

Review of 2011 Doctoral Dissertations on International Student Studies

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The purpose of this section is to share recent doctoral research activities to the Journal of International Students readers. This section lists the selected dissertations related to the issues and challenges of international students in the United States. Published in 2011, these dissertation abstracts are grouped into five themes: adjustment issues, campus support services, recruitment strategies, college experiences, and immigration policies. The complete versions of the selected dissertations are available in the ProQuest, Michigan-based electronic publisher.

Adjustment/Adaptation/Acculturation/Counseling Services

Factors that contribute to the adjustment of international students. Lopez, Iris Y. University of La Verne, 2011. 3502088.

This study examined the possible relationships between stressors, resources, and coping response variables of international students studying in the United States. Results indicated that students with assimilative and integrative acculturation modes, greater frequency of contact with members of the host members, and high English language confidence had higher self-esteem. The relationship between daily hassles and self-esteem was positively correlated, in that the higher the self-esteem the higher the perceived daily hassles score. The assimilation acculturation mode and longer length of residence in the host country contributed to students' English language confidence. However, other factors did not contribute to international students' self-esteem and English language confidence.

Functions of the common in-group identity model and acculturation strategies in intercultural communication: American host nationals' communication with Chinese international students. Imamura, Makiko. University of Kansas, 2011. 3489880.

This experimental study examined American host nationals' perceptions of Chinese international students' cultural adaptation strategies and the effects of the strategies on American host nationals' willingness to communicate with the Chinese students. Results revealed that participants were more willing to communicate with the assimilated and integrated Chinese students than with the separated and marginalized students. Results also found that the assimilated and integrated Chinese students were judged more positively than the separated or marginalized Chinese student. Finally, the intercultural

adaptation strategies had indirect effects on willingness to communicate through both interpersonal communication anxiety and social attractiveness.

The relationship between discrimination, acculturation, and general psychological functioning in international students. Hirschel, Michael J. The University of Mississippi, 2011. 3479012.

This study examined discrimination felt by international students, and how it was related to pre-contact factors, acculturation factors, and adjustment factors. Results suggest that feeling discriminated against was common for international students. Country of origin, physical appearance, connectedness to mainstream culture, and English proficiency were found in the study to be particularly important regarding international student experiences.

Fitting-in: Sociocultural adaptation of international graduate students. Wilson, Georgette P. Johnson & Wales University, 2011. 3457225

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between sociocultural adaptation of international graduate students and selected demographic characteristics. Findings showed relationships between gender, age, region and country of origin, English language ability, having family or friends already in the U.S., and having an international friendship family, with respect to adaptation.

Factors influencing international students' academic and sociocultural transition in an increasingly globalized society. Hsu, Chung-Hsien. The University of Southern Mississippi, 2011. 3455443.

In this mixed-method study, 115 international students participated in the quantitative study. Sixteen out of the 115 international students participated in the qualitative interview. The findings indicated globalization has significantly influenced the students' transition experiences in academic learning and sociocultural life.



Students of Indian heritage and United States citizen students' adaptation of college, opinions about mental illness and attitudes toward seeking professional counseling help. Ajayi-Nabors, Margaret Omotola. Western Michigan University, 2011. 3455068.

This study compared India students ($n = 244$) and U.S. students ($n = 393$) on their adaptation to college, their opinions about mental illness, and their attitudes regarding their professional psychological help-seeking behavior. Opinions about mental illness, attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, and adaptation to college significantly predicted an international student's use of counseling as compared to U. S. citizen students. Findings also supported that students indicating negative opinions about mental illness reported negative attitudes toward seeking professional counseling help. Furthermore, college students indicating negative opinions about mental illness reported having a higher level of difficulty in adjusting to college. College students with positive attitudes toward seeking professional counseling help indicated a significantly better adjustment to college. One unexpected finding was that adaptation to college and attitudes toward seeking professional counseling help were not significant predictors in determining U. S. college students' use of counseling but they were for international college students.

Acculturation, coping, and attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help among Chinese international college students. Wu, Iwen. St. John's University, 2011. 3483407.

In this mixed method study, the results showed that there was no significant correlation existing between Chinese international students' levels of acculturation and their attitudes toward seeking professional help. There were no significant relationships between Chinese international students' levels of acculturation and their coping beliefs. There was no relationship between styles of coping beliefs among Chinese international students and their attitudes toward seeking professional help. The length of residence, previous therapy/counseling experience and having spouse/partner accompanied students to America were related to Chinese international students' attitudes toward seeking professional help. Finally, Chinese international students' levels of English proficiency were not related to their levels of acculturation or their styles of coping beliefs.

Qualitative analyses identified nine acculturative stressors: language barrier, culture shock, loneliness/homesickness, status, financial stress, racial discrimination, living arrangement, academic achievement, and environmental factors.

Asian cultural value and contingency of self-worth as moderators for academics stress among Chinese international students. Liao, Kelly Yu-Hsin. Iowa State University, 2011. 3473050.

This study examined Asian cultural value of Family Recognition through Achievement and Contingency of Self-Worth on Academics (CSW-A) as potential moderators that may enhance the negative impact of academic stress on Chinese students' feelings of shame and positive affect. In 370 student samples, there was a significant two-way interaction between academic stress and CSW-A on the outcome of positive affect. Specifically, at higher levels of CSW-A, academic stress was significantly and negatively associated with positive affect. Thus, participants who base self-worth on academics are likely to be vulnerable for lower levels of positive affect when they encounter academic-related stress. This suggests that Chinese male students are vulnerable to feelings of shame under high academic stress across higher and lower levels of adherence to FRTA.

An exploratory study on international students' adjustment to American universities. Atebe, Grace M. West Virginia University, 2011. 3476402.

This research investigated the challenges international students encounter while attending American universities and students' perceptions of the extent to which these challenges are met by their host institutions. Findings from 472 responses revealed that the varying student demographic characteristics perceived varying adjustment challenges. The greatest challenges perceived by international students were Religious Service, Student Activity, Living Dining, Academic Record, and Social Personal Problems. The least challenging problem areas were identified as Orientation Service, Placement Service, and Admission Selection. The least met challenges by host institutions were reported as Financial Aid, Admission Selection, Academic Record, Orientation Service, Placement Service, and Student Activity Problems.

Work-family balance and psychosocial adjustment of international students. Bulgan, Gokce. Purdue

University, 2011. 3479317.

The researcher investigated how work-family balance mediates the relationship between personality traits, gender roles, social support, and psychosocial adjustment. Data were collected from 243 married international graduate students. Results show that certain personality characteristics such as extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness ease the psychosocial adjustment process, whereas personality traits such as neuroticism make the process more difficult for married international graduate students. Work-family balance did not mediate the relationship between personality traits, gender roles, social support, and psychosocial adjustment. More specifically, the paths from gender roles and social support to psychosocial adjustment and work-family balance were non-significant, thereby indicating poor dyadic relationships between the variables.

Making ourselves understood: The role of previous experience, stereotypes, communication accommodation, and anxiety in Americans' perceptions of communication with Chinese students. Ruble, Racheal A. University of Kansas, 2011. 3489964.

This study examined American students' perceptions of communication with Chinese international students. Exploratory factor analysis revealed five primary stereotypes of Chinese students. Some reflect previous literature concerning stereotypes of Asians generally (e.g., smart/hardworking), whereas others are less common (e.g., nice/friendly). American students reported comparable levels of willingness to interact with and social attractiveness of the Chinese student.

Language adjustment of international students in the US: A social network analysis on the effects of language resources, language norm and technology. Qiu, Wei. Michigan State University, 2011. 3434212.

Using social network influence model, the study examined the effects of language resources, language norm, and technology use on international students' self-confidence in overall English skills and four sub-skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The findings suggested a number of variables boosting English confidence of international students: usage of mass media related to host community, usage of technology to contact family (in home country), the size of one's personal network, the proportion of English speakers (both native and non-native) in one's personal network weighted by the contact frequency.

This study disproved a set of variables suggested by the literature that is beneficial to language adjustment: length of residence (in the US), the percentage of native English speakers in the participants' social networks, and home country-related mass media usage. Length of residence in the US had no significant impact on English self-confidence, indicating that living in the US for longer period of time does not automatically improve one's confidence in using English.

A comparative study of first time international college students' level of anxiety in relationship to awareness of their learning-style preferences. Young, Arlene Shorter. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2011. 3460542.

This dissertation focused on the identification of learning style profiles of Japanese, Korean, and Chinese college student populations. Although the Asian students were clearly surprised by aspects of the American classroom that differed markedly from their prior learning experiences in Asia, they generally adapted quickly and comfortably. The results of the quantitative portion of the study make it clear that the Asian students did not change very much in their learning styles over the course of six weeks, but the student responses in focus groups suggest strongly that they were able to adapt and to function quite well in learning situations that were quite different from what they had experienced in their home countries.

Campus Support Services /Student Satisfaction

International student satisfaction levels with student support services at Delaware State University. Ikwuagwu, Vincent O. Wilmington University (Delaware), 2011. 3434959.

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and focus group data for this study revealed that Delaware State University (DSU) could further support international students by responding to the service needs. International students reported very high satisfaction with academic advising and instructional effectiveness, but were least satisfied with recruitment and financial aid and immigration services.

International student satisfaction with student services at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Thiuri, Phillippa. Boston College, 2011. 3481441.

This study at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Western New York reveal that services



related to academics provide the most satisfaction and meet the expectations of the international students surveyed. The study further revealed that the services registering the lowest satisfaction were: (1) Student Financial Services; (2) Housing Operations; (3) Co-operative Education Placement; (4) Dining Services; and (5) Transportation Services. The findings also reveal that female international students reported the highest satisfaction and the lowest dissatisfaction.

Writing resources used by graduate international students and their effect on academic satisfaction. Colombo, Laura Marina. University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 2011. 3459921.

Findings indicate that although graduate international students were aware of the writing services provided by the university, they used them partially. Graduate international students more likely consulted peers, academic advisors, and class professors when writing for their courses. Graduate international students enrolled in the Engineering and Information Technology College used significantly fewer writing resources than students enrolled in the colleges of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Natural and Mathematical Sciences. In addition, graduate international students enrolled in the college of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences faced more writing demands than students in the other two colleges. Regression analyses showed that those graduate international students who sought support when writing for their courses and reported higher levels of English ability indeed showed higher levels of academic satisfaction. After controlling for social relations, English ability, and writing demands of graduate courses, writing resources use was also positively associated with academic satisfaction.

An investigation of academic writing in international students in post-secondary education. Causarano, Antonio. The University of New Mexico, 2011. 3473599.

This study investigates the acquisition of academic writing in international students by using Vygotsky's system of meaning as theoretical and methodological framework. The analysis of academic writing in English as L2 at the intersection of the sociocultural and cognitive is the first step in investigating academic writing by applying a more systematic theoretical lens in second language writing and writers.

Recruitment/Agents/Admissions

Experiences that impact the recruitment and retention of international (non-native speaker of English) student-athletes in NCAA Division I institutions. Kontaxakis, Evangelos. Indiana State University, 2011. 3491231.

This study explored the experiences that impact the recruitment and retention of international student-athletes in NCAA Division I institutions. The findings suggested that the experiences that impact decision-making were (a) the U.S. educational system combines education and sport, (b) the U.S. system supports student-athletes and provides financial security through the scholarship system, and (c) international student -athletes want to live a new experience in life. The results also suggested that the experiences that impact retention were (a) the difficulties in English language, (b) the adjustment in the cultural differences, (c) homesickness, and (d) the time management involving the balance between the two roles (being a student and athlete).

The use of agents in applying to the U.S. higher education: Experience of Chinese undergraduate students. Zhang, Yi Leaf. Iowa State University, 2011. 3458385.

This study collected both quantitative and qualitative data from two groups: prospective Chinese students in China and international Chinese undergraduate students in U.S. institutions. The findings of the study can better inform education practitioners about international student experiences of college application, advantages and disadvantages of using an agent, and to what extent they are satisfied with agents' assistance. This study can be beneficial for recruitment officers and administrators, particularly those who like to increase international enrollment.

An analysis of a consortium of five community colleges in implementing an international student recruitment program. Ramsammy, Jillian Daniel. University of Florida, 2011. 3467587.

This study focused on the organization's important features, benefits, challenges and factors that influenced its success in recruiting international students. The findings revealed that the model provided an effective framework of operation. There were several benefits of *The Consortium* that included leveraged financial resources of the member institutions and collaboration through shared responsibility.

Factors that may impact the number of international students from China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand or Vietnam who study in the United States. Lemke, Jeffrey C. Bethel University, 2011. 3491553.

The researcher interviewed educational agents in China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam to examine the influences of financial factors, educational prestige and quality, policy and government, marketing and communications, and familiarity or family connection as a student or family considers study abroad options. Findings suggest: (a) financial factors allow students to afford study abroad and reward these same students in the job market; (b) educational program prestige and quality are often contradictory and may misrepresent the standard it intends to measure; (c) sending nations, not the United States, may be restricting student visas; (d) marketing and communication are effective when personalized and connected with the factor of alums, school staff, and current students or parents; and (e) there is support for brain mobility versus the brain drain as students are drawn to the advantages of an emerging economy.

Australia v. USA: Indian engineering students pursuing graduate degrees abroad, an analysis of factors influencing the choice and location of institution. Berends, Louis Michael. Loyola University Chicago, 2011. 3454899.

This study analyzes the decision-making processes of students from India who pursue graduate education in Australia and the United States of America. In this setting, decision-making processes of student choice were examined after study participants selected higher education institutions in Australian and U.S.

College Experiences/Engagement/Gains of Learning

Exploring the college experiences of students adopted from South Korea. Nissen, Jennifer Garrett. Iowa State University, 2011. 3458308.

This qualitative study examined the college experiences of Korean adoptees related to their personal development and Korean cultural awareness at a mid-sized Midwestern university. The findings were organized into three sections: youth and background experiences, college experiences, and thoughts about the future. The themes that emerged in the youth and background experiences included strong connection to family, religion as an important part of childhood, and connection to Korean culture as a child.

The findings reflected that, although the students did develop and change while in college, they did not necessarily explore their Korean culture or interact with Koreans and Korean Americans. Typically, they did not use campus support services or the campus environment to explore the Korean culture.

Experiences of international doctoral students in social science and humanities programs with their dissertation chairs at a Research I university. Lee, Krystal O. University of Florida, 2011. 3496914.

This study describes eight doctoral international students' experience with academic advisors. Findings indicate that advisors can positively impact international doctoral students' experience by supporting them academically and personally, providing funding opportunities, and setting clear expectations for their students. In addition, advisors should also help these students to understand the norms, expectations and values of graduate education in American institutions.

Caribbean international undergraduates' resisting, reframing and reaffirming of their ethnic identity at a four year institution. Malcolm, Zaria T. University of Florida, 2011. 3496916.

This study examined the ethnic identity experiences of Caribbean international. Three significant dimensions emerge from participants' experiences located at the core of their ethnic identity: 1) Resisting, 2) Reaffirming, and 3) Reframing. These three dimensions are reactions to the institutional context. The emerging theory reveals that participants constantly make shifts in their navigation of their identity in their new academic and cultural setting, and that institutional stakeholders must pay closer attention to the overgeneralized and homogenous institutional discourse on international students to maximize internationalization missions on learning, discovering and engagement.

A phenomenological study: Educational experiences of international doctoral students of education at a Midwestern university. Unyapho, Panadda. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 2011. 3460462.

In this phenomenological study, the researcher examined the educational experiences of six international doctoral students of Education at a Midwestern university. The participants' understanding of their transformation as learners tied closely to their academic accomplishments, which include completing



tasks and assignments, being accepted in academic community, having articles published in academic journals, and presenting their academic work at conferences. Much of their transformation and meaning making related to their instrumental learning. The study suggests that educators should encourage students to broaden their frames of reference by inviting them to engage in meaningful discussion that is beyond instrumental learning in order for the students to develop critical thinking and to be in charge and accountable for their learning towards critical consciousness.

The development of conceptual socialization in Turkish international students: A language socialization perspective on conceptual fluency and social identity. Ortactepe, Deniz. State University of New York at Albany, 2011. 3450228.

This longitudinal, mixed-method study relied on the assumption that international students as newcomers to the American culture experience conceptual socialization which enables them to gain competency in the target language through exposure to the target language culture. Findings suggested that the acquisition of formulaic language follows a non-linear, U-shaped process that relies on trial-and-error and is objected to L1 transfer and overgeneralization.

International student curricular preferences in U.S. institutions of higher learning. Mishra, Tarakeshwar Prasad. Southeastern Louisiana University, 2011. 3482202.

In this study, international students showed preference for online courses and were more likely to be dissatisfied with the school. However, cultural distance dimensions did not influence student behavior for enrolling in classes with high English communication intensity. Results of this study will also enhance educational administrators' efforts to boost international student recruitment and retention.

Campus influence on international students' perceptions of the United States. Anson, Mirra Leigh. University of Missouri-Saint Louis, 2011. 3504336.

This mixed-method study examined international students' perceptions of the United States as a result of participating in a short-term ESL program at three campuses of a community college district in the Midwest. The findings suggest that the students' perceptions of U.S. culture were altered as a result of their eight-week stay in the United States for each of

the five perception areas examined: diversity, friendliness, safety, wealth, and quality of American higher education. The findings also suggest that perceptions of U.S. culture differed because of the cultural attributes of each campus, particularly the construct of diversity. An important finding was that students from all campuses expressed appreciation for the open discussion and collaborative learning environment of their college classrooms. This class format contributed to increased perceptions of the quality of American higher education.

Examining the psychometric properties of two international student engagement forms. Hart, Shelley R. University of California, Santa Barbara, 2011. 3456149.

This study examined the validity of a comprehensive instrument assessing both the indicators and facilitators of student engagement. Both the Student Engagement in Schools Questionnaire (SESQ) and Student Conduct & Academic Performance -Teacher Rating (CAP) demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties for the population studied.

Examining the co-curricular engagement of international students at a public four-year university. Yebei, Philemon Kiprono. Indiana University, 2011. 3449581.

This research examined background and demographic factors that explain international student engagement. Findings indicate that the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) measures were one-dimensional, and upper-level students had higher co-curricular engagement scores than first-year students; however, the former group was less satisfied with their college experience. Past volunteering experience, parents' education level, gender, length of residency in the U.S., and socio-economic status of family were important explanatory variables.

Background characteristics and academic factors associated with the academic behavioral confidence of international graduate students in Ohio's public institutions. Willis, Wendie A. Kent State University, 2011. 3441381.

This study identified the background characteristics and academic factors associated with Academic Behavioral Confidence in international students in Ohio's public institutions. The results of the survey found one background characteristic and two

academic factors associated with academic behavioral confidence. Complementary interviews were conducted with 16 of the 267 international graduate students who completed the survey. The results of the interview found two background characteristics and five academic factors associated with academic behavioral confidence.

Experiences of international students using information communication technology in college in the United States. Zhadko, Olena. University of Missouri - Saint Louis, 2011. 3460079.

This study surveyed 262 international students at two four-year institutions regarding their experiences with technology while in college in the United States. It was found that the majority of international students feel comfortable using technology (95.5%); hours a week spent using technology for school related purposes predict international students' comfort level with technology (explains 6% of the variance); the majority of international students learn on their own how to use technology (82%); and international students spend almost equal amounts of time using technology for academic and non-academic purposes.

International doctoral students: Relationships between engagement in academic-social activities and self-perceived academic gains. Akobirova, Zamira. University of Kansas, 2011. 3488336.

This study investigated the relationships between student engagement and six academic gains during doctoral education: (a) acquisition of academic knowledge and skills, (b) writing clearly and effectively, (c) presenting research, (d) publishing research, (e) career preparation, and (f) satisfaction with academic gains. Overall satisfaction from the academic gains of participants was low. The findings indicated a definite relationship between international students' academic and social engagement and their academic achievement in doctoral study.

Characteristics of closest friends: A comparison among U.S., international and Third Culture college students. Choi, Kyoung Mi. Syracuse University, 2011. 3461818.

This study investigates the characteristics of closest friends of female college students among three subcultural groups that were categorized based on their previous transnational transition experience(s): first cultural college students who did not have any

transnational transition, second cultural college students who had only one transnational transition upon their college entry, and third culture college students who had more than one transnational transition during their childhood. The findings of the current study are mostly consistent with previous assertions that CTCKs and non-CTCKs prefer different characteristics in their closest friends.

The experiences of international Asian students and American students in American online classrooms. Moore, Chaowanee Kumlerluk. Texas A&M University-Commerce, 2011. 3467965.

This study identified academic experiences of international Asian students and American students in online classrooms of the Dallas County Community College District. Results of the survey indicated no academic problems experienced by the students. Both international Asian students and American students were satisfied with online courses at the Dallas County Community Colleges. International Asian students rated online courses more fulfilling than did American students.

Learning democracy political socialization, transnationalism and the Nepali diaspora. Sijapati, Bandita. Syracuse University, 2011. 3465445.

This study provides an understanding of Nepali youths in the United States, the transnational ties they have established with their home country, and the different agents of socialization, both in the home and host countries, affect their political worldviews, identities and beliefs. Findings indicate that political learning among youths in a foreign country is a multifaceted process determined by many factors, including the degree to which individuals have been integrated into the culture of the host society; the family background of individuals; their relationships with academic institutions; their involvement in formal and informal immigrant networks in the receiving country; and the nature of their continuing relationships back home.

Immigration Services/Legal Issues/Institutional Policies

A study of the impact of changes to international student visa policy and procedures since the 9/11 attacks. Alkanat, Gokhan. Auburn University, 2011. 3480628.



This phenomenological study analyzed the long-term impact of the changes to the international student visa policy and procedures through describing the lived experiences and perceptions of six international education administrators. Results indicate that they had an enduring impact on American higher education at the local, national, and global level.

The meaning of “international student” post-9/11: A rhetorical analysis of how organizational change altered perceptions of international students in the United States. Sinsheimer, Ann Margaret. Carnegie Mellon University, 2011. 3510835.

This dissertation examines the effect of 9/11 in law, policy, and government structures on language and meaning. Using three theories of rhetorical analysis: *kairos*, frame theory, and genre analysis, this work has focused particularly on legal institutions and on how institutional change within the executive branch of the United States affected the meaning associated with international students.

Building a “national civilization” at home and abroad: International students and changing U.S. political economy. Aw, Fanta. The American University, 2011. 3484793.

Using a historical case study method, this study explored the ways in which international students as social, cultural, economic and political capitals advance the goals of the state. The state plays an important role in facilitating the migration of international students. However, in a post 9/11 world order, the state has exhibited a schizophrenic approach

to the international student program by constructing international students as friends and foes.

Navigating graduate school: International students, institutionalism and language ideologies. Pollock, Pamela M. Cornell University, 2011. 3484829.

This case study of two economics departments at two competitive research universities examines institutional and language ideology forces acting on students at the university, disciplinary, and departmental levels in order to better understand the ways that non-native English speaking PhD students experience at graduate school. The study offers their perspective on current tensions at research universities, as well as policy implications. Students receive very few direct messages about the importance of English language proficiency. This study shows no consensus: English is of secondary importance to technical expertise in economics, though there is a general acknowledgement that some minimal level of language is needed. Clearly, stronger English skills would not hurt a graduate student, but devoting time to English at the expense of research or academic work is not necessarily favored. The only regulated form of communication for graduate students is teaching, which, depending on funding needs, is often not a priority.
