INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY ASSISTANCE
WITH THEIR SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

by

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Abstract

Social support has been found to contribute to an overall positive adjustment for International students in U.S. colleges. This study addressed the relationship between International students’ perceptions of university assistance in adjusting to campus life and their social adjustment levels. Questionnaires were divided into two sections: 1) university helpfulness in connecting with others—collegiate personnel and students—in the campus community and through the various campus events offered; and 2) assessing social adjustment through The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). The questionnaire was distributed to undergraduate students attending a private Midwestern university with 62 usable responses gathered from 31 American and 31 International students representing eight international countries. The university had 68 undergraduate International students and 45.4% participated in the current study. Statistical analyses revealed that Americans were more socially adjusted to university life when compared with International students ($p<.001$). The data also disclosed that there was no relationship between level of adjustment to campus life and student perception of being respected by peers and faculty ($p>.05$). However, International students with relatively lower social adjustment were observed as more likely to perceive campus activities as less useful than their more well-adjusted International peers, though no significance was found ($p>.05$). All the International students reported being treated well by faculty and students, yet improvements were suggested for social events to include opportunities for multicultural relations. Implications of this study suggest that well-developed campus events that connect International and American students could have a positive impact on social adjustment for International students.
Acknowledgments

Many organizations and officials contributed to the completion of the current study. Thanks to The Western Psychological Services, the *Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)* was permitted to be used in this undergraduate research. Also, several organizations and personnel throughout the university made this study possible. Information about the studied university and the International students within was given to the researcher by Scott Parillo (International Student Advisor and Advisor over the International Club), Kathy Stone (Director of Student Success and Retention), and Ryan Wilson (Retention Analyst). The recruitment process was facilitated through several organizations and individuals on campus: the International Student Services Office (also providing the $50 university gift card), International Club, Religious Life, and various students who volunteered to distribute surveys to known friends. A special thanks is also given to Dr. Cindy Moseman and Dr. David Vanata for all of their support and dedication in the process of making this current study a work of excellence.
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International Students’ Perceptions of University Assistance with their Social Adjustment

International students have been traveling to the United States, the primary host country for Internationals since around 1960, yet International students struggle in adjusting to American universities (Brown, 2009; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Ramsay, Jones, & Barker, 2007; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). International students undertake the transition to the United States for various reasons; personal growth, academic achievement, or to experience studying in a foreign land (Fritz, Chin, & Demarinis, 2008; Lee, 2009). They travel from their native country and endure multiple transitions resulting in culture shock (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). There are two main ways for the International students to reinforce their adjustment; having resilient personalities and having good social support (Brown, 2009; Wang, 2009; Ramsay et al., 2007). This study addressed having good social support, and focused on the relationship between International students’ social adjustment levels and their perceptions of university assistance in adjusting to campus life.

Annual enrollment in higher education for International students has been systematically increasing over time. The Institute of International Education has researched the specific quantitative data collected from International students since 1919 (“Open Doors”, 2011). In the fiscal year 1960/1961, there were 53,107 International students studying in the colleges and universities within America. In the academic year of 2009/2010, that number multiplied by 13 to 690,923. Annual change in enrollment within the past fifty years has varied from -3.2% to 21.2% per year, with a 4.1% increase for annual enrollment within the past five years (“Open Doors”, 2011). After the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centers in New York City on September 11, 2001, the number of International students enrolling in U.S. colleges dropped
about 1.0% per year for three years after the attack, until the fiscal year of 2006/07 when the percentage of International enrollment began to increase once again (“Open Doors”, 2011; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). The majority of International students studying in U.S. colleges are graduate students (52.3%) (Wang, 2009; “Open Doors”, 2011). The International student body, however, represents 3.5% of all higher education enrollment (“Open Doors”, 2011). Each International student contributes to the American economy when they pay for attending college. At an annual rate, International students pay almost $20 billion for their tuition, room, board, supplies, transportation, insurance, and other expenditures (“Open Doors”, 2011). This amount is given to the host campuses, but also filters down to the local communities. Their temporary residence in U.S. colleges, despite the small the International student percentage, contributes to the economy of the host country.

International students commonly struggle in the transition from their home country to America. The many physical, mental, and emotional challenges that International students endure as they transition to college life are more abundant than what average American students experience. Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) described International students as sojourners, people who are temporarily between-societies and journeying from one culture to another. As International students travel from a familiar way of life in their native country into an entirely different culture, they may experience culture shock while at the same time being required to cope with the major transition into college life. The transitions and shock must be dealt with throughout their adjustment period, usually lasting between six to twelve months (McLachlan & Justice, 2009).
Transitioning Into a U.S. College

Unlike students studying in their native country, International students must cope with various transitions beyond the average domestic student. These transitions invariably cause an increase of stress to the individual. While studying at college, International students experience similar problems to the American student such as leaving one’s family, adjusting to college life, and having potential difficulties with academics, personal doubt about their academic ability, homesickness, and support needs (Ramsay et al., 2007). However, the International student also faces living in a different country with different languages, cultural differences, religious practices, and unfamiliar weather conditions. Wang (2009) found that these multi-layered transitions could deliver a negative experience and therefore influence the academic achievement of the individual. Everyone goes through transitions in life; however, some changes in life challenge the individual to make him or her stronger, while others threaten to inflict harm by exceeding the person’s inner resources (Ramsay et al., 2007). This potential harm could result in adverse health effects, decreased levels of self-efficacy—believing one can perform the task and achieve a certain goal—and increased chances of academic failure (Lin & Betz, 2009; Wang, 2009; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Ramsay et al., 2007; Ward et al., 2001). If students cannot overcome the daily hardships and adapt to their new life, then the possibilities of achieving the individual’s educational goals decrease along with their positive perceptions of the American college experience (Wang, 2009). Universities strive to discover the balance between the academic demands on the International students and their needs for support (Ramsay et al., 2007).

Along with the many transitions International students undergo, they also represent a variety of differentiation that makes them all individuals—gender, age, proficiency in English,
personality, character, social class, and their level of study (undergraduate, graduate, or non-degree). The individualized self is “the essential core of the individual, the part that calls itself I, the part that feels, thinks, and originates action” (Becker, 1968, p. 194). In Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, the “self” is also developed through the various nested systems within the individual’s life, moving from the innermost environments and persons that the individual has direct contact with, to the culture within which the individual resides (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

As the International student travels to America to embark on a different chapter in his or her life, the individual’s “self” is called into question (Brown & Brown, 2009; Wang, 2009). With the environmental shift, a negotiation unfolds within the sojourners as they are confronted with new values and roles from the host environment that may conflict with their adopted roles and principles from their native culture (Brown & Brown, 2009; Ramsay et al., 2007). This conflict develops into a testing ground of stress for International students, having the potential to change the sojourners’ self-understanding and increase their inner strength, or having negative consequences that lead to ill adjustment and negative psychological effects—depression, disorientation, and extreme homesickness (Brown & Brown, 2009, Poyrozli & Grahame, 2008).

A common task of college students is to develop a sense of self-identity (Adams, Berzonsky, & Keatiny, 2006). Finding one’s identity is a process in which a person strives to define him or herself “as a group member within the broader social context…[providing the individual] with a coherent sense of self” (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004, p. 9). Identity is developed through exploration towards a successful accomplished identity (identity synthesis), yet role confusion (lack of a stable identity) can occur if success is not accomplished (Erikson, 1968). Universities provide the opportunity for students to explore new roles, values, and
identity images that can help shape or hinder an individual’s construction of a steady sense of self (Adams et al., 2006; Erikson, 1968). Therefore, the university provides an institutionalized moratorium for developing self-identify.

**Beginning the Adjustment Process**

The first year is critical for socialization into the university for all college students, but especially for International students. A satisfactory first year is a main contributor toward success in college academics and in a positive college experience, yet it also represents the time when stress is the most intense (Ramsay et al., 2007; Brown & Holloway, 2008). “The move to a new environment is cited as one of the most traumatic events in a person’s life” (Brown & Holloway, 2008, p. 33). Culture shock is the anxiety one feels when replacing the familiarities of home with the uncertainties of a strange, new environment (Brown & Holloway, 2008; McLachlan & Justice, 2009). It is the shock that everyone, International or American, experiences when confronted with any life change (McLachlan & Justice, 2009), yet the shock can be harder to absorb for the undergraduate International student.

**Culture shock.** Culture shock has been found to cause the students to respond in predictable ways (Brown & Holloway, 2008). During the first few weeks, the sojourner typically feels anxious and nervous, causing the student to display low self-esteem and doubt in his or her ability (Brown & Holloway, 2008; McLachlan & Justice, 2009). International students can begin to stress over daily routines and hassles that can sometimes come from simply not understanding the host country’s cultural guidelines of behavior. These minor stressors add up and can cause disorientation for the sojourner. Some International students become dissatisfied with their new life in a different country, or succumb to depression as they long for the familiarity of home. Homesickness, as Brown and Holloway (2008, p. 43) described, is “an
emotional reaction [grief] to a loss of reinforcements from [the] original culture,” as the transition and the grief one feels are often connected. This longing for home flows into a sense of aloneness, and this feeling helps to reinforce the perception that one has no meaningful relationships. Most, if not all, sojourners experience this shock in their adjustment process as it is a normal response to this significant change (Wang, 2009; Brown & Holloway, 2008). Although, students also experience a sense of euphoria or excitement, as they embark on a new adventure while at the same time enduring the initial shock of the new environment (Brown & Holloway, 2008). This perceived traumatic event is far from effortless, yet countless students come to America for the chance to experience this difficult adventure in hope of achieving this euphoria.

Adjusting to U.S. Colleges

The university represents a main element in their expanded microsystem—the environment that the person has immediate contact with and consists of a “pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39). In Ecological Systems Theory, the environments within the microsystem have the potential power to “produce and sustain development” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39). However, this development depends on the content and composition of the environment. A microsystem environment can possibly have adverse effects on the individual, especially when a transition to a new culture challenges the individual’s home culture.

The adjustment. The transition to a new country will increase the probability of stress, but by adjusting to the move, a student goes through “an active process of managing [the individual and situational] stress” (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, & Todman, 2008, p. 65). Adjustment is summarized as a complex and multi-faceted psychosocial concept with the process of striving for
harmony between the individual and the new environment (Hannigan, 1990; Ramsay et al., 2007). The struggle for harmony ultimately leads to achieving the appropriate fit between the person and the environment (Ramsay et al., 2007). However, establishing harmony between the environment and the individual also depends on the cooperation of the individual in question. The person must be willing and determined to change his or her outlook towards the environment, including attitudes, emotions, and beliefs about the host culture (Wang, 2009). This perspective gives the individual responsibility over his or her own adjustment (Ramsay et al., 2007). The individual is the key ingredient. Individuals have the potential to positively enhance their own adjustment by being an influence on the surrounding environment (Ramsay et al., 2007), instead of allowing the environment to negatively influence them. A sense of positive adjustment for a college student is important for the student’s well-being as a whole, psychologically and socially (Ramsay et al., 2007). As the person-environment perspective and the Ecological theory used earlier take both the environment and the individual into account for a positive or negative adjustment, Ramsay’s perspective states that students should take an active process of managing their own stress and also accept liability for the quality of their own experience within the new microsystem environment.

Those who achieve positive adjustment are successful in harmonizing themselves to the new environment (Ramsay et al., 2007; Hannigan, 1990). Culture shock may be inevitable for International sojourners, but having poor adjustment to college life can still be avoided. Positive adjustment is forged once students can manage the stress triggered by culture shock at both systematic levels—individual and situational (Brown & Holloway, 2008). When International students feel at home in the host setting, demonstrate an improved academic performance, and increase interaction with others from the host culture, they become satisfied with the new living
arrangements (Hannigan, 1990). International students need to have a clear concept of who they are, be able to understand the culture and its citizens, have confidence in their own abilities, and skills to establish relationships with university professionals (Olivas & Li, 2006). Measuring high-adjustment is accomplished through a combination of a strong “attachment to the university, [high] participation in campus activities, psychological well-being, and [high] academic standing” (Taylor & Pastor, 2007, p. 1003). These characteristics define sojourners who embark on their journey and successfully adjust into the new environment, satisfied with their adventurous decision and progress in overcoming the hardships of adjusting.

**Barriers to international adjustment.** However, the process of transitioning successfully into the host culture can be hindered through several different avenues. One event that has impacted the immigration policy was the tragedy on September 11, 2001 in New York City when public aircrafts crashed into the Twin Towers killing thousands. After this event, new travel regulations were instituted for International students with the purpose of protecting America from further terrorism (Galloway & Jenkins, 2009). International students now face more of a daunting application process and must endure a thorough background check before they can receive their visa to study in the United States (Galloway & Jenkins, 2009).

Another barrier that International students sometimes undergo is discrimination, or neo-racism—emphasizing cultural differences as a basis for unfair treatment or action such as denying a cultural group access to needed resources for personal growth and well-being (Lee & Rice, 2007; Wei, Ku, Russel, Liao, & Mallinckrodt, 2008). People can tend to have negative expectations of interacting with strangers that are perceived as “different” from themselves (Brown, 2009). Poyrazli and Grahame (2007) found that non-Caucasian International students reported a higher chance of perceived discrimination within U.S. colleges compared to
Caucasian International students, as they are seen as most different from other Americans. There are some cultures that openly display their cultural differences, Arab women who wear veils or women from India wearing saris, who reported having negative experiences within the collegiate culture and maintained difficulty in integrating into campus life (Lee & Rice, 2007). Also, Asians and Latin Americans were found to have increased levels of stress over all other nations because their language and cultural factors are so different from the U.S. (Lee & Rice, 2007; Lin & Betz, 2009). The act of discrimination has the potential to lower the self-esteem of the victim, enhance a learned helplessness, and increase the chances of depression, which is common for many sojourners (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Wei et al., 2008). Mostly, discrimination takes place outside the university and in the surrounding community; however, subtle discrimination is also within the boundaries of the university, such as classmates being unkind or dismissive of the International student’s ideas (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007).

An additional potential barrier of adapting to a university in the United States is linked to familiarity with the English language. Many students from all over the world come to an American university with insufficient knowledge and application of the English language. A lack of proficiency and confidence in the English language is a major disadvantage and can hinder a more positive adjustment (McLachlan & Justice, 2009). Even when ESL (English as a Second Language) students have a well-rounded understanding of English, they can still lack in confidence for fear of misinterpreting the conversation or being misunderstood (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Insufficient knowledge of the host verbal language, as well as the contextual language, limits the desire to seek social interaction, leading the sojourner to negative thoughts and feelings of inability to succeed in the new college environment (Olivas & Li, 2006). Also, since people come from all over the country and the world to study in an American university,
there will be many different levels of the English language as well as a variety of accents. Diverse accents and dialects increase the likelihood of misinterpretations for ESL students (Martin & Kee, 2008; Sovic, 2009). Ramsay, Jones, and Barker, discovered that because International students have trouble communicating, they have a higher risk of diminished opportunities for emotional support and social companionship (2007). Establishing interpersonal relationships within the host culture has become one of the leading concerns of International students (Lee, 2009; Ramsay et al., 2007). The English language can be problematic for ESL International students to completely comprehend, and thus creates hardships in the successful integration into the host culture.

**Reinforcing Adjustment**

As previously noted, researchers have discovered that International students struggle with their collegiate adjustments, being able to successfully transition into the host culture and overcome negative stress, and being satisfied with the person-environment fit (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Ramsay et al., 2007; Hannigan, 1990). However, countless International students do not seek help from a counselor in this area. For some sojourners, it is not customary to go to a mental health specialist, since many have grown up with a stigma towards counseling (McLachlan & Justice, 2009). Several researchers have taken an interest in how International students adjust if they do not seek a counselor.

**The individual.** Ramsay, Jones, and Barker (2007) emphasized that the individual must assume some responsibility for his or her own adjustment to the new culture. As one enters a new environment, it causes the individual to experience culture shock and stress when attempting the process of adaptation. The environment has a huge role to play in this process, but the final adjustment of the individual depends on the person’s reaction. Having a resilient character aids
in the International student’s adjustment (Wang, 2009; Poyrozi & Grahame, 2007). Resilient people are flexible and adaptable while possessing a positive attitude about themselves and their lives (Wang, 2009). They are able to be proactive and assertive about their situation, be flexible with social relations yet organized and focused to complete their goal and have high levels of self-confidence and self-efficacy, resulting in less stress and a better adjustment (Wang, 2009; Wei et al., 2008; Hannigan, 1990). Also, background differences from the sojourner’s native culture, such as the native climate, food, geography, language, behaviors, values, and social interactions, affect the process of adjustment depending upon the contrast of the native culture and the host culture (Wang, 2009; Brown & Brown, 2009). Individualist cultures, cultures that are more focused on the success of the individual and thrive on competitiveness, report an easier process of adjustment because the cultures are similar to the individualistic competitiveness of the United States; whereas collectivist cultures that center on enriching the community, not necessarily the individual, are found to have more difficulties in adjusting (Poyrozi & Grahame, 2008). Also, individual characteristics such as expanding their worldview, letting go of trivial issues, and feeling comfortable enough to ask for help when needed all enhance the student’s ability to cope with the transition, however some cultures encourage these characteristics while others do not (Olivas & Li, 2006).

**Social support.** Social support represents an extension of one’s resources. The individual relies on perceived social support in attempt to improve the person-environment perspective (Ramsay et al., 2007). Increased contact with the host culture is linked to a positive satisfaction for the college experience, enhancing a smoother adjustment process overall (Brown, 2009; Ward et al., 2001). There are two main types of social support pertaining to the social connectedness of a college campus for sojourners: companionship and a sense of community.
Friendship. A key concern for International students is social companionship support (Ramsay et al., 2007). Friendship is a major contributor to emotional, practical, and social well-being—thus enhancing the sojourner’s adjustment (Brown, 2009; Ramsay et al., 2007). One can relieve stress by confiding to someone, usually family or friends, and believing that they understand and care (Ramsay et al., 2007). International students who were well-adjusted had much higher levels of social companionship compared to International students who were not well adjusted. However, International students are potentially at risk for reduced opportunities for friendship having left their original social companionship in their home country (Ramsay et al., 2007). Though, according to Bochner’s functional model of friendship networks, International students could have three types of companionships: 1) friends from their original country, 2) friends from other International countries, and 3) friends from the host country (Bochner, McLeod, & Lin, 1977). All three types of friendship can be a resource for comfort and camaraderie.

Each of the three networks had distinct benefits, yet having all three types increased the likelihood of possessing a well-rounded adjustment (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, & Todman, 2008). The first group involves having friends from one’s original country; a mono-cultural friendship network (Bochner, et al., 1977; Zhou et al., 2008). This network provides a sense of cultural/emotional connectedness and a common language where friends share few negative cultural stereotypes against one another (Ramsay et al., 2007). Mono-cultural friends diminish loneliness and cultural stress, but they also decrease intercultural interaction and the progress of enhancing the English language (Brown, 2009). This network is common for close friends as most International students claim that their best friend is from their own county (Bochner et al., 1977). The second system of friends is the multi-cultural friendship network, as sojourners gain
friendship with other International students from a range of countries (Bochner, et al., 1977; Zhou et al., 2008). All International students share a common bond as they are all studying on foreign land, giving an advantage to possible friendships. The third and final network is with students from the U.S.—a bi-cultural network (Bochner, et al., 1977; Zhou et al., 2008). This is the hardest group to befriend, but would benefit the student socially, psychologically, and academically (McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Zhou et al., 2008). American students give sojourners a chance to improve their English interpersonally and feel welcomed (Zhou et al., 2008). Friendship aids the International students through their time of need, but many have found it difficult to stray from the mono-cultural network of friends, so they form more relationships from their own countrymen (Brown & Holloway, 2008). If an International student would establish ties with all three groups, mono-cultural, multi-cultural, and bi-cultural networks, then they have a greater chance to experience a pleasant adjustment (Fritz et al., 2008), giving the sojourner the benefits of all three groups.

**Community.** A sense of community, belonging, and identifying with the university is significant for a positive adjustment (Cassidy, 2004). One simple way that enhances community within colleges is having a good relationship with one’s advisor and professors as these officials can offer expertise in assisting the student’s academic success (Olivas & Li, 2006). University faculty members who supply positive support enhance the student’s “personal independence, emotional autonomy, social integration, sense of well-being, and persistence” in the college life (Adams et al., 2006, p. 83).

Also, contrary to popular opinion, having several International students on a campus does not equal a satisfying social life (Sovic, 2009). As the proportion of International students increase, Sovic (2009) found that the International student body perceives the campus to actually
be less supportive, for they have more opportunities to spend with their own ethnic group instead of being pushed outside of their comfort zone. It was found that activities on campus that include both native and International students help reduce the cultural stress that International students face, for there is a more intercultural community to learn from one another (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). A multicultural university is one that transforms a community by international connectedness, social cohesion, and intercultural learning (Brown, 2009). However, a true multicultural connected university continues to be an unrealized dream throughout the U.S. (Brown, 2009). Research has indicated that as most individuals stay in their mono-cultural groups, the chance of a positive adjustment through a multicultural setting decrease (Brown, 2009, Brown & Holloway, 2008).

**Limitations and Implications**

Previous research has addressed the importance of social connectedness and the positive adjustment of International students, yet there are some limitations and gaps within the findings. Some research focused mostly on Asian International students, representing 36.4% of International students (18.5% consisting of Chinese students), instead of the international student body as a whole (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007, “Open Doors, 2011). These studies create an imbalance in the research area as all ethnic groups should be included in the examination of the entire population. Also, in many research studies, there are few accounts of the longevity of the International students’ stay and how that affects their adjustment (Fritz et al., 2008). Also, there are limited studies that have assessed social adjustment for International students with their perceptions of program effectiveness and the collegiate community’s respect for them. Intercultural growth and opportunities for having all three types of friendships increase the positive adjustment of an International student, so Brown (2009) suggested that colleges could
find ways to enhance this social connectivity within the college community. Also, university services need to find ways to connect with the sojourners and see how they are adjusting over time on campus (McLachlan & Justice, 2009). This connection would give the International students the sense that they are valued and allow them a way to express their feelings and concerns. Colleges could also implement ways of helping domestic students understand the International student’s perspective (Sovic, 2009). These limitations and implications from the research expand on the importance for interconnected multicultural universities, enabling students, both American and International, to join together as a collegiate community and increase the probability for positive adjustment for the sojourners.

The current study focuses on the proposed research question, does a U.S. private university assist International students in their social adjustment? There are three hypotheses: 1) International students would be less socially adjusted than American students, 2) students who have negative perceptions of university assistance in connecting them with others on campus would also have lower levels of social adjustment, and 3) those that feel welcomed in the university would have higher levels of social adjustment. Knowledge of the social adjustment of International students in relationship with how they perceive university assistance would give the studied university, along with other universities, insight into the social adjustment and the overall well-being of International university students.

**Method**

**Participants**

The sample was collected from a Midwestern private university with a little over 2,000 undergraduates enrolled including 68 International undergraduate students. The university has an average student to professor ratio of 15:1. It is predominately a white (88.8%) and middle
class environment (45.4% of the undergraduate population have a family income between $40,000 and $100,000) (R. Wilson, personal communication, April 5, 2011; P. Stimpert, personal communication, April 15, 2011). During the time of participation recruitment there were 51 males and 17 females that made up the total possible International undergraduate student population (International Student Services, 2010). International students originated predominately from China (n=36) and Saudi Arabia (n=13) (International Student Services, 2010). The rest of the 19 undergraduate International students originated from each of the following countries: UAE (n=3), England (n=3), Japan (n=2), Taiwan (n=2), and one each from Australia, Canada, India, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, and Thailand (International Student Services, 2010). These countries are categorized as “other countries” that represent 31.6% of the total undergraduate International population (International Student Services, 2010).

Out of the 87 surveys distributed, 62 were completed and returned for a 71.3% response rate. As shown in Table 1, there were 62 undergraduate student participants; 31 American students and 31 International students, representing 45.6% of the total 68 International undergraduate students. The American participants included 15 males and 16 females whereas the International participants were 20 males and 11 females. These students all met the selected criteria: at least 18 years of age, an undergraduate student, and enrolled in the selected university. Each student spoke fluent English, though International students varied in their native languages, 96.8% of the International student sample were identified as having English as their second language (ESL). The citizenship of these students predominately originated from the United States (n=31), China (n=16) and Saudi Arabia (n=9). The remaining students (n=6) were from other countries: Japan, South Korea, Thailand, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Australia, and
Russia. There was also one individual who had American citizenship, but was born in the Netherlands.

Table 1

Participants by Gender, Academic Year, and Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Americans (n=31)</th>
<th>Internationals (n=31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (n=62)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(48.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(51.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Year (n=62)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(29.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(22.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(32.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(16.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residence (n=61)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Residence Hall</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>(83.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(16.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: n=number of participants. One International student did not answer residency question.*

**Measures**

Students’ social adjustment to college was assessed using one subscale from The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). The SACQ was originally created by Robert W. Baker and Bohdan Siryk through the Western Psychological Services (WPS) in 1989, but was then revised in 1999. It was “designed to assess student adjustment to college” (Baker & Siryk,
and has been used as a diagnostic tool for research purposes, especially in the past 10 years (Taylor & Pastor, 2007). This tool for college student adjustment included four different sections: Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and Attachment. (Baker & Siryk, 1999). “Validity has been demonstrated through statistically significant correlations between the SACQ subscales” and has been tested for several different measures; psychological separation from family, loneliness, attending counseling services, involvement with social activities, and the levels of attrition for each individual (Beyers & Goossens, 2002, p. 528).

In the current study, Social Adjustment was the only subscale utilized out of the four available, with permission from WPS. The Social Adjustment portion included four clusters: general adjustment, adjusting to other people in college, having nostalgia, and the social environment (Baker & Siryk, 1999). Twenty questions from the social adjustment section in the SACQ was utilized, each question consisting of a 9-point Likert scale. The scores from each question were added together to create the final score for the individual; 20 was the lowest possible score and 180 was the highest. Baker and Siryk (1999) identified three levels of social adjustment based on the mean scores from the SACQ: low social adjustment—LSA (20-102), average social adjustment—ASA (103-152), and high social adjustment—HSA (153-180). A percentile rank that represents the normative sample scoring for undergraduate students rated that 16.0% of the students would score LSA, 68.0% would range in ASA, while 16.0% would score as HSA (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

Questions used a 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from applies very closely to me to doesn’t apply to me at all with 14 positive related questions and 6 negative related questions.
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(Baker & Siryk, 1999). Higher scores reflect a greater level of social adjustment to college. See Figure 1 for examples from the SACQ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applies very closely to me</th>
<th>Doesn’t apply to me at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I fit in well</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as part of the college environment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been feeling lonely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a lot at college lately</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Examples of SACQ Questions. For positive questions within the SACQ, *applies very closely to me* was marked as a 9 but negative questions were reversed to be a 1 (Baker & Siryk, 1999). The examples in Figure 1 demonstrate the reversal scoring—the first example is a positive question and the second is negative.

Students’ beliefs about how well the university assisted them in their adjustment were assessed using a self-administered questionnaire. This questionnaire had 20 questions and was separated into four sections: demographics, friendships on campus, perceptions of feeling welcomed by university staff and students, and perceptions of the events offered on campus. First, demographic information was collected on gender, age, country of origin, parent’s education, academic level, and residency. Questions were either forced choice from a list of options, or short answer questions in which the participants provided their country and years at the college.

The second section addressed the types of students the participants befriended. This section was presented in two parts; one question was designed solely for the American students (n=31) and the other was aimed towards Internationals (n=31). These questions used a 5-point Likert scale consisting of *almost none, a few, some, many, and almost all*. Using the terminology...
of Bochner’s functional model of friendship networks (Bochner et al., 1977), each group was asked about the specific types of friendships. The section designated for Americans, separated two groups of friends: mono-cultural friends (other American students) and bi-cultural friends (International students). International students were asked to rate their three types of friends: mono-cultural (friends from their home country), multi-cultural (other international students), and bi-cultural (Americans). This section was not a comparison between the two groups but to identify the types of friends within each group.

The next section focused on the university events and how they established opportunities to connect with others at the university. Students were asked to rate how useful each type of university event was for them. University events were divided into four groups: campus events, international events, department events, and sports events. The original survey included international outings, events that the International Club hosted outside of the campus boundaries, but this event option was the least attended and viewed as the least helpful for both American and International students, so the option was excluded from most of the results so that international events could be the sole multicultural option. A campus event was defined as any event that university organizations held for students to attend, such as special speakers, movies, or performances. The international events represented activities that the university’s International Club hosted. Department events were events and activities that the participants’ division sponsored. Finally, sport events included participation either as a player or an observer in any university sport. Each rating for an event used the 5-point Likert scale to judge how useful in social adjustment each event was perceived: 1=not at all, 2=a little, 3=neutral, 4=sometimes, and 5=most of the time. The responses of the participants were evaluated through a mean comparison between the two main groups of students, with the neutral responses
removed—four to seven Americans and seven to twelve Internationals scored neutral for the various events. The placing of the neutral responses could have been perceived as either non-applicable or that the events were mid useful. With the neutrals removed, the evaluation became a 4-point Likert scale: 1=not at all, 2=a little, 3=sometimes, and 4=most of the time. The mean values signified to what extent each group believed the event to be helpful. Also, the participants were asked to rank the events from 1-5 (5=most attended, 1=least attended).

International outings were included in the ranking analysis because this event was originally incorporated in the questionnaire and the participants used it in the 1-5 ranking system. The last event related question in the questionnaire asked the students to describe how the events helped or did not help them connect with others on campus. Similar themes were found and compared between groups and within groups.

The final section analyzed the perceptions of feeling welcomed in the university community. There were two questions inquiring about whether participants felt respected by university students and faculty, both using the 5-point Likert scale from not at all—a little—neutral—sometimes—most of the time. The question following examined a short response section asking if they believed the professors at the university “cared” about them and their success as students and why. Another related question asked the participants to “circle-all-that-apply” for who they believed that they could go to for help with adjusting to college. Each individual could choose all that applied to them from nine options provided: professors, advisors, Academic Advising, International Student Services (ISS), Counseling Services, coach, friends, roommates, and other.
**Procedures**

Before beginning data collection, the questionnaires were piloted with a sample of American and International students who were recruited from informal social connections. These individuals identified duplicate or confusing questions, provided suggestions for improving phrasing, and timed the length of completing the survey. The researcher was present at all times to answer any questions of the pilot test subjects. Comments included that the questionnaire was long, but thorough, as it gave a well-rounded view into how the students were adjusting at that particular university. Through the additions and deletions suggested by the test pilot group, the questionnaire was finalized for distribution.

The study received approval by the Human Subject Review Board of the university prior to the data collection. Afterwards, a hard copy of the survey was provided for each participant. For a high response rate goal, a $50 gift card to the university’s bookstore was given to a randomly selected recipient donated by the International Student Services Office (ISS) at the selected university. Recruitment for participation was through several different avenues. First, surveys were distributed at International social events through the International Club on campus. These events were presentations about students’ individual native countries. Second, the individuals in the International Student Services gave their aid in support of the current study. Officials from ISS emailed professors that taught International students, requesting to distribute the survey during their class time. Third, for recruiting American students, the Religious Life organization agreed to hand out and collect a few surveys. Finally, participants were sought after though informal social connections. Individuals within these networks agreed to distribute around 5 to 10 surveys to those they knew. This was the most successful recruitment method for it brought a high response rate, whereas all other recruiting methods produced only a handful of
useable questionnaires. Only undergraduate students with proficient knowledge in the English language were recruited. Participation in this study was completely voluntary.

The current study was processed through the statistical system of PASW (Predictive Analytics SoftWare), version 18.0, formally known as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The data collected for the current study were analyzed using primarily Pearson’s chi-squares and independent \( t \)-tests. The chi-squares were performed to examine differences between the American students and the International students when analyzing the variables: social adjustment levels, friends, events, and feeling welcomed. The independent \( t \)-test was used to determine the differences between the means of variables: event usefulness, ranking events, and the SACQ scores that represented the differing social adjustment levels. Both statistical devices were used to discover significance within the study \( (p<.05) \).

**Results**

When combining the SACQ score for all of the 62 participants, they collectively scored in ASA, average social adjustment, \( (M=111.6, SD=28.7) \). However, in comparison of the two student groups, Americans mostly reported with ASA \( (M=127.4, SD=22.5) \) while International students had an overall LSA, low social adjustment, \( (M=95.8, SD=28.7) \). The difference between the adjustment levels of the two student groups were found to be highly significant \( (p<.001) \).

For all the participants, 41.9% had LSA, 54.8% had ASA, and 3.2% had HSA (high social adjustment), one American and one International student. The majority of American students \( (n=25) \) were in the ASA range, and five had LSA. In comparison, twenty-one International students scored in LSA and nine scored in ASA, see Figure 2 for more details. Ten out of the sixteen International students participants reported having LSA including all of the
Saudi Arabian students \((n=9)\) and two individuals that solely represented Thailand and UAE. Six Chinese students, and the individuals from South Korea, Japan, and Russia \((n=1\) for each country) reported ASA. Australia had the sole International student with HAS, high social adjustment. The differentiations of adjustment levels only within the International sample population represented a highly significant variance when analyzing the different countries \((p<.001)\). Through the adjustment levels of Americans and Internationals, other variables were analyzed to find significant data that pertained to the hypotheses—demographics, friends on campus, university events, and perceptions of feeling welcomed from university students and personnel.

![Figure 2: Social Adjustment Levels of American and International Students.](image)

*Figure 2. Social Adjustment Levels of American and International Students.* This graph represents the number of students in each social adjustment level to compare the differences between the two student groups. LSA=low social adjustment. ASA=average social adjustment. HSA=high social adjustment. \(p<.001\)

**Demographics with SACQ**

There was no significant difference for many of the demographics when either comparing Internationals to Americans or between the within group comparisons of adjustment levels. The results were about equally distributed for age, academic level, gender, and level of parental income. However, the one demographic element that had significance was residency.
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Americans mostly resided in the dormitories on campus (26), whereas the International students were separated almost equally between residence halls (13) and living off campus (17), \( p<.05 \). Residency was also significant \( p<.05 \) when compared to International adjustment levels for almost the entire International commuter sample (16) had LSA, whereas only one International commuter had ASA. There were also International students (4) who lived in the university dormitories that had LSA, but the other nine International students who lived in a residence hall had either ASA or HSA.

**Friends on Campus with SACQ**

More Americans (93.5%) reported that they have *many to almost all* of their friends from America (mono-cultural), compared to the 74.2% who stated that they have *almost no* or only *a few* International friends. Almost half (45.2%) of the International students stated that they had *many or almost all* mono-cultural friends, while over half reported having *almost no or a few* multi-cultural (54.8%) and bi-cultural (58.1%) friends on campus. Thus, the International students reported greater variations of culture within their friendships.

When observing the results for adjustment levels within groups, both groups reported having the majority of their friends from their native country in all adjustment levels. All of the ASA American students reported having *almost all or many* of their friends being mono-cultural along with the one HSA and three out of the five LSA and Americans \( p<.01 \). No significance was found for Americans befriending International students as only the one HSA, four ASA, and two LSA American students chose *some* bi-cultural friends as the highest option for the quantity of having International friends.

Significance was found for Internationals having American friends \( p<.05 \) for most American students stated that they had *almost no* or only *a few* International friends, but the
other friendship options had varying responses that showed little trending. Eleven International students with LSA and five Internationals with ASA indicated *almost all or many* of their friends were mono-cultural, yet the HSA International reported the opposite. The majority of all adjustment levels reported having *a few or some* multi-cultural friends, only one ASA International and four LSA Internationals reporting *many or almost all*. However, significance (*p* < .05) was found for bi-cultural friendships (having American friends) as 71.4% of the LSA Internationals scored having *almost no to only a few* American friends, whereas the ASA Internationals reported equally across the scale from *almost no to almost all*. The HSA International scored *almost all* for having bi-cultural friends.

**Events on Campus with SACQ**

Campus, international, department, and sport events were cross analyzed between group comparisons and also within group comparisons among Americans and Internationals for their adjustment scores. Table 2 displays the mean scores perceived by Americans and Internationals as to how helpful each event was for their social adjustment. Almost every event was perceived to be more helpful to American students than Internationals except for international events. Overall, American students, in all adjustment levels, perceived campus, department, and sport events to be relatively helpful compared to international events. Although, International students believed that all of the events were less helpful in comparison to American students—international events, sport events, and campus events were slightly more helpful than department events. There were nine commuter Internationals (52.9% of all the International commuters) reporting that department events were the least helpful (*p* < .05). In comparison with the two groups of students, department and international events were significant because of the dramatic difference between the American and International perceptions (*p* < .05).
### Table 2

*American and International Students Perceive the Usefulness of University Events*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students and Adjustment levels</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>International Events</th>
<th>Department Events</th>
<th>Sport Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Americans (n=31)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Events</td>
<td>3.1 (1.1)</td>
<td>1.7 (1.0)</td>
<td>3.0 (1.1) *</td>
<td>3.0 (1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSA (n=5)</td>
<td>2.7 (1.5)</td>
<td>2.0 (1.2)</td>
<td>3.7 (.6)</td>
<td>3.0 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASA (n=25)</td>
<td>3.1 (1.1)</td>
<td>1.5 (.8)</td>
<td>2.9 (1.2)</td>
<td>3.0 (.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internationals (n=31)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Events</td>
<td>2.5 (1.1)</td>
<td>2.6 (1.1) **</td>
<td>2.3 (1.1)</td>
<td>2.6 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSA (n=21)</td>
<td>2.2 (1.1)</td>
<td>2.6 (1.0)</td>
<td>1.9 (1.1)</td>
<td>2.2 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASA (n=9)</td>
<td>3.0 (.9)</td>
<td>2.9 (1.1)</td>
<td>2.8 (.8)</td>
<td>3.1 (.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: LA=low social adjustment. ASA=average social adjustment. M=mean. n=number of participants. SD=standard deviation. *=p<.05 between group comparison for specific event. **=p<.01 between group comparison for specific event. Neutral responses were not included.*

The results vary from the differing responses between the two main adjustment levels (LSA and ASA), specifically within the International student sample population, however there was no significance within groups. The no significant data could be a result from the low number of participants within each adjustment level to make a proper comparison, yet trending did occur. LSA International students perceived all the events (excluding international events) to be much less helpful than ASA International students; for example, campus events held less effectiveness for LSA Internationals ($M=2.2$, $SD=1.2$) than their ASA International peers ($M=3.0$, $SD=0.9$). Even with this distinction within the International sample, most of the
individuals in both groups reported that they attended the events at least occasionally. However, there was little difference between Americans and Internationals with ASA. There was also little variance within the American adjustment levels.

Table 3

*Descriptions of How University Events Assisted in Connecting Students on Campus*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses to event helpfulness</th>
<th>Americans (*n=*29)</th>
<th>Internationals (*n=*22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>n</em></td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events helped them find new friends</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(41.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller events were more helpful</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(31.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport events were more helpful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International events were more helpful</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not go to socialize</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not attend the events</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(13.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events do not help</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: n=number of participants. 2 Americans and 9 Internationals did not respond. p<.05.*

The participants also answered a short response question, describing how university events helped them connect with others on campus (see Table 3). Nearly one fifth (17.7%) of the total population did not answer this section in the questionnaire, so the participant response studied was narrowed from 62 to 51—including 56.9% consisted of Americans and 43.1% Internationals. This question was analyzed by identifying similar themes found in the responses;
events helped them find new friends, smaller events were more helpful, sports events were more helpful, international events were more helpful, events were unhelpful, they did not go to socialize, and the last theme was that they did not attend the events. The themes were then categorized into three different areas, positive responses, negative responses, and neutral response. There were 22 out of the 29 American participants who reported positively about the events offered. No negative responses were recorded, yet 24.1% Americans reported neutral. The International participants on the other hand, reported with 68.2% stating positive remarks for university events. This percentage consisted of five Internationals who thought that the events helped them find new friends (all with LSA). However, the only reported negative responses were from five LSA International participants. There were few Internationals who were neutral, though two (9.1%) responded that they were not social people and so they did not attend the events. Significance \( (p < .05) \) was found between the different responses of two student groups, however, there was no significance when comparing the answers between the two main adjustment levels for Americans or Internationals.

It was also requested that the participants rank how often they attended each event from 1-5 (5=the most, 1=the least). The results showed that American students attended campus events \( (M=4.1, SD=1.2) \) most often, followed by department events \( (M=3.7, SD=1.2) \), then sport events \( (M=3.2, SD=1.3) \), with international events being the least attended \( (M=2.1, SD=1.1) \). On the other hand, International students ranked department \( (M=2.3, SD=1.2) \), sport \( (M=2.5, SD=1.5) \), and campus events \( (M=2.5, SD=1.3) \) as lower attendance in comparison to international events \( (M=2.9, SD=1.4) \). Campus and sport events were observed to rate lower in attendance for commuter International students than International students residing in university dormitories, though the results were not significantly different. International outings were
originally assessed to be included in the ranking. Americans typically scored much lower 
\( M=1.5, SD=.9 \) than Internationals \( M=2.3, SD=1.3 \) for this type of event. However, due to 
inappropriate rankings, this data was not used in the current study. There was a small number of 
American student as well as several International students who did not rank from 1-5 using each 
number one time to rank how often they attended one event in comparison with the other events 
(35.5% of the respondents did not follow the directions). This question could have been the 
wrong fit for a ranking question and thus added to the confusion.

**Feeling Welcomed with SACQ**

When comparing the two student groups, significance \( p<.05 \) was found with perceived 
respect from students, but there was no significance observed for respect from faculty. 
University professors and staff members were perceived to at least *sometimes* display respect by 
all of the Americans and the majority (83.9%) of the International students. A small portion of 
Internationals reported *neutral* (5 Internationals with LSA), when asked if professors and staff 
demonstrated respect towards them. All of the American students indicated that students on 
campus demonstrated respect towards them *most of the time* or at least *sometimes*, while only 
71.0% of the Internationals reported the same. A large portion of the International students 
reported *neutral* in the matter (19.4%), five with LSA and one with ASA. Only two LSA 
Internationals reported that students showed them *a little* or *no* respect at all.

The short answer response section that asked the participants if they believed professors 
at the university cared about them and their success had 6.5% of the sample that did not respond 
(4 Internationals), leaving 31 Americans and 27 Internationals useable responses. Only 3.4% of 
the total population stated *no* (2 Internationals), while 96.6% said *yes*. The majority of the 58 
that responded (75.9%) went into detail about how the professors cared about them individually.
Their responses were split into five different themes: *could meet one-on-one, were welcoming and respectful, were very friendly, went out of their way to help the students succeed,* and *interacted with the students in class.* Of those that expanded on their answer, the majority of Americans (10 Americans) perceived their professors to be *welcoming and respectful* to students, and believed that these professors actually *went out of their way to help the student succeed* (6 Americans), all of whom had ASA. Only one International student (3.7% from those who responded) with ASA stated that the professors *went out of their way to help the students succeed.* International students mainly answered with a simple *yes* (40.7%), most of them having LSA (n=8 out of 10). However, 18.5% of the LSA International students stated that the professors were *very friendly*; some even stated that they were like family. There were only two International students who believed that the professors *did not help them* (1 with LSA and 1 with ASA). There was no significant results based on the social adjustment levels, however significance (*p*<.05) was found between differing responses of both American and International students.

Afterwards, the participants were given nine options of who they felt that they could go to for help with adjusting to college. Much of the data were similar when comparing the American and International students, as there were only four out of the nine options with significant differences between Americans and Internationals (see Table 4 for more details). Only the International students reported going to ISS, while almost half of the Americans chose their *roommates*—both categories having significant differences between the two types of students (*p*<.05). Another significant choice (*p*<.05) between the groups was *other* since American students were the sole respondents for this category, even though the percentage of those who chose it was just under 20%. This *other* category was mostly identified as being
family members. Both student groups reported going to their friends and advisors the most for help in adjusting to college. All three adjustment groups chose their friends as the most common selection, with almost every ASA and HSA American selecting it. ASA International students chose their advisor, ISS, and also their friends as people that they could go to for help, whereas LSA Internationals mostly chose the ISS Office while just under half (47.6%) desired to ask their friends for help.

Table 4

*Potential Sources of Help With College Adjustment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Help</th>
<th>American (n=31)</th>
<th>International (n=31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends **</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(90.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(51.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roommate(s) *</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(48.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS ***</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(35.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(16.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(16.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(9.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other *</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(19.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Other mostly consisted of family members.

n=number of participants who answered yes as a potential source.

* p< .05. ** p< .01. *** p< .001.
Discussion

This study was motivated by research findings that social support aided International students in their positive adjustment, yet International students were also found to not have a strong social network in their universities. There is debate on what type of services the university could provide to help International students’ social adjustment. The current study first hypothesizes that Americans would have a higher social adjustment than International students, which is supported. About four fifths of American participants had ASA, while compared to a little less than one third of the International students. These results are skewed more in LSA from the normative percentile ranking scores that Baker and Siryk designed. The majority of students in the normative scale report having ASA, while about a third of the students, evenly proportioned, have either LSA or HSA (Baker & Siryk, 1999). Even though both student groups had only one individual with HSA, considerably less than the normative scores, American students represented the normative scores more than International students. International students fell below the normative scales for ASA and reported higher in LSA.

As might be expected, the one International individual with HSA was the one Caucasian International student. Looking at the different countries’ analysis of social adjustment, all of the Middle Eastern participants (Saudi Arabia and the UAE) and over half of the Asian participants (Chinese and Thailand) had low social adjustment. This finding is supported in the research since non-Caucasian International students are likely to have more difficulties adjusting to college and interacting with the student body (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007).

With residency and adjustment, the results are similar to previous studies as students who live off-campus tend to have more adjustment problems and cannot successfully adapt to the new college environment (Mohamedi, Schwitzer, & Nunnery, 2010; Al-Qaisy, 2010). Significance
was found within the Internationals’ adjustment levels but not for Americans. Even though there were some LSA Internationals that lived on campus, International students that lived off campus, except for one commuter International with ASA, were found to have LSA. There is a relationship between residing off campus and lower adjustment levels, specifically in social adjustment (Mohamedi, Schwitzer, & Nunnery, 2010; Al-Qaisy, 2010), though most of the previous research focused more on freshmen and not every academic level.

It was also hypothesized that students who had negative perceptions of university assistance in connecting the participants with other students will have poor social adjustment. There was a variety of events offered by the university designed to encourage social interaction; however, several LSA Internationals did not find that these events encouraged this interaction. Total satisfaction of perceived event helpfulness for the less well-adjusted students had lower means than their ASA peers for both student groups, especially for the Internationals. Some of the events included smaller knit social interactions between the students, like department events or some campus events, yet these events were believed to be the least helpful for Internationals. Several International students also admitted to not having any great motivation to attend these events. University students need specific opportunities at college that can help them to have a positive assimilation into college life, and living on campus provides the students with easy access to most if not all of the campus activities, tailoring to the needs of different types of students (Al-Qaisy, 2010). Since the majority of LSA lived off campus, residency had some influence for perceived university helpfulness and attendance. This discovery supported the hypothesis as the majority of LSA International students believed that the social events offered were not very useful for social interaction; while Internationals with average adjustment
perceived that these events were more helpful. However, the findings only apply to International students since there was little difference between Americans with LSA and those with ASA.

When asked in a short response about how useful the listed events were for the International students, two responses highlighted the difference between the LSA and the ASA Internationals. The first individual was a Saudi Arabian freshman and had the lowest SACQ score while the other was a Chinese senior with the third highest score for the International students. These two individuals reported two rather diverse approaches to university activities:

[These events do not] help me, the event[s] become like groups. You can see the American students on one side and the International students on the other side.

I started to get involved in my department events as soon as I came here, and I think that’s really helped me to meet many great people…I feel more and more comfortable when I feel more confident in my English, and my friends always said that I am totally different than the time when I was a freshman. I attended more international events when I was in my first 2 years here because that is something that we all have in common—coming from a place outside of the U.S., and it has helped us connect with each other, and gave us less fear to talk to people. But now, I attend more school events than international events…which really let[s] me make a lot of friends and have more valuable experiences. I so regret that I didn’t start that earlier.

These responses provided insight as to whether the person was the reason for the individual’s LSA or the university; the results show both. The higher adjusted individual did put more effort into socializing and had a positive attitude, representing a more resilient personality,
yet social connectedness increased when the participant attended more of the smaller events that were designed to make close knit connections. This was a positive indication for university helpfulness once the student fully engaged in the events. However, the person with LSA perceived that these same events did not encourage multicultural mixing and reported a negative experience when attending events. Multicultural communities aid in the connectedness of the students’ social unity and the learning process about the dissimilar cultures (Brown, 2009). Without this balanced multicultural mix, International students may not increase their social adjustment and so are left perceiving the events as less helpful. Also, the first year of enrollment demonstrates a critical point in gaining social support for Americans and even more so for International students (Sovic, 2009). The events analyzed in the current study had mixed views from the two individuals mentioned, yet both indicated that their beginning years resulted in little involvement with American students in university events.

Previous studies found that multicultural friendships created a higher chance of adjusting to a culturally different college environment (Brown, 2009; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008; Fritz et al., 2008.). The current study found that individuals with higher social adjustment had friends that included both American and International students, all of which were more multicultural mixed. International students with higher adjustment had several friends in all categories (mono-cultural, multi-cultural, and bi-cultural), while even Americans with average adjustment levels reported having various friends from America and at least some International friends. In contrast, the lower socially adjusted individuals had less multicultural friends. However, the majority of Americans were found to have almost all American friends and barely any International friends, similarly International students had the majority of their friends from their own country. This supports previous research that possession of all types of
friends was indeed connected to an overall higher adjustment for college students, International and American, yet many Americans and Internationals identified most of their friends to be mono-cultural (Brown, 2009; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Zhu et al., 2008; Fritz et al., 2008). Having diverse friendships (mono-cultural, multi-cultural, and bi-cultural networks), greatly increased the chance of social, psychological, and academic adjustment for International students (Lin & Betz, 2009; Wang, 2009; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Zhou et al., 2008; Ramsay et al., 2007; Ward et al., 2001).

The university environment plays a role in the students’ adjustment, yet students also have the responsibility to increase their own adjustment by making an impact on the environment instead of completely allowing the university to influence their adjustment (Ramsay et al., 2007). In other words, the university offers events to socialize, but it is up to the individual to actually attend these events and actively participate. Research indicated that International students having diverse social interactions lead into the much needed multicultural social support, increases the person’s psychological well-being, and aids the individual in the process of adjustment (Zhou et al., 2008; Ramsay et al., 2007). Having close friendships actually helps in the development of a more positive adjustment overall and one main avenue that connects students to potential friends within the university is the university events. College students may have the ability to manipulate their college experience in positive ways, yet the university contains the power to aid them in their journey.

The final hypothesis, that those who felt welcomed in the university would have a higher social adjustment overall, was not supported in the current study. The results signified that the majority of both Americans and Internationals with LSA felt welcomed by the staff and students of the university. Though there were a few Internationals that were neutral in their reports when
asked about if students demonstrated respect towards them—all having LSA levels—both Americans and Internationals of all adjusted subgroups agreed that professors respected them and cared about them as students. The Americans believed that professors were welcoming and respectful and that they went out of their way to help each student succeed. International students also had a positive outlook towards their professor as most of them indicated that the professors were very friendly and that they could meet with them one-on-one. There was one Saudi Arabian student with LSA who responded positively towards his/her professors and even the students:

They are like parents to me. Not all of them but most of them are, also the classes being small here is a really good thing because everybody [the professors and students] start knowing your name and waving at you in the hallways. It is just cool!

This study was performed at a Midwestern private university where the classes were small enough to have a closer relationship with the professors and sometimes the students. The positive remarks from all adjustment levels within this study indicate that International students report that this private university reaches out to them with respect and care. According to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, the person is affected by the many different system networks around them. The microsystem, the defining environment that the person has direct contact with (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), includes the university environment. When only addressing the different events, this university environment seems to not promote the overall positive social adjustment for International students. However, the microsystem is not solely composed through activities but also the personal relations around them. The individuals within
the new environment actually helped to promote a positive community for higher and lower adjusted International students.

In summary, International students have expectedly scored in LSA compared to American students and this study has shown that there has been a correlation with event satisfaction and scoring higher in social adjustment. However, the adjustment levels held little significance for the perceptions of respect and care from others within the university for the International participants, as responses were consistently positive for the university faculty and most of the students.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to the current study that must be taken into consideration. First, this study was conducted in a Midwestern private university with limited undergraduate participants. Out of a total international population of 188 undergraduate and graduate students at the university, only 68 were undergraduate—36.2% of the academic International students within the university. Students from the graduate programs were not included in the research because many of them live with family members and so have different social adjustment needs. Therefore, this study did not include those in the graduate programs. Even though the sample size was almost half of the total undergraduate Internationals in the university, only one individual was Caucasian and from a country that spoke English as his/her first language. However, only five (7.4%) of the total undergraduate International population were from English speaking countries so the results would have been more accurately represented with more English speaking Internationals. The one International with English as the primary language was also the sole representative for HSA Internationals, thus preventing comparisons with the other social adjustment levels. With only one individual in HSA for both Americans and
Internals, the percentage of the sample population also does not compare to the normative percentage range of 16.0% for overall students with HSA (Baker & Siryk, 1999). Also, the sample size was too small for a full comparative analysis. The sample size diminished the expanse of the data analyses to compare within group social adjustment levels with some of the demographic information such as gender, age, academic levels, and parental income.

The recruiting methods could also have introduced bias into the results. First, by going to international social events, the International participants had already expressed their satisfaction with these events, so when asked about event usefulness, the international events were perceived to be the most helpful. Then, by having the Religious Life Office on campus agree to distribute and collect surveys, the American respondents had a bias to religious activities, or campus events. Finally, through recruiting from differing social connection, participants recruited their friends, and thus recruited people that were similar to them. These recruitment methods are weaknesses in the current study since the majority of participants were recruited through a convenience sample. Also, given the high proportion of Internationals who lived off campus, and the low proportion of American students who lived in the residence halls, residency could possibly have been a predictor of social adjustment levels. It may be the case that the main difference between the American and International students’ social adjustment was due to residency.

Another limitation could be misclassification due to not completely comprehending the content of the questions asked in either the SACQ or the university assistance questionnaire. English proficiency could be a factor that contributed to any misinterpretations. Even though all of the International students passed the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), there could have been a few Internationals that did not fully understand the English questions and thus
some of the wording may have confused the International students. Misunderstanding could have been made from event usefulness as the neutral responses could have been perceived as either non-applicable or they believed the events to be mid useful. There was also several who indicated that the questionnaire was too long, being intimidating for some to complete. This led to many of the individuals to leave the short response questions blank, creating an even smaller sample size when analyzing these questions. Finally, the SACQ was created in 1989 and then revised in 1999 (Baker & Siryk, 1999). Although the SACQ has been validated and currently in use for over ten years (Beyers & Goossens, 2002; Taylor & Pastor, 2007), Taylor and Pastor (2007) suggested the need for possible additional revisions to update to the current generation, like social networking online. This tool was also challenging for International students to comprehend entirely since it was not found to be applied to International students in previous studies and thus may not have been applicable for Internationals specifically. The researcher had to add further definitions to some of the terms for ESL students to understand the meanings of the questions. Finally, this study was administered at one university and should not be generalized for other universities. Overall, there were several limitations to the study, yet the results proved useful to the studied university in identifying the social adjustment issues for the International student population.

**Conclusion**

Research has indicated that International students often struggle as they adjust to their stay at a foreign college. The students endure several transitions into the college life that go beyond the native student’s experience. Culture shock is one of the most prominent experiences when International students begin their journey in the United States. The transitions from one culture to the next and the resulting culture shock require an adjustment from the International
student, whether positive or negative. However, studies have shown that it is difficult adjusting to a new culture as there are several hindrances to the student’s development. The current study supported the hypothesis that International students were less socially adjusted than American students. Although both American and International students in all adjustment levels felt welcomed by university staff and students, disproving hypothesis two; the major difference between the two groups was the perceived helpfulness of university events, which corroborates with the third hypothesis.

This intriguing observation brings light to the social adjustment of Internationals for even though there are individuals on campus that are welcoming and friendly, the events at the university are not really connecting them to these welcoming and friendly people on campus. Thus, it is the events that have a negative correspondence with social adjustment. Though these findings could be due to the fact that university events were not designed specifically for the needs of International students, especially for the Internationals who reside off campus, though it remains unclear exactly what type of events would successfully connect International students with American students or why certain events are not as helpful to either student group. The findings within the current study are consistent with previous research on International student adjustment patterns for it verifies that friendship and a sense of community within the university corresponds with higher adjustment overall (Brown, 2009; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008; Fritz et al., 2008). Some concern must be raised for this university that hosts International students as there seems to be a disconnect between the university services and the social interaction on campus for International students.
Future Research

Although research on the adjustment of International students to academic life in the United States is extensive, there are still areas that require study. Since there are new government regulations for Internationals, a study could focus on how students adjust to the new regulations (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Fritz, Chin, and DeMarinis (2008) suggested that further research should identify the normative stress response to a new culture. This would increase the researcher’s ability to fully understand if International students react differently than the average response. Also, more study needs to be done on the psychological well-being of International students along with their sociological adaption to the university experience (Zhou et al., 2008). Another avenue to explore would be the nontraditional approaches to university services for alternative ways of counseling. Since there have been consistent findings that International students who have adjustment problems do not seek counseling services, this would help universities implement some positive alternatives and thus increase successful adjustment (McLachlan & Justice, 2009). Also, one could identify cognitive, behavioral, and emotional strategies for adjusting that would aid university services in discovering what adjustment techniques serve a better purpose for International students (Olivas & Li, 2006). As reviewed, friendship has one of the most powerful positive impacts to a student’s ability to adapt. Future researchers should examine friendship sources to help determine ways of enhancing the sense of community on campus (Ramsay et al., 2007). Future research could also examine residency requirements for International students to live on campus instead of off campus in comparison to social adjustment levels. Little research has found a connection with International students staying in contact with friends back home and how it might affect their socialization with new found friends on campus.
References


Appendix A

The Questionnaire from the Study
This survey is to see how well you are adjusting to Ashland University (AU). Please write in your answers for fill in the blank sections and circle one answer in the multiple choice sections, unless the directions state otherwise.

1. What country are you from? ______________________________

2. How old are you? ______

3. What gender are you?
   a. Male
   b. Female

4. What was the highest level of education that either of you parent(s) or guardian(s) achieved?
   a. Some high school
   b. High school
   c. Associate’s Degree
   d. Some college
   e. Bachelor’s Degree
   f. Master’s Degree
   g. PhD
   h. MD

5. Is attending Ashland University your first United States college experience?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. What academic level are you?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. 5th year and above senior

7. Where do you live while you are a student?
   a. In a residence hall
   b. Off campus in Ashland
   c. Off campus but not in Ashland

8. How long have you been in the United States? __________________________

9. How long have you been at Ashland University? _________________________

10. Would you recommend others to study at AU? Why or why not?

11. Would you recommend other international students to study in the US? Why or why not?
If you are an international student, go to question 12. If you are an American student, go to question 13.

12. How many friends do you have for each type of student? Circle one choice for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Almost none</th>
<th>A few</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Many</th>
<th>Almost all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students from your own country</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other international students not from your own country</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American students</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(International students skip to question 14)

13. How many friends do you have for each type of student? Circle one choice for each group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Almost none</th>
<th>A few</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Many</th>
<th>Almost all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American students</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International students</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List your friends' home countries (or regions if you do not know their specific country)
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

How well do you agree with each of the following statements? Circle one choice for each group.

14. Most AU students treat you with respect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Most AU professors and staff members treat you with respect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
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</table>

16. Do you believe that most of the professors and staff at AU care about you and your success as a student? Why or why not?
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
17. Who did you, or would you, go to on campus if you needed help adjusting to AU? **Circle all that apply for you.**
   a. Professors
   b. Advisor
   c. Academic Advising
   d. International Student Services
   e. Counseling Services
   f. Coach
   g. Friends
   h. Roommate
   i. Other______________________

18. Rank how often you attend each type of event offered at Ashland University?
   **Rank the groups from 1-5,  1 = the most often  5 = the least often.**
   Use each number:    1    2    3    4    5.

   ______ On campus events  (Comedians, Acoustic Café, dances, movies, plays)
   ______ International events on campus  (World Café, International Fashion Show, Ebony Ball)
   ______ International event outings  (Mohican trip, shopping trip)
   ______ Department events  (events and activities you do with your department or department club)
   ______ AU Sports events  (Football, Soccer, Baseball)

19. How useful were these events in helping you to connect with other Ashland University students? **Circle one choice for each group.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On campus events</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International events on campus</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International event outings</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department events</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports events</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Describe how well these events have helped you or not helped you to connect with other people on campus.

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
[Questionnaire page omitted at copyright holder’s request]
[Questionnaire page omitted at copyright holder’s request]
Appendix B

Authorization from Human Subjects Review Board
TO: Sarah E. Ebinger
FROM: Randy Gearhart, Chair
DATE: October 14, 2010
RE: Human Subjects Review Board Approval

The Human Subjects Review Board has approved the research proposal you submitted. You may proceed with the project.

The primary function of the HSRB is to ensure protection of human research subjects. As a result of this mandate, we ask that you pay close attention to the fundamental ethical principles of autonomy, justice, and beneficence when establishing your research proposal. These ethical principles pertain specifically to the issues of informed consent, fair selection of subjects, and risk/benefit considerations.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Randy Gearhart
Phone: 419-207-6198
Fax: 419-289-5460
E-mail: rgearhar@ashland.edu
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD

PART I
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO USE HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

Return the original and one copy of the typewritten application including Parts II and III to:
Dean of the Graduate School
100 Founders Hall
Ashland University
Ashland, Ohio 44805

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR Sarah E. Ebinger

DEPARTMENT Family and Consumer Sciences Department

ADDRESS 625 School Road EMAIL sebinger@ashland.edu
CITY Mansfield STATE Ohio ZIP 44907 PHONE

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S) (typed name) (signature)

PROJECT TITLE Comparing the Social Adjustment of American Students to International Students Based on their Beliefs about University Helpfulness in the Adjustment Process

BEGINNING DATE OF RESEARCH (MONTH/YEAR) September 2010

ANTICIPATED ENDING DATE OF RESEARCH (MONTH/YEAR) December 2010

*******************************************************************************

□ FACULTY RESEARCH:

EXTERNALLY FUNDED YES __________ AGENCY ________________________________

NO __________

☑ STUDENT DIRECTED RESEARCH:

ADVISOR Dr. David Vanata

THESIS X DISSETATION ______ COURSE REQUIREMENT X

COURSE # FCS 419 PRACTICUM ______ OTHER (Please Specify) ______

I agree to follow the procedures outlined in this summary description and any attachments to ensure that the rights and welfare of human subjects in my project are properly protected. I understand that no contact may be initiated with subjects until I have received approval of these procedures from the HSRB and complied with any required modifications in connection with that approval.

Date 9/23/2010

Date 9/23/2010

PRINTED NAME OF ADVISOR Dr. David Vanata

ADDRESS/AFFILIATION Kates Center for Family and Consumer Sciences 212

CITY Ashland STATE Ohio ZIP 44805

PHONE (419)-289-5292 E-MAIL dvanata@ashland.edu FAX (419)-289-5333
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD  
PART II: RESEARCH PROTOCOL

TYPE OF REVIEW REQUESTED (Choose One)

NOTE: Regardless of type of review, all of Part II and Part III must be completed and submitted to the HSRB. Research may begin only after written approval of HSRB is obtained.

_______ EXEMPTED I believe the current project is EXEMPTED. It meets category(ies) _____ from the list of six categories on pages 4-6 of the Guidelines.

X_____ EXPEDITED I believe the current project meets the EXPEDITED classification. It meets category 1 from the list of thirteen categories on pages 6-8 of the Guidelines.

A portion of the research conducted will be done through a questionnaire. This meets category 1 of the Exempted classification.

_______ FULL BOARD I believe that this project exceeds the requirements for the EXEMPTED and EXPEDITED classifications, and therefore, must be reviewed by the FULL BOARD of the HSRB.
**HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD**
**PART II: RESEARCH PROTOCOL**
Continued
(Please answer the questions below.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>A. Human subjects in the proposed research are involved in activities that exceed those described as exempt categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>B. The proposed research activity will involve a special class of subjects. Examples would include: children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons. Further examples may include: individuals with psychiatric, cognitive, or developmental disorders, substance abuses, and any other special category of individual who may not have the capacity to make a reasoned decision about participation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>C. The proposed research activity will involve an element of deception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>D. The proposed research activity will expose subjects to discomfort or harassment beyond levels encountered in daily life. (the study will ask about discrimination in the presence of a majority member)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>E. The subjects will be identifiable to anyone other than the researchers through records, responses or identifiers linked to the subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>F. The subjects could be at risk of criminal or civil liability, damage to employability or to financial standing, or undue embarrassment, if responses became known outside this research project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>G. The research deals with sensitive aspects of subjects’ behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>H. The research involves the collection or study of existing data from sources not publicly available. (Existing data can be documents, records, pathological specimens or diagnostic specimens).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>I. The subjects will be video/audio taped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>J. The subjects are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>K. The research activities outlined in Part III have the written approval of the authorized official(s) in the school district and/or other agencies involved with this research (if applicable). (Attach copy).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>L. All required forms and safeguards are included with Part III: Summary of Proposal. This includes questionnaires, research instruments, letters of consent, approvals from authorized officials, etc. (Still waiting on consent from the organization to use SACQ. There is electronic communication available)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD
PART III: SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Summarize the proposed project and procedures to which humans will be subjected. Consent form(s), questionnaires, etc. must be attached. The summary should include purpose(s), solicitation and number of subjects, data collection procedures, an explanation of how consent is obtained, procedures for maintaining confidentiality and any potential risks involved for the subjects. Explain the nature of any deception if it is part of the design.

1. Project Description

This study is to assess the social adjustment of undergraduate college students. The subjects are international students and American students. This comparison is to see how the two groups differ in their beliefs on how the university is helping them in their adjustment. The procedure includes distributing questionnaires with the tool of social adjustment to about one hundred recipients, fifty American students and fifty international students.

2. Subject Recruitment

A. Recipients will be recruited through different ways. Since international students are scattered throughout the classrooms and campus, they will be recruited to take the survey in classes that have several international students with electronic permission from the professors, and through the researcher announcing for participation at international events that have great participation. The incentive for filling out the survey is for their names to be placed in a drawing to receive a $50 gift card from AU. The gift cards are donated by the book store and through cooperation with the ISS Office.

B. There will be two types of subjects: American students and international students. Both sets of students are undergraduate college students from a Midwestern Private University in Ohio. These population is of eighteen years or older, has both male and female, and comes from a variety of counties (United States, China, South Arabia, England, Japan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, India, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Taiwan, and Thailand). Also, since half of the participants are international students, they might have different levels of understanding English. All participants will be around the same mental level as there are all around the same educational level. The participants are freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors. It is necessary to use these participants because they are the main focus of the study.

3. Confidentiality of Data

All data will be kept for a period of thirty-six months in a locked filing cabinet. After which it will be destroyed by fire/shredding.
4. Informed Consent Procedures

A. How will the subject be informed of the nature of the investigation, the reasonably foreseeable risks, and the voluntary nature of his/her participation?

X____ In writing (attach a written copy of this explanation)

The nature of this investigation is to assess your social adjustment to college life; there will be questions about discrimination that might be troubling for some. You are a voluntary participant so your participation can be canceled at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

B. Once the above information has been presented, will you obtain written consent from the subject (i.e., their signature) prior to their participation?

X____ Yes (attach a copy of the written consent form)

_____ No (attach a detailed justification for requesting waiver of written consent)

C. Are the subjects: (Check all that apply)

_____ children ____ mentally disabled
_____ prisoners ______ economically disadvantaged
_____ pregnant women ______ educationally disadvantaged
X____ other (please specify) participants are undergraduate American and international students who might have trouble understanding English.

Describe from whom consent and permission will be sought and granted.

Consent is granted by the individual.

5. Risks to Subjects

A. Describe in detail any immediate or long range risks to subjects that may arise from the procedures used in the study. Indicate the precautions you have taken to minimize these risks.

There are slight psychological risks to this procedure. There will be questions about discrimination that could bring troubling memories to the participant. The participants will be notified of the types of questions and told that their participation is optional if answering discrimination questions is too much for them.

B. Explain the nature of any deception if it is part of the research design.

No deception is a part of the research.
6. Benefits

Describe the anticipated benefits to subjects, field of study, and to society, from knowledge that may be obtained in this study.

There are benefits to the subjects, the field of study, and the university. For the participants, they receive the incentives and the gratitude of someone attempting to let other students in the community understand them. The field of study benefits from this procedure because it will allow other researcher to gain knowledge about how international and American students compare in their social adjustment and how they believe the university is helping them in their adjustment to see if universities across America should implement more steps in helping the students’ adjustment. Also, this university will greatly benefit from this study, for the representatives are able to see how well they are doing in helping both American and international students with their adjustments and then assess what they can do for improvement.
CONSENT FORM

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Sarah E. Ebinger in the Ashland University’s Family and Consumer Sciences Department is conducting a research study to help understand how American and international students compare in their social adjustment based on how they believe the university is helping them. You are being asked to participate in this study because it will allow the university to see how well their officials are helping you adjust to college life.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, you will fill out a survey that will take about 15 minutes of your time.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There will be some questions about discrimination in the university and you will be filling out the survey in front of other students. If you feel uncomfortable and do not want to participate, then you have the option of not taking the survey with no consequences.

D. BENEFITS

The information that you provide may help the university to understand your situation better and apply more ways to connect with you, which may help to increase your adjustment at Ashland University.

E. COSTS

There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study.

F. PAYMENT

In completing this survey, your name will be put into a raffle for a $50 AU gift card.

G. QUESTIONS

If you have any comments or concerns about my email is sebinger@ashland.edu. If you have any further questions you can contact the chair member Randy Gearhart of the Human Subject Review Board at (419) 289-6198 or you can e-mail him at rgearhar@ashland.edu.

H. CONSENT

If you desire a copy of this consent form to keep, circle the “H” by CONSENT and I will send you a signed copy to your email address.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status as a student.

By signing below, you are also acknowledging that you at least 18 years old of age.

To contact you if you win: _____________________________________________

Email address of Study Participant

_________________________ _____________________________________________

Date    Signature of Study Participant

_________________________ _____________________________________________

Date    Signature of Person Obtaining Consent
Author’s Biography

Sarah E. Ebinger was raised in a rural country side on the outskirts of Butler, Ohio, population 3,765, graduating from Clear Fork High School. At Ashland University, Sarah majored in Child and Family Studies with a minor in Religion and will soon earn the designation of Provisional Certified Family Life Educator. She is an active member of the Honors Program, being on the Dean’s List for all eight semesters, and holds the titles of Vice President and Treasurer for Kappa Omicron Nu, the Family and Consumer Sciences Honors Society. Miss Ebinger has been awarded one of the university’s most esteemed scholarships, the Hilda Bretzlaff Scholarship, along with the Kern Pre-Seminary Scholarship, an award given to the future leaders of the Church.

Upon graduation, Sarah intends on working and volunteering for non-profit organizations within her home community before striving for her Master’s Degree in Clinical Family Counseling.