

UNDERSTANDING THE INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MAURITIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: International students live and study in new cultural and social environments, where multiple factors influence their integration into higher education institutions. In today's information age, characterized by global connectivity and access to abundant resources, understanding the behavioural dynamics of international students has become increasingly important. This conceptual study, situated in the Mauritian higher education context, examines the key factors affecting international students' integration and proposes a theoretical model grounded in Ward and Kennedy's *Acculturation Model* (1999). The model identifies four major challenges that may impede international students' adjustment: sociocultural, psychological, language, and financial challenges. Theoretically, this study contributes by integrating the literature on international student experiences with *Acculturation Theory* to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding their adaptation processes. Practically, it offers valuable insights for policymakers and higher education institutions in Mauritius to enhance international students' social and academic integration. To further strengthen the study, a small bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer has been conducted. This analysis examines keyword co-occurrences and citation patterns in the international student literature, identifying central themes, emerging trends, and key contributing countries. The study is particularly relevant as the Mauritian government, through its 2025–2026 National Budget, announced significant investment in the “Study Mauritius” brand to establish the country as a regional higher education hub. This initiative aims to attract students from Africa, Asia, and beyond, as part of a broader strategy for economic diversification in the post-pandemic era. With international branch campuses such as Middlesex University, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas, and Curtin University already operating in Mauritius, the country provides an affordable yet globally recognized study destination, reinforcing its potential as an emerging hub for international higher education.

Keywords: *international students, integration, acculturation model, sociocultural adaptation; higher education, Mauritius, conceptual framework, student adjustment, cross-cultural challenges*

Introduction

With the continual advancement of globalization and the internationalization of higher education, an increasing number of students are pursuing educational experiences abroad to enhance their academic

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knowledge and career prospects (Lim & Pham, 2016; Yu, Foroudi, & Gupta, 2019). Globally, the number of internationally mobile students has expanded significantly over the past two decades, rising from approximately 2 million in 2000 to over 5.6 million in 2019 (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2019). Traditional host countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada continue to attract the largest proportion of international students, collectively hosting around 39% of the total in 2019 (IIE, 2020). However, emerging education hubs, including Mauritius, are increasingly attracting students from diverse regions, reflecting the global diversification of student mobility (de Wit, Ferencz, & Rumbley, 2012; de Wit, Hunter, & Coelen, 2015).

The Mauritian Context

Mauritius aspires to position itself as a global education hub, in line with the Government Programme 2025–2029. The internationalization of higher education is a strategic pillar to attract global talent, promote academic excellence, enhance research collaboration, and promote cultural exchange. For Mauritius, internationalization is not merely an option but a necessary strategy to achieve its ambition of becoming a regional knowledge and innovation hub. By attracting international students, encouraging academic partnerships, and promoting cross-cultural engagement, Mauritius aims to enhance the quality of its education system, diversify its economy, and strengthen its global presence. The Government Programme explicitly states that “Government is determined to position Mauritius as a global education hub in order to attract international students and establish the nation as a centre of academic excellence.”

According to the latest publicly available data from the Higher Education Commission (HEC, 2023), Mauritius hosted approximately 3011 international students of the 39430 students registered in Mauritius' higher education institutions as of 2024 (Committee on Internationalisation of Higher Education Report, 2025). Most international students are enrolled in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) compared to public institutions (PFIs), though the ratio of international students in PHEIs to PFIs has decreased from 10 in 2014 to 3 in 2024.

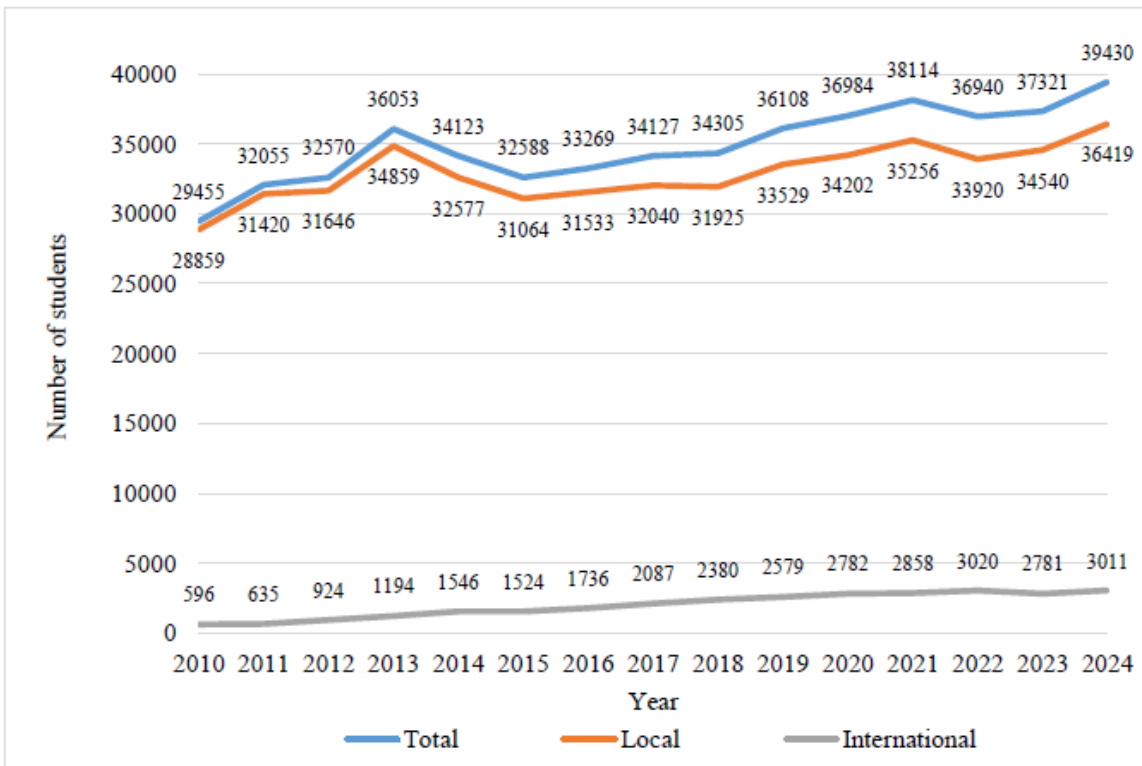


Figure 1: Total Number of students enrolled in HEIs in Mauritius

Source: Committee on Internationalisation of Higher Education Report, 2025

As illustrated in figure 1 above, of all students enrolled at the Higher Education Institution in 2024, 8% are international. In 2010, the proportion of overseas students was 2% of all students; by 2024, that number had risen to 8%.

India, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, France, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya represent the majority of overseas students enrolled at higher education institutions (HEIs) and training facilities. Figure 2 below illustrates that 39% of students are from India, with 20% coming from Madagascar. The ‘others’ category collectively representing 9% are mostly from African nations, with each country representing less than 1%.

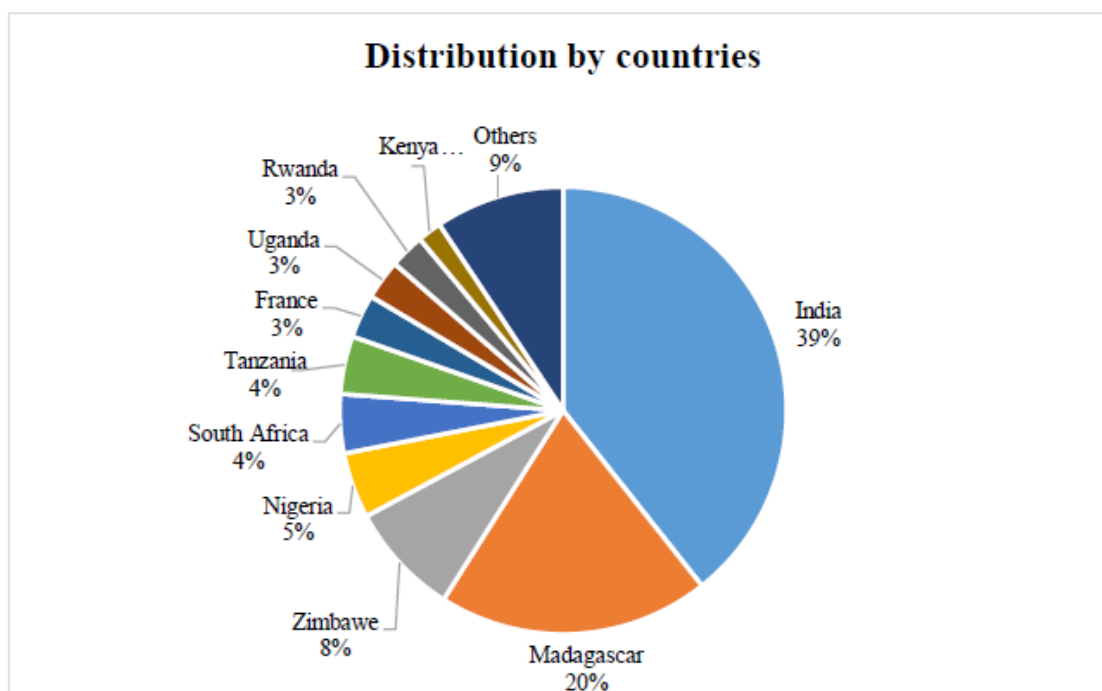


Figure 2: International Students in Mauritius by Country

Source: Committee on Internationalisation of Higher Education Report, 2025

The growing international student population highlight the importance of understanding the factors that influence their academic and social integration. International students often face multiple challenges, including language barriers, cultural adjustment, homesickness, and perceived discrimination, which may affect both academic performance and personal well-being (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Yang & Clum, 1994). HEIs frequently adopt generic student support services; however, international students represent a heterogeneous community with specific needs requiring targeted interventions (Jones, 2017; Marginson, 2010). The regional enrolment pattern over the previous four years is shown in Figure 3. The proportion of African students has continued to rise.

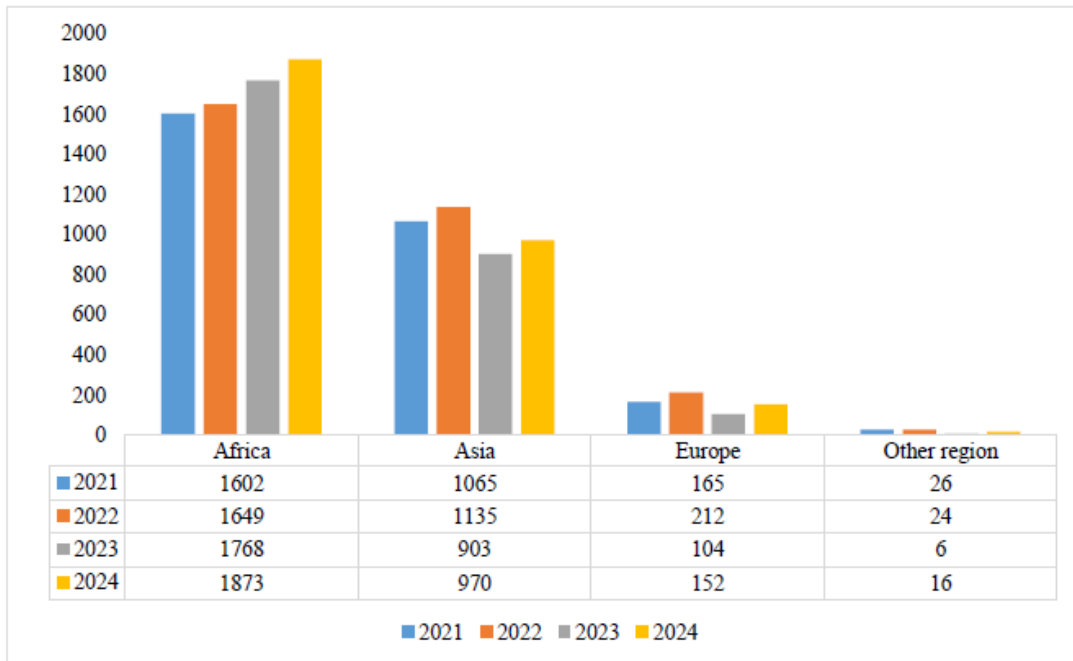


Figure 3: Number of students from different regions

Source: Committee on Internationalisation of Higher Education Report, 2025

Internationalization is increasingly viewed as a key indicator of institutional prestige and global ranking, with inbound and outbound mobility serving as markers of quality (Souto-Otero et al., 2013). For Mauritius, the internationalization strategy serves as a roadmap to increase student mobility, strengthen transnational education partnerships, and ensure a world-class academic environment. By focusing on these strategic pillars, HEIs can attract and retain international students, uphold high academic standards, promote global partnerships, and align higher education with national development goals.

The high proportion of African students is indicative of Mauritius' longstanding position as a major centre for education on the continent. Medicine (35%), Information Technology (14.4%), Administration/Management (11.5%), Business/Commerce/Marketing (9.6%), and Law (4.8%) are the top fields of study for international students visiting Mauritius.

This study, situated in the Mauritian higher education context, aims to conceptualize the key factors affecting international students' integration and develop a theoretical framework to enhance their academic and social adjustment. To date, no studies in the Mauritian landscape have comprehensively examined the interaction of sociocultural, psychological, language, and financial challenges influencing international students' experiences. This gap emphasises the need for a contextualized model that captures the unique

realities of international students in Mauritius. Accordingly, this research proposes a conceptual model grounded in Ward and Kennedy's (1999) Acculturation Theory to explain the multidimensional process of international student integration and adaptation in the local landscape.

Review of Literature

Theoretical Review

Cross-cultural adaptation

According to Kim (2001), cross-cultural adaptation is the process of creating (or re-establishing) and preserving comparatively stable, reciprocal, and functioning connections with people from other cultures. The acculturation framework hypothesis views international students as temporary residents of a new city who are studying abroad (Bochner, 2006). In the process of adjusting to the host culture, they are likely to encounter acculturative challenges (such as understanding culture, values, and social norms) that could be detrimental to the original and host cultures (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002).

Cross-cultural adaptation, according to Searle and Ward (1990), is made up of both psychological and sociocultural adaptation dimensions. Psychological adaptation is the state of emotional well-being, which includes pleasant feelings, life satisfaction, and self-esteem; sociocultural adaptation is the social skills necessary to cope with day-to-day life in a new culture. Both of these forms of adaptation are distinct and connected. According to Berry (1997) and Pernice et al. (2009), psychological adaptation is positively correlated with sociocultural adaptation, whereas a lack of sociocultural adaptation is linked to more psychological issues. International students' psychological and social adaptations were found to be favourably connected in a Turkish study (Gibbs et al., 2020).

The current body of research on cross-cultural adaptation has focused on the individual aspects that influence how someone would adapt to a new culture, including age, gender, time spent studying abroad, language competency, and cultural distance (Pan & Wong, 2011; Luo et al., 2021). Simultaneously, situational factors such as perceived discrimination (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Scott et al., 2015; Kunuroglu, 2021), social support (Shu et al., 2020; English et al., 2020), and social interactions (Kim, 2001; Szabo et al., 2020) may have an impact on the adaptation experience of international students. Perceived discrimination is the particular situational element we concentrate on because it has been researched more than other factors related to adaptation (Bierwiazek & Waldzus, 2016).

Stage models of acculturation

In the literature, a number of models (such as the U-curve and W-curve) represent the adjustment process as a learning curve. The models typically have three (Figures 4 and 5) or four (Figure 6), with some cases being specific (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960; Torbiorn, 1994). They typically begin with a "positive reaction," known as the "honeymoon stage" (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Oberg, 1960), "adventurous stage" (Lysgaard, 1955), or "fascination stage" (Torbiorn, 1994). As a "process of integration over time, or at least a growing familiarity with expectations between a sojourner and the environment," those models then charted the progression from the foreign sojourner's first reaction to the adjustment phase (Wu & Hammond, 2011, p. 426).

According to the additional cultural frameworks that international students must adapt to—the academic culture of the host country, the institutional culture of the HEI they attended, and the international student culture—the literature has more recently acknowledged international students as an acculturating group that differs from other international sojourners, immigrants, or refugees, for example (Bai, 2016). With the added pressure of academic performance, international students must quickly adapt to the notable disparities in learning and teaching systems between nations (Quan et al., 2016).

The literature has more recently recognised international students as an acculturating group that is distinct from other international sojourners, immigrants, or refugees, for example, based on the additional cultural frameworks that international students must adapt to, such as the academic culture of the host country, the institutional culture of the HEI they attended, and the international student culture (Bai, 2016). International students have to swiftly adjust to the significant differences in learning and teaching systems between countries while also dealing with the pressure of academic success (Quan et al., 2016).

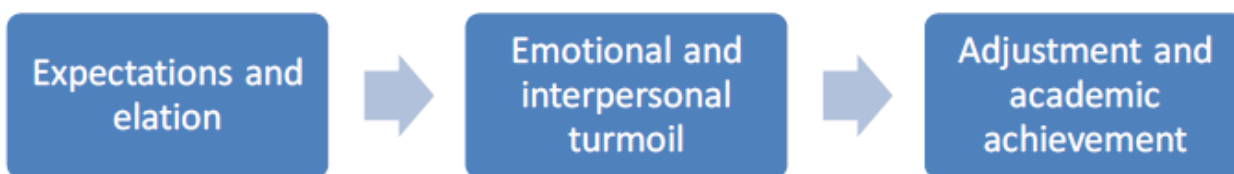


Figure 4: Stages of international students' adjustment (Major, 2005)

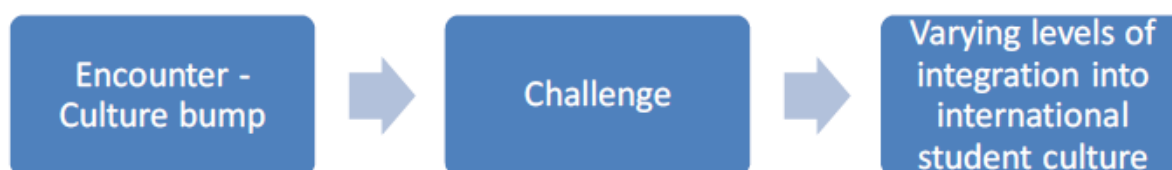


Figure 5: Stages of international students' adjustment (Wu & Hammond, 2011)



Figure 6: Stages of international students' adjustment (Quan et al., 2016)

Empirical Review

The global mobility of students pursuing higher education abroad has accelerated in recent decades. The Open Doors (2019) report by the Institute of International Education notes that international students represented 5.5% of total higher education enrolment in the U.S. during 2018/19, highlighting the scale and significance of global academic migration. International students contribute economically and culturally by diversifying classroom perspectives, promoting intercultural dialogue, and promoting global diplomacy (Lee & Rice, 2007; Kaya, 2020). However, their experience abroad is not without challenges—most notably in sociocultural, psychological, linguistic, and financial domains—which profoundly affect their integration into host institutions.

Sociocultural Challenges

Sociocultural adaptation forms the foundation of international students' integration in host societies. Students often experience a sense of displacement when moving from their familiar cultural and social environments to new contexts characterized by different norms, communication styles, and value systems (Heng, 2017; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002). Feelings of loneliness, homesickness, and social isolation are among the most common early reactions, particularly during the first year of study abroad (Iorga et al., 2020; Kristiana et al., 2022).

Studies show that social connectedness is a vital predictor of successful adaptation. Rudd (1990) observed that individuals in transition seek to establish new friendships to compensate for the loss of their home-based social support systems. A lack of social integration can lead to psychological stress and hopelessness (Leong, 2015). Students' personalities—such as levels of extroversion, optimism, and self-esteem—also influence their ability to form social bonds (Chennamsetti & Bista, 2019). Similarly, proficiency in the host language enhances opportunities for meaningful interactions and friendship development (Mahmood & Burke, 2018).

Zhou et al. (2017) found that limited familiarity with host societal norms hampers participation in local social activities, reinforcing a sense of exclusion. Cultural ignorance or stereotypes from domestic students can intensify isolation (Ge et al., 2021). Moreover, international students often report experiences of racism, culture shock, and linguistic discrimination (Brown & Jones, 2013; Dovchin, 2020). Such encounters can erode confidence, leading students to withdraw socially and rely solely on peers from similar cultural backgrounds, thereby reducing intercultural engagement (Elturki et al., 2019).

Research also links sociocultural difficulties to specific contextual factors such as dietary habits (Forbes-Mewett, 2018), climatic differences (Nieto & Zoller Booth, 2010), and unequal treatment by faculty and peers (Lee, 2010). The cumulative effect of these experiences is acculturative stress—a form of psychological strain arising from navigating between one's native and host cultures. Within Mauritius, where cultural hybridity coexists with a strong local identity, similar patterns may emerge as students from Africa and Asia negotiate the social fabric of a multilingual and multicultural society. Thus, the following proposition is put forward:

P1: Sociocultural challenges negatively affect the social integration of international students in Mauritian higher education institutions.

Psychological Challenges

Psychological adjustment is another crucial dimension of international students' integration. The transition to a new academic and social environment, combined with the absence of familiar emotional support systems, can trigger stress, anxiety, and depression (Furnham & Trezise, 1983; Sam & Eide, 1991). Studies consistently show that international students report higher levels of psychological distress than domestic students (Russell et al., 2010; Sun et al., 2021).

Initial symptoms often include homesickness, feelings of alienation, and emotional fatigue (Shah et al., 2019). These are compounded by academic pressure and expectations to perform well despite language and

cultural barriers. Financial strain and social isolation can also heighten anxiety and depressive tendencies (Hunley, 2010; Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2016). Forbes-Mewett and Sawyer (2011) categorized the causes of mental health problems among international students into three domains: (1) linguistic challenges and unfamiliar teaching methods, (2) sudden independence in managing daily responsibilities, and (3) cultural perceptions and stigma around seeking help.

Language discrimination in particular nurtures feelings of inferiority and social withdrawal, leading to low self-esteem (Dovchin, 2020). Many students come from societies where mental health issues are stigmatized, and they often avoid counselling services for fear of judgment (Gan & Forbes-Mewett, 2019). Even when support services exist, barriers such as limited cultural sensitivity, communication difficulties, and confidentiality concerns prevent effective utilization.

Social integration plays a protective role against psychological distress. Sun et al. (2021) found that international students who establish friendships with domestic peers experience lower stress and better mental health outcomes than those who interact only within their ethnic groups. Hence, universities need to create inclusive environments that promotes interpersonal connections, provide culturally appropriate mental health support, and promote open conversations around well-being. For Mauritius, where international student numbers are rising, establishing campus-based psychological support systems sensitive to diverse cultural norms is critical for sustaining positive adjustment outcomes. Hence,

P2: Psychological challenges negatively affect the social integration of international students.

Language Challenges

Language proficiency remains one of the strongest predictors of academic success and social integration among international students. Despite meeting entry requirements such as (International English Language Testing System) IELTS or (Test of English as a Foreign Language) TOEFL scores, many students continue to struggle with academic writing, listening comprehension, and oral participation (Heng, 2018; Ravichandran et al., 2017). These challenges arise because standardized tests often measure technical proficiency rather than practical communicative competence required in academic discourse.

Martirosyan et al. (2015) demonstrated a positive correlation between English proficiency and academic performance, indicating that weak language skills can lead to poor grades and low self-confidence. Writing assignments, understanding lectures delivered in varied accents, and comprehending idiomatic expressions present persistent difficulties (Roy et al. 2013). Instructors' fast-paced delivery, use of complex

terminology, and lack of awareness of multilingual learners further compound the issue (Ravichandran et al., 2017).

Faculty perceptions often exacerbate the challenge. Many lecturers view language support as outside their teaching remit, expecting students to seek assistance from external writing or language centers (Gallagher & Haan, 2018). This disconnect between student needs and institutional expectations highlights the importance of pedagogical inclusion. Universities that integrate language support into mainstream curricula—through academic writing workshops, peer mentoring, and inclusive communication strategies—facilitate smoother linguistic adaptation (Martirosyan et al., 2019).

Linguistic barriers also extend beyond academics into social life. Non-native speakers often experience “linguistic racism,” where accents or non-standard English elicit negative stereotypes (Crawford, 2000; Dovchin, 2020). Such experiences can hinder social participation and lead to withdrawal from intercultural interactions. For international students in Mauritius—where English and French coexist alongside Creole—the need for linguistic flexibility may further complicate adaptation, highlighting the importance of institutionally supported language orientation programs. Consequently,

P3: Language challenges negatively affect the social integration of international students.

Financial Challenges

Financial constraints are a pervasive concern for international students, influencing both academic performance and well-being. The cost of tuition, housing, food, and transport in host countries often exceeds expectations, particularly in urban settings (Calder et al., 2016; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Many students face restrictions on part-time work hours—typically capped at 20 hours per week in countries such as Canada and New Zealand—which limits income opportunities (Mahler, 2020).

Research shows that delays in scholarship disbursement, loss of sponsorship, and bureaucratic complexities in accessing financial aid intensify stress and uncertainty (Ackah & Kuranchie, 2015; Gopalan et al., 2019). Inadequate financial support affects students’ ability to purchase textbooks, afford healthcare, and participate in social activities, further isolating them from the campus community. Moreover, discriminatory pricing practices, where local vendors charge higher rates to foreign students, exacerbate the burden (Lim et al., 2019).

Financial anxiety can manifest in mental exhaustion and academic disengagement (Iqbal et al., 2022; Larbi et al., 2022). In some cases, students are expected to remit money to family members back home, creating

additional strain between personal and familial obligations. This dual pressure—supporting dependents while managing rising living costs—may result in burnout or withdrawal from studies. Addressing such challenges requires transparent scholarship systems, accessible campus employment opportunities, and financial literacy programs tailored to the needs of international students. In Mauritius, where the government aims to position the country as an affordable educational hub, policies must ensure that affordability is matched with adequate financial and welfare support. Thus,

P4: Financial challenges negatively affect the social integration of international students.

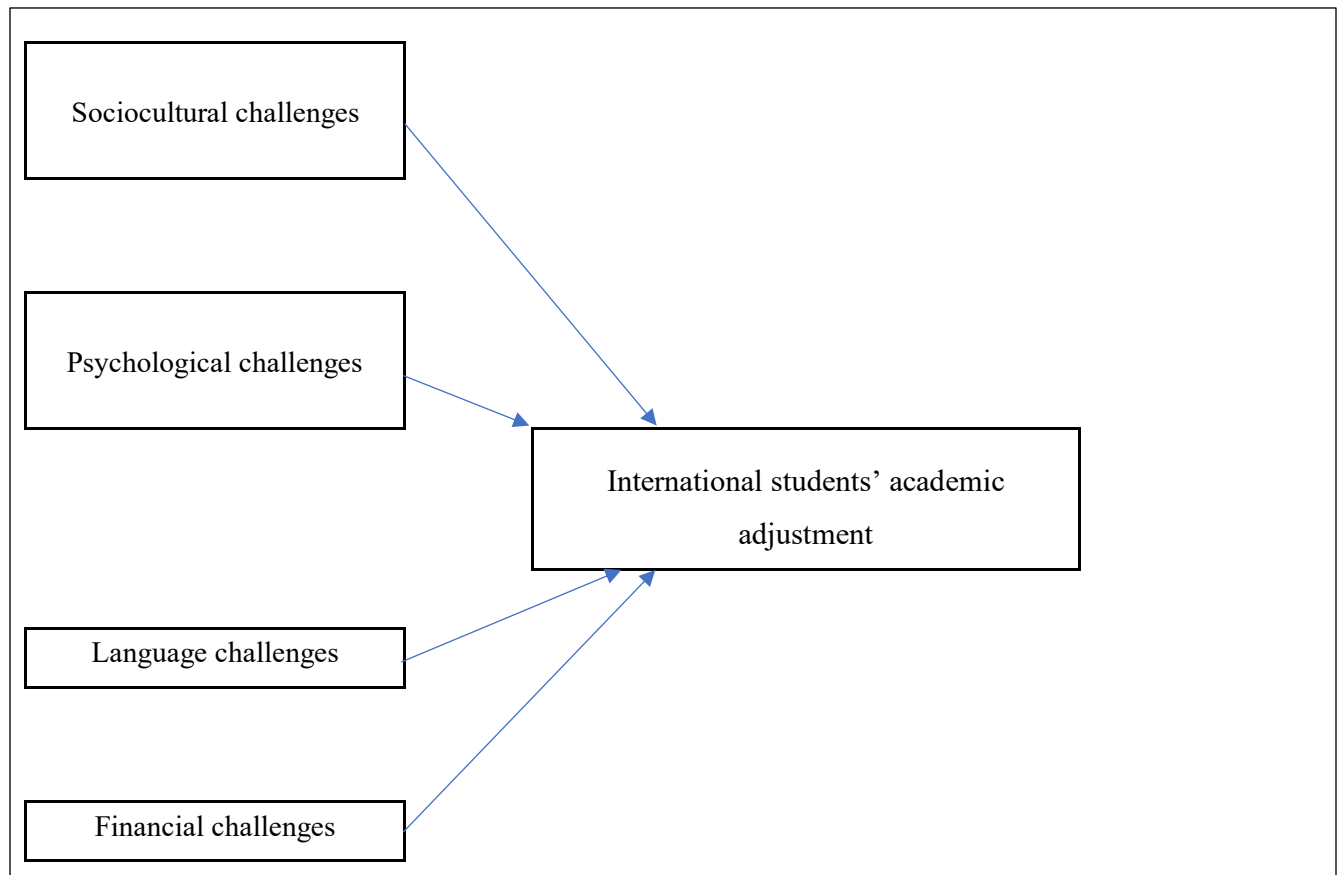


Figure 7: Proposed conceptual framework

Proposed Methodology

This study will adopt a mixed-methods approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative components to provide a comprehensive understanding of international students' challenges in Mauritius. The first phase will employ a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships between sociocultural, psychological, language, and financial challenges and the academic

adjustment of international students. The second phase will involve focus group discussions to gain deeper insights into students' lived experiences and perceptions.

The target population includes undergraduate and postgraduate international students enrolled in both public and private higher education institutions in Mauritius. A simple random sampling technique will be employed to ensure that each participant has an equal chance of selection.

The inclusion criteria specify that participants must:

- Be current international students enrolled in a regular undergraduate or postgraduate programme in Mauritius;
- Be above 17 years of age.

Exclusion criteria include:

- Students who have completed their programme of study;
- Distance-learning students, as they are less likely to experience face-to-face interactions, group work, and extracurricular participation that influence social integration and adjustment.

A self-administered questionnaire will be used for the quantitative phase. The instrument will consist of five sections, including demographic information and four constructs measuring:

- Sociocultural challenges,
- Psychological challenges,
- Language challenges, and
- Financial challenges.

Items will be adapted from validated instruments in previous studies to ensure reliability and content validity. The questionnaire will be pilot-tested to confirm clarity and internal consistency before full administration.

Questionnaires will be randomly distributed to international students in HEIs. Participation will be voluntary, and written informed consent will be obtained prior to data collection. Respondents will be assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the qualitative phase, focus group discussions (FGDs) will be conducted with eight participants per session at confidential venues within the University of Technology, Mauritius. A discussion guide structured around the study's four main constructs—sociocultural, psychological, language, and financial challenges—will be used.

The FGD guide will be piloted with six undergraduate international students (four males and two females) to ensure clarity and appropriateness of questions. All discussions will be audio-recorded with participants' consent, and pseudonyms will be used to protect identities.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to explore relationships among the four identified challenges and academic adjustment. Statistical software (e.g., SPSS) will be employed for this purpose. Qualitative data obtained from the FGDs will be transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2019). The analysis will involve familiarization with the data, coding, theme development, and refinement. Major themes are anticipated to align with the study's focus—sociocultural, psychological, language, and financial challenges—while subthemes will emerge inductively from the participants' narratives.

Ethical approval for data collection will be obtained from the University's Research Ethics Committee. Participants will receive clear information about the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation. All data will be securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

In addition, a small bibliometric analysis has been conducted using VOSviewer. The issues indexed in the Scopus database from 2008 to 2025 were considered for this study, yielding a total of 221 contributions over this period. This analysis helps identify key research trends, keyword co-occurrences, and citation patterns in the field, situating the conceptual framework within the broader global scholarly landscape.

Discussion

The conceptual framework developed in this study highlights the multifaceted challenges—sociocultural, psychological, language, and financial—that influence international students’ integration in Mauritian higher education institutions. Consistent with the Acculturation Model (Ward & Kennedy, 1999) and cross-cultural adaptation theories (Kim, 2001; Searle & Ward, 1990), the findings suggest that social and academic adjustment are closely intertwined, and deficits in one domain can adversely affect the other.

Sociocultural challenges emerge as a primary barrier to integration. Feelings of homesickness, social isolation, and cultural dissonance may reduce students’ participation in both formal and informal campus activities. These challenges are compounded by language barriers, limited familiarity with local customs, and perceived discrimination, which align with findings in similar contexts globally (Zhou et al., 2017).

Psychological challenges such as stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue are strongly linked to sociocultural adaptation. International students without sufficient social support or coping mechanisms are at risk of diminished well-being and academic disengagement (Russell et al., 2010; Sun et al., 2021). The study underscores the importance of mental health interventions, peer support programs, and culturally sensitive counseling services tailored to international students.

Language challenges remain critical, influencing both academic performance and social participation. Despite formal entry requirements such as IELTS or TOEFL scores, students often struggle with comprehension of lectures, academic writing, and everyday communication. These challenges suggest the need for integrated language support within academic programs, peer mentoring, and faculty awareness of linguistic diversity (Martirosyan et al., 2015; Ravichandran et al., 2017).

Financial challenges are a persistent source of stress affecting students’ academic engagement and social participation. Tuition costs, living expenses, and limited opportunities for part-time work exacerbate psychological strain. Transparent scholarship programs, financial literacy initiatives, and campus employment opportunities could mitigate these pressures and improve overall integration (Calder et al., 2016; Iqbal et al., 2022).

Overall, the proposed framework emphasizes that integration is a dynamic, multidimensional process. Interventions addressing only one aspect, such as language or social support, may be insufficient; instead, a holistic approach targeting all four dimensions is essential to facilitate successful adaptation for international students in Mauritius.

Simple bibliometric analysis

The issues of the Scopus database from the year 2008 to 2025 have been taken into consideration for this study. The total number of 221 contributions during the period 2008-2025 has been recorded for the present study.

Keywords Analysis

The degree to which keywords are increasing annually may be seen in Figure 8's visualisation overlay; the more yellow the cluster, the more recent the research. The majority of the keywords that appear in yellow in Figure 8 demonstrate how the development of keywords is expanding.

By analysing keywords related to international student experiences, cross-cultural adaptation, and integration challenges, this study aims to highlight the central topics and emerging issues pertinent to the adaptation of international students within the Mauritian higher education landscape. This analysis provides insights into the specific factors influencing student integration in Mauritius, including sociocultural, psychological, language, and financial challenges, while also situating these issues within the broader global landscape on international student mobility and adaptation.

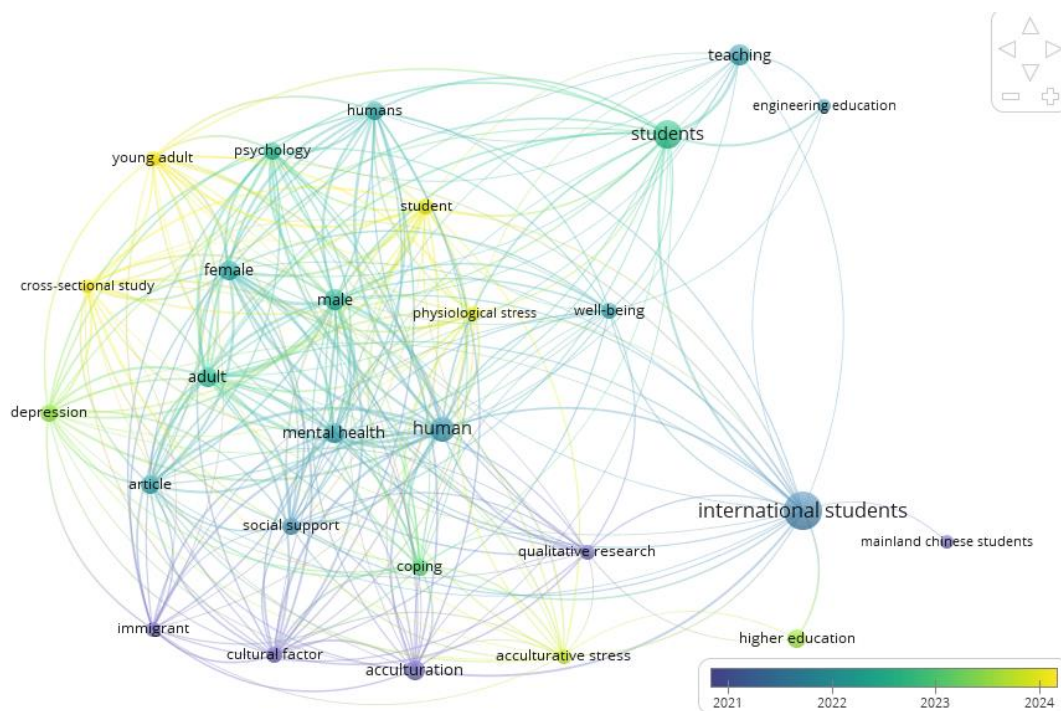


Figure 8: Keywords Analysis
Source: Own compilation using VOS viewer

Citation by countries

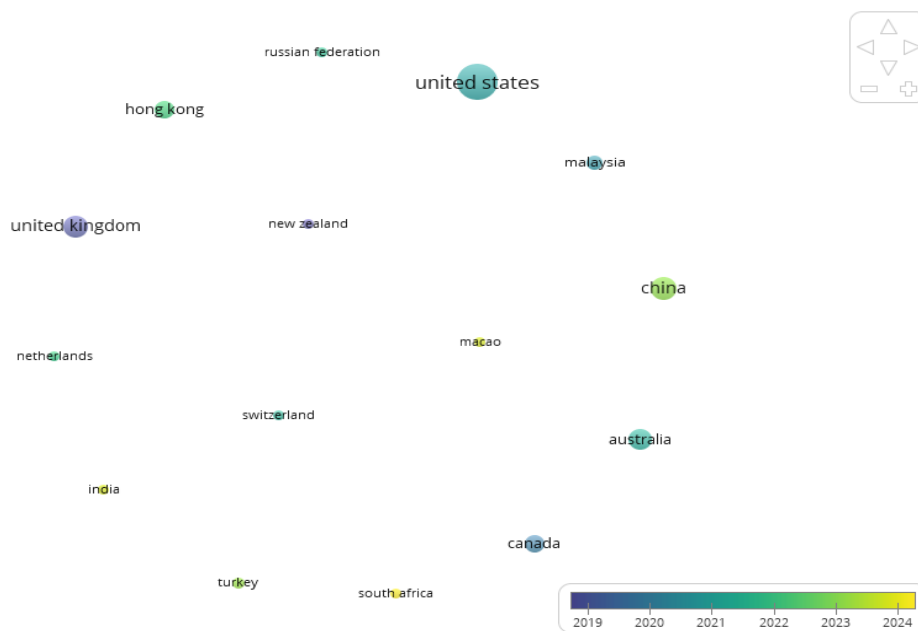


Figure 9: Citation by countries
Source: Own compilation using VOS viewer

In addition to keyword analyses, a citation analysis by countries has also been conducted to identify the global distribution of research on international student integration. This analysis highlights which countries have contributed most extensively to the literature notably, United States, Australia, China, United Kingdom, Canada and Hong Kong amongst others, revealing patterns of scholarly activity and influence across different regions. Mapping citations by country provides valuable insights into international research collaborations and emphasizes the geographical contexts in which studies on international student experiences are most prominent. Such an analysis also helps situate the Mauritian context within the broader global landscape, highlighting the potential for Mauritius to contribute to and benefit from international research networks in higher education.

Conclusion

Higher education internationalisation has become a strategic objective for countries looking to attract talent, improve academic performance, boost economic growth, and expand their worldwide influence in an increasingly linked world. Many nations have implemented unique models that are suited to their institutional strengths, national interests, and competitive positioning in the global education market.

This conceptual study provides a structured understanding of the key factors affecting international students' integration in Mauritian higher education. By synthesizing sociocultural, psychological, language, and financial challenges within a theoretical framework grounded in Acculturation Theory, the study highlights the complex interplay of factors that influence academic and social adjustment.

The findings suggest that higher education institutions must adopt comprehensive strategies to support international students, including culturally responsive counselling, language support programs, inclusive social initiatives, and financial assistance. Policymakers and university administrators can leverage these insights to design targeted interventions that enhance students' well-being, foster academic success, and reinforce Mauritius' goal of becoming a regional hub for higher education.

Furthermore, the framework provides a foundation for empirical research in the Mauritian context, enabling future studies to test the proposed relationships quantitatively and qualitatively. By addressing these challenges proactively, universities can not only improve international student experiences but also strengthen the country's reputation as a welcoming and globally competitive education destination.

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