Personal and Professional Challenges and Benefits of Studying Abroad

Madeline Milian, Ed.D.
Matthew Birnbaum, Ph.D.
Betty Cardona, Ph.D.
Bonnie Nicholson, M.A.,
University of Northern Colorado

Completing studies abroad is a global trend that has placed the United States in the enviable position of being the most desirable destination for those considering post secondary education. Institutions of higher education are increasingly devoting efforts to attract international students as they bring both financial and cultural benefits to the institution. This study engaged international students attending Regional Western University (RMU), to learn about reasons for selecting the institution and the perceived barriers and benefits of studying abroad. Our participants agreed that having had a friend or relative who attended RMU previously was an influential factor for selection. Some challenges included language barriers in the academic context; lacking knowledge of culturally expected classroom practices; transferring new learning to context in the native country; and finding housing off-campus. Participants agreed that the cultural awareness and competence that studying abroad provided was the most significant asset to them in the future.
Key words: Internationalization, international students, testimonials, challenges, perceived benefits, and recruitment strategies

International student enrollments continue to increase at U.S. institutions of higher education, reaching a record high of 886,052 in the 2013/14 academic year, which constituted a 8.1 percent increase over the previous year and reflecting a global trend of students in higher education wishing to pursue studies outside their homeland. The U.S. enrolls far more international students than any other destination and students who plan to earn a post-secondary degree outside of their homeland perceive the United States to be welcoming, to have a quality higher education system, and to offer a wide range of schools and programs that can accommodate and prepare a variety of different students (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014; Institute of International Education, 2015).

Universities are increasingly dependent on the tuition dollars international students generate and the financial contributions they make to local and the national economy, reported to be roughly around $27 billion in 2013/2014 (Binsardi & Ekwulgo, 2003; Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014; Lee & Rice, 2007; Olson, Evans, & Schoenberg, 2007). Interest in recruiting international students can be attributed to the continued growth and development of revenue generating exchange programs, collaboration and creation of joint degree programs, improvement of globally applicable curriculum programs, sophisticated marketing procedures, and desire to increase diversity on our campuses and communities (Bartram, 2008; Olson, Evans, & Schoenberg, 2007).

While we have a good sense for why U.S. institutions recruit international students, less is known about international students' reasons for selecting and attending a particular institution and the experiences they have while attending their chosen programs. The present work explores the personal challenges and anticipated professional benefits that will result from attending Regional Western University (RMU), a pseudonym for a mid-sized doctoral granting institution located in a Western state. The institution currently hosts around 300 international students and is discussing ways to increase this number while ensuring that these students are adequately supported. We are not aware of any distinguishing features of RMU that would make it more or less attractive to international students than other regional institutions. As a regional university, we are not on the top list of institutions attracting international students, but we are increasingly interested in bringing more international students to our campus; consequently, we need to actively recruit these students. Similarly to several hundred other institutions that share this goal, understanding our students' perceptions and identifying effective recruitment activities is critical to obtaining our goal.

What We Know About International Student Experiences

Although international students report general satisfaction with their academic experiences and tend to have higher aggregate completion rates and times to graduation, they also report being frustrated by their experiences outside the classroom (Birnbaum, Cardona, Milian, & Gonzalez, 2012; Curtin, Stewart, & Ostrove, 2012). Previous research has demonstrated that international students' adjustment to a host country is mediated by factors that include their ability to communicate in the host countries language, marital status, nationality, and opportunities for interpersonal interactions with students from cultures different from their own (Galloway

& Jenkins, 2005; Glass, 2012; Kashima & Loh, 2006). It has also been reported that international students face a variety of unique challenges that must be addressed to ensure a meaningful international experience (Glass, 2012; Moores & Popadiuk, 2011). These challenges commonly include perceived discrimination, racism, limited social support, feeling of isolation from family and friends, financial difficulties, adaptation to new cultural and social norms, potential culture shock, and challenges to adapt to new educational and learning styles (Bista & Foster, 2011; Crockett & Hays, 2011; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Hartshorne & Baucom, 2007; Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen & Van Horn 2002; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Taras & Rowney, 2007; Winkelman, 1994). Regardless of degree program or type of degree, one notable problem is an individual's level of English proficiency (Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010), as they often struggle with unfamiliar language usage and slang, errors made during the translation from one language to another, and misunderstanding of idioms, similes and metaphors (Robertson, Line, Jones & Thomas, 2000). Higher levels of English proficiency lessen academic difficulties, especially as it has been reported that listening to lectures is a difficult academic task (Lee, Farruggia, & Brown, 2013; Yates & Wahid, 2013). Understanding of nonverbal behaviors is also reported as a communication challenge experienced by international students studying at U.S. institutions (Taras & Rowney, 2007).

Additional challenges include overcoming culture shock and adapting to a new cultural lifestyle that include unfamiliar drinks and foods, some of which may violate their dietary cultural practices and require adaptations. As explained by Spencer (2003) the U.S. academic environment and general pedagogical approach to teaching represents another significant cultural difference as many international students come from educational settings in which students are expected to passively receive lecture materials and produce memorized

information verbatim. International students in the United States are often confronted with cooperative classroom activities and expectations to participate in discussions, which may be new teaching and learning styles to them. Other academic skills that may present challenges for international students include use of critical thinking skills, writing ability, efficient note-taking, oral presentations and comprehension of readings assigned in class (Spencer, 2003).

Research on the challenges experienced by international students have also identified social and emotional barriers that include social adaptation problems, homesickness, lack of financial resources, new educational systems, reasoning and learning styles, employment complications, time needed for language translation, gender norms and prejudices, and housing and transportation (Crockett & Hays, 2011; Hartshorne & Baucom, 2007; Taras & Rowney, 2007). Stress symptoms, due to acculturation factors, can interfere with attempts to adjust to the culture of the academic host country and limited social connection can decrease the chances of adaptation (Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, & Baker, 2004). Organizational skills have also been identified as an important factor that can impact on the international students' success rate of adaptation to the new environment (Hartshorne & Baucom, 2007). Despite these challenges, international students still continue to pursue study abroad opportunities.

Numerous personal benefits with long-lasting effects for international students have been identified in the literature such as intercultural learning, acceptance, and personal growth benefits (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Undeniably, completing a degree in another country is a significant accomplishment that allows international students to develop new skills and facilitate the establishment of new friendships that could result in future professional personal and professional benefits (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Establishing friendships and building a sense of belongingness in the host university has been shown to have a positive

relationship to academic success, especially if cross-cultural interaction is encouraged in coursework (Glass & Westmont, 2014). Valuable learning also occurs when students acquire a new language and accumulate hands-on knowledge about the host country. Once international students return home they are more likely to seek out multicultural experiences, careers and organizations where their new second language skills are needed (Lenz & Wister, 2008; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). Despite the challenges and barriers that international students experience when studying abroad, Dwyer (2004) describes that the majority of internationals students report having a lifelong changing experience impact and a new perspective on how they perceive the world.

As the number of international students continues to rise, it is imperative that universities examine the factors that make the institution attractive to those considering a study abroad program. The primary reason stated for choosing an international institution is the perceived academic status of the university (Nyland, Forbes-Mewett, & Hartel, 2013; To, Lung, Lai, & Lai, 2014), which is often influenced by the testaments of international student alumni and word of mouth referrals (Cardona, Milian, Birnbaum, & Blount, 2013; Ozturgut, 2013). Other factors that influence the decision to attend an institution include the perception of the safety provided by the institution, academic support specific to international students, and the international recognition of degree conferred (To, et al., 2014; Nyland, et al., 2013).

Understanding international students' experiences, including the challenges they face and factors that facilitate adaptation, is significant to institutions of higher education that are actively working to attract and retain international students, as these institutions have a responsibility to offer proactive support to meet the social, academic, and practical needs of these students (Hartshorne & Baucom, 2007; Ozturgut, 2013; Lee & Ciftci, 2014). Inquiring about their experiences and perceptions provide faculty

members and administrators the opportunity to address student concerns, assess and expand support services, improve classroom experiences, promote learning, enhance campus climate, and decide how to best invest limited financial resources to improve international students' satisfaction (Cardona, Milian, Birnbaum, & Blount, 2013; Lee, 2010). Institutions of higher education have the ability to directly impact the success of international students by building communities that respect diversity and promote cross-cultural relationships (Glass & Westmont, 2014; Sabbadini, Naldi, Packman, Youngblom & Weil, 2013). Universities that intentionally build welcoming and accommodating environments that are sensitive to students' adjustment and support their needs will better serve international students and will have a competitive edge in what has become a highly competitive market (Birnbaum, Cardona, Milian, & Gonzalez, 2012).

Theoretical Perspective, Methodology, and Methods

This study is most concerned with understanding the challenges international students experience while attending RMU and the professional benefits they anticipate receiving from earning their degree. Our approach to answering these research questions is therefore largely pragmatic and emphasizes placing data collection needs ahead of epistemological considerations (Credwell, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Pragmatism frees researchers to make decisions about which data collection methods are best suited to their research questions and is open to mixed-methods and various approaches to analysis (Jones, Torres, & Armino, 2014). After we developed our research questions our next steps were to conduct a comprehensive review of the literature on international students and then developed a survey instrument designed to collect the necessary data.

Methodology and Methods

We adopted a mixed-method approach to data collection. Our first step was to distribute an on-line survey to all undergraduate and graduate international students included on RMU's Center for International Education contact list. The survey consisted of questions about how well prepared respondents felt shortly after the start of their first semester, challenges with speaking and reading in English, how welcomed they were in the community, the perceived quality of RMU's academic programs, and the types of benefits they believed would be accrued because of their degree. We used the survey to also collect data about demographic, adjustment, housing, and family related issues. Most questions relied on a Likert scale and categorical responses, along with two open-ended responses.

A total of 130 students, 58 percent female and 42 percent male, completed the online questionnaire. Of those completing the questionnaire, 49.6 percent were enrolled in a graduate program, 35.7 percent were enrolled in an undergraduate program, 10.9 percent were completing a non-degree study abroad program, and 3.9 percent were students enrolled in the Intensive English program with the intention to apply for a degree program upon successful completion of the English program.

The demographic information from our survey revealed that 46.4 percent of our participants have been at our institution for less than one year, 17.6 percent had spent between one and two years, 24.8 percent had spent between three to four years; and 11.2 percent had been at our institution for five or more years. Most of them, 64.2 percent lived off campus, 71.4 percent were single, and collectively they spoke 28 different languages with Arabic, Chinese, English, and Thai constituting the four largest language groups. While they were enrolled in a variety of academic programs, three areas were identified more frequently than others and included business, education, and sports and exercise related programs.

After summarizing the descriptive statistics gathered from the participants and coding our open-ended questions for emergent themes, we developed relevant opened-questions for a follow-up semi-structured interview. Participants in the semi-structure interview were individuals who provided contact information on the survey responses and indicated a willingness to be interviewed. We conducted interviews in our library at mutually agreeable times. The face-to-face interview consisted of 16 questions that allowed the participants to expand on the issues raised in the survey. A total of 12 students participated in the interview, all graduate students. Interviews lasted between 40 and 70 minutes. After all interviews were completed, coding steps were followed as recommended by Bogdan and Biklin (1998), initial coding and then focused coding were created to arrive at the final themes.

Results

Selecting Our Institution

Learning about the institution is the first step in the application process; our participants learned about RMU from many sources, however getting information from a friend or family member was the most commonly cited and influential selection source. Other sources listed by participants included Internet searches, college fairs, contacting the institution, or receiving information through the mail. When asked questions related to the application process, 90.6 percent described having found the application process to be easy to understand, and only 22 percent of the participants stated that they did not know who to contact if they had a question about the application process. Factors that motivated the participants to select RMU included having been accepted, the high quality of the educational programs they wanted to complete, having a friend or a family member in the RMU community, receiving tuition assistance, reasonable cost of the institution, and the knowledge that the institution provided a supportive community.

Challenges

To inquiry into possible language and academic challenges we asked participants about their comfort level with spoken English in both casual and academic situations, as well as with reading and writing assignments in English. Not surprisingly, 55 percent of the participants felt very comfortable with casual conversations, 51 percent felt very comfortable with casual writing, and 42 percent felt very comfortable with casual reading. When asked about academic speaking, reading, and writing only 31 percent felt very comfortable with academic conversation, 17 percent with academic writing, and 31 percent with academic reading. As indicated by the participants, having minor to some difficulty was typical for 58 percent of them in academic conversations, for 68 percent in academic writing, and for 59 percent in academic reading. Following are examples of comments expressing difficulties with language:

Actually my bigger problem is the language, so sometimes I don't feel comfortable to ask questions. Yeah, and I do not like to study on-line or hybrid. I like to study face-to-face. Yeah, yeah, they are very helpful.

....everyone is talking and I am not sure of my English to be able to talk academics. I can talk in conversations, but with academic words id difficult and takes time to be able to express myself. I am more confident in myself and I don't care what the others think of me. I know the students from last semester so I feel comfortable now. So now I can say, "Excuse me I don't get it." I can say that now and not last year.

In addition to the language challenges that needed to be confronted to be successful in the classroom, a number of students related examples of how they often have to examine the applicability of the content they

are learning when they return to their countries given the different cultural and social context; and how their lack of cultural knowledge of the U.S. sometimes interferes with their ability to participate in the classroom. One student expressed this point in the following statement:

> *So like I really struggle that, I'm learning a lot of really great things about the counseling career, theories, techniques, or ethical laws something like that but how much can I bring to my country. Some yes, some not, if like just give the lectures and everybody just type the notes it's more similar. But umm… there's more, umm, here the professor more creative people to ask the questions, umm say your opinions and more group to discuss. I like this part, but it's a change for me too, cause I think not only the language, but umm the cultural background, a very obvious example is that a lot of the class discuss about the high school or school system, but you know a lot about the philosophy and the systems, total different from me, me and from Americans. So everybody when they are talking about experiences in the school bad or good, I just don't get it, because it's not my experience.*

A somewhat unanticipated finding involves the frustration international students experience when they must listen to, or interact with, other international students in the classroom. While participants appreciated meeting other international students on campus, they found it difficult to understand students from other countries, especially in classes that attracted students from numerous countries.

Other challenges that were mentioned by students included the process of finding housing for those who needed or wanted to live off-campus, the heavy reliance of technological tools such as Blackboard that most are unknown to them, and navigating the K-12 educational system for students who brought their school aged children.

Benefits

In reference to academic benefits, 74 percent of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed that they were receiving a quality education at RMU, 20 percent had neutral feeling about their academic program, and 6 percent of the participants were not satisfied with the educational program they were receiving. Some of comments validating the benefits of studying abroad, particularly at RMU included:

- *Program is not available in my country.*
- *I feel that I'm improving a lot here, and it has been a great experience for me. I also fell very proud for being part of RMU.*
- *Small but great campus. Understanding professors. Great advisor. I love the activities offered by CIE. Everyone is understanding and sensitive to the needs of international students.*
- *Small school, good contact with professors, activities and trips for international student.*
- *The writing center, they are always supportive and they help me as an international student.*
- *My advisor understands my needs. She has a good understanding of the identity that we bring to the US and she cares about us. One thing I really liked is that she attended to my questions quickly.*

Socially, 65 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they have found a community of friends while attending RMU; 26 percent were neutral about their community of friends; and 9 percent expressed that they had not yet found a community of friends. Culturally, 59 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the institution valued and respected cultural differences; 19 percent were neutral about

the statement; and 22 percent did not think that the institution valued and respected cultural differences. The following comments illustrate some of the social and cultural comments contributed by the students:

> • *Meeting friends from all around the world, visiting new places, having a valuable experience, learning practically, being independent.*
> • *It gave me a new network of friends and contacts. It taught me a new way of learning and a new method to study, different from the Italian one.*
> • *New friends, new experiences do to a new school, new system and learning more about the world and myself.*
> • *Getting my degree, and learning a new thing, and making friends from other culture.*

When asked to list the services offered for international students on campus that they perceived to have been of benefit, participants included the English conversation groups, using the computer lab at the Center for International Education, attending cross-cultural event, participating in the International Ambassador Program, receiving tutoring, orientation activities, and learning about immigration regulations.

There was agreement among the participants that the experience of studying in the United States and becoming more aware of other cultures will be viewed as an important asset once they return to their country of origin. In fact, cross-cultural awareness and competence was considered to be one of the most significant future benefits of studying abroad.

Implications for Practice

While the findings of this study are specific to one particular institution of higher education, it is reasonable to anticipate that international students attending similar institutions may also experience the same challenges and will have comparable expectations for the benefits that the experience of studying abroad will generate. As opportunities for academic and social interactions between college and university personnel and international students continue to increase, the results of this study points to very specific factors that could create multiple avenues for positive interactions. These positive interactions are essential in creating a context for international students that will result in successful experiences at our U.S. institutions and will motivate international students to communicate these experiences with others in their countries of origin. And as the participants in this study indicated, these personal contacts become instrumental in the process of recruitment.

Designing recruitment and admission procedures to attract international students to our institutions of higher education is only the first important step; developing academic, cultural, and social programs to support them while completing their programs will facilitate adaptation and lead to successful academic experiences. In fact, the stories of successful academic and social academic experiences that international students take back to their countries have the potential to become our most powerful recruitment tools.

When considering the challenges expressed by our participants, a number of recommendations can be provided that could lead to facilitate adaptation to our campus and communities. These include: a) regular access to an informal Language Chat program that will bring together local students and community members with international students on a weekly basis and could offer English language practice and information about the community and other cultural information essential to international students; b) monthly organized social and cultural activities that will bring international students together to get to know each other and share resources they have found helpful; c) provide frequent academic monitoring to identify and assist with possible academic and language challenges students may be experiencing but are unable to resolve due to unfamiliarity

with the educational system; d) work with the local school district to create informational materials and presentations on the local K-12 education system that will be helpful to international students who bring children to our institution of higher education; e) provide an intensive technology tutorial that will introduce international students to the technology programs needed to access academic information in their courses; f) include information on the best ways to purchase textbooks either through on-campus or local bookstores or online sources; g) remind and encourage faculty members to create opportunities for international students to consult with them when there are academic questions or concerns; h) assist international students in locating additional financial resources that will lessen their tuition and housing burden; i) provide a list of grocery stores and restaurants where food items and meals are available that meet students' dietary needs; and j) connect students to campus health and psychological services and encourage them to use those services as needed.

As international students arrive at our institutions from many different geographical areas of the world, their academic, health, and social needs, may be dictated by their place of origin. Cultural and religious practices as well as the political conflicts taking place back home can create multiple needs and challenges for these students. Creating programs that international students can accesses that will support and assist them to overcome the challenges that they will experience on our campus becomes our obligation and responsibility. Only then can these students successfully complete their academic programs or degrees, return home to work and achieve the anticipated benefits, and share their stories with others so that another generation of young people will be encouraged and motivated to follow a similar path and decide to go abroad to pursue their academic goals.

Conceivably, the most successful recruitment strategy begins by ensuring that our current international students achieve their anticipated educational goals and return home with positive stories to tell others who may become our future students. Their positive experiences at our institutions will provide the type of testimonials that neither beautifully designed brochures nor recruitment fairs can offer.

Author Bios

MADELINE MILIAN is a Professor in the School of Teacher Education at the University of Northern Colorado where she teachers in the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education program. She also serves as the director of international teacher professional development programs. Her current research interests include comparative education and the education of emergent bilinguals.

MATTHEW BIRNBAUM is an Associate Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership and Chairs the Leadership, Policy, and Development department at University of Northern Colorado. He frequently collaborates with colleagues to explore issues associated with international students' experiences in the United States.

BETTY CARDONA is a Licensed Professional Counselor and an Associate Professor at the University of Northern Colorado in the Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education since 2008. Her research interests are multicultural counseling, and internationalization of the counseling profession. Dr. Cardona is currently conducting cross-cultural research study on love marriages in India.

BONNIE NICHOLSON is a third year doctoral student in the Applied Psychology and Counselor Education Program at University of Northern Colorado.

References

Bartram, B. (2008). Supporting international students in higher education: Constructions, cultures and clashes. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *13*(6), 657–668. doi:10.1080/13562510802452384

Bhattacharya, K. (2009). Othering research, researching the other: De/colonizing approaches to qualitative inquiry. In J. Smart (Ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, Volume 24 (pp. 105-150)*. New York: Springer

Birnbaum, M., Cardona, B., Milian, M., and Gonzalez, M. (2012). Strangers in a strange land: How non-traditional international adult students see a United States university. *Journal of International Education and Leadership, 2*(2), 1-16.

Bista, K. & Foster, C. (2011). Issues of international student retention in American higher education. *The International Journal of Research and Review, 7*(2), 1–10.

Bogdan R. B. & Biklin, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*, Third Edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Cardona, B., Milian, M., Birnbaum, M., & Blount, I. (2013). In-class and out-of-class experiences of international graduate students in the United States. *Higher Education of Social Science*, *4*(1), 1–9. doi:10.3968/j.hess.1927024020130401.2116

Chapdelaine, R.F. & Alexitch, L.R. (2004). Social skills difficulty: Model of culture shock for international graduate students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(2), 167-184.

Crockett, S. A. & Hays, D. G. (2011). Understanding and responding to career counseling needs of international college students on U.S. campuses. *Journal of College Counseling, 14*, 65-79.

Crotty, M (2003). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Original work published 1998).

Curtin, N., Stewart, A. J., & Ostrove, J. M. (2012). Fostering academic self-concept: Advisor support and sense of belonging among international and domestic graduate students. *American Educational Research Journal,* 1-30. doi: 10.3102/0002831212446662

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2005). "Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research". In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research (3rd ed.), pp. 1-32*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dwyer, M. M. (2004). More is better: The impact of study abroad program duration. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 10*, 151-163.

Dwyer, M. M., & Peters, C. K. (2004). The benefit of study abroad. *Transitions Abroad Magazine*, *37*, 56-59.

Farrugia, C. A. , & Bhandari, R. (2014). *Open Doors 2014 Report on International Education Exchange.* New York: Institute of International Education.

Galloway, F. J. & Jenkins, J. R. (2005). The adjustment problems faced by international students in the United States: A comparison of international students and administrative perceptions at two private, religiously affiliated universities. *NASPA Journal, 42*, 175-187.

Glass, C. R. (2012). Educational experiences associated with international students' learning, development, and positive perceptions of campus climate. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *16*(3), 228–251. doi:10.1177/1028315311426783

Glass, C.R., & Westmont, C.M. (2014). Comparative effects of belongingness on the academic success and cross-cultural interactions of domestic and international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations 38*, 106-119.

Guido, F. M., Chavez, A. F., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2010). Underlying paradigms in student affairs research and practice. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice 47*(1), 1-22. doi:10.2202/194966056017

Hartshorne, R. & Baucom, J. (2007). Issues affecting cross-cultural adaptation of international graduate students. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching*, *2*(2), 78-87. doi**:** 10.2202/2161-2412.1023

Hechanova-Alampay, R., Beehr, T.A., Christiansen, N.D., & Van Horn, R.K. (2002). Adjustment and strain among domestic and international student sojourners: A longitudinal study. *School Psychology International, 23*(4), 458-474. doi: 10.1177/0143034302234007

Institute of International Education. (March 2015). Attitudes and perceptions of prospective students from around the world. New York: IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact.

Jones, A., & Jenkins, K. (2007). Cross-cultural engagement in higher education classrooms: A critical view of dialogue. In D. Palfreyman & D. McBride (Eds.) *Learning and Teaching Across Cultures in Higher Education (pp.133-152).* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kashima, E.S., & Loh, E. (2006). International students acculturation: Effects of international, conational, and local ties and need for closure. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30, 471-485.

Lee, J.J. (2010). International students' experiences and attitudes at a US host institution: Self-reports and future recommendations. *Journal of Research in International Education, 9*(1), 66-84.

Lee, B., Farruggia, S. P., & Brown, G. L. (2013). Academic difficulties encountered by East Asian international university students in New Zealand. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *32*(6), 915-931. doi:10.1080/07294360.2013.806444

Lee, J., & Ciftci, A. (2014). Asian international students' socio-cultural adaptation: Influence of multicultural personality, assertiveness, academic self-efficacy, and social support. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *38*97-105. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.08.009

Lee, J.J. & Rice, C. (2007). Welcome to America? International student perceptions of discrimination and neo-racism. *Higher Education,* 53: 381-409.

Lewis, T. L. & Niesenbaum, R. A. (2005). Extending the stay: Using community-based research and service learning to enhance short-term study abroad. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 9*(3), 251-264.

Lenz, W., & Wister, J. (2008). Short-term abroad with long-term benefits. *International Educator*, *17*(3), 84-87.

Moores, L., & Popadiuk, N. (2011). Positive aspects of international student transitions: A qualitative inquiry. *Journal of College Student Development*, 52, 291-306.

Nyland, C., Forbes-Mewett, H., & Hartel, C. J. (2013). Governing the international student experience: Lessons from the Australian international education model. *Academy Of Management Learning & Education*, *12*(4), 656-673. doi:10.5465/amle.2012.0088

Olson, C., Evans, R., & Shoenberg, R. (2007). At home in the world: Bridging the gap between internationalization and multicultural education. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Ozturgut, O. (2013). Best practices in recruiting and retaining international students in the U.S. *Current Issues in Education, 16*(2), 1-20.

Poyrazli, S., Kavanaugh, P. R., & Baker, A. (2004). Social support and demographic correlates of acculturative stress in international students. *Journal of College Counseling*, *7*(1), 73-82.

Poyrazli, S., & Lopez, M. D. (2007). An exploratory study of perceived discrimination and homesickness: A comparison of international students and American students. *The Journal of Psychology, 141*(3), 263-280.

Robertson, M., Line, M., Jones, S., & Thomas, S. (2000). International students, learning environments and perceptions: A case study using the Delphi technique. *Higher Education Research and Development*, *19*(1), 89-102.

Sabbadini, M., Naldi, M., Packman, W., Youngblom, J., & Weil, J. (2013). International genetic counseling students' perspective on their training experience in the United States. *Journal of Genetic Counseling*, *22*(6), 817-829. doi:10.1007/s10897-013-9648-5

Sherry, M., Thomas, P., & Chui, W. H., (2010). International students: A vulnerable student population. *Higher Education, 60*, 33-46. doi: 10.1007/s10734-009-9284-z

Spencer, A. (2003). Facilitating the academic success of international students. *Teaching Theology and Religion, 6*(3), 164-168.

Swadener, B. B., & Mutua, K. (2008). Decolonizing performances: deconstructing the global postcolonial. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.) *Handbook of Critical Indigenous Methodologies (pp. 31-43)*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Taras, V., & Rowney, J. (2007). Effects of cultural diversity on in-class communication and student project team dynamics: Creating synergy in the diverse classroom. *Journal for the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management*, *35*(2), 66-81.

To, W. M., Lung, J. Y., Lai, L. L., & Lai, T. M. (2014). Destination choice of cross-border Chinese students: An importance-performance analysis. *Educational Studies*, *40*(1), 63-80. doi:10.1080/03055698.2013.858615

Vidich, A. J. & Lyman, S.. (2000). Qualitative methods: Their history in sociology and anthropology. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.) pp. 23-44. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Winkelman, M. (1994). Cultural shock and adaptation. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 73*(2), 121-126.

Yates, L., & Wahid, R. (2013). Challenges to Brand Australia: International students and the problem with speaking. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *32*(6), 1037-1050. doi:10.1080/07294360.2013.806447