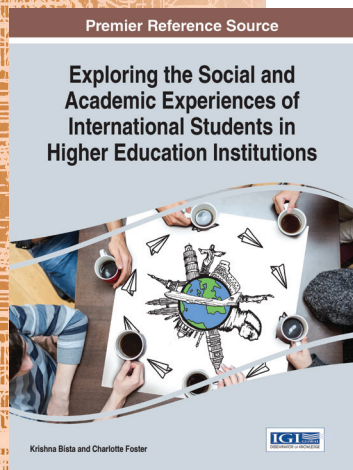


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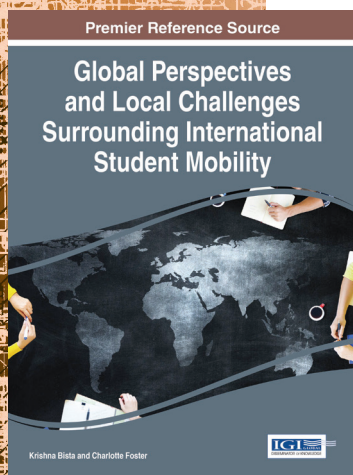


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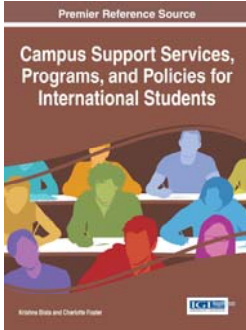
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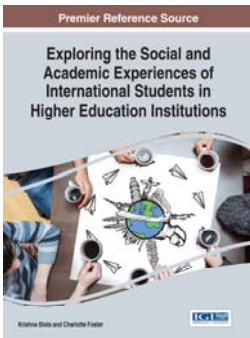
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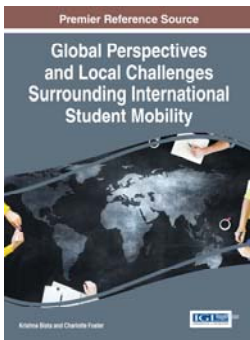
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Krishna Bista, *Editor-in-Chief/Founder*
University of Louisiana at Monroe (USA)

Contributors

1. Anne-Maree Sawyer, *La Trobe University, Australia*
2. Bo Chang, *Ball State University, USA*
3. Christina W. Yao, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA*
4. Cody J. Perry, *University of Wyoming, USA*
5. Eun Jeong (Esther) Lee, *Clafin University, USA*
6. Eunyoung Kim, *Seton Hall University, USA*
7. Haijun Kang, *Kansas State University, USA*
8. Helen Forbes-Mewett, *Monash University, Australia*
9. Kah Loong Chue, *National Institute of Education, Singapore*
10. Katherine C. Aquino, *Seton Hall University, USA*
11. Larry Austin, *University of Phoenix, USA*
12. Libi Shen, *University of Phoenix, USA*
13. Mingsheng Li, *Massey University, New Zealand*
14. Nara M. Martirosyan, *Sam Houston State University, USA*
15. Peter G. Ghazarian, *Keimyung University, Korea*
16. Reema Negi, *Seton Hall University, USA*
17. Taghreed A. Alhaddab, *Seton Hall University, USA*
18. Youyan Nie, *National Institute of Education, Singapore*

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An interdisciplinary, peer reviewed publication, *Journal of International Students* (Print ISSN 2162-3104 & Online ISSN 2166-3750) is a professional journal that publishes narrative, theoretical and empirically-based research articles, student reflections, and book reviews relevant to international students and their cross cultural experiences and understanding. Published quarterly, the Journal encourages the submission of manuscripts from around the world, and from a wide range of academic fields, including comparative education, international education, student affairs, linguistics, psychology, religion, sociology, business, social work, philosophy, and culture studies.

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- a) **Peer-reviewed Article** - includes manuscripts that focus on the interpretation, implication, or significance of research work related to international students and scholars from various disciplines (between 4,500 to 7,500 words).
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For further information

Krishna Bista

Editor-in-Chief/Founder – *Journal of International Students*

<http://jistudents.org/>

E-mail: contact@jistudents.org

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“THERE are three cycles in the life of a foreign student in America: first, his thoughts before he comes to America; second, his impressions on arrival; and third, his self-reckoning on Graduation Day. I have lived through these three cycles. Picture the foreign student in his [her] home town, thousands of miles away. It may be in Persia, in China, or in the hinterlands of the West Indies. Wherever it is, the picture is much the same.”

- Arthur A. Young (*America*, January 23, 1926. p. 347)

International Students and Mental Health

Helen Forbes-Mewett
Monash University, Australia

Anne-Maree Sawyer
La Trobe University, Australia

ABSTRACT

Since the early 2000s, reports of increased rates of mental ill health among young people worldwide have received much attention. Several studies indicate a greater incidence of mental health problems among tertiary students, compared with the general population, and higher levels of anxiety, in particular, among international students compared with domestic students. Australia is host to many thousands of international students of an age when mental illnesses are most likely to surface. However, this issue has received little attention from Australian researchers. This article reports on in-depth interviews with 16 professionals working with international students at an internationalized university.

Keywords: international students, youth, mental health, health-care, integration and adjustment, higher education

Since the early 2000s, mental health policies of western countries have prioritised the development of early intervention and treatment programs specifically targeted to young people. These policy developments have been driven in part by recognition of the impacts of untreated and under-treated mental illnesses on the growth and development of young people, their educational and occupational achievements, and ultimately their nations' economic prosperity (Gore, Bloem, Patton, Patton, Ferguson, Joseph, Coffey, Sawyer, & Mathers, 2011; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; McGorry, 2011; Patel, Flisher, Hetrick, & McGorry, 2007). These concerns are also part of a broader context of widespread and debated claims that mental well-

being has been declining in western countries since the Second World War (e.g. Busfield, 2012; Collishaw, Maughan, Natarajan, & Pickles, 2004; Horwitz & Wakefield, 2007).

Of particular concern are reports that the greatest increase in mental health problems has been among young people (Collishaw et al., 2004; Fombonne, 1995). The latest Australian National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing shows that the highest rate of the most common mental disorders – depression, anxiety and substance misuse – occurs in people aged 16–24 years (26 %), with overall prevalence decreasing with age to around one in twenty (6 %) in the oldest age group (75–85 years) (ABS, 2008).

Researchers in the U.S. (Twenge, Gentile, DeWall, Ma, Lacefield, & Schurtz, 2010) and Britain (Collishaw et al., 2010) have argued that the mental health of adolescents and university students has deteriorated over recent decades, with study participants reporting significantly higher levels of emotional and stress-related problems than those of earlier cohorts. In a recent Australian study (Stallman, 2012), heads of university counselling services reported a rise in the proportion of students presenting with “serious psychological problems” (p. 251) over the past five years. Other studies have shown that university students are significantly more vulnerable to high levels of distress than non-university students of the same age (Stallman & Shochet, 2009). These claims are supported by a national survey from the US, in which 95% of directors of college counselling services reported a significant increase in “severe psychological problems” in their students (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010, p. 4).

From a Western perspective, it has long been established that the peak period for onset of mental ill-health is between 12-25 years of age (McGorry, 2011). However, social scientists and other researchers have argued that economic, social and cultural change over the last few decades have altered the social parameters of adolescence and youth (Eckersley, 2008, 2011; Mortimer, Vuolo, Staff, Wakefield, & Xie, 2008; Sawyer, Rima, Bearinger, Blakemore, Dick, Ezeh, & Patton, 2012), contributing to higher rates of mental illness among young people:

[T]hey live in a more rapidly changing and unstable personal and social environment and are confronted by much more information about more and graver problems...at a much earlier age than previous generations (Eckersley, 2008, p. 12).

Traditionally, adolescence in western countries was viewed as beginning with the physical changes of puberty and ending with the social transition into adulthood: full-time employment, marriage and parenthood. The period covered by “adolescence and youth” has lengthened significantly

since the 1970s: the onset of puberty occurs earlier and “mature social roles” are entered significantly later (Sawyer et al., 2012, p. 1630). Furthermore, key social role transitions are “now less distinct than in the past” and less linear (Sawyer et al., 2012, p. 1630, 1632). The factors that shape pathways into adulthood are more complex and involve greater risks than in the past.

Both the complexity and growing rapidity of change since the 1970s means that each new generation must deal with greater stresses and demands than the preceding one (Eckersley, 2008, p. 12). These include labour market insecurities, changes in the functioning of families, increased expectations and competition in education, rapid technological advances, and the changing nature of mass and social media (Eckersley, 2011). Along with the erosion of traditional forms of social guidance and “rules”, these changes mean that individuals are increasingly forced to lead more flexible and fluid lives. Over twenty years ago, Giddens (1991, p. 5) described the quintessential character of late modern identity as a “reflexive project of the self”. Ten years later, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s (2002) metaphor of the “do-it-yourself” biography captured the tenor of contemporary life and identity with its promise of greater opportunities, loss of clear reference points, and focus on individualism. Biographical construction is often insecure and unstable and, under such conditions as unemployment, may become a “breakdown biography” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Individuals may be forced to fall back on their personal resources and to view ups and downs as a matter of individual responsibility (Eckersley, 2008).

Though little has been written about the health effects of modernisation, increasing materialism and individualisation, Eckersley (2008) argues that cultural pressures are most acute for young people as they attempt to establish a sense of identity and direction. He notes that “youth are vulnerable to the peculiar hazards of our uncertain times” and emphasises that the effect of culture is “hard to discern because it is so pervasive” (Eckersley, 2008, p. 12).

Yet, these concerns are not limited to western societies. As Blum, Bastos, Kabiru and Le, (2012, p. 1568) argue: “there are increases in mental disorders, suicide, homicide, obesity, malnutrition, and precancerous lesions in young people worldwide.” According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “neuropsychiatric disorders” are the leading global cause of years lost due to disability for 10-24 year olds, with “major depression” the most prominent condition within this category (Gore et al., 2011). However, neuropsychiatric disorders are neglected in the public health agendas of many non-western countries, where infectious diseases continue to be prioritised (Gore et al., 2011). Suicide rates for young people in Australia and the US, where suicide prevention strategies have been implemented, began to fall over the past decade. In contrast, suicide rates for young people

in China and India remain high and continue to rise (Patel et al., 2007) with some researchers citing rapid social change as a key factor (Phillips, Liu, Zhang, 1999).

Since processes of modernisation and individualisation are global, the reduction of social scaffolding to guide young lives is not just a problem in the west. Through (often) rapid urbanisation, the rise of social media, and globalisation, the nature of “community” is undergoing significant change in India and China, the Middle East, Africa and East Asia. These areas are also home to the majority of Australia’s international students. In 2012 there were 402,388 international students in Australia (AEI, 2013). The largest group came from China (118,832), followed by India (37,041), the Republic of Korea (20,778), Malaysia (19,653), Vietnam (17,862), Indonesia (13,791) and Thailand (13,408). Of the total number of international students, 48.9% (216,392) were in the higher education sector. Despite a decrease in international student numbers since 2009, these figures reflect the rapid rise of international education in the “new” market-driven environment (Hira, 2003). This increasing population experiences many socio-economic challenges associated with being in a new environment, often for the first time and without traditional family supports (Marginson, Nyland, Sawir, & Forbes-Mewett, 2010; Marginson, 2011). The many challenges include emotional, financial, cultural, personal issues that have the potential to impact on mental health.

RESEARCH METHOD

Within the context outlined above, we analyze the accounts of professionals who encountered mental health problems in their interactions with international students at a Group of Eight (Go8) Australian university. In exploring the discourses and explanatory frames used by these professionals, we situate their accounts historically and socially to advance a deeper understanding of the broader structural milieu in which these problems have been produced. In contrast with the largely survey-based, Australian studies of international students’ health and wellbeing (e.g. Rosenthal, Russell, & Thomson, 2006; 2008), this paper offers a preliminary qualitative view of the phenomenon from the perspectives of a small number of key informants. Qualitative methods are especially suited to exploratory research focusing on the “how” and “what” of close-up views, thus illuminating the social processes within particular social worlds (Creswell, 2013).

Sixteen in-depth interviews, with participants who specifically raised the issue of mental health problems among international students, were selected from a larger study of international student security and support services at an internationalized university in Australia (Forbes-

Mewett, 2008). The identification of this purposive sub-sample enabled us to explore the views, concerns and experiences of these participants in relation to the mental health of international students (Creswell, 2013). The order of knowledge generated from this qualitative approach, though preliminary and exploratory in nature, raises important insights not accessible from the (quantitative) surveys that characterize this field in Australia.

Questions asked of the participants were not specifically related to mental health problems but were more generally concerning student welfare. For example: *What do you think international students find most difficult about studying at the University? What do you think are the most difficult things about living in Australia?* In response to such questions, the participants (see Table 1) spontaneously raised the issue of mental health problems.

Table 1: Participants: Pseudonyms, Male/Female, Age, Employment Positions

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Employment position
Angela	Female	53	Support Services
Ben	Male	46	Academic
Carmel	Female	52	Academic
Cathy	Female	53	Support Services
Elaine	Female	43	Support Services
Freda	Female	57	Counsellor
Graham	Male	53	Support Services
John	Male	50	Counsellor
Jane	Female	40	Support Services
Janice	Female	59	Medical Services
June	Female	32	Support Services
Mandy	Female	53	Medical Services
Robert	Male	60	Support Services
Rhonda	Female	28	Support Services
Rosanne	Female	38	Support Services
Sandra	Female	51	Support Services

The participants included international student support staff, counsellors, a general medical practitioner and academic staff. The 12 females and four males were aged between 32 and 60 years. The higher number of female participants reflects the concentration of females in support service positions at the university. Four participants were formally qualified to diagnose mental health issues; however, all had much experience in addressing international student concerns on a day-to-day basis. It is the perceptions of these key informants that form the basis of this study. The larger study relates to an on-campus international student cohort,

which constituted approximately one fifth of the total university population and was primarily made up of Asian students. The use of the term “Asian students” is not intended to essentialize “students from different Asian Countries as a homogeneous entity”; rather, the term is used “with acknowledgement of the diversity and variety of Asian students encompassed by this descriptor” (Tran, 2007). It is assumed the participants’ use of the term is similar.

The interviews were between 45 and 90 minutes in duration and were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed in terms of emerging themes (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). A purpose-driven analysis focusing on mental health problems allowed us to interpret the research text to make sense of this issue in relation to international students (Creswell, 2013). Participants were allocated a pseudonym and an employment category.

Our analysis is presented in three main sections. First, we discuss a perceived increase in the number and severity of mental ill-health presentations by international students. In the second section we consider participants’ explanations of the factors believed to contribute to an increase in mental health problems. These entail three contexts: the academic environment, everyday living, and help-seeking. Third, we present participants’ observations of potential solutions. These concerned the structure of support services and university life, and are relevant to early intervention and prevention measures to avert mental health crises.

FINDINGS

An increase in mental health problems: “we are dealing with people with more severe problems”

Participants reported a significant increase in the numbers of both international and local students presenting with perceived or diagnosed mental health problems, together with an increase in the severity of these problems, an observation also explored by US researchers (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). The participants, however, also indicated that mental health problems for international students were often exacerbated by the stress associated with living away from home in a foreign environment. Mental health problems were very broadly defined and included “emotional” and “stress” problems as well as serious psychiatric conditions. Robert, Director of Health Services, argued that a “far broader spectrum” of university students today accounted for the “bigger variety of problems”. He also saw the present-day lives of students as “a lot more difficult” than in previous decades, leading to distress and anxiety:

When I first started here...we probably had 40% what we’d term emotional relationship problems and 60% study. Now it’s about 80%

emotional relationship issues and 20% of what we call learning type problems...Twenty years ago you may see five or six real severe psychiatric difficulties per counsellor. Now they're seeing five or six a week and suicidal ideation.

Several other participants reported an increase in suicidal presentations, which required referrals to manage the high levels of risk involved: "there seems to be more kids who've got mental disorders...let alone the question of adjusting and studying" (Rosanne, Manager of International Student Support Services). While not discounting Eckersley's arguments (2008, 2011), the overall growth in presentations of serious mental disorders may not only reflect increased levels of distress. The past "twenty years" covers the period of intensive development and re-structuring of mental health services in Victoria and Australia. Public education campaigns aimed at de-stigmatizing mental illness have contributed to increased "mental health literacy" among the population (Jorm, 2012), with youth mental health identified as a key area. In turn, these developments shape the definitional and discursive practices of student support staff and the help-seeking practices of students (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010).

The "far broader spectrum" of university students noted by Robert reflects the expansion of tertiary education in Australia and other western countries (UNESCO, 2012). Several intersecting social changes have driven this expansion: credentialism, professionalization of training previously undertaken "on-the-job" or in technical colleges, the growth of service-sector employment, and government policies to retain secondary and tertiary students. Many of the students entering university during these waves of expansion represent the first generation of tertiary-educated members in their families. Similarly, most international students coming from rapidly advancing industrial economies are first generation tertiary students. The diversity among university students thus produces a "bigger variety of problems." These problems are also socially produced through wider definitions of what constitutes "mental" or "emotional" disorder (Busfield, 2012; Horwitz & Wakefield, 2007), and compounded by growing casualization and insecurity of employment.

Stress and strain: "it suddenly seems a great big frightening world out there"

All participants spoke at length about the adjustments and stresses encountered by international students when negotiating their transition to life in Australia. Their capacity to make a successful transition was seen as critical to their general wellbeing and academic performance, and thus to their mental health.

1. The academic environment: if students struggle with English “everything else suffers”

Most participants described the transition process in terms of a “culture shock” (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). English language difficulties and unfamiliar methods of teaching and learning were cited as major challenges. Coinciding with the work of Rosenthal et al. (2006), John (student counsellor) explained that if students struggle with English “everything else suffers,” including their academic performance and their capacity to “connect” with others.

In terms of negotiating unfamiliar academic practices, most participants referred to the difficulties encountered by students from (mainland) China. Angela (language and learning support) explained that students in China often learn by rote. In Australia they are required to synthesize information and, as June (student support officer) commented, to voice their own opinions and arguments. Rhonda (support program coordinator) described the different learning environment as a form of “culture shock”:

They have to question their lecturer...they have to engage, whereas in their home country...they would never question their lecturer. Participation in a group happens differently [here]...in a lot of Asian countries it's about group consensus...whereas here it's okay for you to...disagree.

Similarly, Brown (2008) noted that critical evaluation and class participation were the greatest sources of study-related stress among international postgraduate students in the UK.

2. Off-campus living: many come from “very restrictive backgrounds”

Aside from adjusting to a new academic environment, international students were confronted with the need to manage everyday tasks and interactions. As Elaine (student support manager) explained, “some of the students have never cooked their own meals before...so for the first time they're having to budget, source food, cook their meals, do the cleaning”, along with organizing transport and accommodation. Cathy (student financial officer) pointed out that many students had come from “very restrictive backgrounds” and, given the freedoms they encountered in Australia, could “quite easily get led astray”.

As Sandra (careers and employment officer) put it, international students have to “self-manage” in new ways (see Rosenthal et al., 2008, p. 52). They must manage their households and relationships without the familiar normative controls and reference points of home:

Students get together...whilst they are studying [which can easily lead to] sexual intimacy that maybe they're not ready for.... In the course of getting help for a subject you end up getting entangled in romantic relationships which end up in chaos which then affects academic progress.... The amount of freedom is quite enormous and it's about learning how to harness that [new] responsibility.

Contrary to the stereotype of the wealthy overseas student, participants reported that some international students experienced intense financial pressures. In some circumstances parents had borrowed money to finance their studies (Carmel, academic) or "their whole community has put in to get them here and they're under a lot of pressure to perform" (Cathy). Mandy (medical services) also spoke about "the extraordinary pressure from home":

We've had a couple of students who failed when I was first here, and their parents had no idea...They were suicidal at the thought of having to tell them...and face the shame.

Rosenthal et al. (2008) found that international students had relatively high scores on anxiety and depression; and those students who felt their academic work was "below expectation" were more likely to score high on depression and anxiety. Janice (general medical practitioner) explained that many international students "get very worn out" from their long hours of paid employment:

We have a big problem with the international students working basically too hard and not getting enough sleep...we often get people that are in a state of collapse, they've only slept three or four hours for the last three weeks...they often have to work long hours just to make ends meet. (See also Anderson, 2007)

Work stress associated with international students undertaking long hours of employment in addition to their study was believed to be a consequence of students arriving with inadequate funds to support themselves, despite declaring that they were able to do so. These circumstances were strongly believed to be impacting on the students' health.

Janice offered significant insights into international students' health and use of health services as part of their adjustment to living in Australia, emphasising the difficulties and complexities of negotiating a "culturally different health system." English language difficulties were

problematic within the medical encounter. Even for students who were “quite adept” at English, explaining their symptoms in a second language could create confusion: “they will look it up in the dictionary and come out with something...you have a bit of a guess as to what it is they mean, but it often isn’t the way we would explain an illness or symptoms.”

She also reported that many students appeared to have been told that “everything will be free, provided you take out this cover,” and some assumed their health needs would be met by the University. These misunderstandings became problematic when students had to be referred to specialists outside the University. Usually this meant an added cost for the student and great reluctance to attend appointments beyond “where they live and the University: it suddenly seems a great big frightening world out there.”

3. Seeking help for mental health problems: “a real taboo”

Several participants reported that international students tended to delay seeking professional help for mental health problems. June observed that many had let their problems get to the point of “disaster”, which necessitated “urgent attention”, whereas “had they asked for help from the beginning, it would have been solved.” Similarly, in the US context, Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) noted that help-seeking was especially infrequent among international students.

Fellow students, particularly those from the same cultural background or others who had been in Australia for longer, were generally the first port of call in the early stages of a mental health problem (Ben, academic). However, there was a greater chance of students utilising counselling or health services if their friends had positive experiences with services (Rhonda). Several participants noted that “word of mouth” seemed to be the best means of promoting counselling to international students (June, John).

A number of reasons were offered as to why students were reluctant to seek professional help. Different cultural constructions or idioms of personal distress were at the heart of these discussions (Kleinman, 1986). Robert suggested that many students were unfamiliar with western therapeutic approaches to “emotional” issues: “They’re willing to accept a medical issue, but a psychological [issue] is harder for them to accept.” He felt that this was changing slowly, noting that psychology and counselling were generally very small fields in their home countries. In such contexts, emotional issues were often interpreted through the lens of physical health problems (Kleinman, 1986).

John, among others, argued that many international students did not attend counselling because of the “stigma attached...they think it is only for mentally ill students.” Likewise, Mandy described “a real taboo with

counsellors in their culture”, and Elaine observed that students were often “very hesitant to seek assistance” for fear of having to reveal personal information. This reluctance of Asian groups to seek help has previously been associated with a belief that supernatural causes are responsible for mental distress (Sheikh & Furnham, 2000). Furthermore, participants’ observations of the seeming reluctance of many international students’ to seek help is, at least in part, due to their lack of cultural familiarity with the Anglo-American emotional norms that underpin the work of mental health services (Pupavac, 2004).

Delaying intervention often meant increased severity of mental health problems, with students requiring more intensive intervention than would otherwise have been necessary. Some mental health problems would escalate to the point of suicidality if left untreated, requiring “more work”, as Robert explained: “[B]ecause [the counsellors] have to see the person more times and they may have to start arranging a referral outside to a psychiatrist.” Freda echoed Robert’s concerns, focusing on the limitations of the University counselling service:

We are restricted to the number of sessions that we can actually see people for...if you can see somebody for [only] six to eight times and you’ve got somebody who’s severely depressed, that’s not enough.

In such situations, outside referrals to a psychiatrist or psychologist were problematic because of the added cost to students, and “often long waiting lists...” These insights from a small number of key informants are useful for what they tell us about the realities and complexities of on-the-ground service provision. Their voices provide a counterpoint to reports insisting on “better delivery of health promotion education, and access to...counselling and health services” for international students (Rosenthal et al., 2008, p. 51) without acknowledging the straitened fiscal environment of higher education and the reluctance of some international students to use these services.

Facilitating the transition of international students

Participants suggested ways that international students could be better prepared for their sojourn in Australia and more effectively supported after arrival.

1. Integration and prevention: “a greater sense of belonging”

Most participants commented on the erosion of particular routines and on-campus activities, notably “the common lunch-hour” which had

previously provided significant sources of integration for international students through student-run clubs and societies. Brett observed:

More students have part-time jobs to support themselves, so they come to uni to go to their classes and they don't stick around, whereas, in the old days you'd go to some interesting thing at lunchtime...there's a lot less of that...and more coming to uni as a consumer.... [The] social and communal aspects have sort of diminished, and I think those are quite critical to international students being able to survive.

Greater time pressures, a larger range of courses and accompanying time-tabling complexities, and the growth of casual and part-time jobs in the 24/7 economy mean that "common" lunch-hours and the like are a thing of the past. This is an issue for all university students. "Orientation" or "Faculty" lunches, now part of consciously designed retention practices, were previously part of the taken-for-granted fabric of university life.

Comparably, Anne (support services) commented that the absence of a common lunch hour had made it very difficult to schedule "conversation classes" for students wanting to practice their English—again limiting the possibility of integrative activities.

2. Dissemination of information: "they can't take it all on board"

Participants spoke at length about the way in which information was disseminated to students during the "orientation period". Several felt that students were given excessive amounts of information much too early in their sojourn. Despite the provision of numerous pamphlets and promotional material during Orientation, Wendy reported that she often encountered students, "who say: 'Oh, I didn't even know that was available.'" Chen agreed: free services were "still a bit too distant". She suggested that information be staggered throughout the year to familiarize students with availability and appropriate use of services. Cathy reported that students were "flooded" with information: "we really need to do a follow-up about a month after they're here and say: 'Remember us?'" She emphasized the fundamental importance of making sure that students understood the information they were given, noting that even the meaning of "orientation" may not always be obvious. Cathy also noted that information was distributed efficiently through various handouts at the expense of providing clear explanations through small-group discussion. Rather than overloading students with information in their first few weeks, she felt it would be "more useful" to provide information later in the semester. Furthermore, frequent exposure to the availability of supports was needed given the intricacies of the transition experience.

3. A clear overview of the health-care system: “medical services can be so different”

Some participants argued that international students would benefit from a clearer understanding of the Australian health care system. As a medical practitioner in the sample, Janice’s insights were instructive:

They’re often given some false information: ‘provided you’ve got your health cover, everything will be free.’ But it only pays medical costs [like] Medicare does, so [with] private consultations there’s often a big gap.

International students are required to purchase health cover as a condition of their visas. However, Janice observed that without an effective monitoring system in place, many students let their cover lapse after their first year. As a consequence, they must then pay for consultations and “if they become very ill...they could be up for thousands.”

To facilitate more effective treatment, Janice recommended that students bring a medical report from their doctor in their home country, so that Australian healthcare providers are aware of their medical history and medications:

Medical services can be so different. We hear some strange stories from patients and we don’t really know exactly what’s happened. They often don’t know the names of their medication.

Janice was also concerned that should requests be made for medical reports, some students may be wary of bringing such reports with them because of concerns as to how they might be used by Australian “authorities”: “what if the visa people get it, or the university would say, ‘Well, you shouldn’t be studying here’...we need to reassure them that it’s a report from their doctor at home to the doctor here and it’s got nothing to do with visas.”

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we explored the discursive constructions deployed by a sample of professionals at a Go8 Australian university to make sense of the mental health problems they encountered in their everyday interactions with international students. We situated their accounts in the broader structural context in which these problems have been produced.

Factors identified as critical to the mental health of international students derived from three broad dimensions: adjusting to unfamiliar

academic practices; developing skills to manage everyday life in a different cultural context; and both recognizing and seeking professional help for mental health problems. All participants identified numerous interrelated challenges faced by international students in the early stages of their sojourn, and these were commonly referred to as “culture shock”. This involved adjustment to a very different academic system and adaptation to different cultural norms. Much of the discussion related to the largest student group, broadly categorized as “Asian” and considered culturally distant from the host country norms. This group in particular tended to face major challenges associated with language and unfamiliar methods of teaching, learning and teacher-student interactions.

The broader structural context suggests several factors are contributing to the apparent increase in mental health problems among international students: increased mental health literacy and media reporting on mental health and illness, including reports of increased rates of mental illness among youth, and expanded definitions and discursive resources for making sense of what constitutes mental health problems (e.g. Busfield, 2012). At the same time, recent structural and cultural changes, the extension of the period designated as adolescence and youth, and the competitiveness and growth of the global economy, have produced greater pressures and stress in the lives of young people (Eckersley, 2011; Sawyer et al., 2012). Beyond the notion of “culture shock” (Ward et al., 2001), these factors point to complex conditions generating the problems encountered by our participants. While some participants alluded to broader socio-cultural shifts, most focused on the transition process encountered by international students.

Recent trends in higher education are also part of the broader structural context in which the professionals’ accounts are situated. The growth of the University sector has increased the diversity of the international student population, along with the marketization of higher education, and the construction of students as “consumers” creates new opportunities as well as new pressures, aptly illustrated through the image of the “do-it-yourself biography” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). The new individualized on-line learning environments are more complex and demanding than those of the past, when collective supports were more available. Together with shifts in part-time and casual employment, these new learning environments may help to produce social isolation. By illuminating the broader structural context of their accounts, we can see the tensions and challenges between the human-service responses at the micro-level and the macro-level imperatives of the market-driven university.

This “bigger picture” shows a mismatch between the broader structural context and the intricacies of micro-level practices and services. While support services are important to all who experience mental ill-health,

we suggest that the difficulties faced by international students are intensified as many are experiencing for the first time circumstances associated with heightened individualism and individualization. This is particularly the case for international students who find themselves without traditional social markers by which to navigate their new circumstances. While many international students may have already been experiencing a loss of (traditional) “community” supports in their home country, these circumstances are likely to be exacerbated by new host country experiences.

The current study was limited as it was derived from a larger, more broadly focused study of the “security needs” of international students. It would be beneficial to include the student voice in future research of greater scope. Much information could be obtained from longitudinal studies and the exploration of possible approaches to identifying and meeting unmet needs of international students. This would not only be of great benefit to the students but also universities in their quest to be better positioned themselves in a competitive, market driven environment. Utilizing a qualitative lens, the current study goes some way in providing a close-up view of mental health problems among international students and argues for further qualitative investigation.

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HELEN FORBES-MEWETT, PhD, is Senior Lecturer in Sociology. Her research interests include cultural diversity, higher education and human security. Email: Helen.ForbesMewett@monash.edu

ANNE-MAREE SAWYER, PhD, is Lecturer in Sociology. Her research interests include mental health policy and practice, narrative methodologies, and emotions. Email: A.Sawyer@latrobe.edu.au

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International Students' Motivation and Learning Approach: A Comparison with Local Students

Kah Loong Chue
National Institute of Education, Singapore

Youyan Nie
National Institute of Education, Singapore

ABSTRACT

Psychological factors contribute to motivation and learning for international students as much as teaching strategies. 254 international students and 144 local students enrolled in a private education institute were surveyed regarding their perception of psychological needs support, their motivation and learning approach. The results from this study indicated that international students had a higher level of self-determined motivation and used a deep and surface learning approach more extensively than local students. Perceived psychological needs support positively predicted intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and a deep learning approach for both groups. There were also differences in the effects of motivation on learning approach between the two groups. Further possibilities for exploration are discussed in this study.

Keywords: International students, self-determined motivation, learning approach, deep learning, surface learning

In the past few decades, the number of students studying abroad has increased significantly from 0.8 million in 1975 to an estimated figure of 4.5 million in 2012 (OECD, 2015). These international students are prone to face adjustment issues that are unfamiliar to local students, primarily in the area of language proficiency and culture adaptation (Andrade, 2006) and this may impact their motivation and learning in the classroom (Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000; Tompson & Tompson, 1996). As such, lecturers in classes comprised of both groups of students will need to take

into account differences in prior educational and cultural experiences when designing strategies to improve motivation and learning. For example, to address their lack of language proficiency, Chinese students use silence as a means to avoid making mistakes (Liu, 2001). However, this strategy could easily be mistaken by lecturers for a lack of interest or engagement in the subject (Liu, 2001). Previous research that dealt with this topic has focused mainly on differences in learning styles (Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001) and the implementation of appropriate teaching strategies (Robertson et al., 2000; Tompson & Tompson, 1996; Wong, 2004) or policies, services and programs (Ren & Hagedorn, 2012; Stoyhoff, 1997; Wicks, 1996). Relatively few studies have been conducted on psychological factors that contribute to motivation and learning for international students. Indeed, Robertson et al., (2000) noted that many academic staff neglected the impact of emotional and psychological dilemmas faced by international students (Robertson et al., 2000).

What are some psychological factors that might affect motivation and student's approach to learning? Self-determinant theory postulates that supports for autonomy, competence and relatedness contribute to the overall psychological growth of an individual (Deci & Ryan, 2002). It is reasonable to conjecture that the same psychological supports would impact the motivation and learning of international students. Moreover, if international students have to face challenges which are unfamiliar to the local students, these psychological supports might have a greater impact on them than on local students. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationships of these psychological needs support on motivation and learning approaches for international students. Furthermore, this study also examines how such relationships amongst international students differ from their local counterparts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In exploring this particular area, the psychological constructs from self-determinant theory (SDT) will be applied. Self-determinant theory is a broad motivational framework that is centered on the beliefs that all humans have basic innate psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competency and that social environments play an important role in the actualization of these needs (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). According to SDT, motivation can be categorized into distinct types along a self-determinant continuum. Amotivation lies on one extreme end of the continuum and represents a complete lack of motivation. People who are amotivated either do not act or act passively. At the other extreme end lies intrinsic motivation which represents the pinnacle of self-determined behaviors. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated perform activities for their inherent fulfilment rather than some external stimuli. In the middle

band lies extrinsic motivation which can be further differentiated into three types according to their level of self-determination: External regulation, Introjection, Identification. External regulation is caused wholly by externally imposed rewards or punishment. Introjection occurs when individuals impose their own internal rewards or constraints (e.g. guilt, shame or obligation). Identification takes place when individuals can identify with the reason for behavior.

In recent years, findings regarding SDT in the field of education has shown that a higher level of self-determinant leads to positive educational outcomes, i.e. deeper engagement, better conceptual learning and higher persistence (Areepattamannil, Freeman, & Klinger, 2011; Black & Deci, 2000; Lin, McKeachie, & Kim, 2001; Moneta & Siu, 2002; Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, & Briere, 2001; Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2005; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006; Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Zhou, Ma, & Deci, 2009; Zhu & Leung, 2011). To develop a higher sense of self-determination towards intrinsic motivation, an individual's basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness must be satisfied (Deci et al., 1991). This requires the awareness of internal factors (e.g. an individual's age, gender, cognitive ability) and the introduction of external social factors (e.g. degree of autonomy support in the environment) (Wehmeyer et al., 2011). When social factors satisfy the three basic psychological needs, one can expect intrinsic motivation to be facilitated. In contrast, when these needs are thwarted, the individual's motivation is diminished (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

Autonomy refers to the experience of one's behavior as volitional. An environment that supports students' autonomy can be achieved by tapping on inner motivational resources, minimizing external pressure through language and providing explanatory rationale to transform any task into one of personal value (Reeve, 2009). Competence refers to the experience of one's interactions with the surroundings as effective. Students' competence can be supported by introducing appropriate learning activities and providing students with the appropriate tools and feedback for improvement (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Relatedness refers to the experience of a sense of belonging and connectedness to a group. This is realized when students feel that a teacher genuinely respects and cares for them (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Recent research has combined the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness into one composite variable and the satisfaction of these needs has been positively associated with self-determined motivation, i.e. intrinsic motivation, identified motivation and introjected motivation (Chen & Jang, 2010; Jang, Reeve, Ryan, & Kim, 2009; W. C. Liu, Wang, Tan, Koh, & Ee, 2009; Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2003; Standage et al., 2005) but negatively associated with external regulation and amotivation (W. C. Liu et al., 2009; Standage et al., 2003, 2005).

Approaches to learning

The concept of learning approaches is derived from the seminal work of Marton and Saljo (1976). In essence, a student's approach to learning could be classified into two categories based on their study behavior. Students, who apply a deep learning strategy read widely, inter-relate with previous relevant knowledge and try to connect their information with other subjects. Students who apply a surface learning strategy do the bare essentials, relying mainly on rote learning and memorization (Biggs, 1987). Naturally, most educators would wish to inculcate a deep learning approach in students. As such, numerous attempts have been made to identify the factors that induce deep learning. To categorize these factors and their impacts, Baeten (2010) conducted a study of previous literature and established that these factors can be grouped into three areas. Contextual factors refer to the actual learning environment, e.g. teaching methods, assessment, feedback and cognitive scaffolding. Perceived contextual factors refer to the manner in which students interpret instructional interventions, e.g. workload, teaching, supportiveness and relevance. Student factors refer to individual level factors, e.g. gender, personality, motivation. At the same time, it was acknowledged that a lot of these variables have yet to be empirically investigated (Baeten, Kyndt, Struyven, & Dochy, 2010).

Previous studies focusing on the relationship between motivation and learning approaches have generally associated intrinsic motivation with deep learning and extrinsic motivation with surface learning (Entwistle, 1986). This is not surprising as many behaviors are typical of both intrinsic motivation and deep learning, e.g. performing tasks based on inherent satisfaction. However, the various types of extrinsic motivation as postulated by SDT were not considered in most studies pertaining to motivation and learning approach.

The distinction between the various types of extrinsic motivation is important. Firstly, identification is usually classified as autonomous motivation and has been associated with positive results whereas introjection and external regulation have been associated with negative results (e.g. Pelletier et al., 2001). Secondly, whilst external regulation consistently predicted negative outcomes, introjected regulation has shown correlations with both positive and negative outcomes (Ng et al., 2012). Lastly, studies have indicated that students are generally motivated by extrinsic factors (Tan, Goh, Chia, & Treagust, 2001; Yee, 2011). It is therefore essential that a distinction be made between partial external regulation and full external regulation so that the appropriate strategies can be employed to improve students' approaches to learning.

International students in Singapore

To complement the public education institutions in Singapore, private educational institutes offer a range of education programs at the diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate levels to both local and international students. The private educational institutes have partnered with overseas universities (typically from UK, US or Australia) to provide external degree programs, thereby providing students the opportunity to acquire qualifications of foreign universities whilst studying in Singapore. In 2012, there was a total enrolment of 227,000 students in the private educational institutes, of which 44% were international students (Council of Private Education, 2012). Many of them hail from different countries in Asia, thus creating an immensely diverse and heterogeneous student profile. The push and pull factors for these international students are usually compliance with their parents' desires, inability to secure a place in their countries' prestigious universities, lower costs than western countries, lower safety concerns and the prospects of learning English in a bilingual society (Kitty, 2005).

Previous research studies on international students have largely concentrated on the East-West divide or more commonly the collectivistic-individualistic worldview. For example, results pertaining to approaches to learning have indicated that students in Eastern societies tend to emphasize rote memorization whilst their Western counterparts focus on conceptual understanding (Biggs, 1991; Murphy, 1987). However, in recent years, the notion that culture is represented by a set of values embracing individualism or collectivism has been replaced by a systems view of culture (Kitayama, 2002). This alternate view proposes that culture is a dynamic system made up of many loosely organized but connected elements such as practices and associated mental processes. Each individual's psychological processes and behaviors are organized around efforts to coordinate with a system of practices and public meanings. The systemic view of culture explicitly refutes the notion that Eastern and Western societies are composed of different core values. Instead, all psychological processes are potentially available to all groups of people (Kitayama, 2002). From this viewpoint, it is conceivable that the motivation and learning processes of international and local students within an educational institute may be vastly different from each other. For example, international students usually choose to study abroad for academic and personal growth, better career prospects and economic benefits (Eder, Smith, & Pitts, 2010; Li & Bray, 2007) and this may show a tendency to be extrinsically motivated. They could also have an intention to avoid disadvantageous conditions in their home country (Valery Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao, & Lynch, 2007). Before finalizing the decision to study abroad, they would also have to consider many factors such as the host countries' reputation for quality and cost issues (Mazzarol & Soutar,

2002), that local students would not have to contend with. These reasons suggest that international students demonstrate a significant amount of forward thinking and planning which may result in different learning processes from their local counterparts.

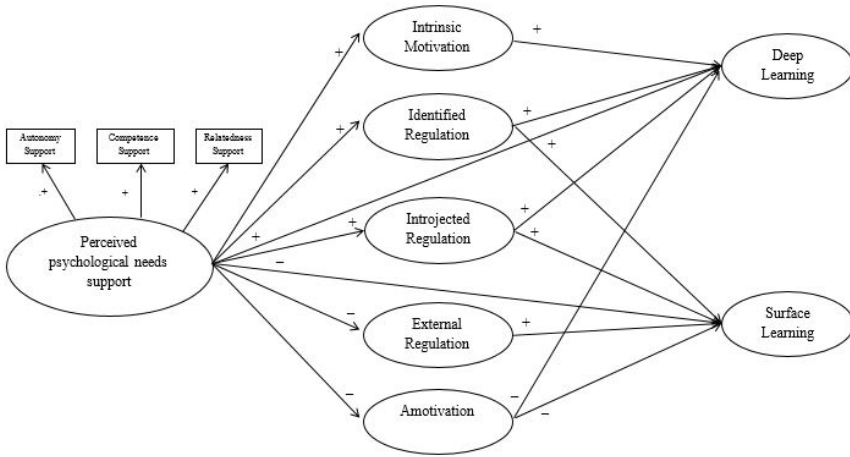
In addition, international students face social and academic adjustment challenges unfamiliar to local students. Social adjustment were ascribed to less social support and social connectedness whilst academic adjustment challenges were mainly attributed to English language proficiency (Andrade, 2006; Yeh & Inose, 2003). They experience more anxiety and stress, thus requiring different levels and types of support to foster their cross-cultural learning skills (Andrade, 2006; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). International and local students also differ in their learning systems (Ramsay, Barker, & Jones, 1999; Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). Furthermore, faculty staff often have a different perception of the behaviors of international students (Robertson et al., 2000; Tompson & Tompson, 1996). For example, academic staff felt that international students lack writing and critical thinking skills whereas international students had difficulties understanding the instructor's use of colloquial language (Robertson et al., 2000).

Research in this area has emphasized the implementation of appropriate teaching strategies (Robertson et al., 2000; Tompson & Tompson, 1996; Wong, 2004) or policies, services and programs (Ren & Hagedorn, 2012; Stoyoff, 1997; Wicks, 1996) but have largely neglected the motivational and psychological needs of these students. These needs are especially important to international students as a higher level of self-determination could lead to more beneficial cultural adaptation outcomes (Chirkov, Safdar, De Guzman, & Playford, 2008; Chirkov et al., 2007).

Therefore, the current study will seek to address this gap in the literature by investigating the following research questions: (1) What are the differences in motivation and learning approaches between local and international students? (2) How does perceived psychological needs support contribute to motivation and learning approach of international students? (3) How do the relationships between perceived psychological needs support, motivation and learning approach differ for local and international students? Based on the framework of SDT and previous research, the hypothesized model for both groups of students is represented in Figure 1. Specifically, perceived psychological needs support would be positively associated to self-determined motivation (intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation) and negatively associated to external regulation and amotivation. A deep learning approach would be positively predicted by intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and introjected regulation as these motivation types have elements of self-determination. A surface learning approach would be positively predicted by identified regulation, introjected

regulation and external regulation. Amotivation would be negatively associated with both deep and surface learning as a lack of interest should naturally correspond to a lack of learning. Similarly, as perceived contextual factors play a role in determining learning approaches, perceived psychological needs support would positively predict deep learning and negatively predict surface learning.

Figure 1 : The hypothesized model for the relations between perceived psychological needs support, different types of motivation and learning approach for both local and international students



RESEARCH METHOD

Sample

The participants in this study were 401 students enrolled in a business mathematics course at a private educational institute in Singapore. The sample consisted of 144 local students (84 male, 59 female, mean age = 20.4, SD = 2.64) and 254 international students (99 male, 155 female, mean age = 19.0, SD = 1.72). Three participants did not state their nationality and gender. English is the medium of instruction in the module. To ensure that students had sufficient time for perceptions of autonomy, competency and relatedness to be formed, the survey was conducted in the middle of the semester. The total time required to complete all the questionnaires is approximately 15 minutes. All students provided their background and demographic information.

Measures

Perceived psychological needs support. Perceived psychological needs support was measured with three subscales (i.e. perceived autonomy support, perceived competency support, perceived relatedness support) that

were adapted from a modified version of a raters scale for perceived autonomy support (Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004), the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory for perceived competence and the Need for Relatedness scale for perceived relatedness. Each subscale had five items. Example items from the subscales include “My lecturer explains the rationale for the value of tasks” (perceived autonomy), “My lecturer makes us feel like we are good at math” (perceived competence) and “My lecturer cares for our learning” (perceived relatedness). The three factors are further collapsed into a single composite factor. A second order confirmatory factor analysis with three factors at the first level and one factor at the second level showed an adequate fit for the data $\chi^2(84, N = 401) = 280.576, p < .01, TLI = .93, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .076$. The subscales showed good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$ for perceived autonomy support, $\alpha = 0.86$ for perceived competency support, $\alpha = 0.88$ for perceived relatedness support).

Motivation. Motivation was assessed using an adapted version of the Perceived Locus of Causality (PLOC) questionnaire (Goudas, Biddle, & Fox, 1994) and the Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1992) . There were five subscales to measure intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation and amotivation. Each subscale had four items. All items were altered to fit a mathematics module context (e.g. Intrinsic motivation – I take part in mathematics lessons because I enjoy learning new skills/techniques in math). A five-factor confirmatory factor analysis provided an adequate fit for the data $\chi^2(140, N = 401) = 484.422, p < .01, TLI = .91, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .078$. The subscales showed good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.96$ for intrinsic motivation, $\alpha = 0.89$ for identified regulation, $\alpha = 0.70$ for introjected regulation, $\alpha = 0.78$ for external regulation, $\alpha = 0.87$ for amotivation).

Learning Approach. Surface and deep learning were measured using a modification of the revised two-factor version of the Learning Process Questionnaire (Kember, Biggs, & Leung, 2004) and the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999; Pintrich, Smith, García, & McKeachie, 1993). Two subscales assessing deep and surface strategy were modified from the questionnaire to suit a mathematics module context. Each subscale had six items and scores for each item were extended to a 7-point scale. A two- factor confirmatory factor analysis provided an adequate fit for the data $\chi^2(23, N = 401) = 74.475, p < .01, TLI = .91, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .075$. The subscales showed good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.82$ for deep learning, $\alpha = 0.72$ for surface learning).

Demographical variables. The demographical variables of age, gender (male = 0, female = 1) and nationality (Local students = 0, International students = 1) were measured.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients among the variables for the two groups were computed and inspected. Gender was not significantly correlated to deep or surface learning for both groups indicating that any relationships between the variables were invariant across gender. Path analysis was conducted to examine the significant direct and indirect relations between perceived psychological needs support, motivation and learning approaches for both groups. Multi group analysis was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in path coefficients between the two groups.

Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations

Descriptive statistics and correlations for international and local students are presented in Table 1 and 2 respectively. International students reported a significantly higher level of perceived psychological needs support ($t(396) = -4.63, p < .001, d = .47$), intrinsic motivation ($t(396) = -5.57, p < .001, d = .56$), identified regulation ($t(396) = -5.24, p < .001, d = .53$), external regulation ($t(396) = -3.14, p < .01, d = .32$), deep learning ($t(396) = -2.92, p < .01, d = .29$) and surface learning ($t(396) = -2.03, p < .05, d = .20$) but a lower level of amotivation ($t(396) = 2.87, p < .01, d = .29$) than local students.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and correlations among variables for international students

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Needs support	5.20	.93	1.00								
2 Intrinsic Motivation	4.70	1.63	.38***	1.00							
3 Identified Regulation	5.18	1.31	.43***	.47***	1.00						
4 Introjected Regulation	4.13	1.32	.08	.04	.13**	1.00					
5 External Regulation	4.21	1.30	.04	-.19***	.08	.51***	1.00				
6 Amotivation	2.92	1.44	-.15**	-.37***	-.40***	.07	.32***	1.00			
7 Deep Learning	5.33	1.01	.43***	.41***	.49***	.16***	.02	-.38***	1.00		
8 Surface Learning	4.16	1.13	.12*	.05	.27***	.19***	.22***	.06	.17***	1.00	
9 Gender			.01	-.08	.07	.12*	.10	-.03	.10	.08	1.00

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$;

For both groups of students, there were surprisingly no significant correlations between perceived psychological needs support and introjected regulation and external regulation. Several differences in bivariate correlations between the two groups were quite evident. For example, surface learning was positively associated with only external regulation for

local students whereas it was positively associated with perceived psychological needs support, identified regulation, introjected regulation and external regulation for international students.

Table 2 : Means, standard deviations and correlations among variables for local students

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Needs support	4.74	1.01	1.00								
2 Intrinsic Motivation	3.73	1.74	.20**	1.00							
3 Identified Regulation	4.43	1.47	.30***	.47***	1.00						
4 Introjected Regulation	4.07	1.39	.06	.18**	.33***	1.00					
5 External Regulation	3.75	1.56	.04	-.08	.11	.46***	1.00				
6 Amotivation	3.39	1.73	-.32***	-.50***	-.60***	-.15*	.10	1.00			
7 Deep Learning	5.02	1.09	.41***	.25***	.43***	.25***	.08	-.31***	1.00		
8 Surface Learning	3.92	1.17	.10	.05	.08	.03	.14*	.03	-.01	1.00	
9 Gender			-.11	-.02	.02	-.04	-.01	.01	.00	-.04	1.00

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$;

Path analysis

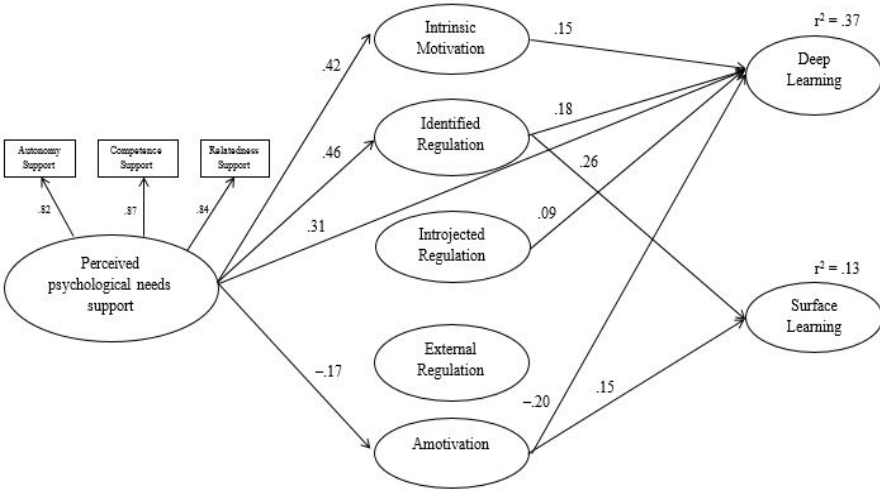
The model for both groups was examined via SEM using the asymptotically distribution-free estimation method to cater for multivariate non-normality. In both path models, the residuals of the various motivational types were allowed to be correlated to represent their inter-relationship as recommended by Standage et al. (2003). Non-significant paths were removed from the model. Differences in pairwise path coefficients were inspected using multi-group analysis in AMOS.

The final path models for international students and local students are presented in Figure 2 and 3 respectively. An examination of the fit indices suggested a good fit for the data, $\chi^2(34) = 44.23, p = .113, TLI = .95, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .028$. In both path models, perceived psychological needs support positively predicted intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, negatively predicted amotivation and had no associations with introjected regulation and external regulation. In the path model for international students, a deep learning approach was positively predicted by perceived psychological needs support, intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and introjected regulation but negatively predicted by amotivation whereas a surface learning approach was positively predicted by identified regulation and amotivation. However, in the path model for local students, perceived psychological needs support and identified regulation predicted a deep learning approach. No motivation types predicted a surface learning approach (See Table 3).

A comparison of pairwise path coefficients across the two groups also revealed significant differences in the path coefficients between perceived psychological needs support and intrinsic motivation ($p = .013$) and perceived psychological needs support and amotivation ($p = .062$) (See Table 4). International students reported a greater impact of perceived

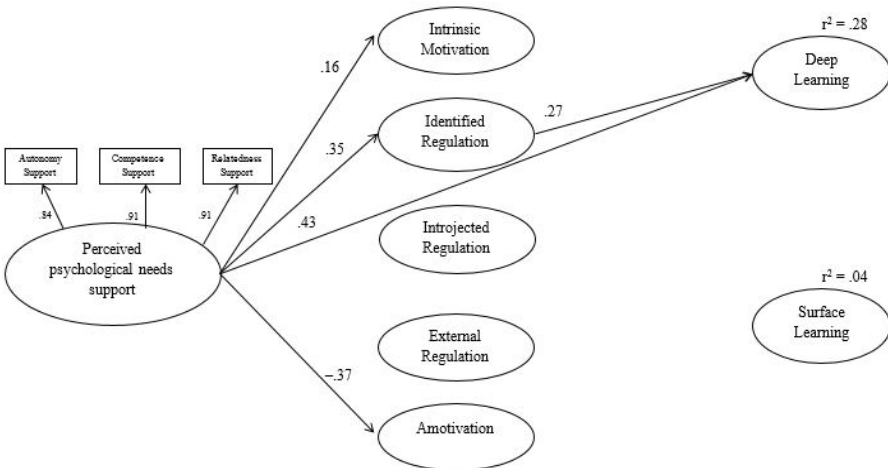
psychological needs support on intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .42$ compared to $\beta = .16$) and a lesser impact of perceived psychological needs support on amotivation ($\beta = -.17$ compared to $\beta = -.37$).

Figure 2.: The path analysis for the relations between perceived psychological needs support, different types of motivation and learning approach for international students



Only significant paths ($p < .10$) are represented. The numbers next to the solid lines are standardized parameter estimates.

Figure 3.: The path analysis for the relations between perceived psychological needs support, different types of motivation and learning approach for local students



Only significant paths ($p < .10$) are represented. The numbers next to the solid lines are standardized parameter estimates.

Table 3: Significant standardized parameter estimates of direct and indirect effects for international and local students

Parameters	International		Local	
	β	<i>p</i> -value	β	<i>p</i> -value
Perceived psychological needs support → Intrinsic Motivation	.421	<.001	.157	.067
Perceived psychological needs support → Identified Regulation	.463	<.001	.349	<.001
Perceived psychological needs support → Introjected Regulation		n.s.		n.s.
Perceived psychological needs support → External Regulation		n.s.		n.s.
Perceived psychological needs support → Amotivation	-.165	.012	-.372	<.001
Perceived psychological needs support → Deep Learning	.312	<.001	.427	<.001
Perceived psychological needs support → Surface Learning		n.s.		n.s.
Intrinsic Motivation → Deep Learning	.150	.012		n.s.
Identified Regulation → Deep Learning	.176	.005	.274	.007
Introjected Regulation → Deep Learning	.094	.075		n.s.
Amotivation → Deep Learning	-.200	<.001		n.s.
Identified Regulation → Surface Learning	.261	<.001		n.s.
Introjected Regulation → Surface Learning		n.s.		n.s.
External Regulation → Surface Learning		n.s.		n.s.
Amotivation → Surface Learning	.150	.049		n.s.
Perceived psychological needs support → Intrinsic Motivation → Deep Learning	.063	.010		n.s.
Perceived psychological needs support → Identified Regulation → Deep Learning	.081	.004	.096	.003
Perceived psychological needs support → Amotivation → Deep Learning	.033	.009		n.s.
Perceived psychological needs support → Identified Regulation → Surface Learning	.121	.001		n.s.
Perceived psychological needs support → Amotivation → Surface Learning	-.025	.042		n.s.

Table 4: Critical ratios for significant differences between path coefficients of local and international students

Parameters	<i>z</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Perceived psychological needs support → Intrinsic Motivation	2.472	.013
Perceived psychological needs support → Amotivation	1.868	.062

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The current study was designed to examine and compare the relations between perceived psychological needs support, five types of motivation as specified by SDT and approaches to learning for both international and local students. The results indicate that international students have a higher level of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, external regulation, deep learning and surface learning but a lower level of amotivation. An inspection of the path models indicate the following key observations congruent to both groups : 1) perceived psychological needs support positively predicted intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, negatively predicted amotivation but has no effect on introjected and external regulation, 2) a deep learning approach was predicted by perceived psychological needs support and identified regulation. An examination of the differences between international and local students indicated that 1) a deep learning approach was positively predicted by intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and introjected regulation but negatively predicted by amotivation for international students whereas there were no effects for local students, 2) a surface learning approach was positively predicted by

identified regulation and amotivation for international students whereas there were no effects for local students.

Motivation and learning patterns between international and local students

International students reported a higher level of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and external regulation but a lower level of amotivation than local students. This may be due to the reason that international students usually have a specific aim in mind when they opt to study overseas. For example, when they choose to do so for personal or professional growth (Eder et al., 2010; Li & Bray, 2007), this will naturally correspond to a higher intrinsic motivation than local students who may be just following a natural academic progression. By the same token, when international students opt to study overseas for better career prospects and an enhanced social status (Li & Bray, 2007), this will correspond to a higher identified regulation and lower amotivation. Finally, it may be that international students who do not pass the course will have their students' visa revoked. The continuous threat of an external penalty will correspond to a higher external regulation.

International students also reported a significantly higher use of both deep and surface learning, indicating that they have a stronger focus on concepts and connections as well as memorisation than local students. Baeten (2010) had suggested that a myriad of student factors influence the adoption of learning approach, such as level of cognitive development, prior educational experience and self-direction in learning (Baeten et al., 2010). International students may have to resolve many issues that are unfamiliar to local students, before finalizing a decision to study abroad. This issues range from a consideration of push factors e.g. the availability of educational opportunities in their home country to pull factors, e.g. the quality of education in the host country and financial costs of staying overseas (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). This suggests that international students may have a higher level of cognitive development and self-direction than local students. However, further investigations will need to be carried out before any definite conclusions can be made.

The beneficial role of perceived psychological needs support

The beneficial role of perceived psychological needs support is consistent for both local and international students. The present results support the generalizability of SDT claims that perceived psychological needs support positively predicted self-determined motivation (intrinsic and identified motivation) and negatively predicted amotivation in both local and international students, thus highlighting the importance of the socio-environmental context in education. Surprisingly, differing from previous

findings, the perceived psychological need supports were not associated with introjected and external regulation. One possible reason could lie with the antecedents of these motivational types. For example, supporting psychological needs may not have any effect on the lack of external financial resources. Future research could attempt to explore in greater detail the antecedents of the various motivational constructs and their consequences.

A pairwise comparison indicated that an increase of perceived psychological needs support had a greater impact on intrinsic motivation and amotivation for international students. Specifically, the same level of perceived psychological needs support would result in a higher level of intrinsic motivation and a lower level of amotivation for international students. A possible reason may be that the most critical adjustment factors for international students in the host country are proficiency in the English language and building a social network (Andrade, 2006). According to SDT, perceived psychological needs support comprises of supports for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Supports for competence might have addressed the issue of English language proficiency whilst supports for relatedness might have addressed the issue of building a social network indirectly. As local students do not face similar adjustment issues, this may account for the disparity in the relationship.

With regard to the relationship between perceived psychological needs support and learning approaches, the results indicated that perceived psychological needs support is a significant positive predictor of deep learning but not a significant predictor of surface learning for both groups of students. Previous studies had confirmed the importance of the learning environment in cultivating deep learning (Entwistle, 2000; Hall, Ramsay, & Raven, 2004) and strategies have been advocated to create a suitable environment, e.g. providing relevant feedback and clear objectives, creating opportunities for questions, making efforts to understand students' difficulties and offering options for students to decide what and how they learn (Trigwell & Prosser, 1991). These strategies are synonymous with strategies for providing supports for autonomy, competence and relatedness, thus reinforcing the premise that perceived supports for psychological needs predicts deep learning.

Differences between international and local students

Several differences emerged upon comparing the findings of international and local students. Firstly, aligned with previous research, a deep learning approach was positively predicted by intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and introjected regulation for international students. All three motivational types encompass, to different extents, an internal perceived locus of causality which may be a significant precursor to a deep

learning approach. However, the same three motivational types had no significant effect on deep learning for local students. One possible reason might lie in the behaviors linked with the motivational constructs. For example, performing tasks based on inherent satisfaction is a common characteristic to intrinsic motivation. But what does it mean for local students to be interested in math for inherent satisfaction? In Singapore, the central focus for primary and secondary mathematics education is problem solving (Ministry of Education, 2007a, 2007b). Teaching activities are assessment focused (Hogan et al., 2013) and mainly involve practicing procedural routines (Fan & Zhu, 2007). Students enjoy math when they can easily get high marks after much practice of routine close-ended questions (Fan et al., 2005). Hence, it is possible that local students may be intrinsically motivated to do math problems, i.e. towards procedural understanding, but do not strive for conceptual understanding nor establishing links with other subjects.

Secondly, amotivation negatively predicted deep learning for international students but had no significant effect for local students. Although the bivariate correlation between amotivation and deep learning was significantly negative for local students, this relationship did not exist in the multivariate path analysis, suggesting that some other variable may affect the relation between amotivation and deep learning. For example, previous research had proposed that the antecedents of amotivation comprised of four factors: ability beliefs, effort beliefs, task characteristics and task value (Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006). Of the four factors, ability beliefs and effort beliefs were related to academic outcomes whilst task characteristics, task value and effort beliefs are tied to problem behaviors. It is plausible that international students are amotivated because of ability beliefs and effort beliefs whereas local students are amotivated because of task characteristics and task value. If international students believe that they are neither intelligent nor able to expend the necessary effort to do well, this might have a negative influence on their types of cognitive strategies used (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). Conversely, local students might not believe in the value of the subject in which they are studying but this belief do not interfere with the manner in which they approach learning.

Lastly, a surface learning approach was positively predicted by identified regulation whereas there was no effect for local students. This indicates that for international students, a greater level of identification with the importance of the subject will result in a higher level of surface learning, suggesting that international students recognize the need for both deep and surface approaches to learning in order to achieve good academic outcomes. Likewise, amotivation positively predicted surface learning for international students but had no effect on local students. As mentioned in the preceding

paragraph, international students may be amotivated because of ability beliefs and effort beliefs.

IMPLICATIONS

One primary aim for educators is to inculcate self-determined motivation in students. The findings in this study suggest that the most effective strategy for international students is to increase support of their psychological needs. Although previous research has indicated that all students will benefit when these needs are supported (Standage et al., 2005), it would appear that there is a greater impact on international students than local students. Specifically, educators could aim to support feelings of relatedness by establishing a sense of connectedness with the students (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). For example, separate dialogue sessions could be conducted with international students. This serves to acknowledge the students' backgrounds and expresses an interest in them. Instructions during lessons could also emphasize a caring aspect by recognizing that each student has his or her own interests and emotions (Sheldon & Filak, 2008).

An autonomy supportive climate could possibly be created by nurturing students' inner resources, displaying patience and acknowledging student's expression of negative affect (Reeve, 2009). For example, educators can openly ask what international students need or want and consequently modify the lesson accordingly. Students could also be offered the option to evaluate themselves from a self-referent standard (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, & Turner, 2004). Furthermore, as international students may not be proficient in English, displaying patience and acknowledging their difficulties may also increase their self-determination level. In addition, supporting international students' needs of competence addresses issues pertaining to their language proficiency and prior academic knowledge. This could be achieved by introducing optimally challenging learning tasks with appropriate tools and feedback (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

LIMITATIONS

A number of limitations need to be considered in the present study. First, the current study is cross-sectional in design; hence, any causal conclusions cannot be drawn. For instance, because of an increase in the exposure of metacognitive skills, it is possible that students who adopt a deep learning approach will gradually enjoy performing tasks for intrinsic motives. Future studies might consider using an experimental or longitudinal design to help clarify the relationships. Second, the relative importance of autonomy support, competence support and relatedness support in the model could be explored in greater detail. For example, researchers have debated whether

students in different cultures value autonomy equally (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). International students who are separated from their home societies could have different perspectives of autonomy.

Third, some other variables such as prior knowledge were not considered as control variables. For example, one potential factor that could have a high impact is that of cultural distance which is described as the degree of incongruence between cultures (Popp, Love, Kim, & Hums, 2010). Due to cultural similarities, students from Malaysia would experience a smaller cultural distance than a student from Korea. Although it would have been ideal in the present study to investigate if the country of origin makes a difference, the small sample size did not permit such an investigation.

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KAH LOONG CHUE, is adjunct faculty and a graduate student in an EdD program. His research and teaching interests include motivation in education, learning styles, personality traits and assessment methods. Email: klchue@gmail.com

YOUYAN NIE, PhD, is an assistant professor in the psychological studies department. Her research interests include motivation in education and human development, self-regulated learning, organizational climate in classroom and school settings and innovation in curriculum instruction and assessment. Email: youyan.nie@nie.edu.sg.

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Country Image and the Study Abroad Destination Choice of Students from Mainland China

Peter G. Ghazarian
Keimyung University, Korea

ABSTRACT

In this study, the author focuses on the issue of country image in destination choice. To examine the relationship between these two variables, the study tests whether mainland Chinese who favor a destination as their ideal first choice for study abroad have a significantly more positive view of that destination's country image than their compatriots. The findings suggest policymakers and marketers from most destinations may be more successful focusing on factors other than country image in their attempts to attract cross-border students.

Keywords: destination choice, study abroad, China, country image, internationalization, push-pull

Keeping pace with globalization, the market for cross-border students in higher education has grown markedly in recent years. Increasing student mobility provides an alternative source of funding for many higher education institutions (HEIs) in a time of austerity and cuts in public funding. The potential benefits of this market can be seen in the top three destination countries: the US, UK and Australia (UNESCO, 2012), where cross-border students and their dependents make a significant contribution to their host economies.

Within the growing market for cross-border students, East Asia has served as an important region, accounting for an estimated 20.4% of total cross-border students in 2010 (UNESCO, 2012). China is the largest source country, with more than twice the number of outgoing students than India, its next closest rival (UNESCO, 2009). While such students are often referred to as international students, the term 'cross-border' students may be

more suitable for mainland China, given movement into special administrative regions such as Macau and Hong Kong, and the special case of Taiwan.

Demand from mainland China can be traced back to high competition and quality issues in the domestic market for higher education. Mainland Chinese HEIs are under considerable pressure to meet the demand, desire for personal investment, and choice in the domestic market (Marginson, 2002), but the higher education system is still recovering from the damage it sustained during the Cultural Revolution (Guo, 2010). Though there has been progress in improving access, elitism remains a concern in judging the value of a domestic degree (Zha, 2011). The middle class has adopted an independent view of supporting their children's education (Chan & Mok, 2001) and increasingly look abroad when feeling stifled by the opportunities available in the domestic system. A trend towards privately funded cross-border study to a wide variety of destinations and various tertiary programs is taking root (Wu, 2014).

Meanwhile, many developed countries face population decline, posing challenges that could potentially be addressed via selective migration. Stress on higher education institutions caused by decreasing local student numbers, for instance, could be remedied by attracting cross-border students. Just as governments have successfully used export promotion agencies to strengthen exports (Lederman, Olarreaga, & Payton, 2010), many countries seek to grow interest in their higher education systems through various marketing strategies. Without sufficient information, however, these funds may be ineffectively spent.

Though political science and economics literature point to the benefits of positive country image, work continues to establish a conceptual framework for country image, how it influences individual decision making (Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009), how it disseminates (Yang, Shin, Lee, & Wrigley, 2008) and how it influences cross-border students (Son & Pearce, 2005). A better understanding of the cross-border student destination choice would provide greater insight into recruitment (Maringe, 2006). A deeper understanding of how the cross-border student market functions (Cubillo, Sánchez, & Cerviño, 2006; Naidoo, 2007) would help stakeholders better understand how it might be influenced.

The present study focuses on the issue of country image in destination choice, specifically examining mainland China. The study tests the hypothesis that mainland Chinese who favor a destination as their ideal first choice for study abroad have a significantly more positive view of that country's image than their compatriots with other first choice destinations. To this end, this study analyzes the presence and nature of differences in

perceived country image among mainland Chinese with different first choice destinations for study abroad.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Models of Cross-Border Student Movement

Previous work in tourism serves as an inspiration for cross-border student movement models. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) extend the model of push and pull factors from destination choice in tourism to cross-border higher education. As Eder, Smith, and Pitts (2010) explain, “Individuals are influenced by motivational factors that push them into a travel decision, or in other words ‘whether to go,’ while pull factors indicate how they are attracted by a location, or in other words ‘where to go’ (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Kim, Jogaratnam, & Noh, 2006).” (234).

Findings suggest that after students are motivated to undertake cross-border higher education, they then select a host country, followed by a host higher education institution (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008). These decisions consume significant amounts of time and money, include great risk, and require the consideration of an account an enormous number of options (Eder et al., 2010, Kumar, 2008; Pimpa, 2005; Shanka, Quintal, & Taylor, 2005). Additionally, decisions are not made independently; they occur under the influence of family members, agents, peers (Bodycott, 2009, Bodycott & Lai, 2012, Pimpa, 2003; Pimpa, 2005), public policy (Perkins & Neumayer, 2011; Kahanec & Králiková, 2011), and HEI global ranking (Ghazarian, 2011, Marginson & van der Wende, 2007), among others. Within the push-pull model for cross-border education, much remains unsettled. Efforts continue to determine constituent push and pull factors and how the actual decision-making process takes place.

Push factors consist of variables that cause students or their families to look into the option of cross-border higher education. They can be divided into three categories: social/cultural, economic, and political reasons (Naidoo, 2007; Hung, Chung, & Ho, 2000), although these factors are often interlinked. Increased domestic demand for higher education (Bohm, Davis, Meares, & Pearce, 2002), low capacity and the perceived higher quality of foreign HEIs drive interest in cross-border higher education (Ji, 2011). Home country tuition fees, currency exchange rates (Naidoo, 2007), language learning, and desire for greater potential personal and professional growth have also been found to motivate students to consider cross-border higher education (Eder et al., 2010, Mpinganjira, 2009).

Pull factors are a common focus of inquiry hoping to reveal how to best draw students to a destination. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) list six types of factors: knowledge and awareness, recommendation, cost, environment,

geographic proximity, and social links. Alternatively, Cubillo et al. (2006) offer five categories of factors: personal reasons, country image, city image, HEI image, and program evaluation. In an analysis focusing on mainland Chinese students, Bodycott (2009, p. 354) identifies ten common pull factors drawn from: (1) Knowledge and awareness of the institution, its reputation, and general knowledge of the destination country, (2) Positive attitude toward supporting international education in the destination country, (3) Recommendations and the influence of relatives, parents and friends, (4) Tuition fees, living expenses, travel cost, and social cost, (5) Environment considerations including climate, lifestyle, crime, safety and racial discrimination, (6) Geographical proximity [...], (7) Social or educational links to family or friends living in the destination country [...], (8) Immigration prospects after graduation, (9) Perceived higher standards of education and employment prospects, and (10) Availability of scholarships for study.

Country Image

The present study focuses on one pull factor, country image. Country image consists of the symbols and associations that people envision when thinking about a particular country. These associations influence judgments in relation to particular foreign countries. Prior research findings on the importance of home country and destination image as critical components in destination selection for travel (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Sirakaya, Sonmez, & Choi, 2001; Um & Crompton, 1999; Woodside & King, 2001) suggest that country image may also be an important part of study abroad destination choice.

A positive country image offers significant benefits to a state. Country branding offers a competitive edge in the global market for stimulating exports, tourism, foreign direct investment, and immigration (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001; Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005; Kleppe & Mossberg, 2006). Lee, Rodriguez, and Sar (2012) find that even something as simple as country tourism logos can have a significant influence on an individual's willingness to travel there. The evidence also suggests that country image tends to be more important for destination choice than HEI branding (Chen, 2008; Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008), implying higher education marketers need to focus on international perception of a host country.

To effectively manage country image, one must understand its constituent factors. Nadeau et al. (2008) break country image into two components: character factors and competency factors. These character and competency factors provide a useful framework for better understanding aspects of country image. Yet it remains unclear whether findings from tourism or consumer behavior can be generalized to cross-border higher

education. The link between destination choice and country image requires further investigation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study tests the hypothesis that mainland Chinese who favor a destination as a first choice for study abroad have a significantly more positive view of that country's image (in terms of both character factors and competency factors) than their compatriots with other first choice destinations.

Sample

This study draws on the data collected in the Chicago Council on Global Affairs' (2008) *Soft Power in Asia* study, a study that sought to measure soft power in East and Southeast Asia and includes information on first choice study abroad destination. The Chicago data also include information on each respondent's demographic background and perception of overall country image, country character image, and country competency image for each of Japan, Korea, and the USA. The sample consists of a nationally representative group of the population over 18 years of age from mainland China ($N = 1,237$), 51.7% male ($n = 640$) and 48.4% female ($n = 597$).

Table 1: Respondents by Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	4	.4
Some elementary school	12	1.6
Completed elementary school	69	8.5
Some high/secondary school	144	22.8
Completed high/secondary school	405	63.2
Some college/university	213	84.4
Completed university or equivalent	141	98.5
Postgraduate degree	13	99.8
Illiterate	2	100.0

Table 2: Respondents by Coded Total Household Income for 2005

Income Level	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Very low	183	18.2
Low	202	38.4
Average	362	74.5
High	187	93.1
Very High	69	100.0

Data collection occurred between January 25 and February 19, 2008 as telephone interviews in Mandarin Chinese by the international polling firm Globescan. The survey was fielded to 23,442 respondents leading to 1,237 completed interviews, 17,326 partial interviews, and 5,879 refusals. The sample was drawn via a stratified multistage sampling method in which the thirty-one provinces were divided into three strata by geography and Human Development Index.

Variables

The study uses a categorical variable representing ideal first choice of destination and seven country image aspect variables that are combined to calculate variables for overall country image variable, country character image, and country competency image. Country image variables were limited to respondents' perceptions of China, Japan, and the US. Ideal first choice destination was determined by a respondent's reply to the question "If you were to send your children to receive their higher education in another country, which country would be your first choice?" Responses were coded: Japan, Korea, one of the countries of the European Union, the United States, other, and don't know/no answer. The distribution of responses for first-choice destinations were: European countries (23.5%), Japan (29%), Korea (38%), US (83.3%), and other countries (94.5%).

The country character image variable was determined by calculating the mean of the values for a respondent's reported sense of personal connection, diplomatic importance, political system, and culture for each of the destinations. The country competency image variable was determined by calculating the mean of the values for a respondent's reported views on the economy, military prowess, and education/technology of each of the destinations. The overall country image variable was determined by calculating the mean of all seven aspects of country image variables.

Analysis

ANCOVA tests were used to determine any differences among the first-choice groups for each of the overall country image, country competency image, and country character image variables of Japan, Korea, and the US. The results are further analyzed via Bonferroni pairwise comparisons to determine the precise nature of differences in perceived country image.

Limitations

Though the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (2008) data provide valuable information, the data limit this study to comparing first-choice groups for the EU, Japan, Korea, the US, Others, and DK/NA. Additionally, the set restricts measures of perceived country image to Japan, Korea, and

the US. These limitations could potentially obscure important differences among first-choice groups.

Additionally, the first-choice groups may not be representative subsamples. The Japan first-choice group (n=55) and DK/NA first-choice group (n=56) would both benefit from a larger sample size. Language presents another possible source of concern. Mandarin Chinese is not used equally in all regions of China, a possible influence on data collection, and the translation of the survey items and results into English could also introduce bias.

Finally, the data do not account for degree of interest or intent in taking part in study abroad. Thus, while the present study provides insight into the relationship between perceived country image and destination attractiveness, the findings are not limited to families with a clear interest or firm intent to send a student abroad to study.

RESULTS

While there are significant differences among the first choice groups' perception of US and Korea's country image, there are no statistically significant differences in their views of Japan's country image. Table 3 reveals the results of the ANCOVA tests.

Bonferroni pairwise comparisons provide further insight into the precise differences for each country image variable. The Japan first-choice group stands out from other groups not because of a favorable view of Japanese country image, but because of its significantly negative perception of all US country image variables. It appears to be a negative perception of another destinations' country image, rather than a positive country image of their ideal destination, that differentiates the Japan first-choice group's perception of country image from their peers' views.

The Korea first-choice group has a significantly more positive view of Korean overall country image than the EU first-choice group and a significantly more positive view of Korean country competency image than the EU and US first-choice destination groups. The US first-choice group has a significantly more positive view of US overall image than the Japan, Korea, and EU first-choice groups, a more positive view of US character image than the EU first-choice group, and a more significant view of US competency than all other first-choice groups but the Other first-choice group.

Meanwhile, the Other first-choice group has no significantly varying perceptions of country image compared with all the other first-choice groups. The DK/NA first-choice group has only significantly negative views of Korean and US competency relative to those destinations' first-choice groups.

Table 3: Analysis of covariance of perceived country image among first-choice groups

Variable	df	F	<i>p</i>
Overall Japan	5, 992	.979	.430
Overall Korea	5, 992	2.098	.010*
Overall USA	5, 992	6.659	.000*
Japan Character	5, 992	.307	.909
Korea Character	5, 992	2.065	.067
USA Character	5, 992	4.298	.001*
Japan Competency	5, 990	1.732	.124
Korea Competency	5, 985	4.012	.001*
USA Competency	5, 990	7.497	.000*

DISCUSSION

The results reject the hypothesis that mainland Chinese who favor a destination as their first choice for study abroad have a significantly more positive view of that country's image. While those who chose the US or Korea as their first-choice destination did hold a significantly more positive view of their chosen destination's country image, the same does not hold true for those who give Japan as their first choice.

The Japan first-choice groups disprove the hypothesis that study abroad destination choice associates with a significantly more positive perceived country image. Although those respondents who selected Korea as their first-choice destination do have a significantly more positive view of Korean competency and overall country image, the Korea first-choice group does not have a significantly more positive view of Korea's character image, thus rejecting a portion of the hypothesis. Furthermore, respondents who gave Japan as a first-choice destination do not view any of Japan's country image variables significantly more positively than other ideal first-choice groups.

As a result, a favorable view of a destination's country image may not always translate into destination selection. In indicating the absence of a simple, direct relationship between favorably perceived country image and destination choice, these findings support the notion that other factors beyond country image hold greater sway in destination selection. Concerns such as visa/immigration matters, geographic proximity, tuition fees and living costs, or personal links to friends or family may play a more important factor into the decision-making process for most destinations.

Despite rejecting the hypothesis, the findings do reveal the US first-choice group holds a significantly more positive view of US country image relative to all other groups. These results suggest that not all destinations

may benefit from country image in the same way, and that the relative prominence of a country may interact with the influence of country image over destination choice. Certain destinations' country image may be more influential over destination choice than others, and particularly prevalent destinations' country image may play a more important part in destination choice than the country image of actual destination selected by an individual. Country image of particular third-party destinations may play a mediating role in pushing international students towards destinations that they do not view significantly more positively than their compatriots. The results of the Japan first-choice group are particularly interesting in revealing how negative perceptions of country image may be more important than the positive.

In spite of the conventional view that a focus on promoting a positive country image is sufficient, the findings of this study reveal that higher education marketers and policymakers, especially those outside the US, may benefit from moving beyond a focus on country image in their attempts to draw students from abroad. Those hoping to influence the outward flow of mainland Chinese tertiary students in their favor may benefit more from emphasizing their destination's comparative advantages in terms of visa/immigration, geographic proximity, tuition fees and living costs, and personal links with friends or family already residing at the target destination. Further research on the process of destination choice and the relative importance of these various pull factors would help to increase the efficacy of such an approach.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study reveal that no simple, direct connection exists between ideal first-choice destination selection and relatively more positive perception of country image. The study finds that push and pull factors unrelated to country image are likely to play a greater role in destination choice. Higher education marketers and policymakers may benefit from targeting specific demographic groups and emphasizing comparative advantages, rather than relying on a country image strategy. To shed further light on the impact of marketing and policy on destination choice, further research could replicate this examination of country image and destination choice for the populations of other countries. Further investigation may also examine the role of perceived US country image on destination choice, focusing on the mediating effect of a respondents' awareness and perceived prominence of a country on destination choice.

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PETER G. GHAZARIAN, EdD, is an assistant professor of education at Keimyung University in Daegu, Korea. His research interests include multicultural & international education, the international flow of human capital, and social change in post-industrial economies. Email: pg@kmu.ac.kr

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Comparing International and American Students' Challenges: A Literature Review

Cody J. Perry

University of Wyoming, USA

ABSTRACT

International student numbers have increased drastically in the past few years. International students provide benefits to universities and American students such as greater revenue, and more open-mindedness. There have been myriad studies that have examined the international student experience, but most have focused solely on international students. However, a careful examination of the current literature demonstrates that the presence of international students in the United States offers a variety of benefits to American students by improving cultural awareness, students' self-evaluated skills, and even the American economy. This literature review highlights future research that should be performed as well as strategies that can be implemented by faculty and administration to help international students who are currently studying in the United States.

Keywords: International education, comparative education, improving international perceptions

The number of international students grew to approximately 862,000 students for the 2013-2014 academic year and accounted for nearly \$27 billion in economic spending (Witherell & Clayton, 2014). These students offer a variety of benefits to others as they improve cultural awareness, American students' self-evaluation of skills and abilities, and provide additional foreign funds to the American economy (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013). Incoming students such as freshmen, international students, and first-generation graduate students often struggle with the transition to academic life as it differs from the processes they have experienced in the past (de Araujo, 2011; Gardner, 2013). By examining these students and the transitions that take place in academic settings, researchers can identify issues and obstacles that students may face as well as those items that may

cross cultural and national boundaries. While international and domestic students have many differences, comparison of the two groups reveals that many struggles are shared by the two. This would indicate that interventions and practices that work for one group may be adapted to the benefit of the other group. The existing literature on these different student groups provide educators and administrators information that can be utilized to improve the education that colleges and universities offer.

International students are an expanding segment of the student population in the United States, accounting for 4% of all students (Witherell & Clayton, 2014). These students must deal with a variety of difficulties such as language barriers, acclimating to a new culture, and different cultural philosophies and approaches to curricula (Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). However, American freshman and first generation students often deal with issues as they make the transition to a new life and location. This literature review attempts to find the similarities and differences between these groups as well as underlying themes that can improve education for all post-secondary students studying in the United States.

The search for this literature review was conducted using the university's online research database, with articles being restricted to publication within the previous ten years. However, when consulting the most recent articles, many referenced articles older than 10 years. A few of these articles were also included based on their influence and multiple citations in the current research literature. The search was limited to articles that had been peer-reviewed and were available for online reading. Documents from all nations were considered in the study, however most utilized were performed at institutions in the United States. Search terms used in the search included international student issues, challenges, and obstacles; comparing international and domestic students; and issues in comparative education.

FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE

Similarities. International and domestic students have many apparent differences, but their similarities may help colleges and universities tailor their programs to better meet the needs of multiple groups. Both international and American students reported similar levels of satisfaction with the university experience (Grayson, 2008). However, due to adjustment to new surroundings, many students dealt with issues that may have created mental and emotional issues. For instance, first year American students, international students, and first generation doctoral students all reported feelings of alienation or separation as a result of their new surroundings (Burdett & Crossman, 2012; Gardner, 2013). Also, according to data on counseling and social interaction, American and international

students differ in some areas, but not in many important aspects of the research. For example, neither group showed significant differences in the importance of their social experiences (Curtin, Stewart, & Ostrove, 2013). Additionally, first year domestic students and international students both dealt with emotional issues such as anxiety and depression (Mitchell, Greenwood, & Guglielmi, 2007; Rodgers & Tennison, 2009). Both groups' most prolific concern in regards to mental health was relationship problems, though international students were more concerned with relationships with faculty than American students (Hwang, Bennett, & Beauchemin, 2014). Therefore, international and American students, though different in many aspects, suffer from many of the same emotional difficulties regardless of their place of origin.

In addition to emotional and mental health issues, both international and American students often struggle with their academic pursuits. Grayson (2008) found that 74% of international students had issues with studying, while 65% of domestic students reported the same issue. Moreover, both groups of students had similar views on advisor support and their relationship with their advisors and professors (Curtin et al., 2013). More importantly, students showed a positive correlation between support received from their advisor and their academic self-concept (Curtin et al., 2013). This may indicate that students who had a positive working relationship with their advisor felt better equipped to perform their academic duties. However, until a causal relationship is determined, one can only speculate at the connection.

Related to advisor support is the use and acceptance of advice from others while pursuing a degree. In a study of advice perceptions, both American and Chinese students found advice that was feasible and effective to be more valuable (Feng & Feng, 2013). However, Chinese students preferred to receive their advice from someone who was perceived to be an expert, whereas American students placed more emphasis on the content of the advice itself. This may indicate that relationships are more important to students from collectivist cultures than those from individualistic societies. All of these similarities indicate that international and domestic students can both benefit from previous and future research concerning the university experience.

Unique challenges for international students. Although there are many issues and obstacles that international students share with their American peers, there are also numerous challenges that are unique to the international student experience. Unfamiliar campuses and the novelty of a new nation can be overwhelming and give one a sense of alienation (Burdett & Crossman, 2012). In fact, many students felt left out (Sherry et al., 2010), and stated that they preferred to make friends with people of their

own nationality or from a similar background (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). However, Grayson (2008) found that international students were more involved in school groups and clubs than their American peers. This may be due to the fact that many clubs and groups are organized based on religious or ethnic backgrounds. These groups allow international students to find people who have similar interests, beliefs, and backgrounds, but may prevent socialization with people of diverse backgrounds. International students also struggle with making friendships and getting academic help from their peers (Grayson, 2008). This may be due to Curtin's (2013) findings that many international students placed more emphasis on research and professional development than American students. Therefore, international students who desire to make more social connections may be hampered by the demographics of the groups available to them and their concentrated focus on academic pursuits.

Language differences contribute to socialization and friendship issues, but it also plays a role in other challenges that international students may have to overcome. For example, students who reported lower levels of English skills also reported higher levels of discrimination (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). Discrimination is an issue that still seems to be prevalent on many American campuses and continues to be a problem for many international students. As many as 50% of international students have stated they have dealt with discrimination in some form or another (2007). Language can be troublesome in other areas as well and is not restricted to feelings of discrimination and social acceptance.

Academics and language are also closely connected, with many students struggling after passing their English language exams before coming to study in the United States (Burdett & Crossman, 2012). Language differences led many students to feel anxious when speaking in front of Americans, which may hamper their desire to share their thoughts and opinions in the classroom (Lin & Scherz, 2014). Asian students seemed to struggle most with language issues as many had difficulty in understanding lectures from American professors (2014). However, some interventions have helped to alleviate some of the issues that have arisen. One well-received intervention is the use of online language support for students (Burdett & Crossman, 2012). Since many students feel anxious when speaking to Americans, the use of online aids may allow international students to retain their dignity while also receiving the language support that they need.

The language barrier is often a difficult issue to overcome, but international students also deal with diverse emotional issues that may affect their overall perceptions of their experience in the United States. Students with low English skills reported higher levels of homesickness, which led to more complaints of physical issues, anxiety, and forgetfulness (Poyrazli &

Lopez, 2007). Moreover, Asian students were more distressed than North American and European students who were studying in the United States (Mitchell et al., 2007). This study also found that, although all students had similar issues, international students were more likely to be hospitalized for their mental health issues. This is an issue that can make life in a foreign country even more difficult, especially when one considers that the social needs of international students are not necessarily being met.

Lastly, international students deal with issues that are present in the American education system that may be taken for granted by domestic students. One such is the use and implementation of technology. While most international students used technology in their studies, many struggled with it (Habib, Johannesen, & Øgrim, 2014). The online courses and learning modules were not intuitive to many students, and they struggled when told to simply log onto the student online portal (2014). As stated previously, online language support was found to be helpful, but many facets of the online experience can be problematic for international students.

International and domestic students encounter many difficulties when they begin their post-secondary education. Some of these challenges are faced by a variety of groups including freshman, international students, and first generation graduate students. However, international students have many unique challenges and obstacles and may not have a support system similar to that of many domestic students. Yet, many international students enjoy their time in the United States and those who persist often have little difference in perception by their final year (Rodgers & Tennison, 2009). From the literature, many positive lessons can be learned and implemented in American institutions to benefit students from numerous backgrounds.

Synthesis. There are many benefits that can be derived from a study of the current literature comparing the challenges of American and international students in post-secondary institutions. First, increased advisor visibility and support can benefit numerous students in the United States. Although Grayson (2008) found that international students were less involved in the classroom than their peers, they often had more study time and more contact with faculty outside of the classroom. With the increased demand of international study, these students may need more contact from their faculty advisors in order to navigate some of the novel changes they will experience. In addition, American students who reported more contact with faculty were found to have more interaction with international students, leading to better self-concept and self-assessment of skills (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013). Therefore, increased advisor presence can benefit both international and domestic students, though this may also put a greater strain on faculty members' already strenuous workload.

Research provides specific suggestions for the faculty member to improve the international student's experience. First, in advising meetings, professors should give careful consideration to the advice they provide to their students, especially if they are from a collectivist culture (Feng & Feng, 2013). Since many of these students place more emphasis on the relational ties to the advice given, it is important to have a good relationship with the student before offering advice. Secondly, instructors should simplify their language and define difficult terms, especially if they are culturally specific (Lin & Scherz, 2014). By doing so, international students may feel less confused and add more to the conversation, giving domestic students more diverse viewpoints in the classroom. In addition, professors may choose to include some non-text assignments, like video presentations, to aid those students who struggle with the English language (Habib et al., 2014). By adding these options to courses, international students may be able to participate more fully and visual learners may benefit as well. Finally, international students have stated that they would like to see more detailed and specific assignment expectations (Lin & Scherz, 2014). By explicitly stating the requirements for a course or assignment, professors will also decrease errors in domestic students' assignments while also helping international students' understanding.

Advisor support is helpful and necessary for the success of all post-secondary students; yet international students' interactions outside of the classroom are important to future success as well. While social interaction is important to all students, it is important to note a few distinctions. First, international students who had made friends with Americans were better able to adjust and adapt to their new surroundings (Zhao et al., 2005). Additionally, students who had integrated well and had high levels of English proficiency reported lower levels of discrimination (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). Therefore, it is important to understand that helping students with their language skills is important for a variety of reasons. In contrast, too much socialization may have an adverse effect. International students with very high social integration were less likely to persist in their studies (Mamiseishvili, 2012). Moreover, American students who were involved in sororities or fraternities were less likely to interact with international students and missed out on the possible benefits of such relationships (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013). Thus, it is important to help students acclimate to their new surroundings without creating students who neglect their studies and the opportunities that they have been offered.

The current research offers solutions that can help students to socialize properly, improve their language skills, and improve their mental health. As many international students already underutilize university services, it is important to give students a supportive environment from the beginning to avoid some of the mental health issues that may arise (Zhai,

2000). Before students arrive in the United States, institutions should have a person from a similar background contact the student in their home nation (Telbis, Helgeson, & Kingsbury, 2014). This will allow new students to ask questions from someone whom they may view as an ally and provides them with a contact person before they enter the United States. Once students have arrived, Telbis (2014) suggests a peer program to match an American student with a new international student. This will allow the student to get information about services in the area, differences in culture, etc. from an American student who can help them acclimate to their new environment.

Since academics are very important to many international students, mentoring or partnering approaches should be incorporated in addition to the partner programs listed above (Korobova & Starobin, 2015). Although many universities set up ethnic and religious based groups, it may be helpful to form study groups that will allow for diverse interactions outside of the classroom (Mamiseishvili, 2012). Since many Asian students are more reluctant to join groups that are not homogenous, this approach may help more students integrate while obtaining the academic help they need (Zhao et al., 2005). By forming these types of groups, more American students can interact with international students who can also benefit from the cultural education and assistance with coursework.

Universities can help their international student population by forming groups that will aid students in a positive, useful manner. However, there are many other suggestions and ideas that emerge from the literature that can be mutually beneficial to all parties involved. Poyrazli (2007) suggests programs that will help students cope with discrimination, homesickness, and the transition to college life. These will also benefit freshman and first generation students who may need similar help. Also, students who felt they had a supportive campus environment were more pleased with their university experience, regardless of their home nation (Korobova & Starobin, 2015). This may indicate that having more support systems, even if they are specific to international students, will translate into higher satisfaction rates among all students. Moreover, international students that fully integrated into the academic system were more likely to remain enrolled at their institution (Mamiseishvili, 2012). Since completion rates and persistence are so important to today's colleges and universities, this is an important distinction to note.

Some of the programs suggested for institutions may not be immediately feasible due to budgetary and staffing concerns. However, there are many suggestions that can be implemented with little cost or effort. For instance, schools can provide more explicit financial information to students before they arrive in the United States (Telbis et al., 2014). There are many hidden costs that international students may not be aware of. These items that Americans take for granted can become frustrating for

international students. Therefore, it is suggested that universities take a proactive role in providing international students with a list of potential costs and fees that may not normally be provided to students prior to their arrival in the United States.

Many universities have done an excellent job of providing students with groups where they can find people with similar backgrounds. However, Tas (2013) suggests that the university approach should include groups with a purposeful multicultural theme. These groups should reflect the true diversity of ethnic, racial, and international groups that attend the university. By promoting these types of groups, American and international students can interact and receive the benefits of networking and collaboration that may be missing from groups that are aimed at only one cultural group.

Another suggestion that can aid international students in their transition is to include some of the aforementioned items in introductory orientation programs (Sherry et al., 2010). This could be a school wide orientation program, international students only, or could be run by individual schools or departments. By giving cultural, language, and other pertinent information to students, the university can help students before issues arise. In addition, universities should speak with students to determine what factors contribute most to positive student engagement. When universities provide the necessary information to students and receive feedback concerning their desire to continue, the international student population may feel more comfortable with their academic experience.

CONCLUSION

International students account for significant spending in the United States, but their influence and benefit go far beyond financial aspects. In fact, American students may benefit greatly from increased international student numbers. As the economy and business world become more globalized and the United States becomes more diverse, it is important for universities to remain competitive and provide an education that truly prepares students for the world around them. The current literature offers many insights into the international student experience, but as the evidence shows, universities, faculty, and groups can do more to improve the educational experience for those from other nations. Since American students benefit greatly from the presence of international students, it will pay dividends to continue research in this area. As universities struggle financially, the international student demographic can help to alleviate some of these issues while also improving the education for American students and building bridges between different cultures, economies, and nations. In the future, researchers and universities should examine current English language services offered to international

students to determine if these programs are being implemented effectively and if students are properly accessing the services offered to them. Finally, individual colleges and departments should look at their individual population to determine how to be most helpful to their international students. While campus wide initiatives may not be possible for all universities, individual departments may be able to use the current research to offer assistance to their international students that will help them to feel welcomed by their department, peers, and faculty.

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CODY J. PERRY, is a graduate student and teaching assistant, currently pursuing a PhD in Curriculum Studies at the University of Wyoming. Email: cperry12@uwyo.edu

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Factors Influencing Chinese Students' Decisions to Study in the United States

Larry Austin
University of Phoenix, USA

Libi Shen
University of Phoenix, USA

ABSTRACT

The central research question was: Why do Chinese students want to study in the United States? The participants were 20 Chinese students who studied in the U.S. Ten interview questions were used and data were processed in NVivo 10. Five major themes emerged from this study: (a) American culture benefits foreign perceptions of education in the U.S.; (b) increased personal wealth increases demands for educational freedom; (c) Chinese test performance does not indicate education quality; (d) Chinese culture clashes with students' desire for self-actualization; and (e) an education in the U.S. is considered an immigration stepping stone.

Keywords: education, cultural differences, economic factors, cultural factors, political factors

The number of Chinese students studying in the U.S. has increased drastically over the years. China ranked as the top country of the origin for U.S. bound international students for six years in a row, with 98,235 students in 2009, 127,822 students in 2010, 157,558 students in 2011, 194,029 students in 2012, 235,597 students in 2013, and 274,439 students in 2014 (Institute of International Education, 2015). The bulk of student applications have changed from a majority of graduate students to mostly undergraduate students (Chow, 2011). According to the Institute of International Education (2015), there were 886,052 international students studying in colleges and universities in the U.S. in the 2013/2014 academic year, contributing more than \$27 billion to the U.S. economy in 50 states.

Among them, China remained the top country of origin by providing 31% of all international students in the U.S. (Institute of International Education, 2015). However, the report from the Institute of International Education (2015) did not provide reasons why more and more Chinese come to the U.S. to study. Since research studies on the factors that influenced Chinese students' decisions to study in the U.S. are limited, it is imperative to conduct this study.

The goal of this study was to explore factors that contributed to Chinese students' decisions to study in the United States over all other options. This study could be beneficial to policy makers, university administrators, educators, and researchers. The information could provide Chinese university administrators and government officials to better understand how they might improve curriculum or policies to retain Chinese students. University administrators in the U.S. could use the information to make better decisions on students' admission policies. Educational leaders can identify potential problems, adjust learning programs, or refine the enrollment process to better serve the needs of international students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There were three theories that provided the foundation for this study: Constructivism, Social Learning, and Confucianism. Constructivism maintains that personal experiences and social situations influence a person's perception of reality. Constructivism involves the belief that people create references for events and influences to give them a sense of meaning and order (Hein, 1991). Learning is regarded as a process that requires individuals to form new references from sensory input actively and to construct new meaning from events they experienced in the past (Hein, 1991). Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory focuses on the actions of others as a teaching tool (Culatta, 2012). Bandura reasoned that people learned by watching the actions of others and from their observations determined which actions were safe or unsafe to repeat (Culatta, 2012). Human beings are unique in that they do not need to experience something personally to understand whether a particular thing is good or bad. Confucianism emphasizes great respect for social order and traditional family values (Lu, 2014). In Confucius' doctrine, there should be no distinction of the classes in teaching (Legge, 2004). The teachings of Confucius help cement the importance of education into the minds of the Chinese people and communicate the importance of education as a way of social advancement.

Overview of Chinese Education

During the last century, China has witnessed many changes—the most important of these being the rise in power of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1940s. Before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, about 80% of the Chinese population was illiterate; after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, greater emphasis was placed on educational equality (China in Brief, 2000). The Chinese Cultural Revolution in the 1970s reversed education progress, and thrust the entire country into chaos. “Young people were encouraged to revolt and to attack the four olds: old ideas, old customs, old habits, and old culture” (Adams, Stivers, & Bin, 2003, p. 70). All throughout China, educators and cultural elites were denounced and forced into re-education farms or prisons, where many died. After the death of Mao Zedong, those who promoted the Cultural Revolution—known as the gang of four—were denounced and imprisoned (Adams, Stivers, & Bin, 2003).

Over the centuries, Chinese culture has emphasized education as a vehicle for personal advancement based on the teachings of Confucius. In ancient China, around 124 B.C., Chinese education gained importance during the reign of the Han emperor Wu Ti; the best candidates for government positions were selected using rigorous testing (i.e., national examination) instead of personal position or influence (California State Polytechnic University, n.d.). Crozier (2002) emphasized that cognitive testing was the fairest way to select the most qualified candidates for government positions. Chinese people have traditionally believed that hard work and a good education could help them gain success and a better life (Hennock, 2009).

As Sit (2013) indicated, Chinese education has evolved into a system of competitive testing to eliminate all but the best candidates from educational opportunities. During their last year of high school, Chinese students learn nothing new but focus all efforts on preparing for the highly rigorous college entrance exam called the Gaokao (Markleine, 2009). The purpose of the Gaokao is to limit access to Chinese universities, by rejecting all but the best students. Markleine (2009) mentioned that student’ Gaokao scores are extremely important because they determine which university a student may be admitted. Students with higher scores may be admitted into the most prestigious universities, while those with lower scores have fewer or no options for university acceptance. Competitive testing has saturated all aspects of a Chinese student’s life and has been recognized as a cause of problems with school age children.

Chinese Parents’ Expectations

Although educational opportunities may not be equally available, many Chinese families believe that obtaining a good education is essential for

better life (Yi et al., 2011). Li and Li (2010) found that schools continued to promote after-school classes to occupy the free time that children should have. Parents often resort to extreme measures to ensure that children will be accepted into key schools. In the interest of fairness, the Chinese government changed school admission policies based upon student's residency. In the geographic areas with the best schools, wealthy parents eagerly purchased property, which increased real estate prices near key schools (Li & Li, 2010).

According to the *Asian Scientist* (2011) and *U.S. News and World Report* (2012), the majority of the highest rated universities are in the United States. Since only a limited number of Chinese students are rewarded with access to the best universities based upon the results of a single competitive test, some families pay close attention to the reported rankings of worldwide institutions. The traditional emphasis on education as a means for advancement and the reality of one-child families mean that parents have more resources available to benefit their offspring. Because educational opportunities are limited and the demand is high, the Gaokao system of testing eliminates students with less dedication and talent for university life (Markleine, 2009).

Pollock (2009) stated that the Central Government of China discourages educators from teaching subjects that may encourage political debate and strictly controls the content of curriculum available to students. From popular Western media, many Chinese students have developed the notion of the U.S. as a country where people are more relaxed and uninhibited, which is an appealing alternative to their own culture of conformity and competition for scarce resources.

Chinese Economy – the Rise of Chinese Middle Class

During the past two decades, economic development and social changes have not only brought numerous benefits and opportunities to the Chinese people, but also presented major challenges to the country (Wang & Morgan, 2012). As Wang and Morgan (2012) reported, economic prosperity has induced many rural workers to leave agricultural jobs for better paying industrial jobs in urban areas. The new Chinese middle class is likely to seek the best opportunities available to improve their living standards and chances for prosperity. Li and Li (2010) noted that China's rapid economic development has provided increased educational opportunities for many students. "The children nowadays can no longer imagine the poverty in the previous generation when their parents still had to strive for proper meals and warm clothes, and lost many opportunities such as going to universities" (Li & Li, 2010, p. 213). China's economic growth has led to the creation of a middle class with an ability to freely invest in the education of an only child, which has increased demand for

more educational resources within and outside of China. All across China, middle class families are sending children to English language schools to provide them with a better advantage later.

From 1970s to 1990s, most Chinese students attending American institutions were primarily graduate students; however, recent trends indicate an increase of Chinese undergraduate students studying in the U.S. The recent increase in undergraduate students attending American universities may be partly attributed to the increased prosperity of the new middle class in China. Chinese students are able to pay 100% of the costs and tuition for American universities, even though these costs are twice as expensive as the costs for American students (Tang, 2014). Steinberg (2011) described that China's economic progress during the last couple of decades has created a new middle class that can afford to pay children to attend a good university abroad. Mong (2012) also claimed that Chinese undergraduate students are mostly self-funded due to the recent increase in the Chinese middle class, while foreign students in the United States spend around 21 billion U.S. dollars each year for education expenses. In a society that values education as a means of advancement, some might ask if the level of economic prosperity affects choices families make to send their children to institutions in the United States over other international locations.

American Image

In the U.S., freedom of expression and debate may offer new paths of expression to students who were traditionally told what to do and how to think at all times. Popular media has perpetuated the concept of the American Dream and culture of freedom throughout the world. Some students may simply be curious about American culture and choose to study in the United States to experience this culture. Zhao, Zhou, and Huang (2008) reported that many Chinese see the United States as the wealthiest, technologically advanced superpower in the world. The three most common beliefs Chinese students have about the United States is that it is a land of great strength and military power; it has the best schools with access to advanced technology; and it offers the freedoms of a democratic society (Zhao, Zhou, & Huang, 2008). Many Chinese students may want to escape the pressures of the educational system in China, which they view as mostly test-oriented while promoting the societal goals of a collectivist society rather than developing students for individual accomplishments (Zhou, Zhou, & Huang, 2008).

Wong (2001) indicated that many students believe the exposure to American business culture and a diploma from an American university can benefit them in the Chinese job market. When comparing the differences between Chinese and American education, culture, business standing, and power, one may conclude that China is a land of scarcity and shortages but

continual developing. America, on the other hand, may appear as a land of abundance and opportunity. Chinese students who study in the U.S. might be more desirable employees when they return to China.

Many Chinese students believe that America is a place of where they can increase creativity and reasoning skills (Tang, 2014). In China, lessons that teach independent thought and creativity are not as valued in a country that teaches adherence to strict cultural norms. Adams, Stivers, and Bin (2003) stated that Chinese students still use the same learning methods from Confucian tradition, which emphasize learning large amounts of materials through rote memorization and providing evidence of learning with strict cognitive testing. The Chinese technique of rote memorization seems to work well for teaching basic facts and concepts, but does not promote critical thinking skills. Chinese students believe that American schools are better financed equipped than universities in China. Laprete (2008) argued that even though Chinese universities can offer solid teaching in basic subjects, studying in the U.S. offers more opportunities for learning about diversity in an open learning environment. Many Chinese students believe that the teaching culture of the United States is much different from theirs (Tang, 2014).

Chinese Immigration to America

Chinese people were some of the earliest of Asian immigrants to America, initially arrived in the American West during the California Gold Rush of 1848 and again in 1852 as a greater number of Chinese immigrants arrived in America helped build the Central Pacific Railroad (Pew Research Center, 2012). The Pew Research Center (2012) reported that as the gold in the U.S. became increasingly difficult to find and railroad jobs disappeared, many Chinese were forced to live in segregated areas with menial low paying jobs. Since their arrival, Asian Americans have repeatedly endured discrimination, including laws prohibiting Asian immigrants from coming to the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2012).

America has been an important travel destination for Chinese citizens for many years. The opportunities increased as the United States and Chinese governments negotiated visas that can be valid for ten years for business people, tourists, and students (Chappell, 2014). Increased levels of tourism and travel opportunities are viewed as important goals for both countries for increased prosperity (Chappell, 2014). The American dream has not been lost on the imaginations of the Chinese people. Although many Chinese students deeply love their country, many may desire greater freedoms than are currently available in China. As Chinese citizens gain opportunities for travel, some may desire to escape the disadvantages they experience at home in China (Browne, 2014).

Factors Influencing Chinese Students' Decisions to Study in the U.S.

Research studies on the factors leading to Chinese students' decision to study in the United States are limited (e.g., Liao, 2012; Lu, Marondo, & Qiu, 2009; Phang, 2013; Zhao, Zhou, & Huang, 2008). Zhao, Zhou, and Huang (2008) reported that Chinese students seem to be interested in the American system of education not because of education quality, but because of a dislike for the Chinese education system. Lu, Marondo, and Qiu (2009) illustrated that motivation to live and work overseas, the availability of university scholarship, university ranking, and domestic website information are all factors influencing Chinese students' decisions to study in the U.S. Additionally, increased prosperity and the greater buildup of a middle class have led to increased travel and tourism opportunities for Chinese people (Liao, 2012). Phang (2013) posited that the increased demand for Chinese students attending overseas educational institutions could be partially explained by the role the Internet plays in making information more freely available. Phang (2013) explained that the Internet has generated greater business opportunities and allowed greater access to information regarding educational institutions that may have been more difficult to obtain in the past.

Global changes in recent decades have not only affected affairs inside of China, but also influenced politics and culture throughout the entire world. As China becomes increasingly open to foreign trade and influence, new opportunities have opened up for Chinese citizens. Among these new opportunities, Liao (2012) mentioned that relaxed travel restrictions on Chinese citizens have been a result of market reforms and an open door policy. Even though China has experienced high levels of economic improvement and limited political reforms resulting from greater prosperity, evidence indicated that some Chinese wish to emigrate out of the country. Terrazas and Batalova (2010) and Vandermeid (2003) claimed that more than half of Chinese immigrants to the United States were likely to have a Bachelor's Degree or higher and are usually more educated when compared to other American immigrants.

According to the International Business Times (2012), wealthy Chinese families influenced by centuries of Chinese culture are investing heavily in the education of children. Many Chinese students are seeking out educational opportunities that emphasize greater critical and creative thinking skills, which have been traditionally offered in the United States, rather than subjecting children to the old Chinese system of learning (International Business Times, 2012). Vandermeid (2003) and the International Business Times (2012) mentioned that the Chinese one child policy has influenced families to spend more on their child's education as an investment for the future.

The topic of motivation could be addressed further on many levels and from many perspectives. Mong (2012) reported that Chinese students must deal with massive competition for Chinese university admission, which could make the possibility of attending an American university much more attractive. Marklein (2009) found that American universities have a well-established tradition of working with Chinese students to help them meet their educational goals, as Chinese universities are unable to keep up with Chinese students' demand for a university education.

With a population of about 1.36 billion people in China, Chinese job seekers may face strong market competition. Hennock (2009) predicted that the economy in China is slowing down and college graduates are experiencing more difficulties in finding jobs. Hennock (2009) also mentioned that increasing unemployment for university graduates is very worrisome for government leaders in Beijing. Chinese students compete against one another from the time they begin elementary school until the time they graduate from college.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative method with an intrinsic case study design. A case study provides information from an individual perspective and sheds light on a larger picture that outsiders can understand (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2011). Intrinsic case study design focuses on performing an investigation of a specific individual or group as a way to better understand events, actions, or thought processes of that person or group. As Hancock, Dawson, and Algozzine (2011) suggested, the goal of the design is to understand the theory of why something happens rather than the facts of what happened. Many issues that influence the decisions of Chinese students might be dependent upon multiple combinations of factors. This case study attempted to understand the specific factors that underlie Chinese students' decision to study in the United States over all other possible alternatives. The research design is appropriate because an intrinsic approach assists an investigation of the multiple, unique factors that influenced the perspectives of the participants. As Gilgun (2011) noted, an intrinsic approach to case studies helps emphasize the unique and personal perspectives of the study participants. The strength of a case study with multiple participants also helps researchers focus on details of phenomenon that are shared by more than one subject; the resulting data could provide more general information regarding circumstances that have been shared by the subjects (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2011).

Participants

The study participants were 20 Chinese students from the People's Republic of China who lived within a 50-mile radius of College Park, Maryland at the time that the research data were gathered. The participants for this case study involved Chinese students over 18 years old who have attended, or are currently attending educational institutions in the United States, and who speak English well. The researcher recruited participants from restaurants, shopping centers, malls, libraries, fitness centers, and churches in the communities near College Park, Maryland.

Procedure

After obtained IRB approval on July 23, 2014, twenty Chinese students who resided at or near College Park, Maryland were recruited to participate in this study. The participants submitted informed consent forms before the interview and all interviews were digitally audio recorded with the participants' permission. After the interviews, the researcher contacted the participants by telephone to verify their responses. The audio data were converted to written transcripts and NVivo 10® software was used to assist with data analysis.

The written documents and the audio data from each interview session were imported into the NVivo 10® software. The audio data were converted to written transcripts during data analysis. After editing to improve clarity, the written documents were coded and categorized into NVivo 10® nodes. Each node was developed from a category from common participant response topics. For example, if a participant expressed a desire to stay in the U.S. after graduation, the participant's answers were assigned to a node titled "Stay in the U.S.A." After coding all of the documents, the complete list of nodes were examined to determine the most popular response categories. In addition to creating nodes for response categorization, NVivo 10® also generated word counts from all of the documents; this feature helped identify popular participant responses and also helped identify potential node categories.

RESULTS

Twelve emergent themes were identified through NVivo 10 process. Those themes included: the perception of U.S. educational institutions as the best in the world, the U.S. as a study destination to improve English language skills in a native setting, the U.S. as a destination for travel and adventure, the high cost of an education in the U.S., the challenges of adapting to American culture, the importance of a social support networks—friends and

family, an extremely limited level of political expression, the importance of university rankings, the importance of parental support, the competitive advantage of a U.S. education, the hope that a U.S. education can provide an opportunity for work in the U.S. after graduation, and the desire for a permanent life in the United States. Five major themes were developed as follows by combining the emergent themes: (a) American culture benefits perceptions of U.S. educational intuitions; (b) Increased personal wealth increases demand for freedom; (c) Chinese test performance does not predict education quality; (d) Chinese cultural obedience clashes with students' desire for self-actualization; and (e) A U.S. education is considered an immigration stepping-stone. Table 1 presented the themes with examples.

Theme 1: American Culture Benefits Perceptions of U.S. Education

The United States of America and the cultural ideals represented by it provide an attractive study destination as many students seek an escape from the restrictions they faced from multiple sources. Respondents P01, P05, P07, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P17, and P18 cited their desire to travel—an activity that is still restricted in China. Respondents P01 and P20 expressed a desire to learn about the people who come from the many different world cultures that live in the United States. The opportunity to study English in the U.S. was considered important by respondents P05, P07, P08, P11, P19, and P20, since English is the most widely spoken language in the world and used in business. Some respondents mentioned that an American education would make them more competitive in the job market at home. Respondent P02 said, “If you have a degree from the U.S. it's easier to find a job in China.” P06 believed that studying in the U.S. would benefit her future development. P06 further described that with an overseas educational background, her advantage in academic profession, global vision and language skills will make her very competitive. Many of the respondents also indicated that they would like to stay in the United States after graduation to live and work. P15 noted that he wants to find a job in the U.S. with long-term development prospects after graduation. Respondent P11 also said that she wants to find a job and tries to stay in the U.S. after graduation. A few of the respondents also indicated that they wanted to become citizens of the United States. Respondent P15 explained that she is a permanent resident of the U.S. now and may go back to visit China after she becomes a U.S. citizen.

Theme 2: Increased Personal Wealth Increases Demand for Freedom

Nearly all of the study respondents indicated their families were wealthy enough to easily afford sending them to study abroad in the U.S. Respondent P15 emphasized the amount of funding available to her by

saying, “Economic reasons never affected my decision to study where I wanted because I was born into a family that can afford the tuition for the United States.”

Table 1: Major Themes and Examples

Major Themes	Examples
American culture benefits perceptions of U.S. education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People in the U.S.A. have more freedom to travel and experience other cultures.• An education in the U.S.A. can offer a native approach to mastering English language skills.• The U.S.A. offers greater academic and personal freedoms.
Increased personal wealth increases demands for freedom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The accumulation of wealth has enabled students to afford tuition at top rated universities.• Greater wealth has increased the demand and ability for travel.• Wealthy students seek to escape China’s competitive education culture.
Chinese test performance does not predict education quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum in China is designed to suit the requirements of the Central Government.• Classes are taught verbatim out of books.• Chinese teachers are regarded as less creative than American teachers are.
Chinese cultural obedience clashes with students’ desire for self-actualization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chinese tradition emphasizes a duty to care for elderly family members.• Cultural norms encourage obedience and conformity.• Children are pressured to excel in a highly competitive educational culture.
A U.S. education is considered an immigration stepping-stone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A U.S. education prepares Chinese students to compete in the U.S. job market.• Most students report their desire to stay in the U.S. if an opportunity arises.

Respondent P12 noted that males have more financial responsibilities in Chinese culture and need to buy a house before they can marry. However, Respondent P12 said, “Since I’m a girl, my parents did not

need to save money for a house. They could use their money to send me to a foreign university, and that's why I chose to study in the United States.” Therefore, girls may benefit more from family wealth to study in the USA than boys may. Respondent P10 noted that personal wealth has created a kind of democracy in China as students now vote with their feet, and leave the country. Many Chinese families can now give their children more education freedom. Chinese students often speak of personal freedom rather than political freedom. Most students do not exhibit a political opinion. Respondent P10 thought that politics is too good for her to think about because she does not know about things like that.

Theme 3: Chinese Test Performance Does Not Predict Education Quality

Some respondents expressed discontent with the education they received in China and how limited access to educational resources, or poor test scores, might affect their future. Respondent P10 described that many teachers in China only read out of textbooks and do not have much experience. Respondent P14 complained about the amount of preparation necessary to prepare for the Gaokao test and the last year and half of high school was a total waste of time. P14 also complained that schools were often judged as good or bad, and “If you fail one exam, it may kill your future, because you just cannot go to a good school for the next four years, and maybe then you can't find a job, because you failed going to that good school.” A few of the respondents complained about the Chinese curriculum that was available to students. As respondent P20 remarked, “One of the drawbacks of studying in China is that open discussion and critical thinking is discouraged in some cases.” Respondent P10 also indicated that an American education is better than Chinese education because modern education is more developed in America, and sometimes Chinese schools copy the American style of learning.

Theme 4: Chinese Cultural Obedience Clashes with Students' Desire for Self-actualization

Chinese culture emphasizes caring for aging parents. For some students, family and cultural obligations may be stronger than their own personal desires. For others, Chinese cultural traditions conflict with their personal goals. Respondent P04 commented that Chinese parents usually insist their children to study the things they think are best. Later, their children must work in the occupation their parents want instead of what they want. Respondent P05 explained that she is very much aware of and like popular American culture. She believed that American culture influences the rest of the world; When Chinese students are exposed to American culture, it influences them to travel to the United States. Many of the study

participants expressed their desire for independence while in the U.S. and briefly escape the influence of their parents. Respondent P09 said, “The culture difference was one of the things that I mostly wanted to experience in U.S.; it played positive role in my decision to come here.” Respondent P10 underscored the importance of education as an investment with, “because there are not many avenues for investment in China; many parents think it is wise to invest in their children as a way to ensure a kind of security as they grow older.”

Theme 5: A U.S. Education is considered an Immigration Stepping-stone

Out of the twenty participants in the study, seventeen indicated that they would like to stay and work in the U.S. Respondents P03, P06, P10, P13, and P14 mentioned their desire to stay and work only a short while to gain professional experience before returning to China. However, respondents P02, P04, P05, P08, P09, P11, P12, P15, P16, P17, P18, and P20 registered their desire for long-term residency in the U.S. Additionally, respondents P05, P11, and P15 expressed their desire to live permanently in the U.S. Although many of the respondents expressed that they would eventually return to China, most indicated their desire to establish a professional career in the U.S. over a longer period of time. It would then seem logical that when students can stay in the U.S. for many years, they might be increasingly reluctant to return to China after building a career, a network of friends, and possibly family in the U.S.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicated that Chinese students’ perception of U.S. educational institutions, the support from the family, the rankings in the U.S. universities, the competitive advantage of a U.S. education, the opportunity to work in the U.S., and the desire for a permanent life in the United States all contributed to their decisions to study in the U.S. Many participants perceived the U.S. as a place of freedom, opportunity, and wealth. The participants indicated that they got their information from movies and television shows, which portrayed Americans very wealthy and unfettered by cultural tradition. As they had an intense desire for success, wealth, and freedom, the participants’ responses provided a strong indication of the level of influence American popular culture had on their decisions to study in the U.S.

Additionally, the majority of the participants reported that their families could easily afford sending them to the United States to study. As Tang (2014) noted, when personal wealth has increased for and secured the

development of a Chinese middle class, many families now have the means to send their children abroad to attend better schools. Chinese parents often consider the United States as the best choice for students who desire access to the most modern technology and the highest rated universities. Melcher (2010) noted that there is strong demand in China to prepare students to study abroad, with some unscrupulous companies helping students cheat to gain access to top rated universities in the U.S.

Nearly all of the interview participants complained about their last year of high schools in China focusing solely on preparing for the college entrance exams. Some respondents expressed discontent with the education they received in China and how limited access to educational resources or poor test scores in college entrance examination might affect their future. This is consistent with Tang's (2014) findings that an increasing number of Chinese students are coming to the United States during high school to avoid taking the Chinese college preparation exams and to become integrated into the American education much sooner to increase their chances of gaining admittance to a prestigious U.S. university.

The Chinese Central Government strictly regulates school curriculum and focuses mostly on subjects that do not require creative thought. Chinese students often complained that many Chinese university professors merely stand in front of the class and read from government approved textbooks. All of the respondents stated that they believed the institutions in the U.S. offered better opportunities to acquire critical thinking and problems solving skills.

Chinese culture emphasizes caring for aging parents. For some students, family and cultural obligations may be stronger than their own personal desires; for others, Chinese cultural traditions conflict with their personal goals. As Chinese students are increasingly exposed to western freedom, trends, and culture, they may develop a heightened desire to escape the pressures for obedience and conformity they face at home. The majority of the interviewees insisted that they wanted to stay in the U.S. to live and work to maximize their chances for life success, and perhaps visit China later when they have greater resources to finance the care for their parents. Tang (2014) remarked that Chinese students want the things that nearly everyone wants; they are no different from people all over the world. Ninety percent of the participants for this study reported a basic desire to stay in the United States to work for varying lengths of time. They admitted that they want to stay in the United States as long as they could find employment or if a good career opportunity is presented. The participants who wanted to stay a short time in the U.S. after graduation expressed a strong sense of duty toward their families and Chinese cultural tradition. Four participants said they wished to permanently live and work in the U.S. Although the evidence suggested that Chinese students might use their

university experience as a stepping-stone for a prolonged stay in the U.S., they also face intense pressure from family and cultural sources to return to China. Many issues surrounding Chinese immigration to the U.S. are highly complex and continually changing and would need further study to reach concrete conclusion.

LIMITATIONS

There were numerous limitations for the study. First, the collected data were obtained after the interviewed participants lived and studied in the United States for some time; prolonged exposure to American culture may have influenced their attitudes slightly. Had the data been collected in different time or place, the results might be different. Second, the collected data were limited to students' location; it is unknown if different study locations would have changed the data. Third, the number of participants was limited in a case study so it cannot be generalized to a large population. Perhaps a different research method and design might yield different results. Therefore, further studies are needed.

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LARRY AUSTIN, EdD, is an education consultant and curriculum designer. Dr. Austin's research interests include educational leadership, instructional technology, and cultural awareness.

Email: larryaustin@email.phoenix.edu

LIBI SHEN, PhD, is a faculty at University of Phoenix. Dr. Shen's research interests include curriculum design, instructional methods, instructional technology, and K-12 education. Email: drlibishen@email.phoenix.edu

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Developing Skills and Disposition for Lifelong Learning: Acculturative Issues Supervising International Doctoral Students in New Zealand Universities

Mingsheng Li

Massey University, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

This study examines the acculturative challenges facing non-English speaking background (NESB) international doctoral students in the process of discipline enculturation. Twenty NESB doctoral students at three New Zealand universities from eleven countries participated in the semi-structured interviews. The study has found that their transformative learning was the result of happiness, joy, success, and transformative disposition for lifelong learning as well as various challenges, plights and hardships. The dynamic interplay of the dichotomy fosters their intercultural competence, critical thinking, research skills, independence, and academic scholarships, and prepares them for new challenges and multiple academic demands. It is argued that developing capacities and disposition for lifelong learning should be facilitated through disciplinary enculturation, skills development, familiarity with academic conventions, and effective mentoring and healthy supervisor-supervisee relationships.

Keywords: acculturation, lifelong learning, NESB doctoral students, supervision, community of practice, andragogy

Nearly five million students travelled to study in higher education institutions outside their own countries in 2014 (Maslen, 2014). In spite of its small size of the population, New Zealand hosted two percent of the international student market share (MacGregor, 2014), with 112,000 international students in 2014 (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2015). The number of international students studying for a degree at New Zealand tertiary institutions has increased since 2008, reaching 30,280 (27.1% of the

total international student population in New Zealand) in 2014, accounting for 11 per cent of the total enrolments in higher education (Wensvoort, 2014). International education, the fifth largest export industry in the country, has contributed \$2.6 billion to the New Zealand economy and created 28,000 jobs every year (Joyce, 2013). The New Zealand Leadership Statement for International Education has set a very ambitious goal to be achieved by 2025: to double the economic value from \$2.6 billion to \$5 billion by increasing enrolments (Joyce & Woodhouse, 2013).

Following the changes of international education policies in New Zealand, tuition fees for doctoral study and research are charged at domestic fee rates. More and more non-English-speaking background (NESB) international students come to pursue doctorate in New Zealand universities. According to the statistics provided by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2015), there were 3,838 international doctoral students studying at eight universities in New Zealand in 2014, accounting for over forty percent of the total doctoral student population in the country. When they come to study in a new educational environment, they experience challenges and transformational growth in adapting to the new academic life and in enculturating into the discourse community.

There has been a considerable body of research on the transitional issues facing international doctoral students — the fit between international students and the host education environment and on lifelong learning, but the literature associating doctoral study as lifelong learning is very much limited. This paper draws on the theories of transformative learning, lifelong learning, and communities of practice [CoP], and examines the transformative experience and acculturation issues that challenge NESB doctoral students studying at New Zealand universities. Specifically, this study investigates the personal learning experiences of NESB doctoral students, their learning expectations, and perceptions of team supervision and supervisors' pedagogical approaches to inducting NESB doctoral students into the research community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Watson (2003) defines lifelong learning as “a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment, in all roles circumstances, and environments” (p. 3). Shachama and Od-Cohenb (2009) suggest that the acculturative issues facing doctoral students as adult learners should be addressed in relation to adult learning or lifelong learning in doctoral programs. Fostering autonomous, independent, and self-directed lifelong learners requires a constructive alignment with the

environment in tune with the self-concept and self-direction, and a climate in which the relationship between teacher and learner is that of “mutuality”, respect, and collaboration (Gould, 2012).

NESB doctoral students need mentoring facilitated by situated learning, learning through various forms of participation in real-life academic activities mediated by acquisition of the discourse language, and adequate exposure to the ideas and practices in the field and the discourse, and discipline knowledge and conventions (Simpson & Matsuda, 2008; Tran, 2013). As newcomers, their “legitimate peripherality” requires them to participate in the CoP, to have a good knowledge of the “culture of practice,” and eventually “make the culture of practice theirs” (Lave & Wenger, 2002, p. 111). Wenger (2011) defines communities of practices as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 1). Three important elements constitute the meaning of a CoP: the domain, and community, and the practice. Members are committed to the domain, share and value the tacit collective knowledge and competence that distinguishes members and nonmembers. They engage in joint activities and discussions, and build relationships with the community members. They are practitioners with “a shared repertoire of resources,” “a shared practice” and predictability in their sustained interactions (Wenger, 2011, p. 2). A community of practice plays a crucial role in shaping the participants’ identity and constructing members’ linguistic and communication styles through its history, mutual sense making, common interpretation, and practice (Eckert, 2006). According to Lave and Wenger, the critical element of their “legitimate peripherality” is about access to the culture of practice, about transparency, understanding, manipulation, and decoding of the “inner workings” of the “black box” (p.117). Very often, NEBS doctoral students at an early stage “lack the language and tools necessary to engage others in the community, and ... their attempts to participate fall short of the community’s expectations” (Simpson & Matsuda, 2008, pp. 93-94).

Golde (1998) describes doctoral students’ enculturation process as “an unusual double socialization” (p. 56), that is, socialization into the role of a graduate student and preparatory socialization into a profession. Casanave and Li (2008) add a third one, that is, immediate socialization into language and culture for NESB doctoral students. In initial socialization into the academic culture of the university, Golde (1998) states that doctoral students undertake four tasks: intellectual mastery, learning about the realities of a graduate student, learning about the profession, and integrating oneself into the department. Casanave (2008) acknowledges that NEBS students often experience challenges in their academic enculturation, such as lack of understanding of academic and discourses and genre conventions, thinking styles, socio-political and interpersonal engagement, socially and

politically grounded literacy-related activities, academic expectations, tacit assumptions, unwritten game rules, and relationships with supervisors. These challenges make doctoral students “feel lie fish out of water” (Casanave, 2008, p. 14).

NEBS students as novices experience difficulties in “depersonalized” discipline discourses and conventions (Archer, 2008, p. 265). To become familiar with discipline discourses and conventions, they must conform to discipline conventions and develop academic literacies involving “epistemology, subjectivities, discourses and institutional power relations” and negotiation of different cultural values, pedagogies, relationships, conceptualization of knowledge, and contexts (Cartwright & Noone, 2001, p. 45). Casanave (2002) notes that academic literacy is a “situated” practice involving participation and experience in local practice. Discipline enculturation requires the participants to understand the academic settings and “sets of rules, conventionalized practices and strategies” in the “serious game” that structures our academic and social life (Casanave, 2002, p. xiv). The game metaphor suggests that academic literacy is influenced and dictated by a multiplicity of games that safeguards “the unchanging reproduction of social structures and practices without giving up the notion of structure” (Casanave, 2002, p. 18).

It is “wretchedly difficult” for NEBS international students to play academic literacy games because of their cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds, epistemological orientations, prior learning experience, unfamiliarity with the game rules (Christine Pearson Casanave, 2002, p. 35), confusion with clashes between disciplinary genres and discourses, and lack of knowledge of specific academic genres and discourse conventions (Chen, 2001). For NEBS doctoral students, academic literacy practices “represent a game of survival in a fragmented environment or an introduction to the serious academic games that characterize different disciplines” (Casanave, 2002, p. xviii). Discipline enculturation is conceived as partial and fragmented and it is an ongoing incomplete process (Casanave, 2008). The straightjacket of discipline genre and discourse conventions becomes a barrier to international students’ creativity and academic enculturation. Within such a discipline discourse, students, constrained by forces of conventional expectations, are allowed to be creative in content, but not so in genre and conventions, nor in lifelong learning (Allison, 2004).

To achieve academic success, there needs to be a period of enculturation into the CoP through mentoring by creating and maintaining a healthy, constructive, and productive relationships between students and supervisors (Lee, 2012) and through participation in the CoP, including “tacit conventions,” “shared world views,” “specific perceptions,” and “underlying assumptions” (Wenger, 1998, p. 47). Belcher (1994) comments that the success of thesis writing and the gaining of membership status in the

CoP depend entirely on whether there is a match or mismatch in the research community, and whether the students and supervisors share the expectations of the discourse community. Fujioka (2008) finds that to be successfully enculturated into the CoP, the supervisor-supervisee relationship is essential, and yet, this enculturation process is heavily influenced by status imbalance where students become vulnerable to supervisors embodying power and authority, coupled with cultural differences.

Shachama and Od-Cohenb (2009) argue that the aims of doctoral study are to acquire practical knowledge through enculturation and practice, “generate new knowledge and facilitate change” (p. 283). Only by integrating the characteristics of adult and lifelong learning into practice, by taking into account both cognitive and emotional elements of learners, their experience, and their culture, and by providing practical orientation and adequate access to and involvement in the CoP, can change and lifelong learning occur.

Tran (2013) argues that for NESB doctoral students, cross-border intercultural communication involves a dynamic interplay of challenges, difficulties and barriers as well as opportunities for changes, self-transformation, self-determination and academic growth in negotiating higher education. Tran (2013) describes such dynamics as transformative learning which refers to “a changing process in which international students construct reality through revisiting their existing assumptions and moving towards life-changing developments in their personal and professional perspectives” (p. 124). This negotiating process enhances their personal agencies, transformative power, intercultural competence, multiple perspectives, and frames in adapting to the new environment and serves as a catalyst to self-discovery and life-long learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a qualitative interview approach to collect data to identify the challenges facing NESB doctoral students studying in New Zealand universities. The approach allowed the researcher to listen to the narratives of the participants in the process of inquiry to have a deeper understanding of the dynamics of their experience and complexity of the cases of their socio-cultural and academic adjustment by “describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon and integrating their own experiences and the context and situations that have influenced their experiences” (Creswell, 2007, p. 58).

Participants

Twenty NEBS doctoral students from three universities (Massey University, Victoria University of Wellington, and University of Otago)

participated in this study. They came from different parts of the world: China (5), Estonia (1), Indonesia (1), Malaysia (4), Germany (2), Russia (2), Taiwan (1), Ukraine (1), Venezuela (1), and Vietnam (1).

At the times of the interviews (May-November, 2014), five just graduated, two had graduated for two years, and thirteen others were in their second, third or fourth year. The disciplines these participants studied in included: linguistics, education management, information management, finance management, food safety and management, marketing, cross-cultural studies, public relations, international business, accounting and education.

Procedure

The interview questions were designed to elicit the participants' narratives, their views, lived experience and their responses to the research questions that were focused on their learning experiences, with a particular focus on how their learning was supported to facilitate cognitive and emotional changes and lifelong learning. The interview questions also involved their perceptions of supervisor-supervisee relationships, team supervision, teaching pedagogies, and cultural barriers. Interviews with the students in Wellington were conducted face to face, while interviews with students in Auckland and Dunedin were conducted through Skype video conferencing. A snowball sampling research technique, also called "link-tracing sampling" by Hancock and Gile (2010, p. 11) was purposefully used to approach participants whom the researcher knew in person and they in turn introduced the researcher to other participants. The snowball sampling technique was useful to allow the researcher to use a chain referral from initial participants to identify the targeted subjects until a desirable number of participants was obtained. All the interviews were digitally recorded with the participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is defined as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 145). The transcripts of this study were thematically classified, coded and assigned meaning for data analysis, put into logical and meaningful categories to identify significant thematic structures, analyzed through an inductive approach to let the critical themes emerge out of the data, and examined in a holistic fashion (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Suter, 2012). For ethical reasons, the interview order (P1, P2, P3...) instead of the participants' names will be used to represent the participants.

RESULTS

Overall, most NESB doctoral students were satisfied with their learning experience with their supervisors. They were very grateful to them for their supervision, guidance, research and professional experiences, and pastoral care. They saw their supervisors as their role models in the CoP. To them good supervision involves supervisors' understanding, empathy, timely feedback, constructive criticism, encouragement, expertise, direction, responsibility, management skills, knowledge in the field and the ability to convey the knowledge, availability to students, interest in the student's research and future career, and a balanced use of the hands-on and hands-off approaches. However, such expectations were not often met. Problems occurred in managing relationships between supervisors and students in terms of role expectations, team supervision, and disciplinary acculturation.

Mismatched role expectations

The supervisor-supervisee relationship is associated with role expectations and behavior. The match or mismatch in role expectations predicts positively or negatively the role behavior and perceptions of the participants. However, expectations built on role conceptualizations and previous learning and supervision experiences are not often clearly and concisely communicated and articulated. They are dynamic and keep changing at different stages of the supervision process. P4 reported that the relationship was essential to her research study and "it just dominates everything." DP6 described the relationship as the "chemistry" that could lead to harmony and disharmony when role expectations are matched or mismatched.

Associated with role expectations are the two important pedagogical approaches adopted by supervisors: the hands-on and hands-off approaches. The hands-on approach is an intervening approach leading to more effective supervision, and the hands-off approach refers to non-directive supervision aiming to foster students' independence and autonomy. It is important to keep a balance between the two approaches, as a student progresses to different stages. In this study most supervisors tended to use the hands-off approach, advising students to read and write by themselves, to define their own research problems, formulate their own research questions, without providing needed support and supervision. They believed that writing the thesis was the student's responsibility. Conflict occurred when expectations of supervisors and students were not met. Students expecting hands-on supervision often felt disoriented, unsupported, isolated, marginalized, discouraged, and largely ignored under the hands-off approach.

P3 reported that she had expected her supervisors as experts in the area to take a hands-on approach by making a detailed plan for her.

However, her supervisors adopted the hands-off approach, letting her do whatever she would like to do, aiming to develop her independent research capabilities. Six months had passed and she was frustrated. She complained, "I was never told what to do next." Although she was highly motivated, she felt that she needed directions and academic support that had never been provided. P4 told a similar story. Every time when she met with her supervisors, she did not get any useful advice from them:

I was usually in awe of my supervisors. In Germany, we are always in awe of our supervisors. ... You come with a huge awe and you realize that is not all done for your benefit and no advice was given.

She had encountered huge challenges in her research but the supervisors did not lend a hand, letting her grope in the dark until six months later one of the supervisors "mumbled" that she had bitten off more than she could chew. She was angry that the supervisor had not mentioned this earlier. Her deep trust and confidence in them had turned into anger. She believed her supervisors had not performed their roles as expected.

P6 also found that she and her supervisors were not on the same page. They did not offer her much needed help. She had not reached the stage when she could do research independently and "liberate" herself. She was frustrated that they had adopted the hands-off approach prematurely. She said,

No one in here is to tell you what to do next. I have to learn to control what to do next, what I need to do next, and why I should do this first and not that.

She was puzzled that the supervisors did not supervise her as expected:

No ground rules had been laid down for us to follow. No clear role boundaries were drawn. No appropriate supportive structure was set up. No clear and transparent expectations had been articulated.

P7 voiced the same view, "I was struggling on my own. I did not feel comfortable to go when I was struggling because I did not know if what I was doing was appropriate or not." Similarly, P14 was puzzled with the supervision style:

In the first year, it was really hard for me because in New Zealand or the Western educational system they do not tell you exactly what to do. In Indonesia, teachers tell you what to do. Here they voice

their opinions and let you make your own decision. In Indonesia, teachers are more responsible for the students; here in New Zealand, teachers are more responsible for themselves.

There were huge differences between supervision in Russian and in New Zealand. In Russia, it was more of a guided stuff. Supervisors led you by the hand. Here in New Zealand, you have to take the decision for yourself. It was hard for me here. I felt like a blinded kitten and did not know where to go.

P15 was extremely dissatisfied with her learning experience because of the “ineffective” supervision:

The first year was simply a waste of time. My supervisors did not give me any helpful directions. They sat on their hands. I wasted lots of time. I read lots of irrelevant stuff. You do need directions and support to boost your confidence.

P16, a Vietnamese student, expressed his lonely feelings because supportive supervision was unavailable under the hands-off pedagogical approach:

I had two supervisors, one an associate professor and another one a doctor. We met once or twice in six months. They were busy people. They did not have time to read what I had written. They did not have time to support me during the four years. I felt very lonely without the help of supervisors.

P19, a Chinese student, felt that there was a mismatch in his expectations and those of his supervisors. The mismatch lay in the perception of the role of the student. Her supervisors believed that as a Ph.D. student, he should have acquired all the key research skills and have the capacity to undertake independent studies:

I feel I am a student. I come here to learn, to receive training, to improve my academic writing. It is unfair to treat me as a highly qualified doctoral graduate, an academic writer with many articles published in A-ranking journals. Although I met the enrolment criteria, I just started my new journey. I needed my supervisors to lead me by the hand. It is unethical to let the student grope in the dark.

This study has found that more than one third of the participants said that their first year was a waste of time. They received no proper care

and support from their supervisors. The hands-off approach, when not used appropriately, could undermine students' interests in learning and research. However, a small number of students felt the hands-off supervision styles met their expectations. For example, P5 expressed her enthusiasm with such a supervision style:

I like to be independent. I like to fight out things on my own. I knew my supervisor was happy with independent students. She kind of did leave us alone but probably I think she figured out who can be on their own and who needs more support. It was good that I was able to do my own things at my own space.

On the other hand, the extreme hands-on approach could conflict with student expectations. P6 expected to undertake an independent study, but she could not because she was doing her primary supervisor's own research project. He had a rigorous control over the research process and procedures. She complained:

He formulated the research questions, designed the research methods and the thesis structure. He did everything for me. He accepted me as a PhD student on the condition of me working on what he wanted me to do. That was tough for me because he knew what he was doing and what I was doing, but I did not know what I was doing and why I did it. It was so uncomfortable for me because it did not mean anything to me. He did not like what I wrote. Instead, he wrote chapters for me!

In sum, different students and supervisors had different role expectations. Role conflicts occurred when expectations were unmet. The imbalance of the hands-on and hands-off approaches was considered to be one of the major problems in supervision.

Lack of supervision capabilities and disciplinary knowledge

Students' disappointment over supervision could also be seen in the students' perception of the supervisors' lack of supervision capabilities and disciplinary knowledge. In their view, supervisors, especially primary supervisor, should be an expert in the discipline. It can be a challenge for those who did not have any knowledge of the discipline in which the NESB doctoral students are enrolled. Two students reported that neither their primary nor secondary supervisors possessed the disciplinary knowledge of their studies—an accounting supervisor did not know much about cross-cultural issues, and a psychology supervisor did not know how to supervise the student doing research in applied linguistics. Five participants noted that

their secondary supervisors did not have any knowledge of the areas of their research. They were allocated such a role by the universities to promote these academics' profiles for ever being a Ph.D. supervisor, thus for future academic promotions.

Two students had studied for over one year in a university. However, the lack of supervision capacity and supervisors' lack of disciplinary knowledge had prevented them from moving forward. One had already passed the confirmation stage. Eventually, they were "tossed" over to the other school where they could find better supervision. Unfortunately, they had to start from the very beginning.

Three doctoral students complained that they had spent one year longer to complete their doctoral study because of supervisors': lack of disciplinary knowledge to guide them, ineffective supervision, and insufficient commitment and responsibility.

One Russian student stated that:

At some stage, I had 3 supervisors because either the other ones were on sabbatical leave or another supervisor was doing some other work. The most consistent one became my primary supervisor. But none of them had expertise in the area of my research.... He [primary supervisor] was good in terms of providing me with emotional support It was quite an individual study for me.

Similarly, a Chinese student reported:

Basically, my secondary supervisor does not know what I am doing. She was my primary supervisor's supervisor. She is already a professor. Frankly speaking, she is not helpful to my academic research. I am not blaming her. She is specialized in another discipline.

Student's strong enthusiasm in the research projects was dampened and the university's reputation was damaged when the students realized that their supervisors, primary or secondary, did not have expected supervision capacities and disciplinary knowledge. Being a specialist in one knowledge domain does not mean one is a specialist in other knowledge domains.

Team supervision – more problematic than facilitative

Team supervision, consisting of two to four supervisors, has been considered as an effective approach to doctoral supervision. It draws on knowledge, expertise and experiences from different people, different disciplines, and even from different universities. It is especially important

when doctoral students' research topics cross disciplines. Multiple supervisors provide different types of complementary support, such as disciplinary knowledge, theories, practices, language, administration, perspectives, and pastoral care (including emotional support). For example, P6 reported benefiting from team supervision:

Both my supervisors had strengths in their own areas. In my Ph.D. study, I used two different frameworks. One was an expert in one framework and another in another one. ... Their strengths complement each other so that that is an advantage for me.

The students, who found that their supervisors lacked disciplinary knowledge in supervision, enjoyed the complementary role these supervisors played, such as editing and corrections of students' writing.

However, team supervision was considered more problematic than facilitative. More problems than benefits were reported in this study.

Managing team supervision was found to be a significant challenge to many doctoral students. The biggest challenge to them was managing their supervisors and their conflicting views. They were frustrated when they were given conflicting instructions. P1 reported having lost her confidence and trust in team supervision. She did not know that she was the owner of her research project, and she was expected to make her decisions when her supervisors proposed conflicting views. She gave this account:

I had three supervisors. They often had different and conflicts views and instructions. I was difficult for me to adjust who I should listen to. My Asian mind-set told me to follow whatever the supervisor says. However, I was totally confused when they gave me different instructions.

Her cultural orientation required her to please all the masters. It was not until in the fourth year did she realize that

The supervisors' suggestions are just suggestions. It is up to the students to consider and make their own decisions. They are not a must. Different opinions were meant to help me think more about what I was doing and offer me different perspectives for me to deal with the issues.

However, such a revelation came too late. It took her two years longer to complete her study than it was originally planned.

Managing team supervision was also a challenge to a German student. She said,

Basically my secondary supervisor had a lot to say and personality-wise he is a lot bossier and my primary supervisor didn't object him. ... Initially I did whatever I was told and that resulted in some huge problems for me. ... I could have said NO to a lot things. I would have made more clear decisions by myself. I needed to think more than I trusted them.

P7, a student from Estonia, had a different experience. She understood that students took ownership of and had responsibility for their research projects and they had to be "picky" with supervisors' views and comments:

I came from a background similar to here. So I did not struggle as much as students from Asian backgrounds, to stand for my own ideas and not to take the supervisors' advice 100 per cent because they often change their minds, too. It can have severe consequences if you just do what they say.

In team supervision, power struggle between supervisors was found detrimental to students. Supervisors have different styles of supervision and different social and academic status that make it difficult for students to negotiate especially when one supervisor is more powerful than the other. P8 encountered such a type of team supervision. When the conflicts escalated, his approach was, "Listen to the primary supervisor." In such a power struggle, the one in a weaker position could not offer any supervision support. The following statement by P5 is illuminating:

My primary supervisor is very famous. He was the supervisor of the MA and Ph.D. theses of my second supervisor. She respects him a lot. She always says "yes". She never offers her opinions and never contributes anything to supervision.

P20 found the power struggle and game playing between supervisors damaging to his study. In his experience, as a powerless student, he did not get any help from his two supervisors, two well-known professors. They were busy teaching, attending international conferences, doing their own research, without enough time to supervise him and to read what he had written. They often provided minimal feedback that was "useless, or irrelevant to the research project".

Supervision and enculturation

The supervisor-supervisee relationship is associated with pedagogy and disciplinary enculturation where doctoral students are encouraged to

take part in disciplinary activities, gradually gaining entry into and become a full member of the community of practice. Supervisors played a critical role in inducting students into the research community to enable them to become familiar with Western research traditions, norms, values, philosophy, disciplinary genre, research methods and conventions. It was an erroneous assumption that doctoral candidates were well prepared for the academic endeavor.

P1 insisted that academic, cultural and social integration was extremely important to NESB students who did not have adequate knowledge and skills to develop their all-around identity as a researcher, scholar, student, and a social and cultural human being. They needed “nurturing.” Communicating and interacting with supervisors provided them with excellent opportunities to directly learn from them in terms of communication strategies, integrity and rigor in research, socializing skills, and interpersonal and intercultural communication skills. To P20, it was the supervisors’ responsibility to teach students the “game rules” in the supervision process that remain invisible, unwritten, unarticulated but critical to the students as green hands:

To me, supervision means teaching students the Ph.D. game rules. Supervisors themselves have mastered and controlled these hidden rules. I hate these rules but it could be a huge help to make these rules transparent to the students so that they can play and win the game.

He was dissatisfied with his supervisors for “controlling” and “manipulating” these rules. He expected them to guide him to formulate his research questions, develop a conceptual framework, address the gaps in his knowledge of the research process, develop a structure and design for his project, identify appropriate methodology and methods, analyze findings, and he also expected them to have some basic knowledge of his research area so that they could offer relevant and helpful advice, and ultimately usher him into the research community.

Enculturation involves offering workshops and seminars and creating a support network and peer support and a co-counselling system as part of the research program to help students gain entry into the professional community and fight isolation. Many students reported that they had benefitted much from the workshop organized by the department they were studying in. These workshops targeted doctoral students’ learning and research needs, such as seminars on doing literature review, writing the abstract, introduction and conclusion, adopting right research methods, fighting plagiarism, writing for publication, managing your supervisors, managing supervisor-supervisee relationships etc. In these workshops,

students not only learned from others, but also socialized with others to fight isolation and to enculturate them into the CoP, which was important to their independence and lifelong learning.

Some other students, however, felt that isolation was a serious problem. Very often they were not treated as “students,” nor were they treated as staff members of the school. Their supervisors were too “busy” to pay adequate attention to them. They received feedback from their supervisors that was often long overdue and thus unhelpful. They became “independent” at a cost, although they highly valued autonomy. They were isolated in their lonely research journey. For example, P10 told his story in this way:

On this campus, I felt lonely and had nobody to talk to. My family was in China. I had four supervisors, two on this campus and two on another campus. As my research project was very unique and it was not related to the areas of the four supervisors. They did not understand my topic and they could not give useful comments. The most important thing that my primary supervisor did for me was to introduce to the New Zealand Institute of Food and I began to understand how the industry worked. This is good for my research, and for me to broaden my networks.

The above reporting indicates that in order to enculturate students into the discipline culture, supervisors played multiple roles in different contexts at different stages of supervision. Enculturation involves introducing students to the research community, building and broadening networks, participating in the community of practice as a legitimate peripheral member, and eventually gaining knowledge of the discipline conventions.

English language and culture

A large body of literature points to the English language as a major barrier in academic acculturation (Biggs, 2003; Manathunga, Commons, Chatterjee, Cotterall, & Gao, 2014; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). Students needed the language to develop their philosophical concepts, ideas, theories, research frameworks through reading and writing. However, only three students reported that language was a barrier to them. As peripheral members of the community, the students encountered many other problems that were more challenging than English proficiency, such as inadequate knowledge of disciplinary discourses, insufficient knowledge about research philosophy and methodology, underdeveloped research skills, lack of a thorough understanding of game rules, expectations, social skills, and

interpersonal relationships between students and supervisors. The magnitude of these problems reduced language barriers to a lesser important place.

There is a gap between the perceived needs for different types of supervision and the actual supervision they received from the supervisors. As a result, learning support offered by universities that focused on language skills development did not prove to be helpful to NEBS doctoral students, because many of their writing problems involved mastering of discipline and genre discourses, and articulation and development of the concepts, ideas, and theories, more than linguistic features.

Culture is often blamed for the problems between supervisors and students from different cultural backgrounds (Delamont, Atkinson, & Parry, 1997). However, this study has not found strong evidence to support this claim. Only a couple of participants referred to culture as a barrier to NEBS doctoral students that led to misunderstanding, miscommunication and misperceptions. Most students agreed that culture was not an issue. There are two contributing factors to such a phenomenon. The first factor is that many supervisors had an extensive range of intercultural communication experiences. Many of them were from different cultural backgrounds, having received their education in different societies, and supervised students from different cultures. The second factor is that most students had acquired their higher education qualifications from countries other than their home countries, and had developed their intercultural communication skills. Many of them had studied in New Zealand for many years before they were enrolled in the Ph.D. program. For example, four students entered the doctoral program and their supervisors were the ones who had taught them in their undergraduate and postgraduate years. Years of sojourn in foreign countries had cultivated these students' effective intercultural communication and interpersonal communication skills. This explains that culture was not considered as a barrier to their doctoral studies.

DISCUSSION

This study has investigated twenty NEBS doctoral students' acculturative experiences from three New Zealand universities. The supervisor-supervisee relationship was found to be critical and most important to facilitate students' cultural adaptation and transformative learning. For NESB students, one of their primary objectives of overseas study "is to transform themselves rather than conforming to a fixed set of academic conventions of the host institutions" (Tran, 2013, p. 128). The study has found that in spite of their plights, challenges, hardship, and difficulties that students had been through in their "transformative investment," they eventually found themselves growing academically, professionally, and psychologically. The dynamic interplay of challenges and opportunities empowered NESB

doctoral students to undergo transformative changes and critical self-reflection, construct the new self-image, develop internal strength, cope with multiple academic demands, and prepare themselves to meet future challenges in their career in the workplace.

However, this study has found that NESB doctoral students' transformative or life-long learning did not occur easily. The process of negotiating the discourse and discipline practices in higher education in New Zealand was largely a one-way communication. The onus of acculturation and transformation was placed mainly on international students rather than on the supervisors. The tension between students and supervisors was often the cause of disappointment. The key issues involved the role of supervisor-supervisee relationships, inadequacy of supervision, and the imbalance of power, responsibility, and autonomy (Becher, Henkel, & Kogan, 1994). Students were expected to take full responsibilities, while supervisors did not seem to have much involvement in what Grant (2001) called "dirty business" in supervision; "dirty business" because supervision involves the issues of power, desire, and difference. Within the institution, this "dirty business" occurs because the unclear and unset boundaries may be dangerously crossed by both supervisor and student, the former with more power in the hierarchy than the latter.

The findings of this study show that NESB doctoral students have a strong desire to receive academic support from supervisors to help them with formulation of research questions, discipline and discourse knowledge and writing conventions, academic norms, research philosophy and methods, critical reading and writing, and thesis structure and organization. However, the pervasive non-directive pedagogical or hands-off approaches and supervisory inadequacy that ignored students' actual needs and prior culturally shaped learning experiences and their ready responsiveness immediately threw these aspiring students into anxiety and some were rendered to be "orphans," entirely abandoned by the university. The study suggests that there should be a balance between the hands-on and hands-off approaches at different stages of supervision. Both extremes could cause serious consequences. A thorough knowledge of the students' prior learning experience, their cultural academic expectations, cultural differences, and supervisor-supervisee relationship could help supervisors to achieve the equilibrium in supervision.

Team supervision has acquired "a privileged position in the policy frameworks of many universities around the globe", a structure formed for the interests of students with its practical support, shared responsibility and workload, accountability, quality assurance, and transparency (Manathunga, 2012, p. 42). The findings of this study support Manathunga's view that team supervision could provide students with opportunities to develop their scholarships, research vistas, and multiple perspectives to view the world,

and to learn and practice discourse strategies and intellectual argument and debates, and most importantly, to be enculturated into the CoP to prepare them for the future career pursuit. This study agrees with Manathunga that team supervision is likely to cause problems and risks, when power dynamics, inter-subjectivity, and cultural differences are brought into the play and when supervisors and their students have not been properly equipped with skills for team communication, team management, team collaboration and coordination, and conflicts management. Team supervision, when improperly managed, “social loafing” in supervision emerges due to inequity of effort, loss of personal accountability, motivation loss, and coordination loss (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010, p. 163). Social loafing is connected with structural and policy failure (Becher et al., 1994). NESB doctoral students suffer heavy losses academically and psychologically, and the university’s reputation is seriously undermined. Being supervised by supervisors who do not know what their students are doing, who have little expertise in the field of research, and who are not held accountable for students’ academic studies can be an enormous disappointment to students.

English language and culture were often blamed for NESB doctoral students’ unsatisfactory learning experiences. It masks other more important perspectives that must be considered: the game rules of discipline discourses, unspoken rules of the research fields, academic acculturation through community practice, cultural differences, research skills, theoretical knowledge, and tacit knowledge of doctoral thesis writing. Delamont et al. (1997) argue that only when students “are able to internalize skills and criteria in order to exercise judgements” (p. 108) can they master and appreciate the art and craft embedded in the tacit aspects of disciplinary genre and discourse, conventions, and the game rules. Such tacit knowledge, according to Lee (2008), can be acquired through five aspects of supervision: function support (administration and logical giving of information), training in critical thinking, academic enculturation (introduction of the unspoken rules of the research field), emancipation (self-development and independence), and relationship development (lifelong working partnerships and friendship, enhanced self-esteem, and social networks). Becher et al. (1994) argues that “all encounters are part of the contest, even supervision” and therefore students must learn to compete and “must learn and find ways to manage the harsh reality of the norms and culture of the academic world” (p. 151).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has some limitations. Firstly, the size of the research sample is relatively small for the researcher to examine the gravity and magnitude of the issues in supervisory practices in New Zealand universities. A survey of

a larger population is needed to identify the “real” problems that are threatening the reputation of internationalization of New Zealand higher education. Secondly, this study told a “one-side story” without the stories of the other side: supervisors. The voices of supervisors could have contributed much to the understanding of the nature of the problems. In addition, the voice of a third party, such as the Doctoral Research Committees or the Postgraduate Research Committees could also play a significant role. Thirdly, the sample included the NESB doctoral students from many cultures. Students from European cultures might have different learning experiences from Asian students. Students from different cultures might have encountered different problems in their academic acculturation. Comparing their perceptions and learning experiences might shed some light on intercultural communication in terms of supervision across cultures. Lastly, doctoral learning and supervision span a long period of time, at least 3 years. The investigation focused on the memory and the moments of learning experiences and thus the findings might present themselves as incomplete or unrepresentative. Thus, a longitudinal study might help uncover the inner workings of some of the issues presented in this study.

CONCLUSION

Developing skills and disposition for lifelong learning is a critical goal in educating doctoral students in New Zealand universities. However, NEBS international doctoral students experience challenges in adapting to the new educational environment, meeting the academic expectations, and attaining their goals. This study has examined the acculturative issues facing these students in the process of discipline enculturation and legitimate peripheral participation in the academic community of practice. Many NESB doctoral students had positive learning experiences at universities where they had developed capacity for self-direction, metacognitive awareness, and disposition for lifelong learning. Writing a Ph.D. thesis is expected to embody independent research carried out by the student. Supervision and academic dialogues between students, supervisors, and members of the community of practice are vital. International students had experienced difficulties in developing such capacities and disposition for lifelong learning, including lack of the disciplinary discourse knowledge, insufficient knowledge of the game rules in academic writing and research, unsupportive supervisor-supervisee relationships, insufficient commitment and responsibility, and disciplinary knowledge on the part of the supervisors, role confusion, ineffective team supervision, and imbalance of the hands-off and hands-on approaches in supervision. The benchmark of a Ph.D. thesis is its originality and contribution to new knowledge to be facilitated by effective supervision. The study argues that developing capacities and disposition for

lifelong learning requires disciplinary enculturation, knowledge of academic conventions, skills development, commitment, motivation, and responsibility, and a healthy supervisor-supervisee relationship.

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MINGSHENG LI, PhD, is a senior lecturer in communication. His research interests include international education, intercultural communication, and migrant studies. He teaches Business Communication and Cross-Cultural Communication at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Email: M.S.Li@massey.ac.nz.

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Unfulfilled Expectations: Influence of Chinese International Students' Roommate Relationships on Sense of Belonging

Christina W. Yao
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA

ABSTRACT

Findings from this study indicate that more attention must be given to Chinese students' interpersonal relationships with domestic students, particularly when considering the role of daily cross-cultural interactions in residential living. Participants who wanted American roommates anticipated an easier transition to U.S. culture. However, making meaningful connections with American students proved to be more challenging than anticipated. Participants reported that cultural differences within their residence hall room led to difficulty with communication and social connections.

Keywords: Chinese Students, International Students, Roommate Relationships, Sense of Belonging, Residence Life

Chinese international students are the largest international population on college campuses in the United States (Institute of International Education, 2013; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014; Yan & Berliner, 2010). Student mobility from China consisted of over half a million students in 2012, with the United States as their top destination (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014). The United States accepted over 19% of the mobile students from China, with 178,890 Chinese nationals enrolling in U.S. institutions (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014).

Despite the prevalence of Chinese students on campuses, many Chinese students report feelings of marginalization (Lee, 2010; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). Feelings of isolation reported by international students often lead to negative implications for academic and co-curricular success (Lee & Rice, 2007; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Many international students experience transition issues; however, several studies indicate that

there are differences in experiences within international student sub-groups (Lee, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007; Li & Kaye, 1998; Wilton & Constantine, 2003), specifically between European nationals and Asian students. Students from Asia often have more difficulty than Western European international students in many areas affecting their transition to university in the United States, most notably with issues of isolation, language, and social integration.

Residence halls are often considered the epicenter of student engagement (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) since residential students spend most of their on campus time in residential facilities (Shushok, Scales, Sriram, & Kidd, 2011). Campus residences halls are considered to be positively influential environments for students to both live and learn. Community building and intercultural interactions are often at the heart of residential programs since the close proximity and structured learning opportunities promote student engagement and learning (Blimling, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Blimling, 1994; Pike, 2002). Residence halls are settings in which diverse students, including international scholars, are able to thrive and flourish both academically and socially, with the intention of contributing to students' overall sense of belonging to their communities. However, very few studies examine the interpersonal experiences of Chinese international students in residence halls in the United States and the effect on their sense of belonging.

Peers and other campus community members affect students' sense of belonging, which is defined as students' feelings of identification and affiliation with the university community (Hausmann, Ye, Schofield, & Woods, 2009; Strayhorn, 2012). Peer relationships are important factors in the collegiate experiences of undergraduate Chinese international students. Daily social interactions serve as a basis for Chinese international students' feelings of either belonging or exclusion on the college campus. It is imperative to examine the experiences of undergraduate Chinese international students to better understand the challenges in the residence halls, leading to implications for the success and persistence of undergraduate Chinese international students at in the United States.

Many institutions require that all first-year students live in university housing; however, little research exists on international students' perceptions of the climate in residence halls and virtually no research specifically on Chinese international students' experiences in residence halls. In this current study, the experiences affecting the sense of belonging in first-year undergraduate Chinese international students who are required to live in residence halls are illuminated, and insights are provided on these students' perception of their peer interactions within their new residential home on campus. The research questions guiding this study are:

- What were Chinese international students' expectations of roommate relationships on U.S. campuses?
- What is the influence of roommate relationships on first-year Chinese international students' sense of belonging in the residence halls?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on sense of belonging typically focus on domestic student populations as the study participants. The experiences of underrepresented student populations are at the forefront of sense of belonging research (e.g., Berger, 1997; Hausmann et al., 2007; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Johnson et al, 2007; Museus & Maramba, 2011), with virtually no attention to international students as a campus sub-group. With this in mind, the review of literature provides an examination of sense of belonging research on domestic students and then extends this research to international students.

Sense of Belonging in College Students

Sense of belonging is based on students' perceptions of institutional support and interpersonal relationships, with potential to positively influence students' persistence and academic success (Hausmann et al., 2009). Sense of belonging is particularly important for students from underrepresented populations (Strayhorn, 2012) since feelings of belonging elicit a sense of connectedness with, affiliation for, and acceptance by the larger campus community. Additionally, students' sense of belonging at the university as a whole is often strongly associated with their sense of social acceptance, implying that sense of belonging is primarily influenced by social interactions and perception of acceptance by students' peers (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007).

In current literature, differences were found in feelings of belonging from historically underrepresented students and White students. For example, Berger (1997) found that living on campus had a positive relationship to students' socialization and sense of community. However, White students were more likely to identify with the community in their residence halls than were students of color. This finding may indicate that there is "a dominant peer normative environment" (Berger, 1997, p. 449) that affects underrepresented students' sense of belonging.

Racial differences in students' sense of belonging were also found in another study conducted with students living in residential communities. Johnson et al (2007) examined the sense of belonging in first-year students from different racial/ethnic groups and found that students of color perceived a lower sense of belonging on their campuses than White students. The residence hall can be a "compelling environment for shaping

students' sense of belonging" (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 536), which is similar to previous studies that found positive effects of residence halls (Berger, 1997). Although studies in residence halls may have positive implications for international students, most of these studies only include domestic students and do not examine how cultural differences and language barriers may affect international students' sense of belonging in a residence hall.

International Student Adaptation

Parallel to the concept of sense of belonging, social adaptation is a common theme in international students' experiences at colleges in the United States. Sherry, Thomas, and Chui (2009) conducted a study in which participants, who came from 30 different countries, reported issues with language, adapting to new cultural norms, and developing friendships. Several participants in the study, primarily those from Asia and the Middle East, reported feelings of isolation and a lack of connection with university community members. The findings from this study, as well as others (Pan & Wong, 2011; Yan & Berliner, 2011), indicate that Asian cultural backgrounds can add more significant barriers in adapting to a new campus environment, particularly since the high acculturation distress can bring increased psychological distress (Wilton & Constantine, 2003).

According to Yan and Berliner (2011), early support is needed for newly arrived Chinese international students in a foreign environment. Newly arrived students tended to have higher levels of anxiety related to language, academic challenges, and cultural differences. Although most participants in the study indicated that they were interested in acculturating to their new environment through integration strategies, most participants tended to be more separated from the domestic students by withdrawing from social activities and socializing only with others in the Chinese community.

As a whole, international students are more likely than domestic students to feel isolated from the rest of campus because of cultural differences, which have both academic and social implications (Lee & Rice, 2007; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Understanding the experiences of undergraduate Chinese international students in their residential environment is imperative to supporting these students through the academic and social aspects of their collegiate career. If these students do not feel a sense of belonging, they are at risk for being unsuccessful in college and may not persist to graduation (Tinto, 1993). In addition, the early years of college is critical since that time ensures students' sense of belonging and persistence, and the institutional environment and culture are correlated to students' collegiate success (Astin, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993), particularly for Chinese students. These students' perceptions of their surrounding environment are an important factor in developing a

sense of belonging which leads to students reporting a more positive perception of their campus climate (Glass, 2012). However, these studies are not situated in the campus residential setting, indicating a need further examine the influence of roommate relationships on Chinese students' sense of belonging.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Sense of belonging, which includes feelings of membership and affiliation with a particular group, is used as an overarching concept to examine Chinese students' experiences. Sense of belonging is applied to this study since it provides a framework for understanding Chinese international students' perception of membership into their residential community. The comprehensive definition for this study came from Strayhorn's (2012) hypothesized model of college students' sense of belonging, which includes:

Sense of belonging refers to students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group (e.g., campus community) or others on campus (e.g., faculty, peers). (p. 3)

In applying Strayhorn's (2012) model, international students enter social spaces and contexts (e.g., residence halls) in which their basic needs (e.g., sense of belonging) emerge to drive their behaviors. Positive outcomes from achieving sense of belonging include persistence and happiness (Strayhorn, 2012); conversely, negative outcomes could include unhappiness and feelings of isolation.

RESEARCH METHOD

A phenomenological orientation is used in this study in order to illuminate and understand the lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990) of the participants through an interpretive lens that situated their experiences within a specific context (Merriam, 2009). The phenomenon of sense of belonging is examined, with participants describing their overall experiences in their residential communities. In doing so, the commonalities among participants were reduced from "individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). The "essence" of the phenomenon was revealed through a "systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 10).

Midwest University (MWU), a pseudonym given to the actual institution, was chosen as the study site since it has a large residential population as well a large international student population. MWU was a large, public land-grant research institution in the Midwest with over 33,000 undergraduate students enrolled in Fall 2012. MWU had approximately one in eight first-year MWU students identify China as their country of origin in Fall 2012. All first-year, non-commuter students were required to live on campus. Anecdotally, MWU is considered to be an institution of higher education that is doing well in acculturating the many international students on its campus.

Participants were recruited through emails sent to eligible participants from MWU's Office of the Registrar. Emails were sent to all eligible participants who identified as undergraduate Chinese international students in their first year at the university who lived in the residence halls. All 21 participants were first-year students from China who were completing their second semester at Midwest University. The participants included six men and 15 women. Each participant chose a pseudonym, which are used throughout this study. All interviews were conducted in English. For clarification, participants used the term "American" to refer to U.S.-born students; therefore, "American" is used interchangeably with "domestic students" throughout this study.

All first interviews were conducted prior to the end of the 2013 spring semester. Second round interviews were conducted at the start of the 2013 fall semester with 17 of the 21 participants. In-depth interviews were conducted with each participant in a person-to-person format and the audio was digitally recorded. The semi-structured interviews included broad questions related to participants' sense of belonging in the residence halls. Examples of questions include: "describe your relationship with non-Chinese students in your residence hall" and "how much does feeling like a member of that community matter to you?"

Transcriptions were completed immediately following each interview, which allowed for analyzing the data and organizing all hand written notes. The second round interview assisted in obtaining deeper and richer information from the participants.

Coding and Analysis

Researcher reflexivity in research is essential due to the relational nature between researcher and participants (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). The essences of participants' experiences were interpreted through my lens as a U.S.-born Chinese-American. To address what I bring as a researcher, the first part of analysis was to complete thorough reviews of interview transcripts while reflecting down my reactions and responses to participants' experiences. Transcripts were first manually coded on paper copies by

writing codes in the margins and highlighting relevant text. Then transcripts were uploaded electronically in Dedoose and then reviewed again with electronically applied codes. Results between the paper copies and electronic versions were compared to check for consistency.

Categories were made based on the research questions and conceptual framework, which was consistent with analysis typically conducted in phenomenology (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In the first cycle of coding, initial codes for large data chunks were created, utilizing deductive coding, which includes a “start list” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 81) based on this study’s interview protocol and conceptual framework. Themes were developed from emergent broad categories based on the participants’ experiences. Themes were coded by “lifting appropriate phrases or by capturing in singular statements the main thrust of the meaning of the themes” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 93). Descriptive coding was used to “provide an inventory of topics for indexing and categorizing” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 74). Emotion coding was used in addition since it is appropriate for “studies that explore intrapersonal and interpersonal” experiences (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75).

Second cycle coding was used as “a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of categories, themes, or constructs” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 86). First cycle codes were clustered under common themes that emerged from the interviews. An iterative process was used while reflecting and clustering codes into code categories. The pattern codes were continuously refined and restructured until final codes emerged that represented the lived experiences verbalized by the participants. Several themes emerged, including issues related to discrimination, awareness of being an outsider, and perception of language ability. For the purpose of this particular study, the influence of roommate relationships on Chinese students’ sense of belonging is examined as the analytical sample from a larger study.

Trustworthiness and Validity

Triangulation was used to support the validity of this study. Two techniques were used in this study: the use of multiple points in time and member checks (Merriam, 2009). Two interviews with each participant allowed for multiple points in time and created the opportunity to cross-check and compare data between the two interviews. The use of two interviews also allowed for member checks, which provided feedback on emerging findings and interpretation from the first interviews. In addition to multiple data sources, data was triangulated with peers who, as qualitative researchers, were able to critique findings and provide alternative viewpoints.

Limitations

Participants were interviewed at one point in time in their collegiate career, which could pose as a limitation. Although second round interviews were done four months after the first, this does not allow for significant change to occur with participants' experiences. Participants may not have had time to fully reflect and make meaning of their first year. Also, all interviews were conducted in English, which presents some language limitations for the participants. However, questions were often repeated and rephrased in order to assist in participants' understanding.

FINDINGS

Findings for this study are organized in two sections based on the research questions related to expectations of roommate relationships prior to arriving on campus and the realities of roommate relationships for Chinese international students. More attention is given to the findings related to the realities of roommate relationships since they elicit more significant implications for practice.

Expectations of Roommate Relationships

The participants viewed having an American roommate as an automatic path to better English skills and to better understanding of American culture. Eighteen of the participants cited two main reasons for their desire to room with a domestic student: the ability to practice speaking English and immerse themselves in American culture. Some participants were disappointed to find out they were rooming with another Chinese student. When asked about her roommate, Rachel explained:

I want an American student because I ... it's kind of selfish, but I think if you have a roommate with really good English [it is good]... I even talked to my RA to try to apply for an American roommate.

Similarly, Camilla's reason for wanting a domestic roommate was based on her desire to speak English on a daily basis. She also hoped to "get involved into American society instead of Chinese society." Many participants felt that an American roommate would connect them to additional American friends. Peter expressed this thought by saying, "I think it's better to get an American roommate. It's better because if I just get an American roommate, I can more easily join the American group. It's faster maybe."

Many of the study participants viewed American students as the easiest way to feelings of connectedness and belonging on campus.

American students were viewed as teachers and guides who would be able to help Chinese students acclimate faster to American culture.

Of the 21 participants, three participants requested a Chinese roommate due having similar cultural experiences and a common language. For example, Vicky had met a Chinese student online through social media prior to arriving on campus, and explained her reasons for selecting a Chinese roommate:

I'm afraid I would not get along with Americans because the culture difference and the habits we have, they are different. So I think it would make me feel uncomfortable so I decided to choose Chinese student who was in high school here, in the U.S. Because she is Chinese, we don't have much difference.

Nancy and Gwen also decided that a common language and shared culture would assist them in feeling more comfortable in their residential community. Their rationale for Chinese roommates indicated different priorities from other participants who wanted the opportunity to immerse themselves immediately into American culture through interactions with a domestic roommate. Interestingly, this indicates that all students knew their roommates would be instrumental to their sense of belonging in their residential space; however, the fulfillment of their expectations were varied after all participants arrived on campus and moved into their residence hall.

Realities of Roommate Relationships

All study participants expected that an American roommate would assist in their transition to MWU and to their residential community. Twelve of the 21 participants were assigned a Chinese roommate. Of that 12, only three requested a Chinese student for a roommate. Of participants who had roommates randomly assigned to them, most stated that they wanted an American roommate. However, only nine of the participants were housed with an American roommate, and several of these participants stated that their feelings towards their American roommates changed over time. The early anticipation and excitement of living with a domestic student soon faded after realizing that the cultural differences caused discomfort in their room.

Challenges with American roommates.

Kay was excited to be paired up with an American roommate, assuming that close proximity would foster improved communication and cultural exchange. However, partway through the first semester, she and her roommate only communicated when necessary. Kay found that having an

American roommate led to some dissatisfaction in her room. She eventually moved rooms, explaining:

Last semester, I lived with a White girl. We lived together but we don't really have any mutual topics. So every time, every night, when we sit in one room we just keep silent. That's so bad. Actually, we did know that we can get along well but we just don't have much mutual topics. And this semester, I moved out and I live with one of my Chinese friends. We have more topics to talk about.

Kay's situation with her roommate, which was a fairly neutral relationship with no hostility, appeared to be common among the participants who had American roommates. Zoey, who was originally very excited to live with a non-Chinese student, had a similar experience, stating, "We talk[ed] a lot at the beginning, but I think when time goes by, we don't have so much interest in each others' culture. And so we don't communicate a lot. Just necessary talk."

Zoey was vocal about her roommate having no interest in Chinese culture, which was surprising to her. Zoey thought her American roommate would have a lot of questions since Chinese and American cultures are so different; however, Zoey realized that "maybe she has no interest in that." After many attempts at conversation, Zoey stopped trying to connect with her roommate.

Camilla's relationship with her American roommate also changed during the academic year. Her early experience was positive when her American roommate would assist Camilla with her transition to the United States. However, their relationship never developed beyond the surface level of cohabitating. Camilla stated:

I can't say it's too good because we're not familiar with each other even though we live in the same room for nearly one year now. But I have some problems in my heart is that I just feel like we're just roommates instead of friends. It can be kind of a language problem between us. And some cultural problem between us.

Camilla attended a Canadian foreign language high school in China for two years before coming to college in the United States. Even with her early introduction to Western culture, Camilla still had a difficult time finding common conversation topics with her roommate due to cultural differences. Although Camilla was deliberate about requesting an American roommate, she decided to move off-campus with Chinese international friends for her second year.

Derek, a member of a living-learning program, had a difficult time with his roommate. Derek's roommate was very disengaged and that led to Derek having negative experience in his living-learning community. Derek explained:

We don't really have common language and we don't have the same topics we are both interested in. So we don't really have any topics to talk about. So that's why we don't really get along. It's not like we don't get along, we don't talk. We never bother each other, we have different social lives.

Derek spoke about his feelings of loneliness and disconnection from his second roommate and his floormates. He credited his discomfort to the fact that he was the only Chinese international student in his living-learning community. Because of this, he had a very difficult time finding other students who wanted to connect with him, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction with his living environment.

Benefits of Chinese roommates.

Overall, participants who had Chinese roommates tended to have higher sense of belonging in their rooms although not necessarily in the larger residence hall. As a result, when asked why they are able to cohabitate effectively with their Chinese roommates, participants responded that it was easier to live with someone who shared the same culture and language. These participants expressed a sense of relief to be able to return to their rooms and be comfortable around those that are culturally similar.

Jack had a positive experience with his Chinese roommate, who was from his hometown of Shenzhen. They live in a four-person suite with two American students. Jack described that living situation as being the best possible scenario for an international student. He was able to have a roommate with the same cultural background, but was able to get exposed to American culture in his room with his two domestic roommates. When asked about the benefits of his living situation, Jack stated, "It's more convenient because sometimes we talk about things only Chinese can understand. And if with the two American guys, we can also talk about American culture."

Nancy requested a Chinese roommate prior to her arrival to Midwest University. She reported a high level of happiness and connection with her roommate, stating that, "I feel like she's more than my roommate. A friend and kind of like a sister." Vicky, who also requested a Chinese roommate, shared that her roommate relationship was very positive. When asked about her Chinese friends' experiences, Vicky said that most of her friends with American roommates were the ones who had roommate

problems. Although Vicky had originally thought she would make a lot of American friends in her residence hall, she realized that their lifestyles are too different. She spoke openly about not wanting to make friends with the domestic students on her floor, stating that they are “really crazy” and like to “play loud music.” Vicky credited her discomfort with her floormates to cultural differences and the lack of conversation topics between Chinese and American students. She mostly socialized with her roommate and other Chinese friends since she did not feel a connection with others on her floor.

Most participants in this study decided to live with another Chinese student for their second academic year. Several participants cited the need to be comfortable in their living space as their reason. Of the 21 participants, only six chose to live in on-campus housing for their second year. The other 15 participants decided to move off campus and all of them chose to live with other Chinese students. Their choices in housing for their second academic year indicated that for many of the participants, the residence halls do not necessarily provide a very comfortable living space.

DISCUSSION

Most of the participants with American roommates in this study indicated a relatively low sense of belonging in their residence halls. Many participants faced interpersonal challenges with American students in the residence halls as a result of their national origin. This finding is not surprising since relevant literature indicates that feelings of belonging in residence hall communities tended to be higher for White students than for students of color (Berger, 1997; Johnson et al., 2007), likely due to “a dominant peer normative environment” (Berger, 1997, p. 449) based on White student culture that likely affects underrepresented students. The existence of a dominant normative environment is not easy to navigate, particularly for international students who are temporary visitors to a different cultural environment.

Although some participants had positive experiences with American students, they tended to be outliers in this study. Most of the participants in this study lack a sense of belonging in their residence halls. Participants with Chinese roommates indicated a sense of belonging inside their rooms, but not so much in the overall residential community. Most participants with domestic roommates were unhappy with their roommate relationships, which affected their feelings of belonging in their rooms. The minimal feelings of belonging could be a result of feeling like they are outsiders and not full members of the residential community.

Several students indicated they were fairly comfortable in their rooms, but they did not necessarily feel like they were a part of the community in their residence halls. These findings were not surprising when

considering the importance of interpersonal relationships on overall residential satisfaction (Blimling, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Blimling, 1994; Pike, 2002). Findings from this study indicate a need to reexamine assumptions that intercultural engagement would happen naturally in close living quarters. As indicated by the participants' expectations of interactions with American students and prior studies (Pan & Wong, 2011; Sherry et al., 2010; Yan & Berliner, 2011), the challenges of cultural and language barriers between newly arrived Chinese and domestic students are too significant to leave to chance. Consideration of environmental factors (Glass, 2012) such as interactive programs and facilitated dialogue could lead to higher sense of belonging for Chinese students in residence halls.

Although the Chinese participants with American roommates have a relatively low sense of belonging to residence hall communities, there is a compelling case for international students living on campus in residence halls. This is particularly true for those who are in the first year of their collegiate career. Living on campus has a positive influence on first-year students' sense of belonging (Johnson et al, 2007). The residence hall can be a "compelling environment for shaping students' sense of belonging" (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 536), which is similar to previous studies on first-year students that found positive effects of residence halls on students' socialization and sense of community (Berger, 1997). The value of on-campus living was illustrated by the participants' housing situations in their second year at the university. Of the 21 participants, only six Chinese students chose to remain living on-campus for their second year. However, most of the off-campus students stated in their second interviews that they wished they had stayed on campus for two reasons: convenience and increased interaction with American students. These participants indicated that living in residence halls helped with their overall feelings of connectedness to the larger campus community.

Some areas of further research are needed for better understanding Chinese students' residential experiences. A longitudinal study that examines how Chinese students' sense of belonging changes over the course of their collegiate career is needed since increased duration on campus could lead to increased sense of belonging.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Participants with low sense of belonging spoke extensively about cultural differences and language challenges that they experienced with domestic roommates. Both formal and informal measures could improve the sense of belonging in Chinese international students. Formal structures should be put in place related to programmatic requirements of university staff, and

programs are particularly important since this indicates an investment in a departmental and/or institutional priority of intercultural interactions. Early planning and campus-wide collaboration should be at the forefront of developing effective and successful programs. For example, residence life and student services could sponsor domestic and Chinese roommate pairings to attend local/campus events so they have a discussion topic on a shared common experience.

Another example of a collaborative, campus-wide program would be to develop an early orientation to living on campus for both international and domestic students. Orientation programs tend to fall under the purview of universities' new student orientation office or international student advising center; however, all departments should play a significant role in welcoming and preparing students to live on campus. By facilitating early preparation for all students, both domestic students and international students will be better equipped to live with roommates in community spaces. In doing so, some of the responsibility for creating positive living environments shifts into the purview of domestic students. Rather than only expecting Chinese students to adapt to a new collegiate environment, domestic students should also prepare to live in a diverse residential environment with students from a variety of nationalities and backgrounds.

Informal measures for intercultural exchange are likely more influential on Chinese student and domestic student interactions since they occur more frequently than planned programs. Informal programs and events still require planning and outcomes; however, the nature of the programs would be less structured in order to allow more fluidity in participation. The challenge will be to brainstorm informal programs that will engage all residential students, and much of the success will be based on the contextual factors such as residence hall theme, institutional priorities, and architectural space. An example of informal programs for residence life staff could include monthly bulletin boards that are related to current popular topics, including world news, emerging music artists, or current campus issues. These informational posts could serve as conversation topics for students on the residence hall floor. The participants in this study had all studied English as a second language prior to arriving to the United States. However, English language classes typically follow formal sentence and grammar structures that limit the use of informal conversational English that permeates communication among college-aged students. Thus, creative use of bulletin boards could be an opportunity for international students to learn more about colloquial terms and pop culture references from other students in their residence halls.

In addition to programmatic interventions, student affairs professionals and student staff must be prepared to assist in facilitating cross-cultural interactions. As indicated by participants' experiences, many

Chinese students had positive interactions with their roommates early in their first semester. Continuous and meaningful peer interaction requires well-trained resident assistants and other student leaders who are committed to creating and fostering intercultural interactions with all of their residents. Training on proactively assessing roommate relationships is imperative for all residence hall staff members, particularly resident assistants who are living in close proximity to international students. Resident assistants are influential through their daily interactions and program planning for residents; thus, it is imperative that student staff are trained to facilitate intercultural dialogue and interactions among all residents early in the academic year.

Student affairs professionals must be comfortable with and understand their roles as facilitators and resources in order to best support conversations and interaction among diverse students (Quaye, 2012). Training processes could take advantage of the knowledge base that already exists on campus, such as international student support offices, through collaborative facilitation and programs. University staff should invest in intentional training on fostering intercultural interactions for domestic and international students. Training for student affairs professionals is imperative to ensuring success for all student members of the university community.

CONCLUSION

The majority of participants requested an American roommate for their first year, with the expectation that domestic roommates would help international students bridge the gap to American culture. However, many participants came to feel uncomfortable in their residence hall, citing a lack of connection with American students. The participants' feelings of discomfort in their residence hall led to decreased interactions with American students and some tension with roommate relationships. Overall, findings indicate a less than satisfactory residential experience for the Chinese participants in this study, all of which negatively affected the participants' sense of belonging in the residence halls.

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CHRISTINA W. YAO, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research addresses graduate and undergraduate student experiences in higher education, international and comparative education, and critical qualitative methods. Email: cyao@unl.edu

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Examining Culture's Impact on the Learning Behaviors of International Students from Confucius Culture Studying in Western Online Learning Context

Haijun Kang

Kansas State University, USA

Bo Chang

Ball State University, USA

ABSTRACT

There is a lack of shared understanding of how culture impacts learning in online environment. Utilizing document analysis, the authors in this research study culture's impact on the learning behaviors of student sojourners from Confucius culture studying in Western online learning context. The shared understandings of Confucius culture and Western culture are compared, contrasted, and synthesized through Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. The learning behaviors of student sojourners from Confucius culture are examined from the following three dimensions: teacher-student relationship, curriculum development, and teaching and learning pedagogy. Practical implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords: Confucius culture, cultural dimensions theory, Western culture, online learning behaviors

Due to the rapid development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and increased competitions worldwide, more and more education institutions are making efforts to globalize their student recruitment strategies and to develop online distance education programs. The direct outcomes include continued growth of international student population in countries such as U.S., U.K., Australia, and Canada (Choudaha & Chang, 2012) and the fast growing of online distance learning (ODL) market. This

international education development trend has posed great challenges to educators working with international students.

The need to examine how culture impacts ODL is well documented in the literature (Mclsaac & Gunawardena, 1996; Moore, 1994; Phuong-Mai, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2005; Pincas, 2001; Rogers, Graham, & Mayes, 2007; Tan, 2009; Wong, 2007). Overlooking the critical role culture plays in online learning will lead to “detrimental educational and psychological consequences” (Chen & Bennett, 2012, p. 677) and students will experience feelings of isolation, frustration, alienation, helpless, upset, anxious, or depressed (Chen & Bennett, 2012). Szilagyi (2013) further indicates, “the deeper cultural layers that affect their [students’] learning process, such as communicative attitudes in class, relationship with the instructor and classmates remain tacit” (p. 594).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore culture’s impact on student sojourners’ learning behaviors in Western online learning context. In this study, culture is defined as a set of beliefs and values shared by a group of individuals that guide each group member’s behaviors (Bennett, 1993). People travelling to different cultures for a short period of time and then return home are considered as sojourners (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). As four of the eight top origin countries are influenced by Confucius culture and the major learning destination countries represent Western culture (Choudaha & Chang, 2012), this study is specifically designed to examine culture’s impact on the learning behaviors of student sojourners from Confucius culture studying in Western online learning context.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research question decides research method. Document analysis was employed in this study and peer reviewed journal articles were analyzed as primary research data. Focusing on understanding Confucius culture and its impact on online learning behaviors, we began our search by exploring popular education research databases, including ProQuest database, EBSCO, and ERIC. The following key words were used to collect useful research articles: culture, Confucius culture, online learning, e-learning, and distance education. The search results were carefully examined and only those that treated culture and online learning as the main focus of the study were included in the next stage analysis. At the second phase of data collection, only those research studies studying Confucius culture and its impact on student sojourners’ learning in ODL environment dominated by Western cultures were included. The reference lists of the articles collected through the second phase of data collection were examined as well to identify more related research studies. Our keyword search yielded 86

articles from the above databases and majority utilized qualitative research methods (i.e., interview, document analysis, etc.).

“Keywords-in-context” technique was employed in data analysis (Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2012). This technique is useful when studying research literature because context matters. In our data collection process, it was noticed that culture means different things in different contexts. Unless the surrounding words are examined to understand in which context the published study is situated, it is difficult to find appropriate research studies to include in final data analysis. In other words, linking keywords used by the author to the surrounding words and the context, one can truly understand the underlying meaning the author wants to convey to the readers. After themes were developed using the “keywords-in-context” technique, further analysis was done and relationships between themes were explored.

RESULTS

The results are organized into three sections. In the first section, the shared understanding of Confucius culture and the education beliefs and behaviors of student sojourners from Confucius culture are reviewed. In the second section, the shared understanding of Western culture and the dominant Western teaching pedagogy influencing online teaching are discussed. The third section focuses on the learning behaviors of student sojourners from Confucius culture when they are engaged in online learning dominated by Western teaching pedagogy. The results reported in each section are further classified into subthemes to provide a detailed account for culture’s impact on the learning behaviors of student sojourners from Confucius culture when they study in Western online learning environment.

Shared Understanding of Confucius Culture

Confucius culture grows out of the teachings of Confucius and is documented in Confucius’ seminal works including *Confucian Analects*, *Mencius*, *The Great Learning*, and *The Doctrine of the Mean* (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007). Confucius culture represents a system of philosophical, ethical and political thought used to regulate the thinking and behaviors of people from countries such as Mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Singapore, among others (Biggs, 1996; Wang, 2004; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). Confucius culture emphasizes the ties among individuals in a society, social hierarchy, and social harmony. Interests of family members and community surpass individual’s interests and it is the community and family that the life of an individual acquires its meaning or significance from. Parents have the highest authority in the family and the elders are highly respected following the virtue of filial piety.

Applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), Confucius culture fits the description of collectivism and feminism, exhibits high power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance, fosters "normative virtues related to the past and present such as national pride, respect for tradition, preservation of 'face', and fulfilling social obligations", and is characterized as a restraint culture that "suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms" (Hofstede & Hofstede, n.d.). The examples provided below illustrate the shared understanding of the basic principles of Confucius culture in the literature:

- Be modest and respect peers. Example: 子曰：“三人行，必有我師焉。擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之。” (English translation: The Master said, "When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them.) (Legge, 1893a)
- Reverence to authority. Example: 齊景公問政於孔子。孔子對曰：“君君，臣臣，父父，子子。” (English translation: The duke Ching, of Ch'i, asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, "There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son." (Legge, 1893b)

Applications to the Learning Behaviors of Student Sojourners from Confucius Culture

Confucius culture's impact on the education beliefs of student sojourners from Confucius culture is three folds. First, the role a teacher plays in an individual's growth is instrumental. In Confucius culture, teacher is more than just a lecturer. Teacher also has the moral role as a 'parent' who has a collective obligation to instruct students to strictly follow social norms and behave within the socially accepted ways (Watkins & Biggs, 2001). This aspect of Confucius culture clearly exhibits the high power distance dimension of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. Students take it for granted that the teacher has the absolute authority and is the source of the truth and correct answers (Liang & McQueen, 1999; Liu, Hodgson, & Lord, 2010; Thompson & Ku, 2005). In a recent study of students from Confucius culture studying in Australia, Tran (2013) found out that today's younger generation aged from 19 to 24 years old, influenced by the globalization and information technology development, have started to challenge this traditional belief of teacher being the absolute authority but still believe respecting teacher is a classroom norm. Therefore, students from Confucius culture feel uncomfortable to challenge their teacher and are always found to

be on the receptive side of learning. Yarosz and Fountain (2003) considers this aspect of Confucius culture's impact on learning as "take culture".

Second, conflict is seen as an undesirable and ineffective learning behavior and should be avoided with the greatest efforts (Chang, 2000; Chiu, 2009; Williams, Watkins, Daly, & Courtney, 2001). The higher the level of uncertainty and ambiguity in learning, the higher the chance of conflict between students, the less comfortable students from Confucius culture will be with their learning. This is why Confucius culture exhibits strong uncertainty avoidance. Collectivism aspect of Confucius culture offers a solution by surrendering individual's learning needs to the group's collective learning interests. If a potential conflict is sensed, individual learning need is to be sacrificed to satisfy the group's collective learning interests that, in most cases, are determined by the teacher. This reaffirms Chen & Bennett's findings (2012) that the instructors from Confucius culture tend to cater to the class as a group so that they can cover all the content they deem as the most important to the entire learning group. As noted by one student participant of their study that students from Confucius culture learned "not to disturb the class [by asking too many questions], [because] even if their questions are brilliant, the teacher still might not answer them because he/she wants to teach something else first" (p. 684).

Third, the femininity aspect of Confucius culture stresses the value collectivism places in each individual student's learning. It emphasizes the importance of individual's diligence in academic pursuits and instills the belief that all students regardless of what innate ability they have can do well through the exertion of effort (Chen & Bennett, 2012; Rao & Chan, 2009; Watkins & Biggs, 1996). Fang's study of twenty Singaporean Chinese engineering students' online learning experiences (2007), for example, indicates that students from Confucius culture focus mainly on learning achievement and success. They do so by focusing their attention on those tasks directly related to their learning achievement and caring less for fun and exciting but learning-irrelevant activities. The "nail that sticks up" (Uzuner, 2009) and "showing off or trying to appear smart" (Al-Harathi, 2005) types of learning behaviors are discouraged in Confucius culture.

Chen and Bennett (2012) and Liu, Liu, Lee, and Magjuka (2010) summarize the learning preferences of student sojourners from Confucius culture that: (1) The types of curriculum that these students value are those that are heavy loaded with content knowledge; (2) these students are more comfortable to learn in a learning environment that is well structured and transparent with learning pre-sequenced by the teacher; (3) these students perceive the assigned textbooks and required learning materials are the main sources to all learning activities and assessments; and, (4) these students expect the teacher to provide explicit criteria against which they can measure their own learning progress and they see examinations as the

essential way to define their learning performances and help them compete for higher social status. As one student participant of Chen and Bennett's (2012) study reflected:

A good lecture is very systematic and attractive. The content of the lecture is to the point, very concise, easy to be digested by students, easy for them to remember without even having to take notes. ...The teacher highlights the main points for students. (p. 684).

Shared Understanding of Western Culture

“Personal freedom, individuality, and objective thought” are highly valued in Western culture (Nisbett, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 222). This focus on individual has been extensively discussed and documented in the literature (Bassegy, 1999; Beckloff, 2008; Chen & Mashhadi, 1998; Gunawardena, Nolla, Wilson, & Lopez-Isias, 2001; Hofstede, 1986; McGee, 2002; Walker-Fernandez, 1999). The relationships between individuals within a society are weak and individuals are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families (Tylee, 2007). Personal interests are valued above that of a group. If there is a conflict, it is left to the individual to decide whose interests to meet first. Similar to Confucius culture, Western culture values personal achievements as well but the essential interest is still placed on individual. To accomplish personal achievements, Western culture appreciates assertive behaviors and attempts at excelling. Not all individuals living in Western culture represent Western views, however. Euro-Americans and minorities with a high degree of acculturation from Western European and North American seem to be the ones mostly possess Western cultural values (Anderson, 1988; Sanchez & Gunawardena, 1998; Szilagyi (2013)).

Applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), Western culture fits the description of individualism and masculinity, exhibits low power distance and weak uncertainty avoidance, fosters “pragmatic virtues oriented towards future rewards”, and is characterized as an indulgence culture that “allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun” (Hofstede & Hofstede, n.d.). Sanchez and Gunawardena, in their study of culturally diverse distance learners, highlighted the fundamental dimensions of Western culture as follows (1998, p. 5): “Emphasize individual competition; Achievement for the individual; Must master and control nature; Adhere to rigid time schedule; Limit affective expression; Nuclear family; Dualistic thinking; Religion is distinct from other parts of culture; Feel their world view is superior; and Task-oriented.

Applications to Western Teaching Pedagogy

Western culture's impact on teaching pedagogy is two folds. First, learning is considered as an important component of personal growth. Individual students are expected to be self-directed and to take great responsibility to their own learning (Rogers, 1969). To accomplish this, dialogue and interaction are highly encouraged, and pragmatism that emphasizes real life, practical and problem-solving skills is promoted in Western classroom (James, 1907). These teaching principles are clearly exhibited in Western adult learning theories such as Malcolm Knowles' Andragogy, Howard McClusky's Margin Theory, and Jarvis's Learning Process Theory (Beckloff, 2008; Merriam et al., 2007; Ntseane, 2006). Asking questions and challenging the teacher and peers are seen as signs of good learning interests that will lead to group construction of knowledge (Al-Harathi, 2005; Liang & McQueen, 1999; Liu et al., 2010; Thompson & Ku, 2005). Yarosz and Fountain (2003) considers this as a challenge culture that leads to transformative learning experience (Gabriel 2004; Milhauser 2006).

Second, Western challenge culture is understood as constructive rather than destructive. It focuses on collaboration-based constructivism and offers the potential to foster critical and reflective thinking skills (Barah, Hay, & Duffy, 1998; Chen & Bennett, 2012; Chiu, 2009; Dewey, 1938; Herrington, Reeves, Oliver, 2005; Huang 2002; Palloff and Pratt 2001; Taylor 1998). Immersed in this challenging and collaborative learning environment, "learners could learn actively and construct new knowledge based on their prior knowledge [and] construct knowledge through social interaction with others" (Huang, 2002, p. 28). In a pedagogical context of this kind, both teacher and students make efforts to create learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The instructor's role is discussion facilitator and is seen as just one source of information among several (Crooks, 1998; Liu & Schwen, 2006; Lock, 2006; Wilson, Ludwid-Hardman, Thornam, & Dunlap, 2004).

Several studies show benefits of this teaching pedagogy to online learning (Stacey & Wiesenber, 2007; Liu et al., 2010; Baskin, 2001) and Al-Harathi (2005), Liu and Schwen (2006), Liu, et al. (2010), and Robinson (1999) summarize the characteristics of the courses dominated by Western teaching pedagogy: (1) courses designed and delivered by Western teachers tend to have open curriculum that include multiple sources for course content and include several ideologies & perspectives to present balanced view; (2) student-centered learning design dominates the entire course and individual learner's learning needs are prioritized by allowing high learner autonomy over course content and methods; (3) learning assessments mainly focus on evaluating learning process and learning skills (i.e., analytical and critical thinking skills are valued over rote memorization and repetition); (4)

learning is meant to fulfill individualism and self-development. As one research participant of Chen and Bennett's (2012) study reflected:

You don't simply lecture to students at every opportunity. What you try to do is get them more active in their learning so you get them collaborating, working in groups, solving problems. Now you can't do this lecturing. (Teacher E). (p. 685)

Online Learning: The Encounter of Confucius Culture with Western Culture

The above findings classify Confucius culture and Western culture to the two opposite ends of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory spectrum. To reveal "the deeper cultural layers that ... remains tacit" in online learning (Szilagy, 2013, p. 594) and to exemplify how online learning practices are influenced by cultural beliefs of the people involved (Collis, 1999; Hiltz & Goldman, 2005; Liu, et al., 2010; McLoughlin & Oliver, 1999; Uzuner, 2009; Wong, 2007), understanding the learning behaviors of student sojourners from Confucius culture studying in ODL environment dominated by Western teaching pedagogy is necessary.

Student-teacher relationship in online learning. Because of their beliefs in high power distance and the virtue of reverence to authority, student sojourners from Confucius culture appreciate every opportunity to imitate "the conduct of the sages" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 226). They value feedbacks from the teacher more than those from their peers and they rarely voluntarily raise questions and challenge the teacher's authority (Fang, 2007; Liang & McQueen, 1999; Liu, et al., 2010; Thompson & Ku, 2005). When they disagree with what the teacher says, instead of directly confronting the teacher and presenting his/her own view in front of the class, students from Confucius culture prefer to find alternative and more indirect or soft ways to express their different opinions. This approach to learning "may not be as strong, straightforward and critical as Western students' ways [of learning]" (Tran, 2013, p.60) but does show these students' respect to the teacher and their hope to maintain good student-teacher relationship.

Therefore, lack of teacher presence in online classes often times makes student sojourners from Confucius culture uncomfortable and unconfident with their own online learning (Morse, 2003; Zhang & Kenny, 2010). A Chinese student participant in Thompson and Ku's study (2005) reflected on his online learning experience with an American university that:

It is like students are exploring an unknown territory in a forest. The instructor eventually comes out and leads us to the right path. Because we think the teacher is an authority figure, we want to

know what his thoughts are instead of discussing among ourselves blindly. (p. 42)

In Bing and Ping's study (2008a), this cultural virtue was evidenced through increased interaction between students and the online teacher. In Wang's study (2007), however, students from Confucius culture reported low levels of comfort in approaching their teacher in online learning environment. When being asked to reflect on Western teacher's approach to online learning, participants of Chen and Bennett's study (2012) indicated, "It's up to you. If you want to have a look at some spot, go for it. If you want to learn, do so. And if you don't, so be it. (Jennifer, Interview 5)" (p. 687).

Western online learning curriculum. Influenced by strong uncertainty avoidance and instilled with restraint culture, students from Confucius culture are used to following strict social norms and expect to have the similar experience in online learning. They look for highly structured programs, transparent course structure, clear rules from the instructor to guide their learning behaviors, and detailed assessment criteria for them to concentrate (Smith & Smith, 1999; Wang, 2007). They will feel threatened and get lost if any of these necessary learning components are missing in online learning environment (Al-Harathi, 2005; Bing & Ping, 2008b; Chen & Bennett, 2012; Ku & Lohr, 2003; Smith & Smith, 1999; Smith, Coldwell, Smith, & Murphy, 2005; Wang, 2007).

In reality, what students from Confucius culture experience in online learning dominated by Western teaching pedagogy include absence of lectures, solitary reading, learner-controlled discussions and team works, and the nonlinear nature of learning. They feel very nervous studying in a loosely structured pedagogical context of this kind because they are uncertain whether their understanding and interpretations of the content are correct (Chen & Bennett, 2012). In particular, the learning habit of refraining themselves from giving personal opinions that might conflict with the correct answers and make them lose marks puts them in a disadvantage position when subjective assignments with lack of clear objective assessment criteria are given in Western online learning environment.

Western online teaching pedagogy. Influenced by the virtues of collectivism, femininity, and normative orientation, students from Confucius culture are taught to value group effort, maintain harmony, and avoid conflicts (Chiu, 2009; Fang, 2007). Therefore, if being asked to conduct team collaboration and group discussion, these students tend to exhibit modest and face-saving characteristics (Liu et al., 2010). They are found to be less critical and opinionated (Kim & Bonk, 2002; Seo, Schmidt, Sowa, & Miller, 2008; Thompson & Ku, 2005), are less likely to post anything that

conflict with the instructor and peers' views (Wang, 2007; Zhao & McDougall, 2008), and are ambiguous and indirect when expressing their positions. Their purpose of participating in group works is more of contributing to the development of a consensus than creating dissonance among the groups (Chen, Hsu, & Caropreso, 2006; Seo, et al., 2008).

Research studies show mixed results with regards to the performances of students from Confucius culture on group-based online learning activities. Biesenbach-Lucas (2003), Ku and Lohr (2003), and Wang (2007), for example, indicate that students from Confucius culture accept the idea of collaboration-based group learning because this type of learning activities help build online community among peers, develop a locus of mutual support, and offer opportunities to examine topics from various angles. Zhang's (2013) study of Chinese students' experience with online group discussion activities indicates that many Chinese students enjoy online discussions because of the "decrease of power asymmetries in the text-based online discussion"(p.250) and they are given equal opportunities to express themselves. Some students prefer online group discussions in writing than speaking because of language and culture barriers. As Ben from Zhang's study shared:

I felt more confident participating in online discussion because I can take as much time as I need. In the online discussion, I do not need to worry about if I have any accent, if I fully understand the question, or if I remember all the terms. Writing is not easy, but I have more time to prepare (p.245).

However, not all student sojourners from Confucius culture enjoy online group-based learning. Bing and Ping (2008a), Chen and Bennett (2012), Chen et al. (2006), Liang and McQueen (2000), Lim (2004), Tan (2009), Thompson and Ku (2005), Zhao and McDougall (2008), and Zhang and Kenny (2010) indicate that many students from Confucius culture find it hard to adapt to group-based online learning activities and therefore, choose to be passive and quiet. As one student participant in Zhang and Kenny's study (2010) reflected:

In this online setting, you say something, either you get some responses and you don't know what are the emotions behind it, or you do not get any response, and what does that mean? ... so I sometimes decided to have less contributions, because I was scared, if I say something and these people think that "She's an idiot." (Mitra, face-to-face interview) (p. 27).

Particularly when being assigned to discuss controversial topics that disturb or conflict with what they believe, many student sojourners from Confucius culture choose to avoid heated debate by giving acceptable answers or answers that at least will not escalate conflict (Zhang, 2013).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

We often assume connection of learning to culture but it was unclear how culture impacts learning in ODL environment. Focusing on the differences between Confucius culture and Western culture, this study examined how Confucius culture impacts students' learning behaviors when they study in Western online learning context. The results affirm the assumption that online learning is never a value-free transaction and self-referenced learning event. As a matter of fact, culture affects online learning in various ways and the complex nature of humans as socio-cultural agents should not be separated from individual learners' online learning behaviors. In this study, the impacts of Confucius culture on online learning dominated by Western teaching pedagogy are reflected in student-teacher relationship, online curriculum development, and online teaching and learning pedagogy.

The implication of the findings of this study is that special efforts have to be made to help international student sojourners with their study in Western online learning context (see Table 1). Paralejas (2013) recommended some online teaching and learning strategies to specifically support learners from collectivistic culture with high uncertainty avoidance and feminine culture. Examples include developing collaborative team projects and eliminating competition that is against cooperation; providing more structured learning environment "with well-defined learning objectives, detailed assignments, and adherence to a well-defined schedule" (pp.150-151); and, designing activities that encourage mutual cooperation, exchange and relationship support. Sadykova (2014) believes instructors should be trained on how to develop and facilitate collaboration-based group and pair projects, incorporate everyday culture into course design, and enhance peer-to-peer interactions to help international students familiarize themselves with Western teaching pedagogy in online learning environment. Students from collectivistic high-context cultures need more for togetherness than their peers from individualistic low-context cultures. Small-group activities can create such a closer relationship and a sense of family. Zhang (2013) further indicates that student sojourners from Confucius culture are more comfortable with seeking help from their peers when they are faced with difficulties and this is particularly true when the peers assigned to their groups are from similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Table 1: Culture’s Impact on The Online Learning Behaviors of Student Sojourners from Confucius Culture Studying in Western Online Learning Context and Strategies

	Confucius culture	Western culture	Strategies to help students from Confucius culture study in Western ODL environment
General ideas	Social hierarchy, social harmony, and interests of family members and community.	Equality, personal freedom, individuality, and objective thought.	Provide collaborative team projects and eliminating competition
Interpretation from the Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory	Collectivism and feminism, high power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance, normative virtues, social obligations, suppressing gratification of needs.	Individualism and masculinity, low power distance and weak uncertainty avoidance, pragmatic virtues, relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives.	Provide well-defined learning objectives, detailed assignments, a well-defined schedule Provide activities that encourage mutual cooperation, exchange and relationship support
Impact on the learning beliefs and behaviors of student sojourners from Confucius culture	See instructor as the absolute authority or a “parent” Younger generation views instructors differently Students avoid conflict and uncertainty Group’s interests and needs are prioritized Value well-structured and transparent learning environment, appreciate learning that is pre-sequenced by the teacher Value detailed feedbacks, explicit grading criteria and specific reading materials from the teacher	See instructor as facilitator. Students as self-directed learners and construct knowledge by challenging the teacher and peers Open curriculum that includes multiple sources and perspectives Encourage dialogue and interaction Emphasize pragmatism, real life, practical and problem-solving skills Value activities that foster critical and reflective thinking skills rather than rote memorization and repetition	Incorporate everyday culture into the course content design, and enhance peer-to-peer interactions Support high-context learners who favor personal communication and relationship by using multiple nonverbal and visual forms of communication methods Encourage students include personal experience cultural differences in reflection and discussions Provide guidance and accommodation in the areas of language, life, and learning environment to help student sojourners complete cultural transition

Further, it is critical to accurately interpret culture and the role it plays in online learning. As noted above, the fact that most student sojourners from Confucius culture see respecting teacher as a standard classroom norm can be understood through two separate dimensions of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. Some students may respect teacher because they see teacher as a "parent" who has the absolute authority but others may respect teacher only because they want to maintain a good student-teacher relationship. Through which dimension to interpret an individual student's learning behavior affects how to appropriately address this student's learning needs. Westbrook (2014) indicates that learners from low-context culture background communicate with each other with a level of openness through verbal format, which is different from high-context learners who rely heavily on non-verbal communication and relationship to convey the meanings embedded in the tradition. Understanding this difference, the teacher will recognize the limitations of having low-context verbal communications with high-context students. The teacher can either use multiple forms of communication methods to help high-context students better receive and process information or create opportunities for these students to draw their personal experience and cultural differences in reflection and discussions. Such strategies of balancing nonverbal and visual communications and purposefully integrating cultural variables into course instruction and activity will add personal touch to the instruction and create a social system of support for high-context students including student sojourners from Confucius culture.

It is also noteworthy that overestimating or stereotyping is as harmful as underestimating culture's impact on online learning and can create 'behavioural shifts' and 'acculturative stress' (Berry et al, 1987) in international student sojourners. Wang's (2013) discussion of Confucius culture dichotomy is an example of how the same culture leads to completely opposite interpretations. She argues that operating Confucius culture from a "deficit" perspective will stereotype students from Confucius culture as passive and dependent learners, which can only "magnify the negative effects on these learners who accordingly tend to internalize these values and view themselves as passive" (p. 105).

Although popular publication databases were utilized to identify research studies studying Confucius culture's impact on student sojourners' learning in Western online learning context, this study's contribution to the field is still limited by the availability of resources and the employed research design. Further research is encouraged to explore other data sources (i.e., conference proceedings and social media) other than journal publications to validate the findings of this study. More empirical and quantitative research studies are encouraged to provide more meaningful findings to further our understanding of culture's impact on online learning.

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HAIJUN KANG, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Kansas State University. He received a dual title PhD in Adult Education and Comparative & International Education from The Pennsylvania State University (USA). His research interests include the use of educational technology to enhance adult learning in multicultural formal, non-formal, informal learning, and online learning environments. Email: hjkang@ksu.edu

BO CHANG, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Studies at Ball State University. She received her PhD in Adult Education from the University of Georgia. Her research interests: Adult learning; learning and tools such as culture, media, language, discourse and social networks; learning communities; community-based adult education; knowledge construction; and social constructionism. Email: bchang@bsu.edu

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Advanced ESL Students' Prior EFL Education and Their Perceptions of Oral Corrective Feedback

Eun Jeong (Esther) Lee
Claflin University, South Carolina, USA

ABSTRACT

The author in this study examines how advanced-level adult English as a Second Language (ESL) students' previous English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom experiences influence their perceptions of their teachers' oral corrective feedback (CF). It uses in-depth qualitative data to characterize the participants' prior English learning, and to determine how their experiences influence how they perceive CF in ESL classrooms. Understanding these patterns of perception will enhance ESL professionals' abilities to create effective and culturally sensitive ESL classrooms.

Keywords: International English education, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), oral corrective feedback, advanced-level ESL students

Several researchers (Kim, 2004; Rezaei & Mozaffari, 2011; Russell, 2009; Sheen, 2010; Yang & Lyster, 2010) have suggested that the effectiveness of corrective feedback (CF) in second language (L2) classrooms depends on various factors, such as different classroom contexts (e.g. ESL vs. EFL), students' proficiency levels, target structures, language aptitude, and students' attitude toward error correction. Often, these variables stem partly from L2 students' prior English learning experiences in their respective home countries, but almost no studies have connected these experiences to perceptions of CF. To fill this gap, the present study surveys the environments in which a group of sixty advanced-level adult ESL students studied English before coming to the United States, and considers how differences among classroom cultures—including how or whether oral CF and error correction were offered—influence these students' attitudes toward oral CF in the United States. Though Lyster and Saito (2010) found no significant contextual influences on the effects of CF in ESL or EFL

institutional settings, each classroom offers unique learning processes, purposes, and circumstances. Thus, identifying and measuring contextual influence requires paying more concerted attention to how ESL students from different classroom cultures view and respond to teachers' oral CF. The present study is the first to articulate these connections, to help clarify how previous English learning influences L2 students' perceptions of their teachers' oral CF.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Working Definitions of Academic Culture

Academic culture is an especially relevant variable in the present study, both as a pedagogical context for corrective feedback and as a set of broader assumptions about language learning within the context of this study. Flowerdew and Miller (1995) offer a useful working definition of academic culture:

Academic culture refers to those features of the lecture situation which require an understanding of the particular academic values, roles, assumptions, attitudes, patterns of behaviors, and so on. Academic culture may be identified at various levels: at the level of a group of countries (e.g., Western countries); at the level of an individual country; at the level of a group of institutions within a given country; at the level of the individual institution within a given country. At any of these levels, a given academic culture is likely to be imbued with the values and practices of the ethnic culture within which it is situated (Flowerdew, 1986), and it may be difficult, in analyzing a given instance of behavior in an academic context, to ascribe such behavior to ethnic or academic influence (p. 362).

The participants in this study are adult ESL students, mainly from China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. These students had already studied English as a foreign language for many years in their respective home countries. In their interviews, several participants mentioned that public English secondary education in East Asian countries emphasizes reading and traditional grammar translation approaches based on rote-learning and memorization. Cain's (2012) description supports this anecdotal evidence: "in many East Asian classrooms, the traditional curriculum emphasizes listening, writing, reading, and memorization. Talking is simply not a focus, and is even discouraged" (p. 184). According to Hu (2003), this disparity creates a group of learners "who are able to achieve high scores on discrete-point grammar tests yet unable to communicate fluently and accurately in communicative contexts" common to American universities (as cited in

Yang & Lyster, 2010, p. 236).

By contrast, college classrooms in the United States often include and reward student discussion. American ESL classes typically make talking in English a priority. Similarly, American teachers tend to be less authoritarian and more approachable than their counterparts in Asian universities, and consider it normal to give direct personal feedback to individual students. Given these differences, Millar and Endo (2004) argue that ESL students need “some time to become comfortable in that type of environment” because so many American schools highlight “student-centered learning, allowing students to do much of the speaking” (p. 789). Additionally, Millar and Endo (2004) emphasize that ESL teachers should “provide structure in the form of clear directions and...communicate with students individually” (p. 789). Because corrective feedback is engrained in many American classroom cultures, especially in L2 contexts, clarifying and demystifying those cultural expectations can help ESL learners acculturate to American universities. Indeed, Fowler-Frey (1998) argues that “instructors must endeavor to make the interaction between culture and learning in their classrooms explicit so that adult second language learners can participate fully in the learning of the second language in the classroom context” (p. 31). This participation is especially valuable for ESL students who go on to full-time academic study in American universities.

Given these contrasting attitudes toward talking in the classroom and toward corrective feedback, the present study proposes that error correction patterns in international students’ past EFL classes may play a significant factor in how they perceive and respond to their teachers’ oral CF. Simply put, students who are raised in American academic cultures may come to expect oral CF as a normal part of classroom conduct, especially in language classrooms. However, many otherwise experienced EFL learners have had little or no exposure to CF when they come to the United States, so they may process and respond to it very differently than their American peers. For this reason, much of this study’s qualitative analysis examines differences in academic cultures, and their potential impact on student perceptions of and responses to American ESL teachers’ oral CF.

Oral Corrective Feedback in EFL vs. ESL Settings

Lyster and Mori (2006) and Sheen (2004) indicate that “the occurrence and uptake of CF were very different across research or instruction setting, but experimental studies have not singled out research setting as an independent variable” (as cited in Li, 2010, p. 315). Given the differences between ESL and EFL learning processes, purposes, and circumstances, the effectiveness of oral CF might differ as well. This section will juxtapose ESL and EFL settings, and review three studies (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Yang & Lyster, 2010) that explore some of their

differences.

First, some working definitions are necessary. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes take place in a country where English is already the main or official language, most often the United States, Canada, the U.K., or Australia. Adult ESL speakers live or are planning to live in a country where their native languages are not used for education, business, and other activities, so they are under pressure to pick up “survival” language skills. Beyond the need for “survival English,” many of these ESL students will continue their education in American community colleges, colleges, or universities, and thus need instruction on how to write academic research papers or give presentations in English. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors, by contrast, teach English in countries where English is not a majority language. Current hot spots for EFL include South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, and Thailand. Students study English in their own countries as part of academic requirements in their school systems, or as preparation for travel or study in an English-speaking country. Many EFL students have years of grammar and vocabulary study, but they often lack practical skills in listening, speaking, and writing in English.

Lyster and Saito (2010) argue that there were no significant contextual influences on the effects of CF in ESL vs. EFL institutional settings, according to their quantitative meta-analysis study. However, Yang and Lyster’s (2010) study shows that ESL and EFL learning situations may prompt different learning outcomes. Similarly, Li’s (2010) meta-analysis of CF’s efficacy in second language acquisition (SLA) indicates that “the mean effect size associated with the studies conducted in Foreign Language (FL) contexts was significantly larger than that associated with studies conducted in Second Language (SL) contexts, indicating that CF was more effective in FL contexts than in SL contexts” (p. 338). This finding corroborates those by Loewen et al. (2009). The participants in the FL settings, they find, have a more positive attitude toward teachers’ error correction than the participants in the SL settings. Specifically, Loewen et al. (2009) argue that SL learners were “more enthusiastic about improving their oral communication skills,” while FL learners gave “more priority to grammar instruction and error correction” (as cited in Li, 2010, p. 344).

Because many L2 learners transition from EFL to ESL settings when they study abroad, these contextual differences may create a variety of problems, especially as learners try to improve their spoken English proficiency. Specifically, the present study examines how differences between EFL and ESL academic culture, and between EFL and ESL approaches to oral English, might affect students’ reactions to oral CF in ESL settings. To allow participants to articulate their attitudes toward CF and describe their previous English learning experiences, the present study uses mainly qualitative methods to draw out students’ stories and

characterize their approaches to CF in American ESL classrooms. This data might help ESL professionals customize their CF techniques and strategies in order to create a classroom environment suitable for enhancing L2 learners' oral production and proficiency. To that end, this study explores a single research question: How does students' prior English learning affect their perceptions of and responses to American ESL teachers' oral CF?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a mixed method design with a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. More specifically, it uses a dominant-less dominant design: QUAN/qual sequential (Creswell, 1995). This design is "characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The priority typically is given to the quantitative data, and the two methods are integrated during the interpretation phase of the study" (Creswell, 2003, p. 215). Scholars disagree not only about the level of method in quantitative and qualitative methods, but also whether combining them is even workable (Denzin, 2008). However, using mixed methods in this way is not about convergence but rather crystallization. As Lather (2006) puts it, "the ability to situate oneself methodologically in the face of an imposed 'new orthodoxy' (Hodkinson, 2004) is not about paradigm competition but, much more profoundly, about a move away from a narrow scientism and toward an expanded notion of scientificity more capable of sustaining the social sciences" (p.47). In this case, for instance, using mixed methods allowed the researcher both to evaluate the worth of the data and draw out enough data to increase the credibility of the findings, by analyzing the data from multifaceted angles.

Similarly, by substituting inference transferability for validity, Tashakkori and Teddie (2002) demonstrate the fundamental principle of mixed or networked hybrid methodologies: "Methods should be mixed in a way that has complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses" (p. 299, as cited in Demerath, 2006, p. 107). The primary benefit of this sort of design is that it "can provide stronger inferences—an important consideration for those working in a public field such as education" (Donmoyer, 2001, as cited in Demerath, 2006, pp. 107-8). More broadly, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods contributes greatly to bringing about more abundant data resources. Howe (2004) argues that qualitative methods may play a central role in helping strengthen inferences about causal relationships regarding why or how something is happening. Specifically, qualitative methods help researchers recognize the black box, 'gappy' understanding of the causal relationship. Therefore, in order to complement what quantitative research does not provide or show, a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches is certainly required in the present

study.

Participants

The study's participants, sixty advanced-level ESL adult students, were all completing their PhDs at a large Midwestern university, and were all training to be teaching assistants (TAs). In this role, all sixty would be expected to teach courses in their respective fields to college-level students. They were all enrolled in the university's intensive oral English program from March through June 2012, and were from a variety of countries: 36 were Chinese, 10 Korean, four Indian, two Japanese, two Taiwanese, two Thai, one Mexican, one Iranian, one Venezuelan, and one was from Hong Kong.

Before the program began, all the students were asked to take an institutional version of the Test of Spoken English (TSE), which measures the ability of nonnative English speakers to communicate effectively. A score of 230 on this test is required to gain TA certification, and the students in the present study all scored between 190 and 220. This means that they exhibited stronger English skills than their colleagues in the university's standard ESL program, but did not qualify for teaching certification. To gain that certification, each student had to achieve near-native levels of fluency in spoken English. Specifically, each one had to pass a mock teaching test—a 10-minute lecture to a real audience—to demonstrate his or her oral English proficiency.

Forty of the sixty students participated in follow-up interviews. Because more than enough students showed enthusiastic interest in the interview, the researcher chose a representative sample based on the students' survey responses. Of the interviewed participants, 22 were Chinese, eight Korean, three Indian, two Japanese, two Taiwanese, one Thai, one Venezuelan, and one was from Hong Kong. The students' academic fields were somewhat diverse, though heavily weighted towards STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields.

Setting

This study was conducted in a university-affiliated oral English training program hosted by a large university in the central United States. This program targets international teaching assistants (ITAs) whose native language is not English, to help improve the ITAs' ability to teach college courses in American English. The program has four sequenced courses, referred to here as Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4. Each student takes a placement test upon admission to the university, and completes a teaching performance test at the end of the Level 3 course. This study collected data from Level 3 students, because the students there are relatively advanced and because they have been exposed to enough CF to recognize and discuss

its effects on their English development. Indeed, the observed Level 3 classes featured frequent immediate oral CF, and according to program documentation, instructors are trained to stop and correct students whenever there's a problem with the students' communication. Students are then asked to repeat their utterances, making the suggested corrections. Because most of the students at the host university are native American English speakers from the Midwest region, the program prioritizes making ITAs' speech comprehensible to that audience, which often requires accent reduction and favors certain dialects of American English.

Instruments

The data were collected by means of classroom observations, a survey questionnaire, and in-depth follow-up interviews with a majority of the survey respondents. The survey was given after a month of instruction and CF, and included questions examining the students' EFL backgrounds, to assist in interview planning and data analysis.

The interview questions engaged both the students' quantitative and qualitative survey responses. Interview data played a significant role in clarifying the interviewed subjects' prior EFL experiences, and provided rich and abundant resources to organize and analyze the qualitative survey data. At the end of the survey, participants were asked if they were interested in follow-up interviews, and forty interviewees were selected from the pool of interested students. All forty interviewed students were asked the set of fourteen interview questions, and each interview lasted 60-70 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English, in a quiet and empty classroom, and each interview was recorded and immediately transcribed.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the relationship between students' prior English learning experiences and their perceptions of their American teachers' oral CF. Specifically, students' responses to the statements regarding their EFL learning environments, as well as the statements regarding their responses to their American ESL teachers' oral CF, were summarized. Based on the students' interview responses, the qualitative interview data were analyzed and coded in accordance with three themes: students' previous training in oral English, EFL pedagogy and curriculum, and student-teacher interaction. To ensure more accurate and fine-tuned qualitative data analysis, the codes of the students' responses were re-examined and revised three times by two qualitative data analysts with expertise in ESL education. In order to establish credibility, member checks by both analysts were utilized to corroborate face validity and to confirm the transcripts' accuracy.

There will be differences of opinion regarding the validity of students' views of CF and its effects. Some would argue that post hoc and

decontextualized views are not valid, and must instead be embedded within a specific situation.

RESULTS

Students' EFL Learning Experiences and their Perceptions of CF

Quantitative Results

The research question examines how students' prior EFL classes in their own countries influence their perceptions of and attitudes toward their American teachers' oral CF. Figure 1 shows the students' mean ratings on each of the eight declarative items.

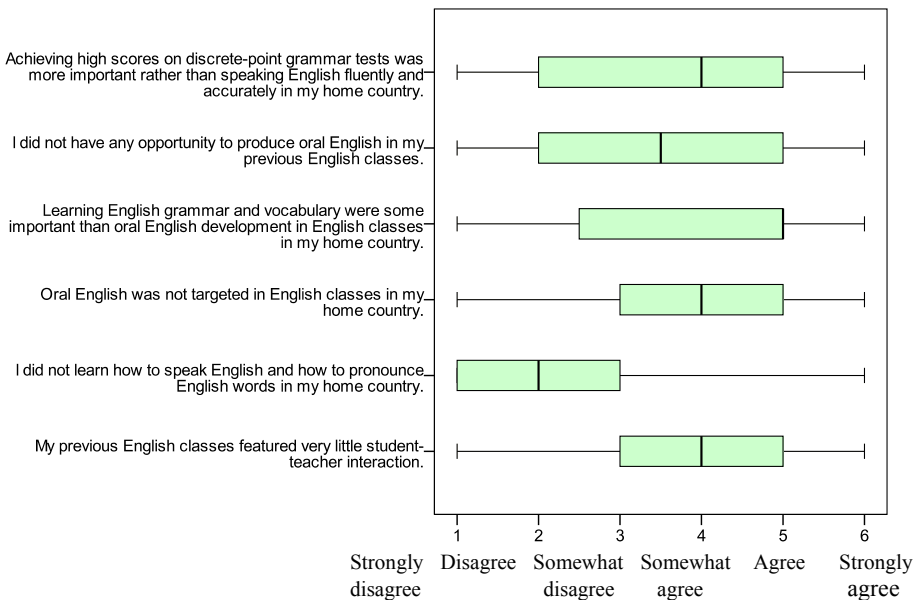


Figure 1. Quantitative ratings of students' EFL learning environments

Figure 2 summarizes the students' attitudes toward their American teachers' oral CF. As shown in Figure 2, the majority of students preferred the US classrooms, where they could get plentiful oral CF from their teachers. A few students, however, preferred the English learning environments in their home countries, where they received no CF.

While the quantitative results provided general accounts of the respondents' EFL classrooms and their feelings about corrective feedback, they did not produce sufficiently detailed information to answer the research question effectively. Accordingly, the qualitative data, especially the interview data, clarified the participants' experiences in terms of lesson content and ESL vs. EFL oral English pedagogy, and suggested how

differences in classroom cultures influenced the participants' perceptions of and attitudes toward American ESL teachers' oral CF.

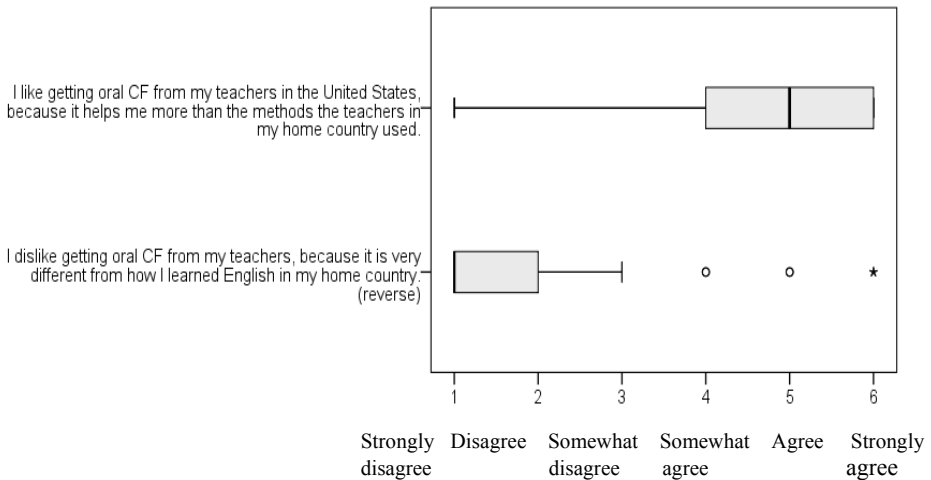


Figure 2. Students' Responses to American Teachers' Oral CF Qualitative Results

Among the forty interview participants, several students transferred to the study's host university from universities in their own countries. For this reason, in order to be consistent with their accounts of the shared common classroom environments and cultures, the interviews focused more on their high school (secondary) English education than on its college counterpart, though students gave examples from classes on both levels.

Students' Previous Training in Oral English

Out of forty interview participants, twenty-two students learned how to pronounce some English words in their own country, while eighteen students did not. However, these lessons did not emphasize real-world conversations: instead, the students just mimicked their teachers' pronunciation and repeated textbook passages that their teachers read aloud. Furthermore, their teachers' pronunciation instruction was vocabulary-level, and they did not teach students how to use intonation, stress, and accent to enhance communication. The following representative interview transcriptions show what the interview participants' oral English classes were like. In the citations, "P" stands for "Participant."

We had a textbook; then my English teachers [in India] took a lesson. They will describe the—usually the English lessons are based on some stories, or they will talk about some leaders' qualities, and so on.

So those lessons are helpful to me to learn the vocabulary, grammar. But it doesn't take care of my oral English, how to communicate to a large audience, how to make an effective speech and so on. So it's purely based on vocabulary and grammar (P30's personal interview, June 8, 2012).

In Korea, my English teachers didn't show or teach how to pronounce exactly, and they did not teach the intonation, accents, and rhythm for oral English. I think they have avoided pronouncing it, because they didn't have any confidence. That's why they just focus on grammar or vocabulary or reading (P1's personal interview, May 29, 2012).

Along the same lines, twenty-seven students did not have any opportunities to practice their oral English in their previous high school English classes, whereas thirteen students did. Even in college, opportunities to practice their oral English were still insufficient; only fifteen students were given the opportunities to practice their oral English, while twenty-five students were not:

I think because I didn't have so many opportunities to practice in China, I felt pathetic. Like, I had been studying English for maybe 10 years. And until now, I couldn't learn to speak English right. I think it's really pathetic. [...] When our previous English teachers taught English in the classes, the teacher pronounced a particular sound and said follow that, repeat that for a couple of times; then, it's done. Then after class, it's done. We didn't speak anymore. In college, it's still not that much. Because after class, we didn't speak unless we had foreign friends (P14's personal interview, May 25, 2012).

As I said, I didn't have a chance to produce or practice my oral English. So when I learned English in Korea, I didn't know where I made a mistake. Whenever I read the perfect sentences, I could understand them, so I believed that I could make those kinds of sentences. But actually, even though I know what the correct form is, and even though I can understand the written English, it's totally different from what I am saying (P23's personal interview, June 13, 2012).

EFL Pedagogy and Curriculum

All forty students reported similar procedures in their EFL classes: they read their textbooks, memorized a certain amount of vocabulary, and analyzed English grammatical structure. Accordingly, the language skills emphasized in their previous English classes followed this hierarchy:

grammar, reading, vocabulary, writing, and listening skills. All forty students asserted that grammar, reading, and vocabulary were the main focus of their EFL classes, and thirty-two students each cited writing and listening skills. Since the college entrance examinations differ by country, the highlighted skills depended on what the exam tested.

Unfortunately, speaking skills were not included in the students' college entrance examinations, and what's worse, oral English for communication was hardly ever taught in their previous classes. That is why speaking English gave all forty students the most difficulty when they came to the United States. All the interview participants mentioned that they were afraid of speaking English: they did not have any confidence in their oral English and they were not able to communicate with Americans in English, so they avoided speaking English with others in the USA.

I didn't know how to express my ideas even though I just read the article, I didn't know how to express my feeling, and I didn't know how to output what I thought. When I see some word, I know its meaning, but when I want to say it, I can't recall the word (P5's personal interview, May 23, 2012).

I think it's the way we speak English, it's the way—so it's the difference between the way you speak English in India and the way we speak in the United States. The two are just different. So before you get the hang of it, you are going to have that difference. And I think even if you observe some people from Asia, some adults (from the continent), usually other than when they're speaking to an American or a native citizen, or a native speaker, when they're speaking English to a person from their same country, you will find a difference in that also (P28's personal interview, May 29, 2012).

More specifically, all forty students agreed that their speaking problems came from their pronunciation. Their incorrect pronunciations prevented them from communicating with Americans in natural settings, and caused miscommunication and confusion in their English conversations. The next set of transcriptions probes how the students' different pronunciation affects their oral English communication:

The difficulty was that sometimes they couldn't understand what I said right away. That was a bit depressing. I think it's because of intonation and pronunciation. Like if I asked a question, then I emphasized the wrong word. But when I came here, one of my classmates who is American kept asking me, "

Pronunciation is a lot. Because I worked with my American teacher, I found a lot of differences. Because in India, we will say "advantage"; here they will say "advantage". And the other stuff, umm... "FY-nance", "fih-NANCE". These are all differences between British English and American. Then we will call it a "me-CAN-ism"; here they will call it a "MECK-a-nism". Then we will call it a "CON-figuration"; here they will call it a "con-FIG-u-RAY-tion". So these are all different ways. Most problems are related to pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Rhythm and intonation are entirely different here (P30's personal interview, June 8, 2012).

Thirty-three students also identified their lack of opportunity to practice their oral English in their own country as an important aspect of their oral English deficiency. Since their previous English classes were extremely focused on grammar, reading, and vocabulary, and ultimately on higher test scores, they did not have any chances to practice their speaking. Their EFL classes mainly involved students memorizing a lot of English grammar, learning vocabulary, and doing sentence-level translation to enhance their reading comprehension skills. In other words, the students were given a large amount of input, rather than outputting what they had learned. In fact, nine students pointed out they were less confident in speaking English because they mainly learned English grammar and reading in their previous English classes.

In addition to speaking skills, eleven students indicated that the next largest difficulty came from their limited vocabulary, and seven students identified listening skills as a problematic language skill. This is because the textbooks and materials used in their previous English classes were quite out-of-date, and they did not include contemporary examples to help the students master practical and colloquial oral English. In addition, the recordings for the textbooks did not follow American's actual conversational speaking speed, and the recorded conversations used fairly formal expressions not used in real-life situations. This limitation, one student estimated, meant that 40% of the actual oral English [she] encountered "is totally different [from the textbook]. There were different intonations, different accents, different speaking speeds" (P10's personal interview, May 24, 2012).

Student-Teacher Interaction

Regardless of course content, the participants' EFL classes were predominantly teacher-centered, and there was little interaction between students and teachers. One student noted that his EFL teachers "just taught you how to use the grammar," and while they would sometimes use questions to test students' comprehension, the students were expected to

keep quiet (P34's personal interview, June 6, 2012). Seven other students highlighted similar scenarios, pointing out that student-teacher interactions represented a central cultural difference between ESL and EFL classrooms. These differences were especially poignant for Asian students:

I think most of the classes are teacher-centered in China. Because one thing is that we have so many students. So the teacher will control the whole classroom. And also, it may be a culture thing, because maybe in Chinese traditions, we need to respect the teachers. I think in China it's really rude to interrupt the teachers during the classes. So we cannot break the habit of listening to the teachers (P15's personal interview, May 29, 2012).

I think Asian students are a little shy. I didn't like to express myself. From my 20 years' experience, I didn't feel like interacting with professors, and I had a kind of fear of the professors. So sometimes I felt so nervous, and I didn't dare to talk to them. Even though, like for American students, I think they feel more comfortable. Sometimes they made jokes with their professors, but for me, I didn't know how to do it! I can't! (P23's Personal interview, June 13, 2012).

Along similar lines, eight students pointed out that their American classes often featured one-on-one tutorials with their teachers, a feature which their previous English classes did not have:

In China, English teachers just teach you something. "Okay, this is what you need to learn." But here, all teachers are dependent on individuals. Like, personal tutorial - this is a very important thing. Well, I must say it's impossible in China, because you know, we have a large number of students, around 50 or 60 students in one class. Also, American teachers are more willing to know each student's personal perspective, and willing, and they can establish more individual way to improve our English. But in China, they can just give you criteria. "Okay! You just follow this, and learn these words, that's it" (P31's personal interview, June 11, 2012).

Because corrective feedback requires personal, targeted interactions between a teacher and a student, the participants also discussed their attitudes toward oral CF in terms of these interactions. As mentioned above, most of the participants preferred getting CF to not getting it, and they offered two main reasons for this preference. Thirty-nine students maintained that American teachers corrected their oral English and incorrect

pronunciation, while their EFL teachers did not correct their incorrect pronunciation, and in fact offered very little corrective feedback on their oral English. Among these 39, eighteen students highlighted that their teachers' English in their own country was not perfect, whereas American teachers speak perfect English, as they are all native speakers.

By the same token, thirty-seven students contended that American teachers not only know how to teach oral English, but unlike their EFL counterparts, they also showed students how to pronounce vowels and consonants in great detail, including how to shape the mouth and where the tongue should be located to make Americanized sounds. Several students specifically praised their additional expertise:

As I told you, my previous English teachers didn't provide individual feedback like this. But, here my American teacher knows what the errors for Chinese are, what are the errors for Thais, for other countries in Asia, so she can—she knows, even, like, "You pronounce L like this, but you should pronounce L like this." They know, even, how we pronounce these words. So I think—I'm not sure if the teachers who taught in Thailand know this, know our weaknesses, our errors (P12's personal interview, June 1, 2012).

We do get oral corrective feedback, but that oral corrective feedback is mapped in the way Indian English has been spoken. It's like, funny, because they're Indian English speakers, and they correct in an Indian speaking way. It won't be exactly the same way that Americans are pronouncing it, but people in America might understand it. They can change my English to understandable English, acceptable English, but it's not good English, it's not real American English. It's not American English. They just correct in an Indian English speaking way (P28's personal interview, May 29, 2012).

The study accomplishes this by paying attention to what went on in participants' English classes, how their prior teachers' oral English pedagogy compared to their U.S. teachers' pedagogy, and how student-teacher interaction contextualized and affected CF preferences.

DISCUSSION

To generate consistent and coherent scholarly discussions about CF effectiveness in the ESL classroom, teachers and researchers need to cope with adult ESL students' expectations for CF and student-teacher interaction. Even though several scholars (e.g. Ellis et al., 2006; Ellis, 2007;

Yang & Lyster, 2010) have recognized the importance of students' prior English learning experiences in their respective home countries in terms of specific pedagogical tasks, no previous studies examined the relationship between these students' EFL feedback patterns and their views of oral CF in ESL contexts.

Other than four students (those from India and Hong Kong) who initially learned English as a second language (ESL), the rest of the participants studied in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context. The key difference between the ESL and EFL students was whether they had sufficient opportunities to practice their oral English in their own English classes. This brought about a big difference in speaking English confidently and fluently. For instance, because the Indian students in this study were used to English as a primary language of education, none of them had any problems listening to American professors' lectures, writing their essays, and freely contributing their opinions to classroom discussion. On the other hand, English was not used as a *lingua franca* in any of the other students' previous classes, so they did not have enough opportunities to practice their oral English. Based on the qualitative results from the interviews, twenty-seven students did not have any opportunities to practice their oral English in their previous high school English classes, whereas thirteen students did. Even in college, opportunities to practice their oral English were still insufficient: only fifteen students were given the opportunities to practice their oral English, while twenty-five students were not.

In addition, these students' previous English teachers almost never taught them tongue-twisters, or how to use their facial muscles to pronounce English correctly. Although twenty-two out of forty interview participants learned how to pronounce some English words in their own countries, their oral education was focused on mimicking their teachers' pronunciation and repeating textbook passages that their teachers read aloud. Their teachers' pronunciation instruction was also vocabulary-level, meaning the students were not taught how to use intonation, stress, and accent to communicate in English. This fact offers more substantial evidence for the drastic differences between oral English education within and outside of the US. More seriously, oral English for communication was hardly ever taught in participants' previous English classes since speaking skills were not included in their college entrance examinations. Accordingly, speaking English gave all forty students considerable difficulty when they came to the United States, and they were afraid of speaking English. These findings support Derwing and Munro's (2013) recommendation that "ESL programs should put a greater focus on oral language skills in the beginner stages of language acquisition, particularly because some L2 students do not access much oral language outside the classroom" (pp. 180-181).

Obviously, these particular students are not the only ones to suffer

from this imbalance: a similar problem emerged among the Canadian French immersion students in Swain's (1985) study. Even though the Canadian students were given considerable comprehensible input in the target language (French) for almost seven years, their productive competence in the target language—especially in terms of grammatical performance—was not equal to that of native speakers. According to Swain's (1985, 1993, 1995) argument, this was because the students' comprehensible output, not their comprehensible input, was limited. Further, she demonstrated that these students were not pushed sufficiently in their output. In particular, Swain's personal communication with an immersion student, conducted in November 1980, confirms that one function of output is to offer students "the opportunity for meaningful use of one's linguistics resources": "I understand everything anyone says to me, and I can hear in my head how I should sound when I talk, but it never comes out that way." For this reason, "producing the target language may be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning" (Swain, 1985, pp.248-249).

The present study supports Swain's (1985, 1993, 1995) conclusion: having sufficient opportunities to practice and output the target language in ESL classroom contexts plays a significant role in improving students' productive English competence. Ortega (2009) further contends that these opportunities should push learners beyond their current L2 competence, particularly in cases where the learners' erroneous interlanguage has been stabilized over the course of many years. The students who participated in the present study lacked these opportunities because their previous English classrooms were focused so much on teacher-centered education, which limited students' opportunities to interact with their teachers and peers to practice their oral English. However, since coming to the US and to a very different set of student-centered classroom cultures, which required more interactions with their American teachers, these students' English learning has been dramatically affected.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study brackets the political dimensions of the standards for "correct" English pronunciation. Any standard for pronunciation implies certain political views about who should speak English and how, and what is "normal" or "proper" English (Luk & Lin, 2006). These political debates, while outside the purview of this study, are especially important to understanding ESL and EFL education in a multilingual and multiethnic educational environment like the United States. However, within the context of the study's host program, the importance of pronunciation is from a practical perspective: the students need to improve their oral English

proficiency both in order to teach college-level students in Midwestern US classroom contexts, and to ensure their future students comprehend and understand their lectures. On a practical level, those students are most used to hearing and speaking Midwestern US English. For this reason, throughout the semester the students were given plentiful opportunities to refine their pronunciation to a level at which they could communicate effectively in the American university classroom.

Additionally, one current question in CF scholarship is the comparative effects of CF in ESL and EFL institutional settings: Lyster and Saito (2010) argued there were no significant contextual differences between the two settings, based on their quantitative study using meta-analysis. Although the present study did not uncover any significant quantitative results to address this issue, a portion of the qualitative data is relevant here. Specifically, interviews with three Indian participants demonstrated the value of previous English studies in contexts where English is the primary language of education. Unlike their fellow study participants, who had studied in teacher-centered EFL contexts described earlier in this study, the Indian students had many opportunities to practice and output their oral English during their English classes in India. This made a big difference in their ability to speak English confidently and fluently, and improved their overall oral English proficiency. Future research should examine EFL vs. ESL backgrounds more directly, to explore the association between oral CF and different institutional contexts, which might affect CF types and strategies for L2 learners' oral production.

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EUN JEONG (ESTHER) LEE, Ph.D., is the Director of the Intensive English Language Program and an Assistant Professor of English and Foreign Languages at Claflin University. Her specific research interests include corrective feedback, the affective elements of L2 pedagogy, emotion and learning, informal English conversations, ESL learning patterns, curriculum development, and ESL program management. Email: eulee@claflin.edu.

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Delaying Academic Tasks? Predictors of Academic Procrastination among Asian International Students in American Universities

Eunyoung Kim

Seton Hall University, USA

Taghreed A. Alhaddab

Seton Hall University, USA

Katherine C. Aquino

Seton Hall University, USA

Reema Negi

Seton Hall University, USA

ABSTRACT

Existing body of research indicates that both cognitive and non-cognitive factors contribute to college students' tendency of academic procrastination. However, little attention has been paid to the likelihood of academic procrastination among Asian international college students. Given the need for empirical research on why Asian international students engage in delaying academic tasks, the purpose of our study was to determine what key factors are associated with academic procrastination among Asian international students. Using the survey data collected from 226 Asian international students enrolled at four different U.S. universities, our study indicates that collective coping, avoidance coping, and language ability are the three strongest predictors of procrastination in Asian international students.

Keywords: Asian international students, academic procrastination

Defined as the voluntary delay of completing academic work within the expected timeframe or the “irrational tendency to delay of an academic task” (Senécal, Julian, & Guay, 2003, p. 135), academic procrastination can

adversely impact academic performance through incomplete assignments and lower grades; it poses a significant threat to students' academic success and psychological well-being (e.g., Klassen, Krawchuk, & Rajani, 2008). Although the degree to which students procrastinate may depend on the types of task (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), research shows that the majority of students engage in academic procrastination at some point in their college lives. Many prior studies have focused primarily on American college students, explaining how psychological factors such as self-regulation, perfectionism, and self-esteem are associated with students' tendency to delay academic work (e.g., Cao, 2012; Özer, 2011; Ferrari & Pychyl, 2012). To date, little attention has been paid to the likelihood of academic procrastination among international college students who are unfamiliar with American education settings. Thus, this study examines academic procrastination tendencies among Asian international students, a population that represents nearly 70% of all international students enrolled in American higher education (Institute of International Education, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research indicates that both cognitive (e.g., English language proficiency, self-regulation, and academic efficacy) and non-cognitive factors (e.g., acculturative stress, cross-cultural coping skills) contribute to academic procrastination (Klassen et al., 2008; Poyrazli et al., 2001). Previous research has found that limited English proficiency may create additional stress and frustration for international students, especially when it restricts their ability to participate in social events and class discussions or to meet the demands of a specific academic program (Poyrazli et al., 2001). Moreover, research has shown a clear relationship between academic efficacy and the ability to self-regulate academic tasks with deadlines. Academic efficacy—an individual's understanding of his or her competence in completing a specific task—is one of the strongest predictors of performance in an educational setting (Klassen et al., 2008) and may account for academic procrastination after controlling for previous academic achievement, personality traits, gender, socioeconomic status, self-esteem, and intelligence (Zuffiano et al., 2013).

Existing research also indicate that non-cognitive factors may impact international students' academic adjustment (Mori, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Yeh et al., 2003). For example, acculturative stress, resulting from efforts to adapt to the social customs and norms of a new culture (Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004), poses many psychological challenges for international students (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Additionally, cross-cultural comparisons of academic procrastination tendencies reveal significant differences between western/individualistic and eastern/collectivistic culture

(Kuo, Roysircar, & Newby-Clark, 2006). While the cultural transition process occurs for all international students, Asian international students are likely to experience higher levels of stress than are their European counterparts because of cultural differences, (e.g., Yang, 2011). Asian international students who have cultural beliefs and/or coping strategies conflicting with American cultural norms may experience additional difficulties in adapting to the new educational environment and, as a result, may have an increased likelihood of academic procrastination (Klassen et al., 2008).

The following research questions guided our study:

- (1) Does the tendency of academic procrastination differ by demographic backgrounds among Asian international students?
- (2) What factors contribute to the likelihood of academic procrastination among Asian international students?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a survey design to explore factors related to procrastination in Asian international students. Students responded to an online Asian International Student Academic Procrastination Questionnaire (AISAPQ) consisting of 69 items, including six components: demographic information, academic self-efficacy (subscale from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire: Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993), Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS: Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994), English language ability, procrastination behavior, and Cross-Cultural Coping Scale (CCCS: Kuo et al., 2006). This last component, the CCCS, includes three styles of coping: avoidance coping, engagement coping and collective coping. Avoidance coping mechanisms stress avoidant behaviors and the tendency to remain absent from social interactions. Engagement coping strategies employ direct actions and positive thinking. Finally, collective coping occurs when students draw on social support and cultural values by interacting with co-ethnic peers and supportive ethnic communities (Kuo et al., 2006).

Data came from 226 Asian international students enrolled at four different U.S. universities (3 public institutions and 1 private across the country), who participated in the online survey. The majority of the sample were graduate students (65%) and 61% of the sample were female, the average age was 25.14 years, and the average length of stay in the U.S. was 2.7 years. Students from China, Korea, and India comprised 76.4% of the sample. The majority of participants were single (91%).

The dependent variable for this study is a dichotomous “yes/no” response to the question, “Have you ever delayed working on one of your class assignments longer than you should have while studying in the United

States?" Independent variables included demographic characteristics, measures of acculturation stress, the cross-cultural coping scale, academic efficacy, and perceived English ability. Missing values (18% of the total sample) were handled using multiple imputations (MI), a method preferred over other traditional approaches to working with missing values (Acock, 2005). Further, to ensure the fit of our logistic regression model against the outcome variable, the Hosmer–Lemeshow (H–L) goodness-of-fit test was applied where insignificant results ($p > .05$) indicated that the model was well fit to the data.

To analyze the data, we first ran a cross-tabulation to see how academic procrastination differed by categorical background variables (e.g., gender, academic status). We then used a binary logistic regression to examine how our independent variables were related to academic procrastination. Logistic regression was selected as the appropriate analytical method because of the binary nature of the dependent variable. Background characteristics, including academic status, gender, length of stay, age, and marital status, along with the measures of cross-cultural coping, acculturative stress, language ability, and academic self-efficacy were all entered in the regression model.

RESULTS

Of the total participants ($N = 226$), 35% of students reported academic procrastination. Cross-tabulation indicates that 36% of female respondents reported that they delayed working on academic tasks, compared with 33% of male respondents. Of the graduate respondents, 35% reported that they delayed working on academic tasks, whereas 34% of the undergraduate respondents reported academic procrastination. A logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict Asian international students' likelihood of procrastinating work on academic tasks while studying in the U.S. The results of this logistic regression are presented in Table 1.

Odds ratios greater than 1 indicate an increased probability of procrastinating academic tasks among Asian international students, while odds ratios lower than 1 indicate a lower likelihood of procrastinating academic tasks. None of the background variables (gender, age, marital status, academic status, and length of stay), were found to be statistically significant. However, perception of language ability was found to be statistically significant, indicating that higher levels of English proficiency increased the likelihood of academic procrastination among Asian international students (log odds .391, $p < .05$, odds ratio 1.478). Total acculturative stress was not a statistically significant predictor of academic procrastination. Further, two of the three coping styles were found to be statistically significant; students who engage in avoidance coping were more likely to procrastinate academic tasks (log odds .485, $p < .05$, odds ratio

1.581), while students who developed collective coping strategies were less likely to delay work on academic tasks (log odds $-.602$, $p < .01$, odds ratio $.548$). Finally, levels of academic self-efficacy were not found to be a statistically significant predictor of academic procrastination among Asian international students.

Table 1: Logistic Regression model and model evaluation: Predictors for Asian International students' likelihood of Academic Procrastination

Predictors	B Coefficient	SE	Odds Ratio
Gender	.162	.330	1.176
Age	-.043	.050	.958
Marital Status	.224	.614	1.251
Academic Status	-.246	.400	.782
Duration of Stay in U.S.	.315	.344	1.370
Language	.391*	.196	1.478
Total Acculturation	.088	.052	1.092
Avoidance Coping	.458*	.231	1.581
Engagement Coping	-.037	.191	.964
Collective Coping	-.602**	.205	.548
Academic Efficacy	-.165	.144	.848
Overall Model Evaluation	69%		
Predicted Probabilities			
Goodness-of-fit test	<i>df</i>	Sig.	
Hosmer & Lemeshow	8	.742	

Significant variables are labeled with asterisks * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our findings indicate that collective coping, avoidance coping, and language ability are the three strongest predictors of procrastination in Asian international students. Collective coping is a negative predictor of academic procrastination; students who develop collective coping strategies tend to be less likely to delay work on academic tasks. This finding suggests that the Asian collectivistic culture, which values group work and social support, may alleviate the stress of adapting to a new environment and therefore better enable students to focus on academic tasks. The same idea can apply to avoidance coping considering that this strategy contradicts Asian cultural values. Asian students who hold strong collectivistic values may find themselves alienated when they engage in avoidance coping, which might contribute to the stress they experience as they adjust to the new setting and distract them from their academic tasks. The language ability variable was positively related to academic procrastination, suggesting that students who

have higher language ability are more likely to procrastinate. Here, it appears that a perceived high level of English language ability might actually increase the likelihood of academic procrastination among Asian international students, though previous research had suggested a positive association between academic adjustment and English language skills (Poyrazli et al., 2001).

IMPLICATIONS

Although existing research has focused on the relationship between personal and environmental factors and procrastination (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), very limited research has examined predictors of academic procrastination among Asian international students. Despite their growing presence on US campuses, the needs and concerns of Asian international students are frequently overlooked (Mori, 2000). Therefore, it is important to investigate Asian international students' academic procrastination, in order to provide insight into the creation of successful strategies for intervention and remediation. The development of such strategies will be particularly important for counselors, advisors, and faculty, especially since previous research has demonstrated that international students underutilize university student support services (Mori, 2000). Understanding the relationship between coping strategies, perceived language proficiency, and academic procrastination is an important step toward enabling institutions to better serve the needs of Asian international students. Based on our findings, it is crucial for university professionals to implement clinical services and to promote collective coping strategies to reduce procrastination behavior in this population. Understanding cultural differences in academic habits can assist in establishing initiatives focused on the academic success of Asian international students. Additional predictive of academic procrastination in Asian international students will need to be further explored. Future research with larger international student populations, including different types of institutions, different countries of origin, and various academic disciplines, will be needed to draw meaningful conclusions.

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EUNYOUNG KIM, PhD, is an associate professor of higher education at Seton Hall University. Email: eunyoung.kim@shu.edu

TAGHREED A. ALHADDAB, PhD, is an independent scholar. Her research focuses on higher education policy. Email: taghreed.alhaddab@student.shu.edu

KATHERINE C. AQUINO, MA, is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Higher Education Leadership, Management, and Policy at Seton Hall University. Email: katherine.czado@student.shu.edu

REEMA NEGI, MA, is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Higher Education Leadership, Management, and Policy at Seton Hall University. Email: reema.negi@student.shu.edu

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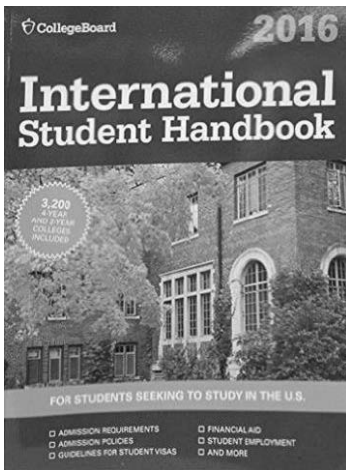
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International Student Handbook

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Reviewed by: *Nara M. Martirosyan*, Sam Houston State University (USA)



For the past 15 years, the number of international students in American higher education has increased steadily (Institute of International Education, 2014). According to the Institute of International Education (2014), "The United States hosts more of the world's 4.5 million globally mobile college and university students than any other country in the world" (para. 1). As the number of international students in American higher education continues to grow every year, there is need for up to date information on U.S. host institutions, their programs and admission requirements, as

well as the various procedures pertaining to international student admission. The 29th edition of *International Student Handbook* published by the College Board (2015) is the most recent guide for prospective international students interested in postsecondary education in the United States. It consists of three parts, which are briefly reviewed below.

Part I of the *Handbook* offers essential information for prospective international students to consider when in the process of searching and/or applying for admission in an American institution. It advises the students to plan for study in the U.S. at least two years in advance from the estimated time of admission, and presents a set of estimated deadlines to follow. The organization of the U.S. education system, types of institutions, degrees, course credit system, transcripts evaluation, along with information on accreditation, college costs and financial aid are also presented in this section. An article by Judy Irwin included in this section discusses the educational opportunities available through community colleges, and lists a number of benefits for enrolling in community colleges (e.g., low tuition

cost, the availability of English language programs, the possibility of transferring to four-year colleges after studying in community colleges, etc.). Another chapter in this section provides detailed advice to prospective undergraduate international applicants. It guides the future applicant through important decision making steps, starting from choosing a college and finishing with a complete application package and all its required documents. Information on various tests that are used for admission purposes in U.S. institutions is also explained. Finally, Part I walks the prospective international student through actions that should be taken after receiving an admission confirmation from a U.S. institution. Important information on visa regulations is provided along with a pre-departure checklist guide and glossary of terms used in U.S. higher education.

Part II includes informational tables of over 3,200 undergraduate institutions in the United States. These tables provide information on degrees, undergraduate enrollment, required tests and their minimum scores, application deadlines, student services, housing, academic year cost, and financial aid opportunities. Institutions are listed alphabetically by state, and readers are guided on how to use the information tables.

Part III provides lists and indexes of various institutional information per college/university including: overall and international undergraduate student enrollment, financial aid, conditional admission opportunities based on English language proficiency, SAT Subject Tests™ requirements, credit/placement for International Baccalaureate and for Advancement Placement, availability of ESL programs on campus, special housing opportunities specifically for international students, and college type. An alphabetical list containing contact information of each college/university is also included in Part III. Readers are provided with the mailing address, telephone number, website address and fax number (when available) of each college. Finally, this part provides contact information on Education USA Advising Centers abroad where prospective international students can visit in their own country, and obtain more information about studying in the United States.

The 29th edition of *International Student Handbook* is a comprehensive informational resource for any prospective student interested in obtaining an undergraduate education in the United States. Current international students who may be interested in transferring from their current institution to another U.S. institution will also find this guide useful. Beyond students, the information is also valuable to study abroad/exchange program coordinators in foreign countries, as well as counselors and administrators involved in international student recruitment and admission in American colleges and universities.

As stated in the book, “the process of researching, selecting and applying to colleges and universities in the United States is difficult and

time consuming” (p. 1), and therefore, having access to this handbook would make the process smoother. Information on more than 3,200 American colleges and universities included in the handbook covers almost every essential area (e.g., tuition cost, housing availability, financial aid opportunities, etc.) where the prospective and current international students might have questions. The author also suggests exploring international.collegeboard.org when searching for colleges, registering for SAT tests, and attaining learning materials for exam preparation. The handbook is user-friendly, easy to read and locate specific information on particular areas of interest related to studying in the United States.

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