

The Problem

There are many economic and academic benefits international students contribute to the host country. It is important these students have a positive experience that reflects through their social and emotional well-being.

The goal of this study is to help higher education better understand international students' needs and tailor their services to enhance students' experience. This study will help faculty members to create intervention plans in their classrooms that will help create international- domestic relationships.

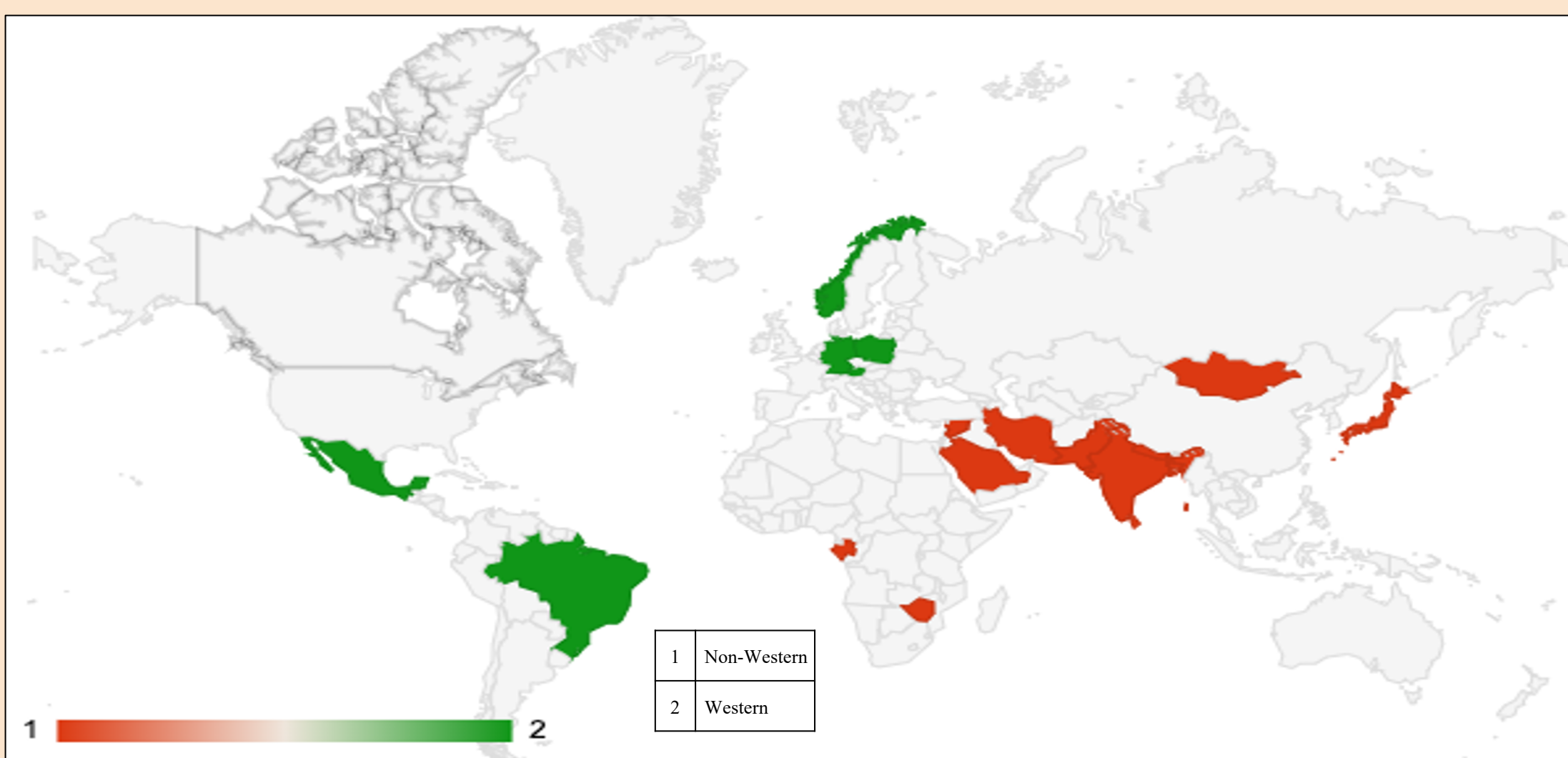
Results and Discussion

Quantitative Findings

- 24 students (35%) out of 68 completed the initial survey, and 15 students (62.5%) out of the 24 participants agreed to participate in a follow up interview session.

Qualitative Findings

- A strong sense of belonging, qualitative data reflect a pattern of issues students talked about during their interview session.
- Those themes included, student integration process, sense of belonging in an academic setting, the support international students need, the role of domestic students, the effect of pandemic, differences, recognizing homesickness, and a variety of challenges students face in the research university.
- As a whole, data provided suggest that international students feel they belong and there is strong correlation between being involved, building interpersonal relationships with others around campus and feeling a sense of belonging.



Participants' Country of Origin

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine factors that contribute to international students' sense of belonging by measuring their level of involvement with the institution and the interpersonal relationship they establish with faculty, staff, and administration. This research will also identify the difference, if any, in the sense of belonging of students with Western identity vs. students with non-Western identity.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

- Do undergraduate international students at the studied University feel a sense of belonging?
- What are the differences in the sense of belonging between undergraduate international students' groups based on their nationalities (Western, non-Western)?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to Answer
I feel like real part of the university	2	2	14	6	0
It is hard for people like me to be accepted here	9	11	2	2	0
Sometimes I don't feel as if I belong here	2	8	10	3	1
People at the university are friendly to me	0	1	9	14	0
I am treated with as much respect as the other students	0	3	7	13	1
I can really be myself in this university	1	6	10	7	0
People know where I can do good work	0	1	8	13	2
I feel proud of belonging to this university	1	3	14	5	1
Other students here like me the way I am	0	1	8	13	2

Participants' Answers to the Survey Questions
Related to the Overall Campus Culture

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to Answer
Faculty and staff at this university value my opinion	0	1	14	9	0
Most faculty and staff at this university are interested in me	0	2	13	6	3
There's at least one instructor or faculty or staff at this university I could talk to if I have a problem	0	3	8	12	1
I have a good relationship with other students in my program	0	1	11	12	0
The faculty and staff here respect me	1	1	10	12	1
The instructors at this university give me compliments when I do something well	0	3	9	11	1
Faculty and staff here really want me to succeed	0	0	14	10	0

Participants' Answers to the Survey Questions
Related to Academic Setting

Methodology

All undergraduate international students were invited to participate in a mixed methodology research. First students completed an online survey and then they were invited to take part in a follow up interview session. The qualtrics survey was emailed to 68 undergraduate international students which included two demographic questions and 30 survey questions. The demographic questions included students' national origin and gender. After, 6 students were selected for a 1-1 interview session based on students' demographics. The data from the initial survey and the interview were coded based on emerging themes and analyzed further by the researcher.

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

Web-Based
(30 Survey Questions)
Five-Point Likert-Type Scale

QUALITATIVE DATA:

Individual Semi-Structured Interviews
(11 Open Ended Questions)

RESULTS:

Analyzed Separately
using coding methods
Analyzed Together

Implications

- This small-scale study resonates with other studies and contributes to the larger research on international students' sense of belonging.
- A particular contribution of this study is in the detailed answers that international students provided about their experience.
- A particular concern is that students face more challenges with feeling belonging in a classroom setting more than the overall campus community.
- Further research should be done with a larger, more diverse population of international students.

Students Asks

- To have resources specialized for the international population, such as pairing international students with faculty or staff that speaks their language.
- Hosting workshops with global perspectives
- Listening to international students' need by getting to know them.
- one on one with staff and faculty for social support
- Hosting language exchange events (common phrases, memes)
- Exploring sports from different countries.
- Promoting diverse mindset inside and outside of classrooms.