Character Strengths are Prominent as Mate Preferences of Turkish Students

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Abstract
This study addressed the traits and characteristics that Turkish students deem most important in a long-term romantic partner. We collected quantitative and qualitative data on characteristics desired in romantic partners from students attending Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi in Istanbul, Turkey. Like our previous cross-cultural studies conducted in Japan, Russia and the United States, results supported dependability and love as the most important traits. Overall, positive internal attributes were rated as highly important and we recommend the traits associated with the positive psychology movement be more fully considered in future studies on mate preferences.

A growing body of research literature has addressed mate preferences across widely differing cultures. Studies on mate preferences began with the pioneering work of postwar American psychologists, who first documented traits desired for long-term romantic partners among college students. To set the context for the present study, a brief overview is provided that includes the prevailing evolutionary perspective followed by an introduction to the perspective of positive psychology in regard to mate preferences. Portions of this literature review also appear in Pearce, Chuikova, Ramsey and Galyautdinova (2010) and Pearce and Khramtsova (2010).

Preferences from the Perspective of Evolutionary Psychology
Over 65 years ago Hill (1945) surveyed university students for preferences in a potential marriage partner and concluded that the most highly desirable partner attributes were dependable character, emotional stability, pleasing disposition, mutual attraction, good health, and desire for home and children. He noted women favored ambition and industriousness, education and general intelligence, and good financial prospects; whereas men emphasized good cooking and housekeeping skills, attractiveness, and a desire for home life and children. Such gender differences were successfully replicated in subsequent studies (Hudson & Henze, 1969; McGinnis, 1958). Although these studies exposed the rather stable nature of preferences, each of these studies’ samples consisted of North American university students. Such a limitation restricted identification of potential cross-cultural similarities and differences in mate preferences.

Buss and colleagues (Buss, 1989; Buss et al., 1990) systematically examined mate preferences across the globe by studying 37 cultures within 33 countries. Buss, an evolutionary psychologist, highlighted the universal similarities among cultures by focusing on gender differences and the adaptive role these mechanisms play. For instance, Buss concluded that women in 36 out of the 37 cultures rated good financial prospects more desirable in a mate than males, which supported the notion that women desire a partner who has the willingness and capacity to provide them and their offspring with adequate resources (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). The evolutionary significance of these findings becomes apparent as women around the world have historically gravitated toward men with wealth and high status, thereby increasing the survival probability of any offspring through the provision of resources.

In 34 cultures, women rated ambition and industriousness as more desirable than men (Buss, 1989). Such evidence suggested that ambitious men were more likely to have a higher earning capacity and ultimately be the sole provider for the family. Results also confirmed that men desired younger partners while women desired older partners and showed that males valued physical attractiveness in their mates to a higher degree than their female counterparts. Furthermore, it was proposed that men may desire these qualities because women who are young and attractive will have a higher reproductive capacity (Buss, 1989; Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Many of Buss’s findings confirmed some of the earliest research on mate preferences (Hill, 1945; Hudson & Henze, 1969; McGinnis, 1958), strengthening the position that most modern humans inherited and still display a specific set of mate preferences that are not easily modified by current social, economic, or cultural influences.

Introduction of Positive Psychology Into Mate Preference Studies
Rather than emphasizing adaptive mechanisms and gender differences, research from the perspective of positive psychology seeks to understand what makes life most worth living by focusing on internal strengths of character and positive experiences (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Positive psychologists...
examine aspects and qualities that lead people to happier and more fulfilling lives while downplaying the negative characteristics associated with disease and mental illness. Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed a classification system of character strengths and virtues they believe promote and escalate human flourishing. In their book Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification, six overarching virtues were identified that they contend can be recognized in almost every human society: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. These virtues contain 24 measurable trait-like strengths that contribute to an individual’s life satisfaction.

**Purpose of Present Study**

Previous mate preference studies are valuable and enlightening, but they fall short in two key areas. First, with few exceptions (Li & Kenrick, 2006), studies have largely focused on gender differences and the explanations for such differences while simultaneously downplaying the significance of similarities. Second, studies focused overwhelmingly on external traits on survey research instruments (e.g., financial resources, social status), including physical characteristics (e.g., attractiveness), with less attention to or more arbitrary selection of internal qualities (e.g., kindness and other strengths of personal character). Particularly these issues arise among the field of evolutionary psychology, which has addressed the adaptive nature of a variety of characteristics focused on the importance of and sex differences in external traits.

Our study constitutes an additional attempt to broaden the literature base on mate selection by directly comparing mate preference traits revealed from research in evolutionary psychology with those from an attribute framework established by the emerging field of positive psychology. Within this perspective internal traits are emphasized, such as happiness and fairness, and should be as important when people consider desired qualities of prospective mates. Our study also contributes to the cross-cultural research literature on mate selection by examining long-term mate selection preferences of Turkish students. We hoped to gain insight on the role and prominence of character strengths and virtues in mate preferences in this predominantly Islamic subpopulation.

We collected preference data via self-report surveys from Turkish college students on characteristics desired in long-term romantic partners. Students ranked potential traits taken from foundational research within both evolutionary and positive psychology. Following a previous comparative study in the United States and Russia (Pearce, Chuikova, Ramsey, & Galauthinova, 2010) and a student population in Japan (Pearce & Khramtsova, 2010), we hypothesized: (a) results from our study will support previous research on mate preferences linked to evolutionary psychology; (b) character strengths and virtues will feature prominently; (c) dependability and love will be among the most highly desirable characteristics.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

The sample consisted of 104 students (Men = 22; Women = 81) enrolled in courses at Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi located in Istanbul, Turkey. Ages ranged from 18 to 29 with a mean age of 20.72. Students identified their religion as Buddhism (1.0%), Christian (3.8%), Islamic (78.8%), Judaism (1.9%), None (13.5%), or Other (1.0%). Students did not receive compensation for their participation in the study, and the project was approved by the Arkansas State University Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

**Procedure**

The questionnaire was created in English then translated into Turkish. Multiple drafts were exchanged to ensure accuracy of the items and definitions and the final version was distributed in classrooms under anonymous and voluntary conditions.

**Measurement**

Participants completed two sections on the questionnaire, “Demographics” and “Desired Traits.” In Demographics, information was collected on age, gender, student classification, race, and marital status. For Desired Traits, 37 traits were listed that referred to attributes a partner may possess. These items were adapted from the selection lists used in previous research (e.g., Buss & Barnes, 1986; Hill, 1945; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Toro-Morn & Sprecher, 2003). Roughly half the items (18) derived from mate criteria research linked with evolutionary psychology and half the items (19) were specifically associated with research in the field of positive psychology. See Table 1.

Participants were asked to respond to the question: “What is important in a long-term romantic partner?” by indicating how important these 37 characteristics and traits were using a 5-point Likert importance scale: 0 (unimportant), 1 (of little importance), 2 (somewhat important), 3 (important), and 4 (indispensable).
In addition, two open-ended questions asked them to select from the list the most and least important qualities in a long-term partner and to provide reasons for their selection of these characteristics or traits. Items were ranked in descending order and written responses translated from Turkish to English for content analysis. PASW Statistics 18 software was used for quantitative data analysis.

Results

As in previous studies in Japan (Pearce & Khramtsova, 2010), Russia, and the U.S. (Pearce, et al., 2010), dependability ranked among the highest, findings which were also supported by the qualitative data analyzed by content analysis. The remaining four of the top five traits were associated with character strengths: love, cooperation, authenticity, and happiness. See Table 2. When examined by gender, the rankings were similar except that stability and fairness replaced cooperation and authenticity in females.

To examine whether preferences differed as a function of sex, an independent samples t test was conducted with the 37 items as dependent variables. To control for Type I errors, the significance level was set at p < .001. This analysis revealed significant differences on several characteristics. See Table 3.

According to interviews conducted with Turkish students on the campus of Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, dependability and love were at the core of mate preferences. One male student stated, “Being reliable [dependable] is very important. For me, reliance [dependability] is the thing that makes a relationship as it is.” Another female student emphasized the importance of dependability by stating, “Reliability [dependability] is the most important characteristic. You can be happy with a person whom you trust. You are happy when you are peaceful beside him and you are peaceful when you trust his love.” While dependability was ranked the highest, love also was considered a highly desired trait among Turkish students. A female student reported that love was a highly desired trait for hers personally by saying her partner would be “Full of love. I think if there is love, everything is possible.”

Both quantitative and qualitative results suggested that positive internal states are among the most important qualities desired in a long-term romantic partner by Turkish students and lend support for these as universal preferences.

Discussion

Our studies are unique from other studies on mate preferences in that they address characteristics and traits first proposed by both Hill (1945) which later influenced the field of evolutionary psychology, and those from Seligman, et al (2005) associated with the positive psychology movement. In the current study, support was found for all three of our initial hypotheses: (a) results from our study supported previous research on mate preferences linked to evolutionary psychology; (b) character strengths and virtues featured prominently, and; (c) dependability and love were among the most highly desirable characteristics. In support of the first hypothesis, with the exception of persistence, sex differences were as anticipated. That is, all significant differences between the males and females surveyed were noted on traits affiliated with evolutionary psychology.

In support of the second hypothesis results suggested positive internal states such as love, cooperation, authenticity and happiness are among the most important qualities desired in a long-term romantic partner by Turkish students and these data, along with our previous studies of students in the U.S., Russia (Pearce, et al., 2010) and Japan (Pearce & Khramtsova, 2010) lend additional support for these as universal preferences. Overall, positive attributes were rated as highly important and the attributes associated with evolutionary psychology were rated as less important.

Dependability and love were rated as highly important, congruent with research conducted by both Hill and Seligman. We can only speculate why dependability was rated as highly desirable in a long-term romantic partner by Turkish students. Turkey, which was historically a conservative Muslim country, has been increasingly adopting a Western lifestyle. With the longevity of relationships no longer dictated by cultural norms, individuals seek partners that would be reliable and trustworthy, which would guarantee stability and life-long commitment.

Unlike other studies of student preferences in the United States (Pearce, et al., 2010), religiosity was not rated as highly important here or in a similar study conducted in Japan (Pearce & Khramtsova, 2010), suggesting possible cultural differences for this trait. In the case of this sample, the majority of respondents associated with Islam but we did not ask to what degree. It is possible that the trait of religiosity was taken as a given, meaning that whomever their partner was, they would also be of the same religion thereby reducing the importance of this trait. We hope to address this limitation as well as translation issues and the possible gender bias in future studies.

Apart from dependability, four of the top five traits were personal characteristics from Seligman et al. (2005) and these were rated as more important in a potential mate than the traits consistently studied in evolutionary psychology over the past sixty years.
In all studies we have conducted thus far, dependability and love have ranked numbers one and two on the importance scales. Such findings suggest that regardless of the culture, students desire partners with whom they can rely on and with whom they are in love.

We hope to expand our cross-cultural database examining such preferences for similarities and differences among cultures. We contend that future research on mate preferences should integrate traits examined within positive psychology, evaluate their impact on people seeking a long-term romantic partner, and consider more elaborate interpretations of fitness benefits.

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Arkansas State University
The Bicultural I: A Social and Cognitive Approach for Understanding the Psychology of Acculturation

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Abstract
This paper investigates the processes and challenges of creating a socially integrated, empowered immigrant identity by exploring the concepts acculturation model. The author examines the psychology of acculturation and the processes for creating a socially integrated bicultural self for immigrants who retain cultural traditions while adapting to new social norms and practices. The complexity of this process embraces principles from both social and cultural psychological paradigms and emphasizes a non-dual approach for creating meaning for a bicultural individual acculturating into a new society.

The experience of moving to another town or across the country is stressful. There is discomfort of not knowing neighbors, being a new student at school, having no mental map of the surrounding communities, and wondering if other residents are multiculturally competent. However, what is the psychological process like for immigrants moving to another country, immersing themselves into a new culture, language and sociopolitical ecology? The additional pressures of learning a new language and culture, while possibly dealing with oppression, racism, and marginalization enforced by xenophobic policies can be overwhelming for immigrants without institutional support (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Solomon, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 2000).

Acculturation is an individual and social experience, and relying on cultural and social psychological perspectives can facilitate a dynamic constructive approach for understanding the cognitive processes involved. Acculturation models will be reviewed and concepts of social integration and frame switching (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez, 2000) as they apply to the acculturation of immigrants will be explored. While addressing all aspects of acculturation is beyond the scope of this paper, I hope to critically investigate the processes and challenges of creating a socially integrated and empowered immigrant identity.

Acculturation
Berry (1990) defines acculturation as “the process by which individuals change both by being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes underway in their own culture” (p. 235). Berry’s model (1980) offers four stages of acculturation: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. Assimilation occurs when immigrants adapt to the dominant culture and abandon their cultural practices and beliefs. Separation means the minority members retain their traditional culture at the expense of assimilating into the newer dominant culture. Marginalization happens when the dominant society alienates newcomers, resulting in socio-cultural oppression of immigrants. Integration is where an immigrant’s identity is a balanced blend of traditional and current values, beliefs and behaviors (Mana, Orr & Mana, 2009). Research suggests successful integration results in lower rates of stress and depression, while encouraging resiliency and empowerment (Berry et al, 1987). Swartz-Kulstad and Martin (1999) also suggest that immigrants who successfully adapt to the standards of behavior in the dominant culture while upholding their own traditional values and beliefs are considered socially integrated and are more able to function with greater positive mental health.

Bourhis and colleagues (1997) use the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) as a social psychological framework for understanding that acculturation is essentially relational in nature. They suggest that acculturation is interaction between immigrants and the host country itself, and this process is naturally bidirectional. Bourhis and colleagues (1997) define
acculturation by the limits the State places on immigrants trying to assimilate or acculturate in the host country. If the State declares that immigrants holding certain visas or other official documents are temporary or permanent aliens of that host country, as well as when and if they become citizens, then the immigrant’s relationship to that country is legally and politically set by the State. Therefore, acculturation is not simply a psychosocial process of rehabilitating to newer values and behaviors, but one of bondage to the host State (Bourhis et al. 1997).

Gordon (1964) proposes a unidimensional assimilation model, stating immigrants’ experiences of acculturation depend on how they adapt to the dominant culture, and if they fail to assimilate, they are to blame. However, this does not account for how social structures and policy interact and influence an immigrant’s perceived success at integrating cultures, and Bourhis et al. argue for a bidimensional model of acculturation to account for the influences of the State on the immigration process. Because acculturation is multidimensional and involves complex psychosocial processing, how does an immigrant’s social identity develop?

Social Identity
Social identity includes a cultural self, and introspective dialogue is needed to facilitate the structural and pragmatic mental changes necessary for redefining identity during acculturation (Mana et al., 2009). Because changes happen within, but are reflected externally, there must be strategies in place for immigrants to process the internal psychological shifts while simultaneously integrating into new surrounding cultures (Amiot et al. 2001). Tajfel and Turner’s (1979, 1986) social identity theory (SIT) defines identity as a myriad of aspects of self that relate to others, and as to immigrant identity formation, Tajfel would argue that the immigrant, or “the minority self,” has to find identity and coagulate aspects of his or her previous culture with characteristics of the new culture.

The problem for acculturating immigrants comes when the dominant population exercises their privileges or beliefs unskillfully and forcefully (Yakushko, 2009; Yeh, Kim, Pitus & Atkins, 2008). Immigrants deal with basic acculturation stresses and issues of oppression simultaneously, which can lead to depression and anxiety (Park, 2010). Social integration models and frame switching (Hong, et al. 2000) provide the tools for an empowering acculturation process for immigrants redefining their identities. Phinney, Korenzycki, Liebkind and Vedder (2001) find a strong sense of national pride and ethnic identity are the markers for healthy, adaptive cognitive processes and accomplished social integration.

Mana et al. (2009) writes, “Immigrant identities are defined here as the repertoire of immigrants’ cultural and social positions vis-a-vis those of the host majority group. The identity of a group, in this sense, transcends the level of individual minds and is a collective phenomenon” (p. 450). Immigrants can only make sense of their new world through the “complex set of relationships between social groups,” and to understand the nature of forming a new social identity, through social integration, one must adapt to or adopt the behaviors of the groups he or she is joining. While relying on both the SIT and BAM models, and understanding the acculturation process, Mana et al. (2009), warn readers to be aware of the assumptions that those theories are founded on, “SIT assesses how group members (immigrants in our case) overcome a conflict between their quest for self-esteem and their low status and low social power, whereas BAM presumes a more harmonious social world in which immigrants may choose how to relate to the host group” (p. 466).

In both theories, assumptions do not take into account the variables of social pressure, oppression and xenophobia that could influence one’s social integration and acculturation development. Social integration and reconstructing social identity has psychological and emotional costs and benefits. Some benefits include being accepted into a new community and cultural events, learning new languages, encouraging neuroplasticity, exposure to new customs, foods and traditions. A wide range of benefits for social integration promotes psychological well-being and emotional resiliency.

Some costs are depression from leaving one’s “natural” culture behind, stress from difficulties learning or resisting new behaviors, and anxiety over the sense of losing cultural identity. Other costs come from a xenophobic society that mandates that immigrants assimilate or leave. These pressures can be overwhelming for someone trying to readjust personal identity, leaving him or her isolated and oppressed.
Hong et al. (2000) can provide the cognitive framework needed to adapt, integrate and advocate for acculturation needs.

Frame Switching

Frame switching, intrapsychically weaving two or more cognitive cultural concepts at one time, allows an individual to hold space for his or her primary culture while simultaneously acting out (or thinking within) aspects of another culture. However, the adopted social group also maintains power over the cognitive process of an individual creating an individual identity (Hong et al., 2000). Like code switching where individuals from one linguistic group change the dialect, speed and tone of their language to meet the dominant majority’s expectations, frame switching involves the psychological adaptation of one’s individual intracultural processing in response to “cues in the social environment” (Hong et al., 2000, p. 709).

Hong et al. (2000) describe frame switching as a cognitive process where relevant cultural constructs, each made of various categories influence behavior and “come[s] to the fore in the individual’s mind and guides interpretation[s]” (p. 711). So if one’s primary culture teaches a specific set of behaviors for one construct and the adopted culture specifies other behaviors, the socially integrated individual will preconsciously frame switch perspectives to replicate what is expected in that particular culture. Frame switching can become a consciously cognizant process when the bicultural individual becomes aware of his or her own frame-switching schema. Here, frame switching is a healthy response to locating one’s identity within a new cultural ecological framework that includes interpersonal, communal and socially constructed relationships.

Conclusions

Understanding the psychology of acculturation process embraces principles from social and individual psychological paradigms and creates a non-dual approach for creating meaning for a bicultural individual acculturating into a new society. Ascribing meaning to a cultural event is a phenomenon that depends on a myriad of factors: how one’s culture and inclusion in a particular social group influences cognition, behavior and affect; a bicultural individual’s ability to frame switch between constructs and their inherent categorical variables; and how that individual pragmatically operationalizes those constructs to help create meaning and a new, adaptive identity.

During my service in the Peace Corps, I struggled with my self-concept for two years. Initially, I was more interested in maintaining a distinct boundary between “my” culture and the Thai culture, which marginalized me from the possibility of successful social integration. It was not until I became cognizant of this error that I could remove those internal barriers and allow the Thai culture to permeate within. Thus I began to frame switch, dream in Thai, see the inherent connection between language and culture, and enjoy myself as an integrated part of the community and society I joined rather than as an awkward uni-cultural bystander.

References


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**Internet Fraud: Information for Teachers and Students**

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**Abstract**

Internet fraud takes a number of forms with the responsible individuals changing tactics rapidly to avoid detection. The perpetrators rely on telemarketing, emails, as well as presenting themselves personally to unsuspecting people. The evolution of internet marketing as well as ecommerce and the ease of connectivity create increasing opportunities for fraudsters while at the same time placing more unsuspecting internet users at risk of falling prey to these schemes. There exists a thriving economy online with large sums of money changing hands online. It is therefore important for any internet user to easily identify when they are exposed to internet fraud schemes and as such avoid being a victim.

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**Internet Uses**

The internet is important as it provides an avenue as well as a backbone for electronic commerce, research, communication, and education. It provides information ranging from full books to journals, all of which are important to teachers and students. Research for instance can be very difficult if the information present in online databases was not available. Apart from educational use, students as well as teachers participate in communication through social networks, electronic mail, as well as voice communication such as Skype.

**Risks of Using Internet**

Use of the internet may expose both teachers and students to many risks ranging from identity theft, fraud, and exposure to malware that can easily result.
in harm to the users. The presence of unlimited connectivity often results in students spending considerable amounts of time online thus increasing the risks of being prey to fraudsters (Nikitkov & Bay, 2008). The possibility of falling victim to fraud is always high especially if one is unaware of the existence of internet fraud. Many international students and teachers are more susceptible to online fraud, as some have had little access to unlimited connectivity prior to joining schools overseas. Some international students and teachers may not know that the internet can be used to deceive and swindle them out of their money or even steal personal information. Many users use the service without taking any precautions, especially on unsecured auction websites (Mohatar & Sierra Cámara, 2007).

Unrestricted web use often leads students to websites that participate in fraudulent activities thus exposing them to a risk of being scammed. A search for a particular textbook for instance could lead a student to an online auction website where the book is offered. Pressure from teachers and need for the book can simply lead an individual to buy it from the website exposing him/her to the possibility of being a victim of fraud if (Hache & Ryder, 2011).

**Forms of Internet Fraud**

Internet fraud takes a number of forms with perpetrators currently relying on telemarketing, emails, and presenting themselves personally to unsuspecting people met in online chat rooms or social networks. The evolution of internet marketing as well as e-commerce has increased opportunities for fraudsters. There exists a thriving economy online for these scammers, making it a necessity for international students and teachers to have skills for early detection of fraud. Unfortunately, this detection happens when it is too late. This is due to lack of proper training on safe use of the internet (Brown, 2011).

The most common form of online fraud occurs through sale or advertisements of goods and services that do not exist. International students are more likely to fall prey as they have a desperate need for many products not sold locally. They end up giving away their credit card information to buy those products. Most of the time however, goods and services paid for are not delivered to the buyer. This common occurrence has seen many students and teachers lose money to fraudsters. Early detection is possible and can result in the reimbursement of funds if reported immediately to the bank issuing the credit or debit card.

Other online sellers create false statements about their goods and services with products delivered. Generally, fraudsters make online auctions look legitimate and tailor them to attract foreign students who are yet to learn how online fraud happens. All information provided by the seller is assumed true in online trade, as a buyer cannot physically see or inspect the goods. Online traders all over the world are however flouting this rule (Roddel, 2008).

Other online auction sites include hidden fees. This results into buyers paying more than what they expected (Hu, Liu & Sambamurthy, 2011).

Another form of fraud comes in the form of phishing. This occurs when spam mails are sent to unsuspecting individuals. Scammers usually pretend to come from a company or organization that is well known. Phishing is soliciting personal information that can be used to steal an individual’s identity as well as information related to banking that can result in loss of funds through credit card purchases that are unauthorized. One example of such an email is the recent phishing done with the aim of getting individuals to divulge their PayPal account details (Chua, Jonathan, & Daniel, 2007). Addresses from which the emails were sent were created from the Google email service, Gmail, which pointed directly to phishing. Many individuals replied to the mail and this led to the eventual loss of funds from their accounts.

Vishing is another concept where phone calls are made with the caller pretending to be from a financial or banking institution that the victim uses. In this way, an individual unknowingly divulges banking details (Brown, 2011). Another form of online fraud is identity theft. Theft of an individual’s identity is done with the aim of stealing money from them (Frank & Paul, 2011). Possible use of identities can be bank fraud where an individual’s personal information is presented in a bank and used to acquire large loans. The loans go unpaid prompting the bank to make follow-ups in this case following the real owner of the identity who is largely unaware of the occurrence (Natalita, Maria & Marian, 2011).

Others include subscriptions which appear to be one-off purchases but which later on result in individuals unknowingly paying money every month or every scheduled period of time (Christou et al. 2011). The companies involved in this simply continue deducting funds from an individual’s credit card, an event that can go unnoticed for a very long time. International students are at a risk of falling prey to this simply because these subscription services are tailored to appear as cheap one-off purchases.
Precautionary Measures

In spite of all the loopholes presented by the internet, it is possible to avoid being a victim of fraud. Taking precautionary measures is a step toward ensuring safety on the internet (Hintze, 2011). Introduction of safe use of the internet, especially for international students, remains important to ensure safety from online fraud.

The following are things to look for before accessing any website (especially ones that ask for credit card information). Students can verify safety of websites by ensuring that all websites used for online payments or banking are registered under companies with physical addresses that are accurate and present at the time of payment (Chang & Chang, 2011). The time the company has been in operation as well as the time the website has been online is also an important aspect to note. This information is available from several sources on the internet. Secure websites normally have a small padlock symbol as well as the wording https just before the URL to the site (Gavish & Christopher, 2008). Also these websites should have some form of policy, which should always be read prior to making any transaction. Online trading websites should also have return policies for products.

It is a common rule that information solicited over the phone or through websites is not given if one is unsure of the individual asking for it. Sensitive information should not be given out just because a service requests for it. The lure of buying products at a cheap price as well as the promise to make money or simplify processes as in the case of vishing is responsible for many losses. Lack of knowledge on the issue of internet fraud makes international students easy prey for these schemes. Payments made online can be secured by use of escrow services to ensure that products are delivered to the buyer before releasing any money to the seller (Thomas, 2010).

Conclusions

International students and teachers need to ensure that they conduct research prior to investing online or carrying out any other transactions (Dinew, 2006). Every day new methods to defraud people are being devised and this simply places people at a risk of falling prey to online fraud schemes. Knowing when one is a victim is an important step if the culprits are to be caught. Logging in to online accounts regularly, subscribing to notifications of account activity, as well as regularly changing passwords is important to ensure fraudsters do not access information one owns. If one discovers that bank statements show deductions they are not aware of, then they might be possible victims of bank fraud. International students are likely to fall prey especially to auctions as they are used to making purchases from shops so the thrill of buying items online can be overwhelming. Enlightening them of the possible loss of money online is an important step to bringing them closer to avoiding fraud (Frank & Paul, 2011).

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Professional Book Reviews

Understanding the International Student Experience.


Reviewed by Krishna Bista, Arkansas State University

Catherine Montgomery has depicted a clear picture of how international students encounter both social and cultural, academic differences and learn positively as a result of cross-cultural experiences while studying as abroad sojourns in her book, Understanding the International Student Experience. She has established a strong relationship with foreign students who pursue higher education overseas with home cultures, languages, and learning backgrounds.

Montgomery has examined social factors and learning environments of international students because she believes "learning takes place in contexts beyond the classroom and beyond university walls" (p. xiii). Through the lenses of constructivist approach, she conceives that international students establish an authentic meaning of their learning from their own perspectives as being embedded in social and cultural contexts. She addresses the dichotomy of the culture of internationalization in higher education as "East" versus "West" and cultural perspectives of students, faculty and international student advisors as "insiders" and "outsiders".

With a supportive campus network or community of international students, Montgomery firmly believes that students and educators of overseas students can develop meaningful cross-cultural experiences. She dissects existing stereotypes, assumptions and bias of foreign students and their cultures from an outsider perspective. Lack of cross-cultural experience, according to Montgomery, is the main barrier for educators, teachers and staff for not understanding foreign students and their needs and issues.

Montgomery is an outsider who has offered authentic and realistic research portrayals of foreign students carried at a university in the United Kingdom. This is due to fact that most of the existing literature and research on foreign students are carried by insiders, international scholars. Through several in-depth field observations and interviews collected during six month, she concludes that foreign students are matured, motivated and prepared to study and value the experience of earning degrees overseas. Her study challenges conventional thinking about foreign students as they are slow learners with poor English, limited class-participation skills and inability to think critically.

She acknowledges the values of the educational backgrounds and cultural identities that international students bring to the United Kingdom and demonstrates how eager they are to layer new learning experiences and new identities on top of home cultures. As a result of her research, Montgomery explores the cross-cultural experience which prepares foreign students and their educators to live and work productively anywhere in the world.

Montgomery’s book can educate scholars and staff of international students about the real experiences of overseas students. In her qualitative research, she included seven students from China, India, Nepal, Indonesia, Italy and the Netherlands. Montgomery is unflinching of her assessment of foreign students’ experiences with rich and recent reviews of existing literature. She has added a postscript for "a broader and more critical awareness and understanding of the social context of the travelling student" (p. 144).

Her book prepares teachers, students and support staff in the Office of Internal Programs to understand several unresolved issues of international students, including language proficiencies, mediocre finances, sub-standard housing, loneliness and racism in the institutions of higher education.
This book satisfies an academic audience of international education, and encourages both insiders and outsiders to share their perspectives and critical frameworks of policymakers, practitioners and educators who directly and indirectly work with international students in the world.

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Krishna Bista is founder of Journal of International Students. He works at the Center for Excellence in Education, Arkansas State University. His interests are global and comparative education, learning styles, international student affairs, and English as a Second Language. E-mail: Krishna.Bista@gmail.com.

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**Intercultural Sensitivity in Foreign Student Advising: A Quantitative Analysis of Ethnocentrism within the Profession in the Post 9/11 Era.**

Jeff Davis (2011). VDM Verlag Dr. Mülle pp., 84, $76.35. ISBN-10: 3639320972

Reviewed by Charlotte Foster, Missouri Western State University (USA) Amrita Bhandari, Int’l Faith Theo. Seminary (USA)

Jef Davis' book **Intercultural Sensitivity in Foreign Student Advising** could be helpful to international student advisors and other professionals in two ways. First, it may help advisors understand the issues and concerns of international students who bring their diverse social and cultural backgrounds to American institutions of higher education. After the 9/11 attack in 2001, it was assumed that foreign students perceived social and cultural bias because of their nationality, religion, gender, or language. Following the 9/11 attacks, American colleges and universities did seem to experience significant changes in monitoring and regulating international student visas and the student exchange visitor information system (SEVIS).

The role of foreign student advisor is significant to address the needs and concerns of international students, especially immigration rules and visa information. In his book, Davis discusses the value of intercultural sensitivity among advisors to "increase self-awareness, awareness of one's own culture and worldview, awareness of one's own biases and prejudices, interests in other cultures and different worldviews, fascination with new people, situations and events" (p. 42). International students experience adjustment problems and culture shock in their new location. Davis describes a plethora of research that focuses on why advisors of international students need to understand the unique needs of students in American institutions of higher education (Chapters 1 and 2).

Advisors of international students can also use this book to better understand the challenges and demands of the profession from the perspective of field research. Davis explores the dynamic roles of academic advisors who must deal with students and update their reports of these students to stakeholder government agencies. In one example, Davis described a study of 300 advisors who worked directly with international students across the United States and investigated the intercultural sensitivity of these advisors (Chapters 4 and 5). His findings not only brought attention to the latest updates on the professional network of foreign student advisors (NAFSA) but they also illustrated how the roles of advisors were shifting in the context of post 9/11. Davis found that intercultural sensitivity, also known as intercultural competence, was highly related to the political orientation of advisors, their length of time spent as an advisor, academic study in the field of intercultural relations, and levels of education. He also found that the majority of foreign student advisors operated from an ethnocentric worldview.

It would have been a valuable contribution to the field if the author had included detailed demographics of international students who adopted the roles of advisors. Furthermore, addressing challenges in the field, and comments and feedback from advisors would have been useful instead of merely presenting information as a technical report that emanated from a survey study conducted at Boston College in 2009. However, the book does shed lights on the intercultural sensitivity of foreign student advisors which has never been previously studied empirically. This book is helpful reading for international education professionals, teachers, policy makers, and researchers.

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Charlotte Foster is founder member of Journal of International Students. She belongs to the College of Education at Missouri Western State University, USA. Her interests are multicultural education and math education. Her e-mail is charfos67@gmail.com.
Teaching International Students: Improving Learning for All.
Janette Ryan (Author), Jude Carroll (Author) and Janette Ryan (Editor) London: Routledge. $49.18
ISBN: 0415350662

Reviewed by Lauren Miller Griffith, Central Michigan University (USA)

The fourteen contributors to this edited volume put forth a powerful concept. They argue that the struggles faced by international students in the classroom can be a barometer for the rest of our students, or, as the title of the first chapter puts it, “canaries in the coal mine.” Being attuned to the needs and difficulties of international students can often be an early alert system for the rest of the class.

While some of the challenges that international students face seem to be unique, in reality, most of them have correlates with domestic students’ experiences. For example, international students may be struggling to overcome a language barrier, but native speakers too are learning the nuance of a disciplinary language. Using “plain English” or providing a glossary of key disciplinary jargon are two suggestions from the book that would help both groups of learners. Of course, readers should remember that it is not just a difference in language but differences in communication styles can also impede intercultural communication (see also Tannen, 1990, p. 201-2). In a similar example, the authors point out that most college students experience stress as they move into this new phase of cognitive and emotional development. However, international students must do so in a new culture without their usual support network all the while knowing that continued renewal of their visas is dependent upon adequate academic progress.

Because pressure to succeed is high, international students are at an increased risk for stress related problems, including mental health issues, and need appropriate support. This is especially true during their initial year of study and faculty/staff working with international students should be aware of the signs of culture shock. Framing the international student’s experience in terms of three levels of shock is valuable for thinking about how the culture, language, and academic setting might contribute to disequilibrium in the new environment. It is unfortunate that this framework only appears in the final chapter of the text, but it is nonetheless a useful heuristic.

With a focus primarily on the UK, American readers might find it surprising to learn that our percentage of international students is relatively small compared to institutions of higher education in England or Australia. According to the text, international students comprise a mere three percent of our students, yet most of us with classroom experience in the US can attest to the importance of recognizing international student’ unique needs such as understanding norms about plagiarism. What I had not realized prior to reading this volume was the alignment between best practices for educating international students and general instructional design (see Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

A real strength of this text is the prevalence of practical steps that can be taken to enhance learning for international students as well as the rest of the class. Upon a cursory reading it might seem as if the authors are suggesting we reduce rigor by excessively scaffolding students’ learning; however, they emphatically reject such an interpretation. Rather, they are asking their readers to carefully review their teaching practices and assessment criteria to ensure that they are not unfairly disadvantaging one group of students. This applies not only to our international students, but also to other nontraditional or underrepresented groups that may not yet have the cultural capital demanded by our institutions (Collier & Morgan, 2008; see also Gabriel, 2008).

The authors’ focus on cultural capital is an outstanding feature of this book. This perspective demands that we critically consider the nonmonetary assets that allow one to progress through a specific social field. The authors point out that international students have developed a great deal of cultural capital that is functional within their home environments; however, it is often poorly aligned with the cultural capital most valued in the academic setting of their host country. Rather than treating these students as if they are deficient, we should aid them in converting this so-called capital into a form that is more adaptive for their new social field. Learning to navigate a new academic context is like learning to play a game that has new rules and strategies. Teachers can help their international students by being as explicit as possible about the rules of the game.

One of the weaknesses of this book is that the authors, while stressing the applicability to all students, seem to focus predominately on Asian students. The reader is warned that while acquiring information about
student’s home cultures is valuable, when done in a
good fashion the resulting picture may be more of
a stereotype than true understanding. Kam Louie,
author of the chapter “Gathering cultural knowledge:
useful or use with care,” suggests that instructors
engage in a cultural critique of themselves at the same
time that they ask international students to do so. The
ideal approach here, according to the author, is to help
students develop a meta-cultural sensitivity, allowing
them to see various cultures as systems with both afford-
dances and constraints that can be used to navigate
social life in their host country. This is a wonderful sug-
gestion; however, subsequent chapters occasionally fall
into the very traps described by Louie, reducing cultur-
al complexity to a list of stereotypical behaviors and
attitudes.

Another criticism of the book perhaps stems
from my context as an American educator who has
taught at a series of predominately white institutions
(PWIs) with a relatively small percentage of interna-
tional students. As I read this book, I couldn’t help pic-
turing the classes that each of the authors were describ-
ing. In my mind’s eye, each class has a significant num-
er of international students. Some of the learning tasks
they describe might work extremely well in such sce-
narios, but in a classroom with only one or two interna-
tional students, the same activities would either be
unfeasible or be subject to criticism that the teacher is
singling out the international students and forcing them
to represent an entire cultural group.

In conclusion, this book represents a genuine attempt at integrating an often-marginalized student

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Academic Writing: A Handbook for
International Students (3rd Ed.).

Stephen Bailey (2011). London and New York:
Routledge. 292 pages. ISBN 978-0-415-59581-0,
$36.26

Reviewed by
Krishna Bista and Pamela Shultz
Arkansas State University, U.S.A.

For many international students, academic writ-
ing is a significant challenge because of the rules used
in Standard English. Writing in academia consists of
producing college essays, reflections, reports, and
research papers which all require a working knowl-
edge of the English language. Nevertheless, English
Composition instructors, English as a Second Language
(ESL) program staff, and freshmen international
students will find Bailey’s book Academic
Writing text a helpful resource manual both in
and out of class.

Academic Writing is organized into
four sections: the first
introduces the stages of
the writing process; part
two is related to writing
skills; part three discus-
ess accuracy; and part four provides sample
writings and writing templates. The selected readings
and references
come from authentic texts and journals. Additional
learning materials such as extra readings, practice
A large number of students from various parts of the world travel to study in the U.S., the U.K., and other destinations every year. In the ESL and Making Connections classes, teachers find the writing proficiency of international students very low (Firkins, Forey & Sengupta, 2007; Kuo, 2011; Sawir, 2005) Sometimes students assume wrongly that teachers are sympathetic to their writing styles because English is not their native language. Despite the cultural and linguistic differences, all students are required to write college essays, reports, and reflections as clearly and accurately as possible through the use of Standard English.

Using Bailey’s *Academic Writing*, college freshmen and ESL international students can articulate college writing skills that include learning critical approaches to writing that avoid plagiarism, use appropriate citations and references, and techniques for re-writing and proof-reading manuscripts. The book also offers practical examples of writing a curriculum vitae, formal letters, emails, reports, case studies, and extended essays.

The author has taught for several years in the U.K., the Czech Republic, Japan, Malaysia, and Spain. As a result, readers might experience British instead of American writing styles. For instance, samples of résumés and curricula vitae, exercises and answer keys, plagiarism quizzes, and a writing glossary are offered through the book’s website.

The concepts of scarcity and accountability reign throughout the world of criminal justice and public administration, and this book follows the same course. Those tasked with making strategic decisions must not only juggle the demands of various stakeholders, they must also fulfill their agency’s mission. Too often, the leaders of these agencies find themselves ill-equipped to delve into the world of corporate finance.

From a student perspective, *Academic Writing*, however, is precisely written with plenty of examples and illustrations. Both international students and their teachers can find this book helpful at all levels of teaching and writing.

The book satisfies the academic need to introduce the concepts of financial principles under discussion. Each chapter introduces theory but quickly moves into relatable examples of the principles at work. With this approach, solutions to problems are demonstrated in a straightforward fashion. The examples assume that readers have little existing knowledge of corporate or non-profit finance and should be helpful to the non-finance student.

The authors begin with a discussion of finance and how money works. Emphasis is placed upon finance as part of the strategic planning process of an organization, and special attention is given to understanding the important place of finance in fulfilling the organization’s mission. Space is also allotted to considerations of the decision-making process within companies and organizations, again with special emphasis on strategic financial planning.

The book provides real-world examples of the financial principles under discussion. Each chapter introduces theory but quickly moves into relatable examples of the principles at work. With this approach, solutions to problems are demonstrated in a straightforward fashion. The examples assume that readers have little existing knowledge of corporate or non-profit finance and should be helpful to the non-finance student.

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The book satisfies the academic need to introduce theory while providing relevant real-world application. It provides a logical progression through the world of organizational financial decision-making, and is geared to the non-finance major. It also provides insight into strategic best practices and is adaptable to audiences at the local, regional, and international levels.

**About the Reviewers:**
Krishna Bista and Pamela Shultz are editorial board members of *Journal of International Students* at the Center for Excellence at Arkansas State University.

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