

探討美國高等教育國際學生配偶所面臨的困境

蔡協亨

國立清華大學載物書院導師

中文摘要

美國的全球學生流動比以往任何時候都要多，特別是很多國際學生選擇在美國高等教育學習。現在有越來越多的國際學生接受在美國高等教育機構就讀學位課程，而不僅僅是短時間遊學。由於逗留時間較長，許多國際學生在國外期間讀書期間，會帶著他們的配偶和家人來陪伴他們。「國際學生的配偶以及簽證身份如何影響他們在美國的生活」是高等教育實踐中出現的一個新問題。儘管缺乏關於這個問題的文獻，但很多美國高等教育學校已經做了足夠的工作來了解他們的需求，以及可以做些什麼來幫助這個獨特的人口。這篇文獻綜述重點討論了當前可用文獻中涉及的五個主要觀點：入抵達前的注意事項、國際學生配偶面臨的障礙、上述障礙的處理結果、應對機制、改進建議。

關鍵詞：國際學生配偶，學生簽證，涵化，高等教育

A Study on the Difficulties International Students Spouses Face in Higher Education of United States of America

Tsai Hsieh Heng
National Tsing Hua University, Tzai Wu college, Mentor

Abstract

There is more global student mobility occurring than ever before in American, especially while a lot of international students choose studying in American's high education. More international students are enrolling the degree programs in American higher education institutions, not just coming by themselves for short periods of time anymore. Because of the longer length of stay, many international students are bringing their spouses and families with them during their time abroad. The spouses of international students and how their visa status affects their lives while in the American is an emerging problem of practice in higher education. In spite of the lack of literature available on the subject, enough has been done to gain a picture of their needs and what higher education can do to help this unique demographic. This literature review focuses on five major points covered throughout the current available literature: pre-arrival considerations, barriers faced by spouses of international students, results of said barriers, coping mechanisms, and suggestions for improvement.

Keywords : international student spouses, student visas, acculturation, higher education

Research on migration has generally focused on permanent relocation even though the majority of migrants come to the United States for a more temporary stay (Dreher & Pourvaara, 2011). In the past ten years, international students have become an important component of higher education in the United States (Bordoloi, 2015; Bilas, 2020). While international students benefit greatly during their time abroad, not much has been understood about how this time affects their spouses (Bordoloi, 2015; Bilas, 2020). Much research has been done on international student experiences but little has been done for their spouses such as their own personal experiences of cultural adjustment (De Verthelyi, 1995).

While many institutions of higher education offer programs to help with cultural experiences, marital status, especially when it comes to international students, are classified personal privacy and less has been researched about international students and their spouses' experiences (De Verthelyi, 1995). This literature review will first examine pre-arrival considerations, then barriers faced by spouses of international students, the results of these barriers, coping mechanisms used by spouses when dealing with barriers, as well as suggestions for improvements.

Pre-Arrival Considerations

There were two main topics coming out of the literature in regards to pre-arrival considerations. The decision-making process and lack of information regarding visa restrictions are major issues dealt with by spouses of international students before they even leave to go abroad with their partners.

Decision Making Processes

Dreher and Poutvaara's (2001) research found many international students had been influenced by friends who had studied abroad in the United States which led to a link between foreign students and immigration flow. Once the partner decided they wanted to move abroad, they then had to convince their spouses to move with them or at least be accepting of their decision. De Verthelyi (1995) found two reasons why the majority of the wives agreed to move. This included the social prestige of obtaining a degree abroad as well as the traditional belief of wives following their husbands' career interests regardless of where it took them. In addition, her research found many wives believed their presence would help their spouse feel more secure in the new culture and be more academically successful. It was also found that international student spouses moved to the United States to keep their family together (Kim, 2006; Sakamoto, 2006). When it came to deciding to move abroad, it was primarily the

student that made the decision to move abroad for the family (De Verthelyi, 1995). Spouses rarely had major influence in the decision-making process of moving.

There were differences when it came to spouses' experience of how long they had to prepare in regards to when the decision to move abroad was made and when it actually happened. De Verthelyi (1995) reported that some wives had time to discuss and prepare for the move while others found out with little time to adjust and prepare to a cultural shift. Sakamoto's (2006) research showed international students' goals were negotiated along with the goals of their spouses. This could include the amount of time abroad, the location of study, and when they would join them in the United States.

The length of the time abroad was considered a major factor when it came to making the decision to move abroad (De Verthelyi, 1995). De Verthelyi (1995) reported some spouses knew from the beginning they would be returning to their home country after this partner completed their studies while others had no set timeframe in which they would stay in America or return their countries. Based on the length of stay, spouses could decide how much of an effect this time abroad would have on their career aspects as well as social needs. However, Kim (2015) found married international students intended to stay a longer time in America than unmarried students. This could be due to married students putting less priority on their family back in their home country (Kim, 2015).

Lack of Information Regarding Visa Restrictions

When an international student makes the decision to enroll at an American University, they did not always pass along important information to their spouses. De Verthelyi (1995) found there was variations between the spouses when it came to how much prior knowledge about what it would be like moving to the United States before arriving. Some researched information from consulates while the majority of the spouses received their information from general knowledge, descriptions from previous travelers, as well as mass media presentations from television shows and movies (De Verthelyi, 1995).

Bordoloi (2015) found there was a wide disparity between the spouses when it came to their knowledge of immigration restrictions. While some wives knew ahead of time, they would not be able to work due to visa restrictions, others thought they would be able to work after a certain period of time, while some believed they would

figure out the process after they arrived in the United States (Bordoloi, 2015). Bordoloi (2015) argued many of the spouses might have decided against moving to the United States if they had been made aware, they would not be able to work once they arrived. This might be due to the fact, as Bista and Foster's (2011) research showed, many international students stated they were not given much information in regards to visa restrictions among other things in advance of them arriving on campus.

Bordoloi (2015) found many of the spouses were removed from the entire visa process which affected their knowledge on the subject including the restrictions placed on them, and any information they received was filtered through their partners. Spouses of international students could not apply for the dependent visa themselves, their partner had to request one for them (Bordoloi, 2015). Even if the spouse tried to find out information on visa restrictions themselves, accessing proper information was found to be extremely difficult and organized in a confusing manner (Bordoloi, 2015). Bordoloi's (2015) research showed that in Chennai of India the Embassy of US was the sole website clearly stating the limitation spouses would face with their visa status. Because of the complex regulatory system, many spouses found it easy to unknowingly be in violation if they attempted employment and educational programs (Bordoloi, 2015).

Conclusion

The decision-making process and lack of information regarding visa restrictions are major pre-arrival considerations for the spouses of international students. Spouses must decide when and if they will travel abroad with their partners and being provided with accurate information is important. While many spouses might not want to go abroad and leave their careers, they ultimately do so in order to stay with their partners. Once they decide they will travel, obtaining a visa is the next important step. Spouses should not rely on their partners to provide them with correct information on how to obtain a visa as well as the restrictions put on them due to their status upon arrival in the United States. This could prevent frustrations for the spouses as they gain a better picture of what their life abroad will be like.

Barriers Faced by Spouses of International Students

Global mobility has made acculturative stress at the forefront to global health and is being considered a new challenge (Bin et al., 2014). It is well known that international students face barriers upon arrival. Their spouses face these same barriers along with additional ones. International students themselves experience

issues such as language barriers, cultural shock, financial issues, and lack of friends and social support (Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). Myers-Walls et al. (2011) found six unique stressors ((a) adjustment to living in two cultures, (b) feeling overwhelmed, (c) language difficulty, (d) feelings of isolation, (e) financial stress, and (f) marital stress) experienced by international student families while Cho, Lee, and Jezewski (2006) found eight barriers (lack of support, economic hardship, parenting burden, language barriers, lack of transportation, racial discrimination, acculturation, limitation of self-achievement) from their own research. The most common ones found throughout the literature were cultural barriers, visa restrictions, shift in relationship balance, language barriers, and domestic violence.

Cultural Barriers

Spouses, especially those from childless families, experienced shock when transitioning into a new role which was majority of the time not as clear cut as they would like (De Verthelyi, 1995). Some spouses had idealized their view of what life in the United States would be like for their families (Kim, 2006). Having a family tradition of pursuing education, especially internationally based education, was found to help ease cultural adjustments (De Verthelyi, 1995). However, if there was a lack of such tradition, it made it harder for spouses to adjust to their new surroundings and oftentimes led to separation anxiety (De Verthelyi, 1995). Yu et al.'s (2014) research also showed differences in the amount of stress felt moving to the United States depended on where international students and their families originally came from. For instance, people from East Asia were found to have a higher level of acculturation stress and culture shock than those from other areas (Yu et al., 2014).

Feeling of homesickness depended on how often spouses were able to return to visit their family (De Verthelyi, 1995). Spouses who could not afford to return home as often due to financial or visa restrictions experienced more homesickness than the ones who were able to return to their home country (De Verthelyi, 1995). The spouses in De Verthelyi's (1995) research had very little experience in regards to adjusting not only to a new culture but to new living conditions as well. For many of them, their travel experience had been limited due to political and economic situations as well as visa policies. This led to many of them having strong feelings of culture shock and wanting to return home in the initial stages of the move abroad. Even if spouses made friends with others from their home country, there was often a level of distrust and fear as they did not want them to gossip about their families (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). Many spouses found themselves lonely as they were stuck at home most of the

time while their partner was on campus (Myers-Walls et al., 2011).

Visa Restrictions

Bordoloi (2015) equated spouses of international students as being labeled second class citizens with no capability to participate in American society due to the restrictions put upon them due to their visa status. Visa restrictions did not allow the spouses opportunity to obtain a social security number which was required to work in the United States (Bordoloi, 2015). The restrictions were in place to make sure spouses of international students were dependent upon the status of their partner's academic plans (Bordoloi, 2015). This meant the spouses could only stay in the country as long as their partners were enrolled in full-time academic programs.

Spouses experienced multiple barriers when it came to accessing educational and professional opportunities upon arrival in the United States. They expressed concerns about how these restrictions would affect their career goals (Bordoloi, 2015). Because the spouses were viewed as legal dependents to their academic partners, their options were limited, forcing them to focus more on house and family care which created professional problems if they decided to return to their home country to work (Bordoloi, 2015).

The visa restrictions put financial hardship onto the families as well. There was also stress in the fact many of the spouses could not maintain the same lifestyle they were accustomed to back in their home country (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). Zhang et al (2011) found that spouses were unhappy and became concerned with having no way to make their own income. De Verthelyi (1995) found when it comes to financial issues, it was not simply a case of having less to spend but was more culturally complex. For instance, some spouses were resentful of the current financial situation because they would have been much better off if they had stayed in their home country.

Shift in Relationship Balance in Marriage

Gender roles became more pronounced upon arrival in the United States due to visa restrictions (Bordoloi, 2015; Sakamoto, 2006). In addition, the current system was found to assign gender roles such as husbands being in the public academic sphere while their spouses were delegated to the private sphere of homemaking (Bordoloi, 2015). Tennant, Saqr, and Stringer (2014) found that traditional values and expectations in regards to the role of women at home still mattered and also impacted

spousal behavior upon arrival in the United States. In addition, Tennant, Saqr, and Stringer (2014) argued from some cultural perspective, the men were expected to have an education and career while women were expected to get married. For instance, some spouses felt pressure to conform to specific cultural gender norms which sometimes left them feeling inadequate because they believed they were not doing what was best for their husband (Sakamoto, 2006).

De Verthelyi (1995) found differences between the spouses in regards to their arrival in the United States. Some wives arrived with their student spouses while others came later. For the spouses that arrived together, this allowed for joint-decision making and formed the foundation for mutual emotional support in the transition (De Verthelyi, 1995). For the wives that arrived after their spouse had been in the United States, they found their husbands already had acclimated and behaved more like a guide and translator and did not go through acculturation at the same time (De Verthelyi, 1995).

Myers-Walls et al. (2011) found that marital conflict occurred because the couples were so dependent on each other to meet many needs due to the new dynamic. It was found that international student spouses relied heavily upon their husbands for providing them information about gatherings and existing programs on campus and oftentimes only found out about it from another international spouse (De Verthelyi, 1995). This was a drastic change from the spouses' lives in their home country where they had more independence and did not rely on their partner. Feelings of frustration, as Jiang and Hussain (2020) found, were not focused on their student husbands, but directs the immigration laws to limit the family member who would be confined at home.

Language Barriers

Language barriers were a critical obstacle for international students and their families (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). Chavajay and Skowronek's (2008) study found language skills were strongly associated with successful acculturation while Poyrazli and Kavanaugh's (2006) study found English language proficiency predicted how successful international students would be academically. International student spouses considered being able to speak English as an indispensable skill as it was needed to do daily functions from grocery shopping, communication with the university, and dealing with utility companies (Kim, 2006). Lei et al (2015) reported finding English language skills were related to spouses' life satisfaction and social connectedness.

The individual characteristics of each spouses determined how each spouse dealt with the language barrier (De Verthelyi, 1995). Language concerns were increased even more when children were involved as now the spouse had to be able to communicate with teachers and other administrators (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). Universities do not have any language requirement for the spouses of international students so the spouses must, in a way, evaluate themselves and decide whether they need to improve their English language skills (De Verthelyi, 1995). In addition, few spouses thought the language barrier would have a big effect on day to day life (De Verthelyi, 1995).

English language was the main barrier preventing spouses from accessing important services potentially provided by universities as well as not knowing what services were actually provided (Lei et al., 2015). Limited vocabulary prevented spouses from communicating clearly and would limit their social interactions as much as possible to others from their home country (De Verthelyi, 1995). It was common for spouses to not attend orientation sessions with their partners as they believed most information being provided would be relevant to the university. The spouses did not believe universities thought not adapting to a new culture as a whole in addition to language barriers was important to spouses of international students when it came to receiving the information (De Verthelyi, 1995).

Domestic Violence

People categorize family violence as a worldwide human rights, social, and health issue (Joshi, Thomas, & Sorenson, 2013). International students and their spouses are not immune to becoming victims or assailants. However, both institutional and cultural barriers can come between victims receiving the help and support they need when it comes to the campus community. Directors of international programs realized more needed to be done to educate international students on what was acceptable behavior according to United States standards when it came to domestic abuse (Joshi, Thomas, & Sorenson, 2013).

Joshi, Thomas, & Sorenson (2013) found little contact was made by international program offices in regards to domestic abuse cases. There was a belief among office directors interviewed by Joshi, Thomas & Sorenson (2013) that there were not many cases of domestic violence because it was either infrequent or simply not disclosed to the university. Domestic violence was not considered a priority for them as the primary focus of the department was immigration and visa related issues, especially

since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Joshi, Thomas, & Sorenson, 2013).

International Offices tended to only hear about domestic violence cases when they were approached by police or by victims seeking assistance (Joshi, Thomas, & Sorenson, 2013). Joshi, Thomas, and Sorenson's (2013) research found directors of international programs offices believed many assailants of domestic abuse did not see anything wrong with their behavior, labeling it a misunderstanding. This was in line with Adinkrah's (2011) research in which abuse such as marital rape, often stemmed from culturally traditional male/female stereotypes such as men being aggressive and females being passive and seductive.

Only two out of the six international programs offices included information on domestic abuse in their orientations and most of them did not offer domestic violence programs during the academic year (Joshi, Thomas, & Sorenson, 2013). Joshi, Thomas, and Sorenson (2013) reported many offices do not use the term "domestic violence" due to the belief many students – both domestic and international - would not attend a program labeled in that case. Some directors would not use the term as they believed it was an issue primary concerned with marriages and therefore not campus related (Joshi, Thomas, & Sorenson, 2013). This could be why Joshi, Thomas, and Sorenson (2013) found policies on many universities' websites in regards to either sexual assault or sexual harassment but none on domestic violence. This was because sexual assault and sexual harassment are seen as more relevant to campuses than domestic violence (Joshi, Thomas, & Sorenson, 2013).

Conclusion

The spouses of international students encounter many barriers when they move to the American. The most common barriers that come up in the literature are cultural barriers, visa restrictions, shifts in relationship status, language barriers, and potentially domestic abuse. It appears that visa restrictions as well as language barriers are the two biggest issues spouses face. Spouses of international students were not allowed to work or attend educational programs for credit under the visa requirements. This was a big issue for modern spouses as many of them gave up lucrative careers in their home country to move abroad with their partners. They were not used to being homemakers in their relationships and oftentimes depended more on their partners for support than what they did before. Language barriers isolated spouses even more as it made it harder for them to integrate into their new surroundings. This barrier also prevented them from taking part in many services

available in order to improve their time abroad.

Results of Said Barriers

Individual personal variables played a large part in how international student spouses handle their time in the United States (De Verthelyi, 1995). Self-esteem was found to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction when it came to international students and their families (Zhang et al., 2011). Teshome and Osei-Kofi's (2012) research found four common themes among the spouses they interviewed. Kim's (2012) research came up with three common themes related to acculturation. Research showed shifts in professional identity and need for deeper relationships were the most important results of these barriers (Lin, H F, 2018).

Shifts in Professional Identity

Yakaboski et al.'s (2014) research found that many international graduate students looked to advance their education abroad as a way to improve future opportunities. This was not true in regards to their spouses. Bordoloi (2015) found spouses believed the visa restrictions in regards to working meant their professional career aspirations were in jeopardy regardless if they planned to stay in America or come back to their country. Deciding to leave their career to move abroad was not an easy decision but all wanted to stay with their partners and made it clear they were putting a hold on their personal career goals for only a specific amount of time (Chen 2009). This led to many spouses who struggled when it came to redefining their new roles in the United States (Zhang et al., 2011).

Kim's (2006) research showed that spouses did not actively seek out to be homemakers when they arrived but resorted to it due to not having other alternatives. Since most of the spouses had full-time jobs before they arrived, many had very limited experiences being a housewife and called it an "undesirable compromise" (Kim, 2006, p. 172). Chen (2009) found spouses in her study sometimes did not consider themselves housewives, even though they were, because what was required of them did not constitute as "work" as there was no economic return. Some spouses took on a corporate-like negative view of being a housewife as being one would not improve their professional skills (Kim, 2006). Some even felt it was impossible for women with a good education to stay at home to be housewives and they needed to get a job (Zhang et al., 2011).

Many of the spouses taking part in De Verthelyi's (1995) research were working

full-time back in their home country before they left to come to the United States in which their visa status required them to change their role from active professional to a traditional female role of homemaker. The spouses described this period of adjustment as painful which lead to feelings of low self-esteem as well as depression (De Verthelyi, 1995). The majority of Bordoloi's (2015) subjects in their study worked full-time before going abroad and found themselves struggling with the loss of professional identity upon arrival. Bordoloi's (2015) participants also remarked how not being able to work or study significantly impacted both personal and professional goals, and the visa restrictions did not leave them with any choice in how they could grow professionally. One of the wives in Sakamoto's (2006) study went as far to say the only reason she wanted to return to Japan was because she could not get a job under her current visa status.

Need for Deeper Relationships and Support

Boredom was a common theme from the spouses in Chen's (2009) study as their new life contrasted greatly with life back home while many in Bordoloi's (2015) study expressed a desire for a public life outside of being a homemaker. Mamiseishvili's (2012) study found international students devoted considerable amount of time and energy to their studies which left little time to family. Rice et al (2009) found many international graduate students were dissatisfied with their advising relationships which could led to frustrations that could be taken out on their families. This related to Myers-Walls et al.'s (2011) findings in which spouses needed to perform their new role as housewives alone without any support from friends and family. Some spouses were surprised by how much they longed for close friendships (De Verthelyi, 1995). Park, Song, and Lee's (2014) research found communication with family and friends from one's home country and lives in the United States was associated negatively with psychological well-being. This fits in perfectly with Myers-Walls et al.'s (2011) study that found it was not automatic that people from the same country will feel supported and comfortable around each other.

Conclusion

As a result of many barriers the spouses face, literature on the subject shows they experienced shifts in professional identity as well as developed a need for deeper relationships and other forms of support. Before moving to the American, many spouses had developed a strong career path and were well respected in the working world. Due to visa restrictions, they were not allowed to work which was a stark contrast to their previous life in their home country. This led to many spouses needing

deeper relationships and support systems in addition to their partners who oftentimes were not around as much as the spouse would like due to academic commitments.

Coping Mechanisms

When student spouses face to live pressure in the oversea, there are two main strategies that would be to know their private ability and to engage in meaningful activities helpful for them (Kim, 2012). Cho, Lee, and Jezewski's (2006) research showed international students spouses had eight phases (pre confronting, confronting, discovering, undergoing crisis, seeking, reorienting, reflecting, and reconfronting) of adjusting to American life. Sakamoto (2006) found that most international students had four goals ((1) To gain knowledge and skills (2) To obtain employment (3) To meet the expectation of the home institutions in country (4) To gain more status or to improve their qualifications) when it came to earning their degree. Positive thinking was another coping mechanism spouse used to help adjust to their new life (Chen, 2009). The two mechanisms brought up the most in literature were focusing on personal projects and relying on marriage and family for support.

Focusing on Personal Projects

Mamiseihvilli (2012) noted in their study how international students were determined to complete their goal of earning a degree in spite of any challenges in their way. Unlike their partners, De Verthelyi's (1995) research found international student spouses were not expected to achieve any personal goals while in the United States. Spouses of international students who created personal projects to do while living abroad were found to be a powerful coping mechanism when it came to dealing with issues of resentment and career stagnation according to De Verthelyi's (1995) research. The two most common projects chosen by spouses were related to culture, such as traveling the United States while meeting new people, as well as improving their family's English language skills (De Verthelyi, 1995).

Relying on Marriage and Family for Support

The international student spouses that took part in Zhang et al.'s (2011) research stressed support they received from their husbands contributed to bringing their marriage closer and helped them adjust to their new life in the United States. Poyrazli and Kavanaugh (2006) found that married international students did not find the need to expand their social circle as they used their spouses as a buffer for support. This seemed to be in agreement with Sakamoto's (2006) research in which family was

found to have the capability to function as a buffer in regards to cultural adaptation.

Sakamoto (2006) highlighted the importance of the spousal relationship upon coming to the United States. Emotional support and encouragement were major factors in graduate student success and many relied on this type of support from their spouses (Lynch, 2008). Some couples were found to have an improved relationship since arriving in the United States due to the fact they could only depend on themselves since family and friends were far away in their home country while on the other side, some stated the relationship worsened if the husband neglected the family for his studies (Sakamoto, 2006). However, spouses who did not receive support from their partners had a harder time adjusting to their new life (Zhang et al., 2011).

Conclusion

How spouses coped with the stress and barriers of moving to a new country had a major effect on their well-being during their stay. Many spouses in the literature focused on personal projects such as traveling, improving their English language skills, and meeting new people. They also relied on both their partners and family for emotion support. They relied on their partners more especially if the spouse arrived in the conclusion.

As a result of many barriers the spouses face, literature on the subject shows they experienced shifts in professional identity as well as developed a need for deeper relationships and other forms of support. Before moving to the American, many spouses had developed a strong career path and were well respected in the working world. Due to visa restrictions, they were not allowed to work which was a stark contrast to their previous life in their home country. This led to many spouses needing deeper relationships and support systems in addition to their partners who oftentimes were not around as much as the spouse would like due to academic commitments. After their partners as international students had more time to adjust to the new culture.

Suggestions for Improvement

Reducing loneliness could improve the spouses' day-to-day experience while in the United States (Lei et al., 2015). Zhang et al. (2011) found university faculty and administrators should learn more about what spouses of international students experience so they would be better able to help with the adjustment process. Information on English language classes, local transportation, and health care were

listed as the most important topics international student spouses would want to learn more about (Lei et al., 2015). Spouses in Lei et al.'s (2015) study also requested more information on social events occurring on campus as well as professional development workshops. Support groups and interaction with the local community were common threads in all the available literature.

Support Groups

Establishing networks to support spouses was found to be vital to their well-being (Cho, Lee, & Jezewski, 2006). Transitioning into a new culture often came with fear, homesickness, and stress which were all major factors that contributed to international students failing out of or withdrawing from their academic program (Kwon, 2009). De Verthelyi (1995) stressed that assisting international student spouses required accounting for intercultural and intracultural diversity as well as being aware of the adjustment stages they go through during their time abroad.

The idea of an international student spouse support group was well liked by the wives in De Verthelyi's (1995) study, but many were afraid that language barriers would get in the way. Providing detailed pre-departure information directed towards spouses, scheduling pre-arrival interviews with international students would go a long way in helping them (De Verthelyi, 1995). This includes clarifying important information (such as visa conditions and restrictions, health care coverage), creating support groups specifically for spouses, creation of peer group activities, and offering multicultural training workshops for faculty, staff, and other professionals that might interact with international student spouses (De Verthelyi, 1995). Martens and Grant's (2008) research showed spouses of international students had a strong preference for programs related to professional growth. In addition, the wives in Kim's (2006) study mentioned they took up cooking traditional Korean meals and began sharing recipes between themselves. This was a great way for the spouses to bond together in a casual way and did not require them to attend academic events on campus.

Interactions with Local Community

Williams and Johnson's (2011) research showed that only 43% of the American students interviewed reported having one or more international student friendships with 57% stating they had no such friendship. American students that had frequent contact with their international student friends found themselves to be more open-minded (Williams & Johnson, 2011). It also appeared that females were more likely to have international student friends than their male counterparts (Williams &

Johnson, 2011). Williams and Johnson (2011) reported finding domestic students who had international student friends had lower levels of apprehension when it came to intercultural settings and felt less anxiety than those who did not have international student friends. These students also found they attended more cultural events, spent more time abroad, and participated in study abroad programs at a higher rate than students without international student friends (Williams & Johnson, 2011).

Williams and Johnson's (2011) research shows how important it is for the local academic community to have interactions with the international student population which includes their spouses. Both the domestic and international population can benefit from interacting with each other. The more they do, the more likely each will feel comfortable attending various events and the more comfortable the academic community might feel to allow the spouses to be able to create their own programs to design and run.

Conclusion

Support groups and interactions with the local community were two suggestions brought up in the literature that would be helpful for those overseas student spouses revise to suit the local environment when they stay here. Support groups are important for the spouses as they help them realize they are not alone in how they feel in their new surroundings. Interactions with the local community also had been shown to have a positive impact for these spouses. Both the support groups and interacting with the local community would help ease the adjustment into a new culture. After reading, I think that Support groups and interactions with the local community are both important to international students in American. It is a new way to support American overseas students.

Summation

International students have become a major revenue stream for universities (Kwon, 2009) and the world has become more global, including academia, in the past decade (Sakamoto, 2006). With this means taking a look at the spouses whom accompany students on their relocation to the United States. Research literature shows that globalization has increased the need for countries to analyze current immigration processes as well as the need for universities to take more of an interest in helping out the spouses of their international students. They can do so by making sure important information in regards to visa restrictions, support groups, and campus life is provided and actually reaches the spouses, not just the international students.

Based off of the available research, it is clear there is much to do in terms of legal barriers these spouses face. It might even be time to revise these restrictions to allow them to work or at the very least be able to take classes towards certificates to enhance their professional skills and goals. This can boost the morale of the spouses whom the literature shows oftentimes feel they are putting their careers on hold so their partners can earn their degrees abroad in the United States. International student spouses can then return to their home country with no resume gap in addition to adding important skill sets and give them a sense of purpose during their time here in the United States.

Even with a very limited amount of articles that mention international student spouses, there is a clear gender bias in regards to the subjects used as they only focus on males being the student and their wives being the non-academic spouse (De Verthelyi, 1995). It is important for future research to look into this gender bias more closely to see if there is any difference in how male spouses deal with the stresses of moving abroad compared to female spouses.

The spouses of international students need to be taken seriously by higher education, especially in the American. If higher education wants to take advantage of the financial and cultural benefits of these international students, they have to make sure their spouses are cared for as well. After all, I had two years of studying oversea with my family. I believe that it is much truth to the old saying “happy wife, happy life”.

References

- Adinkrah, M. (2011). Criminalizing rape within marriage: perspectives of Ghanaian university students. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 55(6), 982-1010.
- Bilas, K. A. (2020). A Packaged Deal: Effective Support Systems for International Student Spouses. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 12 (Fall), 152-168.
- Bista, K. & Foster, C. (2011). Issues of international student retention in American higher education. *The International Journal of Research and Review*, 7(2), 1 – 10/

- Bordoloi, S. (2015). “I am standing still”: the impact of immigration regulations on the career aspirations of wives of international students in the USA. *Journal of International Migration & Integration*, 16, 607 – 624.
- Chavajay, P. & Skowronek, J. (2008). Aspects of acculturation stress among international students attending a university in the United States. *Psychological Reports*, 103, 827 – 835.
- Chen, L. (2009). Negotiating identity between career and family roles: a study of international graduate students’ wives in the US. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 28(2), 211 – 226.
- Cho, K., Lee, J., & Jezewski, M. (2006). Korean women living in the United States as student wives. *Health Care for Women International*, 26, 897 – 915.
- De Verthelyi, R. (1995). International students’ spouses: invisible sojourners in the cultural shock literature. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 19(3), 387 – 411.
- Dreher, A. & Poutvaara, P. (2011). Foreign students and migration to the United States. *World Development*, 39(8), 1294 – 1307.
- Huang, H., Shih, H., Thiruvadi, S., & Song, Y. (2011). A preliminary research on the lifestyle of international students. *US-China Education Review, A* (3), 401 – 411.
- Jiang, X., Soylemez-Karakoc, B., & Hussain, M. (2020). A new generation of ‘incorporated wife’? making sense of international students’ spouses in the US. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 1-22.
- Joshi, M., Thomas, K., & Sorenson, S. (2013). Domestic violence and international students: an exploratory study of the practices and role of US university international offices. *Journal of College Student Development*, 54(5), 527 – 533.
- Kim, J. (2012). Acculturation phenomena experienced by the spouses of Korean international students in the United States. *Qualitative Health Research*, 22(6), 755 – 767.
- Kim, M. (2006). “Forced” into unpaid carework: international students’ wives in

the United States. *Transnational Migration*, 162 – 175.

- Kim, S. (2015). The influence of social relationships on international students' intentions to remain abroad: multi-group analysis by marital status. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 26(14), 1848 – 1864.
- Kwon, Y. (2009). Factors affecting international students' transition to higher education institutions in the united states. – from the perspective of office of international students-. *College Student Journal*, 43(4), 1020 – 1036.
- Lei, D., Woodend, J., Nutter, S., Ryan, A., & Cairns, S. (2015). The forgotten half: understanding the unique needs of international student partners. *Journal of International Students*, 5(4), 447 – 458.
- Lin, H. F. (2018). The “invisible” group: Acculturation of international women partners on United States campuses. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 55(3), 334-346.
- Lynch, K. (2008). Gender roles and the American academe: a case study of graduate student mothers. *Gender and Education*, 20(6), 585 – 605.
- Mamiseishvilli, K. (2012). International student persistence in U.S. postsecondary institutions. *Journal of Higher Education*, 64, 1 – 17.
- Martens, V. & Grant, P. (2008). A needs assessment of international students' wives. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(1), 56 – 75.
- Myers-Walls, J., Frias, L., Kwon, K. Ko, M., & Lu, T. (2011). Living life in two worlds: acculturative stress among Asian international graduate student parents and spouses. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 42(4), 455 – XIV.
- Park, N., Song, H., & Lee, K. (2014). Social networking sites and other media use, acculturation stress, and psychological well-being among East Asian college students in the United States. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 36, 138 – 146.
- Poyrazli, S. & Kavanaugh, P. (2006). Marital status, ethnicity, academic achievement, and adjustment strains: the case of graduate international students. *College Student Journal*, 40(4), 767 – 780.

- Rice, K., Choi, C., Zhang, Y., Villegras, J., Ye, H., Anderson, D., Nestic, A., & Bigler, M. (2009). International student perspectives on graduate advising relationships. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 56*(3), 376 – 391.
- Sakamoto, I. (2006). When family enters the picture: the model of cultural negotiation and gendered experiences of Japanese academic sojourners in the United States. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 12*(3), 558 – 577.
- Sherry, M., Thomas, P., & Chui, W. (2010). International students: a vulnerable student population. *Journal of Higher Education, 60*, 33 – 46.
- Tennant, L., Saqr, S., and Stringer, P. (2014). Married Emirati students pursuing teaching careers from the perspective of their spouses. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, 4*(6), 493 – 497.
- Teshome, Y. & Osei-Kofi, N. (2012). Critical issues in international education: narratives of spouses of international students. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 16*(1), 62 – 74.
- Yakaboski, T., Sheridan, R., & Dade, K. (2014). U.S. engineering degrees for improving South Indian graduate students' marriage and dowry options. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 18*(1), 45 – 63.
- Yu, B., Chen, X., Li, S., Liu, Y., Jacques-Tiura, A., & Yan, H. (2014). Acculturative stress and influential factors among international students in china: a structural dynamic perspective. *PLoS One, 9*(4), 1 – 8.
- Williams, C. & Johnson, L. (2011). Why can't we be friends? multicultural attitudes and friendships with international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 35*, 41 – 48.
- Zhang, J., Smith, S., Swisher, M., Fu, D., & Fogarty, K. (2011). Gender role disruption and marital satisfaction among wives of Chinese international students in the United States. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 42*(4), 523 – 542.

