INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’ SENSE OF BELONGING AS IMPACTED BY A LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

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BACKGROUND

- Improvement has been shown in relation to international students’ learning experiences
  - many challenges remain
  - enhancing students’ sense of belonging in American universities. 
    (Glass, Buus & Braskamp, 2013; Glass & Westmont, 2013)

- Belonging has been defined as, “the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment”.
  (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsem, & Collier, 1992, p. 173)
Research has shown that individuals establish social identities through involvement with reference groups, where strong identification leads to adoption of the traits, competencies, values and behaviors associated with that identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).
A variety of studies have shown that leadership training programs can improve student’s sense of community, which is thought to be deeply connected to one’s sense of belonging and social identity.

(Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 2001)
CURRENT STUDY

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the current study is to examine how participation in a leadership training program may impact international students’ SOBI.

- **Participants:** International ($n = 14, M = 4.8, SD = 0.36$) and Domestic ($n = 66, M = 4.9, SD = 0.17$) students, prior to engaging in a leadership training program.

- **Hypothesis:** The current study hypothesizes that participation in a leadership training program will improve international students’ sense of belonging.
METHOD

• All participants will completed a pre-test, containing questions from Sense of Belonging Instrument (SOBI) and demographic information.

• Participants will participate in the NSLS sessions (orientation, LTD, 3 SNTs, 3 Speakers).

• Upon completion of the sessions the participants will complete post-test.
MEASURES

- Measures:
  - Sense of Belonging Instrument (SOBI-P)
    - 18 item questionnaire
      - I am just not sure if I fit in with my friends
      - I feel like an outsider in most situations.
  - Sense of Belonging Instrument (SOBI-A)
    - 9 item questionnaire
      - It is important to me that I am valued or accepted by others.
      - It is important to me that I fit somewhere in this world.

All items are assessed on a 7-point Like t-type scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, Disagree, to 7 = Strongly Agree
SENSE OF BELONGING INSTRUMENT (SOBI):

- This is utilized as the primary assessment tool in the current study.

- The Sense of Belonging Instrument (SOBI) is a 27-item, self-report instrument consisting of two separately scored scales, SOBI-P (psychological state) and SOBI-A (antecedents).

  (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995)
HOW DOES NSLS WORK

Procedure:

- Students are invited to join the society.
- Orientation, Leadership Training Day, 3 Success Networking Team, 3 Speaker Broadcasts
EARLY FINDINGS

- Early exploration of the data collected to this point indicates very similar means for both international ($n=14$, $M=4.8$, $SD=0.36$) and domestic ($n=66$, $M=4.9$, $SD=0.17$) students, prior to engaging in a leadership training program.
IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE STUDY

- The current study will aid in program development by providing a data driven approach to decision making, and an evidence-based approach to providing opportunities across campus which have the potential to impact international students’ sense of belonging.
THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?

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