Empirical Article

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Ontario International Graduate Students: An Auto-Ethnography

Rakha Zabin, Sandra Bosacki, and John Novak

Brock University, Canada

*Corresponding author: Rakha Zabin Email: rzabin@brocku.ca

Address: Brock University, Ontario, Canada

ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is a multifaceted ability that helps individuals to sense, understand, value, and effectively apply the power of emotions as a source of information, trust, creativity, and influence (Goleman, 2006; Mayer et al., 2011). The five components (self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skill) embedded within EQ may work solely or collectively to cope with everyday life events that international students may encounter. Such an emotional tool kit may help multicultural international students handle several adverse situations. This study focused on an auto-ethnographic account of the learning experience of one international graduate student's transition to becoming a scholar within a new cultural context. Self-reflection on the hurdles and socio-emotional challenges experienced during the transition to becoming a graduate student in Ontario informs the analysis. Findings suggest the need for Canadian universities to incorporate multiple components of EQ into their international university services, including mindfulness, self-regulation, and stress management.

Keywords: auto-ethnography, emotional intelligence, internationalization of higher education, international students, institutional recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The ability to perceive and express emotions, assimilate emotions in thought, understand and reason with emotions, and regulate emotions in oneself and others is what experts define as Emotional Intelligence (EQ) (Clayton, 2012; Goleman, 2006; Mayer et al., 2000). The significance of EQ strengthens as "the subject of emotional intelligence continues to receive attention in the world even today, especially in the field of education" writes (Pool & Qualter 2018, p. xiii). One issue in studying emotional intelligence is that some theories pertain to emotions and intellect, whereas others seem broader. Therefore, it is worth examining the constituent terms, emotion, intelligence, and their combination at the outset" (Mayer et al., 2011, p. 529). EQ is seen as the stem of regulating oneself as well as others. Being aware and understanding the stream of thoughts, drives, and moods and the ability to understand others' emotional makeup based on their emotional reactions is viewed as intelligence (Brackett et al., 2011; Goleman, 2011).

The significance of EQ is that it helps international students develop an awareness of their mental and emotional lives. Emotional intelligence or competence also enables us to understand others' emotional reactions. According to González-Castro et al. (2020), such important life skills are crucial for emotional adaptation and the acculturation process. Given the multidimensional nature of the construct of EQ, Cherniss et al. (2006) questions the validity of the construct and share that the claim that EI determines real-world success has not been validated. For example, they claim that the different dimensions of EQ, such as (e.g., self-awareness and empathy) need to cohere to collectively work together to help individuals effectively interpret and manage their own and others' emotional states and regulate them contextually (Cherniss et al., 2006; Goleman et al., 2002).

Context

According to the American College Health Association ACHA (2014), 61% of graduate students report more than average or tremendous stress, higher than the average rate (55%) among all college students. Although, the problem is more dominant among international students in general as there is a vast difference in their culture, language, food, and weather from here to their countries. According to Goleman (2011), EQ is one crucial way that makes all effective leaders similar. In dealing with different leadership challenges, EQ brings in leading changes, making it an indispensable element (Tracy, 2017). EQ is vital for international students because it helps students make significant social and emotional adjustments (Qualter et al., 2018) to become future leaders.

With the growing rate of internationalization in Ontario universities (Tamtik et al., 2020), institutions are generally expected to provide international students with academic support. However, there remains a need to develop university policies that address EQ and support students' emotional and social development. These are some critical factors implanted within EQ's concept (such as motivation, self-awareness, empathy, social skill, social awareness, and management), and ignorance of these issues may lead to greater difficulties for the incoming students. These social and emotional aspects are equally important as the educational factors that should be considered, as students are often seen to get traumatized by events regarding discrimination, culture shock, and language barrier. Duggal (2017) addresses the newcomer students as refugees and claims that "refugees are individuals with palpable faces traumatized heart who are colored by real-life stressful stories, tiring experiences, complicated settlement problems" (p. 773). The newcomer international students are stressed out, with all sorts of worries regarding academics, making new friends, managing finances, draining them down.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Cultural, Sexual, and Socio-Emotional Diversity among International Students

International students come from diverse background that reflects an array of cultural, sexual, and socioeconomic backgrounds commonly reflected in past research (Chen & Zhou, 2019; Netierman et al., 2021; Spencer-Oatey & Dauber, 2019) These studies, such as a study by Stavicka and Odiņa (2021), portray the variation in the psychological and social aspects that dominate the emotional domain and wellbeing of these international students arriving in Ontario with diverse upbringing and practices in different contexts.

The following sections highlight the diverse cultural, sexual, and socioeconomic dimensions of these international graduate students.

Alqudayri and Gounko (2018) portray the situation of a dominant Gulf country and state that "students from Saudi Arabia experience unique challenges as they transition from a conservative gender-segregated environment to a liberal gender-mixed environment" (p. 1736). The study results reflect that female graduate students from Saudi Arabia face unique challenges related to adaptation to a new educational environment and managing Saudi and Canadian communities' cultural expectations. The findings also show that studying and living in Canada affected these female students' values and changed how they viewed themselves, their culture, and the community.

Hsiu-Fen (2018) states that as the Canadian universities compete to attract international students, institutional academic ranking and a supportive campus become pivotal factors in international student recruitment. Coping strategies and supportive programs look towards the fact that involvement of "the women partners of international students develops various coping strategies for stress alleviation, such as personal strategies and community involvement" (Hsiu-Fen, 2018, p. 336). Hsiu-Fen (2018) also said that the partners might reshape their identity, discover their talents and interests, develop cross-culture friendships, and even help females find a job.

Lu et al.'s (2018) study results show that "academic and sociocultural challenges tended to be temporary, whereas social and employment challenges tended to be more long-standing" (Lu et al., 2018, p. 998). Emotional and psychological well-being and sociocultural difficulties are great challenges that international students must fight. Lu et al. (2018) shed further light on the issue and say that "in their narratives, they tend to attribute individual challenges to psychological (e.g., personality, motivation, effort) and cultural factors (e.g., language barriers)" (p. 998) which are challenges unique to the international students. International students come in from various cultures, races, gender, perceptions, and mindsets, leading to challenges with cultural-social assimilation and even personal growth satisfaction.

These wide ranges of cultural, sexual, social, and emotional diversity call for intercultural inclusion and assimilation in global education. Building on Success: International Education Strategy (2019-2024) (Government of Canada, 2020) explicitly states that one of the key objectives behind this plan is to encourage international students to gain new skills through academic engagement by enrolling themselves in a wide range of culturally collaborative programs and by engaging themselves to the diverse communities across Canada.

Cooper and Yarbrough (2016) carried out research using the bio-cultural model of human adaptation and photo-voice methodology to study the reflecting behavior to the surrounding circumstances of Asian-Indian female international students' physical or mental health. The photographs were used to promote connectivity and scopes for communication to facilitate psychological comfort, developing classroom strategies to foster emotional strength, resilience, and sensitivity. These are essential paradigms that educators and researchers are increasingly concerned about promoting young people's psychological and emotional health.

Looking at the cognitive domains, it can be seen that "among the psychological variables connected to well-being, relational quality, and social support have a well-established and fundamental role in healthy functioning for organizations and individuals across the life course" (Fabio & Kenny, 2019, p. 6). The institution and educators are expected to play a facilitating role to help international graduate students develop such community connections for intercultural understanding.

Covid-19 Impact on International Students

Covid-19 has drastically changed the educational landscape for millions of university students worldwide (Stavicka & Odiņa, 2021). International students have their own set of inimitable challenges with border closures and uncertainties during the pandemic (Firang & Mensah, 2021). For example, past studies show that many international students worry about visa and graduation status (Keung & Teotonio, 2020; Wong et al., 2020), optional practical training opportunities being harder to obtain or canceled (Keung & Teotonio, 2020; Wong et al., 2020); whether to go home (if that is even an option due to border closings); living far from loved ones, and not having a strong support network; having to find a place to

live if dormitories closed; and finances (Firang, 2020; Keung & Teotonio, 2020; Stavicka & Odiņa, 2021; Wong et al., 2020).

Recent studies show that international student enrollment in Canada has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic (Keung & Teotonio, 2020; Netierman et al., 2021; Ross, 2020) as most the post-secondary education moved from mainly in-person to an online format (Ross, 2020). Wong et al. (2020) illustrate that international students reported that the academic and social-emotional challenges experienced due to Covid-19 restrictions escalated quickly. For example, Wong et al. (2020) found that some students preferred taking a flight at a higher cost and moving back to their home country because they would desire to be with family rather than remain isolated in a solitary dormitory room during this stressful time. For others, flying was not an option; with closed borders and financial stress, they had to stick around experiencing the pandemic in a much more challenging way. As the literature and past research on international students' emotional challenges and social-emotional experiences expand, this paper explores how international students need to be better supported with the components of emotional intelligence.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

Emotional Intelligence deals with stress management, effective communication, empathic concern, coping strategies, and conflict resolution. These are personal and professional significant parts of a person's life. International students have such usual and unusual situations to deal with, and EQ helps these newcomer students to increase their emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, and creativity; increase tolerance, trust, and integrity; improve relations; eventually, aid them in making social and psychological adjustments in this new place. Besides the academic perspective, "the emotional dimensions like self-awareness, controlling disruptive impulses, and managing interpersonal relations are key elements in regulating oneself" (Goleman, 2011, p. 9). These are essential factors that are often ignored, which gave rise to the importance of this research. The institutions somewhat assure academic and curricular support, but the social and psychological provision is given little priority. The need for institutions to develop their mental and social policies is vital to meet the students' needs.

The AUCC's (2011) Trends in Higher Education highlights the current scenario of Canada, stating that "Canadian universities are becoming increasingly internationalized; more universities are engaging in international research collaborations; more international students are coming from a larger number of countries" (p. 15). The same report cited data for 2010 when international students represented approximately 18% of full-time master's students. The greater representation of international students is at the graduate level. For example, visa students represent about 2% of full-time undergraduate students in 4-year public universities and about 23% of full-time graduate students (AUCC, 2011). With the growing rate of the institutions' international programs and the more significant number of students traveling to Canada (Smith et al., 2013), universities need to support these international graduate students with their smooth settlement academically and psychosocial, non-academic issues. Hopefully, this study will encourage university policies to change to facilitate such students and include more emotional and social skills (significant components of EQ) into their international education policies. The study focuses on my auto-ethnographic account to examine these emotional entities through my personal experiences.

Research Question

This study focused on an auto-ethnographic account of the learning experience and transitions of myself as an international graduate student to becoming a scholar within a new social and cultural context. This is an account of self-reflection on the socio-emotional challenges experienced during the transition to becoming a graduate student in Ontario, which informs the analysis. The current research focuses on this transitional journey in reflection to the context of the internationalization of higher education in Canada and will investigate the following research questions:

☐ How did I cope as an international student in Ontario with the emotional and social adaptations I faced, and what supports did I get from my enrolled institution?

☐ What were my key challenges, and how can the institutions in Ontario better assist the international students with their emotional and mental assimilation?

After coming to Ontario as an international graduate student, these research questions reflect on my personal experiences, thoughts, and understandings. This paper also focuses on my views and opinions regarding the institutional programs that helped me with my emotional and social transition and the school's lapses for future students. This comprehensive account of my auto-ethnography is composed of my chronicles regarding my socio-psychological trials and adjustments to explore these research questions. Following my reflections, different dimensions of EQ and auto-ethnography are described and used to develop a recommendation model for the students' future benefit in making smooth adjustments regarding their emotional and social pieces.

RESEARCH METHOD
Leading for Educational Lives and the Importance of Inviting Oneself Personally

Every individual is primarily a leader of leading themselves. Only if someone is effective in leading oneself can he investigate coaching, managing, and mentoring others using the "L.I.V.E.S. model" (Novak et al., 2014, p.14). Leading oneself might seem an effortless job, but that's challenging as well. These elements promote the leaders' core authenticity in being more inviting to support the L.I.V.E.S. model and help maintain the fundamental consistency between one's values, goals, and actions. International students coming to Canada are leaders; they make decisions regarding academics, finances, and social community. They are leading themselves in understanding the new world that they are exposed to.

They are motivating themselves intrinsically and continually trying to boost their inner self. When I reflect on the beginning phase of my adjustment period, I can vividly remember how I kept motivating myself with all the challenges. I was more compassionate to myself as well as others. I was treating myself with more kindness, compassion, and care. As Neff (2020) illustrates, being kind and compassionate to oneself adds to one's resilience during challenging times and helps one understand their self-worth.

This idea of being one's leader and inviting oneself to live an educational life presented through the L.I.V.E.S. model aligning with the emotional intelligence elements can be vividly intertwined with this study. Knowing oneself better, foreseeing the possibilities ahead, and building the social connection is very helpful in the difficult phases, which are seamlessly applicable for international students. Treating oneself with kindness during a difficult time, believing for a better tomorrow, and extending empathy towards oneself and the surrounding community are helpful food for the international students in leading themselves through this challenging situation.

Neff (2020) states that treating yourself with the same kind of kindness, care, and compassion as you would treat those you care about, your good friends, your loved ones is self-compassion. They also say that self-compassion also provides a sense of self-worth. It is intertwined with mindfulness, which assists in coping and the growth of resilience. These connect clearly to my own experience because the core of my coping strategies was resilience. Neff et al. (2020) presented a series of research on developing and validating the Self-Compassion Scale—Youth version (SCS-Y). Results show significant association with mindfulness, happiness, life satisfaction, depression, resilience, and achievement goal orientation in expected directions. Overall, findings suggest that the SCS-Y is a reliable and valid measure of self-compassion for youths. Neff (2020) explores self-compassion and states that self-compassion means being kind and understanding to yourself when confronted with personal failure instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings. Giving up at the painful times of adjustment failures was something easier for me. Feeling that I was not fit for this new place was the most common thought inside my mind because I came from a completely different cultural and societal setting. I tried to treat myself with kindness, patience, and motivation, all aligned with the EQ areas to cope with my challenges.

Account of Auto-Ethnography

Autoethnography is an interpretive research method that studies social phenomena through the lens of the author/researcher's personal experience. (Wall, 2010). Autoethnography is an innovative style of qualitative inquiry that has captured the attention of an ever-increasing number of scholars from various disciplines (Ellis, 2004).

Grounded in postmodern philosophy that makes room for diverse and nontraditional ways of knowing, autoethnographic work produces "highly personalized accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding" (Sparkes, 2000, p. 21). Personal experience methods offer a new and unique vantage point to contribute to social science and education by considering "macro and micro linkages; structure, social reproduction, and social change" (Laslett, 1999, p. 392). An autoethnography helps reconcile the best ideas and combines the power of the personal perspective with the value of analysis and theory to advance our understandings in ways it might never have otherwise been.

The following auto-ethnography account is based on my narratives regarding my experiences as an international student in Ontario. I shared instances of my challenges and the coping strategies I used to aid myself in the difficult times. I am a female international student from Bangladesh who came to Ontario to join the graduate school in an MEd program at a mid-sized Ontario University. I came to Canada in my mid-twenties, the first time away from home and family in a small country located in southeast Asia with a dominant Muslim population. In the beginning stages, my tenure in Ontario was full of emotional challenges because of severe stress and anxiety due to a situational uncertainty that I had to go through alone. It was my first experience living away from home and family, where I had to make all my decisions alone.

Even before reaching Ontario, I struggled with the decision-making of which institution to choose. Some institutions had better recognition of their degree; some were cheaper in finances. Some displayed more support services for the international students, some were situated in a region with better conditions, and some offered more scholarships. At that time, I had my parents with me back home. After many considerations, we collectively chose my current university because of its suitable location, educational research recognition, and some factors like funding and scholarship.

After the admission and the visa formalities, when I was all set for Canada, I was excited but equally drowned by the feeling of traveling alone and settling down in an unknown land. I had my family's constant support throughout; I talked to my mother over the phone for hours, sharing my anxieties. I spoke to my father and brother for advice regarding managing finances, how I adapt to this new country, and many other issues. The challenge was that they were in a different country and didn't know the actual scenario. So, the primary motivation had to come from my inner self. I had to come up with ways of coping effectively in this new environment new place, and I had to self-calm myself at those moments when I broke down completely. At that time, familial and social support was key in supporting my mental health. Research conducted with Canadian adolescent states that social knowledge and support help with emotional and spiritual understanding, strongly linked to positive school experiences (Bosacki et al., 2019a).

Drawing on research that shows links between psychological and spiritual understanding and positive school experiences (Bosacki et al., 2019a) states that social experiences and school engagement help adolescents focus on self-reflection and self-compassion self-acceptance to fight against perceptions of loneliness.

Rubin et al. (2014) state that humans tend to be deficient in applying their social skills and relationships during insecurity, anxiety, and loneliness. Anxious youths are hesitant to apply their coping skills leading to occurrences of unsociability. Research conducted by (Xiao et al., 2020) shows that this unsociability experience leads to peer rejection and subsequent loneliness. Unsociability refers to the social withdrawal associated with shyness-sensitivity, which is further connected to social, school, and psychological adjustment in adolescents (Liu et al., 2017). Shyness tends to be associated with social and psychological problems, more evidently in adolescence. In contrast, unsociability was associated with problems more evidently across domains in childhood and adolescence. Liu et al. (2017) further illustrate both shyness and unsociability lead to adjustment difficulties because adolescent unsociability contributed to increases in loneliness via a pathway through peer rejection, and loneliness directly contributed to increases in unsociability.

For me, the greatest assistance to fight my loneliness at that time was my friends. As (Bosacki et al., 2019b) stated, friendship helps buffer feelings of loneliness and strengthen the social experience of adolescents. My friends were also international students, mostly going through a similar situation. We tried

to create our community. We went to grab groceries together, we went to the bank together, and often, we just sat down together and shared our memories from home. That was so powerful. It gave me an emotional boost for which I never had to go to a professional counselor. We were counseling and compassionate to each other. At times we went to some of our faculty members and administrators to suggest our day-to-day decision-making. I was intrinsically motivated by my surrounding community, which can clearly connect to my EQ components. I would also say that elements like my self-regulation, self-awareness, social skill, and motivation, aroused me and encouraged me to overcome that fear and emotional stress.

Jones (2020) states that students face cascading uncertainties about the school, the pandemic, racial unrest, and the future. Some school districts in California have incorporated mindfulness lessons to help young people learn strategies to deal with stress. I struggled to begin a doctoral program amid the pandemic and was often broken down. The feeling of isolation and anxiety was at its peak as the program started online. Besides being conscious about collaboration, I was also worried about the technological drawbacks of an intense online doctoral course. All these concerns were nerve-racking and stressful for international students being alone in a foreign country away from home in this traumatic period of the COVID-19 pandemic when everything ahead seemed so uncertain. The exercise of quiet breathing and focusing on the present moment, mindfulness is a way to become aware of one's emotional state and usher in a calm sense (McClintock et al., 2019; Pang & Ruch, 2019). "The role of dispositional mindfulness and self-compassion is discussed as protective resources that could be utilized in times of stress" (Hwang et al., 2019, p. 1700). Dispositional mindfulness and self-compassion can assist students and educators in settling down in stressful situations within the educational surrounding. It can be incredibly helpful for young people to boost their attention skills and cope with stress through mindfulness sessions like yoga, tai chi, and other techniques to improve students' mental health.

Tatter (2019) reflects on a new study conducted at a Boston charter school to explore mindfulness in the classroom. The study results suggest that mindfulness education — can reduce the adverse effects of stress and increase students' ability to stay engaged, helping them stay on track academically and avoid behavior problems. This study connects very well to my own experience as I struggled at my beginning phases in Canada and helped myself with meditation sessions, spiritual connection, and networking.

After coming to Canada, I felt that I was drowned in the mid-ocean without even knowing the proper direction to the shore. Finding accommodation for myself, doing my daily groceries, and preparing my everyday meals were all tasks that I did for the first time as I was more of a spoon-fed child back home. These unfamiliar and novel conditions were very traumatic- it was deeply distressing and disturbing emotional experiences. Managing my finances for my living cost and my tuition fees was another massive trauma that I had to gear up with all the time within my mind. When I converted my first grocery cost into my own country's currency, I was just about to faint. Although the currency rate is a big issue, I also figured out that I went to one of Canada's most expensive groceries that I had no one to let me know about. I lived in the university residence for the first two months, but I had to leave to search for cheaper living due to higher costs. Every day after my classes, I had to walk around the whole town looking for houses, and as I mentioned before, I had no one to suggest anything. These were situations that pulled me down so often, made me cry, and lost all my hope, but then again, I tried to keep myself motivated by managing all those harmful disruptions.

The academic transition was another big step that I had to take. The teaching curriculum, methodologies, and practices followed here are different from that in my country. Although I completed my O Levels and A Levels under the London Board of Examination from a private school in Bangladesh, I still had emotional challenges when I could not keep my expectations. For example, there were times when I broke down into tears, even in the classroom, because I could not understand what my professor wanted from my writing. Components of EQ like motivation, and self-management within myself assisted me in overcoming all those emotional collapses. To balance the academic pressure, I was trying to organize my workload by maintaining work logs and calendar tasks, which helped me feel less stressed and more in control. These were ways I tried to balance the academic challenges that led to emotional disturbances and other negative thoughts. I could only accomplish this balance with emotional intelligence elements- keeping myself motivated by maintaining these scheduled work logs.

Crucial phases of my learning journey also include interrupting cultural barriers and adjustments. The lifestyle, thoughts, standards, values, and perceptions of people who live in Canada are different from my homeland. Canada being a multicultural country, has people from all over the world. These mixed thoughts and culture's culmination give this place a completely different setting from a mono-cultural place. Culture shock is a challenge that most foreigners face while adjusting to the new cultural surrounding. I would say that cultural assimilation was one of the most disconcerting and challenging experiences I had to go through.

"Why am I here?" This is the question Yi (2018) keeps on asking themselves throughout their journey in Canada. This question dragged me towards the article to relate it to my situation. They vividly illustrate the complicated interaction they had to make and the pedagogic transformation they went through during journey. Thomson and Esses's (2016) review on international student transition is another excellent secondary source that allows the reader to gain a broad perspective on the two primary acculturation domains, the sociological and the psychological (p. 874). They developed a program that paired newcomer international students with Canadian student mentors. These pairs met weekly throughout a semester, and international student participants completed measures at both the program's beginning and end. Program results showed that participants experienced positive sociocultural and psychological adaptation changes and reduced acculturative stress over time.

Although I received some aid from my professors and administrative coordinator at my institution for the academic resolutions, it was not enough. I would also say that I was lucky enough to get over those educational gaps quickly, but I can still see some of my friends struggling with those academic struggles today when we are more than halfway through our program. These struggles lead to other emotional ordeals that are somewhat not addressed well by the institution.

It would have been far better for me to manage my emotional strains and anxieties if my school had provided me with emotional support services like wellness workshops and mental health training for the primary assimilation period. The school can play a mediating role to help integrate international students in a more connected, inclusive, and unified way. The school can do much more for these international graduate students to help them cope with their emotional instabilities and breakdowns to help them transition.

Tatter (2019), in their paper, includes recommendations from educators and leaders of mindfulness-based education programs for implementing mindfulness in school and making time for staff and students to learn about mindfulness theory and science. Creating consistent space for mindfulness practice – like guided meditations — and approaches in the school day can positively affect the entire school culture, emphasizing acceptance, self-care, and empathy. To adopt mindfulness as a tool for mental health and happiness, students have to have space and time to practice it.

Lei et al. (2015) discuss how international students feel comfortable having a partner from the local country beside them during traumatic events. The new students suffer from academic mismatch due to a vital change in curriculum and teaching style, and they also worry about their residence, food, and other expenses. Lei et al. (2015) state, "international students primarily struggle with social isolation" (Conclusion, para. 1). This endorsement vividly shows that schools can help these students by taking possible measures to come out of their alienation and emotional breakdown. The introduction of peer support, talking partners, and wellness workshops can be possible measures for these institutions to assist these international graduate students.

Calder et al. (2016) highlight that the university services for international students should include pedagogical and curriculum support, designated support staff, academic advisers, and international clubs. The school should provide them with more support services with housing, finances, and other issues and make the students aware of the existing services. The policy refers to the services for some institutions, but the students are unaware of it. To aid these newcomer students, the school must provide them with a network both inside and outside the classroom to adapt to this new place by offering suggestions for these everyday problems.

Although emotional and social cognition elements are individualistic, they can be cultivated by constructing a healthy setting with the help of proper methods and practices. Schools that are increasingly

inclined towards internationalization should also provide appropriate support services to aid these international students in grooming their cognitive competencies and emotional aptitudes.

RESULTS

In their research, Feuerborn and Gueldner (2019) vividly develop the linkage between mindfulness-based practices based on the social and emotional framework and academic, social, and emotional learning competency areas. Elements like self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making play a dominant role in shaping an individual's academic, emotional, and social self. Their qualitative exploration shows the linkages between these elements and how their integration in schools might stimulate trans-disciplinary dialogues.

The auto-ethnographic analysis is based on the narrative account of my own experiences, which portrays the importance of EQ components in my life during the adjustment period. Here, I pulled instances of using self-regulation and self-awareness to overcome circumstances of emotional breakdown. These EQ components aided me in dealing with cultural obstacles, social barriers, and emotional disruptions. I feel that these aspects of EQ played a crucial role during my transition. My institution could have provided my friends and me with more services like therapy sessions, social clubs, conversation partners, and experiential educational tours to foster our emotional competencies to make our adaptation process smoother.

During my first year as an international graduate student, I had to cope with my everyday stress to balance my emotions as I was going through adjustment challenges. Every evening I went out for a walk, strengthening my heart and mind by being closer to nature. I also watched some movies, especially comedies. Yim (2016) demonstrates that laughter is a positive sensation and seems a useful and healthy way to overcome stress. Furthermore, Gelkopf et al. (2006) researched to assess humorous movies' impact on psychopathology, anxiety, depression, anger, social functioning, insight, and the therapeutic alliance in a study group. Research results showed reduced psychopathology, anger, anxiety, and depression symptoms and improved social competence.

Religion is another driving force in negative attitudes and assists in social inclusion. (Anderson & Deslandes, 2019; Cetin, 2019), I firmly believed so, and I often prayed, seeking some mental peace from God. According to Appel et al. (2019), strong spiritual connections lessons anxiety, which was true for me. Prayers strengthened my spiritual connections and helped me immensely when I felt anxious. Although I had academic pressure, I used to cook almost alternate evenings to keep myself occupied with something I love doing. Bjork (2019) suggested simple ways to relieve worry, stress, and anxiety, including yoga, aromatherapy, abdominal breathing, walking in nature, and listening to music.

Something that helped me the most was my regular swimming session and sauna bath, after which I felt relaxed and refreshed. These are the activities that I carried out regularly to strengthen my inner self to fight my depression. It would be beneficial if my institution provided some yoga sessions, cookery classes, and poetry and drama clubs to boost my emotions and all these retreats.

The connection between nature and companion animals often influences the emotional and mental world (Bosacki & Tardif-Williams, 2019). Their study explored how companion animal friendship, comfort, and bonding assists in children's mental state. Research results showed that higher levels of companion animal friendship reflected a greater level of mental stability. University programs should incorporate the use of therapy animals for a student during times of high stress in the academic year such as the use of 'Puppy Rooms' during exam time where students can visit with therapy animals and their trainers in a safe setting within the university campus.

Meditation is another way of accelerating mental performance, and navigating through innumerable possibilities (Bamber & Morpeth, 2018; Patil, 2020). Spiritual and religious construction shapes our relationships with ourselves, tradition, and relationships with the surrounding people. Adams (2019) illustrates the importance of spiritual space and experiences provoked by nature. A moderated meditation model can add to psychological well-being, personal aspiration, learning environment, and meaning in life (Kong et al., 2019; Mairean et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). In traumatic situations, regulating one's own emotions is crucial for every individual, which can be addressed institutionally.

Fredrickson et al. (2008) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions asserts that people's daily experiences of positive emotions compound over time to build a variety of substantial personal resources (e.g., increased mindfulness, purpose in life, social support, and decreased illness symptoms). In turn, these increments in personal resources predicted increased life satisfaction and reduced depressive symptoms. Self-compassion is another resource that increases positive emotions; it promotes response to adverse life events that leave individuals feeling stressed, angry, sad, or anxious (Odou & Brinker, 2015).

Another study conducted by Lombas et al. (2019) focused on evaluating the efficacy of Happy Classroom Programs considering aspects like self-esteem, life satisfaction, relatedness, and emotional repair, in promoting psychological well-being and increasing the mindfulness level of students reducing aggression. Institutions should focus on creating conditions for the students' character building, compassion for self and other, cognitive development, life satisfaction, engagement, and actions, all of which are important in ensuring overall students' well-being (Odou & Brinker, 2015; Vracheva et al., 2019).

These research studies suggest that universities should expand mental health programs to help international graduate students of all gender orientations cope with acculturation challenges. Theories suggest mental health education programs need to broaden and build on positive emotions to teach individuals to cope with everyday life, improve positive emotions and decrease negative emotions – past studies show that compared to mere cognitive distraction, programs that promote the combination of mindful activities with self-compassion are more likely to help to boost mood and improve well-being which connects to the auto-ethnographic log.

DISCUSSION

This study described the challenges of international graduate students with academic adjustments, social and cultural assimilation, and emotional and psychological breakdowns when they pursue their higher education in Ontario. My account as an international graduate student supports past research that suggests the need for universities to help international graduate students further develop their coping skills and emotional competencies to manage their acculturation experiences (Calder et al., 2016; Jin & Acharya, 2020; Redden, 2019). For example, universities need to create support services that apply the theoretical framework of EQs to build mindfulness (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Jones, 2020; Tatter, 2019), self-awareness, and self-compassion (Feuerborn & Gueldner, 2019; Odou & Brinker, 2015), and emotional regulation (Redden, 2019; Vracheva et al., 2019). Such programs will help international students manage the psychological stress experienced during their adjustment to a new school and cultural life. Building on past studies that show engagement in compassion and mindfulness programs often lead to increased well-being and mental health (Feuerborn & Gueldner, 2019; Fredrickson et al., 2008; Lombas et al.,2019; Odou & Brinker, 2015), university services might include meditation sessions, art, and poetry clubs, culinary workshops, among others. Such programs may help international students feel less alone and gain social and emotional support.

Government and educational institutions can reshape their strategies and can also assist the international students with services regarding immigration consultancies, tax submission, and health insurance, which are key in Ontario and might not be commonly done in some other countries (El Masri et al., 2015; Trilokekar & El Masri, 2016). From my auto-ethnographic account, EQ's dimensions, such as self-awareness and self-regulation, helped me make smoother adjustments and better cope with emotional challenges while settling into graduate school life at an Ontario university.

With the strong focus on internationalization and international higher education, it is key that international students are better supported during their adjustment phases, including emotional, social, and cultural barriers. Along with all the other countries that are significantly focusing on the internationalization of higher education, Canada is also focusing significantly on internationalization strategies and goals. Canada's International Education Strategy (2020) builds on the attributes that make Canada a powerhouse in international education: strong schools and programs of study; peaceful, welcoming, and diverse communities; an enviable quality of life; opportunities to work and start careers; and pathways to move forward and join the Canadian workforce.

As more countries recognize that international students represent an important source of revenue and human capital, and as more people worldwide study abroad, the sector has become increasingly competitive (Tight, 2021). In recent years, Canada's traditional competitors (e.g., Australia, France, Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and emerging ones (e.g., China, Malaysia) have invested more in marketing their educational offerings by the incorporating of more appealing programs (Ge & Ho, 2014), the inclusion of scholarly research provision (Weerakkody & Jerez, 2018), and providing work opportunities in key global markets (Moore, 2018), particularly through the use of digital media. Even some of the non-traditional countries such as Iran are attracting more international students than projected (Tehran Times, 2021), taking the additional benefit of lower living costs and being geographically closer to the home countries of the international students (Collier, 2021; Kulkarni, 2021; Xu, 2021).

In addition, in many traditional source countries such as China, Singapore, and Malaysia, international students are growing the capacity and quality of their education systems. Some universities in China, Japan, Singapore, and elsewhere in Asia rank among the world's best and attract growing international students (Sidhu & Ishikawa, 2020; Yang et al., 2021; Zhang, 2021). A steady increase in the number of schools in Asia and Europe offering programs of study in English further intensifies the competition for international students. Canadian institutions and the government must address international students' emotional concerns in this competitive field of comparative and international higher education to help them better transition in this foreign country to adapt to academic and cultural changes.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study describes one example of a personal account of the learning experience of one international graduate student's transition to becoming a scholar through several emotional challenges in dealing with academic differences, culture shock, language barriers, and financial constraints. Such findings support past research that shows international students studying abroad often experience emotional and mental health challenges such as experiences of depression, anxiety, and acute stress disorder (Calder et al., 2016; Hsiu-Fen, 2018; Thomson & Esses, 2016). In sum, this study builds on and extends the research on international students' emotional and social learning experiences and positive mental health programs. This study supports the call for Canadian universities to improve their mental health support for all students and provide specific support specialized for international graduate students.

REFERENCES

Adams, K. (2019). Navigating the spaces of children's spiritual experiences: influences of tradition(s), multidisciplinary and perceptions. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, *24*(1), 29–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/1364436X.2019.1619531

Alqudayri, B., & Gounko, T. (2018). Studying in Canada: Experiences of female graduate students from Saudi Arabia. *Journal of International Students*, *8*(4), 1736–1747. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1468078

American College Health Association. (2014). *National College Health Assessment II: Spring 2014 Reference Group executive summary*. Hanover, MD: Author. https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/ACHA-NCHA-II_ReferenceGroup_ExecutiveSummary_Spring2014.pdf

Anderson, J. R., & Deslandes, C. (2019 Anderson, J. R., & Deslandes, C. (2019). Religion and prejudice toward immigrants and refugees: A meta-analytic review. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *29*(2), 128–145. https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2019.1570814

Appel, J. E., Park, C. L., Wortmann, J. H., & Schie, H.T. (2019). Meaning violations, religious/spiritual struggles, and meaning in life in the face of stressful life events. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *29*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2019.1611127

The Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada. (2011). *Trends in higher education: Volume 1—Enrolment*. Ottawa, ON: Author. https://www.univcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/trends-vol1-enrolment-june-2011.pdf

Bamber, M. D., & Morpeth, E. (2018). Effects of mindfulness meditation on college student anxiety: A meta-analysis. *Mindfulness*, *10*(2), 203–214. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-0965-5

Bjork, L. (2019).   17 Simple Ways to Relieve Worry, Stress, and Anxiety. https://hopeforhealingfoundation.org/17-simple-ways-to-relieve-worry-stress-and-anxiety/

Bosacki, S., Moriera, F., Sitnik, V., Andrews, K., & Talwar, V. (2019a). Theory of Mind, Emotion Knowledge, and School Engagement in Emerging Adolescents. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education.* 11. 529-538. https://doi.org/10.26822/iejee.2019553349

Bosacki, S., Moriera, F., Sitnik, V., Andrews, K. & Talwar, V. (2019b). Theory of Mind, Self-Knowledge, and Perceptions of Loneliness in Emerging Adolescents. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology.* 181. 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2019.1687418.

Bosacki, S., & Tardif-Williams, C. (2019). Children's Mental State Talk, Empathy, and Attachments to Companion Animals, *Psychology of Language and Communication*, *23*(1), 284-301. https://doi.org/10.2478/plc-2019-0013

Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., & Salovey, P. (2011). Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal, social, academic, and workplace success. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *5*(1), 88–103. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00334.x

Canada's International Education Strategy (2020). *Building on Success: International Education Strategy (2019-2024).* https://www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx?lang=eng

Calder, M. J., Richter, M. S., Mao, Y., Kovacs Burns, K., Mogale, R. S., & Danko, M. (2016). International students attending Canadian universities: Their experiences with housing, finances, and other issues. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, *46*(2), 92–110.

Cetin, M. (2019). Effects of religious participation on social inclusion and existential well-being levels of Muslim refugees and immigrants in Turkey. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *29*(2), 64–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2019.1580092

Chen, J., & Zhou, G. (2019). Chinese international students' sense of belonging in North American postsecondary institutions: A critical literature review. *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice, 28*(2), 48–63. https://doi.org/10.26522/brocked.v28i2.642

Cherniss, C., Extein, M., Goleman, D., & Weissberg, R. P. (2006). Emotional intelligence: What does the research really indicate? *Educational Psychologist*, *41*(4), 239–245. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4104_4

Clayton, M. (2012, January 24). There is more to emotional intelligence than Daniel Goleman [Web log post]. *Management Pocketbooks*. https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/2012/01/24/theres-more-to-emotional-intelligence-than-daniel-goleman/

Collier, S. (2021, March 29). 8 Of The Best Places To Study Abroad In Asia. *QS Top Universities*. https://www.topuniversities.com/blog/8-best-places-study-abroad-asia

Cooper, C., & Yarbrough, S. (2016). Asian-Indian female international students: A photovoice study of health and adaptation to the immigration experience. *The Qualitative Report*, *21*(6), Art. 3, 1035–1051. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss6/3/

Duggal, A. (2017). Review of the book *The newcomer student: an educator's guide to aid transitions*, by L. H. Kreuzer (Ed.). *International Review of Education*, *63*(5), 773–774. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-017-9650-5

Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

El Masri, A., Choubak, M., & Litchmore, R. (2015). The Global Competition for International Students as Future Immigrants: The role of Ontario universities in translating government policy into institutional practice. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

Fabio, A. D., & Kenny, M. E. (2019). Resources for enhancing employee and organizational well-being beyond personality traits: The promise of emotional intelligence and positive relational management. *Personality and Individual Differences.*1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.02.022

Feuerborn, L. L., & Gueldner, B. (2019). Mindfulness and socio-emotional competencies: Proposing connections through a review of the research. *Mindfulness*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-019-01101-1

Firang, D. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on international students in Canada. *International Social Work, 63,* (6). https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0020872820940030

Firang, D., & Mensah, J. (2021). Exploring the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on International Students and Universities in Canada. *Journal of International Students*, *12*(1). https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v12i1.2881

Fredrickson, B. L., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J., & Finkel, S. M. (2008). Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of*

Personality and Social Psychology, 95, 1045–1062. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013262

Ge, Y., & Ho, K.C. (2014). Researching international student migration in Asia: research design and project management issues. *Journal of Population Research 31*, 197–217. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12546-014-9129-1

Gelkopf, M., Gonen, B., Kurs, R., Melamed, Y., & Bleich, A. (2006). The Effect of Humorous Movies on In patients With Chronic Schizophrenia. *The Journal of nervous and mental disease, 194* (11). 880-883. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.nmd.0000243811.29997.f7.

Goleman, D. (2006). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* (10th ed.). New York, NY: Bantam.

Goleman, D. (2011). *HBR's 10 must reads on leadership*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002, February 20). The emotional reality of teams. *Journal of Organizational Excellence*, *21*(2), 55–65. DOI:10.1002/npr.10020

González-Castro, J. L., Ubillos Landa, S., Puente Martínez, A., & Vera Perea, M. (2020). The Role of Emotional Intelligence and Sociocultural Adjustment on Migrants' Self-reported Mental Well-Being in Spain: A 14 Month Follow-Up Study. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, *17*(4), 1206. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17041206

Hsiu-Fen, L. (2018). The "invisible" group: Acculturation of international women partners on United States campuses, *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, *55*(3), 334–346. https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2018.1474753

Hwang, Y.-S., Medvedev, O. N., Krägeloh, C., Hand, K., Noh, J.-E., & Singh, N. N. (2019). The role of dispositional mindfulness and self-compassion in educator stress. *Mindfulness*, *10*(8), 1692–1702. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-019-01183-x

Jin, L. & Acharya, L. (2020). Dilemmas and coping strategies of talking about Chinese international students' mental health problems: from the parents' perspectives. *Journal of International Students*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v11i1.1446

Jones, C. (2020). California schools turn to mindfulness to help students cope with stress. *EdSource, Highlighting Strategies for Student Success.* https://edsource.org/2020/california-schools-turn-to-mindfulness-to-help-students-cope-with-stress/633956

Keung, N., & Teotonio, I. (2020, April 8). "Billions of dollars are at risk." Colleges and universities scramble to protect international student sector amid COVID-19 pandemic. *The Star*. https://tinyurl.com/yay5ewp9

Kong, F., Gong, X., Sajjad, S., Yang, K., & Zhao, J. (2019). How is emotional intelligence linked to life satisfaction? The mediating role of social support, positive affect and negative affect. *Journal of Happiness Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-018-00069-4

Kulkarni, A. (2021, June 26). Asia continues to rise, but rankings highlight challenges. *University World News.* https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20210622100822257

Laslett, B. (1999). Personal Narratives as Sociology. *Contemporary Sociology, 28*(4), 391-401. doi:10.2307/2655287

Lei, D., Woodend, J. D., Nutter, S. K., Ryan, A. R., & Cairns, S. L. (2015). The forgotten half: Understanding the unique needs of international student partners. *Journal of International Students*, *5*(4), 447–458. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1066283.pdf

Liu, J., Chen, X., Zhou, Y., Li, D., Fu, R., & Coplan, R. J. (2017). Relations of shyness–sensitivity and unsociability with adjustment in middle childhood and early adolescence in suburban Chinese children. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 41*(6), 681–687. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025416664195

Lombas, A. S., Jimenez, T. I., Arguis-Rey, R., Hernandez-Paniello, S., Valdivia-Salas, S., & Martin-Albo, J. (2019). Impact of the Happy Classrooms Programme on psychological well-being, school aggression and classroom climate. *Mindfulness*, *10*(8), 1642–1660. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-019-01132-8

Lu, Y., Chui, H., Zhu, R., Zhao, H., Zhang, Y., Liao, J., & Miller, M. J. (2018). What does "good adjustment" mean for Chinese international students? A qualitative investigation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *46*(8), 979–1009. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000018824283

Mairean, C., Turliuc, M. N., & Arghire, D. (2019). The relationship between trait gratitude and psychological wellbeing in university students: The mediating role of affective state and the moderating role of state gratitude. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *20*(5), 1357–1377. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-018-9998-7

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2000). Selecting a measure of emotional intelligence: The case of ability scales. In R. Bar-On & J. D. Parker (Eds.), *The handbook of emotional intelligence* (pp. 320–342). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D. R., & Cherkasskiy, L. (2011). Emotional intelligence. In R. J. Sternberg & S. B. Kaufman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of intelligence* (pp. 528–549). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

McClintock, A. S., Rodriguez, M. A., & Zerubavel, N. (2019). The effects of mindfulness retreats on the psychological health of non-clinical adults: A meta-analysis. *Mindfulness*, *10*(8), 1443–1454. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-019-01123-9

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. (2018). *Educating global citizens: Realizing the benefits of international postsecondary education*. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario. http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/consultations/maesd-international-pse-strategy-en-13f-spring2018.pdf

Moore, K. (2018). Improving Higher Education Productivity and Its Measurement: Linking Productivity and Student Success in Australia. *International Journal of Chinese Education, 7*(1), 107-128. https://doi.org/10.1163%2F22125868-12340092

Neff, K. (2020). Guided Self-Compassion Meditations. *Self-Compassion*. https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/

Neff, K. D. (2020). Commentary on Muris and Otgaar (2020): Let the empirical evidence speak on the Self-Compassion Scale. *Mindfulness.* Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01411-9

Neff, K. D., Bluth, K., Tóth-Király, I., Davidson, O., Knox, M. C., Williamson, Z. & Costigan, A. (2020). Development and validation of the Self-Compassion Scale for Youth. *Journal of Personality Assessment*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.2020.1729774

Netierman, E., Harrison, L., Freeman, A., Shoyele, G., Esses, V., Covell, C. (2021). Should I Stay or Should I Go? International Students' Decision-Making About Staying in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-021-00825-1

Novak, J., Armstrong, D. and Browne, B. (2014). *Leading for educational lives: Inviting and sustaining imaginative acts of hope in a connected world*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Odou, N., & Brinker, J. (2015). Self-compassion, a better alternative to rumination than distraction as a response to negative mood. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 10*, 447-457.

Patil, N. (2020). Benefits of Meditation for Students. *Knowledge Review*. https://theknowledgereview.com/benefits-meditation-for-students/

Pang, D., & Ruch, W. (2019). The mutual support model of mindfulness and character strengths. *Mindfulness*, *10*(8), 1545–1559. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-019-01103-z

Pool, L. D., & Qualter, P. (Eds.). (2018). *An introduction to emotional intelligence*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667360601154584

Qualter, P., Urquijo, I., Henzi, P., Barrett, L., & Humphrey, N. (2018). Ability emotional intelligence and children's behavior in the playground. *Social Development*, *28*(2), 430–448. https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12340

Redden, E. (2019, May 31). International Student Well-Being. *Inside HigherEd.* https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/05/31/panel-focuses-mental-health-needs-international-students

Ross, S. (2020, May 11). McGill and Concordia universities plan to move most classes online for fall term. CTV News. https://tinyurl.com/yb8sprsy

Rubin, K. H., Coplan, R. J., Bowker, J. C., & Menzer, M. (2014). Social withdrawal and shyness. In P. K. Smith & C. H. Hart (Eds.), Wiley Blackwell handbooks of developmental psychology. The Wiley Blackwell handbook of childhood social development (p. 434–452). Wiley Blackwell.

Sidhu, R. & Ishikawa, M. (2020) Destined for Asia: hospitality and emotions in international student mobilities. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.1771544

Smith, C., Whiteside, B., Blanchard, S., & Martin, C. (2013). International student services at Ontario universities. *Strategic Enrollment Management Quarterly*, *1*(1), 55–66. https://doi.org/10.1002/sem3.20005

Sparkes, A. C. (2000). Autoethnography and narratives of self: Reflections on criteria in action. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 17*(1), 21–43. https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.17.1.21

Spencer-Oatey, H., & Dauber, D. (2019). Internationalisation and student diversity: how far are the opportunity benefits being perceived and exploited?. *High Educ,78*, 1035–1058. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00386-4

Stavicka, A. & Odiņa, I. (2021). Subjective Well-Being of International Students in the Specific Context of Pandemic (COVID 19). *Psychology and Education Journal, 58*(3). https://doi.org/10.17762/pae.v58i3.4363

Tatter, G. (2019).   How Making Time for Mindfulness Helps Students. *Mind Shift.* https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/53110/how-making-time-for-mindfulness-helps-students

Tehran Times. (2021, July 11). Attracting foreign students more than projected: official.
    https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/461372/Attracting-foreign-students-more-than-projected-official

Thomson, C., & Esses, V. M. (2016). Helping the transition: Mentorship to support international students in Canada.
    Journal of International Students, *6*(4), 873–886. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1125567

Tight, M. (2021) Globalization and internationalization as frameworks for higher education research. *Research
    Papers in Education*, *36*(1), 52-74. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2019.1633560

Tamtik, M., Trilokekar, R. D., & Jones, G. A. (Eds.). (2020). International Education as Public Policy in Canada.
    McGill-Queen's University Press.

Tracy, B. (2017, October 30). Why emotional intelligence is indispensible for leaders [Web log post]. *Forbes*.
    https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/10/30/why-emotional-intelligence-is-
    indispensable-for-leaders/amp/

Trilokekar, R. & El Masri, A. (2016). Canada's International Education Strategy: Implications of a New Policy
    Landscape for Synergy Between Government Policy and Institutional Strategy. *Higher Education Policy.
    29*. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-016-0017-5.

Vracheva, V. P., Moussetis, R., & Rahma, A. A. (2019). The mediational role of engagement in the relationship
    between curiosity and student development: A preliminary study. *Journal of Happiness Studies*.
    https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00140-8

Wall, S.S. (2010). Toward a Moderate Autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 15*(1).
    https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1609406916674966

Weerakkody, U. & Jerez, E. (2018). International Student Success: A Multilevel Perspective on Factors That
    Contribute to the Success and Quality of the Experience Abroad. *International Journal of Chinese Education,
    7*(1), 22-41. https://doi.org/10.1163%2F22125868-12340088

Wong, J. Hian, B.T.C., Haldmann, A. & Agrawal, A. (2020, May 11). Interviews with international students in Canada
    about the Covid-19 situation. The World University Rankings.
    https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/blogs/interviews-international-students-canada-about-covid-
    19-situation#

Xiao, B., Bullock, A., Liu, J., & Coplan, R. (2020). Unsociability, Peer Rejection, and Loneliness in Chinese Early
    Adolescents: Testing a Cross-Lagged Model. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*.
    https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431620961457

Xu, X. (2021, June 1). What does the rise of Asia mean for global higher education?. *The Campus*.
    https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/what-does-rise-asia-mean-global-higher-education

Yang, L.,Yang, J. & Wang, C. (2021) The research-intensive university in a glonacal higher education system: the
    creation of the world-class university in China. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. 1-
    20. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2021.1884512

Yi, S. (2018). Why am I here? A self-study of an international art education student lost in transition. *International
    Journal of Education through Art*, *14*(2), 197–210. https://doi.org/10.1386/eta.14.2.197_1

Yim J. (2016). Therapeutic Benefits of Laughter in Mental Health: A Theoretical Review. *The Tohoku journal of
    experimental medicine*, *239*(3), 243–249. https://doi.org/10.1620/tjem.239.243

Zhang, H., Chen, K., Chen, C., & Schlegel, R. (2019). Personal aspirations, person-environment fit, meaning in
    work, and meaning in life: A moderated mediation model. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *20*(5), 1481–1497.
    https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-018-0005-0

Zhang, Y. (2021). Internationalization Higher Education for What? An Analysis of National Strategies of Higher
    Education Internationalization in East Asia. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education,
    12*(6S1). https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v12i6S1.3077

RAKHA ZABIN (rzabin@broku.ca) is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education, Brock University, Canada. Her research interest lies in the internationalization of higher education, auto-ethnographic reflection, institutional policy, and educational administration and leadership. Her doctoral research focuses on the internationalization of higher education and exploring disorienting experiences of international students in Ontario universities.

SANDRA BOSACKI (sbosacki@brocku.ca)**,** PhD, is a Professor at the Faculty of Education at Brock University, Canada. Her research interests lie in the field of emotional and socio-cognitive development in children and adolescents, theory of mind, self-esteem and social competence, school bullying/victimization experience, spiritual and moral development.

JOHN NOVAK (jnovak@brocku.ca) is an Emeritus Professor for the Department of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies in Education at Brock University, Canada. His research interest lies in educational philosophy, invitational theory and practice, educational leadership, and the social-cultural context of education.