Applied Project Submission Form

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1 electronic copy via Moodle. There is no requirement for a hard copy .

Evidence of the Primary Research MUST be included in the appendix of the report. That includes a copy of questionnaires, interview schedules, or observation diaries. One interview transcript should be included as a full transcript and a summary of all other interviews must be kept as a backup by the student. See template on Moodle for what should be included in all aspects of the report. **All data must be anonymised.**

The text should be double-spaced throughout and single column format (A4) with 2cm for left and right-hand margins and 2.5cm at head and foot. Text should be justified, standard 12 point, footnotes 10 point, and in Calibri. Page numbers should be at the bottom-right. Do not use line and paragraph spacing. Keep formatting to a minimum and avoid underlining.

Harvard Referencing shall apply.



CHALLENGES FACING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MANAGING THEIR EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER PROGRESSION IN IRELAND IN 2025.

Collated by:
EMMANUEL CHIDERA OZOAGU

This project is submitted in part fulfilment of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in International Business.

INDEPENDENT COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to outline challenges that international students in Ireland face especially when it comes to academic and career progression, the research was conducted under five themes namely: academic challenges, financial challenges, cultural challenges and adjustment, mental health challenges and coping strategies.

To conduct this research, Secondary and Primary Research were done, and the application of a mixed method to collect quantitative and qualitative information through online surveys and interviews, respectively. The theoretical paradigm was under the interpretivist epistemology for interviews and elements of deductive approach for surveys. The findings from the Primary Research and Literature Review were cross compared using the triangulation strategy, to answer sub research questions and lastly the research question.

International students face a lot of challenges on all fronts because changing educational environments and migrating to a new country with a new educational system is not easy, academic issues like different educational style were raised in the research with proper recommendation being given. Financial issues that international students might face like high cost of living was also brought up. cultural adjustments was also brought up as in the case international students didn't find it difficult to adapt. Various coping strategies were further discussed in the research as well.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Currently I'm an international student at Independent College and I'm relatively new to the country and its education system, in this process I became curious as to how international student can balance their educational pursuit with surviving in a relatively new country and how their earnings affect their purchasing choices. Well, the pathway it links to is the one I'm currently in, as the results from this project will help shape how I approach challenges as an immigrant and will help other prospect international student have an idea about the potential challenges they'll face and provide them with solutions.

According to Rajasekar et. al. (2006), research is a logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic. Furthermore, it is done through study, experiment, analysis, reasoning and observation and it must stick to three standards to be considered research namely, following philosophies set by a framework, using valid means and free from biases.

RESEARCH PURPOSE:

The purpose of this research is to analyze the challenges that international students face in Ireland when it comes to their academic and career progression. The aim is to get good recommendations from the experiences of others that would help international students in Ireland navigate these challenges across the academic front, financial front, cultural front and mental health front as well.

THEMES AND SUB THEMES:

Theme 1: Academic challenges

Sub question 1: how would you compare your academic experience in Ireland with you home country so far?

Sub question 2: what are the main challenges you face academically in Ireland as an international student?

Theme 2: Financial challenges

Sub question 3: what are the main sources of income for international students and how do they suffice in covering student expenses?

Sub question 4: what ways do international students use to manage financial constraints?

Sub question 5: how does financial challenges affect the overall experience of international students?

Sub question 6: what are the employment opportunities and policies like?

Theme 3: cultural challenges and adjustments

Sub question 7: what are the new cultural norms in Ireland international students find difficult to adapt to?

Sub question 8: how have international been able to adjust socially to their new environment?

Theme 4: Mental health and well being

Sub question 9: what are the different metal-health challenges international student face and their cause?

Sub question 10: How easily accessible are mental health help and support systems for international students?

Theme 5: Coping strategies and solutions

Sub question 11: what solutions do students recommend to better their experiences studying in Ireland?

Sub question 12: what are the various strategies international students use to cope with the challenges they face

INFORMATION GATHERING AND DATA COLLECTION:

The information gathered for this research we have gotten through online surveys and interviews. Before the online surveys were sent out the researcher put the informed consent on the landing page of the survey, so that every respondent agrees to the terms and conditions of confidentiality and anonymity before participating in the research. Likewise, when the researcher sent emails to respondents for participation in the interviews, they sent them informed consent as well for the respondents to also fill and go through before they participated in the interview.

CHAPTERS OVERVIEW:

This study is made up of five chapters. Chapter 1 is the general introduction to the study which covers the Background, research purpose, themes and sub-themes, mode of data collection and information gathering. The 2nd chapter reviews literature on challenges international students face across 5 themes namely academic challenges, financial challenges, cultural challenges and adjustments, mental health challenges and coping strategies. The 3rd chapter examines details about the research method, theoretical paradigm, methodology and ethical section. It also includes the sampling method, the data sources and the various tools and techniques used in data gathering and the method of analysis that has been adopted into the research. Chapter 4 entails the presentation of the data that has been gathered and the analysis of its data collected through online surveys and interviews analyzed in this chapter. Chapter 5 presents the summary of findings and recommendations towards helping international students navigate these challenges that come with chasing new academic aspirations in a new country.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

One of the major advantages of globalization is that individuals can now migrate and change their environment faster and easier than ever. International students are people who move to a foreign place for educational activities (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002) According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute of Statistics (UNESCO), the number of international students increased to 3.4 million students in 2009. This figure shows an increment 65% from 2000 Bhandari A, et al (2011). International students are seen as advantaged immigrants because they are considered very ambitious and very motivated (Russell et al., 2010) For international students, studying abroad has not been without various types of challenges. Most students find it difficult to adjust to an alien culture easily. Being informed about these patterns and challenges could make the adjustments smoother. Getting education in a new and presumably better environment would allow international students to be in a better position to learn more about their host nation's culture, values, and beliefs while also representing their home countries and cultures.

THEME 1 ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

According to martirosyan et al p 1 (2022) International students experienced both academic and non-academic challenges, majority of which were graduates and seniors. The students did not have a lot of academic challenges as compared to non-academic challenges because they were established as self- learners and probably had exposure to the course work before the pandemic. But while that is a positive point some of the academic challenges faced by the students According to martirosyan et al (2022) are: difficulties in engaging with classmates, having group meetings or completing group assignments, difficulties in asking lecturers questions or receiving assistance when necessary, difficulties understanding program expectations and finishing course assignments, difficulty learning in a fully online environment due to English language barriers, and lastly difficulties in understanding hybrid course schedules and requirements. The research also found that some of these challenges were not new due to the different educational systems of their home and host countries. They concluded by saying that some of these issues were caused by the abrupt change of lectures from physical to online.

On the other hand, Andrade et al (2006) p 144 found that international students found speaking and writing more difficult compared to reading and listening and also suggested that other factors like motivation, academic skill, age and years of study also affected the academic achievement of international students. They recommended that international students needed learning communities, support courses, comprehensive programming and peer study partnership to help with the academic challenges they might face. They further recommended that universities and other educational institutions should become aware of the degree of success of their international students not just through quantitative data like GPA's and retention rates but also through qualitative data derived from surveys, interviews and focus groups.

The respondent emphasized the need for bilingual resources, improved teaching strategies, Subtitle teaching and integration of technological solutions such as AI and subtitle teaching as all these are important to

enhancing student understanding, interest and success in their academics. Furthermore, Into Jarar s et al (2025) p 49 research “Many students reported avoiding class discussions, with 40.3% strongly agreeing and 41.7% agreeing that they feel unable to actively participate due to the language barrier” their confusion often means academic challenges like difficulty in understanding exam questions, further leading to incorrect answers in the face possessing sufficient subject knowledge.

Taking all these literatures in deep understanding, all 3 literatures duly addressed the issue of academic challenges that international students faced but from different perspectives, the key issues being language barriers, esteem issues and different educational expectations. Now in my research I'd like to find out the outside factors that trickle in and affect international students academically like cultural differences, and the influence of stress. So all this literature is important as they serve as guides in the questions and methods I'll use in conducting my research.

THEME 2 FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Bilas, K., (2016) p3 found that some of the financial challenges international students face has to do with the payments of higher tuition fees, lack of employment opportunities, lack of financial aids in terms of research grants and scholarships as compared to local students. He found that most of this is caused mostly by visa restrictions or grants being available to only local students or international students not being made aware of any financial support available to them throughout their programs. Bilas, K., (2016) research further revealed about how all these could lead to stress and mental health issues and recommended consistent information updates from campus support service, better advising in terms of understanding the needs of international students, and the need for collaboration between international students' programs and other departments in the institution to help address the needs of international students. In the same light Arthur, N., (1997) pp 260 research found that tuition paid by international students were almost four time higher than that of local student and that a lot of international students depended on family members and friends for financial support, they also struggle with basic amenities such as food and clothing in order not to border their dependents more with their struggle. The researcher further found that because of this issue American educational institutions now mostly admit students who can prove that they can cover their financial cost without needing financial help. Furthermore Bista k et al (2011) p1 focused on retention and individual needs of international students at a southern university, they discovered that when alternative employment options were provided for students their retention rates went up. The researchers also found that international students spend at least double the hours studying than local students and have a much smaller amount of time to work with transportation issues. Moreover Harman, G. (2003) researched the financial support, course experience and career plans of international PhD students in 2 Australian universities. As most international PhD students have scholarships with stipends, a small number of students experience financial problems and lack adequate research

support. Which revealed that while most international students were able to secure funding for their education others could not get sustainable employment opportunities to supplement their rising cost of living and this led to financial challenges.

In McFadden, C et al (2012) research funding was found to be the most important factor in the decision-making process for international students on where they wanted to continue their education and their retention decisions while participating in the program. All students in one study reported facing anxieties about finances, and 91% worried about how they were going to pay their tuition and fees in the UK. Khanal, J 2019 pp 561 Researched on various issues international students faced from per departure to post study and found Tuition, immigration and taxation policies to be part of the things affecting the economic benefits of international students.

Khanal, J 2019 pp 561 Researched on various issues international students faced from per departure to post study and found Tuition, immigration and taxation policies to be part of the things affecting the economic benefits of international students.

For this theme financial challenges, all the authors addressed the issue for different angles because of the context they were researching from the issues of lack of equal opportunities to employment opportunities to visa restrictions, so my research questions are going to cover how visa restrictions affect finances, funding available to international students in Ireland, if international students pay taxes and if they benefit from tax returns, how their financial situation affects their choices and financial habits.

THEME 3 CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND ADJUSTMENTS

During the process of attaining higher academic levels abroad international students face multiple layers of challenges and with the increasing number of international students, universities and other stakeholders need to provide different services to assist international students needs that are related to cross-cultural adjustments. Cultural adjustment is a major part of migrating for studies, according to Smith k, et al (2011) the inability of adept cultural adjustments may lead to many mental health problems like depression and physical health concerns (e.g., sleep and appetite disturbance, fatigue, headaches). Ward et al (2001) p2 described cross-cultural adjustments is made up of three parts namely: affect (psychological adaptation, built around the use of stress and coping theories), behavior (socio-cultural adaptation, typically modeled with the use of culture learning theories), and cognitions (i.e., cultural identity, built around the use of social identification theories). The belief is that international students usually struggle with everyday social interactions in their new cultural environment (Furnham & Bochner,1986). This social problem can be addressed through culture learning. Ward et al. (2001) defined culture learning as the process whereby migrants gain culturally important social knowledge and skills to survive and thrive in their new environment" (p. 51).

Previous research shows that international students' cross-cultural adjustment process differs depending on the cultural differences between their original culture and the host culture in terms of differences in indulgence/restraint, uncertainty avoidance and individualism/collectivism (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Mustafa, Y. (2021) recommended that international students could proactively minimize their culture shock by researching their destination's culture beforehand and should be open to seeking professional help and therapeutic treatments, and taking part in a buddy/mentor system. All these concur to the fact cultural adjustment is an issue for international students as the process of changing environment can make the process of settling in as an international student difficult, cultural shocks are common as it takes a while or is impossible for international to unlearn social norms, values or beliefs that they are already used to

especially when they come from an entirely different cultural context. These articles would help in conducting a deeper analysis on the issue of cultural adjustment for international students providing causes and coping strategies.

The literature reviewed here all emphasize the importance of cultural adjustment as it helps avoid some of the challenges that we are researching, so I'd be asking mainly about their home culture and how much of a difference it is from the Irish culture, how they are adjusting to the cultural expectation in Ireland and if the cultural differences affects them financially, academically or mentally.

THEME 4 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Clarke, K., 2023 research focused on the mental health diagnoses, challenges and stressors experienced, and use of mental health support, of international and non-international students who identified as being graduate/professional students. Overall, international and non-international students may experience similar challenges, but international students are less likely to seek support. The findings suggest a need for graduate advisors and student affairs professionals to recognize the unique experiences of international graduate students particularly with their help-seeking behaviours. They identified multiple causes such as the individualized nature of graduate education, challenges with faculty advisors, racial discrimination, financial, language, and work-life difficulties, as well as feelings of isolation, inadequacy, and lack of the feeling of belonging. They also found that 41% of graduate students scored high enough to be categorized as having moderate to severe anxiety. international students experience challenges such as loneliness, homesickness, language barriers, financial issues, acculturative stress, and loss of identity. These challenges may in turn impact academic performance, and jeopardize completion of the degree.

Akiba, D et al 2024 researched on the mental health of international students during the covid-19 pandemic and built his research on 7 themes namely: Actual, anticipated or vicarious discrimination and xenophobia, Health

concerns for self and loved ones, Financial and food insecurity, Living arrangements, social isolation and loss of support networks, Visa and residency concerns and lastly Academic and professional challenges. There is not a lot of literature when it comes to the mental health of international students, most literature just refer to it on a broad level of challenges, which is a research gap and needs to be explored.

So all the literature reviewed points to the facts that mental health is important in helping international students in adjusting to a new environment. They spoke about the various types of mental health issues, so in my research I'd like to explore gaps in this theme addressing it from the aspect of how it affects their finances and academics. I'd also look into issues of suicides and self- harm among international students as this was not addressed in the literature i reviewed.

THEME 5 COPING STRATEGIES AND SOLUTION

Peterie, M 2025 researched on the mental health strategies of international students in Australian universities and came up with the fact that social media and technology served as a coping strategy also joining communites of their countries or culture.

Malau-Aduli, B.S., (2011) This research was conducted to get an understanding of international students in their third and fourth year in the school of medicine Tasmania Australia. It was discovered that their end goal of being medical doctors was their coping strategy through medical school another was advise and motivation from senior medical students and mainly focused on the positive of their situation to see them through. This research further looks at the coping strategies of international students with regards to stressful situations. Stress coping strategies were measured using the Coping Orientation of Problem Experience questionnaire. It was proved that in stressful situations international students do not really focus on venting emotions and stress as a coping strategy. Furthermore, male international students usually used religious coping strategies. More often they used to focus on and venting emotions, behavioral disengagement, substance use

and little use of positive reinterpretation and growth. Humor was associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms in international students.
There is not much literature that covers this theme and fits the context. This proved to be a gap when it comes to this research topic, which is what I'm looking to explore, in my research I'd look at asking about how technology plays a role in helping with coping, then also the role of community and what the educational institution has done to help their international student.

CONCLUSION

To sum up that had been said in this chapter, literature available showed that international students faced various academic challenged all stemming from the same issues, such as English being a second language, different educational systems and just the fact that it takes a while for international student to settle down as compared to their local counterparts. When it comes to financial challenges, international students also face the issue of visa restrictions and the ability to support themselves during the school year, as for the cultural challenges faced by international students the literature states that not researching about the new culture before migrating could lead to cultural and adjustments challenges. Furthermore, according to the literature reviewed international students also suffered from various mental health challenges with anxiety and stress being the major causes.

During the process of this primary research there were certain gaps that were identified by the researcher, the first being that there is no data on the challenges local Irish student face so that the researcher could have comparable data that he could compare his/her results with. Furthermore, there was no detailed literature on international students in Ireland. There could also research done international students categorizing them by cultures so, any correlation could be identified between the experiences between international students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

According to (*Goundar,2012*) “Research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem. … Essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena are called research methodology” (*pp 10-49*). This chapter explains the Research paradigm, Research methods, Research sampling; its description and relevance to this research and the way data gathered was analysed for this project. The data used in this research was gathered through surveys compiled on Google forms and interviews (*see Appendix 7 & 8 pp 21*).

THEORETICAL PARADIGM

This research was guided by the interpretivist approach which according to (*Cohen et al., 2007, p. 21*) the Interpretive approach requires that social phenomena be understood “through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher” which is fitting for social research like this one. However, elements were borrowed from the deductive research approach, as the researcher identified the themes of the research before collecting data to which after the researcher found data and statements which relate and correspond to the pre identified themes.

RESEARCH METHODS

According to (*Goundar,2012*) “Research methods are concerned with use of any of the following: theoretical methods, numerical techniques, experimental techniques and other relevant data and tools necessary for the research study.” This research combined the use of Quantitative and Qualitative research methods because to get the full scope of the research question the researcher needed to collect data through interviews and online surveys. Quantitative Research was used so that data gotten from the research can be used to

establish the existence of associative or causal relationships between variables and Qualitative research to describe the research sample without attempting to quantify variables or look to possible relationships between the variables.

RESEARCH SAMPLING

The sample required for this project were mainly international students and policy makers in Ireland, the international students were all from diverse backgrounds culturally and socially the only thing they had in common was that they were students at Independent college and the policy maker was an official form the independent college admin. A total of 77 respondent participated in the survey while a total of 3 people participated in the interview session.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION AND ITS RELEVANCE

INTRODUCTION

According to (Sharma, 2017) Sampling is a device used by researchers to systematically choose a relatively smaller a subset from a pre-defined population to serve as subjects or data source for observation or experimentation as per objectives of his or her study. In this research the researcher made use of cluster sampling for the quantitative data collection and purposive sampling for the qualitative data collection, cluster sampling was chosen because it saved time which was not readily available and limited the research to international students in independent college. Purposive sampling was chosen for the qualitative data collection because the researcher knew the specific respondent need to provide information that fit the research question.

QUALITATIVE – INTERVIEW

POLICY MAKER: Over a year's experience as an admin with constant contact with international students and helping them settle in and assisting with whatever issue they might encounter as international students. This person is also a former international student.

INTERVIEWER 1: A student at independent college of European decent in their mid-30's.

INTERVIEWER 2: A student at independent college of Latin American decent in their mid-30's as well.

QUANTITATIVE – SURVEY

77 International students participated in the survey.

This sample contains a mix of individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences, but have all gone through the immigration process to become an international student in Ireland.

DATA ANALYSIS

Here in data analysis, the data collected were analysed separately with the quantitative data being put in charts including pie charts, bar charts and histograms (see Appendix pp22-25). However, the in qualitative data collected, narrative analysis was used because this technique examines information gotten from personal interviews which would then provide the most informed answers to the research question, the responses here were first transcribed and then crucial data was extracted from the transcript answering question about what the challenges international student faced in Ireland with the best recommendation suited for them. The collection the data led to the triangulation of both the primary and secondary research to answer the research questions based on the 5 themes.

ETHICAL SECTION

To assure anonymity, confidentiality and avoidance of biases in this research making it as standard as possible, many ethical measures need to be taken namely;

- Havard Referencing.
- Ethical Form A; submitted to module leader for approval. *(See Appendix* 1, pg: 35)
- informed Consent; submitted to interviewees prior to interview date. *(See Appendix 2, pg:38)*
- Electronic Informed Consent; first question on the survey, to ensure anonymity, confidentiality and voluntarily.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

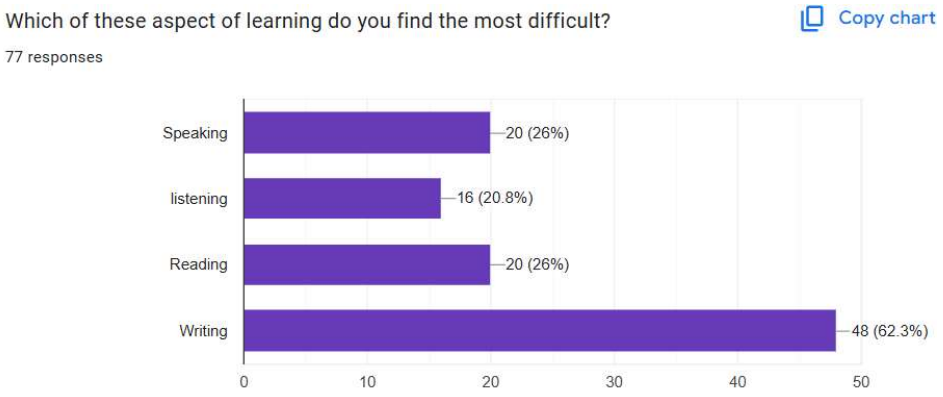
INTRODUCTION

This section of the study presents the findings gathered through online survey and interviews conducted with different respondents at independent college, Dublin. Furthermore, they will be discussed in combination with information gathered from the literature that was reviewed, the results and discussions of this research are then grouped under the themes of this research and compared with the literature reviewed in the chapter two of this research.

THEME 1 ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

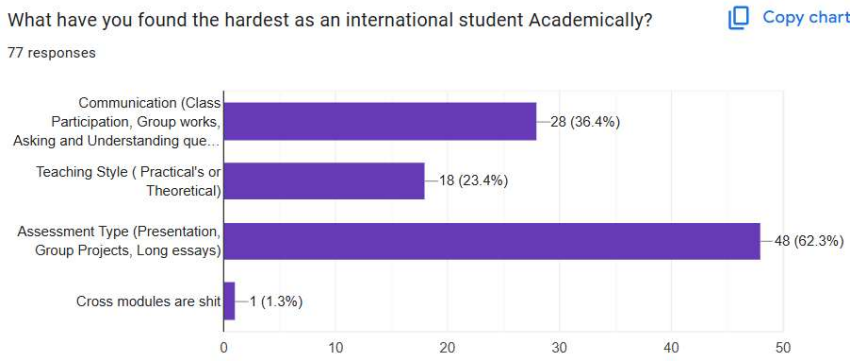
QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

In the online survey the respondents were asked a lot of questions relating to their academic challenges they faced in Ireland, when they were asked what aspect, they found difficult 62% percent found writing the most difficult, then reading and speaking at 26% each with listening as the least difficult.



Furthermore, they were asked what they found the hardest as an international aspect they found as international students, majority at 62% found the assessment type (Presentations, group projects, long essays) as the most difficult aspect of their educational experience in Ireland, followed by

communication (class participation, group works, asking and understanding questions) with 36% and lastly teaching style with 23%



QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

From the interview conducted with the students one of the main academic challenges they faced had to do the pressure of the workload (assignments) and how other factors in their lives makes it difficult to combining both workloads. furthermore, another respondent spoke about the technicality of the assignment they were given and how its different form what they are used to. When one of the respondents was asked what challenges they were currently they said *" I would say lots of written assignments, like essay formats, when you need to write an essay with a specific topic, with a specific amount of words. And in my case, I must do so in my second language or my second language. And in the beginning, it was quite challenging to write also in academic style as well".* They further emphasised that other aspects were a challenge as well because it was done in a second language to them and they had to work with people from different cultural backgrounds which could prove to be a challenge, they said this when asked about other academic challenges " *Maybe it's working as a group because here we have people from different cultures and everyone has different approach probably. And to find some middle ground in the beginning could be quite challenging, but once we found it, it's so far so good. What else? What learning styles? Not really. Maybe it was quite, not challenging, but different that teachers show videos on YouTube."*

DISCUSSIONS

According to martirosyan et al p 1 (2022) According to martirosyan et al p 1 (2022) The International students did not have a lot of academic challenges as compared to non-academic challenges because they were established as self-learners, data gathered from the online survey found one part of this to be true in the fact majority of the international students were established self-learners 57% of the respondent having a previous degree, but still had a lot of academic challenges like assessment type, communication and teaching style. martirosyan et al (2022) further emphasized that international student had difficulties in engaging with classmates, completing group assignments, difficulties in asking lecturers questions finishing course assignments, difficulty learning in a fully online environment due to English language barriers. The data gathered through the survey agrees with the author as 28 respondents found communication difficult.

Andrade et al (2006) p 144 found that international students found speaking and writing more difficult compared to reading and listening, they survey agrees with the author as 68 respondent ford writing and speaking difficult.

CONCLUSION

To conclude international face a lot of academic challenges in Ireland mainly because English is their second language, furthermore they are not used to the teaching style used in Ireland, lastly would be that they have a lot going on in the lives outside school that makes it difficult for the to prioritize academics. To help with this keen attention need to be paid to the academic needs of international students by policy maker so that they can be properly integrated in the educational ecosystem of Ireland.

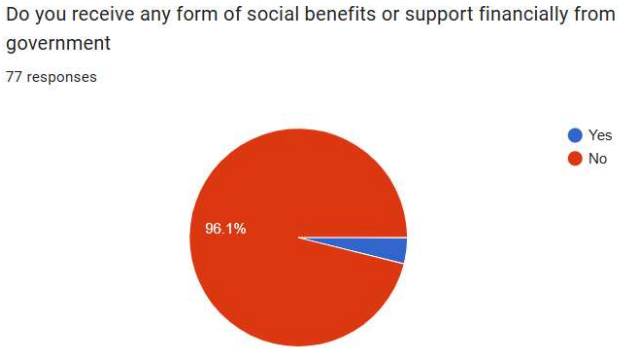
THEME 2 FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

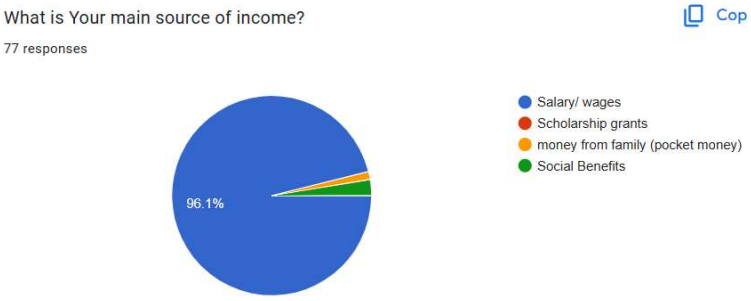
The respondents were asked if they paid tuition fess to gauge the financial burden they might be encountering with regards to their education and 75% agreed that they pay tuition.



Also, they were asked if they received any form of social benefits from the Government to help reduce the burden they might be going through and 96% responded that they did not receive any form of social benefit for the Government.

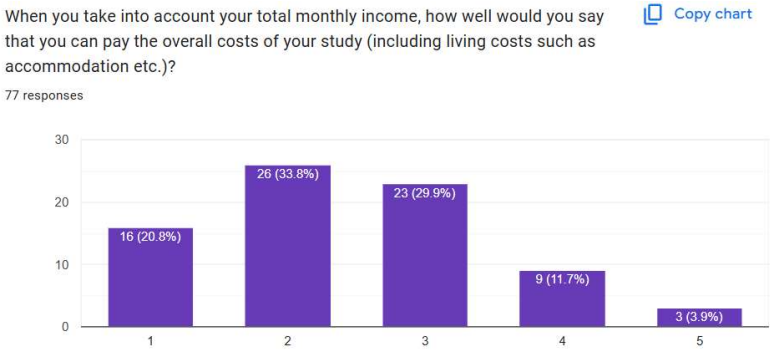


When asked what their main source of income was 96% responded that their main source of income while they were studying was through salary/wages.



Which also corelated with the fact that 92% of the respondent had a paying job during their academic year.

When they were further asked how well their total monthly income could cover the overall cost of their study on a scale of 1-5 34% chose 2 which could translate to very little.



QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Here the respondent both had jobs and that was their only source of income with no social benefits or anything like that, and they agreed that their earning form the job covers their expenses just ok, but they must manage their expenses very well and work with a budget. But the issue with their finances had to do mainly the number of hours their visas allowed them to work.

DISCUSSIONS

Bilas, K., (2016) p3 found that some of the financial challenges international students face has to do with the payments of higher tuition fees, lack of employment opportunities, lack of financial aids in terms of research grants and scholarships as compared to local students. According to data collect during the research 96% of the respondent did not receive any form of social benefit or financial aid, but 92% of the respondent had a paying job during the academic year. He found that most of this is caused mostly by visa restrictions or grants being available to only local students or international students not being made aware of any financial support available to them throughout their programs, during the interview the respondents spoke about how the visa restriction of 20 working hours per week affected their spending ability as they had to survive on a budget.

Arthur, N., (1997) pp 260 research found a lot of international students depended on family members and friends for financial support, they also struggle with basic amenities such as food and clothing in order not to border their dependents more with their struggle. The response gotten from the online survey does not agree with this as 96% of the respondents had a paying job and didn't depend on family members for financial support.

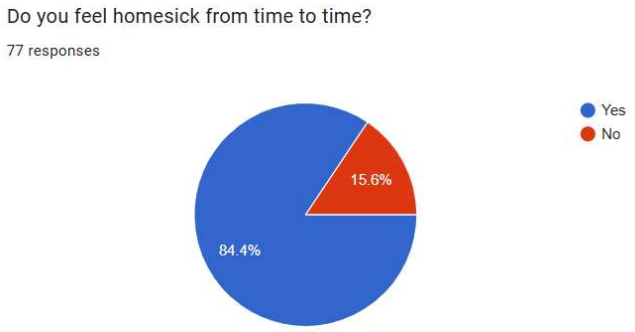
CONCLUSION

To summarize all that has been said about the financial challenges international students face, one of the major challenges they face with regards to that is the visa restriction on the number of hours they can work while studying, the fact that they pay significantly higher fees and are not receiving any form of benefits, which then in turn affects other aspects of their migration experience as international students. So the data collected agrees with the literature reviewed.

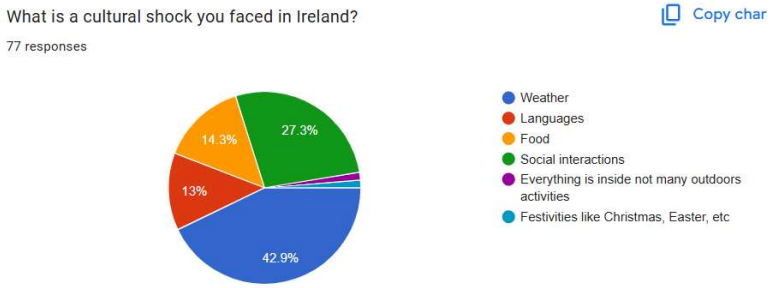
THEME 3 CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND ADJUSTMENTS

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The respondents were asked if they felt homesick from time to time and 84% of them agreed



Furthermore, they were asked what cultural shocks they've faced in Ireland majority at 43% found the Irish weather to be a cultural shock.



And lastly what their favorite thing about the Irish culture is they said unanimously said the Irish people.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Here the main cultural shocks according to the interviews had been the culture of communication with a respondent saying *" but what took me time to adopt to it was directness and indirectness because I work in the Irish company and lots of my colleagues are Irish. And for example, in my culture, I'm from the very direct culture. So, where we go straight to the point and we can say, for example, if something is bad, something is wrong and whatever. And here people can't provide you with direct feedback when it's negative. So, in the beginning, it was quite challenging because I was spending quite a lot of time*.".

while the other's cultural shock was the Irish culture of being "easy going". Here also the policy maker interviewed spoke extensively about the cultural learning programs provided to the students the person said "*different festivals are celebrated at an independent college, and then students are encouraged to join and meet other fellow classmates from other different cultures. And we post in newsletters and on Instagram stories about any cultural activity that is going around in Dublin that is free of cost.*"

DISCUSSIONS

Previous research shows that international students' cross-cultural adjustment process differs depending on the cultural differences between their original culture and the host culture in terms of differences in indulgence/restraint, uncertainty avoidance and individualism/collectivism (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). According to the interview conducted during the research one of the respondents stated that their communication culture was entirely different for the communication in Ireland which was indirect meanwhile they were used to direct communication.

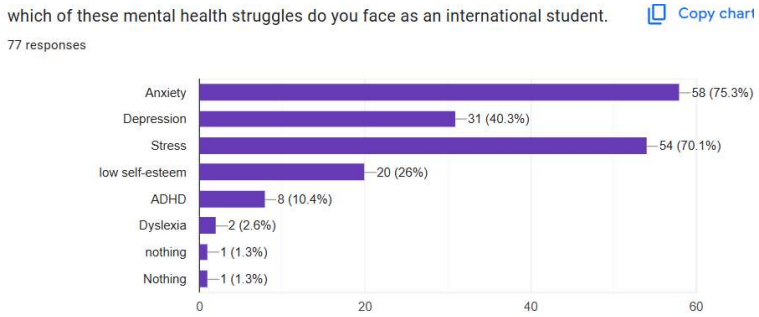
CONCLUSION

To conclude all that has been said here international students need to know and learn a lot about the culture they are migrating to so they can easily adapt and not have to add the stress of learning about the culture afresh. At the same time international students need to come out of their shells and interact with the Irish people as international students are fond of sticking to their cliques of people, they share the same or similar cultural identity with.

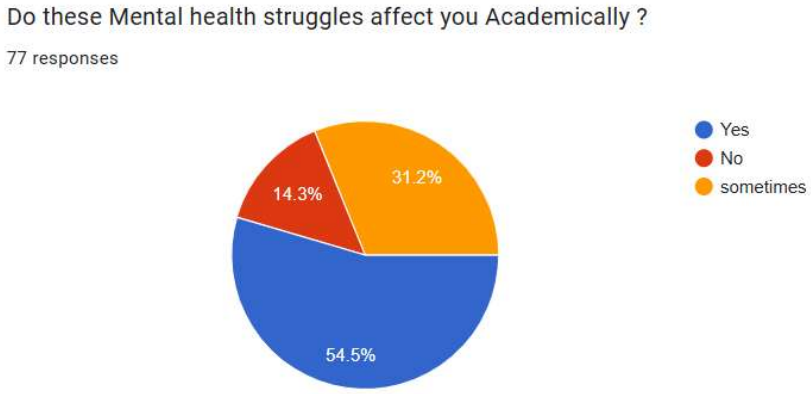
THEME 4 MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Here the respondents were asked what mental health challenges they faced and anxiety, stress and depression came out top 3.



Furthermore, they were asked if the mental health challenges affected their academics and 55% agreed, with 31% responding “sometimes”.



QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Here the respondents spoke extensively about the different mental health they have seen their peers go through from anxiety to home sickness to stress etc. The policy maker attributed the mental health challenges faced by international students to study and work life balance, living costs and conditions in Dublin, also they do not also take time out to take care of themselves and end up crashing. The policy maker also spoke about the programs in place to help

international students, they spoke about a workshop arranged for students " *Yes, we do workshops on most Wednesdays and we have a collaboration with a clinic called My Mind where there are therapists available, counselling available right at the doorstep and it's like very cheap price and we have called them as well to do some workshops here to get counselling to the students.*"

DISCUSSIONS

Clarke, K., 2023 research focused on the mental health diagnoses, challenges and stressors experienced, and use of mental health support, of international and non-international students who identified as being graduate/professional students.

Overall, international and non-international students may experience similar challenges, but international students are less likely to seek support. The findings suggest a need for graduate advisors and student affairs professionals to recognize the unique experiences of international graduate students particularly with their help- seeking behaviours. This corresponds with the results gotten from our survey as 79% of the respondents did not make use of the counselling services available to them.

They also found that 41% of graduate students scored high enough to be categorized as having moderate to severe anxiety. international students experience challenges such as loneliness, homesickness, language barriers, financial issues, acculturative stress, and loss of identity. These challenges may in turn impact academic performance and jeopardize completion of the degree. The data collected from the survey showed that only about 2% of the respondents did not suffer from any form of metal health challenges and the others suffered mostly from stress and anxiety.

CONCLUSIONS

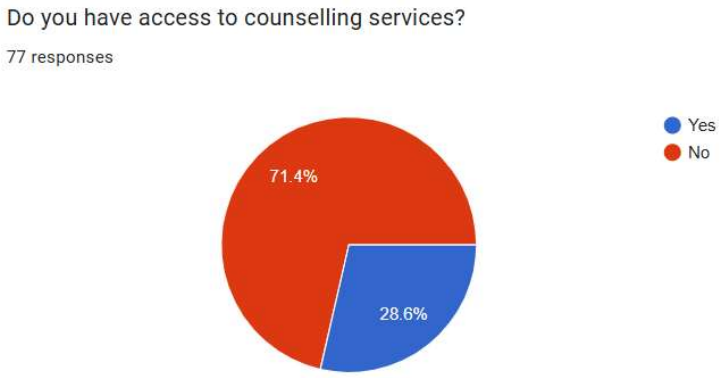
In summary international students suffered a lot form various mental health challenges with stress and anxiety coming out top, to help with these challenges they need to use the mental help resources available to them, they also need to take time out of academics and work to take care of themselves and it could

be difficult not having a social life outside school and work. Furthermore, the policy makers need create more awareness about mental health and how important it is to look after it.

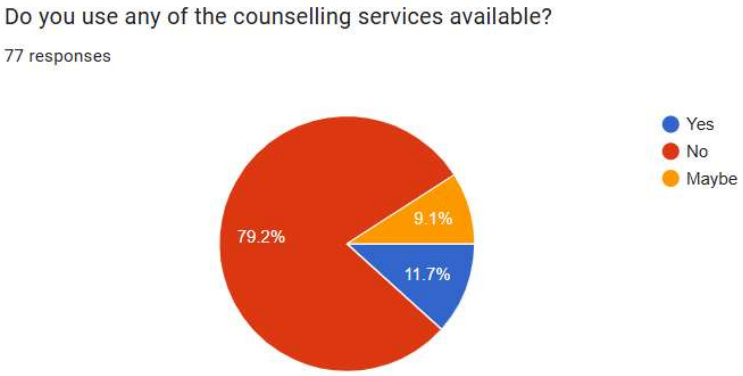
THEME 5 COPING STRATEGIES

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

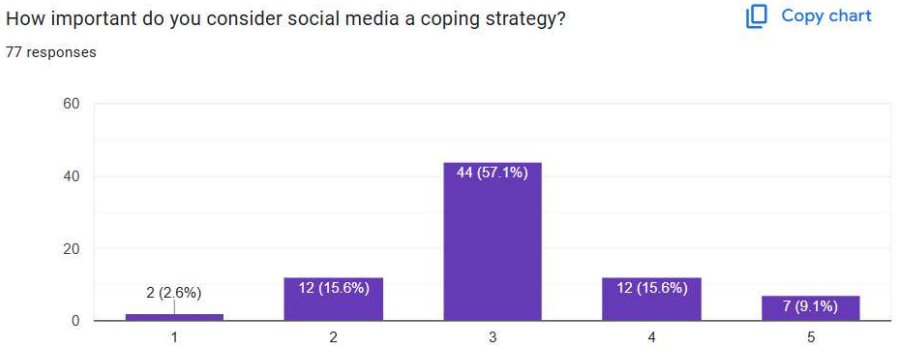
Here the respondents were asked if they had access to any counseling services and 71% did not have access to counseling services as international students.



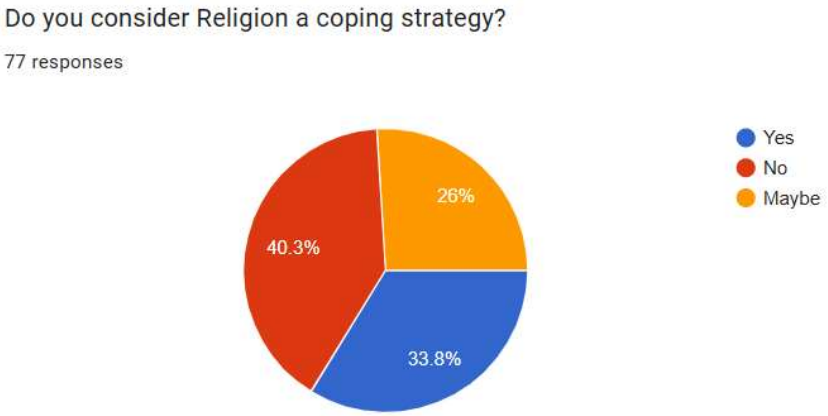
Furthermore, they asked if they used any of the counselling services available 79% said they did not use it.



They were also asked if they considered social media a coping strategy and majority at 57% were neutral



Lastly, they were asked if they considered religion a coping strategy and 40% responded no while 34% responded yes and 26% responded maybe.



QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Here the policymaker spoke about a coping strategy for the international students to make friends with themselves and see things from different perspectives, so they don't get under undue pressure. Also, It's easier for international to find solutions to whatever issues they are facing if they socialize and meet people they need to consider their health as a priority as well. The respondents felt everyone's situation or challenges is unique and in the mind. The other respondent spoke about counseling and going to therapy and then the need for awareness about mental health and other challenges that international students might be going

through the need for time management and proper planning as well was included as a coping strategy.

DISCUSSIONS

Peterie, M 2025 researched on the mental health strategies of international students in Australian universities and came up with the fact that social media and technology served as a coping strategy also joining communities of their countries or culture. The collected from the online survey showed that respondents were neutral towards considering social media a coping strategy as 57% picked 3 on the Linkert scale provided.

This research further looks at the coping strategies of international students with regards to stressful situations. Stress coping strategies were measured using the Coping Orientation of Problem Experience questionnaire. It was proved that in stressful situations international students do not really focus on venting of emotions and stress as a coping strategy. Furthermore, male international students usually used religious coping strategies. In this case 40% of the respondents did not consider religion as a coping strategy, while 26% felt maybe it was coping strategy.

CONCLUSION

In summary there are various coping strategies available to international students, but whatever challenge an international student is going through is personal and within them, so therefore whatever coping strategies they might need would also be unique to them and their condition. From the data collected various coping strategies were recommended but the main ones were planning and taking timeout to take care of your-self.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary result of this research with the use of triangulation technique in the previous chapter to answer the research question, provide the conclusion, limitations and recommendation.

LIMITATIONS

During the course of this research, there were various limitations faced by the researcher that would affect the results of this research, most of them were unforeseen but the standard and ethics of this research need to be upheld. Some of the limitations are:

- Lack of substantial and wide variety of literature regarding the research question
- The difficulty of getting participant to engage with the research as mails were sent to different potential respondents that are considered policy makers when it comes to the affairs of international students in Ireland, but no reply was given
- Lastly is the availability of time, the time provided was fair but if more time was provided the research could have achieved more.

CONCLUSIONS

To overcome challenges the challenges faced by international student takes as while as it could be referred to as a work in progress but at the same time it requires all hands on deck from the current international students themselves, to previous international students, to the government of both countries and the policy makers when It comes to the affairs of international students. Academically international students need to come out of

their shells and speak up about whatever challenges they might be going through so that the right assistance can be provided for them. The universities also need to provide a transition course that helps them settle into their new academic environment, familiarize them with the new teaching and learning style, so they can unlearn the old ones. Financially international students need to stick with the 20 working hours required but their visas give them time to focus on their academics and other challenges as well. When it comes to culture, most international students do not have a huge challenge adapting to the Irish culture as it is considered relatively easy, but they also need to be knowledgeable about it, so it makes their transition easier. When it comes to mental health international students need to watch out for signs and seek help at the appropriate time. From the research anxiety and stress came out top for the most common mental health challenges international students face, they need to make use of the resources available to them properly to avoid escalation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the literature reviewed and data collected, various recommendations were put in place to help international students navigate these challenges. When it comes to academics challenges it was recommended that international students need learning communities and groups across various tertiary institutions, support and transitional courses, comprehensive programming and peer study partnership to help with the academic challenges they might face. It was also further recommended that universities and other educational institutions should become aware of the degree of success of their international students not just through quantitative data like GPA's and retention rates but also through qualitative data derived from surveys, interviews and focus groups. The literatures suggested

the need and use of bilingual resources, improved teaching strategies, Subtitle teaching and integration of technological solutions such as AI and subtitle teaching as all these are important to enhancing student understanding, interest and success in their academics.

They further recommended consistent information updates from campus support service, better advising in terms of understanding the needs of international students, and the need for collaboration between international students' programs and other departments in the institution to help address the needs of international students.

When it comes to financial challenges international student was advised to speak up on any difficulty they might face financially, they were also advised to prepare well before migrating as the expenses here in Ireland could be considerably high especially during the onset. They are also advised to live frugal lifestyle till they have it figured out, in order not to incur heavy expenses and debt. When it comes to culture international students are advised to learn about the Irish culture extensively and the things that are considered norms and values here. They are also advised to socialized and explore the city and around Ireland as well to gain a better understanding of the culture and it people, websites like Eventbrite were recommended as places where international student could find social and cultural events that might interest and appeal to them, some events are free and others are paid. They were further advised to join their local community in whatever activity they might be organizing as it helps the get familiar with the locals within their community.

When it comes to mental health challenges international students are advised to speak up when things are going wrong with them mentally so that the right help can find them, they are also advised to make use of the various mental help available to them and lastly

the need for them to plan themselves well to avoid a jampack of their various responsibilities leading to stress and anxiety.