

## Impact of Lack of Social Support on Mental Health and Academic Achievement Among International Students in United State

Asma Mubarak Al-Juaid

Faculty of Social Sciences || Umm Al Qura University || KSA

**Abstract:** This study aimed to reveal the impact of lack of social support on mental health and academic achievement, and to determine associations of social support between depression and academic achievement, among international students in U.S. universities. The researcher used the systematic review approach and all literature that related to the research's subject was scanned and analyzed to achieve the aims of the study.

The study indicated that international students in the United States experienced cultural, social, or environmental stressors which resulted in internal difficulties. It also showed that international students who did have access to social support from family, friends, and teachers achieved higher grade point averages, as for the academic stress faced by international students in the United States was also shown to be substantially higher than that faced by native U.S. students.

**Keywords:** depression, social support, international students, mental health, academic performance.

### أثر قصور الدعم الاجتماعي على الصحة العقلية والتحصيل الأكاديمي بين الطلاب الدوليين في الولايات المتحدة

أسماء مبارك الجعيد

كلية العلوم الاجتماعية || جامعة أم القرى || المملكة العربية السعودية

الملخص: هدفت الدراسة إلى الكشف عن أثر قصور الدعم الاجتماعي على الصحة العقلية والتحصيل الأكاديمي، وتحديد ارتباطات الدعم الاجتماعي بين الاكتئاب والتحصيل الأكاديمي وسط الطلاب الدوليين في الجامعات الأمريكية. لقد استخدم الباحث منهج المراجعة المنهجية، وتم مسح وتحليل جميع الأدبيات المتعلقة بموضوع البحث لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة. وأشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن الطلاب الدوليين في الولايات المتحدة يواجهون ضغوطات ثقافية أو اجتماعية أو بيئية، والتي تُحدث صعوبات ذاتية لدى هؤلاء الطلاب، كما أظهرت الدراسة أن الطلاب الدوليين الذين يلاقون دعم اجتماعي من عائلة وأصدقاء ومعلمين يحققون مستوى درجات أعلى، وأن الضغط الأكاديمي الذي يواجهه الطلاب الدوليين يظهر بشكل جلي أنه أعلى من ذلك الذي يواجهه الطلاب الأمريكيين (الأصليين).

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاكتئاب، الدعم الاجتماعي، الطلاب الدوليين، الصحة العقلية، الأداء الأكاديمي.

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is commonly believed that social support is correlated to positive social and psychological health. Prior research has established that there is a significant association between social support and the avoidance of depression (Gray, Hellzen, Romild, & Stordal, 2012). Research has also shown that a lack of social support is a major predictor of suicidal ideation among college students (Wilcox, 2010). Research also supports the assertion that perceptions of social support, particularly from parents, have a positive impact on the grade point averages (GPAs) of college students (Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, & Russell, 1994). A lack of social support has been specifically found to predict high levels of academic stressors in international university students residing within the United States (Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003). In view of the aforementioned findings, the aim of the present study is to determine the association between social support and depression as well as the connection between social support and academic performance in international students who are enrolled in universities in the United States.

### **Statement of the Study Issue**

This research examined whether low levels of social support can lead to depression and whether they are associated with low academic achievement. Abundant empirical evidence supports the notion that a lack of perceived social support from family and friends can lead to the instigation of mental health problems, including depression. Finding a balance between succeeding in education and having a healthy and positive sense of well-being has become a decisive issue among international students. Lack of partnership, cultural differences, and uncertainty about the future can lead to mental health problems such as depression (Wang et al., 2007). Being away from family and facing new university environments can contribute to the sense of a lack of support. This study focused investigation on international students who are faced with a distinct set of social, cultural, and psychological issues that accompany settling into and adapting to a new country.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study was to determine associations of social support between depression and academic achievement, respectively, among international students in U.S. universities. It also aimed to discern the impact that low levels of social support have on the academic achievement of international students who are enrolled in U.S. colleges. This research sought to answer the following research questions:

- Does a lack of social support lead to the development of depression in international students residing within the United States? What practices, programs, and interventions effectively reduce this mental health problem?

- Do low levels of social support have a negative impact on the academic achievement of international students enrolled in universities in the United States? What are effective practice, programs, and intervention for reducing this academic problem?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study investigated the psychological and academic effects of low social support among international students in the United States .

#### **This study was significant for several reasons:**

First, the complexities inherent in adapting to a completely new culture and learning environment are salient. International students must reach the high level of cultural assimilation (Mahmood, 2014).

A second concern was that stressors can be environmental, social, or internal in nature, as for stressors amplify physiological and behavioral links by increasing variation. It can attenuate such relationships by decreasing variation (Killen, 2013). Because of the set of circumstances that international students are exposed to, such separation from their home.

Finally, the main significant point of this study was its focus on international students, who are considered as to add a mighty value to the host country. Therefore, maintaining their psychological well-being and academic achievement is very important. International students are very important to higher education in any country, as they enhance academic prestige and financial advantage.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **1. Historical Perspective**

In 2008, it was estimated that more than 3.3 million international tertiary students were studying in colleges and universities worldwide. This figure is a substantial percentage of students studying in countries foreign to their countries of origin (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010).

Overall, half of all tertiary students choose to study in the United States. Of the remaining students, 10% choose to study in the United Kingdom, and 7% elect to study abroad in Germany, France, and Australia; other hosting countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010).

International students are viewed by host country institutions as important financially. Thus, international students comprise a major financial asset to the host nations in which they choose to study; they also enrich these countries by contributing the diversity of their cultural heritage and perspectives and enriching the diversity of the student populations and society overall (Bevis, 2002; Harrison, 2002).

## **2. Depression and Lack of Social Support**

International students are specifically vulnerable to depression because of a lack of social support. As students move from collectivistic cultures to individualistic cultures, such as that of the United States, they feel lonely and depressed. Students who were in less individualistic cultures in their homelands of origin reported higher levels of depression due to a weak social support mechanism, as compared to the students from more individualistic cultures (Stephoe, Tsuda, Tanaka, & Wardle, 2007).

Depression was found to hinge on the lack of social support inherent in personal and social isolation among international students. Social support is an important factor known to be helpful in alleviating depression and loneliness and in allowing students to adjust more productively to their new culture. When seeking help for emotional or social problems, such as isolation, students tend to turn to parents, older friends, and other fellow peers (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986).

Confronting an entirely new culture also impacts the ways in which individuals, students included, access social support as a coping strategy for overcoming depression. For example, studies have indicated that Asians, Asian Americans, and Arabs use much less social support to mitigate the inadequate coping strategies they have when dealing with stress; comparatively, Europeans, Americans, and Jews hesitate less when accessing social support (Taylor, Sherman, Jarcho, Takagi, & Dunagan, 2004).

## **3. Academic Performance and a Lack of Social Support**

A lack of social support when international students move to a foreign country brings acculturative stress, adjustment problems, and academic stressors. Adjusting with the lack of social support often has a double effect of causing depression and impacting educational achievement. Poor academic performance can be an outcome of the lack of social support, and there can be serious consequences for it.

Literature has also established the importance of social support by indicating that social support from multiple sources helps students achieve substantially higher levels of academic success (Rosenfeld, Richman, & Bowen, 2000). In contrast, a lack of social support in response to demanding academic stressors and feelings of isolation can lead to despondency as well as depression and can ultimately impact academic performance negatively .

International students face major stressors that can impact academic success. These include new academic challenges, the pressure to succeed in unfamiliar environments, anxiety related to English as a second language, homesickness, low self-esteem, complex housing issues, inability to understand and accommodate their new culture, a lack of social support, and experiences of discrimination and stereotyping.

Thus, this study is quite timely in its attempts to investigate the impacts of social support on depression and academic achievement among international students studying in the United States, which hosts the largest contingent of international students in the world by far.

#### **4. Afrocentric Perspective**

In the research on education, the Afrocentric Perspective is a unique source that enriches this research with many concepts concentrated in the meaning of social settlement as a means of ensuring the well-being of the individual.

Thus, countries have invited students from around the world to access many aspects of education programs. However, in this process, the individual will become a part of a new culture. For instance, regarding the Afrocentric perspective, very few researchers have addressed the problems faced by the international students from African descent who are studying in the United States. The study found in the available literature that the common stressors and problems faced by the Afrocentric students studying as international students are discrimination and stress related to acculturation. Being a part of the diverse population, these students have values and beliefs that are different from the cultures they move into, and thus, they face a lot of problems in adjustment. As such, it is very important to provide this chance of study abroad for the students through their experiences, values, and beliefs.

Prelow (1997) indicated that African and Latino students receive more social support compared to that of the Caucasian students. Having different ethnicities, cultures, and social support is extremely important to African and Latino students because of the strong family support and group orientation in their culture.

In general, the study found it is logical to rely on the Afrocentric Perspective to further explain the objectives and importance of this study.

#### **5. Theoretical Frameworks**

This study accounted for the cultural differences between international students and for acculturation phenomena regarding various stressors, including academic stressors, adjustment problems, and social support availability. Social support has been seen to alleviate the effects of depression and declining academic achievement. Conceptually, Berry (1997) proposed an acculturation framework to explain the process of adjustment for those who established lives in a new country. In formulating his theoretical framework, Berry emphasized factors prior to acculturation (pre-arrival) and during the process of acculturation (post-arrival). He also highlighted collective and cultural contexts alongside individual and psychological contexts.

Another theoretical concept from Berry's Acculturation Framework is the need to belong. Baumeister & Leary (1995) indicated that the need to belong was a fundamental human need, crucial to cognitive processes and having positive effects on cognitive processes.

Social Determination Theory is also relevant to this study. Deci & Ryan (2000) posited that the need and desire for high-quality social relationships was a fundamental human need. These psychological needs are also critical to academic motivation. Positive supportive relationships in the context of family and peers are known to lead to better emotional adjustment, well-being, and academic success (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In this regard, international students moving to another country to study who confront isolation may suffer in silence.

It is also vital to include the concept of motivation to help explain how social support impacts psychological well-being and academic success. According to Eccles & Wang's (2012) theory of motivation, indecent to the relationship between perceived social support and commitment were likely to be mediated by students' perceptions of themselves and the tasks they were going to perform. When people have had access to others who encourage, advise, and guide them, they have felt more confidence and more up to their tasks.

Thus, Motivation Theory is applicable to the current study with respect to social support and academic success of international students. It is relative because these students can lack direct contact with any significant others and lack social support, encouragement, and relatedness.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study analyzes perceived social support and its impact on depression and academic performance among international students studying in U.S. colleges and universities. Study also identified and analyzed scholarly articles on the topic. The main databases this study used for research were EBSCO, SAGE, Taylor & Francis journals, JSTOR, Science Direct and Google Scholar. At the end of this chapter, this study discussed the limitations of the study.

### **Methods of the Study**

This study performed a systematic review to analyze the existing literature and to answer the research question. It less likely to retain biases from of the literature, and it requires reviewing a wide range of literature (Kitchen ham, 2007). Because it is difficult to find first patients of depression among international students, to analyze the effect of social support, and to identify their academic performance, this study conducted this review with consideration of the ethical concerns in working with international students .

In the literature review, about 30 research articles were summarized, and five books were used for qualitative and statistical information. The main databases used in the study were SAGE databases, from

which this study selected full test articles. The inclusion criteria were that all articles published between the years of 2000–2016 with the available key terms were available in full in the library database. This study used these criteria to remove older and obsolete references as well as to reflect on the current literature and recent trends on the topic. However, add a few studies dated before 2000 for theoretical analysis. This study sorted the studies into themes and saved them in separate folders. Study included all of these studies in the literature analysis to reflect on the effects of social support on depression, of depression on academic performance, and of social support on academic performance. Study also reflected on Afrocentric Perspectives, on historical backgrounds, and on the theoretical basis of the study. Older references included the theories used in the study, such as various sociological models and theories of depression and social support.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study addressed the topics of perceived social support and depression among international students and how these factors affected their performance. It was also consider the Afrocentric Perspective, the theoretical basis of the research variables considering the importance of depression and social support, and the academic performance of university and college students studying abroad. An initial significant difficulty was that these variables had been studied for a long time, and very old literature on perceived social support and depression emerged. Studies published between 2000 and 2016 were limited. Although study chose some old literature for the introduction section as well as for the theoretical background, study discarded most of it.

Another difficulty was that depression's relation to academic difficulties had not been commonly addressed from Afrocentric Perspectives. Most studies included in the review were on White students, indicating a need for further studies regarding Afrocentric Perspectives. Researchers had also not elaborated on cultural differences, making it difficult to analyze how cultural differences for social support and depression affected international students .

These limitations might have affected the results of the study. It was also difficult to compare different cultures and students from those cultures regarding their social support and depressive symptoms. Another difficulty arose in the study in searches for keywords. For international students, there were many studies that only presented one gender. Studies confirmed that female students already had strong self-motivation, which reduced the mental and academic effects of a lack of social support.

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

This study examined whether a lack of social support led to the development of depression in international students residing within the United States and whether levels of social support had a negative

effect on the academic achievement of international students. Related to both questions, study sought effective practices, programs, and interventions to alleviate these problems.

### **Findings on Social Support and Depression**

First, studies of international graduate students experiencing symptoms of overt stress have shown that all forms of social support correlated significantly with lower levels of symptoms of mental distress (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Among female students, depression has been found to be mitigated most through support for living conditions, financial resources, and, if applicable, childcare (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Social support was found to be important to students' senses of well-being, and social support also proved a key coping resource for those dealing with the stresses of cultural adaptations (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Overall, social support was found to positively affect international students undergoing high-stress circumstances, and the presence of social support was found to buffer adjustment difficulties when facing life stresses .

Second, findings on psychological adjustment showed social support were associated with levels of adjustment and the ability to cope with stressors. Because international students have to face a number of stressors while studying abroad, such as cultural changes, prejudice, language barriers, and adjustment problems, social support could be a protective factor. The role of social support has been seen as central to international relocations because overseas students face disruptions of established social support and challenges in finding new ones (Copeland & Norell, 2002). Within the framework of stress and coping, social support has been found to be an important predictor of psychological adaption, especially during cross-cultural transitions. Social support was also found to have positive effects on psychological adjustment and coping in new cultures (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis, & Sabatier, 2010; O'Reilly, Ryan, & Hickey, 2010).

Finally, the findings indicated that depression was related to a lack of social support that prevented personal and social isolation among international students. Social support is an important ingredient in alleviating depression and loneliness and helping students adjust more effectively. The most commonly reported sources of social support were friends, family, and relatives. When seeking help for emotional and/or social problems such as isolation, students tended to turn to parents, friends, and peers (Leong & Sydlask, 1986).

Social work professionals can help international students by encouraging them to find the necessary existing social support networks within academic institutions and communities. In addition, Maundeni (2001) suggested helping international students bolster interpersonal communication with family, friends, other international students, academics, and counselors affiliated with their college or university.



### **Findings on Social Support and Academic Performance**

First, this study identified social support as a key factor in helping students get and stay motivated to complete academic tasks. The roles of peers, family, supervisors, teachers, and institutions were all significant in determining students' academic performance. Perceived social support correlated to students' appreciation that these important role players were supportive of their academic efforts (Reynolds & Clements, 2005). Dollete, Steese, Phillips, & Matthews (2006) indicated that social support acted as a protective factor in terms of decreasing psychological problems among students, including academic stress and anxiety.

Second, university and college students, particularly those in their earliest years in higher education, were found to experience stress as a result of transitioning to academic life. Many international students have arrived in the United States with a strong attraction to developing new social networks (Geiger, 2013), but many have had issues adjusting to rigorous studying schedules to meet academic expectations.

Finally, cultural differences between students have often posed disorientation and academic problems. International students have found themselves confronting greater psychological and social adjustments, and therefore, suffer greater effects to their academic achievement as well. Research has shown that academic performance of non-Western international students was correlated to social integration, among other factors, with social integration being a key way to gain social support in college environments (Rienties et al., 2012 ).

Social integration has been judged to be integral to academic success among international students through measures of academic integration and social integration for 958 students (Rienties et al., 2012). Students responded to an adaptation questionnaire that measured academic and social integration—academic integration was defined as the extent to which students adjusted to the academic method of life, and social integration was defined as the extent to which students adjusted to the social style of life in an academic setting (Rienties et al., 2012). International students with non-Western backgrounds were shown to be less academically or socially integrated as compared to other international students, yet they showed similar levels of academic performance (Rienties et al., 2012). Non-Western students were also found to have academic and social integration processes that proved more nonlinear and more complex.

### **SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

The aim of this study was to examine the associations of social support with depression and academic achievement among international students studying in the United States. The research questions guiding the study included: 1) whether a lack of social support led to the development of depression in international students residing within the United States, and 2) whether levels of social support had a negative effect on the academic achievement of international students enrolled in universities. Findings showed a lack of social

support was related to depression and academic performance among international students studying in the United States.

### **Summary of the Study**

Comprehensive systemic review of the literature revealed a link between a lack of social support and increases in depression and declines in academic achievement among international students. Depression has become a critical concern on college campuses among international students, alongside increases in suicidal ideation. A lack of social support also affected international students' academic success. Studies indicated that many factors created a lack of social support among International students. International students have confronted acculturation conflicts, social isolation, and, not infrequently, loneliness, leading to depression; they have also faced difficulties with English, struggles with academic courses, and a lack of resources to help them cope with their unique challenges .

Studies indicated that international students in the United States experienced cultural, social, or environmental stressors which resulted in internal difficulties. They missed the support of their families, friends, and societies that they already comprehended and knew. Findings also showed that international students who did have access to social support from family, friends, and teachers achieved higher grade point averages. Academic stress faced by international students in the United States was also shown to be substantially higher than that faced by native U.S. students. The higher levels of academic stress were due to language issues and a lack of social support from both their families and their colleges and universities.

### **Implications for Social Work**

The findings of the present study show that there are needs for social work practice, policy and research. They also provide useful implications for social work practice. The implications call for social work professionals to be more proactively involved in U.S. colleges and universities with a special focus on international students.

In terms of policy, the findings call for a great deal more proactive administrative programs and outreach on behalf of international students. Finally, additional research is warranted so that social workers can avail themselves of praxis models and syndromes or treatment modalities that address the problems international students face: social isolation, feelings of lost attachments, and a lack of belonging, which are results of moving from a more collectivist society to a Western nation that is more geared to the needs of individuals. More research is also needed to identify the special acculturation and academic demands experienced by students from various regions of the world in U.S. institutions of higher learning.

To succeed in mitigating the issues of social support related to depression and academic performance among international students in the United States, social work practitioners must focus on proactive and preventive methods, including social integration strategies. Study recommends social integration strategies to expand social support opportunities and to mitigate depression and academic effects to which international students are vulnerable. As social workers implement social integration strategies for international students, they must focus on detecting students with mental health issues in student populations with high amounts of international students. University health services must be adequately staffed with social work professionals skilled in the issues that affect international students and be apprised to the signs of mental health problems in students who present to health services for other reasons, such as gastrointestinal difficulties, insomnia, nutritional deficiencies, and sadness. Social work policies must bolster outreach to international students, as these students' well-beings are tied to positive outcomes for their universities and their own reputations. Not only do international students bring substantial support to colleges, they also bring the potential for high achievement and furtherance of colleges' academic standings. The addition of academic assistance programs that are geared especially to international students is also highly advisable. Such academic assistance programs would be a valuable adjunct to existing clubs for international students. These clubs are often organized and led by the students themselves. Administrators should work closely with clubs with international contingencies on their campuses. Aim is bring to international students more academic support that is tailored to their needs. For example, international students often have global careers in mind and may not only study abroad but also aim to work. They target the regions of the world in which geopolitics are of interest. Bringing international students together in debate forums would give them new social networking opportunities, a greater sense of belonging, and ways to feel involved. Furthermore, international students studying in the United States often seek careers in global business domains, such as diplomacy, international law, intergovernmental cooperation, international development, and international business or trade. Standard career day forums that host opportunities limited to the states or localities in which they are temporarily studying, or even to the United States, are not as relevant to these students. Adding international career prospects would be a meaningful policy outreach to International students, which would also yield new social networking opportunities. Social workers must proactively address the emotional and acculturation difficulties that international students face with difficulties using English and the need to acculturate to U.S. society. Volunteer networks can assist with "connection networks" that pair international students with American students as "cultural brothers or sisters" to help them with English immersion and with their integration into an unfamiliar culture. International students have come up with ideas such as pairing with American students who can teach them to drive, coach them in applying for necessary documents, such as

auto insurance, or help them seek out doctors' appointments, apply for utility services, and other routine needs.

Finally, addressing the mental health and academic needs of international students in the United States offers a rich vista of new information that has yet to be revealed. Students from parts of the developing world are being increasingly recruited by U.S. colleges, as they are seen important avenues for enrollment growth. Greater enrollment by international students poses risks to incoming students from collectivist societies in that United States often confront impersonal society by supporting the individual. Without the more traditional society they are familiar with, and minus their large families, their group activities, and the rituals they had relied upon, international students may face despondency. Additional research can go far by filling the gaps such students perceive and by finding new social integration modalities that work to build connectedness, group-orientation, and collectivist activities for international students .

Future researchers' goal must be to determine which social integration strategies may prove most useful to students in unfamiliar cultural settings in the United States. A wide range of investigation methods is available to mount qualitative studies in developing programs to involve vulnerable students proactively in group therapy, individual therapy, and social integration activities to prevent isolation, depression, and academic difficulties .

Social work practices, policies, and research challenge all present opportunities for social workers to build new or to enhance existing social integration support mechanisms and to find new frontiers for more innovations. Keeping attachment issues in mind, the challenges are to foster a sense of community attuned to the special academic and acculturation challenges of international students, including students from areas of the world that are most at risk. Expanding social integration strategies and social support for international students on college campuses is a worthy goal for social workers, as the United States remains the leading destination for international students .

These objectives should maintain a special concern for non-Western students from collectivist societies, as they face alien social and academic demands in the West. Social workers attuned to application of attachment theory in dealing with depression resulting from perceived losses of social support networks will be best equipped to assist non-Western students at the highest risk—those from marginalized societies of Africa who are known to experience special difficulties in the United States—and to address the systemic racism in many institutions.

## **REFERENCES**

- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong—Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human-motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497–529. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7777651>
- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46, 5–33. doi: 10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x
- Bevis, T. B. (2002). At a glance: International students in the United States. *International Educator*, 11(3), 12–17. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240909356382>
- Brisset, C., Safdar, S., Lewis, J. R., & Sabatier, C. (2010). Psychological and sociocultural adaptation of university students in France: The case of Vietnamese international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34, 413–426 .
- Copeland, A., & Norell, S. K. (2002). Spousal adjustment on international assignments: The role of social support. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26, 255–272 .
- Cutrona, C. E., Cole, V., Colangelo, N., Assouline, S. G., & Russell, D. W. (1994). Perceived parental social support and academic achievement: An attachment theory perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66(2), 369–378. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/messages/downloadexceeded.htm>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227–268. doi:10.1037/0002-9432.74.3.230
- Dollete, M., Steese, S., Phillips, W., & Matthews, G. (2006). Understanding girls’ circle as an intervention on perceived social support, body image, self-efficacy, locus of control and self-esteem. *The Journal of Psychology*, 90(2), 204–215. Retrieved from <https://onecirclefoundation.org/docs/fullreport.pdf>
- Geiger, B. (2013). Female Arab students’ experience of acculturation and cultural diversity upon accessing higher education in the northern Galilee-Israel. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 2(3), 91–106. doi:10.5430/ijhe.v2n3p91
- Gray, S., Hellzèn, O., Romild, U., & Stordal, E. (2012). Association between social support and depression in the general population: The HUNT study, a cross-sectional survey. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 21, 111–120. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2702.2011.03868.x
- Harrison, P. (2002). Educational exchange for international understanding. *International Educator*, 11(4), 2–4. New York, NY, U.S.A: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.

- Killen SS, Marras S, Metcalfe NB, McKenzie DJ, Domenici P (2013). Environmental stressors alter relationships between physiology and behaviour. *Trends Ecol Evol.*; (11):651-8. doi: 10.1016/j.tree.2013.05.005. Epub.
- Kitchenham, B.A. (2007). Guidelines for performing systematic literature reviews in software engineering (EBSE Report 2007-01). Retrieved from Keele University and University of Durham website: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/messages/downloadsexceeded.html>
- Leong, F. T. L., & Sedlacek, W. E. (1986). A comparison of international students and U.S. students' preference for help sources. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 27, 426–430a. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/messages/downloadsexceeded.html>
- Mahmood, M. (2014). Psychological adjustment. In M. Mealad (Ed.), *Arab encyclopedia* (2nd edition). Retrieved from <https://www.arab-ency.com>
- Mallinckrodt, B., & Leong, F. T. L. (1992). International graduate students, stress, and social support. *Journal of College Student Development*, 33, 71–78. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Frederick\\_Leong/publication/232504679\\_International\\_Graduate\\_Students\\_Stress\\_and\\_Social\\_Support/links/0deec53050cf856c48000000/International-Graduate-Students-Stress-and-Social-Support.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Frederick_Leong/publication/232504679_International_Graduate_Students_Stress_and_Social_Support/links/0deec53050cf856c48000000/International-Graduate-Students-Stress-and-Social-Support.pdf)
- Maundeni, T. (2001). The role of social networks in the adjustment of African students to British society. *Race, Ethnicity, & Education*, 4, 253–276. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13613320120073576>
- Misra, R., Crist, M., & Burant, C. J. (2003). Relationships among life stress, social support, academic stressors, and reactions to stressors of international students in the United States. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 10(2), 137–157. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.10.2.137>
- O'Reilly, A., Ryan, D., & Hickey, T. (2010). The psychological well-being and sociocultural adaptation of short-term international students in Ireland. *Journal of College Student Development*, 51, 584–599. doi: 10.1353/csd.2010.001
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2010). *Education at a glance 2010: OECD indicators*. PARIS / France: OECD Publishing.
- Prelow, H. M. (1997). Life stress, coping, and social support in adolescents: Cultural and ethnic differences. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 57(7-B), 4691.
- Reynolds, A. J., & Clements, M. (2005). Parental involvement and children's school success. In E. N. Patrikakou, R. P. Weissberg, S. Redding, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *School-family partnerships for children's success* (pp. 177–208). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Rienties, B., Beusaert, S., Grohnert, T., Niemantsverdriet, S., & Kommers, P. (2012). Understanding academic performance of international students: The role of ethnicity, academic and social integration. *Higher Education*, 63(6), pp. 685–700. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-011-9468-1>
- Rosenfeld, L. B., Richman, J. M., & Bowen, G. L. (2000). Social support networks and school outcomes: The centrality of the teacher. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 17(3), 205–226. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007535930286>
- Steptoe, A., Tsuda, A., Tanaka, Y., & Wardle, J. (2007). Depressive symptoms, socio-economic background, sense of control, and cultural factors in university students from 23 countries. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 14, 97–107. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17926438>
- Taylor, S. E., Sherman, D. K., Jarcho, J., Takagi, K., & Dunagan, M. S. (2004). Culture and social support: Who seeks it and why? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 354–362. . Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.87.3.354>
- Wang, Y., Lin, J., Pang, L., & Shen, F. C. (2007). International students from Asia. In F T. L. Leong, A. Ebreo, L. Kinoshita, A. G. Inman, L. H. Yang, & M. Fu (Eds.), *Handbook of Asian American psychology* (pp. 245-261). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications .
- Wilcox, H. C., Arria, A. M., Caldeira, K. M., Vincent, K. B., Pinchevsky, G. M., & O’Grady, K. E. (2010). Prevalence and predictors of persistent suicide ideation, plans, and attempts during college. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 127(1), 287–294. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2010.04.017.