Spring 5-12-2019

Mixed-Method Study Exploring International Students' Career Readiness at a Four-Year Private University in the Midwest

Chloe Bonnand
Lindenwood University

Recommended Citation

Mixed-Method Study Exploring International Students' Career Readiness at a Four-Year

Private University in the Midwest.

by

Chloe Bonnand

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Mixed-Method Study Exploring International Students' Career Readiness at a Four-Year

Private University in the Midwest.

by

Chloe Bonnand

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

_____   __4/12/19__
Dr. Roger "Mitch" Nasser, Dissertation Chair   Date

_____   __4/12/19.__
Dr. Gabriela Romero-Ghiretti, Committee Member   Date

_____   __4/12/19__
Dr. Christie Rodgers, Committee Member   Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Chloe Bonnand

Signature: _____ Date: 4/12/19

Acknowledgements

I am truly thankful for the support I have received from my professors, co-workers, and family. I would like to thank Dr. Mitch Nasser for his guidance throughout this experience. His patience and dedication are what allowed me to complete this dissertation. I am thankful for the countless emails, discussions, and meetings shared with Dr. Nasser on this topic to force me to look beyond what I thought I knew and to expend my knowledge on international students. I also would like to thank my committee members Dr. Gabriela Romero-Ghiretti and Dr. Christie Rodgers for their helpful feedback and time commitment to this project.

I would like to thank Dr. Winslow for helping me with the statistic portion of this dissertation. His love and dedication to statistics and to his students is truly admirable and I would have not been able to complete this dissertation without his help. To Dr. Deb Ayres, whom from the start of my doctorate program, was available to listen to my doubts and concerns, and who persuaded me that this was something I could achieve. Thank you.

Finally, I want to thank my husband, who, for two and a half years listened to all of my thoughts and ideas, who was by my side during the good and the bad times, who never doubted by ability to complete this program. I could have never reached this milestone without him.

As my father would say: *"Allez, on y croit!"*

Abstract

This study explored international students' career readiness in a four-year, private university in the Midwest. In order to measure career readiness, the researcher reviewed three factors: financial support, academic major, and country of origin. International students graduating in May 2018 received a survey from the researcher on career readiness. A total of 38 students completed the survey. The final question of the survey was an invitation to participate in an individual interview and/or a focus group. The qualitative data from the survey showed that financial support impacted international students' career readiness. International students with financial support were more prepared to enter the workforce than students who did not have financial support. Academic majors also impacted career readiness. Students with Business majors pointed out that due to the numerous different fields within the field of Business, it was difficult to show proficiency in one area needed by an employer. Students pursuing other degrees such as Science and Education had a clear idea of the steps to take after graduation and what employers were looking for in new graduates. Country of origin did not have an impact on career readiness as all international students pointed out the difficulties and uncertainties met after graduation due to the immigration restrictions on student and work visas in the United States.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Study

The number of international students in the United States has changed due to different factors impacting their mobility. The United States has seen an increase in international students in the 1960's (Hazen & Albert, 2006). However, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2011, the number of international students decreased due to the added restrictions on student F-1 visas (She & Wotherspoon, 2013; Austell, 2013). The literature showed that international students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions for different reasons (Tan, 2015). Some students came to the United States to learn English, to receive a degree that would help them find a job in their home country, to find a job and permanently remain in the United States, or to experience living in another country. Regardless of the reasons why international students came to the U.S, acculturation was part of the adjustment process (Gautam, Lowery, Mays, & Durant, 2016). The literature presented the acculturation process for international students as a life event happening when students moved to the United States for education purposes. However, acculturation also occurred once international students were graduating and leaving the institution. The environment the students lived in changed and new challenges emerged. One of these challenges was entering the workforce after graduation. This study explored the challenges international students faced after graduation and how higher education institutions could prepare international students for the workforce by understanding the students' challenges, strengths, and weaknesses.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed method study was to explore international students' career readiness in a private, four-year university in the Midwest. The study targeted international students who graduated within a few weeks after the study was over. The study analyzed three factors: financial support, academic majors, and country of origin of international students to examine whether or not the factors had an impact on international students' career readiness. The Director of the university's Office of International Scholars emailed graduating students a survey created by the researcher composed of a Likert scale and open-ended questions. The participants who completed the survey had the opportunity to provide their contact information to the researcher to participate in an individual interview as well as a focus group. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data to find recurring themes on international students' career readiness. The themes gathered from the interviews were compared to the themes gathered during the focus group to find any discrepancies and differences. The researcher used an ANOVA to find a relationship between career readiness and academic majors. The academic majors of participants were grouped in three categories; Business, Sciences, and Communication. A t-test of two independent samples analyzed the quantitative data gathered on the relationship between career readiness and the financial support of international students. This study continued the current research on international student challenges but focused on an area that lacked research and that could be beneficial for international students and U.S. institutions. Understanding whether these factors impact international student career readiness can provide guidance to higher education

institutions when discussing international students' career decisions based on their

financial situations, academic majors, and country of origin.

Rationale

The number of international students in the United States has rapidly increased

since the 1960's (Hazen & Alberts, 2006). However, enrollment numbers have

significantly decreased after the attacks of 9/11 due to strict immigration policies

implemented by the U.S. government (She & Wotherspoon, 2013). Despite the decrease

of international students and the immigration policies, over one million international

students came to the United States to study during the school year 2016/2017 (Open

Doors report, 2016).

International students represent a large portion of the U.S economy from college

expenses, such as tuition and living expenses. According to the National Association of

Foreign Student Advisors (NASFA), international students studying in U.S. universities

contributed $32.8 billion during the 2015-2016 school year. International students often

pay higher tuition rates than U.S. citizens. International students are not eligible for

federal financial aid but can receive scholarships from the institution they attend. These

scholarships are awarded to only a small portion of international students (McGill, 2013).

During their stay in the United States, international students must follow the regulations

of their F-1 student visa which prohibits them from gaining employment outside of the

university without a work authorization (Austell, 2013). International students can

however work on campus but are limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session

and 40 hours per week when school is not in session (U.S. Citizen and Immigration

Service [USCIS], 2018a).

Adjusting to the U.S. culture is a task that can be difficult for some students. Cultural adjustment may be more difficult for international students from different cultural backgrounds than students from European countries with similar cultures (Bang, Muriuki & Hodge, 2008). Cultural shock and language barriers can lead to homesickness and social isolation which can prevent international students from embracing the host culture. International students reacted differently to the acculturation process based on their assimilation to the host culture (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008). The social challenges that international students face can be linked to the cultural adjustment issues stated previously. International students can have difficulty socializing with U.S. students and other international students due to language barriers. In some cases, language barriers force international students to only socialize with students from their home country, which delays the acculturation process. Social support has been considered one of the most critical components of determining international students' psychological well- being (Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004).

Challenges encountered by international students before and after graduation are different than those encountered by U.S. students. Crockett & Hays (2011) pointed out in their study that the underuse of career services by international students is due to career services not offering services specific to international students. Counselors need to be aware of the different needs and challenges international students will face to assist them with career placement. Dey & Cruzvergara (2014), pointed out that international students need special guidance with internships and career planning.

This study filled the gap in the literature regarding the type of assistance international students need to feel prepared for after graduation and to enter the U.S.

workforce. Previous studies explored the challenges international students face in U.S. higher education institutions. These studies provided guidance to university administrators to assist international students when facing these challenges. However, the literature on international student challenges stops once international students have graduated. This study continued the current research on international student challenges but focused on an area that lacks research and that could be beneficial for international students and U.S. institutions.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does financial support affect international student's career readiness?

Research Question 2: How do academic majors impact international student career readiness?

Research Question 3: How does an international student's country of origin impact career readiness?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between financial challenges international students face and perceived career readiness.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between international student's academic majors and perceived career readiness.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study was the population sample. The researcher had a small sample of data as only 38 students completed the survey. Four students agreed to participate in an interview and focus group, which limited the number of responses. This

small sample is also due to the fact that the researcher used a specific population. Instead

of addressing all international students in the study, the researcher decided to only focus

on international students about to graduate to measure their career readiness before they

entered the workforce. Another limitation to this study was the duration of the study. The

researcher only had a small window of opportunity after receiving IRB approval and

before students left campus after graduation. The researcher completed the interviews and

the focus group while the survey was still open and during the last few weeks of the

semester. Students were preparing for finals, finalizing projects and papers due within a

few days. This timeline was not optimal to meet with students as they had other

engagements, mostly academic. Many students did not have time to complete the survey

or participate in an interview or a focus group.

Another limitation to this study was the instrument and the delivery method.

When the researcher asked permission to use the CDDQ, one of the requirements was to

sign a document stating that the researcher had to use the survey in its entirety, and that

no changes could be made. This brought up a few issues as the CDDQ only represented

the second half of the survey. Originally, this questionnaire was composed of 40

questions. With the other half of the survey on financial support, the survey had 60

questions which took a significant amount of time to complete. As a result, 17 students

started the survey but did not finish it. Another limitation of the CDDQ was that the

researcher could not update the questions with simpler words used on the daily basis for

international students to understand. During several interviews, the researcher was told

by international students that the survey took them a long time to complete because the

questions were difficult to understand. It is possible that some international students who

completed the survey did not understand all of the questions and guessed on the answers they provided.

Another limitation was the delivery method of the survey. Due to internal policies of the university, the researcher was not allowed to email the survey directly to the students. To complete the study, the researcher had to find a third party to email the surveys and send out reminders. It is possible that more international students would have completed the survey if it had been sent by the researcher considering that the researcher works with international students on a daily basis. In terms of demographics, another limitation arose as the interviews and the focus group were primarily composed of females and only a small number of countries were represented. The researcher was unable to generalize on all international students and could only use descriptive data to discuss the differences between countries.

Instruments

The instrument used was composed of two preexisting instruments from previous studies. The first survey used was from a study led by So-Hyun Joo, Dorothy Bagwell Durban, and John Grable in 2008, which explored a relationship between students' financial stress and academic performance. This survey was used to explore international students' financial support and the impact on career readiness. The Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) used for the overall measurement of career readiness of international students was a questionnaire composed of 41 questions aiming "to locate possible difficulties and problems related to making career decisions" (Gati & Osipow, n.d., p. 1). The researcher was not allowed to make any changes or remove any questions from the survey, which resulted in a 58-question survey. The researcher timed a

pilot participant taking the survey and was completed in 5 minutes. However, once the survey was closed, 17 participants had started the survey but did not complete it.

Once the survey was completed, the researcher invited participants an interview and a focus group led by the researcher. The questions generated for the interview and focus group questions were to understand international students' challenges and needs after graduation based on the researcher personal experience and professional background.

Participation

The population chosen for this study consisted of international students graduating in May 2018 who were staying in the United States to complete their Optional Practical Training (OPT). A total of 178 international students were scheduled to graduate in May 2018. A total of 55 students started the questionnaire but only 38 participants submitted a questionnaire with all questions answered. This lack of participation, despite the numerous reminders sent by the Office of International Students and Scholars, created a small data set. At the end of the survey, students were invited to provide their contact information to the researcher to set up an interview and/or be part of a focus group. Eleven students provided their email addresses but only four students responded to the researcher's email regarding an interview or focus group.

Definition of Terms

*Alien: "*Any person not a citizen or national of the United States" (USCIS, 2018c, para. 5).

Career readiness: "The attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace" (National Association of Colleges [NACE], 2017, para. 1).

Curricular practical training (CPT): "Is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school." (USCIS, 2017, para. 2).

Designated School Officer (DSO): a university employee processing immigration documentation for international students (USCIS, 2016, para. 1).

F-1 visa: "(Academic Student) allows you to enter the United States as a full-time student at an accredited college, university, seminary, conservatory, academic high school, elementary school, or other academic institution or in a language training program" (USICS, 2016, para. 1).

Green card: "Allows you to live and work permanently in the United States. The steps you must take to apply for a Green Card will vary depending on your individual situation" (USCIS, 2017, para. 1).

H-1b visa: "Allows companies in the United States to temporarily employ foreign workers in occupations that require the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge and a bachelor's degree or higher in the specific specialty, or its equivalent" (USCIS, 2017, para. 2).

International students: "Students who have crossed a national or territorial boarder for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin" (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017, para. 1).

Summary

       The purpose of this study was to explore international students' career readiness based on the students' academic majors, financial support, and countries of origin. This mixed method study determined the type of assistance international students needed to enter the workforce after graduation based on their background. Resources available to universities for international students' professional development and career preparedness were limited (Choudaha, 2016). Consequently, the literature on international students' success in the workforce after graduation was lacking (In, 2016). As stated in the next chapter reviewing the literature on this topic, universities understood the needs of international students during their stay at institutions, however, after graduation, international students had to face several challenges on their own, outside of campus and the university's infrastructure. This study presented these challenges and provided recommendations to assist international students on a professional standpoint after graduation.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

International students face different and unique challenges while attending U.S. institutions. This literature review will first provide a historical overview of immigration reforms leading to international student mobility to the United States. This chapter will next focus on the challenges experienced by international students attending U.S. institutions. These challenges include cultural, academic, financial, social, developmental, and immigration restrictions impacting students. This chapter will conclude with recommendations of best practices found in current literature. The literature on international student challenges is limited once international students have graduated. Previous studies have been conducted on the different challenges international students face during their stay in U.S. institutions and led to finding ways to overcome these challenges. Despite the unique challenges international students face after graduation, there is a lack of literature on the subject (In, 2016). This study will explore the challenges international students face after graduation but first, a review of the current literature is necessary.

Historical Context

The United States government has implemented several laws to limit immigration since 1882. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, also known as the Immigration Act of 1882, was signed by President Chester Arthur and was put in place to control the number of Chinese workers in the United States (Cox & Subramaniam, 2015, p. 3). The immigration act prohibited Chinese workers from entering the U.S. territory and also prohibited Chinese workers who left the country from returning. The Chinese Exclusion

Act was extended for another 10 years through the Geary Act of 1892 which "required that people of Chinese origin carry identification certificates or face deportation" (Encyclopedia Britannica, Chinese Exclusion Act, para 1). The act was extended again in 1902 and made the "extension indefinite in 1904" (Encyclopedia Britannica, Chinese Exclusion Act, para 2). President Theodore Roosevelt signed the immigration laws and regulations of February 20th, 1907 enforcing different regulations regarding the entrance of Asian individuals into the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act provided a description of the people prohibited to enter the U.S: "That the following classes of aliens shall be excluded from admissions in to the United States: All idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons, epileptics, insane persons, and person who have had two or more attacks of insanity at any time previously" (U.S. Sixty-Fourth Congress, 1917, p. 875). Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917, also known as the Immigration Act of 1917, added a few more people on this list such as "polygamists, anarchists, prostitutes, and those opposed to organized government" (Agarwal, 2017, para. 5). The Immigration Act of 1917, provided a map of countries from where individuals could not immigrate from. The zone included "India, Siam, Indo-China, parts of Siberia, Afghanistan, and Arabia, the islands of Java, Sumatra, Ceylon, Borneo, New Guinea, Celebes, and various lesser groups with an estimated population of 500,000,000" (Agarwal, 2017, para 6). The Immigration Act of 1917 limited the flow of visitors from other countries to the United States.

The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 was created to decrease the number of aliens defined as "any person not a native-born or naturalized citizen of the United State, but this definition should not be held to include Indians of the United States not taxed nor citizens of the islands under the jurisdiction of the United States" (U.S. Sixty-Fourth

Congress, 1917, p. 874). As a reference, to decrease the number of aliens in the United

States, the government used the 1910 United State Census to allow three percent of the

reported number of foreign-born aliens per country in the United States (U.S. Sixty-

Fourth Congress, 1917, p. 5).

The number of allowed aliens into the United States decreased through the

Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. This immigration act was created to have a quota of two

percent of alien per country. For this immigration act, the U.S. government did not use

the 1910 United States Census but the 1890 national census. In addition, immigrants from

Asia were prohibited to enter the country (Immigration and Nationality Act, 1952, para.

1). The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 was at the origin of a debate during the Cold War

between individuals wanting to create international relationships with other countries and

individuals who thought of immigration as a national security threat (Immigration and

Nationality Act, 1952, para. 2).

The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, reduced the immigration quota to immigration

quota to one-sixth of one percent of alien per country, and the Asian population was still

excluded from entering the United States (Immigration and Nationality Act, 1952, para.

4). These immigration acts were put in place by the U.S. government to "exclude

unwanted immigrants" (Cox & Subramaniam, 2015 p. 3). These laws were implemented

to control immigration based on national origin. However, in 1965, the Hart-Cellar Act

"abolished the quota system, which critics condemned as a racist contradiction of

fundamental American values" (Krammer, 2015, para. 6). In 1990, the Immigration and

Nationality Act was revised and updated to eliminate "fears of racial, national and ethnic

discrimination" (Cox & Subramaniam, 2015, p. 5).

In 1919, the Institute of International Education (IIE) was founded to promote international student exchange, foreign affairs, and international peace and security and is dedicated to do so by providing international students opportunities to partner with different cultures to provide access to opportunities (Open Doors Report, 2016, Our Vision,). The number of international students in the United States has rapidly increased since the 1960's (Hazen & Alberts, 2006, p. 1). However, enrollment numbers and F-1 visa issued have significantly decreased after the attacks of September 11th, 2001 due to strict immigration policies implemented by the U.S. government (Hazen & Alberts, 2006, p. 203; She & Wotherspoon, 2013, p. 3; Austell, 2013, p. 231).

Events

The World Trade Center terrorist attacks of 1993 triggered a need for additional monitoring of international students as one of the terrorists was an international student who stayed in the United States after his student visa expired. After the attacks, INS recommended a review of the F visa and the necessity for a "continuing scrutiny before and during their [international students] stay in the U.S." (An Introduction to SEVP, n.d., para. 6). Since the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, Homeland Security implemented the SEVIS web-based system to gather and maintain information on international students (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, What is SEVIS?, 2018).

After the terrorist attacks of 2001, The U.S. government made changes with immigration services. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was dismantled according to the Homeland Security Act of 2002. This act created the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) within the Department of Homeland Security

(USCIS, 2016, Para 1). U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service (USCIS) was created "as a

stand-alone, Cabinet-level department to further coordinate and unify national homeland

security efforts" (2015, para 2).

These changes reflected on the international students' ability to receive an F-1

(student) visa to study in the United States. According to Cox and Subramanian (2015),

the application process for a student visa is very stressful for international students. The

authors pointed out that international students had to negotiate with immigration officers

at the embassy to obtain their visas. During the study, the students emphasized the

importance of appearing to be a model student during the application process. Students

had to convince officers that once they have received their degrees, they will go back to

their home countries. Students also shared the importance of not acting too excited or

nervous before and during the visa interview. The visa application and interview could be

very stressful leading to students doing research prior to their appointments to practice

the type of questions they will be asked. Students also talked among themselves to ensure

that they would know what to do to not jeopardize their chances of getting a visa.

When coming to the United States for education purposes, international students

were responsible for keeping their legal status in the country (Austell, 2013, p. 231). In

order to keep their F-1 visa, international students had to follow the requirements dictated

by the U.S. government through USCIS: All students had to be enrolled full-time in an

academic program, be proficient in English or take classes to learn English, be able to

support themselves financially, and maintain residency in home country (USCIS, 2018e,

para 3). International students' employment opportunities while studying are restricted to

20 hours per week when school is in session and 40 hours per week when school is not in

sessions. International students only had access to on campus employment with their F-1

visas. Off-campus employment was restricted and could only be granted with a work

authorization (Austell, 2013, p. 232; Cho & Yu, 2015, p. 14; Mcfaden & Seedorff, 2017,

p. 38).

Despite the decrease in international students and the changes in immigration

policies, over one million international students came to the United States to study during

2016/2017. The leading countries of origin were China with 350,755 students, India with

186,267 students, and South Korea with 58,663 students for the school year 2016/2017

(Open Doors Report, Places of Origin, 2016). International students come to the United

States in the hope to find better employment opportunities than in their countries (Urban

& Bierlein Palmer, 2016, p. 153; Bound, Demirci, Khanna, & Turner, 2015, p. 32; Hazen

& Alberts, 2006, p. 206) and to learn a new language (Tan, 2015, p. 7).

Theoretical Framework

International students go through numerous changes and transitions when

attending a U.S. institution. International students may react to these transitions

differently based on their backgrounds but also based on the type of transitions occurring.

In her transition theory, Schlossberg (2011) presented a transition model to understand

the different types of transitions students face, how to cope with transitions, and how to

apply this model in a real-life setting. Schlossberg explained that "a transition can be said

to occur if an event or nonevent results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the

world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behavior and relationships"

(Schlossberg, 1981, p. 5). There are different types of transitions used in Schlossberg's

theory: Anticipated transitions are events that are expected to happen in one's life such as graduation, marriage, starting a new job, or retiring. Unanticipated transitions are unexpected events, which are often disruptive such as serious illness or car accidents. Nonevent transitions are events that one would expect but that do not occur such as not graduating, not getting married, or not becoming a parent (Schlossberg, 2011). Schlossberg pointed out that everybody experiences transitions and that these transitions shape one's life. She also pointed out that the transitions can be good or bad but also that expected or desired transitions can be disappointing to an individual (Schlossberg, 2011).

Schlossberg provided the 4 Ss system to understand the factors leading to the transition and how to cope with transitions. The 4 Ss include: Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies. Situation referred to the different characteristics of the event or nonevent such as stress level, previous experience, triggers, and timing. Self, referred to one's ability to cope with transitions and self-characteristics and resources. Support referred to the support available to an individual going through transitions. This can be social support, family support, and other networks. Finally, strategies referred to how the individual responded to transitions and how to cope with transitions (Schlossberg, 2011). International students may use one or several Ss from this model to adjust to a new culture and the different changes that came along moving to another country for education purposes.

Culture

Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, presented the push and pull factors that lead students to study abroad. The push factors were the factors that push students to go abroad. The pull factors were those from the host countries that make them attractive to students. The

author presented 6 pull factors that influenced student selection of a host country:

knowledge of the other country, referrals and personal recommendations, cost issue,

environment, geographic proximity, and social link. Some of the push factors were:

opportunities to study abroad, access an education program that is not available in their

countries, and learning a new culture, different from theirs. The authors pointed out that

the student population depended on the pull factors more than the push factors. The

student's network in the host country impacted international student mobility and that the

quality of education in the host country was also a deciding factor for the international

students to enroll at an institution (Beine, Noel & Ragot, 2014, p. 24). However, all

students had different personal reasons to study in the United States (Tan, 2015, p. 7).

      The acculturation process was different for every student (In, 2016, p. 536;

Mahadevan, 2010, p. 644). International students often experienced culture shock when

coming to the United States. Acculturation is a challenge that many international students

faced when moving to another country (Baba & Hosoda, 2014, p. 11; Reynolds &

Constantine, 2007, p. 347; Cozart & Rojewski, 2015, p. 7; Gautam, et al 2016, p. 520;).

There were four strategies of ethical acculturation. The first was integration, which means

that the student retained his or her own personal values and accepted the values of the

host country. Assimilation, where the student followed the values of the host country

instead of the values from the home country. Marginalization, where the student did not

completely belong to either or the values from the host and home country. Separation,

where the student follows the values of the home country and not the values of the host

country. These four acculturation dispositions were the ways international students

viewed themselves in relation to their home and host countries. (Anderson, 2011, p. 12;

Zhou et al., 2008, p. 67).

Part of the acculturation process for international students included acculturative

stress, which was mostly due to adapting to new food, the geographic environment,

weather, and cultural values or norms. Slaten, Elison, Lee, Yough and, Scalise, (2016),

provided a definition of acculturative stress: "identified when participants described

experiencing social, academic, or emotional hardships connected to their international

status and in relations to the host cultural norms" (p. 394). International students can go

through different experiences such as culture shock, confusion about role and expectation

in the United States, homesickness, loss of social support, discrimination, and language

barrier which lead to acculturative stress. These experiences are factors that prevent

international students from focusing on their academic goals as well as career

development (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). Slaten et al., (2016) pointed out how

campus facilities were critically important for Asian international students to belong on

campus to socialize, study and exercise (p. 403).

International students with different cultural background tended to have higher

stress compared to European international students since the European culture was

similar to the U.S. culture. Gender was also a factor of acculturative stress for

international students. Female and male international students reacted differently to

stress. Female international students tended to have more school and social related stress

than male international students (Bang et al, 2008, p. 114).

Acculturation was a different process for international students from different

countries. A study by In (2016), on Korean international undergraduate students showed

that Korean students "do not have to abandon their home culture to adjust to U.S. culture, and it is possible to engage highly in both the host and home cultures" (p. 533). However, Tummala-Narra & Claudius (2013), lead a qualitative study on Muslim students struggling with different aspects of the American culture. The authors explained that since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, negative attitudes towards Muslim students had emerged on U.S. campuses making the acculturation process more difficult for Muslim students regardless of the country they are from. The study presented the primary areas of difficulty for Muslim students: new cultural environment, social isolation, experiences of discrimination, religious identity and protective factors in adjusting to living in the United States.

In 2015, however, Lefdahl-Davis and Perrone-McGovern (2015), led a study on females from Saudi Arabia and their cultural adjustment on a U.S. campus. The authors analyzed seven themes that emerged from the data: The first theme was expectations versus reality about the United States. The data from the study showed that Saudi women's expectations were different than reality in a positive way: "Less unfriendly and dangerous than expected, less like the movies, and more friendly, accepting and tolerant of religion" (p. 415). The second theme was culture shock: Women from Saudi Arabia were used to traveling to the United States and were raised following the American culture, therefore, the concept of culture shock did not apply to this particular population when coming to the U.S: "Many of the women did not experience "culture shock" or acculturative stress when they came to the United States" (p. 415). The third theme was cultural differences between Saudi Arabia and US. "The Saudi women in this study reported that some of the main cultural differences were the treatment of women, social

mores, and attitudes toward religion and morality laws, privacy, time, and family

closeness" (p. 417). The fourth theme, explored the different experiences of

discrimination and/or curiosity in the US. "The remaining Saudi women students spoke

about interest and curiosity from people, and positive treatment rather than negative

experiences" (p. 417). The fifth theme was English proficiency which was one of the

main barriers to Saudi women's adjustment to the U.S: "Communication was difficult,

studying in another language was challenging, and the English language felt like a barrier

to their successful adjustment" (p. 420). The sixth theme was social support, relationship

with US Americans, help seeking behaviors and how these relationships affected the

students' cultural adjustment: "For those Saudi women who did have acquaintances with

US Americans, some mentioned that these friendships were "limited," or "not that deep,"

because these relationships were lacking "cultural and religious dimensions" (p. 41). Per

the last two studies presented, the acculturation process of students from the same

geographical location and same religious background could be different as students were

affected differently by the factors that contributed to the acculturation process.

He and Hutson (2018) argued that Chinese international students enjoyed the idea

of independence and freedom when attending a US institution. According to the students,

unlike in China, there was no one to tell them what to do and when to do it. They are

responsible for their own time management (p. 93). However, Chinese international

students described difficulties with food, transportation, and language. The authors

explained the Chinese international students shared that they were having difficulties

with American food and that the lack of transportation to and from Chinese restaurants

made it difficult for Chinese students to have a Chinese meal. International students also

shared that the English language was also a barrier as they were experiencing challenges in everyday conversations (He & Hutson, 2018, p. 94).

The U.S. higher education was attractive to students from other countries and the United States was one of the leaders in having international students on college campuses (Choudaha, 2016, p. 1). Choudaha (2016) argued that U.S. universities were not ready for this increase which resulted in "lack of readiness of many campuses to engage and support international students" (p. 2). U.S. universities needed to be prepared to have an international student population because their challenges were different than U.S. students and therefore needed special attention from trained, knowledgeable professionals (Choudaha, 2016, p. 3; Yao & George Mwangi, 2017, p. 1; Zhang, 2016, p. 46).

Studies showed that staff and faculty members could have a significant impact on assisting international students adjusting to the U.S. culture by being aware of the differences between cultures and the challenges international students faced when coming to the United States (Baba & Hosoda, 2014, p. 13; Singaravelu, White, & Bringaze, 2005, p. 55; Lakshmi, 2010, p. 655; Lee, 2013, p. 67; Lieb, 2016, p. 417; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013, p. 144). Staff and faculty members needed to be aware of the acculturative stress international students faced (Urban & Bierlein Palmer, 2016, p. 170). Reynolds and Constantine, (2007) defined acculturative stress as the different experiences that international students went through such as culture shock, confusion about role and expectation in the United States, homesickness, loss of social support, discrimination, and language barrier. International students could also show physical symptoms to acculturation stress such as "cognitive fatigue seen as cultural confusion and disorientation and/ or difficulty concentrating" (Prieto- Welch, 2016, p. 55).

Urban and Bierlein Palmer (2014), argued that having international students on U.S. campuses was an opportunity to increase universities' global engagement and internationalization (p. 318). However, students were not always involved in on campus cultural events (Urban & Bierlein Palmer, 2014, p. 319). International student's engagement was based on the meaningfulness of the events (p. 321), as well as their relationship with other students, primarily with domestic students: "Such meaningful relationships were described as a source of emotional intimacy and a place where doubts regarding their decision to study abroad and identity as a student could be discussed and dispelled through encouragement" (Slaten et al., 2016, p. 392).

International students want to be part of cultural events. Urban and Bierlein Palmer (2014) pointed out that international students want "U.S. Americans try to get to know them and learn about their culture and having U.S. students ask them questions about their culture" (p. 319). The authors argued that depending on their country of origin, international students 'desire to be part of these cultural events differed. The authors provided an example with students from South and Central America who wanted to be more involved than students from Asia (p. 320).

Acculturation was only one of the challenges that international students face when moving to the United States. Other challenges such as "financial, social, and religious challenges persist throughout the international student experience" (Gautam et al, 2016 p. 521). In addition, these challenges evolved with time and culture shock eventually transitioned to academic challenges. (Durant et al, 2016 p. 520).

Academic Challenges

When coming to the U.S., international students faced academic challenges (Ugwu & Adamuti-Trache, 2017, p. 14; Austell, 2013, p. 230; Gautam et al., 2016, p. 519; Mahadevan, 2010, p. 653; Wu, Garza, & Guzman, 2015, p. 2). Language barrier was a factor leading to academic challenges that most international students faced, which impacted international students' academic success (Bang, Muriuki, & Hodge, 2018, p. 113; Gautam et al., 2016, p. 503; Lee, 2013, p. 62; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007, p. 339; Wu et al., 2015, p. 2). Zhang (2016), pointed out that most international students did not have a good enough understanding of English to succeed in their classes: "It is probably not practical to expect international students to thoroughly understand information given by an academic advisor when they first enroll" (p. 165). Perry, Lausch, Weatherford, Goeken, and Almendares (2017), argued that international students from East Asia had more issues with language barrier than students from other countries (p. 283).

When international students studied in another country, they had to adapt to new academic culture and standards (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017, p. 352; Ugwu & Adamuti-Trache, 2017, p. 5; Wu et al., 2015, p. 3). International students' interactions with professors were different based on their country of origin. Wu et al., (2015), pointed out that Korean students were not used to asking questions during a lecture because it was considered "rude behavior" (p. 5). Sato and Hodge (2015), discussed the differences in relationships between Japanese students in Japan and Japanese students in the United States. In the Japanese culture, "undergraduate students are not allowed to disagree with professors' opinion" (p. 218) and must "respect professors" (p. 219). In the United States,

Japanese students must adjust to a new academic culture where students can freely voice

their opinions including the ones opposite to their professors (p. 219). Gartman (2016),

led a study with international students which showed that besides the language barrier

issues and the lack of confidence when participating in class, students found the U.S.

education system to be much easier and less challenging than those in their home

countries. The students pointed out the benefits of the resources accessible to students as

well as the academic relationships students can have with their professors. However,

students also pointed that it took them a little bit of time to adjust to the U.S. academic

culture (p. 4).

During the course of their academic studies, 50 to 70 percent of college students,

international and domestic, violate academic honesty policies (Frost & Hamlin, 2015, p.

1). Chinese and South Korean students have the highest percentage of academic integrity

violations mainly through exam misconduct (Fass-Homes, 2017, p. 657). According to

Doss, Henley, Gokaraju, McElreath, Lackey, Hong, and Miller, (2016), domestic and

international students had a different perception of plagiarism (p. 544). The authors

explained that international students may not be familiar with the concept of plagiarism

and the consequences (p. 559). The authors pointed out the idea that the perception of

plagiarism differed from country to country because in some countries using somebody

else's words may be recommended for reliability (p. 558). According to the authors,

some students may believe that because they agree with someone's ideas, they could use

their words and material to support their arguments (p. 558).

The definition of plagiarism was not clear among international students from

different countries. Isbell, Chaudhuri, and, Schaeffer (2018), led a study involving 6

international students enrolled in a U.S. institution. The students had different definitions

for plagiarism. The authors pointed out that international students with different

backgrounds and different cultures had a different understanding of plagiarism. The study

suggested that international students had difficulties with plagiarism, especially because

of language barriers. Their vocabulary was limited and therefore they could struggle

when trying to rephrase a sentence or a paragraph. International students pointed out

during the study that it was important to inform the students about what plagiarism is,

what to do or not do, and the consequences (Adhikari, 2018, p. 386; Isbell et al., 2018).

International students were more often tempted to plagiarize than domestic

students because international students wanted to impress their professors. International

students also had a lack of vocabulary and were therefore more scrutinized than domestic

students (Haitch, 2016, p. 265). International students needed instruction about what

plagiarism was to avoid any issues during the students' course of studies (Doss et al.,

2016, p. 559; Frost & Hamlin, 2015, p. 164; Grigg, 2016, p. 4). Not understanding

plagiarism can have important consequences on international students such as removal of

financial aid or student visa (Haitch, 2016, p. 265).

The literature suggested international student struggle with plagiarism. The

outcome of these studies showed that international students did not have the knowledge

they needed to avoid plagiarizing and that they should be taught and trained by professors

on plagiarism (Adhikari, 2018, p. 386; Doss et al., 2016, p. 559; Isbell et al., 2018, p.

327; Kim & LaBianca, 2018, p. 55) Cultural background played a role with international

students and plagiarism. In some countries, students believed that agreeing with someone

else's ideas allows them to use other people words and material to support their

arguments (Doss et al., 2016, p. 558). Students from East Asia "may not share the western notion of intellectual ownership" (Kim & LaBianca, 2018, p. 50). The study revealed that students did not know which type of academic help was ethical or not and that students' cultural background "play a role in how students perceive various types of writing help" (Kim & LaBianca, 2018, p. 55). Often, "international students plagiarize because their culture did not teach them about plagiarism" (Adhikari, 2018, p. 377).

This lack of knowledge on plagiarism can lead to unintentional plagiarism from international students (Adhikari, 2018, p. 376). International students' vocabulary was limited and therefore they can struggle when trying to rephrase a sentence or a paragraph.

It can be time consuming, and international students feeling the pressure to complete an assignment may be tempted, just like United States students may be tempted, to look for short cuts or skimp on requirements for the sake of completing an assignment on time (Isbell et al., 2018, p. 320).

Grigg (2016), argued that students and faculty members had a different view of plagiarism: "In the comparative analysis of student and faculty participants' interview data, I discovered a clear disconnect between students' views of plagiarism, the faculty instruction on plagiarism, and their expectations of students' being able to apply their instruction." (p. 50). Haitch (2016), argued that institutions with international students can review the rules and guidance on plagiarism: "International students and the problem of plagiarism can also be a gift to institutions, and opportunity to reflect on the basis of their rules, the extent to which these rules are rooted in specific cultural values and social norms." (p. 265).

Studies showed that faculty members can assist international students in overcoming their language barrier and therefore overcome academic challenges. Glass, Kociolek, Wongtrirat, Lynch, and Cong (2015), discussed how international students can have different interactions with faculty members and how that impacted international students' sense of belonging (p. 358). From the study, the authors identified three dynamics: "participation and inclusion, personal ways of knowing, and possible selves" (p. 357), which promoted a better learning environment. In the study, the students found their professors "culturally sensitive" (p. 358), which was helpful for participation and inclusion in class. The study also found that students a relationship between the students and professors promoted "their capacity to construct knowledge for themselves" (p. 359). Finally, the study found that students' long-term goals were affected by their student-faculty interactions. The authors pointed out the importance of student-faculty relationship to promote a good learning environment and help students reach their academic goals (p. 359).

As Glass et al (2015) pointed out, student-faculty relationships promoted a good learning environment and helped students reach their academic goals (p. 359). However, in order to create these relationships with international students, faculty members needed to be "culturally sensitive" (p. 358) and needed to have international competencies acquired by traveling to other countries and learning about different cultures (Lee, 2017, p. 67). In addition, to create a good relationship with students and therefore be able to help them succeed, faculty members had to understand the different challenges international students go through when coming to the United States (Urban & Bierlein Palmer, 2016, p. 168). For example, not all faculty members understood the processes

and challenges international students faced when learning a new language; Andrade

(2017) led a study showing that faculty and staff members "tend to lack knowledge of

language acquisition factors" and despite the fact that English is their second language,

faculty members are not "satisfied with students' skill levels" (p. 3).

Financial Challenges

International students faced different challenges and obstacles while attending

U.S. institutions such as homesickness, social isolation, financial pressure, perceived

discrimination, and overall culture shock (Gartman, 2016, p. 3; Gautam et al., 2016, p.

510; Lee, 2013, p. 67; Wu et al., 2015, p. 2). A significant number of international

students faced financial challenges when attending a U.S. institution. Han and

Appelbaum, (2016), led a study involving 4,305 STEM international students which

showed that 47.6 percent of international students faced financial challenges while

studying in the United States.

International students' financial contribution to higher education positively

impacted the United States economy and universities (Cantwell, 2015, p. 519; Spencer,

2016, p. 1; Wu et al., 2015, p. 2). According to the National Association of Foreign

Student Advisors (NASFA), international students enrolled in U.S. institutions

contributed $32.8 billion to the U.S. economy during the school year 2015/2016.

These students help universities generate higher revenue in terms of

tuition and other fees. Therefore, from an economic standpoint,

international students contribute significantly financially to American

universities and if their needs are met, they can be the best bridge for

future international students that will continue this contributory process.

(Wu et al., 2015, p. 2)

International students have been responsible for paying higher tuition rates

than U.S. students:

The surprise comes from the fact that international and out of state

students tend to pay higher tuition than do in-state students . . . as well as

additional fees charged to their accounts due to their international status

which resulted in revenue for U.S. institutions: "International

undergraduate students have sometimes been charged fees by countries

where there are no fees for national students, such as Sweden. (Cantwell,

2015, p. 513)

Choudaha (2016), pointed out that U.S. universities were not ready for the

sudden increase of international students on their campuses once the immigration

concerns due to 9/11 settled down. This resulted in "lack on readiness of many campuses

to engage and support international students" (p. 2). U.S. universities increased fees for

international students in order to assist them with the lack of resources available.

However, it did not help with assisting international students: "By continuing to increase

tuition and fees for international student without a proportionate reinvestment in the

success of the student themselves, some institutions are behaving contrary to their

missions, value and principles" (Choudaha, 2016, p. 3).

Perry et al. (2017) pointed out that the main concerns that international students

had are financial, health, and language related: "Many students were concerned with their

health, but the significant differences present were not as pronounced as financial issues"

(p. 287). The authors explained that international students can have financial troubles even though they largely contribute to the U.S. economy: "Although international students account for a large contribution to the economy, they are not immune to the financial concerns that many American face" (p. 286).

International students worried about the cost of tuition as well as the cost of living when they moved to the United States (Adams, 2016, p. 67). Community colleges were an option for international students who were concerned about tuition cost, cost of living, and financial repercussion on their family (Adams, 2016, p. 70). The study by Adams in 2016 showed that international students were concerned about the cost of higher education in the United States and have found community colleges to be an option to overcome financial difficulties. Students pointed out that one of the main reasons why they have chosen to attend a community college was because the tuition was cheaper than at a four-year institution (p. 67). In the study, international students who are attending a community college pointed out their desire to transfer to a four-year institution to complete their Bachelor's degree after they were done with their first two years at the community college to ensure cost saving:

> A cost comparison tool would also be helpful for international students whose goal it is to ultimately transfer to a four-year institution. Allowing students to visually see the cost savings of attending a community college for two years prior to transfer, versus a four-year institution for all four years, would speak directly to international students and their families.
>
> (Adams, 2016, p. 86)

Another cost that students may have faced was the cost of an agent or a recruiter to come to a U.S. institution. Agents assisted students with finding the right school for them, helped them with the application process, and answered questions international students may have about higher education (Adams, 2016, p. 83). During the study, a student shared that the cost of hiring an agent was $800, however, agents can have different fees (Adams, 2016, p. 59) and charge differently: "Some agents charge only for the application, but some agents charge for everything" (Adams, 2016, p. 68). Universities also use agents as part of their recruiting strategies. Agents can be expensive and, in some situations, schools were not satisfied with agents because they only wanted to place students in order to receive commission as oppose to trying to find the school that will be the best fit for the student (Bruhn, 2016, p. 61).

International students' tuition was considered out of state tuition and was paid by the students without federal aid (Su & Harrison 2016, p. 906). A small portion of international students received scholarships to assist them with tuition expenses. According to Kommers and Pham (2016) less than half of the non-Asian population received financial aid and a third of the Asian population receives financial aid (p. 1003). In some instances, student's scholarships were given to students with the condition that they had to return home after they graduate as sponsorship to study abroad (Ugwu & Adamuti-Trache, 2017, p. 16; McGill, 2013, p. 174). International students did not qualify for federal financial aid due to their immigration statuses as F-1 students and not permanent residents or citizens of the United States (U.S. Congress, 1965, p 570).

International students' financial struggles were also due to immigration restrictions on the F-1 student visa. International students were restricted to work on campus and were not allowed to work more than 20 hours per week while school was in session and 40 hours while school was not in session. In addition, international students could not work off campus without a work authorization provided by the Designed School Officer (DSO) of the universities. (USCIS, 2017, Foreign Students in F-1 Nonimmigrant Status Participating in Curricular Practical Training (CPT); McFadden & Seeforff, 2017, p. 38). The restrictions put in place by the United States government regarding employment and scholarships created challenges for international students on a financial standpoint (Gartman, 2016, p. 4). In addition, cultural differences can lead to difficulties with understanding on-campus job opportunities as well as the different laws and regulations linked to their student visas. The application process for on campus employment may be different in the United States than the student's home countries and students may not know that they were allowed to work on campus. (Gartman, 2016, p. 516; Gautam et al., 2016).

When international students found employment on a university campus, the students had to familiarize themselves with IRS regulations and income taxes. International students' incomes were taxed at a different rate than U.S. students depending on the international student's status in the United States. An F-1 student who had been in the United States for less than five years was considered a nonresident alien for tax purposes and taxed at a higher rate than a U.S. citizen or an international student who had been in the country for more than five years, who then was considered a resident alien for tax purposes and taxed at the same rate as a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident

(U.S. Internal Revenue Services, 2018). In some cases, students were eligible to utilize

tax treaties between the United States and their home countries to avoid paying taxes:

"The United States has income tax treaties (or conventions) with a number of foreign

countries under which residents (sometimes limited to citizens) of those countries are

taxed at a reduced rate or are exempt from U.S. income taxes on certain income received

from within the United States" (U.S. Internal Revenue Services, 2018, p. 51).

In additions to high tuition rates, fees, and taxes, international students had other

expenses that were specific to international students. USCIS held universities responsible

for tracking all international students attending their institutions by providing personal

information through the software SEVIS (USICE, What is SEVIS?, 2018). International

students were required to pay a fee through ICE to receive an F-1 student visa which was

linked to the SEVIS software. The cost of this fee was $200 (USCIS, 2017, I-901 SEVIS

Fees) and was separated from any other visa or school related fees (USCIS, 2017, I-901

SEVIS Fee Payment Tutorial). According to the U.S. Department of State, an F-1 visa

application cost was $160 (U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs, n.d.,

Application Fee).

As seen previously, financial challenges affected a large number of international

students. This challenge also impacted international students' financial support systems.

High tuition cost and fees in addition to low scholarship opportunities forced parents of

international students to question the return on investment of sending their children to

U.S. institution in the hope of finding better employment opportunities after graduation

(Balin, Anderson, Chudasama, Kanagasingam, & Zhang, 2016, p. 1054). In additions to

academic and financial issues, international students also faced social issues.

Social Challenges

International students encountered homesickness and social isolation when moving to another country (Lieb, 2016; Wu et al., 2015). The social challenges that international students faced are one of the challenges that remained throughout the students' stay in the United States (Gautam et al., 2016). Social isolation includes missing family and friends of the student's home country as well as the challenges of establishing friendships in the United States (Tummala-Narra & Claudius 2013, p. 138). Most first year students, Americans and international, experienced homesickness. It was a normal feeling for students to have when attending a university. Students experience homesickness when they were separated from their friends and families. There were different degrees of homesickness which could vary throughout the students' college experience. Most students "experience less than a moderate degree of suffering, a small proportion of students report severe homesick distress." (Sun, Hagedorn, & Zhang, 2016, p. 954).

Sun et al., (2016) argued that female students, out of state students, and children of parents without college education were more likely to experience homesickness during their first year of colleges than male students, state residents, and students of college graduates. The authors explained this by making a parallel between parent's understanding of college life and how college education can prepare their children for the challenges students may face when moving to campus. In addition, the authors also point out that students "who are less academically prepared for college need more time or support to adjust to the new learning environment" (p. 953).

Students experiencing homesickness could show different mental and physical symptoms and should be provided professional assistance. Sun et al., (2016) argued that homesickness was a factor for low retention rate (p. 955). Universities hosting international students should have known what homesickness was and how it affected students. Support services should have professional help available to first year international students to help them cope with homesickness and other possible mental issues (Terrazas-Carrillo, Hong, Pace, 2014, p. 703; Sun et al., 2016, p. 955).

Establishing friendships in a country with a different social culture could be challenging. For example, female international students from Saudi Arabia pointed out in a study that the friendships they had with U.S. students were limited (Lefdahl-David & Perrone-McGovern, 2015, p. 41). International students' friendships in the United States could involve different types of people, domestic students, students from their own country, and students from other countries. Depending on the situation, international students may create friendships with these different types of individuals. For example, in classes, in on-campus events, and religious organizations, international students created friendships with all three types of students. Students made friendships with those who came from the same home country and/ or other countries through housing and international student related events (McFaul, 2016, p. 9).

International students did not join on campus organizations that involved primarily U.S. students. However, international students' ability to make friends amongst other international students was easier than making friend with domestic students. International students considered themselves outsiders and therefore could support each other (Urban & Bierlein Palmer 2016, p. 167). Prieto – Welch (2016) pointed out that if

international students were to engage with domestic students, it would help learning

English as well as understanding the U.S. culture:

> Additionally, the more international students engage with Americans and
>
> U.S. culture, the better their language skills, the more they understand the
>
> customs, and the more they learn about communication patterns and social
>
> interactions in the United States. This can lead to improved self-
>
> confidence and feelings of mastery, as well as more connection and less
>
> social isolation. (Prieto-Welch, 2016, p. 57)

Sato and Hodge (2015), discussed the social interactions between Japanese and

U.S. students. Japanese students stated that they felt stranger anxiety which means that

"they were reserved around people they did not know" (p. 213). Japanese students

pointed out that they were "hesitant to speak to American students on campus during the

first semester because of social distance from American students" (p. 213). In the study,

the students explained how they have learned English. One student stated that he was

"hesitant to practice it [English] with American students" (p. 215). The students pointed

out that they felt "Unwelcome outsiders from a foreign land – Marginalized, alienated,

and alone in their individual circumstances – in their academic major courses" (p. 216).

International students' social interactions with individuals from their home

countries provided students comfort and support (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017) when

adjusting to a new culture. "Such meaningful relationships were described as a source of

emotional intimacy and a place where doubts regarding their decision to study abroad and

identity as a student could be discussed and dispelled through encouragement" (Rabia &

Karkouti, 2017, p. 392) particularity with someone with a similar cultural background

(Slaten et al., 2016). In some instances, international students tried to stay away from students from their home countries or from similar cultures. Sato & Hodge (2015) led a study in academic and social struggles of Japanese students at a U.S. university. The study revealed that students decided to not socialize with other Japanese students to learn English. However, this decision resulted in social isolation. Students who decided to stay away from other Japanese students found out that in times of need, other Japanese students were their only resource.

Wu et al., (2015), argued that social isolation can result from having to deal with different social norms and communication patterns that were different from the international student's culture and home country. The authors explained that international students can feel uncomfortable when receiving a gift because in some culture, it is rude to open a gift in front of people (p. 6). In some cases, American customs, including social norms, can be in conflict with international students' personal and cultural identity (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). Understanding and adjusting to U.S. social norms can be the source of "emotional hardships" (Slaten et al., 2016, p. 394), and lead to acculturative stress. Social interactions in classrooms between domestic and international students can show the different types of social and cultural norms. Class discussions can be challenging to international students due to their English proficiency. It was also challenging for international students to adjust their social identities when discussing certain topics such as ethical issues, and with whom they were discussing these issues. International students had to face "radically insensitive comments of their U.S. peers" (Glass et al., 2015, p. 359), which can be an obstacle to their social adjustment in the institution.

International students needed access to social support to succeed in the United States. Cho and Yu (2015), discussed the importance of university support for international students. The study was based on a four-key variable model composed of university identification, university support, school-life satisfaction, and psychological stress. The authors pointed out the importance and the needs for university support for international students. The authors also discussed the limited interactions international students had with other international students and domestic students. Understanding this issue led institutions to create events involving both international students as well as domestic students. The four-key variable model in this study suggested that university support is critical for international students' psychological well-being.

Yan and Sendall (2016), found that a First Year Experience (FYE) program for international students helped them with college life as well as social and emotional development. The student's part of the study pointed out that the class should include in-class activities, group discussions, and individual presentations. Domestic students should be part of the class and this FYE program should not include international students only. The authors pointed out that one class would not be sufficient to support international students. This support needed to be constant and involve other departments within the university. In addition, staff and faculty should be trained to understand international students' social challenges and how to support them when facing these social challenges (Urban & Bierlein Palmer, 2016; Lieb, 2016). However, Choudaha (2016), pointed out that training staff and faculty members on international student challenges was not enough if they did not use that training when needed:

> Knowledge is only one part of the intercultural competence the other two parts are skills and attitudes. Many faculty and administrators know the need of intercultural competence, however practicing it with skill and a welcoming mindset is yet to be achieved on many campuses (p. 3).

In addition to social challenges, international students may face developmental challenges. These challenges can relate to the processes of finding a job after graduation, going through job interviews, handling work authorization restrictions, and understanding the differences of work ethics between home country and the United States.

Developmental Challenges

International students came to the United States to study and also to find job opportunities (Andrade, 2017, p. 2; Hazen & Alberts, 2006, p. 206; Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016, p. 626). However, international students faced unique challenges when looking for a job (In, 2016, p. 535). Staff and faculty members at universities assisted international students during this process: "In particular within career centers, staff can examine their typical services of advising, workshops, career fairs, internship and externship programs, networking events, and web-based resources to better serve international students" (Mcfadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 42). Eland, Lee, and Rowland (2016), argued that the two biggest challenges international students faced were knowing about the job search process and having to deal with employers who lacked information of hiring internationals or had policies that prohibited the hiring of international graduates (p. 17).

After graduation, international students faced challenges that were unusual compared to the challenges U.S. students faced. International students had to understand

work permit limitations, acclimate themselves to the U.S. culture outside of campus, and

had to learn the U.S. job market (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz, & Cavazos, 2011, p. 22). In

addition, there was an important gap between what students learned in higher education

institutions and employer expectations. International students had to have an

understanding of employers' expectations and what they were looking for in resumes and

also in new hires (Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016, p. 627). For most international students,

the interview process was a difficult moment that resulted in discomfort, incongruence,

and awkwardness (Sangganjanavanich et al., 2011, p. 21) For example, it was difficult for

international students to make small talk at the beginning of the interview (Behrens,

2009, p. 183).

Career Services

Career services departments within higher education institutions have evolved

since the 1900's. Career services came in to play mostly after the war with the need for

teachers and the increase of students attending universities. These students, who were

also veterans, needed guidance in their careers. Career services helped students with

career counseling to assist them in choosing a career path. In 1990, career services

emphasized professional networking. Later in the 2010's the emphasis shifted to

connected communities to provide "meaningful connections to internship and

employment opportunities as well as mentoring and experiential learning" (Dey &

Cruzvergara, 2014, p. 9).

Panke Makela & Rooney, (2014) described the assessment needs for career

services by pointing out the importance of student engagement, participation, and

satisfaction as components of career services and to promote student success. The need of

assessment was divided in four parts: needs, participation, satisfaction, and outcome. The

authors also pointed out that assessment helped institutions: "The value of their efforts

can be experienced through observing enhancements to current career interventions,

sharing success stories with key stakeholders, and finding opportunities to honor

individuals for their contributions to enhancing the value of career services" (p. 77).

However, the authors argued that career interventions did not necessarily impact all

students and pointed out that there is no "one-size-fits- all." It was critical to always

consider continuous improvement of the services provided to the students (Makela Panke

& Rooney, 2014, p. 69; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007, p. 348).

International students went through different obstacles and were limited in what

they could do after graduation, which could result in students having to go back home

after graduation. A study was done with international students, career development

professionals, and employers. The authors pointed out that universities should focus more

on professional development for international students as they did not know the benefits

of career services. (Balin et al., 2016, p. 1057). Despite the challenges they faced after

graduation, international students did not take advantage of the career service

departments within universities (Urban & Bierlein Palmer, 2016, p 167; Shen & Herr

2004, p. 21) because international students "indicated that their career counselors did not

understand their experience as international students and were not familiar with rules and

regulations regarding employment of international workers" (Sangganjanavanich et al.,

2011, p. 24)

Students often complained that staff and faculty members did not understand

them (Urban & Bierlein Palmer 2016, p. 168), which was mostly because the counselors

were not trained to assist international students. Most counselors were unaware of the

different immigration restrictions or other aspect of job searching that impacted

international students (Sangganjanavanich et al., 2011, p. 24). Furthermore, international

students were not taught the value of extracurricular activities or the importance of

visiting the career services for professional and career development advice (Urban &

Bierlein Palmer, 2016, p. 168). Shen and Herr (2004) pointed out that some countries did

not have career services available at their universities. Therefore, international students

from these countries were not aware that this resource existed. As a result, international

students did not know what type of services and assistance they could receive from career

services departments (p. 22) In addition, international students were more likely to visit

the career center if he or she needed a resume or a cover letter right away than to learn

more about career opportunities before graduation (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2009, p. 435).

     The literature showed that the main reason why international students did not use

career services, was the lack of training of career counselors in assisting international

students (Sangganjanavanich et al., 2011, p. 25). Counselors should have been able to

understand different cultures and learn valuable information on international students to

help them in a way that matches their social and economic backgrounds. For example,

international students have reported that career counselors should offer group sessions as

opposed to individual ones. International students would be more comfortable with other

international students who will be able to support each other (Singaravelu et al., 2005, p.

56).

     Career counselors needed to be aware of the challenges international students

faced and how they impacted their academic, social, and professional lives. The lack of

information and knowledge regarding international students during career development

made it challenging for career counselors to assist international students (Reynolds &

Constantine, 2007, p. 347). Career counselors had more knowledge on U.S. students'

challenges after graduation than international students' challenges. International students

were often reluctant in using these services due to the different paths international

students took compared to U.S. students (Crockett & Hays, 2011, p. 72). For example,

Career Counselors needed to know more about the needs of international students,

especially on an immigration standpoint (Balin et al., 2016, p. 1059) and how the

different immigration restrictions or other aspects of job searching that impacted

international students (Sangganjanavanich et al., 2011, p. 24).

Another aspect that career counselors should be aware of is the family pressure

that international students faced when making a decision for their future. International

students often referred to family and cultural considerations before making a decision

(Arthur & Popadiuk, 2009, p. 432). Liao and Ji (2015) pointed out that in the Asian

culture "family influence in a salient factor for high school graduates in determining their

college major" (p. 156). Family involvement was an important aspect of career

counseling as many international students had parents with high expectations of success

for their children. In some cases, students decided on an academic major or a specific

career based on their parents' preferences: "Many Asian students often choose a college

major because of parents, authority figures, and expectations of future earnings rather

than personal preferences" (p. 168). According to Singaravelu et al (2005), family

influence was more present amongst non-Asian international students than amongst

Asian international students (p. 53).

In addition, work ethic was another issue that career counselors may encounter when working with international students. Anderson (2011) pointed out that what can be considered ethical in one country may be considered unethical in another. For example, Mideastern and African countries had a different view on ethics. The author pointed out the importance of having discussions with the students to avoid any conflict when presenting another type of ethics. In most cases, career counselors needed to find a common ground to move forward with the student. The counselor must explain the differences in ethics between the United States and their countries and how their view of what is ethical may change when entering the U.S. workforce (p. 17).

Immigration Challenges

It is challenging for U.S employers to hire international students or foreign-born workers due to the restrictions the U.S government implemented on the F-1 student visa and H-1b visa, (Bound et al., 2015). The number of different visas available was intimidating to employers and resulted in employers refusing to hire foreign nationals (Borovska, 2016) to avoid immigration expenses and having to face potential challenges with the U.S government and visa processes (Bound et al., 2015). International students had different opportunities to work on and off campus. The F-1 visa regulations limited international students to a maximum of 20 hours of on campus work per week. The term on campus was defined as working directly for the institution the students attended. When school was not in session, international students were allowed to work 40 hours per week. Unlike for off campus employment, international students could work anywhere on campus and their jobs did not have to be related to their majors (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 38). In order to start working, international students must apply for a

U.S. social security number. When applying for a social security number, international students had to prove their immigration status by providing an unexpired passport as well as a certificate of eligibility for nonimmigrant student status, also known as I-20 provided by the university, and their arrival and departure records through the I-94 form. International students must have received a job offer to apply for a social security number and provide proof through job description, employment dates, and location (U.S. Social Security Administration, Work Eligibility, n.d.).

Off campus employment was extremely restricted. International students could only work off campus after receiving a work authorization from the institution's Designated School Officer (DSO). DSO were responsible for international students attending the university in terms of compliance with the U.S. government: "Although it is extremely rare, it is possible for an institution to lose the permission of the federal government to hire international students due to excessive or extreme failures to comply with federal laws" (Mcfadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 39). After completing one academic year at an institution, international students were eligible for a work authorization called Curricular Practical Training (CPT). This work authorization allowed international students to work off campus "to receive course credit for their employment through an established school program" (Borovska, 2016, p. 42). With CPT, international students must find employment within their field of study. CPT was authorized by the DSO of the institution (Mcfadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 39).

According to USCIS, international students were eligible for two types of work authorizations called Optional Practical Training (OPT). The first type was pre-completion OPT. International students who have been enrolled at a U.S. university could

participate in pre-completion OPT and work up to 20 hours per week while school is in

session and 40 hours when school is not in session. After completing a degree,

international students had the ability to apply for post-completion OPT which allowed

international students to stay in the United States and work in an area related to their field

of study (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 39). USCIS tracked the number of months

international students worked on OPT. All international students are eligible for 12

months of OPT, pre-completion and post-completion per degree:

> If you participated in pre-completion OPT, USCIS will deduct that
>
> amount of time from your post-completion OPT authorization period. For
>
> example, if you participated in 10 months of pre-completion OPT, you
>
> would be eligible for only up to 2 months of post-completion OPT.
>
> (USCIS, 2018b, para 6).

In 2008, the Department of Homeland Security implemented another type of OPT for

students who earned a degree in Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

(STEM). International students in STEM fields could receive 17 additional OPT months

after completing the first 12 months of regular OPT. In 2016, the policy changed again,

allowing international students in STEM fields to add another 24 months of OPT

extending their overall OPT status to 36 months (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 39).

After graduation, international students who wished to remain in the United States

after their OPT had to find an employer willing to sponsor them for an H-1B visa, one of

the most popular categories of non-immigrant visas for specialty occupations for

individuals with a bachelor's degree (Borovska, 2016, p. 35; McFadden & Seedorff,

2017, p. 40) which allowed individuals to work for one employer for up to 6 years

(Callan, 2016, p. 335). To apply for and H-1B visa, the employer must prove to USCIS

that the employee will be paid a prevailing wage set by the U.S. government based on the

position and the geographic location where the employee will work (Borovska, 2016, p.

37; McFadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 40). In additions to the prevailing wage, the

employer and employee must prove that the position meets at least one of the eligibility

criteria dictated by USCIS:

> Bachelor's or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum
>
> entry requirement for the position, the degree requirement for the job is
>
> common to the industry or the job is so complex or unique that it can be
>
> performed only by an individual with a degree, the employer normally
>
> requires a degree or its equivalent for the position, or the nature of the
>
> specific duties is so specialized and complex that the knowledge required
>
> to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a
>
> bachelor's or higher degree. (USCIS, 2017, Eligibility Criteria,)

The number of H-1B visa available per year is limited. The Immigration and

Nationality Act 1990 implemented the H-1B visa and the restriction of 65,000 visas

available every year. In 1999, the American Competitiveness and Workforce

Improvement Act increased the number of visas available to 115,000. In 2001, the

American Competitiveness in the Twenty-First Century Act increase the number of visa

to 195,000. In 2004, however, the number of visa decreased to 65,000 as it originally was

(Callan, 2016, p. 338). The available visas are distributed as follows: 65,000 visas for

individuals with a Bachelor's degree and an additional 20,000 visas for individuals with

an advanced degree such as Masters and Doctorate (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 40;

Shih, 2016, p. 124). Employers must apply on April 1st by sending the required

documents to USCIS for their employees to be considered for an H-1b visa: "This means

large numbers of H-1B applications flood in at the same time; in recent years far more

than the number of H-1B visas available. This meant that the cap could quickly be

reached soon after April 1st" (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 40). Higher education

institutions, non-profit organizations, and government research organizations are

considered exempt organizations and do not have a limit on how many H-1b visas to file

and can file at any time of the year (Borovska, 2016, p. 37).

USCIS often received a higher number of H-1B applications than the number of

available visas: "This is the 16th straight year the supply of H-1B visas has been

exhausted" (Anderson, 2018, para. 3). USCIS uses a random selection process to select

the petition that will be reviewed for approval or denial. USCIS first conducts the random

selection for the 20,000 masters or higher degrees and then conducts the selection for the

65,000 visas for individuals with bachelor's degrees. Once received by USCIS, all

applications were given a numerical identifier randomly selected by a computer (USCIS,

USCIS Runs Random Selection Process For H-1B Petitions, 2008). The H-1B process

and lottery are challenging and stressful for employers and international students:

> For many immigration attorneys, U.S. companies, and foreign nationals,
>
> April 1 is one of (if the not) most stressful days of the year. Aptly known
>
> as the "April Fool's Day" to the rest of the nation, April 1 has become one
>
> of the busiest, most taking, and comically challenging days in the practice
>
> immigration law (Callan, 2016, p. 335).

Sponsoring international students is expensive (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017, p. 40; Onyenekwu, 2017, p. 1122). Employers are responsible for paying the following fees: $1,500 for employers with more than 25 full-time employees, $500 for fraud prevention and detection, $460 for the form I-129, petition for a nonimmigrant worker (USCIS, 2018d, H and L Filing Fees for Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker). These fees equaled to $2,460 per applications and do not include lawyer fees. Due to the difficult process and cost that employers have to face, companies do not want to hire foreign individuals needing an H-1B visa (Bound et al., 2015; Onyenekwu, 2017, p. 1122).

When a H-1B application is picked by the random selection, the application moved forward to being processed by a USCIS agent. Making it through the random selection does not guarantee that the visa will be granted. Agents reviewed the documentation provided and could either approve or deny the petition, or in some cases, send a letter to the attorney and the employer to ask for additional documentation. This process is known as Request for Evidence. The employer and the attorney have only a few days to respond to the agent's inquiry by sending the correct documentation back to the agent. If the application is approved, the foreign national will have a change of status to an H-1B holder on October 1st (Callan, 2016, p. 341).

Best Practices

International students faced unusual challenges during their stay at U.S. institutions and after they graduated (Cavazos, Lens, & Varunee, 2011), such as academic, immigration, economic, integration, wellness challenges (Austell, 2013), language barriers, financial problems, career concerns, and cultural adjustment (Lee, 2013). Staff,

faculty members (Urban & Bierlein Palmer, 2016), international advisers (Austell, 2013),

career counselors (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007), and counselors needed to be aware of

the challenges international student faced when working with them. Yan and Sendall

(2016), pointed out that international students faced different challenges than U.S.

students on an academic and non-academic standpoint. The authors emphasized the

importance of tailored First Year Experience (FYI) programs for international students to

help them "Familiarize themselves with academic resources, and expectation,

understanding American culture, making more American friends, and improving their

English language skills" (p. 1).

From an academic standpoint, international students faced the challenge of

academic dishonesty and plagiarism due to language barrier and the difficulty of

paraphrasing (Isbell et al., 2018). Informing international students about plagiarism was

not enough and professors should have provided international students with the necessary

skills to understand and avoid plagiarism (Adhikari, 2018). Fass-Holmes, (2017), pointed

out that students with low English proficiency could be at a disadvantage and may be

more incline to cheating therefore, instead of punishing the students for cheating, the

author recommended that universities should make cheating unnecessary. Doss et al.

(2016), recommended the use of workshops for new international students to explain the

concept of plagiarism and the consequences of doing it. Therefore, this could prevent

students from plagiarizing and could allow them to be more successful academically.

On a cultural and social standpoint, international students should engage with

domestic student, as it would be helpful in learning the language as well as understanding

the U.S. culture (Prieto-Welch, 2016). Urban & Bierlein Palmer (2014) suggested

incorporating international perspectives in classes where international and domestic students could learn about each other's culture (p. 320). On campus events can also promote multi-culturalism and improve engagement between international and domestic students (Cho & Yu, 2015). International students wanted to be part of cultural events where "U.S. students try to get to know them and learn about their culture and having U.S. students ask them questions about their culture" (Urban & Palmer, 2014, p. 319).

Lee, (2013), recommended to extend staff and faculty members' international competence by travelling to other countries and learning about different cultures to help international students with their acculturation process. For example, Onyenekwu (2017) pointed out that staff and faculty members should learn how to pronounce international students' names. Shortening names for convenience was not acceptable and students would appreciate staff and faculty members trying to pronounce their names.

The University of Missouri, Columbia, created a career center for international students to meet their needs. International students received special attention when looking for employment such as resume writing, job searching, vocational challenges, cultural and language barrier, and more importantly, legal requirement such as work authorization information. This career center was assisting international students with understanding the differences between the United States and their home countries when looking for a job. The career center for international students was providing tailored career counseling based on the student's home country and culture and had different communication methods (face-to-face and written) to reach out to as many international students as possible (Yang, Wong, Hwang, Heppner, 2002, p. 204). Crockett & Hays (2011) pointed out that universities have been emphasizing their time and budgets on

career counseling for American students but are now understanding that career

counseling for international students is as important (p. 77). However, "career services

and higher education professionals should have a greater understanding about the career

development needs of international students on their campus before implementing "one

size fits all" programing" (Balin et al., 2016, p. 1059).

Understanding international student cultures was also a valid recommendation for

immigration purposes. Staff and faculty members, and especially career counselors

needed to be more aware of the immigration challenges international students faced when

coming to the U.S. (Balin et al., 2016). The lack of knowledge from counselor regarding

immigration restrictions led to the inability to assist students with job searching (Cavazos

et al, 2011), or assisting them with their social and professional lives (Reynolds &

Constantine, 2007). On a career development standpoint, institutions can have a critical

role in helping international students with career decisions and job searching. McFadden

& Seedorff, (2017), pointed out that career services should have resources for

international students such as career advising services, workshops, and career fairs. In the

study, the authors pointed out the concept of parallel planning with the students where the

career services staff of the university would help the students applying for jobs in the

United States but also in their home country and elsewhere in the world.

Behrens, (2009) argued that career workshops are a helpful way to assist students

and prepare them for after graduation. In the study, international students were asked to

complete a survey at the end of the workshop to provide feedback. Students pointed out

that there were other aspects of interviews that they would like assistance on, such as:

salary negotiation, interview attire, training on academic versus industry interview. Perry

(2016) discussed the idea that international students, especially Chinese students would rather talk to a specialist than an advisor which is different than U.S. students who focus the advice and not the person who was giving it to them. In addition, using real experiences can also be helpful. Lee (2013), recommended that international offices kept track of the jobs international students get to provide career counseling to other students.

Recommendations to help international students in U.S. institutions were to ensure that university employees were trained on working with international students (Cavazos et al 2011; Lieb, 2016; Urban & Bierlein Palmer, 2016; Yan & Sendall, 2016; Yao & George Mwangi, 2017). From a financial standpoint, recommendations in the literature showed that Universities in the United States could also help international students with their with their finances by helping them understand the different fees they have to pay and also by "having scholarships for international students or additional financial aid" (Sherry, Chui, Hong, 2010, p. 40).

Conclusion

The current literature showed that international students faced unique challenges when attending U.S. institutions. International students coming from different countries and backgrounds must adjust to the U.S. cultural and social norms as well as a new way of living with limited social support, immigration and financial restrictions, while academically succeeding in a country with different education standards using, in most cases, a different language. The current literature discussed the difficulties international students faced when finding a job after graduation in the United States. The main difficulties presented were related to immigration restrictions. One of the main recommendations to assist international students is to have staff and faculty members

have a better understanding of international student challenges. International student

challenges do not fit into a "one-size fit all" advising or counseling method (Reynolds &

Constantine 2007, p. 348; Makela Panke & Rooney, 2014, p. 69). Challenges can vary

per students' country of origin, academic majors, and financial support.

Chapter Three: Research Method and Design

Purpose

The purpose of this mixed method study was to explore international students' career readiness in a private, four-year university in the Midwest. The study targeted international students who graduated in May 2018. The researcher used three different factors to determine the potential impact on international students' career readiness in the United States. The factors were financial support after graduation, choice of academic major, and country of origin. To gather data, the researcher emailed graduating international students a Likert scale and open-ended question survey. The survey included an invitation to be part of an individual interview and/or a focus group. The results from the survey provided quantitative data used to answer hypotheses and descriptive data used as qualitative data to answer research questions. The researcher examined the quantitative data using the different answers provided by students based on their financial support, academic majors, and country of origin. The researcher used a t-test of independent means and an ANOVA to analyze the quantitative data. The interviews and focus group provided the researcher the opportunity to meet the students and learn more about their own career readiness. The purpose of having interviews and a focus group was to examine common themes and find similarities as well as differences between interviews and the focus group as international students are more comfortable in groups (Singaravelu et al., 2005). The researcher analyzed the quantitative data by finding recurring themes and compared them with answers from the individual interviews and answers from the focus group.

Research Site and Participants

This study was conducted at a private four-year higher education institution in the Midwest. This institution was founded in the 1800s and currently offers over 130 degrees. The institution has a total population of 10,000 students, including 750 international students from over 70 countries. The institution's mission is to prepare its student for a successful future through real-life experience while pursuing a degree. The participants of this study were international students in their final semester before graduation. The study was open to all student level (Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate) and participants could volunteer for an individual interview and/or a focus group. The researcher then contacted international students who wished to participate to schedule the interviews and focus group at a convenient time for the students. The participants' identities were protected by referring to students as student 1, 2, 3 and so on.

Instruments

The researcher used two preexisting surveys to create the survey sent to international students. The first survey used was from a study in 2008 by So-Hyun Joo, Dorothy Bagwell Durban, and John Grable entitled, "The Academic Impact of Financial Stress on College Students." This study's results concluded that there was a relationship between students' financial stress and academic performance. The authors pointed out that students with stress due to financial difficulties were more likely to not continue their education (Joo, Bagwell Durband, & Grable, 2008). This instrument was not used for other purposes than for this study. This survey was used to gather data on international students' financial support. The second survey used by the researcher was the Career

Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ). This survey was created by Itamar

Gati and Samuel H. Osipow to find the difficulties people may encounter when making

career decisions. This instrument was used several times in other studies: Albion &

Forgarty (2002) analyzed the different factors influencing career decision making in

adolescents and adults using the CDDQ. The study showed that regarding career

readiness, all ages are impacted by similar factors. However, the authors pointed out that

individuals with experience had less difficulties than students without experience.

Vahedi, Farrokhi, Mahdavi, and Moradi, (2012) validated the Career Decision-Making

Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ). A total of 511 undergraduate students participated in

their study. The authors reviewed three factors: lack of confirmation about the self,

inconsistent information, lack of information and lack of readiness factors. The CQQD

was validated because the questionnaire measures the three factors. Amir, Gati, &

Kleiman (2008) explored how to interpret individual responses of the CDDQ. The studies

involved numerous career counselors and experts to review the CDDQ. Hurley, 2013

explored relationships between career decision-making difficulties, self-efficacy, and ego

identity status. In this study the author found a significant relationship between career

decision making difficulties and college self-efficacy.

This survey was used to gather data on international students' ability to make

career decisions, find potential difficulties when making these decisions and link these

findings to the themes explored in this study such as students' academic majors and

country of origin. The two surveys were merged to create the survey sent to graduating

international students. The quantitative data gathered through the survey on financial

support was analyzed using a t-test of two independent means and the data gathered on

academic majors and career readiness was analyzed using an ANOVA. The interview

questions were designed using the researcher's personal experience of entering the

workforce after graduation and the different challenges faced at that time. The researcher

also used her own knowledge regarding career readiness based on the numerous

discussions with international students in the workplace setting regarding career

readiness. The interview script was composed of three sections; the first section allowed

the participant to introduce himself or herself, the second section was about plans that

students had after graduation, the third section was about the participant's knowledge,

skills, and ability to enter the workforce. These questions provided an overall

understanding of the student's background, professional desires, as well as strengths and

weaknesses with regards to career readiness.

The focus group questions were similar to the interview questions as the

researcher wanted to know whether or not questions asked individually would have

different answers than questions asked to a group of participants. International students

are more comfortable in group sessions during career counseling sessions and are willing

to share more information when other international students are present because they can

support each other (Singaravelu et al., 2005). The questions were more direct than the

questions in the interview to trigger a rapid response leading to a discussion amongst the

students. The qualitative data gathered was analyzed by finding recurring themes and also

analyzed by finding possible answers that may differ from the interviews and the focus

group.

Methodology

This study explored the career readiness of graduating students from a university in the Midwest. The researcher used a mixed-method research design for this study. As Onwuegbuzie & Wisdom (2014) explained qualitative and quantitative approaches answer different sets of questions and "neither research approach alone is useful for answering combinations of questions that involve both sets of questions" (p. 679). In order to answer both sets of questions (who, what, where, why, and how), the researcher opted for a mixed-method study. The researcher first researched existing surveys on how to measure career readiness. The Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire seemed to correspond to the researcher's needs for the study. The researcher emailed the contact person on the survey to utilize this questionnaire. A few days later, the researcher was granted authorization to use the questionnaire. Simultaneously, the researcher emailed the authors of the article entitled "The Academic Impact of Financial Stress on College Students" to receive authorization to use their instrument. The authors positively responded and provided a copy of the instrument. The researcher then created the final survey using both instruments on the software *Qualtrics*. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board of the university, the researcher emailed the university's Office of International Students and Scholars to receive a list of graduating international students for May 2018. The Director of the Office of International Students and Scholars provided the researcher a list of graduating international students without names or any identifiable information.

Due to internal university regulations, the researcher was not allowed to email the students directly. Therefore, the survey was sent by the Director of the Office of

International Students and Scholars. The survey was open for a total of 4 weeks and

reminders were sent by the Director on weeks 2 and 3. Students who wished to

participate in the survey were first asked to sign off on the consent form outlining the

purpose of this study and provided additional information on the survey. The researcher

needed 32 responses to move forward with the study. A total of 38 students completed

the survey and an additional 17 students did not finish the survey. The survey was

composed of open-ended questions as well as Likert Scale questions. The final question

of the survey was an invitation to an individual interview and/or a focus group. The

participants were invited to leave their email address for the researcher to contact them to

set up an interview or to provide the date and time for the focus group. All interviews and

focus group were held in a central location of campus for easier access. In addition, the

researcher scheduled these events outside of class and work hours to accommodate

students.

      The researcher recorded all interviews and focus groups, which were later

transcribed using an online transcription company. The researcher read the interviews and

the focus group once while listening to the recording to ensure the accuracy of the

transcription. The researcher had to correct a few minor errors during this process. The

errors were mainly due to the participants' accents leading to mispronunciation of words.

The researcher then listened to the interviews and the focus group twice and read the

transcriptions three times to find key words and word repetitions to create themes. The

researcher used the pawing method to find key phrases within the qualitative data. This

method included highlighting key phrases to link them together with common statements.

These phrases were then color coded for the researcher to go back and analyze the

sentences one color at a time to create themes. The researcher also used the compare and contrast method to find differences and similarities between the interviews and the focus group to indicate whether or not international students provided different responses when alone and in a group setting. The researcher then created an outline with the different themes and subthemes found in the qualitative data. The descriptive data from the survey was also analyzed to match the themes to provide additional information and validity to the themes.

The researcher used grounded theory as an approach to this study and developed a model on career readiness. This model presented a cycle of the post-graduate stages of international student career readiness based on the quantitative and qualitative data gather during the study. A description of the model later in this dissertation.

Analysis

The research questions for this study were based on three different components affecting international students' career readiness; financial support, academic major, and country of origin. For financial support, the researcher analyzed quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was based on the survey responses provided by the students. The researcher used a t-test of two independent means to find a relationship between students receiving financial support after graduation and preparation to enter the workforce. The quantitative data was used to have a better understanding of international students' view of financial support and the impact it has on them. For academic major, the researcher utilized quantitative and qualitative data to find a relationship between academic majors and career readiness of international students. The data provided three different groups of academic majors and the researcher used an ANOVA to identify any

differences in career readiness based on academic major. The qualitative data provided an

understanding of the university's support to international students based on their

academic major as well as the skills and knowledge students had before graduation and

entering the workforce. For country of origin, the researcher used qualitative data from

individual interviews and the focus group, as well as descriptive statistics to find common

themes regarding immigration restrictions, and the desire to return to their home country

after graduation.

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between financial support received by

international students and perceived career readiness.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between international student's

academic majors and perceived career readiness.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does financial support affect international student's

career readiness?

Research Question 2: How do academic majors impact international student

career readiness?

Research Question 3: How does an international student's country of origin

impact career readiness?

Reflexivity

According to Greene (2014), reflexivity was recognized as a method for

researchers to "reach a deeper level of introspection that may assist them in the narration

of their participant's stories" (p. 1). Reflexivity allows researcher to distance themselves

from the study and the participants in order to limit subjectivity. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) argued that reflexivity was linked to ethics.

> Reflexivity is something that most qualitative researchers are aware of and incorporate into their research practice; it is not a new concept. However, what we suggest is that its meaning be expanded so that reflexivity be considered and enacted as a way of ensuring not just rigorous research practice but also ethical research practice. Being reflexive in an ethical sense means acknowledging and being sensitized to the micro ethical dimensions of research practice and in doing so, being alert to and prepared for ways of dealing with the ethical tensions that arise (p. 278).

Reflexivity was known to generate credible data and findings (Darawsheh, 2014) and was used to understand how the researcher's background, in this situation, being an international student, may have affected this study. The reflexivity piece was used to explore how the questions generated during the interviews and the focus group limited subjectivity. The researcher was closely connected to the study due to the researcher's background and profession. As an international student and an employee frequently working with international students on career decisions, immigration, and professional development, the researcher could create relevant interview and focus group questions based on personal and professional experiences.

Summary

This chapter presented the methodology for this mixed-method study. The researcher focused the study on graduating international students from a private university in the Midwest and whether or not its international students were ready to enter

the workforce after graduation. The researcher utilized three factors to determine a

potential impact on international students: financial support after graduation, academic

majors, and country of origin. This mixed-method study was created to receive data from

graduating international students and also to meet with these students in order to

understand their challenges, needs, and perceived career readiness. The following

chapter will present the results gathered during this mixed-method study.

Chapter Four: Analysis

Introduction

  This study explored international students' career readiness during their final semester at a four-year private institution. International students scheduled to graduate in May 2018 were emailed a survey composed of a Likert scale and open-ended questions on career readiness. The survey included questions on student's demographics, financial stability and support, academics, and overall career readiness. The survey was anonymous and distributed by the director of the Office of International Students and Scholars of the university. Additional emails were sent to all students to remind them to take the survey before the end of the semester. The researcher analyzed the gathered data to examine the possible relationship between financial support of international students and academic majors and perceived career readiness. This chapter presents the participants of the study, provided an analysis of the quantitative data using t-tests and ANOVA as well as an analysis of the qualitative data through recurring themes found by the researcher.

  This study explored how financial support, academic majors and country of origin impacted international students 'perceived career readiness. International students faced different challenges while studying in a U.S. institution. These challenges however, were known by administrators who could provide resources for international students to succeed academically and socially. This study looked beyond these challenges to suggest a better understanding of what international students faced after graduation. The study was held on the university campus to reach as many international students as possible. Interviews and the focus group were scheduled at a central location on campus for easy

access and at a convenient time for the students. The researcher scheduled all meetings

during the evening to accommodate the students. Some students could not meet with the

researcher due to personal and academic schedule conflicts despite the numerous

attempts to set up meetings with different time options.

Research Questions and Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses and research questions were addressed in this study:

Hypotheses:

N1: There is no relationship between financial support received by international

students and perceived career readiness.

N2: There is no relationship between international student's academic majors and

perceived career readiness.

Research Questions:

RQ 1: How does financial support affect international student's career readiness?

RQ 2: How do academic majors impact international student career readiness?

RQ 3: How does an international student's country of origin impact career

readiness?

Based on the results from the survey, individual interviews and focus group, the

researcher presented the findings in this chapter by using statistical tests to analyze the

quantitative data and by finding common themes emerging from students' responses to

survey, interview, and focus group questions.

Participant Characteristics

This study examined three factors related to career readiness (financial support, academic major, and country of origin). This study explored whether or not these factors impacted career readiness of international students. There were 55 participants in the study, with 38 (69%) completing the entire instrument. The first factor analyzed was financial support of international students and its impact on career readiness. This study explored whether students who will continue to receive financial support were more prepared to enter the United States' workforce than students who will not receive financial support. Financial support can be from relatives or from the students themselves (savings). The results from the survey showed that 22 students out of 37 stated that their financial support will not remain after graduation. However, 15 students stated that their financial support will remain after graduation.

The second factor was academic majors impacting career readiness. This section analyzed whether students with certain academic majors were more prepared than students with other academic majors. For the purpose of this study, the academic majors were grouped together to facilitate statistical tests to answer hypotheses. A total of 22 students had a Business degree, 3 students had a Communication degree, and 11 students had a Science degree. The third factor was country of origin which explored whether international students from certain countries were more prepared than international students from other countries. For the purpose of this study, international students were grouped together based on their country of origin: 10 of the 37 students were from Asia (Japan, China, Mongolia, Azerbaijan, and Vietnam), 13 students were from North, Central, and South America (Canada, Mexico, Panama, Honduras, Antigua & Barbuda,

Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia), 13 students were from Europe (United

Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Slovenia, and Poland), and one student

was from Africa (Nigeria), but was removed from the data as the student could not be

grouped with other countries.

Null Hypothesis 1

As previously seen in Chapter Two, a significant number of international students

faced financial challenges when studying in the United States due to the high tuition cost

and lack of financial aid. International students had different financial resources to pay

for tuition and personal expenses. Often, family members offered financial support to

international students. However, in some cases, students provided for themselves or used

loans to pay for their education expenses. After graduation however, the financial support

international students had, remained or changed. Null Hypothesis 1 explored a potential

relationship between financial support or lack thereof and perceived career readiness.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between international student financial

support and perceived career readiness.

To test this hypothesis, the researcher used two questions from the survey sent to

international students. Question 17: "Will your financial support remain after graduation

when you start your career in the U.S.?" had two possible answers: Yes or No. Question

57: "How would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision? -

Please select the number which best describes you." The participants were given a 1 to 10

Likert scale to answer this question. 1 as not difficult and 10 as very difficult. The

researcher ran an F-test of two variances to know whether or not the variances were

equal. The F-value was 1.505 and the p-value was 0.44. Since the p-value was greater

than 0.05 alpha, a t-test of two independent means was ran using the scores of students

answering Yes to question 17 and scores of students answering No to question 17. Table

1 displayed the results of the two-sample t-test of independent means. The t-value was

2.569 and the p-value was 0.0146 which was less than 0.05, therefore the Null

Hypothesis was rejected. The researcher concluded that based on the data from the

survey, international students without financial support after graduation have more

difficulties in making a career decision than international students with financial support

after graduation.

Table 1

*Results from Two-Sample T-Test of Independent Means on Financial Support of
International Students Before and After Graduation.*

Parameter	Financial Support Will Not Remain After Graduation	Financial Support Will Remain After Graduation
Sample Mean	5.1818	3.6667
Sample Standard Deviation	1.8932	1.5430
Sample Size	22	15
Df	35	
T-Value	2.569	
P-Value	0.0146	

Null Hypothesis 2

This hypothesis examined the relationship between international students'

academic majors and perceived career readiness. This data was analyzed to know if

international students' choices of academic majors had an impact on career readiness.

International students' responses to the survey were grouped in three academic degrees to find a relationship with the students' readiness to enter the U.S. workforce.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between international student's academic majors and perceived career readiness.

To test this hypothesis, the researcher first grouped the students who participated in the survey in three categories by their academic majors. The categories were composed of Business majors, Science majors, and Communication majors. The researcher ran an ANOVA using the results from the survey question 57: "How would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision? - Please select the number which best describes you" with the three different groups. Table 2 and 3 displayed the results from the survey:

Table 2

Summary of ANOVA on International Students' Career Readiness and Academic Majors.

Groups	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Business	22	103	4.681818	3.274892
Science	3	12	4	1
Communication	11	49	4.454545	5.672727

Table 3

Results of ANOVA on International Students' Career Readiness and Academic Majors

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F_{crit}
Between Groups	1.388889	2	0.6944	0.180	0.8363	3.285
Within Groups	127.5	33	3.86364			
Total	128.8889	35				

The *F*-value was 0.180 and the P-value was 0.8363. This test was conducted with an alpha of 0.05 and the null was therefore not rejected which showed that there was insufficient evidence to suggest that there was a relationship between international students' academic majors and perceived career readiness.

Research Question 1: How does financial support affect international student's career readiness?

To answer this question, the researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze four questions from the survey on financial support and compared them to the final question related to overall career readiness. The results were then compared to the data gathered through interviews and focus group. The first question analyzed was "How satisfied are you with your present financial situation?" Over half of the students who participated in the study shared that they were not satisfied with their current financial situation. The researcher noted that no student answered extremely satisfied to this question. The Likert's scale questions were converted to a 1 to 5 scale where 1 was not satisfied at all and 5 was extremely satisfied. When grouped together, the students scored a 3.05 out of 5 of satisfaction on their present financial situation, which, to follow the scale, would equal to somewhat dissatisfied.

As stated previously, none of the students answered extremely satisfied to the question on present financial situation, however, 14 students answered satisfied to this question. When grouping students together and comparing their results to the final questions: "Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?" the data showed an overall score of 3.71 out of 10. The students who responded that they were dissatisfied with their financial situation had higher scores when rating their degree of difficulty in making a career decision. Based on the data from the survey, it was concluded that international students who are satisfied with their present financial situation have less difficulties making career decisions than international students who are not satisfied with their present financial situation.

The data gathered through the focus group showed similar results. Students on track for graduation pointed out their financial situation was their main focus. Student 3, a business major from Honduras, explained why she was thinking about her financial situation: "Lately, since we're getting so close to graduation, all the time, just because I'm looking for an apartment. My car is breaking so I have to fix it." Student 1, a business major from Mexico, also pointed out the reasons why she is thinking about her personal finances: "And more because you're in a different country, so the difference between the money back in your country and the money back here it makes sometimes worry about it." Interviews and the focus group provided insights on international student's cultural differences as well as understanding of personal finances and responsibilities.

RQ1 Theme 1: Cultural differences regarding financial support from relatives:

The survey question used to answer the first research question was: "How comfortable do you feel about your current personal finances?" The possible answers to this question were converted in to a 1 to 5 Likert's scale where 1 was not comfortable at all and 5 was extremely comfortable. Over half of the students who participated stated that they were not completely comfortable with their current personal finances. When grouped together, international students scored a 2.91 out of 5 which would place the overall feel of comfort on current personal finances between not very comfortable and somewhat comfortable.

These results were then compared to the results of the last question: "Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?" The result showed that students who are not comfortable with their current personal finances have a higher score on their difficulty in making a career decision than students who stated that

they were comfortable with their current personal finances. Based on the data from the

survey, it was concluded that students who are less comfortable with their current

financial situation find it difficult to make career decisions. The focus group revealed that

international students had different views of financial support from relatives. Student 1

was singled out because she expressed that her family could financially support her after

graduation:

> I think I'm going to get some support from my family. It's too much
>
> money. I'm hopefully going to get a job, but I still don't know. I cover all
>
> my expenses, which I think it will not. I probably will ask for support
>
> while getting a full-time job.

> A conversation emerged from this statement related to culture. Student 1

was from Mexico and Student 3 was from Honduras. Student 3 made a point to

explain the differences between the Hispanic culture and other cultures: "In our

culture, Hispanic culture, it's almost a tradition, your parents will help you

through school and once you're out of school."

> However, Student 3, did not receive any support from her family and was not able

to ask for financial support from her family after graduation:

> In my case, I paid for my own school, too. Undergrad, I got a full
>
> scholarship. Right now, at grad school, I pay for it myself. And I'm not
>
> going to lie, I would've loved it if my parents would have been like, "Hey,
>
> here. Here's a $500." But I think that I got to a point where I had already
>
> got in that far by myself that even if they had offered, I would have been

like, "No, thank you," because I had already gotten that far, and so I really,

really want to at least do this by myself and for myself.

Student 4, who was from China also pointed out that culturally, Chinese students

receive financial assistance while attending school:

I think it's also a different cultural thing. In my country in China, high

school students don't get work. Their job is to study and get a nice exam

score. And so, even if I decided that I go to a university in China, there's

some sort of financial support I have to have from my family. That's how

things work back in China. It's just that paying a lot more to support me

going to study abroad or paying much less for support me to study in

China, so that's the major differences.

Similarity, Student 2, who was from Germany had a similar response:

Everyone is different, but I paid all my tuition by myself and I feel so

much more accomplished than asking my family members for help. And I

know I can do it. I don't even like asking people for money. If I want to do

something, if I want to study abroad, I think, I made a plan and I commit

to the plan and I said, "I'm going to work so I can cover the bills and

tuition." And I want to keep doing that for the rest of my life.

To summarize these results, it appeared that financial support was guided by the

culture of the countries students were from. In Central American countries as well as

China, the financial support after graduation from family member was normal and

common if the family could afford to assist the student. However, for European country,

in this situation Germany, it was not common for families to financially support students after graduation.

RQ1 Theme 2: Financial autonomy after graduation

The third question analyzed to answer the first research question was "How comfortable do you feel about your personal finances after graduation?" The possible answers to this question were converted in to a 1 to 5 Likert scale where 1 is not comfortable at all and 5 is extremely comfortable. Over half of the students stated that they were not comfortable with their personal finances after graduation. When grouped together, international students scored 2.70, which would place the overall feeling at not very comfortable and somewhat comfortable. During individual interviews and the focus group, students expressed similar feelings towards finances after graduation. Student 1 pointed out the difficulty of financially supporting herself after graduation. "I will need support because I might not be able to pay a rent here or something like that. So yeah, that worries me, I'm aware that I will have problems with money when I'm starting." Student 1 shared that she will have financial support from her relatives after graduation.

> I will want to get a job that covers most of my expenses. I'm not expecting
> to cover everything. I will really need support from my parents, or, well, I
> am counting on my parents because I don't think I will find a job right
> away that will cover all of my expenses.

Other participants had a different view regarding finances after graduation. These students pointed out that they will not receive financial support from relatives after graduation. Student 2 expressed the necessity of finding a job after graduation to pay for her expenses and support herself: "I will get a teaching job and from my salary, I will pay

off my bills." In the focus group, Student 3 stated that she will "just get a job, cover it [expenses] by myself." Student 4 had a similar reaction by stating that he will be the one supporting himself after graduation, "Not asking money from my parents." These results were then compared to the results of the last question: "Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?" Students who answered extremely comfortable had an overall score of 5 out of 10. Students who answered comfortable had an overall score of 4.44 out of 10. Students who answered somewhat comfortable had an overall score of 3.78 out of 10. Students who answered not very comfortable had an overall score of 4.6 out of 10. Finally, students who answered not comfortable at all had an overall score of 5.6 out of 10. Based on this data, it was concluded that there was no link between how students feel about their personal finances after graduation and their ability to make career decisions.

The fourth question analyzed to answer the first research question was "How would you describe your understanding of personal finances?" The possible answers to this question were converted in to a 1 to 5 Likert's scale where 1 not knowledgeable at all and 5 is very knowledgeable. All students stated that they have some king of knowledge regarding their understanding of personal finances. When grouped together, international students scored a 4 out of 5 which indicated that international students were knowledgeable regarding their understanding of personal finances. These results were then compared to the results of the last question: "Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?" Students who answered extremely knowledgeable had an overall score of 5.11 out of 10. Students who answered knowledgeable had an overall score of 4.21 out of 10. Students who answered somewhat

knowledgeable had an overall score of 4.78 out of 10. Based on the data, the averages were very close to each other which made it difficult to find a link between understanding of personal finances and ability to make career decisions. However, it was important to point out that students who were extremely knowledgeable had more difficulties making career decisions than students who answered that they were knowledgeable or somewhat knowledgeable.

Interview results showed that international students were knowledgeable on their personal finances. Student 2, from Germany, explained during her interview that since she had moved to the United States she had not received any type of financial support from relatives:

> I'm only 25, and I came to the United States, and I paid every single thing
> by myself. So, I'm kind of aware of what's going to be in the future. I
> mean obviously, electricity and water are paid by the university, but I still
> pay tuition, so I kind of count it towards that bill and phone bills. I'm
> aware of that.

Student 3 had a similar answer as Student 2 but pointed out that she learned about personal finances at school:

> I took different personal finance courses in undergrad. I think I'm pretty
> good managing my money. For the past year and a half, I had some money
> saved up. But, for the past year and a half I've paid for school all on my
> own. School and books and whatever expenses I've had. I've got pretty
> good at managing money and at being thrifty and at, you know, doing
> what I can with what I have. It's up to the point where I don't have a lot of

extra money to spend on other things because I'm paying for school. I

think that after that, it'll be very easy for me to be able to manage rent. I

mean, I'm having a roommate because that's the first thing that I decided

to do. It would cut expenses. Not having a roommate, I would've had to ...

it would've been around, to give you a number ... around twelve hundred

just for me. Now that I have a roommate, it'll probably go down to about

half of that.

Student 4 also pointed out that school in the United States had helped him have a

better understanding of his personal finances:

I think I have a relatively good idea about my personal finance, because

like I said, my emphasis was in actuarial science. And it's somewhat

related to my financing, something like that. So, I had my own plan for

saving money, or how much I spend each month, based on my income, or

stuff like that.

From the data collected from the individual interviews and the focus group, it

appeared that international students from the different countries represented in this study,

were knowledgeable on their personal finances and understood the importance of

financial autonomy after graduation.

Research Question 2: How do academic majors impact international student career

readiness?

The purpose of this question was to explore whether students' choice of academic

majors had an impact on career readiness. In this section, the researcher used several

questions from the survey sent to students and analyzed the similarities and differences of

the results based on the participants' country of origin. The researcher also used the information gathered during the interviews and focus group to find recurring themes regarding career preparedness based on academic major. According to the descriptive data from the survey, international students completing a Business major scored higher on career readiness than students with Communications or Science majors. The 8 questions used from the survey for this research questions were from the CDDQ questionnaire which related to occupation preferences, understanding of self-competencies, and understanding of exciting professional opportunities.

Table 3 displayed the results of the survey on academic majors and career readiness. Participants had the opportunity to choose a number between 1 and 10 that answered the question based on their own experience. In this section, 1 meant does not describe me and 10 meant describes me very well. Every question started with "I find it difficult" which meant that the highest the score was, the more students found something to be difficult, which suggested a lack of preparedness. The descriptive data from the survey showed that overall, students with a Business degree had higher scores than students with Communications and Science degrees. Business students had the highest scores on 5 out of 8 questions followed by Communications students with higher scores on 2 questions and Science students with higher scores on one question.

Table 4

Academic Major and Career Readiness

Questions	Business	Communication	Science
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I still do not know which occupations interest me. - Please select the number which best describes you.	3.68	1.33	2.64
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am not sure about my career preferences yet (for example, what kind of a relationship I want with people, which working environment I prefer). - Please select the number which best describes you.	3.23	3	3.27
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about my competencies (for example, numerical ability, verbal skills) and/or about my personality traits (for example, persistence, initiative, patience). - Please select the number which best describes you.	3.05	3.33	3
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the characteristics of the occupations and/or training programs that interest me (for example, the market demand, typical income, possibilities of advancement, or a training programs' perquisites). - Please select the number which best describes you.	3.68	3.33	3.55
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know how to obtain accurate and updated information about the existing occupations and training programs, or about their characteristics - Please select the number which best describes you.	3.86	2	2.82
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I have contradictory data about the existence or the characteristics of a particular occupation or training program. - Please select the number which best describes you.	2.63	1.33	2.46

Continued

Table 4 Continued.

I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am equally attracted by a number of careers and it is difficult for me to choose among them. - Please select the number which best describes you.	3.41	4	3.91
Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision? - Please select the number which best describes you.	4.68	4	4.45

RQ2 Theme 1: Understanding of skills

Based on this data, and the questions on which Business students had a higher

score, international students completing a Business degree seemed to struggle in finding

information on the different careers open to them and how to use the skills and abilities

they have to choose a career path. According to the qualitative data gathered during the

individual interviews and the focus group, results were similar. Two of the students

interviewed were Business students, Student 1 and 3. Student 1 was an undergraduate

student in International Business. She pointed out that her major was very broad because

it includes several different areas of Business:

My field of study is hard for us, for international business, because it's so

big, we can work in many areas that that's why most of employers are like

"well, you're not an accountant, and I need accountant." That's why I'm

doing my MBA also, because I have more knowledge about a specific

topic.

Student 3 was a graduate student in Business Administration and International

Business. She too thought that with a Business degree, students could work in different

areas of Business:

I think that in business you're pretty flexible. You can do marketing ... I

mean, you can do accounting and end up with a marketing job. You can

start accounting and be in a sales job, so I think it just depends on your

flexibility and your ability to adapt because it's all very related. I mean,

when you take the core business classes you look at a little bit of

everything. So, even something that I wasn't too familiar with, I think I

would've felt comfortable in accepting something that had nothing to do

with like marketing or finance, or international business, or anything that I

knew of.

The students pointed out that it was difficult to have a specific idea of the jobs

they could have in the future or which jobs to apply for because they have taken different

classes for their degrees but they did not know one subject in particular that could have

them be prepared for a job after graduation in this specific field.

The survey questions confirmed the two students' feelings about understanding

their competencies and the positions they could hold in the future due to the variety of

career options provided by a business degree with a score of 3.68 for the question "I find

it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the

characteristics of the occupations and/or training programs that interest me (for example,

the market demand, typical income, possibilities of advancement, or a training programs'

perquisites)," a score of 3.86 for the question "I find it difficult to make a career decision

because I do not know how to obtain accurate and updated information about the existing

occupations and training programs, or about their characteristics - Please select the

number which best describes you," and a score of 4.68 for the question "Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?"

The results of the focus group were similar. Students with Business degrees pointed out that it is complicated for them to apply to jobs because of the variety of jobs available:

My undergrad is in international business. We know economics, we know finance, we know accounting, we know marketing. There is so broad [sic], our major is so broad that we cannot just focus to apply for any specific job. That's why I'm doing my MBA also in marketing, I'm focusing marketing because I'm looking more for a marketing area. And I investigate that jobs in marketing are really broad. People are asking for marketing right now. But yeah, right now, I will have doubts in what jobs to apply for because international business is so broad.

Another student with a Business degree explained that she cannot find a job that she is interested in:

I don't know of a job in international business. I have my international business professor, and he dealt with risk in a company but I don't ever see job postings for risk manager or something specific to international business. I don't know that there are jobs specific for international business, what would that be?

Based on the descriptive data from the survey, international students completing a degree in communication had the highest scores for two of the 8 questions. Communication students scored a 3.33 on the question "I find it difficult to make a career

decision because I do not have enough information about my competencies (for example, numerical ability, verbal skills) and/or about my personality traits (for example, persistence, initiative, patience.)" Communication students scored a 4.0 on the question "I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am equally attracted by a number of careers and it is difficult for me to choose among them." Comparing these two questions to the two other groups; Business and Sciences, Business students scored a 3.05 and Science students scored a 3 on the first question. On the second question, Business students scored a 3.41, and a 3.91 for Science students. Table 5 showed the results of the survey questions for the three groups. It can be concluded from this data that Science students had more issues with understanding their personal competencies and abilities as well as finding the career they are interested in.

Table 5

Understanding of Skills per Degree

Questions	Business	Communication	Sciences
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about my competencies (for example, numerical ability, verbal skills) and/or about my personality traits (for example, persistence, initiative, patience). - Please select the number which best describes you.	3.05	3.33	3
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am equally attracted by a number of careers and it is difficult for me to choose among them. - Please select the number which best describes you.	3.41	4	3.91

Science students had the highest score, 3.27 on the question: "I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am not sure about my career preferences yet (for example, what kind of a relationship I want with people, which working environment I prefer)." The data from the interviews and focus group revealed different results. The primary concern a science student was not about career preferences but rather the availability of jobs within the market:

Because of my major. It's very in the niche market, to major in mathematics with actuarial science. It's a field that related with a lot of very difficult exams. One of the characteristics of this kind of job is that being an actuary, a lot of times the employer actually sponsors the employee to take different exams, for traveling to different places, to go to conferences. I know probably what kind of company are hiring these positions, but if it goes into specific details I'm not very sure.

The student mentioned that he was also taking MBA classes:

My major is mathematics with actuarial science, which is very specific job occupations. And the candidates I have to be competing with that go out searching for a job, they require a lot of commitment from the company from the employer, because that's a future investment because they have to actually invest in those employees for them to go to conferences, pass exams, to pay them study hours even though they are not at work, it's just they're being paid because they're studying for exams. That's not the best choice for international student to choose for mathematics major. But when it comes to MBA with a supply chain, which I am in right now, I

think it's very helpful. I'm exposed to all those high-tech management

skills and also, that advanced information that is going on actually in the

real world, so I think it's helpful.

The student felt that MBA classes would help him be more marketable and that it

will be easier for him to find a job. However, the student never mentioned not knowing

his preferences in terms of employment which was the opposite of the survey results for

Science students.

RQ2 Theme 2: Impact of university support on career readiness

This theme was extracted from the individual interviews and the focus group with

international students. The outcomes from individual interviews and the focus group were

slightly different. During the interviews students pointed out different issues or lack of

services they experienced within the school in regards to career services. However, the

students also discussed other recourses they had access to such as the knowledge they

have received from their classes and interactions with academic advisors. Student 1

pointed out that the services from the career services department are not tailored to fit

international students' needs:

Here in the school, they have fairs, career fairs and things like that, but

they are mainly I think for Americans, you know, because all we have to

do a completely different application and that's why many people get

discouraged here, you know, it's like, I'm going to get back to my country

because here's too hard or I have no idea where I can find a job here.

Student 2, pointed out that career services were helpful for students wanting to stay within the same state, which was an issue for her because she had planned to move to a different state to teach after graduation:

> They provide the career fair, but when I went to the career fair, only
>
> schools obviously, that are around this area or St. Louis area, were there.
>
> So, they didn't offer any particular jobs, I mean, Illinois is not so far away,
>
> and they didn't even offer any other job opportunities in Illinois, for
>
> example.

Student 3 pointed out a lack of communication between students and professor and/or academic advisors:

> I haven't really communicated much with my advisor. I don't know of any
>
> portal or anything that [Research Institution] sustains for MBA students
>
> who can kind of look for a job. I don't know of another resource to find a
>
> job that the university offers.

The data indicated that international students had a negative view of the services provided by the university or lack thereof. During the focus group, international students pointed out additional issues that they agreed on, but agreed that the career services department was trying to help students but did not offer sufficient services and services that were helpful to international students. Two students in the focus group indicated that they did not know what types of services the university provided. Student 1 explained that she did not think that the university prepared her to find a job after graduation:

> I would have loved to get some help getting a job, but I don't know that
>
> [Research Institution] even has that service. So, in that sense, I don't feel

like [Research Institution] has done a good job in preparing for the good

job seeking opportunity.

The other student expressed her specific needs:

Maybe give us a little bit more help to us, that's how you have to create

your resume. That's how you have to present yourself in order to have a

chance of getting a job. But yeah, I don't think [Research Institution] has

that.

The students who were part of the focus group then discussed the types of

services that should be provided by career services to assist them in finding a job. Based

on the outcomes of the focus group, students from different countries have the same

needs. Students pointed out that students needed help with networking with local

businesses, creating resumes, applying for job, and preparation for interviews.

One of the students who was an education major and at the time of the study was

completing her student teaching hours, pointed out that within her program, she received

help from professors and speakers:

My student teaching right now, we have people coming in and actually

guide us through different interview questions and not only creating the

resume, also preparing us for the interview and we would actually have ...

I mean, those people were working for [Research Institution] but they

were also these strangers, so you still feel nervous whenever they did the

interview with you and I think they prepared me.

A student with a science major pointed out that the school prepared him to enter

the workforce through the classes he had taken:

I think it helps a lot because back in undergrad, there were actually classes

especially set up for certain actual exams. Which I think is great, because

if I get an A in that class, it means I can already pass the exam. Which is a

different exam outside which I have to pay separately to gain the exam.

But those classes actually give me enough information to pass those

exams, which I think is good. And for MBA, the classes I've taken out,

they always additional information for you to prepare into the workforce,

for getting different certificates and stuff like that. Yeah, the course is

actually helping.

Based on these answers and on what the students agreed, the university prepared

students for the workforce on an academic standpoint. Students are knowledgeable in the

different classes they have taken while being students. On paper and in terms of

knowledge of their field, students were ready to enter the workforce, however, they

needed guidance in the period of time between graduation and their first job outside of

the university. A student explained:

We need more guidance on resumes or questions that are going to be in

the interview. I have no idea. During my first four years here, I have no

idea to sit down and what they're going to ask me. You want to talk about

accounting? I can talk to you about accounting. You want to talk about

finance world? Yeah, I can. But that's not the question they're going to ask

me. How I have to respond to actually make them think I'm actually

prepared for that job.

Another student discussed networking and opportunities:

I think it's the connection that's missing. So even though you got the

education from [Research Institution], the connection to how to get a job

or to prepare you for the workforce. You just have to apply and either you

get it or you don't, but I think there's so much more involved than just

going to the interview and saying yes or no.

The interview responses on whether or not students thought that the university

prepared them for the workforce were quite negative because students did not know

which services were available or were disappointed with the services provided. During

the focus group, answers were different. Students were at first pointing out the lack of

resources and their anxiety with going into the workforce without assistance. However,

the more the students were talking, the more students pointed out how their academic

classes prepared them for the workforce and that the lack of assistance was on

networking, finding jobs, and interview preparedness.

Research Question 3: How does an international student's country of origin impact career readiness?

The purpose of this research question was to explore a link between international

students' country of origin and perceived career readiness. As previously stated, 37

students completed the survey. Participants were from a variety of countries. Table 4

displayed the different countries of the participants. In order to use descriptive data, the

different countries were grouped per continent as they were for the quantitative portion of

this study. Table 6 presented the grouping of these countries. To answer this research

question, the researcher analyzed statistical data based on four questions from the survey

sent to international students. The researcher also found common themes extracted from

the qualitative data gathered through individual interviews and a focus group. The

participants of the individual interviews and focus group represented several different

countries such as Mexico, Honduras, Germany, and China. International students had the

opportunity to share their opinions on career readiness and the different elements

impacting their future careers. The first theme that stood out from the data gathered

through the interviews and the focus group as the impact of immigration regulations on

international student career readiness.

Table 6

International Students Country of Origin

Country	Number of Students
Antigua & Barbuda	1
Azerbaijan	1
Belgium	1
Brazil	1
Canada	2
China	3
Colombia	1
Ecuador	2
Germany	5
Honduras	3
Japan	1
Mexico	1
Mongolia	3
Nigeria	1
Panama	1
Poland	1
Slovenia	1
Spain	2
Sweden	2

Continued

Table 6. Continued.

United Kingdom	1
Venezuela	1
Vietnam	2

Table 7

Grouped countries per continent

Continent	Number of International Students
America	13
Europe	13
Asia	10

RQ 3 Theme 1: Immigration policies and career readiness.

One of the main topics regarding immigration that international students brought forward was the uncertainty of their future in the United States due to immigration regulations. International students seemed to be worried about finding a sponsoring employer during their Optional Practical Training (OPT). International students were allowed to apply for OPT after each degree they earn from a U.S. higher education institution (Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate). Students on OPT could work in the United States for a period of 12 months. After the 12 months period, international students had different choices. They could either leave the United States to go back to their home countries or go to another country, pursue another degree, or get sponsored by a U.S. employer for a work visa such as an H-1b visa to work for this employer for 3 to 6 years. International students pointed out the difficulty of finding an H-1b sponsoring employer.

Student 1, who was from Mexico, shared her anxiety about finding an employer to sponsor her:

I'm actually scared about what I'm going to do, you know, because I don't know where I have to start, because there's even jobs I have seen applications, and they ask, "do you need sponsorship?," and whenever you click it, you are like categorized in another kind of applicant, you know.

Student 1 also pointed out that this anxiety affected other international students around her:

I think that's something that universities have to really, really care about, not only even for internationals but for its students because it's really stressful. What am I going to do if I don't get a job, or even the OPT, nowadays, I don't know if it's because of the government regulations or school regulations, I have friends that don't know what to do because they cannot get a job because their OPT start on a specific day, and they cannot get hired right away because of this. I know it's going to be hard but having a little bit more of help I think is key for actually being really confident and knowing that it's possible to get a job here and a sponsorship afterwards.

Student 4, who was from China was also counting on finding a sponsoring employer:

I already got a full-time job offer, so I'm trying to see if I can work for a year under OPT and then for the next year, fiscal year, maybe, for the sponsorship, H1B Sponsorship. If I can get it, that means I'm lucky. I win the lottery.

In the focus group, the students pointed out the difficulty of finding a job due to their immigration status in the country. The student from China pointed out that they are at the mercy of employers due to the job application process:

> We can pass the exams, we can get certificates as so many other people
>
> can do it. But when it comes to being employed, it's actually employer's
>
> choice. How many job applications have you filled out they ask you, "Do
>
> you need sponsorship?"

The student from Mexico agreed and stated: "Or whenever you are filling out an application, there is a box that said, you need a sponsorship? Yes? No? And if you picked yes, it disappears."

RQ 3 Theme 2: Country of origin had no impact on career readiness.

To answer this research question, the researcher focused on four questions from the survey and compared them to the students' country of origin. The questions selected focused on decision making, self-confidence when making a decision, fear of failure, and decision making related to career paths. Four questions were used where students had to select a number from 1 to 10 to describe themselves. 1 equaled "does not describe me" and 10 was describes me." The four questions were as follows: "It is usually difficult for me to make decisions," "I usually feel that I need confirmation and support for my decisions from a professional person or somebody else I trust," "I am usually afraid of failure," "Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?" The answers of these questions were divided per continents (America, Europe, Asia). Table 7 summarized the compiled scores for each question. Students from Asian countries had the highest scores for the first three questions. Asian students scored of a

4.7 on "It is usually difficult for me to make decisions," a score of 4.8 on "I usually feel

that I need confirmation and support for my decisions from a professional person or

somebody else I trust," and a score of 5.3 on "I am usually afraid of failure."

For the question "It is difficult for me to make decisions," students from Asian

countries scored a 4.7 out of 10 as opposed to a 2.9 for student from North, Central, and

South American countries, and a 4.3 for student from. European countries. For the second

question "I usually feel that I need confirmation and support for my decisions from a

professional person or somebody else I trust," Students from Asian countries scored a 4.8

out of 10 while student from the North, Central, and South American countries scored a

3.5 and European students scored a 3.8. For the third question "I am usually afraid of

failure," students from Asian countries scored a 5.3 whereas students from North,

Central, and South American countries scored a 3.7 and students from European

countries scored a 3.6. However, for the last question that summarized the difficulty in

making career decision "Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in

making a career decision?" European students had the highest score with a 5.2 out of 10

as opposed to a 4.2 for students from North, Central, and South American countries who

scored a 4.2 and European students who scored a 4.5 out of 10.

Table 8

International Students' Decision Making

Questions	America	Europe	Asia
It is usually difficult for me to make decisions.	2.9	4.3	4.7
I usually feel that I need confirmation and support for my decisions from a professional person or somebody else I trust.	3.5	3.8	4.8
I am usually afraid of failure	3.7	3.6	5.3
Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?	4.2	5.2	4.5

Based on the descriptive statistic and the qualitative data gather through the survey, individual interviews, and the focus group, the country of origin of international students had no impact on career readiness. All students who participated in this study seemed to be comfortable with making career decisions regardless of their country of origin. However, the descriptive statistics showed different results. It appeared that students from North, Central, and South America have less difficulties making career decisions than students from Europe or Asia. Asian students have received the highest scores in terms of difficulty in making career decisions. However, the interviews and the focus groups did not provide the same results. Despite the participation of students from different countries, the students from Asia in the interview and the focus group did not seem to have issues making career decisions. In the interview, the student from China knew what was going to be expected of him after graduation when entering the workforce. He also pointed out the skills he needed to improve in order to be more marketable:

> First, I think the most important is communication, to be able to present a
> project, write emails efficiently, talk to coworkers efficiently. That's most
> important. The second one would probably be some computer skills. Right
> now, everybody using PBT Excel. Sometimes companies require you to
> learn the company systems, the ERPs, stuff like that. I think that's the
> skills people are looking for.

During the focus group, the student from China shared that he is prepared for a career but that he has more to learn from experience as opposed to classroom learning:

The nature of my first full-time job is a lot of using of my language ability,

Chinese and Cantonese. That's why I feel like I'm somewhat prepared to

enter in the workforce. But on the other hand, when it comes to the nature

of the business that I was in, I still have a lot more to learn which I cannot

learn from school. That's something that school cannot teach us.

The student from Germany shared during the focus group that she was prepared to

enter the workforce thanks to her education degree that involved student teaching:

Actually, this semester I did student teaching and student teaching is

nothing different than, you're going to school from 8:00 till 4:00 like any

other teacher and you teach. You have your own units. You do everything

your host teacher's doing. So, I completely feel that I am ready for the

workforce.

Other students who have had internships and prior jobs during their degrees, such

as the students from Honduras, pointed out that she was ready for the workforce because

these professional experiences helped her understand the workforce and the expectations

from employers: "I feel like I have a better perspective just because I did this internship

for so long and I know what it's like at a company."

RQ 3 Theme 3: Desire to return to home country after graduation.

This theme pertained to whether or not international students decided to return to

their home countries after graduation and what factors they considered when making this

decision. Data from the survey sent to international students showed different results. For

the purpose of this theme, the countries where the students are from, are grouped together

as previously done for other research questions. Table 8 presented the results from the

questionnaires. Out of 13 students from North, Central, and South America, one student

stated that he or she wanted to return to his or her home country after graduation. For

students from Europe, 6 students out of 13 stated that they wanted to return to their home

country after graduation, and 7 students stated that were not planning to return to their

home countries after graduation. For students from Asian countries, only 3 out of 10

students stated that they wanted to return to their home country after graduation, the rest,

7 students, stated otherwise. It was important to note that the students who were not

returning to their home countries were not necessarily remaining in the United States

after graduation.

Table 9

International Students' Desire to Return to Their Home Country:

Country	Number of students returning home after graduation	Number of students not returning home after graduation
Asia	3	7
America	1	12
European	6	7

The data gathered from the interviews and the focus group provided similar

information on international students' desire to return to their home country after

graduation. Consistent to the data on students from North, Central, and South America,

students from Mexico and Honduras shared in the focus group that going home at any

time was not an option. The student from Honduras shared:

I think in my case, just my experience of the environment back home. I

mean, I live in one of the most dangerous cities in the world. So, it was for

me, it was, try to move somewhere else and do something else. Because I

felt that the environment was not something that I would want to live in.

So, in my case, it prepared me to work really hard and try really hard in

getting a good job or getting an education to set myself somewhere else.

Even if it's not here, I've educated myself so I can go work somewhere

else even if it's not back home.

Through this statement, the student shared that she did not want to return home

and that she could find other opportunities in other countries:

Once my OPT is over I'd have to like get into the visa lottery and see how

that goes. If that doesn't work out and I don't get the work visa and have to

leave, I probably would prefer to go somewhere like Hong Kong or

Shanghai, and I have friends that live there already. So, I could kind of do

that if I wanted to in the future. But going home is not an option right now.

The student from Mexico also shared that she wanted to stay in the United States

after graduation by being sponsored for a work visa:

I hope to get sponsored and staying here, because even the difference of

cultures that I have with my country and here, I think the amount of

opportunities you have here to change everything is huge, and in my

country, you don't have these opportunities, you know.

In the interview, the student from China shared that he wanted to return home

after spending one year in the United States for his OPT. He also stated that another

option for him was to stay in the U.S and pursuit his Master's degree. The student from

Germany also shared in the individual interview that after 6 months of OPT, she wanted

to go back to school of pursue a Master's degree. The data gathered through descriptive

statistics, interviews, and the focus group were consistent and showed that most

international students wanted to remain in the United States after graduation. However,

the uncertainty that they faced, forced them to have several options such as going to another country or pursue another degree in order to stay longer in the United States and to not return to their home country. The data from the interview and the focus group did not provide an explanation as to why international students would want to return home after graduation. However, the descriptive data shows that a total of 10 students out of 37 wished to return to their home country after graduation which represented 27% of the study's population. Additional research will have to be done to understand why some international students wanted to return home after graduation.

Summary

This mixed method study showed the impact of financial support, choice of academic major, and country of origin on international students after graduation. This study showed that the lack of financial support after graduation could have a negative impact on international students' career readiness. This study pointed out that international students who will receive financial support after graduation will be more prepared to enter the U.S. workforce than international students not receiving financial support after graduation. In terms of choice of academic majors, this study revealed that international student's academic majors do not have an impact on international students after graduation. In a similar fashion, this study revealed that country of origin had no impact on career readiness of international students after graduation. However, other factors such as a country's political climate, professional experience received through internships or other employment opportunities, and the different classes offered to international students, had an impact on students perceived career readiness.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Reflection, and Recommendations

Overview

The researcher led a study with graduating international students to explore the students' career readiness. The study aimed to determine factors impacting international students' career readiness. The researcher targeted financial support, academic major, and country of origin as the potential factors impacting career readiness for international students. The researcher first distributed a survey to all graduating international students from the institution to find out if these factors had any impact on international student career readiness. The students were invited to participate in individual interviews and a focus group. The researcher decided to complete a mixed method study to have quantitative and qualitative data to explore the trends in career readiness from the perspective of graduating international students and also capture information and feelings that cannot be gathered through surveys or questionnaires.

This chapter provides a discussion of the results from the study by reviewing the hypotheses and the research questions as well as the results gathered in Chapter Four. This chapter also includes the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for practice. The researcher explored the obstacles international students faced after graduating from a U.S. institution, which resulted in understanding the needs international students have and how a U.S. institution could support this population during this uncertain time. The researcher will also provide recommendation for future research.

Discussion

   Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between financial support received by international students and perceived career readiness.

   This hypothesis analyzed whether or not, from a statistical standpoint, international students' financial support after graduation affected their ability to enter the workforce. The researcher ran a two-sample t-test of independent means using two questions from the survey sent to international students regarding financial support and overall career readiness. The null hypothesis was rejected with a p-value of 0.0146 indicating that financial support does impact career readiness for graduating international students. It is important to point out that the type of financial support was not a factor in this analysis. Financial support can come from family members, friends, or even the student on his or her own through savings or loans.

   This information would suggest the importance of financial support for international students when transitioning from college students to new professional graduates. As stated in previous chapters, financial stability is a challenge faced by a significant number of international students attending U.S. institution. Unfortunately, this challenge remains after international students graduate with the difference that frequently international students receiving financial support during their college years may not receive the same support after they graduate. The expenses students have after graduation are different than the ones they had while being a student. It can be difficult for international students to understand these new expenses and how to make sure they are met with the resources they have. In addition, international students may not be aware of these challenges and the new financial responsibilities they will face after graduation.

After graduating, international students must find a job to pay these expenses, however, there is a transition period between the day they graduate and the day they receive their first check. During this period, students with limited financial support struggle to survive outside the university. Often, international students make living arrangement with other students but sometimes, this time can be so challenging that the students decide to leave the country. The thought of life after graduation can be extremely stressful as it is a very uncertain time with multiple challenges such as finding a job right away for financial stability and immigration regulations that may present obstacles when applying for jobs. Students receiving financial support after graduation are less worried about their finances and therefore can focus more on their professional careers.

Financial challenges and obstacles are different for all students, some students are more affected than others. Because of these differences, it is difficult for institutions to know how to assist students in these situations. Besides assisting students with finding a job quickly after graduation, U.S. institutions and more specifically Career Services should be aware of this challenge when discussing career development or career plans with international students.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between international student's academic majors and perceived career readiness.

The second hypothesis analyzed whether or not international students' career readiness is impacted by their academic major. The researcher ran an ANOVA using three different majors: Business, Communication and Science to determine the impact of academic majors on career readiness. The null hypothesis was not rejected as the p-value was 0.8363, suggesting no relationship between the choice of academic major and career

readiness. Although the null hypothesis was not rejected, in the researcher's professional experience, Science and Education majors seemed to have a much better idea of the job they want to apply for after graduation and did not seem worried about finding a job in a timely manner after graduation. However, Business students were more worried as they did not know for which jobs to apply. International students frequently stated that they had knowledge of different areas of Business but not enough to face employers during interviews to share their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the field of Business.

Although the null hypothesis was not rejected, the results may provide additional information worth considering. As stated previously, a majority of international students who participated in this study were pursuing a Business major: It is also true for the rest of the institution with a majority of international students enrolling in Business classes and pursuing Business degrees. International students seem to be drawn to these majors and there could be a few reasons why. Many international students come to the United States to study because family members or friends are either currently studying in the United States or have received a degree from a U.S. institution. These current students' career readiness may be very high, which may lead them to share the opportunities they have received with future students who would like to follow the same path.

Even though students pursuing a Business major did not seem to be ready to enter the workforce, the numerous career options within the field of Business may be attractive to these international students, which is why more international students pursue Business majors as opposed to other majors offered by the institution. It is important to point out that the sample used was small and results may have been different with more participants. Based on this small sample, the specific majors used also may not represent

the main academic majors international students pursue which could also affect the

results. It would be interesting to run the same tests with added majors and additional

participants to have a better chance to find statistically relevant results.

Research Question 1: How does financial support affect international student's

career readiness?

This research question served to complement hypothesis 1 to have a better

understanding of how financial support affected international students' career readiness.

After pointing out that financial support has an impact on career readiness, it is important

to understand how to assist international students with this challenge. Two themes

emerged from this research question. The first theme was regarding cultural differences

regarding financial support from relatives. The qualitative data gathered showed that

international students wanted to be financially independent after graduation. Despite

cultural differences with some students able to receive financial support after graduation

from family members, most students wanted to find a job to financially support

themselves. The results from interviews and the focus group showed that most

international students did not have any expectation that their parents or family members

would financially support them because they were either financially autonomous and

already responsible for their own expenses or because they did not want to ask for more

help after graduation because their parents or family members already paid for tuition for

their degree and paid for their everyday expenses. However, students from Central

America agreed that it was culturally acceptable to have family members financially

supporting new graduates when entering the workforce.

This information would suggest that cultural background could impact financial support which would therefore impact career readiness. Therefore, the needs of international students after graduation may be different based on the students' background. However, additional research is necessary to take in consideration families' social status in their country of origin. As seen in the focus group, the student from Honduras was not expecting financial support from her family even though it is culturally accepted. The student from Mexico however, was expecting financial support from her family based on cultural norms. Financial support from parents and relatives can depend on different factors and can be different based on the student's country of origin.

The second theme that emerged from this research question was regarding financial autonomy after graduation. It appeared that the primary goal of international students was to find a job to financially support themselves. Even though some students could have received financial support from relatives, all participants wanted to find a job after graduation to become financially autonomous. As seen previously, international students want to have financial autonomy and not depend on relatives.

However, international students also wanted to be financially autonomous in order to stay in the U.S. International students are required to find employment within 60 days after their graduation date to legally remain in the United States. The stress students face during this period of time is tremendous as they must think of financial stability and finding a job rapidly to stay in the United States. The lack of financial support can have a negative impact on students' career readiness, which may result in the students leaving the country. For some students however, leaving the country is not an option. The qualitative data gathered from students from Mexico and Honduras showed that staying

in the United States was their primary goal. Another option they would have is to go to

another country and try to find a job there. The students from these countries pointed out

that due to the unstable economy, corrupted government, and gang violence, going home

was not an option. The students shared that since going home was not an option, despite

having financial difficulties, these students accept the challenges to come after graduation

and are hopeful in their abilities to stay in the United States or start over in a new

country. Students from other countries such as Germany and China pointed out that they

would enroll in another university to pursue another degree is an option for them but that

eventually going back to their home country could be an option.

Researcher's Model: Career Readiness Cycle

Figure 1 represents a cycle developed by the researcher based on the data

gathered during the study. This one-way cycle shows the different stages of international

student career readiness. The first and second stage show the relationship between

financial stability and career readiness. This study suggested through quantitative data, a

relationship between international students' financial support and career readiness.

According to the data, international students with financial support are more prepared to

enter the workforce than international students who do not have financial support. The

second and third stages of this cycle show a relationship between career readiness and

employment. The qualitative data of this study indicated that international students who

were prepared to enter the workforce were more knowledgeable and determined

regarding the steps to follow to enter the workforce, which leads to better chances of

finding employment after graduation. The third and fourth stages show a relationship

between employment and international students staying in the United States for the

duration of OPT. Per immigration regulations, international students have two options to remain in the United States after graduation. They can continue their education by pursuing another degree or they can apply for OPT to work for any employer in the United States for a duration of 12 months (more if the students graduated with a STEM degree). Therefore, when international students find employment in the U.S after graduation, they may have an opportunity to remain in the United States for 12 months or more. Stages four and five show a relationship between international students remaining in the United States for the duration of OPT and financial stability. International students who work in the United States for a long period of time such as OPT have the opportunity to have a stable and recurring income leading to financial stability. The cycle continues with the last step showing that financial stability can lead to career readiness, which, in this case, would mean professional development.
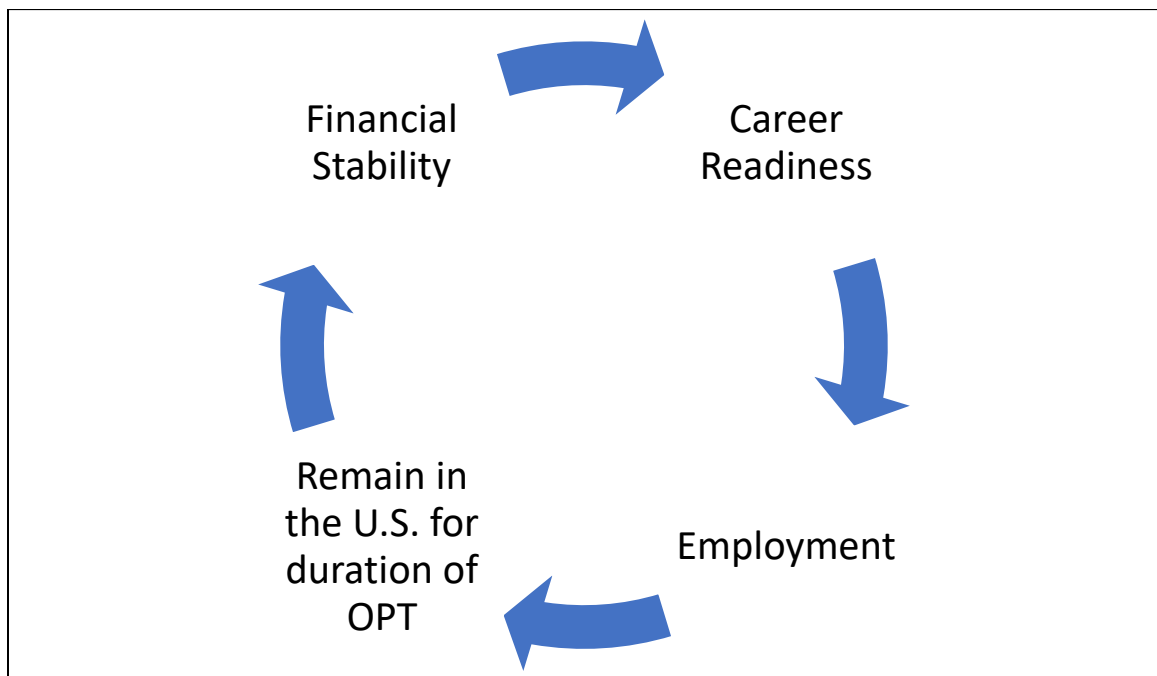
Figure 1: Post-Graduate Stages of International Student Career Readiness.

Research Question 2: How do academic majors impact international student career readiness?

This research question explored how academic majors impacted international student career readiness. This question is also linked to hypothesis 2 in order to analyze the quantitative as well as qualitative data regarding career readiness and academic majors. Two themes emerged from this research question. The first theme was on the international students' understanding of skills. The qualitative data showed that international students had difficulties understanding the skills they had and how to utilize them to their advantage to find employment after graduation. One academic major that stood out was Business. International students stated that the number of different classes required to graduate allowed them to have some understanding of different areas of Business such as Accounting, Finance, and Marketing. However, it is not sufficient when facing an employer during an interview. Their knowledge is too little compared to what employers are looking for when hiring a new graduate, which impacts international students with Business degrees because they are not confident in the skills they have to enter the workforce. It is important to point out that these qualitative results do not match the quantitative results gathered by the survey. The survey showed the highest score of 4.68 out of 10 for Business students on the final question, which rated their career decision making. In the survey, the results showed that Business students were more prepared for the workforce than any other academic major. However, as seen previously, it is the opposite when analyzing the qualitative data gathered.

However, this study revealed that international students with an Education major had no issues with feeling prepared to enter the workforce. The experience Education

students received through student teaching allow them to understand expectations and

skills required to enter the workforce after graduation. The qualitative data showed no

sign of stress of worry from students with Education majors. Even though the quantitative

results through hypothesis 2 showed that academic majors did not have an impact on

international student career readiness, the result from the interviews and the focus group

showed a difference in career preparedness between international students with Business

and Education majors. The subject of internships came up in the focus group as a way to

gain experience and to find employment after graduation. All students participating in the

focus groups, regardless of their academic major pointed out the importance of internship

for career readiness. This experience linked to students with an Education major where

student teaching requires students to complete several hours in a school of their choosing

and to teach a class under the direction of a full-time teacher of the school. This

information would suggest that internships are beneficial for students and may need to be

required for degree completion to assist students, international or domestic, to gain

experience and to prepare them for the workforce after graduation.

It is important to point out that in some instances, internship requirements may be

a challenge for international students. Language barrier, lack of transportation, academic

schedules, and paid on-campus employment can become obstacles to international

students and internships opportunity. For international students struggling with the

English language, it may be difficult to find employment during the first few years of

their degree, which would require these students to complete their internship requirement

during their last semester where frequently their academic schedules may be already very

busy. This study was done in a private university in the Midwest where public

transportation is almost non-existent. Only a few international students have the financial

resources to have a car, which can be challenging for students to commute to and from

their internship location. In addition, international students often participate in on-campus

employment opportunities to help with education expenses. These on-campus jobs can

require students to work several hours per week. Students may not have the time to

complete their on-campus work and internship requirements and if the internship is not

paid, international students who have financial needs may prioritize their paid on-campus

positions to unpaid off-campus internship opportunities.

The second theme for this research question was the impact of university support

on career readiness. This theme emerged from the data gathered from the interviews and

the focus group. The students pointed out the lack of resources for graduating

international students in the Career Services department. The main concern was that the

resources currently available to students were primarily for domestic students. The

participants used career fairs as an example, where there are no H-1b sponsoring

employers and where the companies were mainly located in the Midwest. Some students

shared during the focus group that either they did not know the university had a Career

services department or that they thought it was only for domestic students. Similar results

were found in previous studies such as Reynolds and Constantine in 2007 and Makela

Panke, and Rooney in 2014. These studies pointed out that often, international students

did not visit career services department because they believed that it was only for

domestic students and understood that the department would be able to assist them due to

the different challenge they encountered. This could mean that despite the university's

effort to promote services and assist international students, there seemed to be a

disconnect between the students and the departments providing resources for graduating

students such as the Career Services department. These departments should review their

communication methods to international students to ensure that they are involved in on

campus events pertaining to career readiness.

However, the students found resources in other areas of campus such as with

academic advisors and internship opportunities. The participants pointed out that they

found opportunities talking to faculty members or because their degree's curriculum had

requirements that they needed to complete and resources were available to meet these

requirements. This information would suggest that international students have to find

their own resources to prepare themselves for the workforce. Based on this information

the school should have a better understanding of the types of resources international

students need and have these resources available. It is important to point out that the

needs of international students are very specific and having access to these resources may

be a challenge and expensive to the university. However, having resources available to

international students in one central place would help international students and improve

their career readiness.

Research Question 3: How does an international student's country of origin

impact career readiness?

This research question explored how the country of origin of international

students impacted career readiness. The first theme that emerged from this research

question was immigration policies and career readiness. During the interviews and the

focus group, students spent more time discussing immigration restrictions and how it will

be a challenge for them after they graduate, rather than their education or experience

from their home countries that could have prepared them for the workforce. All of the

international students who participated in the interviews and focus group were well aware

of the immigration restrictions after graduation and the difficulty to stay in the United

States after their one year of OPT. It appeared that in addition to finding a job after

graduation, international students had other concerns regarding their futures in the United

States. Finding an H-1B sponsoring employer can be very difficult due to the current

government administration. The participants were worried to not find an employer

willing to invest in them and sponsor them for a work visa. The cost of a work visa can

be high depending on the lawyer fee, therefore, not all employers are willing to make this

investment for new graduates. In addition, the H-1B lottery is also a source of anxiety for

international students because even though they may have found an H-1B employer, the

chances of getting picked in the lottery are very small. Therefore, international students

must have other plans in mind, if the H-1B route fails. This information suggests that the

immigration policies and restrictions on work visas for non-immigrants impact

international students' stay in the U.S. International students understand the obstacles

imposed by USCIS and can lead to international students returning to their home country

or, in some cases, moving to another country. This finding can be linked to another study

led by McFadden and Seedorff (2017) who pointed out the importance of helping

international students finding jobs in the United States but also in other countries of the

world in case they cannot remain in the United States for an extended period of time.

     The second theme of this research question was related to how the country of

origin of international students had no impact on career readiness. During the individual

interviews and the focus group, all participants regardless of their country of origin were

comfortable discussing their future career decisions and had a specific idea of what they will be doing after graduation. The participants had an understanding of the skills they will need to have in order to succeed in finding a job after graduation. Two students stood out in terms of career readiness. The Chinese student and the German student were very comfortable in making career decisions. They shared that it was because they have had previous work experiences through internships and student teaching. Therefore, it can be concluded that the main factor impacting career readiness is professional experience as opposed to country of origin.

Considering how important professional experience is to career readiness, schools and universities should provide employment opportunities for students to gain experience prior to graduation. This information also means that students who have been in the United States for several years and are about to graduate, have an understanding of life after graduation and are comfortable making career decisions regardless of their country of origin. Considering the small size of the sample, it would be necessary to have additional students participate in this study to know whether or not the country of origin has no impact on career readiness.

The third theme of this research question was desire to return to home country after graduation. The data from the focus group provided some insight regarding career aspirations and dedication based on country of origin. Students from Europe and Asia, stated that if they were not sponsored for a work visa, that they would either enroll at another American university to earn another degree or that they would be able to go home and work in their home country with the degree they earned. However, students from Central America (Honduras and Mexico), shared with the rest of the group that

going back to their home countries was not an option. Due to the unstable economy,

political climate, and gang violence in their countries, these students stated that they will

not return to their home countries. They shared that they would rather go to another

country with new emerging markets than go back home. The other students who were not

from Central America did not understand why they were set on not going home. The

students from Central America proceeded to explain why by sharing personal stories

regarding issues such as coercion within their government, everyday violence, and

overall instability within their country. The students from other countries shared that they

did not know that the situation was so difficult in these countries even though they had

friend from Central and South America.

From this information gathered, it can be concluded that there is a difference in

career readiness from one country to the next. The students from Central America do not

have a choice and therefore will do everything to stay in the United States as opposed to

other students who have the choice and ability to go back to their home country. The

participants however, agreed on one point, which was the impact of the current

administration within the U.S. government. International students were worried that the

Trump Administration may make changes to the OPT and H-1B regulations leading to

the deletion of OPT for graduating students, increase of H-1B filling fees, as well as

decrease of the number of H-1B visas available every year. As seen previously,

immigration regulations are a challenge for international students. However, current

international students are worried that the U.S. government might make changes to their

current policies to reduce the number of international workers based on the beliefs of the

current U.S. president.

Additional Data

The researcher ran additional statistical tests using an ANOVA with the different

academic majors; Business, Science, and Communication with other questions from the

survey that were related to the previous hypotheses stated. Table 10 presented the result

of 13 additional ANOVA.

Table 10

Additional ANOVA Results

Survey questions	ANOVA
If so, to what extent are you confident of your choice (regarding major or future occupation)? - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.3553
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what steps I have to take. - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.2026
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what factors to take into consideration. - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.2303
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don't know how to combine the information I have about myself with the information I have about the different careers. - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.2387
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I still do not know which occupations interest me. - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.2072
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am not sure about my career preferences yet (for example, what kind of a relationship I want with people, which working environment I prefer). - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.328
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about my competencies (for example, numerical ability, verbal skills) and/or about my personality traits (for example, persistence, initiative, patience). - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.9775

Continued

Table 10. Continued

I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what my abilities and/or personality traits will be like in the future. - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.7827
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the variety of occupations or training programs that exist. - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.2339
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know how to obtain additional information about myself (for example, about my abilities or my personality traits). - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.1931
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I constantly change my career preferences (for example, sometimes I want to be self-employed and sometimes I want to be an employee). - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.2514
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I have contradictory data about my abilities and/or personality traits (for example, I believe I am patient with other people but others say I am impatient). - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.2331
I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am equally attracted by a number of careers and it is difficult for me to choose among them. - Please select the number which best describes you.	0.8529

The results show that out of the 13 ANOVA listed, none of the p-values are less than alpha 0.05, which showed that there was insufficient evidence to suggest that there was a relationship between students' academic majors and perceived career readiness even when using other questions from the survey.

Limitations

The main limitation to this study was the population sample. The researcher had to work with a small sample of data as only 38 students completed the survey. Four students agreed to participate in an interview and a focus group, which limited the number of responses. This small sample is also due to the fact that the researcher used a specific population. Instead of addressing all international students in the study, the researcher decided to only focus on international students about to graduate to measure

their career readiness before they entered the workforce. This limitation brings up another

limitation which was when the study was led and when the data was gathered. The

researcher only had a small window of opportunity after receiving IRB approval and

before students left campus after graduation. The interviews and the focus group had to

be done while the survey was still open and during the last few weeks of the semester.

Students were preparing for finals, finalizing projects and papers due within a few days.

This timeline was not optimal to meet with students as they had other engagement,

mostly academic. Many students did not have time to complete the survey or participate

in an interview or a focus group.

Another limitation to this study was the instrument and the delivery method.

When the researcher asked permission to use the CDDQ, one of the requirements was to

sign a document stating that the researcher had to use the survey in its entirety, and that

no changes could be made. This brought up a few issues; the CDDQ only represented the

second half of the survey. Originally, this questionnaire was composed of 40 questions.

With the other half of the survey on financial support, the survey had 60 questions which

took a significant amount of time to complete. As a result, 17 students started the survey

but did not finish it. Another limitation of the CDDQ was that the researcher could not

update the questions with simpler words used on the daily basis for international students

to understand. During several interviews, the researcher was told by international

students that the survey took them a long time to complete because the questions were

difficult to understand. It is possible that some international students who completed the

survey did not understand all of the questions and guessed on the answers they provided.

Another limitation was the delivery method of the survey. Due to internal policies of the university, the researcher was not allowed to email the survey directly to the students. To complete the study, the researcher had to find a third party to email the surveys and send out reminders. It is possible that more international students would have completed the survey if it had been sent by the researcher considering that the researcher works with international students on a daily basis. In terms of demographics, another limitation arose as the interviews and the focus group were primarily composed of females and only a small number of countries were represented. The researcher was unable to generalize on all international students and could only descriptive data to discuss the differences between countries.

Recommendation for Practice

The site where this study took place was a private, four-year institution located in the Midwest with a little under 1000 international students. Institutions should consider the following recommendations to help international students succeed in the United States' workforce after graduation:

1. Have a portion of Career Services dedicated to international students' needs. This is accomplished by creating a partnership with the Office of International Students and Scholar. This international section of Career Services should be composed of trained and knowledgeable staff members dedicated to assisting international students with their unique needs after graduation. This includes, creating relationships with H-1B employers throughout the country, creating relationships with vendors outside of campus such as banks, immigration attorney's offices, apartment complexes, and medical providers. This

recommendation is consistent with the study led by Heppner et al in 2002 to assist international students with career development needs.

2. This study showed that the students' country of origin can have an impact on career readiness. The institution should assess the needs of its students per country to have a better understanding on how to deal with populations from specific countries.

3. The institution should review its curriculum to assess whether or not what is in place amongst the different academic schools is preparing international students for the workforce despite the different needs they have compared to domestic students.

4. All international students should be required to attend at least one mandatory career workshop created by Career Services and the Office of International Students and Scholars during their senior years. This workshop should include, professionalism, resume writing, interview skills, life after graduation (finding an apartment, buying a car, health insurance, personal expenses…), and immigration. The concept of offering workshops to international students to prepare them for the workforce is consistent with a study led by Behrens in 2009 who pointed out that international students can have access to information they will need to succeed after graduation.

5. For recruiting and retention purposes, the institution should promote these resources accessible to future, new, and current students to show that the institution is willing to assist international students while they are attending the university but also after they have graduated.

Recommendation for Future Research

Additional research is recommended to assist international students after graduation when entering the workforce. Future research will be beneficial to international students but also to higher education institutions with recruiting and retention of students. This study had several limitations; therefore, the researcher recommends the following studies to verify and further the findings.

1. The main limitation of this study was the small sample that was used. Only 38 students were involved which limited the opportunity to find statistically relevant results and also made it difficult to generalize the results for all international students because only a small size of the population was represented. For future research, the researcher recommends leading the same study with additional participants to have a better idea of the needs of international students after graduation regarding entering the workforce.

2. This study only included graduating international students to measure their career readiness before entering the workforce. It would be interesting to continue this research by reaching out to these students six months after the study to check on their professional progress and discuss the challenges and opportunities they have encountered when entering the workforce. This would be helpful to assist future international students about to graduate from a U.S. institution.

3. The research site is a private, four-year institution located in the Midwest. The geographic location of the institution may not be representative of other institutions in the United States. The researcher recommends conducting the

same study in a different area of the United States to explore whether or not

geographic location has an impact on international student career readiness.

Recreating this study with other institution can also be helpful to explore the

differences in resources provided to international students in regards to career

readiness.

4. This study reviewed three main factors impacting international student career

readiness, financial support, academic major, and country of origin. Future

research could extent this study to explore other factors such as gender, age,

and number of years in the United States. Similarly, to this study, exploring

additional factors can help understand their impacts on international student

career readiness, and how institutions can use these finding to assist

international students. In addition, domestic students were not included in this

study. As such, the researcher is unable to speak of any similarities or

differences between international and domestic students with the three factors

used for this study.

Conclusion

While attending a U.S. institution, the challenges international students face are

unique and the resources available to them are very small. However, the literature

presents these challenges and provides guidance to institution on how to assist

international students within their school. Unfortunately, the literature does not cover

other challenges international students face. Entering the workforce is a stressful time for

international students as several factors impact international students during this

uncertain time. Institutions must continue to help international students with the

challenges they face after graduation. The creation of programs to help international

students transitioning to the workforce is critical for international student recruitment and

retention.

Administrators, staff and faculty members, must be trained on international

students' unique challenges when leaving the university. University employees who work

with international students must have an understanding of the different factors impacting

international student career readiness (Balin, et al, 2016). Based on this study, the

researcher can conclude that financial support, academic majors, and country origin of

international students are factors impacting career readiness and must be taken in

consideration when meeting with an international student to discuss their future career

plans. Training career counselors in career services departments and creating a section

only for international students within career services departments will help create a

welcoming environment for international students which would increase the usage of

career services. This initiative will be beneficial for the institution as students will have

access to more resources to be successful after graduation which will improve recruiting

and the retention of international students.

References

Adams, S. (2016). International students' decision to attend a small, rural community college in Iowa (Doctoral dissertation, Iowa State University). Retrieved from https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6871&context=etd

Adhikari, S. (2018). Beyond culture: Helping international students avoid plagiarism. *Journal of International Students*, *8*(1), 375–388. http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1161767

Agarwal, K. (2017, February 5). Shadows of the past. Retrieved from www.saada.org/tides.

Albion, M. J., & Fogarty, G. J. (2002). Factors influencing career decision making in adolescents and adults. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *10*(1), 91–126. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072702010001006

Amir, T., Gati, I., & Kleiman, T. (2008). Understanding and interpreting career decision-making difficulties. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *16*(3), 281–309. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072708317367

An introduction to SEVP. (n.d.). Non-immigrant students, and the role of the DSO. Retrieved from https://www.ice.gov/exec/sevp/Module1.htm

Anderson, S. K. (2011). Ethics and working with international students from the Mideast/Africa: Whose ethics? Theirs? Mine? Ours? *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal, 27*(1), 10-19.

Andrade, M. S. (2017). Institutional policies and practices for admitting, assessing, and tracking international students. *Journal of International Students, 7*(1), 1-4.

Arthur, N., & Popadiuk, N. (209). A cultural formulation approach to career counseling with international students. *Journal of Career Development*, *37*(1), 423–440. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845309345845

Austell, D. B. (2013). What college counselors need to know about International student advisers: Field notes on the professionals, the clients, and the challenges. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, *27*(3), 226–237. Retrieved from https://doi-org.ezproxy. lindenwood.edu/10.1080/87568225.2013.798224

Baba, Y., & Hosoda, M. (2014). Home away home: Better understanding of the role of social support in predicting cross-cultural adjustment among international students. *College Student Journal*, *48*(1), 1–15. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/login? url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=96336706&site=e host-live

Balin, E., Anderson, N. M., Chudasama, S. Y., Kanagasingam, S. K., & Zhang, L. (2016). Working with international students in the U.S and beyond: A summary of survey research by NCDA international student services committee. *Journal of International Students, 6*(4), 1053-1061.

Bang, E., Muriuki, A., & Hodges, J. (2008). International students at a midwest university: Gender, stress, and perceived social support. *The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations, 8*(4), 109-116. doi:10.18848/1447-9532/ CGP/v08i04/39615

Behrens, D. (2009). Interview practice U.S. style: A workshop for international students. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 46*(4), 182-184.

Beine, M., Noël, R., & Ragot, L. (2014). Determinants of the international mobility of students. *Economics of Education Review*, *41*, 40–54. Retrieved from https://doi-org.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu/10.1016/j.econedurev.2014.03.003

Borovska, Y. (2016). My company wishes to hire foreign national workers - Now what? Navigating the U.S. visa alphabet soup. *Employee Relations Law Journal, 41*(4), 35-46.

Bound, J., Demirci, M., Khanna, G., & Turner, S. (2015). Finishing degrees and finding jobs: U.S. higher education and the flow of foreign IT workers. *Innovation Policy and the Economy, 15*, 27-72. doi:10.1086/680059

Bruhn, T. (2016) Strategic importance of recruiting international students for community colleges framed in the context of an institution's fiscal health. *Theses and Dissertations,* 839. Retrieved from https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/839

Callan, E. C. (2016). Is the game still worth the candle (or the visa)? How the H-1B visa lottery lawsuit illustrates the need for immigration reform. *Albany Law Review*, *80*(1), 335–351. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/login?url=https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=124102541&site=ehost-live

Cantwell, B. (2015). Are international students cash cows? Examining the relationship between new international undergraduate enrollments and institutional revenue at public colleges and universities in the US. *Journal of International Students, 5*(4), 512-525.

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. (2017). In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. (Vol. 6). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chinese-Exclusion-Act

Cho, J., & Yu, H. (2015). Roles of university support for international students in the United States: Analysis of a systematic model of university identification, university support, and psychological well-being. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *19*(1), 11–27. Retrieved from https://doi-org.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu/10.1177/1028315314533606

Choudaha, R. (2016). Campus readiness for supporting international student success. *Journal of International Students, 6*(4), 1-4.

Cox, J., & Subramaniam, M. (2015). "I'm white and I'm a lady..." Experiences with U.S. visas for higher education. Conference proceedings of American Sociological Association Annual Meetings, Chicago, IL.

Cozart, D. L., & Rojewski, J. W. (2015). Career aspirations and emotional adjustment of Chinese international graduate students. *SAGE Open*. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/215 8244015621349

Crockett, S., & Hays, D. (2011). Understanding and responding to the career counseling needs of international college students on U.S. campuses. *Journal of College Counseling, 14(1)*, 65-79.

Darawsheh, W. (2014). Reflexivity in research: Promoting rigor, reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Therapy & Rehabilitation*, *21*(12), 560–568. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost. com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=99749682&site=ehost-live

Dey, F., & Cruzvergara, C. Y. (2014). Evolution of career services in higher education. *New Directions for Student Services*, *2014*(148), 5–18. Retrieved from https://doi-org.ezproxy. lindenwood.edu/10.1002/ss.20105

Doss, D. A., Henley, R., Gokaraju, B., McElreath, D., Lackey, H., Hong, Q., & Miller, L. (2016). Assessing domestic vs. international student perceptions and attitudes of plagiarism. *Journal of International Students, 6*(2), 542-565.

Eland, A., Lee, S. K., & Rowland, Y. (2016). Seeking best practices for career services to international students. International Students and Scholar Services, University of

Minnesota, 1- 19. Retrieved from https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/16_

career_services_international.pdf

Fass-Holmes, B. (2017). International students reported for academic integrity violations:

Demographics, retention, and graduation. *Journal of International Students, 7*(3), 644-

669. doi:10.5281/zenodo.570026

Frost, J., & Hamlin, A. (2015). A comparison of international student attitudes concerning

academic. *Journal of International Business Research, 14*(2), 153-165.

Gartman, K. (2016). Challenges of international students in a university. *Journal of Adult

Education, 45*(2), 1-7.

Gati, I., & Osipow, S. (n.d.). *Career Decision-Marking Difficulty Questionnaire* [Instrument].

Retrieved from http://kivunim.huji.ac.il/cddq/

Gautam, C., Lowery, C., Mays, C., & Durant, D. (2016). Challenges for global learners: A

qualitative study of the concerns and difficulties of international students. *Journal of

International Students, 6*(2), 501-526.

Glass, C.R., Kociolek, E., Wongtrirat, R., Lynch, R.J., & Cong, M.S. (2015). Uneven

Experiences: The impact of student-faculty interactions on international students' sense

of belonging. *Journal of International Students*, *5*(4), 353-367.

Greene, M. J. (2014). On the inside looking in: Methodological insights and challenges in

conducting qualitative insider research. *Qualitative Report*, *19*(29), 1–13. Retrieved from

http://ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?di

rect=true&db=a9h&AN=97272692&site=ehost-live

Grigg, A. E. (2016). Chinese international students' and faculty members' views of plagiarism in higher education [Doctoral dissertation]. Walden University. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/2050/

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *10*(2), 261–280. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.linden wood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h& AN=12685516&site=ehost-live

Haitch, R. (2016). Stealing or sharing? Cross-cultural issues of plagiarism in an open-source era. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, *19*(3), 264–275. Retrieved from https://doi-org.ezproxy. lindenwood.edu/10.1111/teth.12337

Han, X., & Appelbaum, R. P. (2016). *Will they stay or will they go?: International STEM students are up for grabs*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ ED570660.pdf

Hazen, H. D. & Alberts, H. C. (2006). Visitors or immigrants? International students in the United States. *Population, Space Place*, 12, 201-216. doi:10.1002/psp.409

He, Y., & Hutson, B. (2018). Exploring and leveraging Chinese international students' strengths for success. *Journal of International Students, 8*(1), 87-108. doi:10.5281/zenodo.1101037

Higher Education Act. (1965). House Office of the Legislative Counsel. Retrieved from https://leg counsel.house.gov/Comps/HEA65_CMD.pdf

Homeland Security. (2015). Creation of the department of homeland security. Retrieved from https://www.dhs.gov/creation-department-homeland-security

The Immigration Act. (1924). Retrieved from https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/ immigration-act

The Immigration and Nationality Act. (1952). Retrieved from https://history.state.gov/mile stones/1945-1952/immigration-act

In, H. (2016). Acculturation and hope as predictors of career decision self-efficacy among Korean international undergraduate students. *Journal of Career Development*, *43*(6), 526–540. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845316633784

Institute of International Education. (n.d.). Our vision. Retrieved from https://www.iie.org/ en/Why-IIE/Our-Vision

Isbell, J. K., Chaudhuri, J, & Schaeffer, D. L. (2018). "It just messes your mind:" U.S. international students' perspectives of and experiences with academic text sources. *Journal of International Students, 8*(1), 308-331. doi:10.5281/zenodo.1134309

Internal Revenue Services. (2019). *Publication 15, Circular E*. Retrieved from https://www. irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p15.pdf

Internal Revenue Services. (2018). *Publication 515*. Retrieved from https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p515.pdf

Joo, S., Bagwell Durban, D., & Grable, J. (2009). The academic impact of financial stress on college students. *College Student Retention, 10*(3), 287-303. doi:10.2190/CS.10.3.c

Kim, E. J., & LaBianca, A. S. (2017). Ethics in academic writing help for international students in higher education: Perceptions of faculty and students. *Journal of Academic Ethics, 16*(1), 39-59. doi:10.1007/s10805-017-9299-5

Kommers, S., & Pham, D. (2016). How Tinto's theory differs for Asian and non-Asian international students: A quantitative study. *Journal of International Students, 6*(4), 999-1014. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1125547.pdf

Krammer, J. (2015, September 30). The Hart-Celler Immigration Act of 1965. Retrieved from

    https://cis.org/Report/HartCeller-Immigration-Act-1965

Lakshmi, M. (2010). Acculturation and career beliefs – Is there a relationship for international

    students? *College Student Journal, 44*(3), 633-658.

Lee, K. (2013). Training and educating international students in professional psychology: What

    graduate programs should know. *American Psychological Association, 7*(1), 61-69.

    doi:10.1037/a0031186

Lee, J., Koeske, G. F., Sales, E. (2004). Social support buffering of acculturative stress: A study

    of mental health symptoms among Korean international students. *International Journal*

    of Intercultural Relations, 28(5), 399-414.

Lefdahl-Davis, E. M., & Perrone-McGovern, K. M. (2015). The cultural adjustment of Saudi

    women international students: A Qualitative Examination. *Journal of Cross-Cultural*

    Psychology, *46*(3), 406–434. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022114566680

Liao, C. N., & Ji, C. (2015). The origin of major choices, academic commitment, and career-

    decision readiness among Taiwanese college students. *The Career Development*

    Quarterly, 63, 156-170. doi:10.1002/cdq/12011

Lieb, M. M. (2016). Meeting the needs of international students. *Journal of Alternative*

    Perspectives in the Social Sciences, *7*(3), 400–422. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.linden

    wood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&

    AN=114133631&site=ehost-live

Mahadevan, L. (2010). Acculturation and career beliefs — Is there a relationship for

    international university students? *College Student Journal*, *44*(3), 633–658. Retrieved

from http://ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.
aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54016497&site=ehost-live

Mazzarol, T., & Soutar G.N. (2002) "Push-pull" factors influencing international student
destination choice," *International Journal of Educational Management*, *16*(2), 82-
90. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540210418403

McFadden, A., & Seedorff, L. (2017). International student employment: Navigating
immigration regulations, career services, and employer considerations. *New Directions
for Student Services*, *2017*(158), 37–48. Retrieved from https://doi-org.ezproxy.linden
wood.edu/10.1002/ ss.20218

McFaul, S. (2016). International students' social network: Network mapping to gage friendship
formation and student engagement on campus. *Journal of International Students, 6*(1), 1-
13.

McGill, J. (2013). International student migration: Outcomes and implications. *Journal of
International Students, 3*(2), 167-181.

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). (2017). Definition of career readiness
and competencies. Retrieved from: http://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/
competencies/career-readiness-defined/

Nilsson, A., & Ripmeester, N. (2016). International student expectations: Career opportunity and
employability. *Journal of International Students, 6*(2), 614-631.

Open Doors Report. (2016). Institute of International Education at a glance. Retrieved from
https://p.widencdn.net/0kxflz/IIE-2016-Annual-Report

Onwuegbuzie, A., & Wisdom, J. (2014). Mixed method research in D.C. Philips

    (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy*. (1st ed., pp. 677-680).

    Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Onyenekwu, I. U. (2017). Providing culturally relevant services for international black African

    collegians in the United States: A guide for student affairs professionals. *Journal of*

    International Students, 7(4), 1113-1125. doi:10.5281/zenodo.1035975

Panke Makela, J. P., & Rooney, G. S. (2014). Framing assessment for career services: Telling

    our story. *New Directions for Student Services*, *2014*(148), 65–80. Retrieved from

    https://doi-org.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu/10.1002/ss.20109

Perry, C. J. (2016). Comparing international and American students' challenges: A literature

    review. [Report]. In *Journal of International Students*. 6 (3), 712(10).

Perry, C. J., Lausch, D. W., Weatherford, J., Goeken, R., & Almendares, M. (2017).

    International student's perceptions of university life. *College Student Journal*, *51*(2),

    279–290. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.

    ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=123719304&site=ehost-live

Places of origin. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-

    Doors/Data/International-Students/Places-of-Origin

Prieto- Welsh, S. L. (2016). International student mental health. *New Directions for Student*

    Services, *2016*(156), 53–63. Retrieved from https://doi-org.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu/

    10.1002/ss.20191

Rabia, H.A., & Karkouti, I. (2017). A qualitative investigation of the factors affecting Arab

    international students' persistence in the United States. *College Student Journal*. *51*(3).

    347-354.

Reynold, A. L., & Constantine, M. G. (2007). Cultural adjustment difficulties and career

    development of international college students. *Journal of Career Assessment, 15*, 338-

    350. doi:10.1177/1069072707301218

Sato, T., & Hodge, S. (2015). Japanese exchange students' academic and social struggles at an

    American university. *Journal of International Students, 5*(3), 208-227.

Sangganjanavanich, V. F., Lenz, S., & Cavazos, J., Jr. (2011). International students'

    employment search in the United States: A phenomenological study. *Journal of

    Employment Counseling, 48*(1), 17-26.

Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *The

    Counseling Psychologist*, *9*(2), 2–18. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/

    001100008100900202

Schlossberg, N. K. (2011). The challenge of change: The transition model and its

    applications. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, *48*(4), 159–162. Retrieved from http://

    ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=t

    rue&db=a9h&AN=69670978&site=ehost-live

She, Q., & Wotherspoon, T. (2013). International student mobility and highly skilled migration:

    A comparative study of Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. *Springer,

    2*(132), 1-14.

Shen, Y., & Herr, E. (2004). Career placement concerns of international graduate students: A

    qualitative study. *Journal of Career Development, 31*(1), 15-29.

Sherry, M., Chui, P., & Hong, W. (2010). International students A vulnerable student

    population. *The International Journal of Higher Education and Educational

    Planning, 60*(1), 33-46.

Shih, K. (2016). Labor market openness, H-1B visa policy, and the scale of international student enrollment in the United States. *Economic Inquiry, 54*(1), 121-138. doi:10.1111/ecin. 12250

Singaravelu, H. D., White, L. J., & Bringaze, T. B. (2005). Factors influencing international students' career choice: A comparative study. *Journal of Career Development*, *32*(1), 46–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845305277043

Slaten, C. D., Elison, Z. M., Lee, J.-Y., Yough, M., & Scalise, D. (2016). Belonging on campus: A qualitative inquiry of Asian international students. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *44*(3), 383–410. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000016633506

Social Security Administration. (n.d.). *International students and social security numbers* (pp. 1-2). Retrieved from https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10181.pdf

Spencer, L. (2016). Exploring the transition experience of successful international undergraduate students at a public research university in the USA: The impact on international student success and retention. [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of South Florida.

Su, M., & Harrison, L. (2016). Being wholesealed: An investigation of Chinese international student. *Journal of International Students, 6*(4), 905-919.

Sun, J. & Hagedorn, L. S. & Zhang, Y. (2016). Homesickness at college: Its impact on academic performance and retention. *Journal of College Student Development* 57(8), 943-957. Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved from Project MUSE database.

Tan, A. (2015) College choice behaviors of international students. *Sage Open,* 1-14. doi: 10.1177/2158244015618995

Terrazas-Carrillo, E. C. & Hong, J. Y., & Pace, T. M. (2014). Adjusting to new places: International student adjustment and place attachment. *Journal of College Student*

*Development 55(*7), 693-706. Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved from Project MUSE database.

Tummala-Narra, P., & Claudius, M. (2013). A qualitative examination of Muslim graduate international students' experiences in the United States. *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation, 2*(2), 132-147. Retrieved from http://dx. doi.org/10.1037/ipp0000003

Urban, E., & Bierlein Palmer, L. (2016). International students' perception of the value of U.S. higher education. *Journal of International Students, 6*(1), 153-174.

Urban, E. L., & Bierlein Palmer, L. B. (2014). International students as a resource for internationalization of higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 18*(4), 305–324. Retrieved from https://doi-org.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu/10.1177/ 1028315313511642

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

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. (2013). Education indicators focus. 1-4. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/ EDIF%202013--N%C2%B014%20(eng)-Final.pdf

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service. (2015). Homeland Security. Annual report. Retrieved from https://www. dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2015%20CISOMB%20Annual %20Report_508.pdf

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service. (2016). Our history. Retrieved from https://www.uscis. gov/history-and-genealogy/our-history/our-history

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (2016). *SEVIS reporting requirements for designated school officials.* Retrieved from: https://www.ice.gov/sevis/dso-requirements

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service. (2017). H-1B specialty occupations, DOD cooperative research and development project workers, and fashion models. Eligibility criteria. Retrieved from https: //www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-dod-cooperative-research-and-development-project-workers-and-fashion-models

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service. (2018a, August 9). Foreign academic students. Retrieved from https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/complete-correct-form-i-9/complete-section-1-employee-information-and-attestation/foreign-academic-students

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service. (2018b). Foreign Students in F-1 Nonimmigrant status participating in curricular practical training (CPT). Retrieved from https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/complete-correct-form-i-9/complete-section-1-employee-information-and-attestation/foreign-academic-students

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service. (2018c). Green Card. Retrieved from https://www.uscis.gov/greencard

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service. (2018d). I-901 SEVIS Fee. Retrieved from https://www.icegov/sevis/i901

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service. (2018e). Students and Employment. Retrieved from https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment

U.S. Congress. (n.d.). [Sixty-Seventh Cong., I Session.]. Retrieved from https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/61st-congress/session-2/c61s2ch128.pdf

U.S. Congress. (1965). *Higher Education Act*. [Cong. Bill]. Retrieved from https://leg

counsel.house.gov/Comps/Higher Education Act Of 1965.pdf

U.S. Internal Revenue Services. (2018). *Publication 515*. Retrieved from https://www.irs.gov/

pub/irs-pdf/p515.pdf

U.S. Social Security Administration. (n.d.). *International students and social security

numbers* (pp. 1-2). Retrieved from https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10181.pdf

Vahedi, S., Farrokhi, F., Mahdavi, A., & Moradi, S. (2012). Exploratory and confirmatory factor

analysis of the career decision-making difficulties questionnaire. *Iran Psychiatry, 7*(2),

74-81.

Wu, H., Garza, E., & Guzman, N. (2015). International student's challenges and adjustment to

college. *Educational Research International, 2015(*1) 1-9. doi: 10.1155/2015/202753

Yan, Z., & Sendall, P. (2016). First year experience: How we can better assist first-year

international students in higher education. *Journal of International Students, 6*(1), 35-51.

Yang, E., Wong, S. C., Hwang, M., & Heppner, M. J. (2002). Widening out global view: The

development of career counseling services for international students. *Journal of Career

Development, 28*(3), 203-213.

Yao, C.W. & George Mwangi, C.A. (2017). Role of student affairs in international student

transition and success. *Journal of International Students, 7*(4), 1-3. doi:10.5281/

zenodo.1035956

Zhang, Y. (Leaf). (2016). An overlooked population in community college: International

students' (in) validation experiences with academic advising. *Community College

Review*, *44*(2), 153–170. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552116633293

Zhao, C., Kuh, G. D., & Carini, R. M. (2005). A comparison of international student and

    American student engagement in effective educational practices. *Journal of Higher*

    Education, *76*(2), 209–231. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/

    login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=16246325&

    site=ehost-live

Zhou, Y., Jindal-Snape, D., Topping, K., & Todman, J. (2008). Theoretical models of culture

    shock and adaptation in international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher*

    Education, *33*(1), 63–75. https://doi-org.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu/10.1080/0307507

    0701794833

Appendix A: Authorization to use CDDQ Instrument

From:

To:
Subject: Date: Attachments:

Chloe Bonnand

Bonnand, Chloe

Fwd: Authorization to use the CDDQ Tuesday, March 06, 2018 1:36:54 PM CDDQ34-icc-PER.doc CDDQ34KEY.DOC

CDDQ34Q.DOC
CDDQ-LoP-7-9-2016.doc CDDQ-Manual-Eng-11-2014.doc Gati-CDDQ-2008-encyclopedia of counseling.pdf

---

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: Itamar Gati <itamar.gati@mail.huji.ac.il> Date: Tue, Jan 16, 2018 at 12:06 AM
Subject: RE: Authorization to use the CDDQ To: Chloe Bonnand
<bonnandc@gmail.com>

Dear Chloe,
Thank you for your interest in the CDDQ.
May I ask –at which university you are studying?
Yes you can use the CDDQ.
I enclosed the relevant files,
See also
www.cddq.org
for additional career decision making related tools.
If you decide to use the CDDQ, then please return the permission form for my signature.
Itamar Gati

============= = = = = = = = = = = = = =

Itamar Gati, Ph.D**.**
Samuel and Esther Melton Professor (Emeritus) Departments of Psychology and Education,

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Mount Scopus, Jerusalem 9765418, ISRAEL Tel +972.2.5882170 Fax +972.2.5882084
itamar.gati@huji.ac.il

http://cddq.org www.kivunim.com/gati

From: Chloe Bonnand [mailto:bonnandc@gmail.com] **Sent:** Tuesday, January 16, 2018 1:09 AM
To: itamar.gati@huji.ac.il
Subject: Authorization to use the CDDQ

Hello,

I would like to request authorization to use and adapt the CDDQ questionnaire for my doctoral dissertation.

Thank you Chloe Bonnand

Appendix B: Authorization to use Dr. Durband's Instrument

From:

To:
Subject: Date: Attachments:

Dorothy Durband

Bonnand, Chloe

RE: Request to use research tool for EdD dissertation Thursday, January 11, 2018 4:34:37 PM TTU_credit_survey_04.doc

Dear Chloe,
Dr. Joo sent me a copy of the survey. It is attached for your reference.

DOROTHY B. DURBAND, Ph.D., AFC®

Director and Professor
School of Family Studies and Human Services College of Human Ecology Kansas State University 302 Justin Hall 785.532.1472

Harmony I Achiever I Futuristic I Maximizer I Focus

From: Bonnand, Chloe [mailto:CBonnand@lindenwood.edu] **Sent:** Tuesday, January 02, 2018 7:26 AM
To: Dorothy Durband
Subject: Re: Request to use research tool for EdD dissertation

Dr. Durband,

I apologize for reaching out to you again but I was wondering if you could send me a copy of the instrument you used for your work. I would like to turn in my prospectus as soon as possible to start my study.

Thank you again for your help and time.

Chloe Bonnand Lindenwood University.

From: Dorothy Durband <dottie@ksu.edu>
Sent: Monday, December 11, 2017 7:52 PM
To: Bonnand, Chloe
Subject: RE: Request to use research tool for EdD dissertation

Hi Chloe,

Thank you for your email. I have corresponded with my co-authors and we are all in favor of your request to use a portion of the survey that we used for your dissertation research. We assume that you will cite the original study in your work.

When you complete your study, I'd love to read your abstract. Best wishes in your research.

DOROTHY B. DURBAND, Ph.D., AFC®

Director and Professor
School of Family Studies and Human Services College of Human Ecology
Kansas State University
302 Justin Hall
785.532.1472

From: Bonnand, Chloe [mailto:CBonnand@lindenwood.edu] **Sent:** Sunday, December 10, 2017 10:44 AM
To: Dorothy Durband
Subject: Request to use research tool for EdD dissertation

Dr. Durband,

My name is Chloe Bonnand and I am a current student in the EdD program at Lindenwood University in Saint Charles Missouri. My study is on international student career readiness during their last semester of their Bachelor's degrees. I found your article, "The Academic Impact of Financial Stress on College Students" very interesting and relevant to my topic. One of my hypotheses in my dissertation is related to international students' financial challenges and how they impact career readiness. I am about to turn in my prospectus for approval and would like to ask you if I could use a portion of the survey you used for your study and adjust the questions to target international students on a global scale.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Chloe Bonnand
EdD Student Lindenwood University

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What is your country of origin?

2. Why did you decide on this academic major?

3. What are your plans after graduation?

4. Are you planning on doing your Optional Practical Training (OPT)? Why/why

   not?

5. How would you describe your understanding of personal finances?

6. Do you know which types of expenses you will have after graduation?

7. How will you meet these expenses?

8. What will be your financial support system after graduation?

9. Did the institution prepare you for finding a job in your field of study?

10. Are you planning on only accepting job offers from position within your field of

    study? Why? Why not?

11. How knowledgeable are you on the job market for your field of study?

12. Do you know what will be expected of you for your first job?

13. Do you think your education and/or experience in your home country prepared

    you for a career in the U.S.?

14. What you do want to do after OPT?

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

1. Where are you (plural) from?

2. Are you graduating in May 2018?

3. What are your plans after graduation?

4. How often to you think about your finances after you graduate?

5. How do you plan to cover your financial expenses after you graduate?

6. Are you ready to enter the workforce? Why? Why not?

7. Do you think your education and/or experience in your home country prepared you for a career in the U.S.?

8. Do you think that the institution prepared you to find a job in your field of study?

9.Do you know what jobs to apply for within your field of study?

10. Do you think that the classes related to your major prepared you for your career?

Appendix E: NIH Certification

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Chloe Bonnand** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 01/27/2018.

Certification Number: 2621320.

Vitae

Chloe Bonnand is a French native who moved to the U.S. in 2010 to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Human Resources. After graduating in 2013, she worked for a year as a Human Resources Specialist prior to returning to school to obtain a Master's degree in Human Resources. Chloe Bonnand then worked for a private university in the Midwest, in charge of on campus employment, international taxation, and overall immigration for university international employees. She became a doctorate student in 2016 and focused her research in improving international student services within the university to support international students during and after graduation, focusing on career readiness, employability, and professional development.