PROJECT RISE

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CIES 2022
To understand and enhance the experiences, development, and engagement of study abroad and international students
DRIVING QUESTIONS

How can students maximize their growth and engagement abroad?

How can universities support international students’ engagement and development?

How can global competency increase engagement across cultures and backgrounds?
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OVERVIEW

- Goals and Research Questions
- Wave 1 (2017-2018)
  - Findings
- Wave 2 (2020-2023)
  - Initial Results
- Wave 3 (2023+)
  - Next Steps
Goal

Design iterative longitudinal line of inquiry to better understand and enhance international student engagement and wellbeing

Core Research Question

What is the interplay between individual factors, university contextual factors, and student social-emotional and academic outcomes?
DEFINITIONS

Student engagement: attention, curiosity, and participation in university life

Student wellbeing: psychological wellness, which includes:
- Autonomy
- Personal Growth
- Purpose in Life
- Self-Acceptance
- Environmental Mastery
- Positive Relations with Others
**DEFINITIONS**

**Belonging:** feeling valued, respected, and a part of another group (here: university)

**Social support:** perceiving that one can access information, empathy, and social connections from various groups:
- Faculty
- Domestic students
- International students
WAVE I: 2017-2018

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT TWO UNIVERSITIES IN THE U.S.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Which source(s) of support predict social-emotional outcomes?

2. Do belonging and/or loneliness serve as mediators?
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Setting Resources

- Domestic Students (DS)
- International Students (IS)
- Faculty

Setting Social Process

- DS Social Support
- IS Social Support
- Faculty Social Support

Setting Social-Emotional Outcome

- Belonging
- Loneliness
- Psychological Well-Being

Individual Outcome

- Systems Theory
- Acculturation Theory
- Self-Determination Theory
Participants

$N = 126$

74% Female

79% Graduated HS in Home Country

58% Undergraduate

Citizenship by Region

74% East Asia and Pacific
8% Europe + Central Asia
6% Latin America + Caribbean
2% Middle East + No. Africa

2% North America
5% South Asia
2% Sub-Saharan Africa
Note. Model fit indices: $\chi^2(330) = 392.90, p = .01$; RMSEA = .04, 90% CI [.02 - .05], CFI = .97, TLI = .96. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.  

Brunsting et al., 2021 in Journal of Experimental Education
Wave 2: 2020-2022
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT FOURTEEN UNIVERSITIES IN THE U.S.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does English proficiency impact outcomes?

2. Does academic stress impact loneliness?

Research generously funded by the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) Joint-Funded Research Programme
Participants

\(N = 1040\) attending 14 U.S. colleges and universities

49.8% Female, 48.9% Male, .4% Trans, .9% Gender Non-Conforming, .6% Prefer not to answer

37% Undergraduate; 63% Graduate

6% Participation Rate

Citizenship by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Asia and Pacific</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe + Central Asia</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America + Caribbean</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East + No. Africa</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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INITIAL RESULTS
Note. Initial analyses run with multiple linear regressions prior to structural equation modeling.
WAVE 2 INITIAL RESULTS: RQ2

Academic Stress -> Faculty Social Support -> Loneliness

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>5.38***</td>
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<td>Aca. Stress</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fac Soc. Supp.</td>
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<td>.10</td>
<td>-2.91**</td>
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WAVE 4:
2023-ONWARD

PLANNING FOR A LONG-TERM LONGITUDINAL STUDY LINKING UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCES AND CAREER AND LIFE OUTCOMES
LINE OF INQUIRY: 2023 AND BEYOND

Expand
• Long-term longitudinal approach

Understand
• Understand post-graduate outcomes

Include
• Focused recruitment for high response

Interested in joining or collaborating? Email projectrise@wfu.edu
QUESTIONS

Where do you see opportunities for research on international student engagement and wellbeing?

How might we best recruit and maintain a long-term participant group?

raisecenter.wfu.edu; projectrise@wfu.edu