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PERSISTENCE AND CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

Based on the major theories of motivation and cross cultural awareness, this study investigated the motivation of foreign language college students and aspects that spur them to prolong learning the language beyond the program requirements. The significance of this study stems from the dearth of research literature in this area and the need for exploring constructs of college student motivation to persist in learning foreign language. The study utilizes the aforementioned theories to determine why college students persist in learning a foreign language; how students perceive their abilities of learning as related to their close relationships with peers, instructors, and family members; and how learning foreign language influence learners' cultural awareness of other countries especially those where the foreign language is spoken.

Qualitative data collection tools were utilized to examine aspects influencing the motivation of college foreign language learners. These tools included classroom observations and open ended interviews with students. Triangulation was utilized to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Member checking and participant feedback were also employed to validate findings.

Analysis of the data resulted in revealing several aspects influencing the motivation of college foreign language learners. These included fun elements in the foreign language classrooms as a trigger of initial motivation, family and peer support, the role of the instructor as a major motivator, instructional immediacy, and early exposure to the foreign language. Participants shared their desire to know more about the culture of the language they studied and expressed dissatisfaction about the insufficiency of cultural aspects in the textbooks.

INTRODUCTION

Although the cognitive, academic, personal, and societal benefits of foreign language learning are undeniable, a limited number of American college students study foreign language in any depth. Students in the United States stop foreign language studies before achieving considerable communicative proficiency (Hayward, 2000; Lambert, 1999; Panetta, 1999). With the new tendency for globalization and no-border economy, it is essential for American students not only to be knowledgeable of other cultures but to be able to communicate with people from these cultures as well. The social importance of language teaching stems from its aptitude to introduce people to cultures other than their own (Byram, 1990). This process should result in

the students understanding the foreign culture and acquiring positive attitudes and acceptance to the speakers of the foreign language and their cultures.

The dearth of research literature in this area warranted the need for exploring constructs of college student motivation to persist in learning foreign language and aspects that spur them to prolong learning the language beyond the program requirements. The study utilizes major theories of motivation and cross cultural awareness to determine why college students persist in learning a foreign language; how students perceive their abilities of learning as related to their close relationships with peers, instructors, and family members; and how learning foreign language influence learners' cultural awareness of other countries especially those where the foreign language is spoken. Findings may be utilized by foreign language college instructors and program directors to retain foreign language learners and to increase enrollment in the foreign language programs.

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

With the new tendency to globalization, the urge for American students to learn foreign languages increased. The scarcity of research studies exploring the constructs surrounding college students' foreign language learning warrants the current study. Moreover, revealing these constructs may inform the expansion of foreign language programs which does not only assert the leadership role of the United States but also sustain its security.

The purpose of this study is to examine the motivation of college students enrolled in foreign language classes at a Mid-Western university. The study also investigates why some of students decide to continue studying a foreign language beyond the academic requirement. Moreover, it examines the influence of foreign language learning on the students' cross-cultural awareness. To achieve the aforementioned purposes, the study endeavored to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What motivates students to continue studying a foreign language beyond the usual requirement?
2. What constructs influence college students' persistence in foreign language classes?
3. How does completing a foreign language program influence students' cross-cultural awareness?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students in the United States stop foreign language studies before achieving considerable communicative proficiency due to several determinants (Hayward, 2000). Gardner (2001) classifies motivation as one of the most influential determinants of language achievement. Byram (1997) argued that introducing people to other cultures is an important social construct in foreign language learning.

Motivation has been established as a construct in foreign language acquisition (Gardner & Macintyre, 1991; Dörnyei, 2005). Gardner (1985) identified two types of motivation in

foreign language learning, integrative and instrumental motivation. Gardner and Macintyre (1991) argued for the positive influence of both integrative and instrumental motivation on foreign language proficiency. Speiler (1988) argued that both practical and utilitarian motives were the prime factors in increasing student persistence in language study. Ramage (1990) argued that personal motivation was one of main reasons for students to persist in their foreign language classes.

The role of motivation in foreign language learning has long been examined by educational researchers (Deci & Ryan, 1985; R. C. Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Graham, 1994; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Weiner, 1985, 2005). Several theories and models shape the educational concept of foreign language motivation in particular. These theories include the theory of integrative motivation introduced during the social-psychological period by R. C. Gardner and Lambert (1972), Attribution theory and its implications for task persistence and goal attainment as developed by Weiner (1985; 2005) and Graham (1994), and the Self Determination Theory with its categories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation developed during the cognitive-situated period especially the work of Deci and Ryan (1985; 2000).

Culture is an integral component in the human behavior occurring at many levels with intersecting and overlapping domains. Researchers have always argued that culture is an inherent aspect of learning a foreign language (Abdul Aziz, 2011; Janzen, 2008; Tanaka, 2006; Tochon, 2009). Although some foreign language classes enable students to show understanding of practices, festivities, and perspectives of the cultures studied, cultural understanding extends to include students' ability to engage actively in timely cultural dialogues about relevant and contemporary issues (Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006). Paige et al. (2003) argued that culture is more than a component in foreign language learning because vocabulary and language expressions derive their meaning from cultural contexts of which the language learner need to be fully aware.

METHODS

The study utilized the qualitative case study because of its focus on meaning in context of participants' life experiences (Creswell, 2003). Participants consisted of students of foreign languages who persisted beyond the requirement. The data source of the study originated from semi-structured interviews. The emergence of various themes lead to expanding the interview protocols according to the narratives each participant shared.

Transcribed interviews were analyzed under a list of codes which were later categorized under an *emic* list of themes that emerged throughout the data collection and analysis processes. This categorization helped in chunking the data into meaningful sections that uncovered the various dimensions of the case.

FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND, RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings that emerged from the analysis were categorized under some constructs and motivational aspects. Types of classroom activities and the support participants got from the

instructor were major constructs. Participants' goals and early exposure to the language had their influence on participants' choices in continuing their studies. Cultural competence was another aspect that participants shared as an area where they wanted to gain more knowledge.

Fun elements in the foreign language classrooms triggered participants' initial motivation and kept them interested in the content introduced in the classroom. Student participants expressed the importance of the support they get from the instructor and their families to continue their endeavors of mastering the foreign language. The role of the instructor as a major construct influencing students' decision to continue their language study or even enroll in the language course was shared by all study participants. Instructional immediacy was another motivating aspect that was highlighted in observations and interviews. Early exposure to the foreign language showed a great influence on all participants. Participants shared their desire to know more about the culture of the language they studied. Moreover, participants expressed dissatisfaction about the absence or insufficiency of cultural aspects in the textbooks.

CONCLUSION

The limited choice of the participants was the main dynamic that affected the study results. The study findings are limited to the student participants selected from those enrolled in the advanced levels of foreign language classes in the Department of Modern Languages. That said, the results could only explain the case of these students and cannot be generalized to include students at other institutions. Future research may target a larger sample or utilize findings of this study to generate a survey that may yield more generalizable results.

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND RETENTION OF FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT A MIDWEST STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Student retention is an on-going concern in higher education, although recently it has increased in visibility as state and federal governments in the United States are suggesting tying financial support to institutions to student retention. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been defined by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, two of the leading researchers on the topic, as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions." Its relevance for college student development is only beginning to be researched. In the present research, an Emotional Quotient Inventory was administered to college students at the beginning and end of a semester-long course designed specifically for first-semester undergraduates at a public university in a rural area of a Midwestern state. The students also completed a survey regarding their intentions of remaining at the university at the end of the course. At the beginning of the semester, student EI scores were lower than the normative mean in several areas, but were generally within the normative range. Over the course of the semester, students made significant gains in total EI and three composite scores. But many of students who did not make gains indicated they did not intend to continue enrollment at the University. Further research is needed to understand how EI development impacts a student's decision or ability to remain at the institution.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; First-Year College Experience; Student Retention

ETHICS AND LEADERSHIP DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ASIA AND THE USA

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ABSTRACT

In the current paper we examine variations in ethics and leadership differences between business people and expatriates in China, Japan, Vietnam, and the USA. We find that the ethical structures are quite different between China, Japan, Vietnam and the USA. We also found large differences in the dominant leadership styles across the countries and cultures. We also found differences in terms of whether assessments are done in rural, suburbs, or urban areas – with larger variations within the countries than between the countries.

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TRADITIONAL MBA ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AND GRADUATE SCHOOL SUCCESS: HOW ARE GMAT SCORES, UNDERGRADUATE GPA, AND GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CORRELATED?

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses predictors of graduate success at the MBA level. Most previous research has concentrated on overall GMAT score and undergraduate GPA as predictors. This limited study concentrates on the components of the GMAT (quantitative, verbal, writing) and their roles in predicting success. Two results are significant. First, while writing and verbal are positively correlated, there is a statistically significant inverse relationship between the quantitative and verbal scores. Further, while the GMAT verbal and writing scores demonstrate a statistically significant ($p < .01$) correlation with the three success variables (number of A's, number of C's, and graduate GPA), the GMAT quantitative score fails to demonstrate a significant ($p = .05$) correlation with any of the three success variables. One implication of this study is that schools might consider using the verbal and writing scores as additional indicators of potential success in the MBA program, especially for those applicants who are "on the bubble" of admissibility.

EFFECT OF PELL GRANT CHANGES ON THE GRADUATION RATE AND COLLEGE FINANCES: STUDY OF RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN VIRGINIA

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ABSTRACT

In the past few years, colleges across the nation are imperiled with declines in student enrollment, budget cut and the rising cost of higher education (Pope, 2013). The education budget cuts have direct impacts on college finances. The federal student aid programs were created to increase access to postsecondary education. The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduate and certain post baccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education (Department of Education, 2012). In 2012, the Federal Pell Grant Program was subjected to a number of revisions that could result in a substantial number of students in jeopardy of losing their Pell within one to two semesters of graduation. The changes to the Pell Grant program includes the elimination of ability-to-benefit students, the income levels for zero expected family contribution (EFC), the elimination of students receiving 10% of the maximum award, and the reduction in the maximum number of semesters to receive grant monies. These changes in the Pell Grant rules and funding will have direct impact on the capabilities of Virginia's rural community colleges to raise funds, manage their balance sheets, as well as, the ability of needy rural students to attain their education goals.

This paper examines the significance in the reduction of maximum semesters allowed to receive grant monies on graduation rates, specifically for Virginia's rural community colleges. In these communities, roughly 73 percent of all Pell students drop out, transfer or become non-completers. Virginia's rural community colleges collected data graduation rates up to 18 semesters. This research team had obtained the graduation data from Virginia community colleges for 1996 to 2003. This data shows that on an average 27 percent of all students graduated within 9 years or 18 semesters. The data also shows that on an average 23 percentage of students drops to within six years or 12 semesters. Preliminary analysis shows that rural students' in Virginia require longer periods to matriculate particularly when factors such as remedial coursework are required before starting credit bearing courses. The Virginia community colleges are claiming that the Pell Grant modifications will substantially impact their

enrollment and graduation rates are true. This research is an attempt to assess their claim. The possible outcome of research may help community colleges as they work to increase enrollment and lobby for additional funding and revenue sources. Virginia's community college system plays a vital role in the rural locales where one in four residents do not have a high school education and financial aid is the most vital means for attaining a college education.

MARKETING DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AS KEY INFORMANTS – THE ROLE OF GENDER IN JUDGING THE CONSEQUENCES OF STUDENT MARKET ORIENTATION WITHIN AACSB MEMBER SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Phillips (1981) suggests that key informant characteristics (such as gender) are among several factors that can impact variable measurement and “systematic sources of error” (p. 396), and that researchers should take note in attempting to measure organizational characteristics. This manuscript reports the results of a national survey of AACSB business schools examining the impact of student market orientation on overall business school performance, employee esprit de corps, and employee organizational commitment. We extend previous research by the authors into the moderating influence of key informant gender, examining causal models for male and female respondents and also examining Pearson correlation analyses of the consequence variables for males and females. Specific differences in perception (or bias or error or unique insight) are identified and discussed. Marketing department chairs served as key informants in the study.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN AN AUDITING CLASS: STUMBLING INTO WORTHWHILE OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

This presentation attempts to document the process, outcomes and the educational impact of actual service learning projects undertaken in a senior–level auditing class at a regional university in a small town. Included in the presentation is a literature review about the validity and educational impact such projects can have on student learning.

These service learning projects began when the author learned of a community organization with well-intentioned volunteers that broke most of the “rules” for good internal controls. The author created a class assignment for students to solve this real accounting problem by applying their textbook knowledge to real facts and actions. In a subsequent class more students and more nonprofit community organizations were included in the assignment with successful results. The project is now part of the course requirements.

Brainstorming:

Civic engagement thought that it only worked with VITA
Hadn't really researched or reviewed the literature.
Began without research but knew it was worthy
Second year greater success
Student buy-in
Community buy-in
University tie-in—Brainstorm
Much literature about what to do, not doing it
Not much guidance by change and somewhat by design
Students found it valuable
Not just another case study to sit and gain dust
Usual difficulties for students
Contained in one single semester class.
Limit on work that can be done
Ties in as a capstone project
May wish to set the scenario for more extensive one
Problems with finding nonprofit organization.
Chose nonprofits because of need.
Choose nonprofits because it would supplement but not be a real audit.
Application of prior and current knowledge

DRIVERS OF STUDENT RETENTION: SYSTEM AVAILABILITY, PRIVACY, VALUE AND LOYALTY IN ONLINE HIGHER EDUCATION

Ashley Kilburn, University of Tennessee Martin
Brandon Kilburn, University of Tennessee Martin
Tommy Cates, University of Tennessee Martin

ABSTRACT

Within higher education institutions, student retention is a critical factor that warrants much attention and devotion of resources due to its significant impact on the overall success of these institutions. Positive student retention is ultimately a “win-win” situation in higher education: “as the student completes their educational goals and future earnings while the institution satisfactorily completes its mission” (Bean, 1990 p. 237). As student retention receives significant attention in higher educational institutions, 2012 completion trends estimated that only 36.6% of students enrolled in 4-year public college will complete their bachelor’s degree within 5 years, down from 52.8% in 1986 (ACT, 2012). The emergence of alternative delivery methods of educating, such as the online classroom, provides an increased level of convenience and availability which theoretically leads to increased degree completion. Academia is quickly expanding from a traditional brick-and-mortar service provider toward a B2C e-commerce service category. In fact, 62.4% of colleges and universities have expanded to include fully online programs (Babson Survey Research Group and the College Board, 2012).

A recent study estimates that approximately 6.1 million college students have taken at least one online course (Wisloski, 2011). Offering more online education, however, may place additional demands on course delivery technological systems, professor-student communication and virtual pedagogy. With these new demands, comes the continuous challenge of managing the both the pedagogical and technical quality of programs which can effect student outcome variables which are linked to student retention. Student loyalty has been shown to be impacted by satisfaction and institution reputation (Helgesen & Nasset, 2007). This study examines another determinant of loyalty: perceived value. To that extent, two determinants of perceived value (system availability and privacy) are examined using self-report data collected from online students of a 4-year brick-and-click Southeastern university. AMOS is used to assess the structural model of the role of system availability and privacy on perceived value, and, in turn, the impact of perceived value on student loyalty. Results show satisfactory fit. One interesting finding, however, suggests that student perception of privacy has a non-significant linkage to perceived value. Results suggest that students may not be overly concerned with online privacy when assessing the value of their online higher education program. Significant linkages were found from system availability as a determinant of perceived value, as well as from perceived value and the students’ resulting loyalty.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT EFFORT AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOALS ORIENTATIONS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

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Roger Abshire, Sam Houston State University**

ABSTRACT

Instructors may find that students are not making an adequate effort to learn. We report on research indicating the positive relationship between effort and an individual's intelligence, thus answering a fundamental question: Does the effort of a student matter? Research is also noted that revealed less effort among college students at a time when more effort is needed. This study addresses student effort by developing and testing a model that shows how it can be influenced by helping a student fulfill three psychological needs as well as adopt an effective goal orientation. Findings reveal the influence of these factors, thus highlighting their importance and suggesting that instructors give attention to them when deciding to take steps to increase student effort. Achievement Goal Theory and Self-Determination Theory are drawn upon to advance hypotheses that are tested as a structural equation model using data collected from business students. Recommendations for structuring the learning environment and future research are provided.

SELF-EFFICACY AND A NEW STUDENT GROUP

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Sandra C. Coyner, The University of Akron

ABSTRACT

Self-efficacy beliefs about academic achievements are highly connected to international students' performance in college. This study examined the influence of Saudi students' experiences on their self-efficacy beliefs for academic achievement. Qualitative tools were utilized to explore the experiences of participants at the host institution. Findings revealed various aspects of self-efficacy as causes or influences on Saudi students' achievement. Recommendations show how various aspects of the theory can be utilized to increase Saudi students' potential for academic success.

INTRODUCTION

A surge in numbers of Saudi students due to a fully-funded Saudi government scholarship sending students to universities in the United States warranted due academic and professional attention. American universities witnessed an increasing influx of Saudi students since 2005. In 2010, Saudi Arabia ranked seventh among the countries of origin of international students in the United States with 15,810 students (Institute of International Education, 2010). Saudi students are experiencing some different circumstances from other international students due to economic, academic, psychological, social, cultural, religious, and political factors (Miller, 2002). Riverside State University (RSU) (a *pseudonym*) is a Midwestern Research University. At RSU, Saudi students represent one fourth of the international population on campus (Office of International Programs, 2009). This ratio has its significant implications for university professors and administrators. This paper endeavors to explore one aspect of this phenomenon at RSU dealing with the self-efficacy beliefs of a group of these students and the influence on their academic and social performance.

Lately, researchers started to look at international students' adjustment patterns, linguistic problems, campus involvement, and academic achievement (McClure, 2007; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Though not fully comprehensive, a small amount of research examined self-efficacy and motivational aspects of international students (Adams, 2004; Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004). The current study is a logical step regarding the scarcity of studies on the self-efficacy of Saudi students as a growing part of the international student body on American campuses. Findings may reveal valuable aspects that can be helpful to university stakeholders both in planning and practice.

As self-efficacy guide the amount of success students expect to achieve as compared to their actual abilities, this study explores the self-efficacy of Saudi students at RSU through answering the following questions:

- 1) What self-efficacy beliefs about achievement do Saudi students have?
- 2) How do their self-efficacy beliefs influence their performance?
- 3) How do RSU stakeholders support these students?

PERSPECTIVE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Self-efficacy is individuals' faith in their capabilities to organize and execute actions to accomplish certain achievements. Individuals' perceived self-efficacy is believed to influence their choices of related tasks, their performance levels on chosen tasks, the amount of effort they put into accomplishment of the tasks, and the amount of perseverance they show on task pursuit (Bandura, 1997). Researchers found positive connections between high self-efficacy and high academic performance and those students with high self-efficacy utilized their abilities to overcome challenges and succeed in their endeavors (Buyukselcuk, 2006; Houston, 1995). Students with high self-efficacy showed stronger beliefs in their abilities in achieving success (Camgoz, Tektas, & Metin, 2008; Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001). Moreover, self-efficacy as a psychological factor is positively related to college adjustment (Ramos-Sánchez & Nichols, 2007; Rittman, 1999).

Self-efficacy is a vital construct relevant to the case of international students' acculturation and adjustment in their host countries. Sherer and Adams (1983) found that self-efficacy is exposed to possible threats in the experiences of foreign college students and identified different cultural frame of values and communication obstacles as the basis of these threats. Constantine et al. (2004) found that international college students from Africa appeared to be feeling worse with regard to their self-efficacy than international students from Asia and Latin America. Studying the influence of peer modeling on the self-efficacy of international graduate students, Adams (2004) found peer modeling enhancing students' perceptions of competence for academic achievement.

METHODS

This study utilized qualitative research tools including document reviews, field observations, and in-depth interviews. We utilized three sampling strategies to increase the objectivity of research findings: typical case, snowball, and information rich case (Paton, 1987). Study participants were: two college professors, two college administrators, and five male and three female Saudi students. Representing various categories of Saudi student participants were between 20 to 27 years old and spent more than a year in the United States. All of them took language courses before their academic programs. *Pseudonyms* are used to protect the identity of the participants.

Obtaining the Institutional Review Board approval, we conducted field observations of activities for international students and reviewed relevant documents issued from the Office of International Programs. Twelve one-hour open-ended interviews were conducted. Participants responded to a topical interview protocol eliciting their feelings, emotions, and experiences at RSU. Components of the self-efficacy theory explored by the interview questions included:

conception of ability, social comparison influences, framing of feedback, perceived controllability, and motivational processes. After transcribing the responses, the data were coded and categorized within an emergent framework of relevant themes. Trustworthiness and authenticity were ensured through triangulation, long-term observation, member checking, and informants' feedback (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005).

FINDINGS

RSU offers various social and cultural programs that target international students in general. These programs include: Around the World Party; International Education Week Showcase with dance, food, and culture; Cross Cultural Dialogue; Conversation Partner Program; Conversation Group for International Women; and Summit International Friendship with the First Weeker Program, Host Families Program, and International Speakers Service. Academically, Saudi participants were highly motivated by the feedback systems that were practiced at RSU. Their perception of self-efficacy was usually raised through comments that focus on how much progress they made. Six of the Saudi participants stated that social expectations decided their choices no matter how much effort they can exert. They came to the America with predetermined conception of ability. Therefore, not all Saudi participants had the inherent capacity to view the full potential of their abilities. Saudi participants compared themselves to other students which was not positive once they are in America. It provided a belittling image of their academic achievement considering their English proficiency and the different academic preparation they had.

Participants stated they came from a relatively closed conservative society where change was not the responsibility of individuals. They did not usually challenge the established system. Their attitudes towards negotiation of rules and roles are very low. They expected their surroundings to be rigidly fixed and out of control. However, most participants stated they began to capture ways they can control their environment through utilizing available resources and development opportunities. After a semester or two at RSU, Saudi participants changed their initial conception of their abilities and began to utilize their experiences to bring about a systematic change in their beliefs about their abilities.

Many of Saudi participants came to the United States with clear goals. They aimed at accomplishing their primary task of graduating with a college degree. However, their expectations of the amount of effort required to achieve these goals were usually unrealistic. This is reflected in their perseverance to achieve their goals and in their resilience while facing early challenges and failures in their programs. Saudi participants built their choices depending on their goals rather than beliefs of ability. They have the courage to commit to tasks even if they believe they are beyond their believed abilities and skills. However, their skills to obtain external help and change failures into successful learning experiences usually took some time to build up.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Although the research findings focused on Saudi participants' self-efficacy beliefs as influencing academic and social performance at RSU, they may offer valuable insights for administrators and faculty who may find similarities to the Saudi student populations at their institutions. Administrators bear responsibility to provide co-curricular and social opportunities to help orient Saudi students to their new learning environment. Realistic orientation and information sessions may help to positively influence Saudi students' choice of actions and motivational patterns. An effective strategy may be to engage them in activities that activate their analytical thinking skills about their performances, goal setting, goal orientation, and appreciation of the developmental aspect of learning. Social activities that pair Saudi and American students while being respectful of cultural norms may provide opportunities for socializing.

Faculty and academic departments should consider the self-efficacy beliefs held by these students. Internships requiring Saudi students to interact with faculty and students may build confidence and provide opportunities to ask for help in a non-class setting. Departments could provide training to educate faculty and staff about the characteristics of Saudi students. Departments should provide opportunities to help students understand requirements and the effort needed to be successful. College success workshops should target this aspect in an effort to change the negative influence of social comparisons to a more "outcome based assessment".

Programs that encourage collaborative and cooperative learning strategies can help them acquire needed learning skills and maximize their learning experiences. Academic experiences may occur in an environment where the Saudi students participate and gauge success based on leader-articulated goals, rather than allowing students to follow their inclination to compare themselves to other students. Because self-efficacy is increased by feedback based on progress, classroom assessments should be structured to provide periodic evaluations against predetermined objectives. Creating academic activities which apply critical thinking and encourage setting and achieving goals can provide opportunities for students to further develop their personal abilities through engaging with other learners.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study had two limitations: 1) the small sample size of key informants which limited the degree of generalization and 2) the geographic location of RSU may have influenced Saudi participants who might have behaved, performed, and reacted differently if at an institution in another region. Future studies may use quantitative approaches. They may reach a larger number and produce more generalizable results. A collaborative multi institutional study would reveal valuable findings.

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TEAMS ON TEAMS: USING ADVICE FROM PEERS TO CREATE A MORE EFFECTIVE STUDENT TEAM EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Students are often apprehensive of working together in groups. Researchers have overlooked a potential source of learning and support for novice student teams-- the insights of experienced student teams. We review the relevant literature on giving and receiving advice to show that novice teams are likely to be responsive to, and benefit from, the advice of students who have already had a team-based classroom experience. We content analyzed the advice offered from 132 student teams, who based on their own classroom experiences were requested to give suggestions to novice teams that would help them function more effectively. Finally, we suggest ways an instructor might use this advice to promote effective student team development.

WHOSE LINE IS IT AFTER ALL? A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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ABSTRACT

Practices of academic dishonesty are prevalent on college campuses (Chen, 2009; O'Rourke, Barnes, Deaton, Fulks, Ryan, & Rettinger, 2010; Simkin, 2010). The pressure to excel, peer perception, and the lack of faculty enforcement are among several factors that lead students to cheat. Building on an initial multi campus 673 participant-survey results, circumstances of academic integrity among Saudi students at a Midwestern university are examined through in depth interviews. Findings revealed prevalence of academic misconduct behaviors among study participants. Academic misconduct behaviors ranged from simple utilization of cheating on tests to utilizing internet paper mills. Findings also showed a gap between students' moral beliefs and their moral actions (Gross, 2011). Most participants, though reporting several academic dishonesty behaviors as accepted practices, denounced cheating as opposed to their own cultural, religious, and ethical beliefs.

INTRODUCTION

Occurring for several reasons with varying rates, types of cheating within a college setting may have no limits (Hendricks, Young-Jones, & Foutch, 2011). An observed increase of incidents of academic dishonesty from Middle Eastern international students on three adjacent Midwestern institutions raised a flag to faculty members. As a result an initial survey of academic integrity was adapted from the Dr. Donald McCabe of Rutgers University. After obtaining the proper approval of the Institutional Review Board, an electronic copy of the survey was circulated utilizing Patton's (2002) snowball sampling method through student international groups at 11 cities in the United States. Out of 673 returned surveys, 501 were from Saudi students and 172 were from other Middle Eastern students. The focus of this article is to explore the motives and circumstances surrounding Saudi students' increased reported academic dishonesty practices. An exploration qualitative study was developed to explore the reasons pertained to Saudi students' academic integrity behaviors, how they perceive, interpret, and justify these behaviors, and ways a university may be able to decrease these behaviors.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Over the last two decades, academic dishonesty has become an alarming phenomenon on college campuses (Carter & Punyanunt-Carter, 2006; Fishbein, 1993). Davis, Grover, Becker, and McGregor's (1992) study on 6000 college students showed that between 46% and 79% of students reported that they have cheated at least once. Several forms of academic dishonesty can

take place in the college classroom with its larger meaning. These forms may vary in their degree of severity and seriousness from copying from a nearby student answer sheet during a quiz to plagiarizing a paper from an internet website or collaborating on homework and inappropriate utilization of tutoring services (Levy & Rakovski, 2006). Faculty perceptions about cheating always varied from those of the students who usually denied the severity of the different forms of cheating (Graham, Monday, O'Brien, & Steffen, 1994). Moreover, students consider some forms of academic dishonesty more serious than others. Consequently, students are more frequently engaged in behaviors that they consider less serious than other forms of cheating (Kidwell, Wozniak, & Laurel, 2003).

Types of academic dishonesty can be classified according to several dimensions in regard to intentionality, seriousness of the misconduct from students' point of view, and the degree of student awareness of types and consequences of academic misconduct. Levy and Rakovski (2006) found that student regarded the following categories of misconduct as severe: stealing an exam, submitting another student's paper, knowingly allowing another student to use one's paper, copying an exam with or without the other student's knowledge, copying a paper, and using a cheat sheet. Students categorized copying homework; giving or receiving help on graded work; and plagiarizing from the internet as the least serious and the most frequently practiced (Levy & Rakovski, 2006).

According to Callahan (2004), shifting values from idealism to materialism caused the increases in cheating incidents among students. According to the study conducted by Smith, Nolan, and Dai (1998), faculty believed that student cheating is more encouraged when students encounter a "moral dilemma." Researchers argue that one of the main reasons of today students' academic dishonesty is the social pressure demanding them to demonstrate productivity, performance, and speed (Blum, 2009). Likewise, Wowra (2007) argued that college students who choose to cheat in some form have higher value for their social impression than they attribute to maintaining their integrity. Anxiety about grades, compulsory achievements, and economic conditions may lead students towards sacrificing their integrity especially when the risk of being caught is foreseen to be minimal (Wowra, 2007).

METHODS

Building on the results of the aforementioned survey, the primary data source for this study originates in open-ended interviews with each of the 13 key participants. Participants responded to a topical interview protocol eliciting their feelings about academic honesty, beliefs about cheating and possible practices of academic dishonesty at Riverside State University (a pseudonym) during the academic year 2011/2012. Using a pseudonym list of participant names, the responses were recorded and transcribed. Data were coded and categorized within an emergent framework of relevant themes to examine the intricate relationships that shape the situation of Saudi students at Riverside State University (RSU) and the impact of campus environment, recruitment circumstances, administrative procedures, and academic practices on their practices and perceptions of academic dishonesty behaviors.

Conducting several exploratory discussions with faculty about the topic, the issue proved to be worth of a deliberate and structured research endeavor. After obtaining an Institutional Review Board approval to observe student activities and to interview students, faculty members, and administrators in an effort to reveal the different aspects of the issue, the current exploratory study revealed the different constructs central to the case of these students. The exploratory discussions helped structuring the interview protocols to explore the themes related to academic integrity beliefs, practices, and justifications of Saudi students pursuing degrees at RSU.

FINDINGS

Overwhelmed by the amount of work expected from them to keep up the good grades and accomplish their goals, some Saudi participants sought external help away from regular university resources. Except for one participant, all Saudi participants reported incidents of academic dishonesty as an acceptable norm for survival in their American college endeavor. The academic dishonesty incidents they reported included copying from the internet, using other students' papers as their own, and receiving help on assignments. These practices appeared to be common among the Saudi study participants. The concept of cheating appeared to be blurred when they reported these incidents. Their first argument mainly focused on the stress they suffer because of their inevitable failure without these forms of external help. The stress they suffer from lest they lose their scholarship or return home without their respective degrees places them in the shift to materialism. Their increased incidents of academic misconduct may be a direct result of the collective cultural framework where they belong directing them to value their social impression higher than maintaining their academic integrity. Saudi participants mentioned how grades are more important for them than learning and the precedence of obtaining the degree over acquiring the knowledge and skills matching to their respective degrees. Students in the study also reported how their advisors, instructors, and most important, the scholarship administrators put high values on grades and assignment scores which correspond with their reported tendency for cheating on assignments one way or another.

The Saudi participants' other justification of cheating was about the definition of cheating. Participants reported that as long as they do not take something that belongs to another student, they do not consider themselves cheating. Educating the Saudi students upon arrival about the different forms of academic dishonesty as detailed by the university honor code may establish the common concepts of what are the accepted forms of practice and what are not. Such delineation can be asserted through different techniques like writing an essay on the university honor code or signing an integrity contract (McCabe & Trevino, 2002). Another strategy can target raising the faculty awareness of the increased frequency of students' academic misconduct (Hard et al., 2006). This will encourage faculty to articulate their policies toward academic misconduct and it stated consequences for students. Faculty awareness will also increase the number of faculty working against academic misconduct.

IMPLICATIONS

College professor and administrators might be able to reduce the frequency of Saudi students' engagement in academic dishonest behaviors through a three faceted plan that need to be simultaneous. First they may raise students' ethical awareness to decrease the frequency of cheating (Gomez, 2001; McCabe & Trevino, 2002). Second, because students choose to cheat due to social pressure, institutional endeavor to alleviate these pressures through providing peer support, more learning support systems especially for international students, and progress check points along the academic courses may decrease the amount of academic pressure they suffer and may also decrease their fear of failure alleviating their social threats. Third, professors and instructor should focus more on students' acquiring knowledge and skills more than accumulating grades as the main goal of the educational process (Gallant, 2008; Hard et al., 2006). More specific to the case of paper trade, professors are encouraged to keep writing samples for each student. Professors also may require draft submission that shows students' thought processes. Another beneficial strategy is in-class "work on assignments" segments where students are assisted by instructor an peers.

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EFFECT OF BENEFITS OF BLENDED LEARNING IN KIPP NEW ORLEANS SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The newly emerged concept of blended learning is bringing about tremendous change in the way that classroom instruction is delivered. The objective of this study was to examine the thought process, relevant factors, and benefits of implementing blended learning models within the network of KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) New Orleans schools. The research was conducted using a data-driven model where data was collected and analyzed from surveys pertaining to the implementation of blended learning models in KIPP New Orleans Schools. The survey was distributed via face-to-face method to 186 English, Reading, or Mathematics teachers at nine (9) KIPP New Orleans Schools. 70% of the distributed survey were completed by respondents and contained usable data. The result data analysis shows that overall, 48% of respondents agreed blended learning is higher quality instructional method than traditional face-to-face instruction and that 94% of respondents indicated that blended learning has the propensity to increase scholar success. The results of this study may assist decision makers in considering the benefits of blended learning.

Key Words: blended learning method, technology and learning management

FEELING AT HOME: CREATING A POSITIVE RESIDENCE HALL CLIMATE

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ABSTRACT

Student affairs professionals working in residence halls are accountable for providing a positive learning environment where student perceptions and points of view are welcomed with respect. Creating that learning community requires residence coordinators to understand the circumstances of all students and to provide the means of a safe engaging environment to all of them. College administrators have to come up with innovative techniques and strategies to accommodate and extend helping hands to these students.

Social adjustment is tumultuous for first year international students especially for those living in residence halls. Yet, research focused specifically on international residents in this environment is lacking (Paltridge et al., 2010). A quantitative study conducted at a Midwestern, midsized private institution examined first year international students' perception of racial climate, community, and diversity in residence halls and how their perception influences learning outcomes. A descriptive analysis of the data was conducted, and the results were compared to data collected from the American College and University Housing Satisfaction Survey to compare experiences between international and domestic students. With insights on international student perception, practitioners can tailor programming to engage them.

INTRODUCTION

In determining the perspectives of intercultural interactions between international and domestic students, Brebner (2008) found that international students were less interested in campus-wide cultural activities but more in administrators fostering a supportive campus environment. The purpose of this study is to examine how first year international students' perception of racial climate within residence halls affect their level of engagement on the floor through comparing it to that of domestic students. Knowledge of how student perceptions of racial climate and diversity affect student living experience, student affairs professionals may be better able to create an environment that truly supports intercultural exchange and engagement. Results provide answers to following research questions:

- (1) What are Chinese students' perceptions of the residence hall living environment, community, and diversity?
- (2) Why do these perceptions differ from the perceptions of domestic students?
- (3) How do these perceptions affect student level of engagement?

- (4) How can administrators, considering the general characteristics of these students, encourage their participation in a welcoming and safe learning environment?

PERSPECTIVE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Perceptions of racial-ethnic prejudice have negative effects especially on minority students' transition and adjustment to college, as well as their sense of belonging to their institutions (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Building upon the relationship between the student cultural beliefs and the fit between their entry characteristics and their institution (Tinto, 1993), this study aimed at examining the cultural aspects of the increased presence of Chinese students in residence halls at a Catholic private university, Parish University (PU), a pseudonym. The study followed the quantitative method for data collection and analysis. After analyzing survey data, results were used to draw conclusions about the causes and influences of Chinese student perceptions of residence hall climate.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

For any new college student, the first year is critical in the socialization process into becoming a college student and to the student's success in higher education (Ramsay, Jones & Barker, 2007). Sovic (2009) reported that students with positive peer interactions have reported better academic and social adjustment. Due to their lack of high language proficiency, international students are less likely to interact with peers and consequently missing this positive support.

Residence halls serve as the key environment for building a sense of community, facilitating group learning and enriching the college experience for students (Demarest, 2001). International students frequently experience issues revolving around racial climate. The largest international student populations have historically been from China, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and India ("Open Doors", 2012). The majority of international students inevitably become racially underrepresented students on campus (Patton & Hannon, 2008). Subsequently, they may perceive that mainstream activities such as homecoming and Greek Week as unwelcoming of diverse participants or even boring. Such perceptions may pose as barriers for meaningful interactions between international and domestic students.

Racial and ethnic sensitivity can become a challenge specifically for international residence hall students, especially in predominantly White institutions. Due to the close living proximity in residence halls, students may embrace diversity differently compared to the classroom, where they may be more open to accepting diversity intellectually (Johnson, 2003). The small number of international students who participated in Johnson's (2003) study indicated their perceived need for hall programs to reflect more of an international presence. They also felt like the staff was unable to relate to them and that they often felt misunderstood. This result is particularly problematic, as institutional staff members play a role in shaping students' perceptions of the overall campus climate, particularly for students of color (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

METHODS

A quantitative cross-sectional inquiry was conducted seeking self-reported feedback from first year international students. Respondents were first-year students enrolled full time in a mid-sized, private, religiously affiliated university with a population of 1,500 international students. Ninety eight students voluntarily responded to the questionnaire with a response rate of 65%. The survey instrument consisted of three main parts: demographics information, satisfaction section, and racial climate perception section.

The questions were grouped into four factors: perception of hall environment, perception of hall staff, perception of hall peers, and learning outcomes. A descriptive analysis was then conducted to compare students' overall perceptions with the intended learning outcomes. This analysis helped determine the correlations between their perception and their overall learning experience. Next, the data was compared with the dataset from the ACUHO-I/EBI survey that was administered to all residential students on campus during Spring 2012. The response rate from the ACUHO-I EBI survey was representative of the institution's population and was generalized to the university's undergraduate population for data comparison and for a more balanced discussion.

FINDINGS

An examination of the data revealed that student perception of hall peers significantly correlates with their perceived learning outcomes. Students who considered themselves as benefiting from diverse interactions were more likely to perceive that their living experience positively impacted them as a whole. Students who reported interaction with residents different from them also perceived that their on-campus experience enhanced their ability to respect other races and ethnicities. This finding confirms that the quality rather than the quantity of social interactions were more important for Chinese international students (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000). Additionally, students who believe that they interact with diverse others and feel a part of their floor help their ability to meet the learning outcomes as described in the questionnaire. Specifically, when students perceive that they are a part of their floor, they tend to rank positively that living in the residence hall has enhanced their ability to improve interpersonal relationships and to live cooperatively with others. Further, the data reveals that student perception of hall staff affects how they perceive their hall environment. When students feel welcomed when they first moved into the residence hall, they are more likely to believe that hall programs are for students of all races.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The data reveal that students' sense of welcome when they first moved into the residence hall influence their perception of hall diversity and hall staff. This finding indicates that the resident assistants need to ensure that they make efforts to welcome new students on their floor. When students perceive as being a part of their floor, they tend to rank positively that their living

experience have enhanced their ability to improve interpersonal relationships and to live cooperatively with others, which confirms literary findings that integration with domestic students is crucial to ensuring that students can foster positive interpersonal relationships.

Recommendations of the study included suggestions for campus administrators to ease the transition of these students into college academic and social life, increase their retention rates, optimize their learning outcomes, and empower them with a rich college experience. Residence life staff members thus need to be very intentional about how they program and educate students about differences; it needs to be meaningful and impactful relationship building.

Further research may address the aforementioned limitations to increase the generalizability of findings. First, studies may target diverse international student populations to ensure eliminating the mono cultural influence that was apparent in the current study. Targeting more diverse staff members at similar campuses would be helpful to determine whether the diversity in staff influence students' experience in residence halls

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