

# THE EFFECTS OF GENDER, ACADEMIC CONCERNS, AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON STRESS AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

Thousands of international students come to the United States every year and from the moment they arrive they experience stress from multiple directions. This study focuses on gender differences in stress levels for international students and different types of social support as moderators of that stress. Survey data from a Midwestern university is reviewed regarding general adjustment issues experienced by international students (N = 169). Descriptive statistical and multiple regression analyses are used to test hypotheses. Additionally, gender role theory and a transactional model of stress serve as a framework to approach and understand the issues. The findings reveal that gender, academic concerns, language concerns, and length of stay in the United States are all significant predictors of stress. Furthermore, academic stress is significantly associated with gender and social support. The reassurance of worth, guidance, and social integration subscales of the Social Provision Scale (SPS) as well as the overall sum of the SPS are associated significantly with academic stress for male and female international students independently and differently. Males with academic stress and females without academic stress experience the most benefits from social support whereas females with academic stress experienced no benefit from social support as indicated by the SPS. The results of this study indicate that there are broad implications for individuals who interact with international students on a personal, professional and academic level.

