



## Multilevel analysis of factors affecting international student adjustment and success: A conceptual framework

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### Abstract

In an increasingly interconnected world, the success of international students in higher education institutions has garnered significant attention. This concept paper presents a multilevel perspective framework aimed at comprehensively analyzing the myriad factors influencing international student success. By focusing on adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation, this proposal aims to elucidate mechanisms that could enhance the international student experience. The framework acknowledges the complexity of international student success, recognizing that it is influenced by factors operating at various levels, including individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal levels. Understanding and addressing these factors holistically is crucial for devising effective strategies to support international students throughout their academic journey. Drawing upon existing studies and research findings, this concept paper aims to provide insights into the dynamics of international student success. Adjustment, as a crucial aspect, encompasses the process through which international students navigate the challenges of adapting to a new academic, social, and cultural environment. Acculturation further explores how individuals negotiate their identities within the host culture while maintaining aspects of their own cultural heritage. Language barriers represent a significant obstacle for many international students, affecting their academic performance, social integration, and overall well-being. Addressing language-related challenges requires tailored support mechanisms and interventions that facilitate language acquisition and proficiency. Moreover, motivation plays a pivotal role in shaping international student experiences and outcomes. Understanding the diverse motivational factors driving international students can inform the design of interventions aimed at fostering engagement, persistence, and academic success. By proposing a comprehensive framework that integrates these key dimensions, this concept paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on international student success. It underscores the importance of adopting a holistic approach that considers the interplay of various factors and levels of influence. Ultimately, enhancing the international student experience requires concerted efforts from educational institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders to create an inclusive and supportive environment conducive to academic achievement and personal growth.

**Keywords:** Multilevel analysis; International student; Success; Education

### 1. Introduction

In an era characterized by globalization and increasing international mobility, the success of international students in higher education has become a topic of paramount importance (Roberts, et al., 2010; Nachatar Singh et al., 2018; Ayorinde, et al., 2024). Recognizing the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon, this concept paper adopts a multilevel perspective to propose a comprehensive framework for analyzing the diverse array of factors influencing international student success (Maxwell, et al., 2017; Khajavy, et al., 2018). By delving into dimensions such as adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation, this paper aims to provide valuable insights into enhancing the international student experience.

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The journey of international students is inherently complex, involving a myriad of challenges and opportunities as they navigate through unfamiliar academic, social, and cultural landscapes (Knight, 2005; Allwright, 2005; Usman, et al., 2024). At the heart of this endeavor lies the process of adjustment, wherein individuals grapple with the demands of adapting to a new environment while striving to maintain a sense of identity and belonging. Understanding the nuances of adjustment is essential for addressing the diverse needs and experiences of international students. Acculturation further underscores the intricate interplay between one's cultural background and the host environment (Kuo, 2014; Karim, 2021; Ebirim, et al., 2024). As international students immerse themselves in a different cultural context, they undergo a dynamic process of negotiating their identities and forging connections with the local community. Exploring the mechanisms through which acculturation shapes the experiences of international students offers valuable insights into promoting cross-cultural understanding and integration.

Language barriers represent another significant hurdle faced by international students, impacting their academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being. Proficiency in the language of instruction is crucial for effective communication and engagement within the academic setting. Consequently, addressing language-related challenges necessitates tailored interventions and support mechanisms aimed at fostering linguistic competence and confidence. Moreover, motivation emerges as a key determinant of international student success, influencing their levels of engagement, perseverance, and achievement. Understanding the diverse motivational factors driving international students is essential for designing targeted strategies to enhance their academic experiences and outcomes (Poyrazli, and Grahame, 2007; Wu, et al., 2015; Sam, 2001).

Drawing on existing studies and research findings, this concept paper endeavors to synthesize knowledge from various disciplines to propose a holistic framework for analyzing international student success. By examining the interplay of adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation, this paper aims to offer actionable insights and recommendations for stakeholders in higher education to create inclusive and supportive environments conducive to the success and well-being of international students.

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## 2. Background

The globalization of higher education has led to a significant increase in the number of international students pursuing studies in universities and colleges worldwide (Heck, and Mu, 2016; Varghese, 2008; Altbach, 2013). As these students embark on academic journeys in foreign countries, they encounter a plethora of challenges and opportunities that shape their experiences and outcomes. Recognizing the complexity of this phenomenon, this concept paper adopts a multilevel perspective to explore the diverse factors influencing international student success.

Adjustment stands as a central aspect of the international student experience, encompassing the process through which individuals navigate the transition to a new academic, social, and cultural environment. From academic expectations to social norms, international students must acclimate to unfamiliar contexts while striving to maintain a sense of identity and belonging. Understanding the intricacies of adjustment is crucial for addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by international students as they adapt to their new surroundings (Leary, 2011; Tavares, 2021; Doray, 2017; Ajayi-Nifise, et al., 2024).

Acculturation further adds depth to the exploration of international student success by examining how individuals negotiate their cultural identities within the host environment. As international students interact with members of the local community, they encounter cultural differences that influence their attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions (Al Hamad et al., 2024; Eden et al., 2024; Ayeni et al., 2024). Acculturation encompasses the dynamic process through which individuals integrate elements of the host culture while retaining aspects of their own cultural heritage. Understanding the dynamics of acculturation sheds light on the ways in which international students navigate cultural diversity and foster meaningful connections across cultural boundaries (Kuo, 2014; Karim, 2021; Ebirim, et al., 2024). Language barriers represent a significant obstacle for many international students, impacting their academic performance, social integration, and overall well-being. Proficiency in the language of instruction is essential for effective communication and engagement within the academic setting (Poyrazli, and Grahame, 2007; Wu, et al., 2015; Sam, 2001). Moreover, language proficiency influences international students' ability to access resources, participate in discussions, and express themselves confidently (Eden et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2024; Al Hamad et al., 2024). Addressing language-related challenges requires tailored interventions and support mechanisms aimed at enhancing language acquisition and fluency among international students (Su, et al., 2023; Qian, and Nasir, 2023).

Motivation emerges as a critical determinant of international student success, shaping their levels of engagement, persistence, and achievement. Motivational factors vary among individuals and can be influenced by personal aspirations, academic goals, and cultural backgrounds. Understanding the diverse motivational drivers driving

international students' behaviors and attitudes provides insights into designing effective strategies to promote academic success and well-being (Eden et al., 2024; Ayeni et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2024). Drawing on existing studies and research findings, this concept paper seeks to integrate knowledge from various disciplines to propose a comprehensive framework for analyzing international student success. By examining the multifaceted influences of adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation, this paper aims to offer actionable insights and recommendations for fostering an inclusive and supportive environment conducive to the success and well-being of international students in higher education (Kuh, et al., 2006; Martin, and Dowson, 2009; Lipura, and Collins, 2020; Olatoye, et al., 2024).

## 2.1. Key Dataset on

Approximately 65% of international students report difficulties in adjusting to the academic environment, indicating a significant portion of the student population faces challenges in adapting to the academic rigor, teaching methods, and assessment practices of their host institutions. Around 70% of international students experience challenges in adapting to the social and cultural norms of the host country, highlighting the pervasive nature of cultural adjustment difficulties (Adeniyi et al. 2024). Factors such as language barriers, cultural differences in communication styles, and social expectations contribute to feelings of isolation and alienation among a majority of international students (Eden et al., 2024; Al Hamad et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2023). Distribution analysis reveals that adjustment-related support services provided by universities and colleges are unevenly distributed, with 45% of institutions offering comprehensive support programs, while the remaining 55% provide limited resources (Al Hamad et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2023). This disparity underscores the need for greater investment in institutional support structures to ensure equitable access for all international students.

Approximately 55% of international students actively engage in cultural exchange programs or activities, indicating a moderate level of participation in initiatives aimed at fostering cross-cultural understanding and integration. Participation rates in host country cultural events vary widely, with approximately 40% of international students regularly attending such events (Chisom et al., 2023). While this demonstrates a notable level of involvement, there remains significant room for improvement in promoting broader engagement and inclusivity within the local community (Adeniyi et al., 2024). Survey data reveals that 60% of international students report high levels of cultural identity integration, indicating a strong sense of belonging and comfort in navigating their dual cultural identities within the host environment. However, the remaining 40% express varying degrees of cultural identity struggle, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support healthy identity development and adaptation. These percentages offer quantitative insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with adjustment and acculturation among international students, informing the development of tailored support programs and initiatives to enhance their overall experience and success in higher education.

## 2.2. Overview

This concept paper adopts a multilevel perspective to propose a comprehensive framework for analyzing the diverse factors influencing international student success in higher education settings. By focusing on adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation, this paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by international students and to suggest mechanisms that could enhance their overall experience.

Adjustment, as a central aspect of the international student journey, encompasses the process through which individuals navigate the transition to a new academic, social, and cultural environment (Chisom et al., 2023; Adeniyi et al., 2024). Challenges in adjusting to the academic rigor, teaching methods, and assessment practices, as well as difficulties in adapting to the social and cultural norms of the host country, can significantly impact international students' academic performance, social integration, and overall well-being. Acculturation further explores how international students negotiate their cultural identities within the host environment, encompassing the adoption of new cultural practices while retaining aspects of their own cultural heritage. Participation in cultural exchange programs and activities, as well as attendance at host country cultural events, plays a crucial role in fostering cross-cultural understanding, language acquisition, and integration within the local community.

Language barriers represent a significant obstacle for many international students, affecting their academic success and social integration. Proficiency in the language of instruction is essential for effective communication and engagement within the academic setting. Addressing language-related challenges requires targeted interventions and support services aimed at enhancing language acquisition and fluency among international students. Motivation emerges as a key determinant of international student success, influencing their levels of engagement, persistence, and achievement. Understanding the diverse motivational factors driving international students can inform the design of strategies to promote academic success and personal growth.

Drawing on existing studies and research findings, this concept paper seeks to synthesize knowledge from various disciplines to propose actionable recommendations for fostering an inclusive and supportive environment conducive to the success and well-being of international students in higher education. By analyzing the interplay of adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on international student success and to guide efforts to enhance their overall experience.

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### 3. Literature Review

International student success is influenced by a multitude of factors that operate at various levels. A comprehensive framework for analyzing these factors includes adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation. Drawing on existing studies, mechanisms can be suggested to enhance the international student experience. Research by Rienties et al. (2011) emphasizes the multi-faceted nature of academic success among international students, highlighting the importance of factors beyond just academic integration. Chen (2023) and Aldrup et al. (2018) delve into the significance of instructional clarity, classroom management, and social support in student outcomes, showcasing the relevance of a multilevel approach in understanding and predicting success.

Moreover, studies by Wu et al. (2015) and Sümer et al. (2008) shed light on the challenges faced by international students, such as isolation, language difficulties, and mental health issues, underscoring the need to consider diverse ethnicities and experiences. Additionally, the work of Atteraya (2021) and Bui et al. (2020) highlights the impact of acculturation stressors and the role of student-university alignment in psychological adjustment, emphasizing the importance of host environment factors. Furthermore, the research by Yang et al. (2015) and Nyarko-Sampson et al. (2021) underscores the anxieties related to language, cultural adjustments, and learning barriers that international students commonly encounter. These studies emphasize the necessity of addressing these challenges to facilitate successful adjustment and academic achievement.

In conclusion, a multilevel perspective is crucial for comprehensively understanding and enhancing international student success. By considering factors such as social support, acculturation stressors, and alignment with the host environment, institutions can develop strategies to support international students effectively and improve their overall experience and outcomes.

#### 3.1. Research Gap

To address the research gap in understanding the factors influencing international student success, a comprehensive framework can be proposed by drawing on existing studies that delve into various aspects such as adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation. By synthesizing relevant literature, it becomes evident that the academic success of international students is influenced by a multitude of factors (Rienties et al., 2011). Studies have highlighted the interplay between acculturative stress, academic standing, and quality of life among Chinese international students in the United States, emphasizing the need to explore these dynamics further (Su et al., 2021). Challenges faced by international students, including feelings of uneasiness, insecurity, and academic pressures, have been documented, underscoring the importance of addressing these issues within the proposed framework (Wu et al., 2015).

Moreover, the impact of social media on student engagement and acculturative stress among international students has been identified as a knowledge gap that requires additional research (Manu et al., 2023). Studies have also examined the relationship between depression, acculturative stress, and social connectedness among international university students, shedding light on the psychological aspects that influence student experiences (Nguyen et al., 2019). Furthermore, research has shown that international students' personal and multicultural strengths can reduce acculturative stress and promote adjustment, emphasizing the significance of individual characteristics in the adaptation process (Yakunina et al., 2013).

By exploring the role of acculturation stressors in academic adjustment among Nepalese students in South Korean higher education institutions, gaps in understanding the relationship between these factors have been addressed (Atteraya, 2021). Additionally, studies focusing on the academic acculturation of international doctoral students in the U.S. have highlighted the importance of psychological and attitudinal adaptation in diverse ethnic populations (Park, 2022). The willingness of international students to seek help for emotional difficulties and the predictors of help-seeking behaviors have been examined, providing insights into support mechanisms for students experiencing acculturative stress and depression (Nguyen et al., 2019).

In conclusion, synthesizing these studies can contribute to the development of a comprehensive framework that analyzes the complex factors influencing international student success, offering insights into how adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation interact to enhance the overall student experience.

### 3.2. Problem Statement

Despite the increasing globalization of higher education and the growing number of international students enrolling in universities and colleges around the world, challenges persist in ensuring their success and well-being. While numerous studies have examined individual aspects of the international student experience, there remains a lack of comprehensive frameworks that integrate various factors influencing their success from a multilevel perspective.

Focusing on adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation, this concept paper aims to address this gap by proposing a comprehensive framework for analyzing the diverse factors shaping international student success. The complexity of the international student journey demands a holistic understanding that considers individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal influences. Adjustment to the academic, social, and cultural environment of the host country poses significant challenges for international students, impacting their academic performance, social integration, and overall well-being. Similarly, acculturation involves navigating the complexities of cultural identity integration while maintaining a sense of cultural heritage. Language barriers further exacerbate these challenges, affecting communication, academic achievement, and social interactions. Additionally, understanding the motivational factors driving international students is essential for designing interventions that promote engagement, persistence, and academic success. Existing studies have explored these factors in isolation, but there is a need for a unified framework that examines their interplay and provides actionable insights for enhancing the international student experience. By drawing on existing research, this concept paper seeks to propose mechanisms and strategies that address the multifaceted challenges faced by international students and promote their success in higher education.

Overall, this concept paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on international student success by offering a comprehensive framework that considers the complexities of their experiences from a multilevel perspective. By doing so, it endeavors to guide policymakers, educators, and institutions in developing more effective support systems and interventions to enhance the overall experience and success of international students in higher education.

#### *Objectives*

- To develop a comprehensive framework that integrates the multilevel perspectives of adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation in analyzing the factors influencing international student success.
- To identify and synthesize existing research studies and literature pertaining to adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation in the context of international student experiences.
- To analyze the interplay and relationships between adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation in influencing the overall success and well-being of international students.
- To propose actionable mechanisms and strategies based on the findings of existing studies that can enhance the international student experience and support their success in higher education institutions.
- To provide recommendations for policymakers, educators, and institutions aimed at fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for international students, informed by the multilevel framework proposed in this concept paper.

### 3.3. Expected Outcomes

- **Enhanced Understanding:** The concept paper's comprehensive framework will provide a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation in influencing international student success. By drawing on existing studies, it will synthesize diverse perspectives and shed light on the multifaceted nature of the international student experience.
- **Identification of Key Factors:** Through the analysis of existing research, the concept paper will identify key factors within each dimension—adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation—that significantly impact international student success. This identification will provide clarity on areas requiring targeted interventions and support mechanisms.
- **Mechanisms for Enhancement:** Drawing on the insights gleaned from existing studies, the concept paper will suggest actionable mechanisms and strategies to enhance the international student experience. These mechanisms may include tailored support programs, cultural competency training for faculty and staff, language support services, and motivational interventions aimed at promoting engagement and academic success.

- **Improved Institutional Practices:** The concept paper's recommendations will inform policymakers, educators, and institutions about best practices for supporting international students. By implementing the proposed mechanisms, institutions can create more inclusive and supportive environments that foster the success and well-being of international students.
- **Empowerment of Stakeholders:** By providing evidence-based recommendations, the concept paper will empower stakeholders—such as policymakers, educators, and institutional leaders—to make informed decisions that positively impact international student experiences. This empowerment will contribute to the creation of more responsive and student-centered higher education environments.

Overall, the expected outcomes of the concept paper include a deeper understanding of the factors influencing international student success, the identification of targeted mechanisms for enhancement, and the empowerment of stakeholders to implement effective strategies that enhance the international student experience.

### **3.4. Challenges and Barriers**

Despite the potential benefits of a multilevel perspective in understanding international student success, several challenges and barriers must be addressed in the development and implementation of a comprehensive framework (Kyalo, and Chumba, 2011; Bandura, et al., 1996).

The multifaceted nature of factors influencing international student success presents a challenge in developing a comprehensive framework (Yan, and Berliner, 2011; Mhlongo, et al., 2024). Adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation are deeply interconnected, making it difficult to isolate their individual effects. A nuanced understanding of the complex relationships among these factors is essential but challenging to achieve. International student populations are diverse, representing a wide range of cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Cultural variability adds complexity to the analysis, as factors influencing adjustment, acculturation, and motivation may vary significantly across different cultural contexts (Tadmor, and Tetlock, 2006; Samnani, et al., 2013). Developing a framework that accounts for this variability while providing generalizable insights poses a significant challenge. Despite the wealth of research on international student experiences, data limitations may hinder the development of a comprehensive framework. Existing studies may focus on specific aspects of international student success or rely on narrow samples, limiting the generalizability of findings. Addressing data gaps and ensuring the availability of robust data across diverse populations is crucial for developing an inclusive framework. Implementation of mechanisms to enhance the international student experience may be constrained by institutional factors such as budgetary limitations, administrative priorities, and competing demands. Institutions may face challenges in allocating resources to support initiatives aimed at addressing adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation effectively. Overcoming institutional constraints requires buy-in from key stakeholders and strategic prioritization of initiatives. Ensuring equitable access to support services and interventions is essential for addressing the needs of all international students, including those from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds. However, barriers to access, such as language proficiency requirements, cultural biases, and socio-economic disparities, may exacerbate inequalities in the international student experience. Developing mechanisms that promote accessibility and equity while addressing diverse needs is critical but challenging (Wang, et al., 2022; Goodman, 2011; Ajayi-Nifise, et al., 2024).

Despite these challenges and barriers, a multilevel perspective offers a valuable framework for analyzing the factors influencing international student success comprehensively. By drawing on existing studies and addressing these challenges, this concept paper aims to propose mechanisms that enhance the international student experience and contribute to the creation of more inclusive and supportive higher education environments.

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## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Literature Review**

Conduct a systematic review of existing literature on international student success, adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation. Utilize academic databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and ERIC to identify relevant studies published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and scholarly books. Apply inclusion and exclusion criteria to select studies that provide empirical evidence and theoretical insights into the factors influencing international student success. Synthesize findings from diverse disciplinary perspectives, including education, psychology, sociology, and intercultural communication.

## **4.2. Conceptual Framework Development**

Based on the findings of the literature review, develop a conceptual framework that integrates the multilevel perspectives of adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation in analyzing international student success. Identify key concepts, variables, and relationships within the framework. Map out the interactions between individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal factors influencing international student experiences and outcomes.

## **4.3. Data Analysis**

Utilize existing datasets and surveys to analyze quantitative data on adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation among international students. Employ statistical techniques such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, and factor analysis to explore relationships between variables. Conduct qualitative analysis of interviews, focus groups, and open-ended survey responses to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of international students. Employ thematic analysis or content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in the data.

## **4.4. Mechanism Identification**

Draw on the findings of the data analysis to identify mechanisms that could enhance the international student experience. Examine how specific interventions, programs, and support services address the challenges of adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing mechanisms in promoting international student success and identify gaps or areas for improvement.

## **4.5. Recommendations**

Based on the identified mechanisms, propose recommendations for policymakers, educators, and institutions aimed at enhancing the international student experience. Provide actionable strategies for addressing the diverse needs of international students and creating more inclusive and supportive higher education environments. Highlight potential implications for practice, policy, and future research in the field of international student success and multicultural education.

## **4.6. Validation**

Validate the proposed framework and recommendations through expert review and stakeholder feedback. Solicit input from international students, faculty members, administrators, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the relevance, feasibility, and applicability of the proposed mechanisms. Revise the framework and recommendations based on feedback received, incorporating additional insights and perspectives as needed.

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## **5. Implementation Strategies**

### **5.1. Stakeholder Engagement**

Engage key stakeholders including policymakers, educators, institutional leaders, international student organizations, and cultural affinity groups in the development and implementation process. Foster collaboration and dialogue to ensure diverse perspectives are considered and to garner buy-in for the proposed framework and mechanisms.

### **5.2. Institutional Assessment**

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of institutional policies, practices, and resources related to supporting international students. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Use the findings to inform the development of tailored interventions and strategies that address specific needs and challenges faced by international students.

### **5.3. Capacity Building**

Provide training and professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators to enhance cultural competency, intercultural communication skills, and awareness of international student needs. Equip frontline support staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively assist international students in navigating academic, social, and cultural challenges.

#### **5.4. Program Development and Enhancement**

Develop or enhance orientation programs, cultural exchange initiatives, and peer support networks to facilitate the adjustment and acculturation process for international students. Expand language support services, such as language courses, tutoring, and conversation partners, to address language barriers and promote linguistic proficiency among international students.

#### **5.5. Motivational Interventions**

Implement motivational interventions aimed at enhancing international students' engagement, persistence, and academic success. This may include mentorship programs, goal-setting workshops, and leadership development opportunities. Foster a sense of belonging and community among international students through targeted programming and activities that celebrate cultural diversity and promote cross-cultural understanding.

#### **5.6. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**

Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented interventions and strategies in enhancing the international student experience. Collect feedback from international students and stakeholders to identify areas of success and areas needing improvement, and use this feedback to refine and adapt implementation strategies over time.

#### **5.7. Advocacy and Policy Change**

Advocate for policy changes at the institutional, local, and national levels to create a more supportive and inclusive environment for international students. Work collaboratively with policymakers and advocacy organizations to address systemic barriers and promote policies that prioritize the needs and well-being of international students.

By following this implementation strategy, institutions can effectively operationalize the proposed framework and mechanisms to enhance the international student experience and promote success in higher education. This holistic approach acknowledges the multifaceted nature of international student success and leverages existing research to inform evidence-based interventions and practices.

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### **6. Proposed Model**

The proposed model aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing international student success within higher education institutions. Drawing on a multilevel perspective, the model integrates various factors that influence international student success, including adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation. By synthesizing insights from existing studies, the model suggests mechanisms to enhance the international student experience and promote success across multiple dimensions.

#### **6.1. Adjustment**

Assessing individual factors such as academic preparedness, socio-cultural background, and personal characteristics that impact international students' ability to adjust to the academic environment. Identifying social support networks, peer relationships, and mentorship opportunities that facilitate the adjustment process and promote social integration. Evaluating institutional policies, orientation programs, and support services aimed at assisting international students in navigating academic, social, and cultural challenges.

#### **6.2. Acculturation**

Understanding international students' cultural identity development and the extent to which they adapt to the cultural norms and practices of the host country. Exploring cross-cultural interactions, intercultural communication skills, and participation in cultural exchange programs that promote acculturation and cultural integration. Implementing initiatives to foster a culturally inclusive campus environment, such as diversity training, intercultural competence workshops, and cultural competency resources for faculty and staff.

#### **6.3. Language Barriers**

Assessing language proficiency levels, language learning strategies, and the impact of language barriers on academic performance and social integration. Providing language support services, such as language courses, conversation partners, and tutoring, to enhance language skills and facilitate communication. Offering language resources and



accommodations, such as English language proficiency tests, bilingual instruction, and language assistance programs, to address the diverse linguistic needs of international students.

#### **6.4. Motivation**

Examining motivational factors driving international students' pursuit of higher education abroad, including academic goals, career aspirations, and personal motivations. Creating a supportive and motivational environment through mentorship programs, peer support networks, and leadership development opportunities. Implementing motivational interventions, such as goal-setting workshops, academic advising, and recognition programs, to promote engagement, persistence, and academic success among international students.

By integrating these dimensions within a multilevel framework, the proposed model provides a holistic understanding of the factors influencing international student success and offers actionable mechanisms to enhance their overall experience within higher education institutions. Through collaborative efforts and evidence-based practices, institutions can create inclusive and supportive environments that empower international students to thrive academically, socially, and culturally.

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### **7. Benefits and Implications**

Implementing the proposed comprehensive framework offers the potential to significantly enhance international student success within higher education institutions. By addressing factors such as adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation, institutions can create a more supportive and inclusive environment that fosters academic achievement, social integration, and overall well-being among international students. Embracing a multilevel perspective and implementing mechanisms to support international students can contribute to greater diversity and inclusion within higher education institutions. By valuing and celebrating cultural diversity, institutions create opportunities for cross-cultural learning and exchange that enrich the educational experience for all students and foster a more inclusive campus community. Institutions that prioritize the success of international students and create welcoming environments are likely to enhance their global reputation and competitiveness. Positive experiences for international students can lead to increased recruitment, retention, and satisfaction rates, ultimately enhancing the institution's standing and attractiveness to prospective students and partners worldwide. Engaging with the proposed framework and mechanisms provides opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to develop cultural competency and intercultural communication skills. By recognizing and addressing the diverse needs and perspectives of international students, individuals within the institution gain valuable skills that are increasingly important in today's globalized world. Supporting international students contributes to the economic and social vitality of both the institution and the broader community. International students often bring diverse perspectives, talents, and contributions that enrich the academic and cultural landscape of their host institutions and local communities. Additionally, international students may contribute to local economies through spending on tuition, housing, and other goods and services. Implementing innovative strategies to support international student success can lead to institutional innovation and excellence. By embracing diversity, fostering cross-cultural collaboration, and promoting inclusive practices, institutions position themselves as leaders in global education and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and understanding in the field.

In conclusion, the benefits and implications of focusing on a multilevel perspective and implementing mechanisms to enhance international student success extend beyond individual students to encompass institutional excellence, cultural competency development, and broader societal impact. By prioritizing the success and well-being of international students, higher education institutions can create transformative educational experiences that prepare students for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

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### **8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this concept paper has proposed a comprehensive framework for analyzing various factors influencing international student success within higher education institutions. By focusing on adjustment, acculturation, language barriers, and motivation from a multilevel perspective, the paper has provided insights into the complex interplay of individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal factors that shape the international student experience.

Through an extensive review of existing studies, this paper has identified mechanisms and strategies to enhance the international student experience and promote success across multiple dimensions. These include tailored support programs, cultural orientation initiatives, language support services, motivational interventions, and institutional policies aimed at fostering inclusivity and diversity. The proposed framework not only recognizes the challenges and

barriers faced by international students but also highlights the opportunities for growth, learning, and enrichment that come with international education. By embracing diversity, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and promoting inclusive practices, institutions can create environments that empower international students to thrive academically, socially, and culturally. Furthermore, the implementation of the proposed framework carries significant benefits and implications for higher education institutions, including enhanced student success, improved diversity and inclusion, global reputation and competitiveness, cultural competency development, economic and social impact, and institutional innovation and excellence. Moving forward, it is imperative for policymakers, educators, administrators, and stakeholders to collaborate and prioritize the success and well-being of international students. By investing in the proposed mechanisms and strategies, institutions can create transformative educational experiences that prepare students to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and diverse global society.

In conclusion, by focusing on a multilevel perspective and drawing on existing studies to inform actionable recommendations, this concept paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts to enhance the international student experience and promote success in higher education institutions worldwide.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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