Navigating Perspectives: Unpacking the Discourse Surrounding International Student Experiences in Canadian Higher Education

Shamiga Shamy Arumuhathas, Western University, Canada

Abstract: The oscillation of Canadian international higher education policies continues to construct, re-frame, and re-contextualize how international students of colour are perceived by domestic institutional actors within Canadian higher education institutions. Through a preliminary textual and critical discourse analysis, this paper aims to navigate various discursive perspectives within existing literature to understand the broader and detrimental implications of framing international students through a deficit and problem-laden lens. The positional paper illuminates accounts of Canadian international students' culture shock and social integration, lack of support/resources in adjusting to their new academic environment, insufficient information provided by Canadian universities, and difficulties making new companions which ultimately hinders the student experience and academic outcomes. In discussing the apparent dissonance and discrepancies, this paper offers alternative solutions that perhaps mitigates international students' negative experiences and offer robust institutional resources, support, and services.

Keywords: higher education, international students of colour, culture shock, social integration, institutional resources and support

Introduction

Over the past two decades, Canada has demonstrated itself to be a leading contender in the international market, particularly in the Western hemisphere (Beck, 2023; Buckner et al., 2020). Canada's role within international higher education has drawn much interest by educationalists and scholars alike who noted the vast number of the international student population are from the global south and east. Although much of the empirical literature suggests the economic benefits of hosting international students, very few scholarly works delve into how international students are depicted and framed within the field of international higher education and address its implications for institutional practice.

The purpose of this literature review is to develop a comprehensive understanding of how international students' experiences in Canadian universities are represented in the literature. Conducting a comprehensive literature review is timely to adequately understand the systemic challenges international students are currently experiencing along with identifying trends and patterns, along with ways to enhance equity and student service practices. A review of the literature indicates international students from Asia, South America, and Africa reported having a negative experience in Canada as a result of: (a) culture shock, (b) lack of supports/resources in adjusting to their new academic environment, (c) inadequate information disclosed by Canadian universities (e.g., on housing, campus life, employment, and finance), and (d) difficulties making new companions (Grayson, 2008; Guo & Chase, 2011; Guo & Guo, 2017; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). Studies highlight that these negative experiences are mainly attributed to the universities' lack of responsiveness to cultural differences and their treatment of the students as a homogenous group (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). Such a generalized approach ignores the unique hindrances and barriers faced by international students based on their places of origin and cultural backgrounds. The unpleasant experiences of international students resulted in poor academic outcomes and their marginalization (Guo & Chase, 2011). My thorough examination of the literature on international students' negative experiences conveyed by scholars, frames them as problematic. This discursive framing can be conceptualized as detrimental, as university stakeholders come to adopt this literature into practice, they will begin to perceive international students as troublesome and incompetent in transitioning which contributes to encumber their students' experiences further. Fundamentally, literature that portrays international students as problematic and incapable influences practitioner's views when they provide service to international students. The scope of this paper is to illustrate international students' experiences in the Canadian landscape and how the existing literature adopted by university stakeholders can improve their experiences in the future.

Contextualizing the Current Higher Education Landscape

In the early 21st century, Canada was experiencing a shortage of capital within their market economy; thus, to compensate, Canada turned to Asia's mature student population to satisfy their deficit (Madgett & Belanger, 2008). This led to the massification of international education as it generated additional revenues for Canadian universities. According to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), 70,000 full-time and 13,000 part-time international students were enrolled at various Canadian post-secondary education institutions during the year

of 2006 (Guo & Chase, 2011). Among these reported number of international students, 48,000 are undergraduates while the other 22, 000 were considered graduate students (Guo & Chase, 2006). Overall, the primary focus in Canada has been on the effectiveness of new recruitment strategies in expanding international student enrollment. Conventionally, international students were termed as 'foreign students' in tertiary education. However, post-colonial scholars in education such as Stein and Andreotti (2016) reveal international students being systematically re-conceptualized and re-imagined by universities as a source of income and intellectual capital. Likewise, studies pertaining to international students are concerned with nuanced recruitment techniques to increase the statistical numbers in enrollment, while "literature documenting [on] such practices [like international student experience] remains nearly nonexistent" (Guo & Chase, 2011, p. 308).

Although the literature on international students' experiences in Canada is seldomly produced, scholars have yet to investigate why this continues to be. The scarcity in the literature remains an unexplained conundrum considering international experiences is a topmost priority in ensuring greater enrollment within the consecutive years that will thereby produce a profit. Equally important, recent political events in the United States of America, including heightened national security measures following terrorist attacks, have imposed stricter travel policies on international students. By reason, these prospecting students changed their PSE destination to Canada. As a result, Canada gains a greater opportunity in sizing international students to increase their pool of candidates. Despite the growing number of international applicants in Canada, reports surveying on international students' experience continues to be of disinterest.

Theoretical & Conceptual Framework

To explore why international students evaluate their experiences at their Canadian universities as disappointing, Alexander Astin's (1984) Theory of Involvement among student development theories can serve to critically comment on universities' policies, programs, and resources effectively for a smooth transition. Astin (1984) postulates that a student's positive experience is mainly attributed to how physically and psychologically they are involved in their academic environment. Astin (1984) suggests "the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement" (p. 519). According to this theorist, university administrative stakeholders are to be held accountable for ensuring that their students to be involved in campus culture for positive outcomes, such as rewarding student experience. Astin (1984) further posits his theory by introducing a sub-premise which he refers as 'resource theory'. In explicating on 'resource theory' Astin (1984) remarks: "if adequate resources are brought together [by university stakeholders] in one place, student learning and development will occur [to contribute to a great student experience] …" (p. 520). Astin claims effective implementations of resources that aim to facilitate progressive involvement will potentially prompt positive attitudes, and therefore, stimulate favourable student experience.

Treatment of Scholarly Literature on International Students' Experience in Canada

The following sections consist of a comprehensive textual analysis extracted from existing empirical literature on international students experience at Canadian universities. Through the thorough examination of scholarly literature, the review demonstrates various concerns, phenomenon, and encounters international students face such as culture shock, lack of supports, navigating through mis-or-no information, social integration, and academic transition. The exploration into such dimensions and aspects of international student life is relevant to analyze how they are depicted and treated within Canadian higher education institutions.

Encountering & Overcoming Culture Shock

One common challenge international students face, regardless of their geographic location, is culture shock. Educational counselors, such as Popadiuk and Arthur (2004) denote:

> "culture shock…to the experience of sojourning international students who must learn to deal with the lack of familiar customs, and become familiar with the host country, often with the expectation of integrating into the new cultural practices…culture shock involves new learning for coping with novel aspects of a novel environment, such as assumptions, beliefs, and social norms for behavior" (p. 131)

The definition of culture shock posed by the scholars is framed to imply that it is the onus of the "international student who *must* learn to deal" with the vicarious effects and implications of culture shock (Guo & Guo, 2017, p. 859). The abovementioned assertion fails to take into consideration that it is the moral responsibility of the university to find culturally responsive and relevant approaches to mitigate to adverse implications of culture shock international students of colour experience. Furthermore, it is very alarming that certified educational counselors working within an institution fail to understand that there are varying levels of cultural shock which differs based on the individual's socio-cultural background and place of origin.

Many East Asian international participants experienced culture shock; as a result, they suffered "isolation, frustration, homesickness and depression…" (Guo & Chase, 2011, p. 313). For example, a graduate international student who was assigned a Teaching Assistantship (TA) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) noted that orientation sessions facilitated by the international office and the department provided an inadequate guide of UBC's TA system; thus, she experienced difficulties integrating herself within her setting (Guo & Chase, 2011). Evidently, UBC neglected to recognize TA systems uniquely differ on the basis of culture and region. By reason, this international TA had to acclimatize to new teaching and learning styles quickly in order to overcome her culture shock. UBC's sweeping assumptions on TA systems as homogenous across all universities irrespective to the geo-cultural conditions led this international student to take it upon herself to become familiar with UBC's TA system without support granted by administrative stakeholders. If one were to apply Astin's (1984) Involvement Theory to this particular case, the international student is physically and psychologically disconnected from her academic environment. Thus, she or he is prone to a negative experience since the lack of UBC's support in aiding the student to navigate the TA system and hence serves as a hindrance for effective involvement which exacerbates negative experiences.

To combat the culture shock international students experience, some international students formed connections with peers from similar cultural backgrounds, which allowed them to cope with the implications they faced together in host settings (Myles & Cheng, 2003). This internal support network among colleagues allows one to depend on one another proactively, rather than experience a sense of isolation and frustration on an individual level.

Falling Through the Cracks: Lack of International Student Support & Resource

International students enrolled among Canadian universities signified experiencing uncertainty throughout the course of their programs. Notably, students' state of uncertainty primarily stemmed from universities lack of disclosure of pertinent information on suitable housing/residency, tuition, campus culture, and the requirements of their program (Calder, 2016). International students expressed their concerns about poor communication of information that is provided by the host institution. To illustrate, in Calder's (2016) study a student who comes to encounter the harsh realities of the high cost of living in Canada asserts:

> "There was nowhere to improve [in the home country] so okay, I come to Canada I want to improve. I'm doing a Ph.D. in Canada, which is like, wow, right, but then you're living in…a hole and it's like… you can barely eat, you know, food…" (pg. 99)

It becomes apparent that this international student had a negative experience due to the university paying no attention in providing relevant information on Canadian living expenses prior to the student's arrival in Canada. As a consequence, the student was required to make sacrifices such as choosing meals over affordable housing to remain within the program. Informing students of the potential financial challenge they will encounter prior to their departure provides them with an opportunity to evaluate if they have the financial capacity and means to study abroad. Another concern within this statement is of the student's diet and nutrition. According to the statement, the student is susceptible to malnourishment due to infrequent dietary intake which may implicate the individual's cognitive performance. Here, the international student is unable to partake in campus events because they have imperative issues such as ensuring they have enough money to cover expenses. For this reason, the student refrains from any campus involvement that potentially fosters positive experiences as there are more pressing matters, he/she must attend to. Unfortunately, for those who encounter these financial burdens the universities offer only limited bursary opportunities; hence, students are left with little financial assistance. A point often overlooked is the university's assumption of international students as financially well-off. In fact, this ideology of international students who engage in tertiary education as privileged is flawed and proved otherwise by the unfortunate international student 's lived reality.

In other instances, international students face difficulties with "the registration process, ensuring that they are taking the appropriate courses for their programs, completing administrative tasks such as obtaining a library card, and adjusting to large class lectures" (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004, p. 127). Since international students require attention and assistant of university personnel, they are usually conceived by faculty administrative as problematic. To elaborate, when international students seek services or information on resources that are available to them, administrative view them as problematic and incompetent because they are incapable of problem-solving (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004, p. 127). As a result, international students begin to identify themselves as a problem in the eyes of the university as a whole. For this reason, international students seek to self-segregate themselves to minimize the perception of themselves as a group that is "problem-laden" (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). Through such an act, international students abstain from engaging in campus activities that are fundamentally known to prompt positive student experience and intercultural competence.

In contrast, research findings suggested, often times international students are unaware of available campus resources; indisputably, the university should proactively inform students of these services. In detail, a Canadian university in the west has a one-on-one counselling program specifically catered to international students (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004, p. 126). Both Popadiuk and Arthur (2006) discuss that international students realize such counselling and advising sessions are accessible upon the completion of their program via a peer. Certainly, when a university program is not utilized by their intended population, the program becomes vulnerable and is discontinued since operating the program and employing service providers is an expenditure. However, those international students who require the one-on-one counselling will be at risk because the university subsequently determined the program as meaningless due to the infrequent use of the service by students. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the university to take proactive measures in advocating and communicating to international students of the beneficial programs and services prior to the start of their academic year. To apply Astin's (1987) Resource Theory to this context, one can conclude that the university's failure in disclosing the resources obtainable to international students thereby hindered student learning and development, resulting in a negative experience. In this respect, international students are then cognizant of the resources and are able to access them to mitigate the effects of culture shock that will potentially guarantee in a positive learning experience.

Faultfinding Instructional Approach: Academic Transition for International Students

Transitioning from a familiar to a new learning environment often results in international students' experiencing adjustment difficulties. Despite Canadian universities efforts to provide academic integration workshops, the effectiveness remains questionable. For example, a Chinese female participant recounts (Zhang & Zhou, 2010):

> "I remember in my first semester, I was taking three Political Science courses. It was horrible. The textbooks seemed easy, but the course requirement were really high. We were asked three papers. Each one was more than 2000 words. And before that, I did not write any papers in high school. So I had to learn APA style, and learn everything from the very beginning. The Academic Writing Center is not that helpful, I think… I got a C-, and I was shocked. It's my lowest essay mark I've ever got. So I just went to the TA's office, and she said "Are you an international student?" I said "yeah" And she said "Even though you are an international student, we still reduced your grammar scores. We don't care about it [we have the same requirement for everybody]. You have the responsibilities to figure it out." So that's really frustrating for me at that time. I didn't write any paper in China. What is a paper? I don't know" (p. 51-52)

Evidently, written language communication is a challenge this international student confronted. The student's respective professor presumed all the students within his/her course was acquainted with APA citation manuals and has prior knowledge on how to write coherent essays. Additionally, the students' anecdote uncovers that universities unanimously believe it is the responsibility of secondary schools to prepare their students for various post-secondary schooling they wish to pursue. Canadian universities often fail to consider the diverse skills and backgrounds international students bring, making incorrect assumptions about their preparedness. It is problematic to assume that all international students have a homogenous skills set during their formative secondary educational training as it disregards and overlooks the idea that students are culturally and ethnically diverse and their knowledge and skill varies even among a nation. Arriving at such a conclusion is harmful towards students' academic outcome and experiences since the university places the onus on the student to familiarize with Western learning and writing styles; this demonstrated aggressive academic integration. Nevertheless, this raises the questions: Who is responsible

for ensuring students possess the required skills to enroll in PSE courses? Is it the secondary or the post-secondary institution or the student?

The learning experiences recounted by international students above are indicative of how the Canadian higher education institutions have neglected to understand that the global east/south employ very distinct learning styles and have unique assessment approaches that differ from the global west/north. Eastern cultures primarily adhere to (but not limited to) traditional methods of learning and evaluations (i.e., memorization, oral examination, and written recitation). As a consequence, the Chinese student was overwhelmingly stressed because Canadian learning styles were novel to her. Also, the student reported the Academic Writing Center to be impractical; however, she did not further elaborate on the reasons for her rationale. Perhaps, this is attributed towards writing center to be oriented to a domestic first-year population. In other words, the writing center this international student attended was not responsive to her cultural differences and specific needs; while similarly assuming that the student has produced papers and assessments prior to PSE.

On the contrary, this former international student recollected the insensitivity her TA demonstrated despite being mindful that she is an international student (Zhang & Zhou, 2010). In this circumstance, the TA did not provide alternative solutions (such as academic resources and workshops) for the student to utilize and properly enhance her written communication skills. A faculty member's ignorance and unwillingness in providing academic support or accommodation pose as a barrier towards a successful outcome. According to Chickering and Gamson's (1987) Seven Principles of Good Practice in Ungraduated Education, they advise: "(1) Encourage contact between students and faculty; (4) Give prompt feedback; (7) Respect diverse talents and ways of learning" (p.1). These practices were failed to be upheld by faculty TA since he/she did not recognize students arrive in their courses with a diverse range of learning skills, knowledge, and talents which are conveyed differently. Thereupon, the dismayed student was later instructed by the TA to take it upon herself to become acquainted with grammatical conventions and citation styles if she sought to successfully pass the course. Astin (1987) would judge this case as the TA's failure to stimulate physical and psychological involvement from the student since he/she overlooked the concept of diverse talents that resulted in the student's poor grade. On the psychological level, this discouraged the student to make contact with faculty since the TA perceived her as incompetent to adhere to Western modes of learning. In effect, the student sought to maintain limited contact between faculty members, disallowing for a positive learning experience and outcome.

Social Integration Hardships

Studies that conducted focused group interviews alluded to the struggles international students displayed finding companions (Grayson, 2008). Among the interviews, the consensus on making friends with Canadian students were primarily negative. Research (Myles & Cheng, 2003) examines the social life of international students on a Canadian campus, a Taiwan international student comments:

> "You always feel you are still an outsider. Because my circle, my friends, I found mainly because of similar experiences as a newcomer, people get together more easily than native speakers" (p. 258).

Similarly, the outsider status is also felt by other international students with different cultural backgrounds such as an Indian male student who emphasises:

> "I don't feel very comfortable when I go to parties or barbeques. I can speak English, but I cannot speak their way, so I cannot just mingle with them very comfortably. I am from a different country, a different culture, so they do understand [why I don't go to their parties]" (p. 258)

International students are prone to feeling like an 'outsider' because of the limited socializing with the domestic students. Canadian students are often unaware of the cultural conditions and their respective sensitivity towards its traditional customs. Due to religious dietary restrictions, the Indian student marginalizes himself from involving in barbeque events. If the domestic student population is aware of the cultural differences and accommodate to an individual's conditions, international students can have the opportunity to "explore new relationships across cultural boundaries [which suggest] …few problems with cultural, academic and social adjustment at the university level" (p. 258). By evaluating their lived realities, international students prefer associating with peers who share the same nationality and culture. As a Bulgarian male international student justifies:

"I don't really have Canadian friends. I am having trouble like getting close to Canadians. Maybe it's the culture. I have a couple of international student friends. They have an eastern European background. It's just that people are different" (p. 258).

The analysis of the Bulgarian's student's experiences making networks validates the exclusionary practices demonstrated by Canadian domestic students. After being rejected by the domestic population, the Bulgarian student abstains from making contact with Canadian students and now is inclined to making friends with students of Eastern Europe. In doing so, the Bulgarian student deprives himself from engaging in intercultural competence from students who do not share the same culture as him. Scholars Myles and Cheng (2003) suggest "if [international students] want to feel more like "insiders" they *need* to participate in a host cultural milieu in order to acquire new cultural knowledge..." (p. 258). However, their suggestions for international students to adopt the "insider" status is ineffective when they are alienated from the domestic population.

For international students, the status of the "insider" manifests in inclusive dialogues and interactions with students who are culturally different from them. An appropriate means to foster "insider" status is for the university to intervene and design culturally responsive programs that cultivate the building of global dimensions and intercultural understanding. Additionally, intercultural interactions nurture language proficiency, international knowledge, cross-cultural skills, and international attitudes and behaviours" (Jon, 2013, p. 457). It is through such intercultural interactions, international students have the ability to feel involved, accepted, and acknowledged for their cultural differences within their new academic setting. According to Vincent Tinto (1975, 1993), students' identities are shaped by the community they inhabit and their interactions with students and professors. If Canadian universities were to facilitate effective cross-cultural interventions, international students will develop an identity of a campus community member. Nevertheless, the cultural exchanges between the mobile and domestic student, allows the international student to be physically and psychologically be involved which facilitates positive experiences and outcomes (Austin, 1987).

Critical Discussion and Analysis

The lived realities and testaments from various international students provide coherent rationales for describing their experiences at Canadian universities as unpleasant. Canadian universities must critically analyze and study international students' integrational transitions and the external and internal factors that come to hinder their experiences. When international students come to inhabit a novel setting, their distinct cultural characteristics become emphasized and manifested prominently, especially during interactions with a domestic population. However, the negligence of university stakeholders, including faculty members, senior institutional administrator or leadership administrative, TAs, and professors, in acknowledging cultural variations has led to struggles for international students. Astin (1987) accentuates the importance in fostering psychological and physical involvement that thereby incites a feeling of belongingness; which translates to a campus community member identity and a good experience. Similarly, Bryson (2014) stresses "that a sense of belonging is created through a responsive interaction between student and other members of the university community" (p. 12). Based on Astin and Bryson's arguments, the call to respond to the international student's individual needs whether it is academic or social remains the gap within their transitional phenomena. If the universities are not to address this gap sooner, many international students will resort to withdrawing from their programs; thus, contributing to attrition.

According to NSSE reports, one's ability to adapt is influenced by the environmental conditions which include how proactive the university is in receiving international students and the programs and resources they have for them (Myles & Cheng, 2003). Unlike most literature that places the onus on the newcomers to aggressively assimilate into their Canadian academic environment (and overcome culture shock), a majority of the responsibility falls on the institution for creating a receptive environment. Likewise, if professors assume that all of their students have the same knowledge, skills, and perquisites, they establish assignments and assessments according to these constructs that work to encumber their international students' experiences. Few professors may provide a counter argument, stating that international students must provide a TOELF assessment with a substantially high score to be enrolled in their courses (Myles & Cheng, 2003). Despite the high-test scores on TOELF exams, students demonstrated a hard time communicating with their fellow counterparts (Myles & Cheng, 2003). For this reason, in-service and pre-service training for faculty professors should be implemented regarding on international students' conditions and transitions for the professors to be conscious and sensitive to barriers students experience.

The referenced literature in this paper provides evidence of international students being portrayed as problematic and incompetent in transitioning to their new academic settings. Many international students said that their professors would explicitly remark that because they are international students, language proficiency will be a problem (Myles & Cheng, 2003). Here, the professor makes predetermined assumptions that international students will exhibit a language problem regardless of their years of English language instruction. However, the professor fails to understand that international students are not up to par with colloquialism. When professors make false accusations about the student's language proficiency, it naturally influences the student's self-esteem. Subsequently, the student is then less inclined to submit their assignments knowing that the assignment will consist of language and literacy inaccuracy. When professors make a general assumption in front of the larger audience, it singles out the international student to be incompetent in comparison to other students; thereby, creating a dichotomy of the capable and incapable. Such acts of classification encourage the student to preclude themselves. Due to the student's lack of participation, the student denies any form of interaction that might prompt a good learning experience.

A professor's lack of cultural insensitivity can impede on an international student's learning experience and outcome. Most often the lack of consciousness on the professor's part in not addressing international perspectives within their discussion led students to feel as though they were omitted from the course discourse and content. Markedly, international students felt as though they were only being indoctrinated with Western perspectives while other global standpoints remained insignificant.

If one were to employ Peggy McInstosh's (1988) analogy of the 'invisible knapsack' further on Canadian university campuses, we are able to better synthesize the bigger picture of international students' experience. Canadian universities should not assume that all their PSE students attend their campuses wearing the same standard knapsack. When the universities immerse themselves in such an assumption, they neglect to consider that students arrive at their universities with various privileges, beliefs, expectations, and cultural values consisted in the knapsack. Although the knapsacks are worn by all students, the conditions within them greatly differ from one another. As a result, an international student who pursues Canadian PSE enters a system that is enacted under the ideology that all international students are homogenous in their learning skills, cultures, communication, and expectations. When the university classifies an international student akin with another international or domestic student with very distinct cultures, the university sets itself up as a barrier and conflict for the student in prohibiting them to obtain a valuable student experience. This very situation is a paradox because the university's efforts to provide resources and services is the precise issue of causing a hindrance which contribute to a negative student experience. If university stakeholders acknowledge international students to vastly differ regardless if they are from the same place of origin, they can become culturally responsive to their needs to better their transition and student experience.

Alternative Suggestions

Academics discern that when universities achieve cultural mixing of international and domestic students, it enforces students to intermingle; thus, allowing students to gain intercultural competence. Perhaps, Canadian universities should look to the global East to borrow and implement Buddy Programs (Myles & Cheng, 2003). This Buddy Program prompts for social interaction which lowered the attrition rates of international students. Furthermore, the physical and social interaction attributes to a sense of psychological inclusion; thereby generating a positive experience. Similarly, more programs that are oriented to foster inclusion and simultaneously allow for a smooth adjustment ought to be designed by university coordinators. Nonetheless, there is limited research done on international students' experience. Since Canada's intake of international students exponentially rises each year, Canadian scholars should recognize the gaps and propose solutions to culturally respond and to satisfy the experience of this population.

Conclusion

International students have been a population of financial interest for many Canadian higher education institutions, which is made apparent through university's international strategies and aggressive recruitment efforts (Beck, 2023; Buckner et al., 2020). Despite the profound business, their experiences and outcome are an unconcern. Canadian scholars and university stakeholders' shift in examining their international students' experiences have the potential to increase their enrollment. Involvement and inclusion appear to be important variables for international students to

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obtain positive international experience in Canada. The assessment of the discursive framing of international students of colour within higher education literature is necessary to understand how their lived experiences are inadvertently shaped and conditioned by domestic stakeholders' perception and portrayal of them. The negative and detrimental depiction of international students of colour within the existing review of the literature is necessary to prevent how stereotypical biases has the potential to transpire within student service practice. In addressing the inequity and unfair treatment of international students of colour, institutions can provide improved culturally relevant supports that are reinforced by policy and funding developments. Conclusively, university stakeholders should re-examine their programs to be culturally responsive and steer away from grouping international students as a homogenous group. Addressing these challenges not only benefits international students but also enriches the entire university community by fostering a more inclusive and diverse learning environment.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shamiga Shamy Arumuhathas: is a Doctoral Student at Western University (London, Ontario) in the Faculty of Education. Shamy's research and scholarship are primarily premised on understanding racialized international students' experiences at settler-colonial universities, and more specifically investigating the systemic barriers they encounter that thereby hinder their academic persistence. Shamy's research interests also include the decolonization of higher education and its sustainable practices and the equitable inclusion of traditional disenfranchised peoples in post-secondary education. As a research practitioner and educator, Shamy continues to provide effective intercultural interventions for secondary and post-secondary students during student and academic crises.