Peer-Reviewed Article

Challenges of International Students from Pre-Departure to Post-Study: A Literature Review

Jeevan Khanal
Nepal Open University, Nepal

Uttam Gaulee
Morgan State University, USA

ABSTRACT

Studying in overseas institutions presents international students with exciting opportunities; however, with these opportunities come challenges. Drawing on literature since the year 2000, this article addresses challenges confronting international students within some top sending countries and receiving countries. The challenges are categorized into pre-departure, post-departure, and post-study. The findings revealed pre-departure challenges, such as obtaining accurate information, understanding the admission procedure, and preparing documents for visa acquisition. Post-departure, international students face language barriers, financial issues, and cultural adjustment when they are in the host countries. Uncertain future and paperwork are the major challenges post-study. The findings of this article have useful implications for government personnel, as well as administrators of educational institutions that seek to attract international students.

INTRODUCTION

More than five million students were studying outside their home countries in 2017 (Neghina, 2017). The increase in international students studying abroad is not at all accidental. They represent a high-achieving and highly motivated group (Russell, Rosenthal, & Thomson, 2010) and they greatly contribute to the economies of the country that hosts them. Tuition, immigration, and taxation policies of the host country are huge factors affecting the economic benefits created by international students (ICEF Monitor, 2014). Due to the increasing number of international students and their direct cost-benefit relationship to host institutions and host countries, a considerable effort and devotion to attract them has emerged. However, far less attention is paid to the challenges of international students in their journey as they prepare for study abroad, during their study, or at the post-graduation stage. This study takes a more comprehensive approach and seeks to address a number of questions as follows: (a) What are the problems faced by international students when preparing to leave their country? (b) What are the problems faced by students when arriving and studying in a new country? (c) What are the difficulties and threats faced by international students after graduation?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research surveys of international students and their challenges started about a century ago. The Committee on Friendly Relations (CFR) started an annual census of foreign students in 1915, and the Institute of International Education worked together with CFR in circulating the census questionnaire in 1921 (Du Bois, 1956). While many challenges of international students have remained the same for the last several decades (Bista & Gaulee, 2017), new and complex changes are evolving along with the rapid economic growth and technological changes. Since our research objective is to identify contemporary works with an impact on recent times, we decided to summarize findings of research articles published since 2000. In order to overcome the problems associated with a large number of published studies with varying quality, we applied a pre-planned review protocol (Kirch, 2008). We have used three terms "pre-departure," "post-departure," and "post-study" so that we could limit the number of subjective decisions that must be made during a literature review and increase the probability of identifying the relevant studies (Nicolescu & Galalae, 2012). For the purpose of this review,

international students are defined as students who are enrolled in an overseas higher education institution undertaking an undergraduate or postgraduate course (Al-Quhen, 2012), as well as students who graduated from overseas universities.

The extensive literature search was undertaken with thorough searches of two online search engines (Google and Eric). The search ranged from 2000 to 2018 and the main combinations of keywords considered were: (a) "international students" and "challenges," (b) "international students" and "pre-departure challenges," (c) "international students" and "post-departure challenges," and (d) "international students" and "post-study challenges." The studies we found were dominated by major sending countries and major host countries. This search identified a large number of overlapped articles. When the keyword "challenges of international students" was used in Eric, 50% of articles (31 out of 62 appeared from the *Journal of International Students* in the first four pages. Thus many of the articles in this study were primarily downloaded from the *Journal of International Students*. Moreover, existing studies have mainly been conducted in English-speaking countries, because of their popularity among Chinese, Indian, South Korean, Japanese, and Saudi Arabian students. English-speaking countries have a natural advantage in attracting international students. Not surprisingly, the US, UK, and Australia remain the first tier destinations for these international students (Asian Development Bank Institute, 2014). Bista and Dagley (2015) found that securing a scholarship, preparation of documents for the visa, passing college entrance exams, and obtaining the right information of the universities and colleges were the most difficult steps for those students who were preparing to study at U.S. universities. We initially aligned our literature scanning process to those domains as identified by Bista and Dagley (2015).

Inclusion Criteria

After a thorough analysis of the literature in each of these categories, three themes emerged: the language barrier, cultural shock, reverse cultural shock, and racism. We extended our search using these keywords. We found varying amounts of quite robust empirical evidence; the post-departure challenges attracted the largest number of studies. We found fewer evidence in pre-departure and post-study challenges. Thus we included a few book chapters and newspapers articles to include the challenges that appeared while searching in Google. Readers might wonder, reasonably, why we have chosen the few articles from newspapers. The purpose of our study was to gather information related to the challenges of the international student. Thus

summaries reported in a few magazines and newspapers were considered secondary sources (Galvan, 2013). A total of 79 research articles, book chapters, and newspaper articles were reviewed. A thematic-synthesis method was used to identify the sub-themes within the earlier mentioned themes in relation to the challenges of international students (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

RESULTS

Pre-Departure Challenges

Durkin (2008) identified the pre-departure period as the stage for "entry points" (p. 20) of study abroad. Compared with research on post-departure challenges, international students' pre-departure status and challenges have not attracted much attention in the previous studies. However, many sub-themes unique to specific countries have emerged from the study.

General Entry Point Difficulties for Chinese Students

China is the world's largest source of international students (Institute of International Education, 2016). In total, 5,194,900 Chinese students have studied abroad over the last 40 years, and 1,454,100 students were enrolled in overseas higher education institutions in 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2018). However, Chinese students still experience difficulties prior to entering study abroad programs, including choosing the best university, deciding whether to use an agent, and having confidence about language barriers.

Chinese students are well aware of various universities ranking available and make references to the *Times Higher Education*, *The Guardian*, *QS World University Rankings*, and Shanghai rankings to decide a desirable place to study (Boado, Hu, & Soysal, 2017). Chen (2017) also identified that Chinese students perceived that graduating from a reputable international school is important for future career and life prospects. Even though students place value on the reputation of various institutions by looking at rankings in magazines and websites, enrollment numbers of Chinese international students at these high-ranking institutions are not high (Boado, et al., 2017). This implies that getting admission at well-ranked institutions is one of the challenges for Chinese students. This could be, in part, because of the high cost of high-ranking colleges. Another challenge is that Chinese parents have started questioning the value of sending their children to distant countries given that more recently many universities in Asia have placed favorably in prestigious world ranking (Spinks & Wong, 2010). Ling and Tran (2015)

reported that the international students' use of education agents to assist in the selection and enrollment process for a study abroad program has become increasingly important in Chinese international students' quest for information and decision-making processes. In the case of China, some agents are hired by host foreign institutions to recruit, and they take a service charge to connect students to U.S. community college. This function is also viewed negatively by many U.S. baccalaureate institutions (Zhang & Hagedorn, 2014).

The level of confidence is another challenge because Chinese students foresee English proficiency issue and the difference in the learning environment as two notable barriers in English-speaking countries before departure (Tang, Collier, & Witt, 2018). Finally, a challenge has been a decline in visa approvals starting in 2017, which has been seen among students from China (Kavilanz, 2018).

General Entry Point Challenges for Indian Students

India, currently the second largest sending country after China, is projected to become the number one sending country by 2025 (Falcone, 2017). Kavilanz (2018) reported that common challenges for Indian students include passing the GRE, obtaining a visa, and getting the appropriate vaccinations. Another common theme that has emerged among Indian students is the issue of financial problems. A majority of Indian students are self-financed through private loans. Cost and return-on-investment calculations are major deciding factors when choosing where to study abroad. The fluctuations of Indian currency make students particularly sensitive to financial issues (Clark, 2013). Prospective Indian students are also advised to complete a full body check-up because treatments are very expensive in the host country, in particular, dental and eye care (Yocket Editorial Team, 2018). Certain countries in Asia and Africa require students to obtain an international certificate of vaccinations before students depart for their studies abroad (Alexander, 2012). The *Times of India* (2015) noted that Indian students have immunization requirements as part of their application process. Among the requirements for them are Measles Mumps Rubella vaccination, Hepatitis B, Meningitis, Diphtheria, Tetanus, and other vaccinations, in addition to tuberculosis skin tests, chest X-rays, and blood tests. However, the doctors aren't always aware of which vaccinations are required for study abroad (Favin, Steinglass, Fields, Banerjee, & Sawhney, 2012). Even though it is very time consuming, a student needs to get more than one dose of vaccines within 4 weeks.

General Entry Point Difficulties for South Korean and Japanese Students

South Korea has the fourth highest number of students pursuing studies abroad (Hyun, 2016). But South Korean parents are increasingly capable of directly acquiring information on educational opportunities for their children. Agents are utilized at a minimum (International Trade Administration, 2016). Unlike Korea, the use of institution, consultancy, or agent is more prevalent in Japan. Japanese speakers tend to avoid disagreement and asking direct questions while searching for information. Getting the right information about the culture of host countries and information about the program of study are identified as challenges for Japanese students (Brian, 2012; Zamborlin, 2016).

Different General Pre-Departure Difficulties for Saudi Arabian and African Students

The primary pre-departure challenge for Saudi students is maintaining the balance between the program of their choice and financial sponsorship. In the Saudi context, the program of study selection is not determined by student choice but is influenced by their financial sponsors including the government and university employer as well as Saudi values, culture, and religion (Hofstede, 2003; Onsman, 2012; Yakaboski, Velez, & Almutairi, 2017). African students are subject to a number of specific challenges as they prepare for study abroad, and it has been noted that they face the complex and frustrating process of obtaining visas as well as the tensions they feel in leaving their communities. These challenges and pressure points are extensive and impact their subsequent ability to adjust to life in their host institution (Caldwell & Ssekasi, 2016).

On the basis of the literature review, we developed a model of pre-departure challenges. Figure 1 represents the model of pre-departure challenges.

Figure 1: Pre-Departure Challenges

Information → Finances → Visa

The model represented the following key findings:

- Obtaining accurate information about university and college are the most common challenges for international students.
- Students seek admission in well-ranked universities but not all students cannot afford the tuition fees with living expenses.
- The difficulties encountered in preparing visa documents vary from country to country but is more pronounced in developing countries.

Post-Departure Challenges

Once international students have made a decision and completed the entire paperwork and visa interview successfully, they depart to the host countries with the hope of a positive educational experience. But the life they had imagined may not always match up with actuality when they arrive. Bartram (2008) suggested that particular prior information regarding food, culture, the academic system, finances, and accommodation should be provided to relieve their anxiety. We summarized the finding in three main sub-themes.

The United States as the Premier Destination for International Students and Associated Challenges

The United States is regarded as the leading destination for international students (Institute of International Education, 2018). Researchers have identified a number of academic and non-academic challenges for international students visiting the US. Horne, Lin, Anson, and Jacobson, (2018) revealed that students in the United States consistently reported lower levels of social satisfaction and feelings of being welcome. Feelings of alienation or separation occur as a result of their new surroundings (Burdett & Crossman, 2012; Gardner, 2013). Lee (2015) identified many examples of racial discrimination in the United States. The author noted that most of the students from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East experienced at least some discrimination, whereas none of the students from Europe, Canada, or Australia experienced any discrimination. Lee (2015) labeled this discriminatory experience as neo-racism or "new racism" on the basis of culture and national order. International students from Asia often did not have sufficient prior knowledge of academic conventions practiced in the host country before their arrival, which led to difficulty in writing assignments and

reports (Campbell & Li, 2007). Swathi, Mark, Kara, and Ankita (2017) believed that international students in the United States experienced writing difficulties related to grammar and vocabulary, organization and flow of ideas, critical thinking, and plagiarism.

English language proficiency and classroom learning styles are considered primary challenges and barriers to academic success for students from East Asian countries including South Korea, China, and Taiwan (Andrade, 2009; Leong, 2015; J. Li, Marbley, Bradley, & Lan, 2016; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011). International students whose first language is not English encounter socio‑linguistic complications and challenges while taking university courses (Yan & Berliner, 2013; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011). Chan (2013) argued that international students felt embarrassed about non-fluency followed by the perception of critical or negative judgment by fluent speakers. The depression and mental health symptoms of international students from East Asian and South Asian countries in the United States have been correlated to English language fluency, among other factors (Andrade, 2009; Dao, Lee, & Chang, 2007; Yakunina, Weigold, & McCarthy, 2011). Smiljanic (2017) investigated how lower scores created psychological problems. The author found that the lower scores in speaking sections in the TOEFL exam were related to more acculturative stress. Anxiety and avoidance were positively correlated with acculturative stress. Researchers (Perry, 2016; Safipour, Wenneberg, & Hadziabdic 2017) concluded that academic cultural differences seem to play a more important role in raising negative experiences and forming stereotypical views.

In addition to the language barrier, international students face cultural barriers in their social interactions with American students and professors (S. Li & Zizzi, 2018). Regarding learning styles, classrooms in the United States are different from what many students are used to in their home countries (Wong, 2004). Many Asian students are used to following the traditional lecture format and using memorization to obtain satisfied grades and passing exams (Leder & Forgasz, 2007). Similarly, international students from Confucian cultures are sometimes stereotyped as procrastinators, uninterested, intentionally isolated, or sometimes even characterized as inactive learners lack critical thinking skills (Young, 2017). The contributing factors of academic adaptive stress for international students are culturally and linguistically different teaching styles, curriculum structure, the minimum credit hour requirements, heavy course load, academic competence, and high expectation (J. Li, Wang, Liu, Xu, & Cui, 2018; Liao & Wei, 2014). Chinese students seek advice from agents to help formulate their study plans

and transitional issues even in the post-departure stage. Support in transitional periods is common in Australia but rare in the US (Ling & Tran, 2015).

Problems Faced by International Students in the UK

The UK attracts large numbers of international students each year, second only to the US (Shea, 2018). Concerning the difficulties challenging international students in the UK, English language proficiency and financial problems are the initial challenges. The National Union of Students (2014) noted that self-funded students in the UK are likely to experiences financial difficulties. Further, unreliable payment schedules for international students in higher education institutes cause financial hardship. Blake (2006) pointed out that self-funded Black-African students reported the problem of paying for their studies. In fact, Maringe and Carter (2007) found that all the students in their study reported facing anxiet**ies** about finances and 91% worried about how they were going to pay their tuition and fees. In addition, many students struggled to comprehend lectures. The productive skills of reading and writing posed the greater challenge (Wu & Hammond, 2011). International students faced significant financial pressure and difficulties in accepting and fitting in with the culture of the UK. These challenges may leave the students feeling disillusioned and cynical about the value of intercontinental learning (Ssekasi, Mushibwe, & Caldwell, 2014).

Researchers report non-academic challenges in the UK to include homesickness**,** feeling of isolation, stress, depression, cultural shock, and dietary issues (Alloh, Tait, & Taylor, 2018; Cowley & Ssekasi, 2018). Wu and Hammond (2011) presented the challenges of East Asian master's students differently. They encountered "cultural bumps" rather than "cultural shock" in the UK. The idea of "cultural bump" rather than full-blown culture shock was introduced by Chen in 2007. Beside cultural bumps, Brown and Jones (2013) found in their survey that 49 students out of 153 students had experienced some form of abuse in the UK. In most cases, this took the form of verbal abuse, though racism manifested physically for nine students.

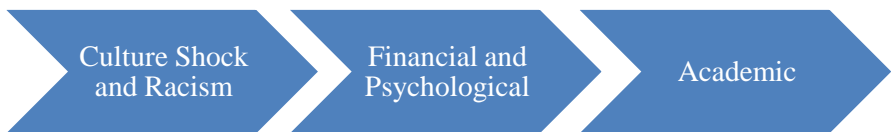## Challenges Encountered by International Students in Australia

International students in Australia frequently face a wide range of social and academic transitional issues while adjusting to new learning and the social environment as well(Andrade, 2006). The language problem remains the same in Australia. International students in Australia face language difficulties caused by loss of confidence in their linguistic skills and negative

societal attitudes towards foreign accents (Park, 2016). At the same time, due to the cultural and language barriers, fewer work choices, relatively poorer working conditions and, in many cases, financial pressures, international students may be at the greater risk of occupational injury (Thamrin, Pisaniello, & Stewart, 2010). Similarly, Mills (2018) noted that international students in Australia encountered the challenges of racism and poverty. A survey conducted by Babacan et al. (2010) concluded that a large proportion of international students identified racial, cultural, or religious elements as threats to their safety in Australia. They further suggested the need to name and identify racism in all of its manifestations to acknowledge that it exists. A study by Yeoh and Terry (2013) pointed out five main areas of difficulties: the language barrier, time management, research resources, educational background, and cultural background.

Sawir Marginson, Deumert, and Nyland (2007) interviewed 200 international students residing in Australia and found that 66% had experienced problems of loneliness and /or isolation, especially in the early months of departure. Other research noted that international students who come from countries where the classroom is conservative may at first find the Australian classroom a bit chaotic (Dalglish & Chan, 2009). In Duangpracha's (2012) survey in Australia, international students were psychologically and/or physically affected by bad experiences with the accommodation. Leaving in unsuitable accommodations produced negative feelings and bad experiences for most of the international students.

Figure 2 represents the model of post-departure challenges of international students on the basis of our review.

Figure 2: Post-Departure Challenges

The model referred to the following key points.

- The foremost post-departure challenge that every international student has to face is culture shock. The local environment and interaction present feelings of discomfort, frustration, and confusion.
- Other major challenges were financial and psychological, which include general living issues and socio-cultural issues.

- Language is the most common barrier to social interaction and academic progress.

Post-Study Challenges

Empirical studies demonstrate that international students from particular areas of the world have uniquely differing challenges after graduation. Nearly half of the international students who return to their home country from the US after graduation reported visa and work-related issues as the primary reasons for returning. Among alumni who have remained in the US, 47% reported a lack of professional connection as a major obstacle in finding a job (O'Malley, 2017). Many of the post-departure challenges continue to linger even after graduation. Ugwu and Trache (2017) highlighted that doctoral students continue to face a variety of challenges such as adapting to a new culture, experiencing English language difficulties, and cultural, social and adjustment barriers in the US, even after graduation.

More surprisingly, however, students who return home after overseas study in the United States sometimes find it harder to readjust in their own home countries. Le and LaCost (2017) reported that the Vietnamese international students who returned to their home country after graduation had difficulty readjusting even though they had lived most of their lives in Vietnam. Time in the US had changed them considerably, making it difficult for them to fit into their old lives in Vietnam. Le and LaCost (2017) found that Vietnamese returnees experienced reverse culture shock and most had made real efforts to fit back into the Vietnamese environment and culture. The trouble of Chinese returning students are no different: They experience hardship in trying to integrate into the Chinese job market (O'Malley, 2017).

Flood (2015) reported that the international students in the US are living their life year to year, not knowing what's going to happen the next year. They have to broaden their scope to host country, third country, and home country. Returning to their home country is not the kind of future most international students want. The restrictive nature of US immigration policies also causes challenges for international students. Han, Gebbie, and Appelbaum (2015) claimed that the complex and restrictive nature of US immigration policies may limit the US to no longer be the premier destination for the world's top international students.

An increasingly restrictive policy in the UK also aims to reduce the number of international students who "overstay" beyond their study abroad (Falkingham, 2017). The new rule for non-EU international students in the UK is that they should either get a job or get out within four months of

completing their study (Paul, 2015). Visa control makes life difficult and poses challenges for international students who want to stay in the UK after graduation. Therefore, 97% of international students leave the UK after their studies (Amy, 2017).

Although the figures of international students in South Korea is relatively low compared with the percentage in the US, UK, Australia, and Canada, they bring a potentially significant force of change to Korean society, which has 97% ethnic homogeneity (Shin & Moon, 2015). Post-study challenges of international students in South Korea find that if students get a faculty job in a Korean university, they are often perceived as temporary skilled labor, rather than being valued as full, contributing members of their academic communities. There is also a tendency among Koreans to perceive foreign professional employees as second-tier employees who were unable to secure employment in their countries of origin (Shin & Moon, 2015). But the case of Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, and Sweden is different. They include immigration policies that not only expedite obtaining a student visa but also provide opportunities to work while studying and permanent jobs and residency after graduation (Lane, 2015).

Findings of these studies indicate that not every international student in the world feel the rush of excitement and freedom that comes with college graduation; they have to face further challenges that are not easy to overcome. Figure 3 represents the model of post-study challenges of international students.

Figure 3: Post-Study Challenges of International Students

Uncertain Future → Immigration Policies → Reverse Culture Shock

The model summarizes the following key points.

- International students face pressure, immigration policies, and an uncertain future after graduation.
- International students want to pursue a career in the host country, which is becoming harder and harder due to new documentation requirements and policy hurdles.
- International students who return home permanently after graduation may confront reverse culture shock.

CONCLUSIONS

Definitely, academic mobility in higher education opens multiple horizons for many international students to study abroad. As international students discover the multiplicity of prospects and overture of experiences from the preparation level to graduation, they also undergo challenges as they prepare, adapt, and adjust in a new environment. Study abroad is a challenging experience for students of all nationalities and backgrounds and the transition is not easy. When we searched the keywords "challenges of international students" in Google Scholar's all time collection, 3,960,000 results were shown in 0.9 seconds. As Bista (2016) suggested, numerous studies are published each year regarding the experiences of international students. Furthermore, as Bista and Gaulee (2017) documented, 139 dissertations were published related to international students, along with an ongoing interest in research in the area. The main reason for this review are to bring together the evidence coming from both small and large scale studies in the area. We acknowledge that the studies we looked at varied in the use of the sample sizes, research designs, and methodologies. Hence, readers are encouraged to consult particular studies for a better understanding of each issue at hand

This summary of literature has categorized the challenges experienced by international students into three stages: pre-departure, post-departure, and post-study. This literature review will extend the number of titles about challenges of international students in a range of different countries. Thus, it will increase the quality and quantity of evidence of what the challenges of international students mean in practice.

IMPLICATIONS

Despite significant international student mobility around the world over the last few decades, a synopsis of their challenges such as the one this study provides was missing. As the literature has argued, the complexities of the challenges of international students around the world fall across many domains that are more akin to the systems approach to overall perceived student experiences. Thus, this review brings the issues together at one place for future researchers willing to take on more specific issues in various contexts.

Accordingly, a major implication from this review is that the challenges, categorized in specific stages, may provide much-needed information to policy makers, educational administrators, faculty, consultants, and others working in higher education in host countries. Specific issues of pre-

departure, post-departure, and post-study help to design support services catering to specific needs of these particular stages, and eventually to the development of a culture of continuous quality development at international universities of host countries.

REFERENCES

Alexander, L. (2012, May 29). *The crucial documents you need before departing for study abroad.* Study Abroad. Retrieved from https://www.studyabroad. com/resources/travel-documents-for-study-abroad

Alloh, F. T., Tait, D., & Taylor, C. (2018). Away from home: A qualitative exploration of health experiences of Nigerian students in a U.K. *Journal of International Students, 8*(1), 1–20. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1101024

Al-Quhen, K.Y. (2012). Cultural diversity in university requirements and among international students at Aal-Bay University in Jordan. *European Journal of Social Sciences, 28*(4), 489–501.

Amy, B. (2017). 97% of international students leave the UK after studies. *THE PIE NEWS*. Retrieved from https://thepienews.com/news/government/97-international-students-leave-uk-studies/

Andrade, M. S. (2006). International students in English speaking universities: Adjustments factors. *Journal of Research in International Education, 5*(2), 131–154. doi: 1177/1475240906065589

Andrade, M. S. (2009). The effects of English language proficiency on adjustment to university life. *International Multilingual Research Journal, 3*(1), 16–34. doi: 10.1080/19313150802668249

Asian Development Bank Institute. (2014). *Labor migration, skills, & student mobility in Asia*. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/migration/Labour-migration-skills-student-mobility-in-Asia.pdf

Babacan, H., Pyke, J., Bhathal, A., Gill, G., Grossman, M., & Bertone, S. (2010). *The community safety of international students in Melbourne.* Melbourne, Australia: Institute for Community, Ethnicity and Policy Alternatives, Victoria University. Retrieved from http://vuir.vu.edu.au/15491/1/The_Community_Safety_of_International_Students_in_Melb_A_Scoping_Study.pdf

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

Bista, K. (2016). Examining the research on international students: Where are we today? *Journal of International Students, 6*(2), I-X.

Bista, K., & Dagley, A. (2015). Higher education preparation and decision making trends among international students. *College & University, 90*(3), 2–11.

Bista, K., & Gaulee, U. (2017). Recurring themes across fractal issues facing international students: A thematic analysis of 2016 dissertations and theses. *Journal of International Students, 7*(4), 1135–1151. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.103598

Blake, A. C. (2006). The experiences and adjustment problems of Africans at a historically black institution. *College Student Journal, 40*(4), 808–813.

Boado, H. C. B., Hu, Y., & Soysal, N. Y. (2017). Why study abroad? Sorting of Chinese student across British universities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 39*(3), 365–380. doi: 10.1080/01425692.2017.1349649

Brian, J. (2012). *Preparing Japanese University Students for study abroad*. Retrieved from http://www.brianenglish.net/prose/preparingjapaneseunivstudentsforstudyabroad.pdf

Brown, L. & Jones, I. (2013). Encounters with racism and the international student experience. Studies in *Higher Education, 38*(7), 1004–1019. doi: 10.1080/03075079.2011.614940

Burdett, J., & Crossman, J, (2012). Engaging international students. *Quality Assurance in Education, 20*(3), 207–222. doi: 10.1108/09684881211240286

Caldwell, E. F., & Ssekasi, D. H. (2016). Leaving home: The Challenges of Black-African international students prior to studying overseas. *Journal of International Students, 6*(2), 588–613.

Campbell, J., & Li, M. (2007). Asian students' voices: An empirical study of Asian students' learning experiences at a New Zealand University. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 12*(4), 375–396. doi: 10.1177/1028315307299422

Chan, E. (2013). A narrative research study—Living in the space between participants and researcher as a narrative inquirer: Examining ethnic identity of Chinese Canadian students as conflicting stories to live by. In J. W. Creswell (Ed.), *Qualitative inquiry and research design:*

Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed., pp. 303–326). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chen, J. M. (2017). Three levels of push-pull dynamics among Chinese international students' decision to study abroad in the Canadian Context. *Journal of International Students, 7*(1), 113–135.

Chen, W.C.D. (2007). Reflecting on pre-sessional EAP courses: A pilot study of Taiwanese students' perspectives at the University of Leicester. *An Interdisciplinary Journal, 53*, 127–134.

Ciubancan, M. (2015). Principles of communication in Japanese indirectness and hedging. *Romanian Economic and Business Review, 10*(4), 247–253.

Clark, N. (2013). *Indian study abroad trends: Past, present, and future*. World Education News+Reviews. Retrieved from https://wenr.wes.org/2013/12/indian-study-abroad-trends-past-present-and-future

Cowley, S. P., & Ssekasi, D. H. (2018). Motivation, induction, and challenge: Examining the initial phase of international students' education. *Journal of International Students, 8*(1), 109–130. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1101039

Dalglish, D. C., & Chan A. (2009). *Expectations and reality-international student reflections on studying in Australia.* The Queensland University of Technology. Retrieved from http://aiec.idp.com/uploads/pdf/ Fri%200930%20Carol%20Dalglish.pdf

Dao, T. K., Lee, D., & Chang, H. L. (2007). Acculturation level, perceived English fluency, perceived social support level, and depression among Taiwanese international students. *College Student Journal, 41*(2), 287–295.

Duangpracha, K. (2012). *The accommodation challenges of international students* (Doctoral dissertation). Graduate School of Business and Law, Australia.

Du Bois, C. (1956). *Foreign students and higher education in the United States: Studies in universities and world affairs*. Washington, DC: American Council of Education.

Durkin, K. (2008). The adaptation of East Asian masters students to western norms of critical thinking and argumentation in the UK. *Intercultural Education, 19*(1), 15–27. doi: 10.1080/14675980701852228

Falcone, S. (2017). International students' recruitment: Trends and challenges. *Journal of International Students, 7*(2), 246–256.

Falkingham, J. (2017). *A survey of 3,500 UK- based international students with surprising results*. Times Higher Education, The World University Ranking. Retrieved from https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/survey-3500-uk-based-international-students-surprising-results

Favin, M., Steinglass, R., Fields, R., Banerjee, K., & Sawhney, M. (2012). Why children are not vaccinated: A review of the grey literature. *International Health, 4*(4), 229–238. doi: 10.1016/j.inhe.2012.07.004

Flood, H. (2015). International students face unique challenges after graduation. *USA Today College.* Retrieved from http://college.usatoday.com/2015/05/19/ international-students-face-unique-challenges-after-graduation/

Galvan, J. L. (2013). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences.* Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.

Gardner, S.K. (2013). The challenges of first-generation doctoral students. *New Directions for Higher Education, 163*, 43–54. doi: 10.1002/he.20064

Han, X., Gebbie, M., A., & Appelbaum, R. (2015). Will they stay or will they go? International graduate students and their decisions to stay or leave the U.S. upon Graduation. *Plos One, 10*(3), 1–18. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0118183

Hofstede, G. (2003). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Horne, S. V., Lin, S., Anson, M., & Jacobson, W. (2018). Engagement, satisfaction, and belonging of international undergraduates at U.S. research universities. *Journal of International Students, 8*(1), 351–374. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1134313

Hyun, O. J. (2016, September 18). Korea sends most forth students abroad. *The Korea Herald*. Retrieved from http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php? ud=20160918000267

ICEF Monitor. (2014, April 23). *New research explores economic impact of international students on host countries.* Retrieved from http://monitor.icef.com/2014/04/new-research-explores-economic-impact-of-international-students-on-host-countries/

Institute of International Education. (2016). *Fast Facts Open Doors 2015*. Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/en/Researchand-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fast-Facts#.Vy-Susv2YdV

Institute of International Education. (2018, November 13). *Number of international students in the United States reaches new high of 1.09*

million. Retrieved from: https://www.iie.org/en/Why-IIE/Announcements/2018/11/2018-11-13-Number-of-International-Students-Reaches-New-High

International Trade Administration. (2016). *2016 top markets report education country case study*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce.

Kavilanz, P. (2018, March 14). Sharp drop in international student visas worries some US colleges. *CNN Money*. Retrieved from https://money.cnn.com/2018/03/12/news/economy/international-student-visa-college/index.html

Kirch, W. (2008). *Systematic literature review. Encyclopedia of Public Health*. Springer: New York.

Lane, J. (2015, October 14). *US losing its dominance in the global higher education market.* Retrieved from http://theconversation.com/us-losing-its-dominance-in-global-higher-education-market-46721

Le, A., T. & LaCost, B., Y. (2017). Vietnamese graduate international student repatriates: Reverse adjustment. *Journal of International Students, 7*(3), 449–446. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.570295

Leder, G. C. & Forgasz, H. J. (2007). Australian and international mature students: The daily challenges. *Higher Education Research & Development, 23*(2), 183–198. doi: 10.1080/0729436042000020665

Lee, J. J. (2015). International student experiences of Neo-Racism and discrimination. *International Higher Education, 44*, 3–5. doi: 10.6017/ihe.2006.44.7916

Leong, P. (2015). Coming to America: Assessing the patterns of acculturation, friendship formation, and the academic experiences of international students at a US college. *Journal of International Students, 5*(4), 459–474.

Li, J., Marbley, A. F., Bradley, L., & Lan, W. (2016). Attitudes towards seeking counseling services among Chinese international students: Acculturation, ethnic identity, and language proficiency. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 44*(1), 65–76. doi: 10.1002/jmcd.12037

Li., J., Wang, Y., Liu, X., Xu, Y., & Cui, T. (2018). Academic adaptation among international students from East Asian countries: A Consensual qualitative research. *Journal of International Students, 8*(1), 194–214. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1134289

Li, S., & Zizzi, S. (2018). A case study of international students' social adjustment, friendship development, and physical activity. *Journal of International Students, 8*(1), 389–408. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1134317

Liao, K. Y., & Wei, M. (2014). Academic stress and positive affect: Asian value and self-worth contingency as moderators among Chinese international students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 20*(1), 107–115. doi: 10.1037/a0043071

Ling, C., & Tran, L. T. (2015). Chinese international students in Australia: An insight into their help and information seeking manners. *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives, 14*(1), 42–56.

Maringe, F., & Carter, S. (2007). International students' motivations for studying in UK He: Insights into the choice and decision making of African students. *International Journal of Educational Management, 21*(6), 459–475. doi: 10.1108/09513540710780000

Mills, N. (2018). *International students say challenges in Australia include loneliness, racism, poverty.* ABC Radio Melbourne. Retrieved from http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-01/challenges-international-students-face-in-melbourne-australia/9702606

Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2018). *2017 sees increase in number of Chinese students studying abroad and returning after overseas studies*. Retrieved from http://en.moe.gov.cn/News/Top_News/20 1804t20180404_332354.html

Neghina, C. (2017). *2017 Trends in student recruitment*. Retrieved from https://www.studyportals.com/intelligence/2017-trends-in-international-student-recruitment/

Nicolescu, L., & Galalae, C. (2012). *International students' mobility and adjustment. A literature survey.* The Future of Europe International Conference 2012: Rethinking Strategies in Emerging Economies, The Bucharest University of Economic Sciences, Bucharest, Romania.

National Union of Students. (2014). *Widening the safety net: International students in unexpected financial hardship and what can be done*. Retrieved from http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/open/international/Widening-the-Safety-Net-Bringing-Financial-Safety-to-International-Students/

O'Malley, B. (2017, October 21). Study identifies key challenges for foreign students. *University World News.* Retrieved from http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=201710210 54644646

Onsman, A. (2012). Distributing the future evenly. English as the lingua franca in the Saudi Arabian higher education sector. *Higher Education Policy, 25*(4), 477–491. doi: 10.1057/hep.2012.8

Park, E. (2016). *Social and educational challenges of international students caused by accented English in the Australian context: A sociolinguistic analysis of linguistic experiences* (master's thesis). School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University, South East Queensland, Australia.

Paul, A. K. (2015, July 2). Get a job or get out: The tough reality for international students. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jul/02/get-a-job-or-get-out-the-tough-reality-for-international-students

Perry, C. J. (2016). Comparing international and American students' challenges: A literature review. *Journal of International Students, 6*(3), 712–721.

Russell J., Rosenthal, D., & Thomson, G. (2010). The international student experience: Three styles of adaptation. *Higher Education, 60*(2), 235–249. doi: 10.1007/s10734-009-9297-7

Safipour, J., Wenneberg, S., & Hadziabdic, E. (2017). Experience of education in the international classroom—A systematic literature review. *Journal of International Students, 7*(3), 806–824. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.570035

Sawir, E., Marginson, S., Deumert, A., & Nyland, C. (2007). Loneliness and international students: An Australian study. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *12*(2). doi10.1177/1028315307299699

Shea, J. (2018, September 4). UK universities make graduate visa plea. *China Daily*. Retrieved from: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn /a/201809/04/WS5b8ea554a310add14f38998f.html

Shin, G., W., & Moon, R. (2015). South Korean universities remain challenging places for foreign students and faculty. *The Conversation.* Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/south-korean-universities-remain-challenging-places-for-foreign-students-and-faculty-42014

Smiljanic, I. (2017). The role of attachment, travel experiences and English proficiency of international students, acculturative stress and depressive systems. *Journal of International Students, 7*(2), 188–203.

Spinks, J., & Wong, I. (2010). *Understanding student recruitment in Mainland China: A case study.* The Observatory of Borderless Higher Education. Available at http://www.obhe.ac.uk/documents/view_details?id=800

Ssekasi, D. H., Mushibwe, C., & Caldwell, E.F. (2014). International education in the United Kingdom: The challenges of the golden opportunity for Black-African Students. *Sage Open, 4*(4), 1–13. doi: 10.1177/2158244014562386

Swathi, R., Mark, K., Kara, K., & Ankita, G., (2017). Strategies to address English language writing challenges faced by international graduate students in the US. *Journal of International Students, 7*(3), 764–785. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.570033

Tang, X., Collier, D., A., & Witt, A. (2018). Qualitative study on Chinese students' perception of U.S. university life. *Journal of International Students, 8*(1), 151–178. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1134279

Thamrin, Y., Pisaniello, D., & Stewart, S. (2010). Time trends and predictive factors for safety perceptions among incoming South Australian university students. *Journal of Safety Research, 41*(1), 59–63. doi: 10.1016/j.jsr.2009.11.003

The Times of India. (2015). *The pre-departure checklist*. Retrieved from https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/The-pre-departure -checklist/articleshow/48738040.cms

Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*. Retrieved from https://bmcmedresmethodol.biomedcentral.com/articles/ 10.1186/1471-2288-8-45

Ugwu, D. N., & Trache, M. A. (2017). Post-graduation plans of international science and engineering doctoral students attending U.S. universities of Texas Arlington, USA. *Journal of International Students, 7*(1), 1–21.

Wong, J. (2004). Are the learning styles of Asian international students culturally or contextually based? *International Education Journal, 4*(4), 154–166.

Wu, W., & Hammond, M. (2011). Challenges of university adjustment in the UK: A study of East Asian Master's degree students. *Journal of Further and Higher, 35*(3), 423–438. doi: 10.1080/0309877X.2011.569016

Yakaboski, T., Velez, K. P., & Almutairi, Y. (2017). Collectivists' decision-making: Saudi Arabian graduate students' study abroad choices. *Journal of International Students, 7*(1), 94–112.

Yakunina, E. S., Weigold, I. K., & McCarthy, A. S. (2011). Group counseling with international students: Practical, ethical, and cultural

considerations. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 25,* 67–78. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.54.4.385

Yan, K., & Berliner, D. C. (2013). Chinese international students' personal and sociocultural stressors in the United States. *Journal of College Student Development, 54*(1), 62–84. doi: doi:10.1353/csd.2013.0010

Yeoh, J. S., & Terry, D. R. (2013). International research students' experiences in academic success. *Universal Journal of Education Research, 1*(3), 275–280. doi: 10.13189/ujer.2013.010319

Yocket Editorial Team. (2018). *Pre departure to-do list for students going abroad for higher studies*. Retrieved from https://yocket.in/blog/study-abroad-tips-and-information-38/pre-departure-to-do-list-26

Young, J. T. (2017). Confucianism and accents: Understanding the plight of the Asian international students in the U.S. *Journal of International Students, 7*(3), 433–448. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.570022

Zamborlin, C. (2016). Giapponesi, parlanti oblique evvaghi per la salvaguardia di 'wa'. *quanto c'e di Vero nel luogo commune, 3*(2), 155–171. doi: 10.7358/Icm-2016-002-zamb

Zhang, Y., & Hagedorn, L. (2014). Chinese education agent views of American community colleges. *Community College Journal, 38*(8), 721–732. doi: 10.1080/10668926.2014.897082

Zhou, Y., Frey, C., & Bang, H. (2011). Understanding of international graduate students' academic adaptation to a U.S. graduate school. *International Education, 41*(1), 76–94.

JEEVAN KHANAL, PhD, is a faculty member in the School of Social Sciences and Education, Nepal Open University, Nepal. His research focuses on the area of international students, study abroad, educational leadership, educational administration, academic integrity, higher education, and multiculturalism.
Email: jeevan@nou.edu.np

UTTAM GAULEE, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Community College Leadership Doctoral Program, Morgan State University, USA. His research interests include community college systems, development education, diaspora studies along with interdisciplinary perspectives on education policy, global citizenship, and cross-cultural issues in international development and geopolitics.
Email: uttam.gaulee@morgan.edu