- opulent Renaissance Old Town Hall
- built between 1554 - 1559,
- work of Italian architect Matteo Borgorelli
- the facade is in the sgraffito decoration with scenes from the Old and New Testament, figures as evangelists and saints
- opened in 2001
- address: Old Town Square, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav

Church Nanebevzetí Panny Marie

- one of the most beautiful buildings in the town
- built in 1332
- rebuilt in a Baroque style in 1702 after a fire
- address: Kateřiny Militské 58, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav I

ŠKODA AUTO Museum

- close to the bus station and Bondy Centrum
- unique possibility to see the development of cars from the famous Czech car manufacturer
- guided tours in Czech, English, German and Russian
- address: Tř. Václava Klementa 294, 293 60 Mladá Boleslav
- adult admission 70CZK (app. 2,60 EUR)
- **http://new.skoda-auto.com/en/experience/museum/Pages/museum.aspx**

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Bohemian Paradise

- area of extraordinary natural diversity including characteristic sandstone rock towns, fauna and flora
- declared the first nature reserve in the Czech Republic in 1955
- situated between the towns of Mladá Boleslav, Jičín, Nová Paka and Semily
- **www.cesky-raj.info**

✓ More information about Mladá Boleslav at **www.mb-net.cz**

Health care

FIRST AID MEDICAL SERVICES

Laurinova 333, Mladá Boleslav

Telephone number: (+420) 326 326 444
Surgery hours: Mon – Fri   17:00 – 22:00
     Weekends and holidays   8:00 – 22:00

KLAUDIÁNOVA HOSPITAL (HOSPITAL FOR AREA OF MLADÁ BOLESLAV)

Info centre: (+420) 326 742 111
Non – stop service

DENTAL EMERGENCY

(+420) 326 743 721
Opening hours: Mon – Fri   7:00 - 19:00
     Sat – Sun   9:00 – 15:00

EMERGENCY PHARMACY

Palackého 150, hospital area
Phone: (+420) 326 743 603
Opening hours: daily   8:00 - 22:00

FACTS ABOUT THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The aim of this chapter is to provide you with practical information and general overview of the country.

Introduction

Czech flag	
The Large and Small State Emblems	
Land area	78,867 sq km
Population	10.5 million
	Almost 95% of inhabitants claim to be of Czech nationality, others to Bulgarian, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Romani, Russian, Greek, Slovak, Serbian, Ukrainian and other.
Currency	Czech Crown (CZK/Kč)
Capital	Prague; population 1.2 million
Other major cities	Brno, Ostrava, Pilsen, Olomouc, České Budějovice
Historic lands	The Czech Republic is in Central Europe and consists of 3 historical lands – Bohemia (western part), Moravia (eastern part) and Czech Silesia (north–west of the country).
Administrative division	14 self-governing regions and municipalities
Official language	Czech
Geographical location	Central Europe

Neighbouring countries	Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Poland
European Union member	Yes, since 2004
Euro currency in use	No
Schengen area member	Yes, since 2007
President	Miloš Zeman (2013)
Government	Parliamentary democracy with president as the head of state and prime minister as the head of government.
Time zone	GMT+1 (U.S. EST+6, PST+9), Daylight Savings Time observed
Religion	Most of the population (ca 60%) is irreligious, approx. 30% inhabitants claims to belong to a certain church or a religious community.
Climate	Temperate, four seasons, a mix of ocean and inland climate, changeable winters, warm summers. The average daily temperature in January, the coldest of winter months is about -2°C, in July, the warmest month, about 25°C .
Voltage	230 Volts/50 Hz
Country calling code	00420 / +420
Public holidays	January 1, May 1, May 8, July 5, July 6, September 28, October 28, November 17, December 24 - 26
Foreign languages spoken	English (younger generation), German (older generation)
Travel documents	Passport or national ID card not required (but advised) for EU nationals arriving from a passport-free Schengen country; valid passport required for all other citizens.
Safety	Low rate of violent crime, high rate of pickpocketing and car theft.

Geography

Land boundaries	Austria 362 km, Germany 815 km, Poland 615 km, Slovakia 197 km
Terrain	Bohemia in the west consists of rolling plains, hills, and plateaus surrounded by low mountains; Moravia in the east consists of very hilly country
Elevation extremes	lowest point: Labe (Elbe) River 115 m, highest point: Snezka 1,602 m
Natural resources	hard coal, soft coal, kaolin, clay, graphite, timber
Land use	arable land: 40.12%. permanent crops: 0.96%, other: 58.92%

Natural hazards	flooding
Environment – current issues	Air and water pollution in areas of northwest Bohemia and in northern Moravia around Ostrava present health risks; acid rain damaging forests; efforts to bring industry up to EU code should improve domestic pollution.

History

Brief overview	The oldest historically documented ethnic group were Celts from the beginning of the 4th century B.C. From the 6th century, the area was settled with Slavic tribes that formed the so-called Samo Empire in the 7th century. After 820, the first documented polity was formed, partially also in the are of the present republic – Great Moravia with which the beginnings of Christianity are related in this area. After its fall, creation of statehood moved to Bohemia by the beginning of the 10th century. The Přemysl´s dynasty achieved consolidation of the Czech state in 995.
	From the middle of the 12th century, economic and cultural prosperity began; it was also supported by influx of German colonists. In the 13th and 14th century, the Czech state improved and stabilized on the inside, grew economically and achieved the greatest prosperity in its history. Development of education is documented by establishment of a university by the king **Charles IV** in Prague in 1348 (Today´s Charles University). The deep social depression in Europe as well as within the Czech state at the turn of the 14th and 15th century led to the **Hussite movement** that transformed from the original movement for the Church reformation into a militarized popular resistance – the Hussite wars. Since the Middle Ages, the borders of the main historical countries have not change very significantly, other lands were always only a temporary part of the Czech state. In 1526, the Lands of the Bohemian Crown became a part of the **Hapsburg Empire**.
	After the fall of the monarchy (the Austro-Hungarian Empire), Czechoslovakia was formed of the historical Czech lands (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia) with parts of the former Kingdom of Hungary (Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia) as one of the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (related to the personality of T. G. Masaryk) due to the World War I in 1918. After the **Munich Agreement of 29. 9. 1938**, the Nazi Germany occupied the Czech borders (this was also supported by the disloyal approach of a considerable part of German national minority towards the Czech state); subsequently, Germany occupied also the remainder of the land and established the **Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia**. In Slovakia, an autonomous state was established which became a Nazi Germany satellite. After the World War II, the Czechoslovakia was renewed in 1945 (without Carpathian Ruthenia) and at the same time, a three-million German minority was displaced and forced out of the country. In February 1948, the Communist party performed a coup d´état and introduced a totalitarian rule in the country. In the 1960s, the totalitarian rule was partially loosened; this was however stopped in **August 1968** by a **military intervention** by the USSR and other countries of the Warsaw

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Pact.

The fall of the Communist regime in November **1989** (so-called "Velvet Revolution") allowed renewal of multi-party democracy). In December 1989, Václav Havel (one of the founders of the underground movement Charter 77) was elected the first non-Communist president since 1948. In the following years, withdrawal of the Soviet occupation forces was achieved and there were some democratic reforms within the state. By the end of 1992, the Czech and Slovak sides reached an agreement of division of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic into two autonomous states. **By 1 January 1993, the Czech Republic came to origin** due to the break of the Federal Republic. The Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004.

Independence	**1 January 1993** (Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia); note - although 1 January is the day the Czech Republic came into being, the Czechs commemorate 28 October 1918, the day the former Czechoslovakia declared its independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as their independence day
Famous Czechs	**Charles IV.** (1316 – 1378) King Charles IV (Karel IV), Czech king and Holy Roman Emperor. He founded Central Europe's first university and initiated the construction of many of Prague's great Gothic monuments. During his reign, Prague grew into one of the largest and most important cities in Europe. **John Amos Comenius (Jan Ámos Komenský)**(1592 – 1670) Comenius wrote several textbooks on education (e.g. Orbis Pictus), which were so original that they won him the name "the father of modern education". **František Palacký** (1798 – 1876) Czech nationalist and historian. He is considered to be the "father of the modern Czech nation". Palacký played a leading role in the Czech cultural and national revival of the 19th century. **Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk** (1850 – 1937) The first Czechoslovak president, under whose presidency Czechoslovakia was a strong democratic country and one of the most developed countries in the world. Apart from being politician, Masaryk was also a philosopher and a sociologist. **Václav Havel** (1936-2011) A Czech writer, dramatist and politician. His first publicly performed full-length play, The Garden Party (1963), presented in a season for the Theatre of the Absurd, won him international acclaim. Havel became a leading figure in the Velvet Revolution of 1989. He was the ninth and last President of Czechoslovakia and the first President of the Czech Republic.

Living in the Czech Republic

Cost of living	The average living costs of students range from 8 500 CZK /month, incl. meals, accommodation, public transport and culture. Dependent on

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student´s needs and interests.

Dormitory	3 000 – 4000 CZK / month
Private flat	from 8 000 CZK / month
Lunch at the school canteen	around 50 CZK / meal
Restaurant meal	from 120 CZK / meal
A loaf of bread	from 25 CZK
1 kg of meat (chicken)	from 100 CZK
Dairy products	from 25 – 50 CZK
Cinema ticket	from 100 CZK
Theatre ticket	from 100 CZK

Public holidays	People usually don't work on these days. Schools, shops, banks, post offices and hospital outpatient departments are closed.

January 1	Foundation Day of the Czech Republic in 1993
Easter Monday	Easter Holiday
May 1	Labour Day
May 8	Liberation Day: the end of World War II
July 5	The feast of St. Cyril and St. Methodius: the arrival of the Christian missionaries sent from the Byzantine Empire to the Czech Lands
July 6	Jan Hus Day: commemoration of the religious reformer's death at the stake in 1415
September 28	St. Wenceslas' Day: in remembrance of the patron saint of the Czech State
October 28	Czechoslovak Statehood Day: this day commemorates the establishment of democratic Czechoslovakia in 1918
November 17	Freedom and Democracy Day – commemorating the anti-Communist demonstrations of 1989
December 24	Christmas Eve
December 25, 26	Christmas Holidays

Local cuisine	Traditional Czech cuisine reflects the influence of neighbouring countries: German roast goose, Austrian schnitzel, Hungarian goulash, etc. Typical Czech food is mostly based on meat, flour and sauce. In recent times, Italian cuisine and healthy diets have become fashionable among young people. Vepřo-knedlo-zelo: roasted pork served with sour cabbage and dumplings; the most typical Czech dish. Svíčková: pot-roasted marinated beef in a rich creamy vegetable sauce, served with cranberries, whipped cream and dumplings. Ovocné knedlíky: fruit-filled dumplings, served with sugar and curd. Koláče: small pastries topped with almonds, poppy seed, jam, or a sweet curd cheese.

Vocabulary	**Pozdravy**	**Greetings**
	Dobrý den	Good day (suitable for use all day)
	Na shledanou	Good-bye

Ahoj	Hello (also Bye) – informal greeting
Děkuji	Thank you
Není zač	Not at all, you're welcome.
Promiňte	I'm sorry. Excuse me.
Prosím	Please
Jak se máte?	How are you?
Jmenuji se …	My name is …
Neumím česky.	I don't speak Czech.
Mluvíte anglicky?	Do you speak English?
Kolik to stojí?	How much does it cost?
Cena	Price
Kde je…?	Where is…?
Nevím.	I don't know.

Osobní údaje	**Personal data**
Příjmení	Surname
Jméno	First name
Datum narození	Date of birth
Země	Country
Bydliště	Residence; Address
Povolání	Profession
Pas	Passport

Nápisy	**Notices**
Divadlo	Theatre
Hospoda	Inn, Pub
Jízdní řád	Timetable
Kino	Cinema
Letiště	Airport
Nemocnice	Hospital
Pokladna	Box Office, Cash Counter
Policie	Police
Pošta	Post Office
Pozor!	Watch out!
Příjezdy/Odjezdy	Arrivals/Departures
Restaurace	Restaurant
Směnárna	Bureau de Change
Stanice	Station/s, stop/s
Vchod	Entrance
Východ	Exit
Zavřeno/Otevřeno	Closed/Open
Záchod(ky), toalety	Lavatory, toilets

Education system

Education is based on equal approach to education with no discrimination, on taking education needs of an individual into account, on mutual respect, opinion tolerance, solidarity and respect for dignity of all education participants. Primary and secondary education of citizens of the Czech Republic or any other EU Member State in schools operated by the state, region or municipality is free. The education system allows everyone to educate themselves for their entire lives.

Preschool education is offered at créches and nursery schools as a complement to family-based education.

Elementary education – nine-year school attendance is compulsory from the age of 6 till the age of 15.

Secondary education - pupils who have fulfilled their nine-year compulsory school attendance can apply for study at secondary schools. Secondary education can be achieved by students also in their eighth class level or, more precisely, six-year grammar schools at which they have already completed several classes of elementary education.

Tertiary education - tertiary education is included in studies following a completed secondary education with a leaving exam. Tertiary education includes advanced vocational and university education.

Higher vocational education - The teaching system is almost identical with the system at the college or vocationalcollege; however, certain rules of secondary education apply (holidays, fixed timetables, etc.). Higher vocational education deepens upon general and professional knowledge and takes three years in the daily form, hands-on training included, and three and a half years for medicine and certain other fields of study. Studies are completed with a certificate, a specific exam on selected subjects, a practical exam and the defence of a graduate examination paper. Of course, everything in relation to the subject studied. Together with the certificate, students are awarded the title of certified specialist (the abbreviation Dis. is added after a surname).

University education is available to all applicants with completed secondary education (i.e. leaving exam), who successfully pass the entrance exam. The system of entrance exams is specified individually by each college, and serves for testing the knowledge and skills of applicants.

Most universities have the following accredited degree programmes:

Bachelor's: Usually a three-year course of study in which students receive an elementary overview of highly specialized areas. Students can either leave their studies after these three years, or they can complete it by means of a leaving exam including defence of a Bachelor's thesis, or may continue into the Master's programme, where they can achieve a narrower specialization.

Master's: Operates either as a five-year (or, more precisely, six-year), or two-year programme following Bachelor studies. During the course, students gain both a basic overview of highly specialized subjects and a certain level of specialization. The programme culminates with students taking required state leaving exams and defending their diploma theses.

Engineering: Relates to technical and economic fields.

After students pass these types of university study, some continue in their specialization through Doctoral programmes. Passing these programmes is often conditioned on certain publication work and sometimes also by training.

At college, students can study either in attendance form (formerly daily study), distance form (formerly extramural studies), or combine both forms of study (combined study).

Besides standard types of study, colleges offer also other forms of education: retraining study, third age university, studies oriented toward pedagogical qualification, etc.

Some schools in the CR provide study programmes leading to the Degree of Master's of Business Administration (MBA).

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Further education - within the frame of ongoing education programmes, universities implement a variety of courses intended e.g. for those who are interested in study, university graduates, seniors, and also students and employees interested in studies. The courses focus either on learning a skill or trade, or on the study of areas of interest. In addition, some universities organize so-called Third age universities. This is intended for seniors who are interested in gaining new knowledge in selected areas of study, and is usually free.

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TRANSPORT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Public transport

The public transportation system in the Czech Republic is generally reliable, safe and cheap. The system covers buses, trains, trams and in Prague metro as well.

Municipal transport

The municipal transport includes primarily (the system varies according to the city size and local situation) transport by bus, tram, trolleybus or subway(only Prague). The transport is paid and every city has its own tariff system. It is necessary to pay transport fees also for transport of dogs and luggage in case they fail to meet conditions of free transport. Payment of the transport fee is checked by ticket controllers and failure to pay the fee is penalized with a high fine.

More detailed information about the transport fees and schedules may be obtained in person, via telephone or on the Internet website of the individual public transport companies.

In some cities of the Czech Republic, the transport is integrated which means that tickets for the applicable zone designed for city transport may also be used for suburban transport in the outlined area of the cities and between them. In integrated transport systems, the individual transport types (bus, train, etc.) cooperate and form a network of interwoven lines with a unified tariff, transport conditions and regular intervals between the lines.

In Mladá Boleslav you can pay only with coins! The bus machines do not pay back.

Intercity transport

Intercity transport in the Czech Republic includes primarily bus or train transport. Domestic air transport is used only marginally, between the biggest cities (Prague, Brno, Ostrava). Intercity bus transport is provided by a wide range of transport providers in the Czech Republic. Each of these providers has their own tariff system that offers single tickets as well as pre-paid passes. Similarly as public transport companies, most bus transport providers offer discounts for certain passenger groups (e.g. to students, disabled people, seniors, children up to a certain age, etc.).

More information on the amount of bus or railway transport fees, discounts, transport conditions and schedules is available e.g. on the website **www.idos.cz**, in information centres or at bigger bus stations or railway station.

This website allows searching connections in every type of transport separately or combined and therefore finds an optimum connection.

Public transport in Prague

The best way to get around Prague is by metro. The Prague metro is an open ticket system. Passengers are obliged to buy and validate a ticket before entering the metro platform. There are uniformed ticket inspectors who have the right to check the validity of the ticket at any time inside the metro area.

At the metro entrance be sure to stamp your ticket in the machine otherwise it is invalid and you will be liable for a fine as ticket inspectors regularly patrol metro stations. The price of a short trip (max. five stops only on one line) is 24 CZK, for a one hour trip it is 32 CZK and for all day ticket it is 110 CZK. You can change lines with the last two tickets, providing it is within

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the designated time period. Please also note that you may also have to purchase a ticket for large luggage.

✓ **payment only in CZK**

You need to purchase your ticket(s) before traveling and you can get these in the airport at the transport information desk, which is in the arrivals hall. Choose 90 min.

If you have luggage larger than 25x45x70 cm then you need to buy a ticket for it as well.

Please note that employees on public transport usually do not speak English.

The right to drive

The right to drive is necessary in order to drive a vehicle in the Czech Republic; it is documented by a driving license. The holder of the driving license is obliged to carry the driving license when driving a vehicle on him/her and to submit it to control upon request.

A driving license issued in a European Community member state also entitles its holder to drive motor vehicles in the Czech Republic; driving license and an international driving license. If you are not sure whether your driving license issued by a foreign country is valid in the Czech Republic you can ask at the Ministry of the Interior office CR for more information.

In the Czech Republic, utilization of a selected network of motorways and highways is subject to a fee payment. Payment of a highway fee is documented with a highway coupon. Highway coupons are available at petrol stations, in the Czech Post offices, at frontier crossings or auto-clubs. It is possible to purchase coupons valid for one year, one month or ten days.

Maximum speed in the Czech Republic:

city: 50 km/h
outside the city: 90 km/h
highway: 130 km/h

In the Czech Republic it is not allowed to drive a car after the consumption of alcoholic beverages or other drugs regardless of the quantity of the consumption.

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How to Get From Prague Airport to Mladá Boleslav

a. Take a bus to a metro station

Bus Nr. 119 Airport - Dejvická (Metro line A)
Bus Nr. 100 Airport - Zličín (Metro line B)
Bus Nr. 179 Airport - Nové Butovice (Metro line B)
Bus Airport Express Airport - Main railway station

Travel by metro to either the last metro station **Černý Most** on the yellow B line (Bus station)

or

to the station **Hlavní nádraží** (Main train station).

b. Find a connection to Mladá Boleslav (you can use portal www.idos.cz)

By bus

a. From Černý Most – last metro station on yellow B line
b. Take the bus to Mladá Boleslav (Bondy Centrum)

- price for one bus route around 70 CZK (please note that you will also pay extra for luggage)
- very good connection which runs approximately every 20 minutes

By train (you can use portal www.idos.cz)

a. Travel by metro to the station Hlavní nádraží (Main railway station)
b. Travel by train to Mladá Boleslav (Main train station – Hlavní nádraží); price is around 100 CZK

Map of the metro stations in Prague

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How to Get to ŠKODA AUTO University/Accommodation Na Karmeli

School address:
ŠKODA AUTO University, Na Karmeli 1457, Mladá Boleslav

Accommodation Na Karmeli – address:
Českobratrské náměstí 75, Mladá Boleslav

From the main train station in Mladá Boleslav

a. Take the bus Line A.
b. Get off the bus at the stop **Náměstí míru**.
c. Look at the Map 1 and the follow black line.

From the bus station (Bondy Centrum) in Mladá Boleslav

a. Go to the bus stop **Václava Klementa** next to Bondy Centrum.
b. Take the bus C and get off at **Komenského náměstí**.
   On foot follow the directions on map 1
   or
   On foot from the bus station and follow the directions on the Map 2 (15 minute walk)

- Price for one trip by public transport bus is 15 CZK. (You can purchase tickets on the bus. It is possible to pay only with coins.)

Map 1: Náměstí Míru -> ŠKODA AUTO University / Accommodation Na Karmeli

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Map 2: Bus station -> ŠKODA AUTO University / Accommodation Na Karmeli

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How to Get to Pension UNO (Accommodation)

Address:
Čejetičky – U Cukrovaru 287, 293 01 Mladá Boleslav

From the main train station in Mladá Boleslav
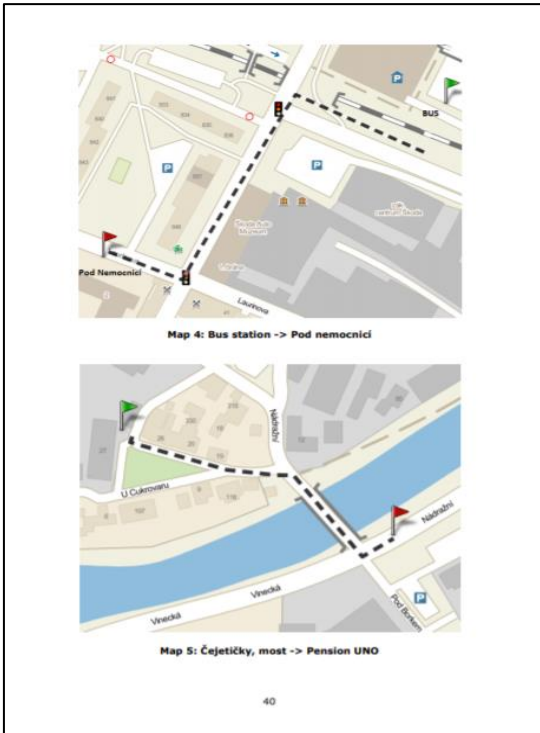
a. On foot follow the directions on map 3 (300 m).

Map 3: Main train station -> Pension UNO

From the bus station (Bondy Centrum) in Mladá Boleslav

a. On foot follow the directions on map 4 to the bus stop **Pod nemocnicí**.
b. Take the bus line A and get off at **Čejetičky, most**.
c. On foot follow the directions on map 5 (200 m).

- Price for one trip on public transport bus is 15 CZK. (You can purchase tickets on the bus. It is possible to pay only with coins.)
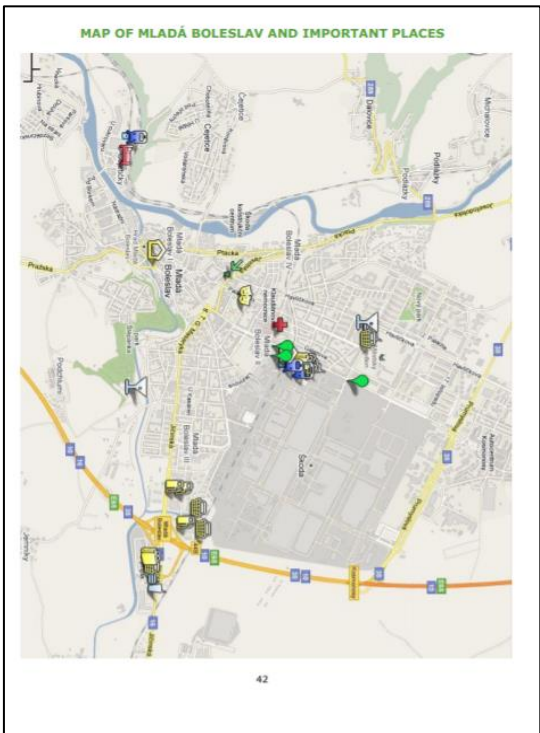
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Map 4: Bus station -> Pod nemocnici

Map 5: Čejetičky, most -> Pension UNO

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From ŠKODA AUTO University

a. Look at Map 1 and go to the bus stop **9. Května**
b. Take the bus line A and get off at **Čejetičky, most**.
c. On foot follow the directions on map 5 (200 m).

Useful Links

✓ public transport connections in the Czech Republic **www.idos.cz**
✓ information about Prague airport and transportation links **www.prg.aero**
✓ information about public transport in Prague **www.dpp.cz**

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MAP OF MLADÁ BOLESLAV AND IMPORTANT PLACES

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Škoda Auto Vysoká škola, a. s.
Budova vysoké školy a sídlo Studentké unie Škoda

Penzion UNO
Oficiální kolej ŠAVŠ http://uno.mbfirmy.cz/

Bondy centrum
http://www.bondy-centrum.eu tř. Václava Klementa

Cinestar
http://www.cinestar.cz/flash/index.aspx Bondy

Nemocnice / Hospital
http://www.klaudianovanemocnice.cz/ V. Klementa

Olympie MB - shopping
http://www.olympia-mb.cz/ Jičínská 1350/III 293 01

mcdonald's

KFC
http://www.bondy-centrum.eu/ Bondy centrum tř.

RESTAURACE KOLIBA
Na Štěpánce 1184 293 01 Mladá Boleslav tel: +420

Městské divadlo Mladá Boleslav
http://www.mdmb.cz/index.php Palackého 263. 293

McDonald's
Jičínská 1350. 293 01 Mladá Boleslav III (Olympia

Interspar Jičínská

Albert Hypermarket
http://www.olympia-mb.cz/ Jičínská 1350/III 293 01

Lidl
Adresa: Jičínská 1369. 293 01 Mladá Boleslav III

Billa
tř. Václava Klementa 1459. 293 01 Mladá Boleslav II

Kaufland
U stadionu 1276. 293 01 Mladá Boleslav II Zelená

Muzeum - Škoda Auto
Škoda Auto Muzeum Václava Klementa 294 293 60

OMV Jičínská I. čerpací stanice

OMV Jičínská II

Shell Mladá Boleslav

Muzeum / Castle
http://www.muzeum-mb.cz/ Muzeum

Olympia Centrum - Bowling
Zábavní komplex Olympia Centrum Krátká 905

Škoda 8. brána

Škoda 1. brána

Technická knihovna
Průchod přes 1. bránu

Mladá Boleslav - Hlavní nádraží
Hlavní vlakové nádraží

Mladá Boleslav - město
Nádraží město

Autobusové nádraží

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ŠKODA AUTO University

Appendix No. 3 Culture scale test

Arrange the cultures in the scales below and explain the reason behind.

Cultures: German, Czech, Italian, Russian, Slovakian & Turkish

Power distance
Index

Hierarchical   Egalitarian

Individualism vs
Collectivism

Individualistic   Collectivistic

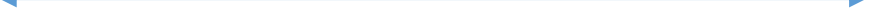**Masculinity vs**
Femininity

Masculinity   Femininity

Long-term vs
Short-term
Orientation

Long-term   Short-term

Uncertainty
Avoidance
Index

High   Low

Restraint vs
Indulgence

Restraint   Indulgent

ANNOTATION

AUTHOR	**Kader Mohideen Tariq Mohamed Uthuman**
SPECIALISATION	Marketing Management in the Global Environment
THESIS TITLE	**The Impact Of Critical Incidents On Cultural Adaptation During Student Exchange Programs**
SUPERVISOR	**Mgr. Dagmar Sieglová, M.S.Ed., Ph.D.**

DEPARTMENT	**KMM - Department of Management and Marketing**	**YEAR**	**2019**

NUMBER OF PAGES	**71**
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NUMBER OF TABLES	**3**
NUMBER OF APPENDICES	**3**

SUMMARY	This master thesis is focused on analysis of critical incidents of incoming students on Erasmus program to Skoda Auto University. The purpose of this work is to recommend proposals to international office to enhance the adaptation process for the foreign students. The theoretical part defines terms of culture - diversity, intercultural communication & competence and culture theories like Lewis model and Hofstede cultural dimensions. The critical incidents were collected from the students with the help of CIT technique. In the practical part, it is discussed how the data collection was performed using response forms, personal interviews and online survey; the collected data is then analyzed for common patterns in them. Based on the observed patterns the responses were categorized under major clusters like language barrier, race and religious differences, safety issues, etc. Recommendations are made to international office to improve the current module of adaptation process to further enhance them so the students visiting Skoda Auto University for the purpose of study in the future would have a pleasant experience during their stay in Czech Republic.
KEY WORDS	**Culture shock, Critical incidents, Cultural adaptation, Student exchange program.**

THESIS INCLUDES UNDISCLOSED PARTS: Yes	