
International students and personal responsibility towards learning

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Abstract

Together with a supportive high quality learning environment and individual motivations, international students' responsibility towards academic learning and capacity to exercise responsibility are crucial to ensure their meaningful engagement in learning and their academic success. This paper aims to address international students' perceived responsibility towards their academic learning. It is based on a four-year research project that focuses on international students' learning and engagement in Australian institutions. Semi-structured interviews and fieldwork were the key instruments for data collection for this research. The paper points to the importance of both external and internal factors in influencing international students' perspectives on their personal responsibility and how such responsibility is critical to their academic performance. The factors shaping international students' views on their personal responsibility range from extrinsic obligations to intrinsic motivations, including externally imposed legal requirements and financial pressures to ensure good returns on investment in overseas study, their self-esteem and identity, perceived work ethic, as well as intrinsic interest for academic development and employment prospects. The paper indicated that it is important to place emphasis on not only *nurturing international students' sense of responsibility* but also providing them with the condition to *enact their responsibility* through specific goal-oriented tasks in the classroom as well as in the broader institutional community.

Key words: international students, academic learning, responsibility, adaptation

Introduction

The academic learning, adaptation, and transformation of international students appear to be among the most common topics for debate and research in the field of education. How to enrich international students' learning experience is a major concern to all involved stakeholders including international students, parents and host institutions. This is critical to host institutions and host countries in the current increasingly competitive education market in which the quality of teaching and learning of international students is often seen as a crucial component that host institutions draw on to promote themselves as an attractive destination for this group.

Teachers, support staff and researchers often place emphasis on international students' motivations, interests and approaches to learning in their efforts to appropriate teaching and learning practices and optimise the learning experiences of international students. Even though students' responsibility and capacity to exercise responsibility has been considered to play an important role in determining their academic success, these aspects are often neglected in both research and practice in the education of international students. This paper responds to this critical gap in the literature by drawing our attention to international students' perceptions of their personal responsibility, the rationales underpinning their ways of viewing their own responsibility and how they see the relationship between their responsibility and academic performance. It draws on a four-year research project supported by the Australian Research Council which included 105 interviews with international students from various institutes in three states of Australia: New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

The findings of the research show international students' perceived responsibility for fulfilling their academic learning commitments is shaped by various internal and external factors, ranging from externally imposed legal requirements and financial pressures to ensure good returns on investment in overseas study to their self-esteem and identity, perceived work ethic, as well as intrinsic interest for academic development and

employment prospects. The paper suggests some practical implications on building a supportive and responsive educational environment which taps on international students' internal values such as self-esteem, intrinsic interest and future goals to nurture their responsibility towards academic learning.

Research on international students' academic learning

The remarkable growth of international students over the past two decades is accompanied by an exponent trend of research on international students. The phenomenon of international student mobility has been examined by cross-disciplinary research ranging from the field of education, cultural studies, sociology, and philosophy to business. The majority of research on international students tends to focus on the following key themes:

- Academic learning, adaptation and transformation (Wright & Schartner, 2013; Volet & Jones, 2012; Tran, 2009; 2010, 2011; Cruickshank, Chen & Warren, 2012; Holmes, 2004)
- English language proficiency and intercultural engagement (Arkoudis & Doughney, 2015; Pham & Tran, 2015; Tran & Pham, 2015)
- Ethnicity and identity (Kettle, 2005; Koehne, 2005; Lee & Rice, 2007)
- Wellbeing, security and employability (Marginson et al., 2010; Tran & Soejatminah, 2016; Tran & Vu, 2016)

Among these themes, the academic learning and adjustment of international students appears to attract the majority of researchers' interest. This is understandable since education is a core aspect of the international student experience and in many cases, the key driver for them to undertake study abroad. Within the line of research on international students' academic experience, the challenges facing them, their adaptation and transformation and the approaches to enriching their academic learning appear to be the primary dimensions.

The challenges facing international students in their academic endeavour appear to be largely linked to their culturally-situated ways of learning and constructing knowledge and their English language proficiency (Samuelowicz, 1987; Elsey, 1990; Lacina, 2002). This stream of research encompasses a stereotypical view towards international students who are often positioned as lacking critical thinking, creative approach to knowledge

construction and capacity for independent learning (Samuelowicz, 1987; Elsey, 1990; Lacina, 2002). In addition, international students, especially those from non-English speaking backgrounds, are constructed as having insufficient English proficiency to enable them to operate effectively in the host English speaking learning environment. Therefore, it assumes the responsibility of host institutions is to help international students to “fix” these problems and adapt to the academic conventions privileged in the host environment (McLean & Ransom, 2005, p.45). On the other hand, this is associated with international students’ responsibility to adapt to what is expected of them. This line of literature appears to essentialise international students as it frames their approaches to learning as being purely culturally-influenced and ignores the complex web of personal characteristics as well as external factors accompanied with their cross-border mobility in shaping their ways of learning and constructing knowledge.

Problematizing the essentialist and deficit view on international students’ learning, an alternative trend of research focuses on international student adaptation to and transformation in academic learning (Kettle, 2005; Tran, 2011, 2013a). This body of research tends to unpack their adaptation patterns and the primary factors underpinning these patterns. Tran (2011), for example, identifies three forms of adaptation that international Chinese and Vietnamese students appear to display in their academic endeavour in the host institutions. She coins the typologies of “committed adaptation”, “face value adaptation” and “hybrid adaptation” to capture the nature of international students’ adaptation behaviours. Committed adaptation occurs when international students are keen to adjust to what is required of them in the host academic environment and feel positive towards such changes. Face value or surface adaptation is the result of the tension between what international students attempt to adapt and their personal value which differs from their actual adaptation. In this case, international students often feel forced to make the adaptation. Hybrid adaptation is a strategic approach international students employ in order to shuttle creatively between what is expected of them and what they personally value (Tran, 2011, 2013b).

Strategic adaptation is also seen as being core to international students’ experiences in mediating their academic routes. Kettle (2005) for example analyses the process in which a Thai international student strategically negotiates his learning experience in higher education. Brown (2009) points

out the transformative power of international students formed and reformed via the condition of cross-border mobility which is seen as “a journey of self-discovery as removal from the comfort of the familiar forces them to test and stretch their resourcefulness and to revise their self-understanding” (p.505). Other authors go further in suggesting international students have the potential to act as self-forming agents in negotiating their academic and social routes (Marginson, 2014; Volet & Jones, 2012). While the principle underpinning the conceptualisation of international students’ experience in the host country as *adaptation* might place international students in a rather passive frame as it largely sees international students as the ones who make the effort to adapt, the literature around their transformative potential sees them as being powerful in mediating and establishing their academic identity in the landscape of international education. Transformation might be achieved but also depends on whether the learning condition is conducive for them to exercise agency and realise their self-forming transformative potential.

Responsibility

Students’ academic success depends on both the internal factors and external environment. Internal factors include their motivations, capability and responsibility to complete tasks and fulfil their academic aspirations. External factors encompass the classroom environment in which teachers and peers play a key role, the institutional culture, resources as well as other factors in the educational landscape that affect the well-being and experience of international students. Internal and external factors can be interrelated. The classroom environment and institutional culture can influence students’ views on their responsibility shapes and the ways in which they enact their responsibility. International students’ efforts in exercising responsibility towards their own academic routes can be nurtured or ignored depending on the academic and social environment to which they are exposed. Weiner (1995, cited in Kluever & Green, 1998, p.521) points out that “effort, ability and task success or failure operate jointly in ascription of responsibility.” Personal responsibility appears to be integral to international students’ academic performance, especially as they are engaged in the context of cross-border education away from their cultural and academic comfort zone of their home country. However, the existing literature tends to concentrate more on international students’ motivation, adaptation and challenges (Tran,

2015) rather than their responsibility and capacity to exercise responsibility towards their own learning. This paper is thus an attempt to respond to this gap in the literature by addressing international students' perceptions of their responsibility in the academic world.

Authors have tried to conceptualise the notion of responsibility and specify types of responsibility. Hsu, Pan, Chou and Lu (2014, p.130) for example distinguish between "personal responsibility" which encompasses "effort" and "self-direction", and "social responsibility" which contains "respect" and "caring and helping." This conceptualisation of student responsibility is developed in the context of school education and closely related to students' behaviours and attitudes (Duke & Jones, 2009; Romi et al., 2009; Lewis, 2000; Ericson & Ellett, 1990; Witeley, 2005). This paper extends this research line by addressing international students' personal responsibility in the context of tertiary education. In this study, personal responsibility is understood as the international student's perceived responsibility towards oneself. The analysis of interview data draws on positioning theory (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999), approaches to defining responsibility suggested by Lauermann and Karabenick (2011), and the concept of "judging instance" which Helker and Wosnitza (2014, p.2) consider to be an essential component of the responsibility construct. *Judging instance* refers to the "supervision or judgment of sanctioning instance" that underpins the determination of what one feels responsible for. Depending on the forms of this judging instance, which can vary "between a court and the internal conscience", responsibility can range from more externally imposed responsibility to more internally self-determined responsibility. In this study, the student's judging instance is analysed through the lens of their positioning. The research findings show that while participating international students share a similar perception of their personal responsibility for academic learning and well-being, their manifold judging instances illuminate the complexity and diversity of motivations underpinning what may appear to be "predictable" and "conventional" personal responsibility that international students reportedly take for their study and well-being within the realm of transitional educational mobility.

The research

This paper is based on a research project supported by funding from the Australian Research Council through the Discovery scheme. The four-year

study focuses on international students' learning and engagement practices and teachers' appropriation of teaching in response to the characteristics of international students. In total 155 interviews were undertaken with international students and staff in dual-sector and vocational education and training (VET) institutions in three states of Australia: New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. In addition, observations of students' practice classes, activities and engagement at the workplaces were conducted. Directors of International Programs were initially contacted and asked to circulate an invitation to international students and teachers. The face to face interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes each. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The interview excerpts cited in this paper were taken from international students participants' responses to the question "What do you see as your responsibility as an international student in the host country?" The responses are centred around the responsibility they feel towards academic learning, social integration and intercultural interaction. This paper focuses mainly on their study-related responsibility as this is core to their sojourn.

To protect the confidentiality of the participants, their institutions are kept anonymous and pseudonyms were given to students. The key themes on which this paper focuses and the relevant quotes were identified through a thorough process of coding using NVivo software, version 10. The researchers read the interview transcripts several times and utilised NVivo software to categorise the interview data. The preliminary analysis was inductive and based on the themes and patterns that emerged from the coding. Then positioning theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) as discussed above is used to interpret the ways international students perceive their responsibility towards their study.

Responsibility for academic learning

Responsibility for academic learning is the most frequently mentioned form of responsibility by international student participants in this study.

I'm an international student, my purpose to come here to study ... the main responsibility for me to come here to study good [well].
(Vietnamese, Business administration, public college)

[I am] a student over here, so first studying. That's it. (Indian, Community welfare, private college)

Academic responsibility is expected to be the foremost. While most international students appear to share this perception in common, their rationale for taking such responsibility is heterogeneous. The judging instance for their perceived responsibility for study-related commitments involves a range of reasons, including externally imposed visa requirements, the awareness of ensuring return on investment, and more internally determined motivations such as their self-esteem and identity, perceived work ethic, as well as intrinsic interest for learning and employability.

Visa requirements

As stipulated in the attendance policy for international student visa holders in Australia, maintaining satisfactory attendance as required by education providers, commonly at a minimum of 80% of scheduled course contact hours, is mandatory (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2016). For a number of students, their personal responsibility to study is instantly associated with this externally imposed legal obligation.

Because [of] the immigration rules that we have to follow regulation, we have to attend for at least 80% of the class. It's my responsibility coming to the class all the time. (Malaysian, Hospitality Management, private college)

My responsibilities [...] I need to maintain my attendance above 80% (Chinese, Interpreting, dual sector institution)

My responsibility is to do things correctly, to you know, to fulfil my visa conditions and to attend college properly. (Indian, Cookery, public college)

Our responsibility is that we should be regular in the class. [...] we should be abide by the rules and the regulations with the government. (Bangladeshi, IT, public college)

The concept of forced self-positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) provides a useful lens to unfold the students' sense of "externally imposed

responsibility" (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011), or "held responsible for" (Helker & Wosnitza, 2014, p.3). According to positioning theory, forced self-positioning results from (perceived) requirements or expectations held by different social forces (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). In these interviews, the students forced-self position their learning as a legal duty required by the host country, a subject of legal control and supervision by the host government. From this vantage point, personal responsibility to attend classes is necessitated as a form of compliance with an external authority to deter known consequences of failing and breaching their visa requirements. This form of responsibility also resonates with the concept of *avoidance-oriented* responsibility (to prevent outcomes) that Lauermann and Karabenick (2011, p.135) suggest in contrast with *approach-oriented* responsibility, which aims to produce outcomes.

On the one hand, these students' inclination to adopt visa requirements as an externally imposed judging instance for personal responsibility indicates the intended effect of the legal system, i.e. immigration regulations, on facilitating individual behaviours, i.e. international students' class attendance. In addition, the students' awareness and observation of the law also alludes to an important quality of transnational citizenship that international students demonstrate in their developing transnational mobility experience. On the other hand, this pattern of personal responsibility is limited in the sense that the students appear to depend on an external pressure to be responsible for their personal learning. Moreover, implications from Lauermann and Karabenick's (2011) distinction between avoidance-oriented and outcome-oriented responsibility also suggest a rather shallow perception of "learning" and a narrow scope of personal responsibility for learning that these students apparently communicate in the interview excerpts. Based on their self-positioning, "academic learning" seems to be bounded within meeting the minimum requirement of class attendance, rather than a broader, more meaningful and proactive range of education pursuits. Nevertheless, it could be argued that once the students take responsibility to be physically present in the classroom, the institution and teachers should seize this chance to help international students, as well as domestic students, develop intrinsic and genuine learning motivation and responsibility through meaningful and engaging educational experiences. This might, in turn, direct students to various forms of academic learning that initially might not exist within their perceived realm of responsibility.

Financial pressures from educational investments

In other cases, international students' personal responsibility for their academic performance is driven by their obligations towards their parents' investments in their overseas study. The following interview excerpts reveal that within a similar pattern of the students' self-positioning, there are two significant judging instances that give quite distinctive meanings to their perceived personal responsibility towards academic learning.

It's my responsibility to study well because I pay much. (Chris, Filipino, Hospitality, dual-sector institute)

My responsibility is I have to graduate the university as soon as fast as I can. I have to save a lot of money. I don't want to waste my money because of my parents, for my parents. (Clara, Korean, Business, public college)

I think my responsibilities is probably get through the course as fast as possible because well I pay more than what local students pay. [...] I think the local students pay about \$500 to \$800 per semester but I pay \$5,000 so I pay about ten times more than local students. So if I take longer to get my diploma, it will cost more. So my responsibility would be to get the diploma as soon as possible. (Stephan, Korean, Hospitality, public college)

Responsibility. Well first of all through the course, so learn as much as you can because if you fail the course it's a lot of money just wasted. So it's up to the person who's doing the course to put in as much work as you can. And learn as much as you can. (Peter, Irish, Cabinet Making, public college)

My responsibility is learning and studying. [...] because we have to pay lots of money for my learning. I have to study, do my best. (Cece, Korean, Commercial Cookery, public college)

In line with the notion of deliberate self-positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999), the consistent use of first pronoun "I" and "We" in articulating their responsibility on account of the education expenses suggests that these student participants deliberately, rather than are forced to, consider financial pressure as a judging instance for their responsibility for academic learning. All of them self-position their study as a venture and see themselves or their parents as investors in the costly business of transnational education. Yet

how this judging stance is manifested in their approach to defining their responsibility is dissimilar.

Clara, Stephan and Peter, for instance, take on avoidance-oriented responsibility. Their perceived responsibility towards study pertains primarily to finishing their programs as fast as possible to prevent extra costs (*"if I take longer to get my diploma, it will cost more," "if you fail the course it's a lot of money just wasted", "I don't want to waste my money"*), and to minimise the expenses of education (*"I have to save a lot of money"*) as a filial duty towards their parents (*"because of my parents, for my parents"*). The practical approach to study responsibility is partly explained through Stephan's positioning, which expounds the distinctively surpassing financial demands on international students and their families when they opt for international education. The pressing financial constraint may have a shaping influence on international students' perceived responsibility in that it gears them to feeling responsible for speeding up the completion of their academic programs, which in turn may make them more focused and efficient in their study. Their compulsion to finish "as fast as possible" also points to the role of the institution in both devising curriculum pathways conducive to such ambitions of able students, and fostering quality assurance of learning experiences and outcomes, being mindful of the students' judging instance, as indicated in Clara's and Stephan's interview excerpts, that seemingly focuses more on *not losing (money-wise)*, rather than *gaining (academically)*.

At the same time, it is also important that education providers cater for the needs and expectations of international students such as Peter and Cece, whose self-positioning of "gaining" and maximising returns on investments is prominent in their perceived responsibility for academic learning: *"to put in as much work as you can. And learn as much as you can"* and *"I have to study, do my best."* Their approach-oriented (or outcome-oriented) responsibility, in Lauermann and Karabenick's (2011) term, lends support to institutional investments in the promotion and provision of manifold and multifaceted educational and developmental experiences throughout the academic program duration, taking into account the distinct characteristics and conditions of both domestic and international student cohorts. In fact, the co-existing aspirations to ensure the timely completion of their course and to maximise their gains from education investment is not exclusive to international students. Yet the intensity and forms of pressure could differ

between international and domestic students due to the comparably limited time span of international students' experience in the host country and apparently their exorbitant expenses for these experiences.

Intrinsic values

A profound sense of responsibility for academic learning is observed among the student participants whose judging instance is drawn on their *intrinsic values* such as their self-esteem and identity, their perceived work ethic, and their intrinsic interest for learning and forming their future self.

only me is international ... Vietnamese student in class. If I don't want to study and don't do anything ... other local people will think about Vietnamese like Vietnamese people is lazy and Vietnamese people don't want to study or something like that. *So like I want to study a lot and I want to study hard to make them feel like be not really. We international student, we can study it. We can study your language. We can understand everything.* (Lan, Vietnamese, Resort Management, public college)

I suppose ... my main responsibility is to go to college because that's the main. If people sign up to do and you have to do it. *So it's my own responsibility, I mean, I'm here, I'm paying my fees, I want to go. I want to get my certificate, my diploma at the end but there is no point paying fees if you don't go and you don't learn.* Otherwise then you shouldn't be in college. *And that has always been my work ethic anyways. I mean when I went to college it was always work hard and get good degree, you know, I think as a student that's your responsibility ... put in the hard time for it and get something out of it in the end.* (Irene, Irish, Business, private college)

I've never missed a class. I just don't. Because I came here to study so why should I miss out on school? It just doesn't make sense. Yeah, *I'm interested in it so I don't want to lose days ... basically, my responsibilities are just school and work. [...] it's tempting to become a chef. Yeah I'm planning to ... I'm going to invest all my time and effort and money into this to study so I would like to get back something from it.* (Sergei, Hungarian, Cooking, private college)

It is recognised from Lan's, Irene's and Sergei's self-positioning that their personal responsibility for academic learning is integrated with their internal values (identity, work ethic or interest), which largely diverges from the previous interviewees. The main difference between Lan and the other two students from the above excerpts is that her internal value (identity, self-esteem) is partly influenced by an external factor (the host country's other-positioning); meanwhile, for Irene and Sergei, their sense of responsibility and value-embedded judging instance appear to be completely self-regulated.

According to positioning theory, *other positioning* denotes the positioning of someone else. From Lan's judging instance, her behaviours and academic performance as a Vietnamese international student are subject to other-positioning by the host society members, which is translated into the host country's view of both her individual identity and the collective identity of her home country. The intertwinement between personal and country's identity, personal study responsibility and responsibility to represent her nation of origin manifests the concept of *national attachment* (DeLamater et al., 1969; Rothi et al., 2005; Terhune, 1964) that denotes the perceived sense of connectedness with a particular sphere, in this context, the student's country of origin. Lan's positioning also indicates her aspiration to attain esteem from the host society and to be acknowledged for her ability, which echoes Terhune's (1964) observation of the typical tendency among students from a less developed country living in a more developed country to gain recognition from the host society. The combination of host country's other-positioning, the student's perceived role to represent home country, and national attachment in determining and fostering personal responsibility for academic learning suggests a possibly unique aspect of responsibility among international students.

For Irene and Sergei, their internally driven responsibility for academic learning appears to be completely detached from external factors. Both of them position themselves as an active agent in their education and adopt their internal values as judging instances for their responsibility. Irene's self-positioning offers an instance of ethics-based judging instance, in which being responsible for one's education as a hardcore is believed as part of students' ethics. Meanwhile, positioning himself as a self-forming agent through education and working experience, Sergei demonstrates a

connection between intrinsic motivation and responsibility (*I'm interested in it so I don't want to lose days*), which apparently exerts a significant influence on his learning behaviour (*never miss a class*) and a positive future-oriented attitude towards learning (*it's tempting to become a chef ... I'm going to invest all my time and effort and money into this to study so I would like to get back something from it*).

Both interview excerpts with Irene and Sergei provide further instances of outcome-oriented responsibility and personal responsibility as a developmental aspect of self-formation. Sergei's and Irene's elucidation of their diligent commitment to studying and optimising gains from education on the basis of their intrinsic values and goals supports previous conclusions about the propitious influence of internally-driven sense of responsibility on the person's engagement (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963; Ryan & Deci, 2000, cited in Helker and Wosnitza, 2014, p.3). This finding reinforces the importance of creating a transnational education experience which is conducive to cultivating this sophisticated form of international students' responsibility towards their study, through fostering their esteem, work ethic and intrinsic interest in their education experiences.

Responsibility towards the self

As more "vulnerable" individuals in the context of cross-border education, responsibility in mobility also means international students' being responsible for themselves. In the interview excerpts below, the student participants provide different accounts of their vulnerability and their perceived responsibility related to this.

We don't live with our parents [...] because we're international students ... I think *should keep ourselves safely first and don't go in some dangerous area. And then behave ourselves.* (Eunyoung, Korean, Cooking, private college)

Truc: Why do you think *have good friend circle would be one of your responsibilities as an international student?*

Ken: Because if you want survive you just *living yourself alone*, especially like me because I don't know anybody here. Like I've got no relatives around here. So it's all my friends like I've had so many friends within

two or three years. [...] If something goes wrong you can call someone or if you want to go out or hang out call them up or if you need assistance or information. (Ken, Indian, IT, public institute)

Well, the first thing as an international student, *I have to be responsible for myself*. [...] *Because this country is not taking care of international students so I have to care for myself first ...* We are not educated slaves but what I have realised is the system is treating those international students like that. (Alina, Indian, Community Welfare, public college)

The vulnerable status of international students, according to the interviewees' positioning, is attributed to their relative state of "solitude" in a foreign country, where familiar sources of protection from their families are temporarily deprived (as for Eunyong and Ken), or the host country is perceived to fail to provide a respectful and supportive environment to international students (as for Alina). Based on this judging instance of their status, Eunyong and Ken deliberately self-position their personal responsibility to save themselves from external threats by avoiding unsafe situations and by constructing a new network of support. Meanwhile, Alina's responsibility for her well-being emerges from her forced-self positioning (*I have to care for myself first*) in the correlation with her other-positioning of the host country's mistreatment. The research findings provide insights into how these international students see themselves as outsiders who are prone to isolation, vulnerability and ill-treatment in the society. This condition apparently helps initiate and develop their stronger sense of responsibility for taking care of their own safety and well-being, yet it also illuminates the challenges that international students have to face as part of the transnational mobility engagement.

Conclusion

Personal responsibility in mobility encompasses international students' externally imposed obligation and internally self-determined *responsibility to their study*, as well as their perceived *responsibility to protect the self*. In light of positioning theory, the judging instance for their perceived responsibility for academic learning involves a range of issues, including externally imposed legal requirements, financial pressures from educational investment, their self-esteem and identity, perceived work ethic, as well as intrinsic interest for

academic and professional pursuits. With respect to personal responsibility for their well-being, the student participants feel responsible for protecting themselves and constructing a new network of support given their relative state of “solitude” in a foreign country. These multiple judging instances of personal responsibility provide nuanced understandings of the complex and diverse motivations underpinning international students’ behaviours and beliefs in the process of transnational education mobility.

The research findings of international students’ personal responsibility also offer further insights into how they perceive of their role in the realm of transnational education and its influence on their sense of responsibility. A group of students tends to view themselves as outsiders from the host society, being passively subject to legal scrutinisation of the host government. Their sense of responsibility, as a consequence, is shown to be restricted by externally imposed responsibility and avoidance-oriented responsibility. International students perceiving themselves or their family as education investors, and their study as a venture, could be apt for avoidance-oriented responsibility, which focuses on “not losing,” and “outcome-oriented responsibility,” which optimises returns on investment in overseas study. Other students, who regard themselves as self-forming agents of the transnational education process are more inclined towards an internally driven, value-embedded sense of responsibility and future (outcome)-oriented responsibility. For this last group, previous research has indicated a positive correlation between this type of responsibility and engagement, which is also evident in the interviews with these students.

Given this multifaceted notion of personal responsibility in mobility and its influences on international students’ beliefs and behaviours, it is important that the host education providers and society draw on the students’ self-positioning to promote the intended positive impacts of responsibility. While it is recognised that international students’ sense of responsibility could be predictably influenced by external factors like visa requirements, financial pressures or the vulnerable conditions, the cultivation of internally driven responsibility via developing intrinsic and genuine learning motivation through meaningful, engaging and goal-oriented educational experiences is critical. It is fundamental to tap into the students’ internal values such as self-esteem, ethics, intrinsic interest and future goals to build up their sustainable and vigorous sense of personal responsibility. It is also critical to pay attention to not only *nurture their sense of responsibility* but also provide them

with the condition to *enact their responsibility* through specific goal-oriented tasks in the classroom as well as in the broader institutional community. In this regard, international students are positioned as not only mere learners but importantly as responsible co-constructors of the learning environment and engaged contributors to the institutional community.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the participants for their valuable insights and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments. We acknowledge the funding from the Australian Research Council for this research.

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