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Independent Study 496

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Project Proposal

**Summary:**

One of the biggest changes for students is going away to college. It is the first step of independence and guidance to what we call today “adult world.” At every university, people will come across a person that from a different country where we called them international students. For international students, it is one of the biggest adjustments in their life. They have to not just adjust going to school away from their parents but also adjust to the culture shock. This also leads them to other stress that effects their academic performance and their experience living in the United States. In statement two, a study was done in South Texas University found out the what types of stress do international students have and concluded that there needs to be a new system for international students that does not psychological damage them. In statement three, the article focusses more on international graduate student with their stress and how they are able to cope with stress. In statement four, it talks about what international student would like to happen before studying in the United States.

1. **The Interplay of International Students’ Acculturative Stress, Social Support, and Acculturation Modes:**

The main focus of this paper is what type of stress levels do international students have while trying to adjust studying in the United States. The paper examines different acculturation modes such as assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization relating with acculturative stress for both undergraduate and graduate international students. Acculturation mode is defined as a person desire contact with its host culture being the United States and their home culture being where they are from. The modes have been used in various research such as immigration or ethnic minorities, however, there was not much study done with international students in the United States. From Johnson & Sandhu research, international students come to the United States at a younger age and not with their families which results them to be less interested in adapting to the United States culture because being on campus is enough adapting. The relationship between acculturation modes and acculturative stress plays a role in a social support system. For international students, a social support system has been an important role when handling stress. A social support network is more to connect with other international students in the same country while the host culture is better for mitigating stress such has information about the area, the expectations of culture and social norms.

There overall goal was to see how social support helped with acculturation modes in relationship with acculturative stress. The study came up with three initial hypotheses. The first one is international students that fall into integration have low level stress and people who fall into marginalization have the highest acculturative stress. The second one is international students to have a good relationship with their host internationals and other internationals have lower levels of acculturative stress. The third is what of support does each mode mean for international such as assimilation with host nationals, integration will all three sources, separation with home country, and marginalization is none. The sample consist of 480 international students that were asked a series of questions to respond in a point system based where they were measuring demographics, acculturative stress, acculturation orientation, a social support. After the study was exam, all of the initial hypotheses held. The study noticed that both assimilation and integration are higher levels of support and there was no support relating to home country (Sullivan).

1. **Stress Factors Experienced by International Students While Attending a South Texas University**

In this study, they conducted 67 surveys for both undergraduate and graduate international students at South Texas University about what is causing them stress. For international students, stress plays a psychological and emotional factor in their lives that results in their academic performance. The most common stress that international students have are family home problems, language barriers, not a great relationship with professors, interacting with other students, loneliness, financial problems, and culture shock. The paper categorizes stress in three different categories. The first one is danger where it relates to a person emotional and mental harm that from previous experience. The second one is high risk where the person is in an unavoidable situation. The third category is issue where the person is solving individual problems by effective gathering and usage of resources. These categories can be directly or indirectly effecting their well-being causing students to have cultural adaptation challenge. In other words, the stress to adjusting in a new place that can cause psychological stress such as feeling segregation, insignificance, loneliness, and helplessness. These problems have a higher propriety that students are not able to focus in class that effects in their academic work. From the survey the most stressful thought students have that effect their academic performance is transportation, financial challenges, loneliness, accommodations, culture shock, and language barrier (Oyeniyi).

1. **Understanding of International Graduate Students’ Academic Adaptation to a U.S. School:**

This article focuses more on international graduate students adjusting studying in the United States at Bowling Green State University. Although they share the common stress levels with undergraduate international students, there are still other stresses graduate students focus on more than undergraduate. The main stressor for international graduate student’s difficulty studying in the U.S. graduate school because they are coping with the transition both the general and graduate education system. The difficult the students faced was doing online assignments because where the student came from, it was not technology advanced education. The students have to spend extra time understanding the software and improving their computer skills. One of the stressors they have is adjusting to the professor expectation. The graduate students have trouble talking with their professors because of the language barriers or cultural differences. For most students, they feel they are able to approach their professors to ask for help academically and outside the classroom. The academically barrier leads with adjusting to research tasks at U.S. schools. Students feel like they research tasks are much more difficult than course work. One of the solutions that helped them was being a teaching or research assistants. Being a teaching or research assistant helped the understand more about academic life, classroom culture, and working in the U.S. Although being a teaching assistant does bring other stressors, it overall helps international graduate students adapt better to the U.S. school system. Other stressors that graduate students have is understanding the American culture and the students believe that American students can help them learn the culture. However, students feel distance between the American students when outside of the classroom. When talking to American students during class, they found them to be helpful and being friendly in class verses having an outside relationship. The students wished that there was a better opportunity to communicate with American student. This leads them to making more connections with other international graduate students because they share more common interest. Overall American colleges and university need improvement of a sense of belonging for international graduate students (Yuchun).

1. **The Acculturation Needs of International Students At U.S University: A Call for Online Anticipatory Orientation.**

This student focus on international students about what would if been helpful when adjusting to American culture and school. One of the main topics that the study focus on is how international students using different social networking sites to help with their stress. The study talks about how social networking sites help with strong and week ties. Strong ties are defined as receiving emotional support because the person sending the support have a good interest at heart. Week ties are defined as people sharing coming interest or finding out information. Their study states three social network models where the first one is a mono-cultural network where students interacting with each other from the same country. The second is a bicultural network where connecting with professors, students in the class, and advisers to helping with academic achievement. The third is a multicultural network where it provides information about recreational activities. These social network impact the international students acculturative stress. One of the most popular social sites is Facebook because it gives them a better opportunity to connect with people from different background. However, International students believe that there could be better social media platforms. For example, they wish that there was a pre-arrival online orientation provided by the university that helps them cover topics such as accommodations, transportation, weather, food, and much more in details about what is popular in universities. The students also have suggestion if was a place where people can post questions, requests, and suggestions of various topics related to the school they are in (Garza).

Works Cited

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