Peer Reviewed Article

International Students' Experience of Studying and Working at a Northeastern Public University in the US

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Abstract

This study explores international students' experiences with studying and working at a North Eastern public university. Through phenomenological research approach that utilized face-to-face interview and photo-elicitation techniques, the personal experiences of twenty international students were captured. The findings of this study indicated that these students benefited from the responsibilities that resulted from their dual role as both students and employees in many ways. However, they also suffered from emotional and physical stress which resulted in tiredness, lack of sleep, role conflict, homesickness and frustration. Interestingly, these students effectively employed different coping mechanisms including finding social support, and participating in leisure and non-leisure activities to off-set the negative effects of studying and working concurrently.

Keywords: international students, coping strategies, effects of studying and working, culture shock, studying and working, student employees, dual roles

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There has been increased involvement of college students in part-time jobs in recent years to supplement their families' income (Derous & Ryan, 2008; Ashwill, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). The Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en Sécurité du Travail (2009), Carney, McNeish & McColl(2005), and Higher Education Research Institute (2003) also point out that the cost of higher education is continually increasing, and that an increasing number of college students are choosing to work during their school years to meet educational expenses.

Studies indicate that the well-being and academic achievement of college students can be affected by part-time job involvement and working pattern (the Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en Sécurité du Travail, 2012; Lederman, 2009). The Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en Sécurité du Travail (2012) and Lederman (2009) mention that depending on the nature of the job and the number of working hours that a student engages in, his health status can be affected either positively or negatively. According to Rochford, Connolly and Drennan (2009) and Salamonson and Andrew (2006), students engage in jobs that demand more hours and increased role responsibilities. Studies on students' part-time work in Scotland indicate that the student employees have suffered health and stress problems (Carney et al., 2005). On the other hand, some students report campus work as a valuable source of learning, personal development and

experience. According to Derous and Ryan (2008), student part-time employment in general has a positive effect on their personal development in terms of self-reported and emotional growth. Positive effects which include higher grade point average, early completion of degree, and student's well-being are attributed to student engagement in campus job (Derous & Ryan, 2008; Carney et al., 2005).

While the existing studies that examines the effects of part-time employment focus on traditional students in their home countries in Europe and America, this area has not been explored in the context of international students in foreign countries. Over a half million international students from more than 200 countries attend United States universities annually and many of these students are engaged in part-time work (Derous & Ryan, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). The focus of this research study is to understand the experiences of international students who assume a dual role of being a student and an employee concurrently.

Literature Review

College years are stressful for many students due to many factors including separation from family, academic work demand, financial concern and part-time job engagement (Lederman, 2009; Derous & Ryan, 2008; Sorti, 2007; Carney, McNeish & McColl, 2005). In particular, many college and university students undertake campus employment during their school years. Students' engagement in employment poses a conflict between academic work and job (Misra & McKean, 2000). Previous research on students' campus employment shows contradicting results regarding the effects of employment on their well-being and health status. Keinan and Tal (2005), Nes, Segerstorm and Sephton (2005), and Misra and McKean (2000) indicated that a low level of stress can be positive for some people but it can also be negatively associated with students' self-concepts. Thus, it is not whether students work during the school year that matters but rather the effects of working depends a great deal on the individual student differences. These authors argued that a certain stress level is healthy (eustress) for the majority of individuals and this tends to promote a board range of the positive action and experience for the individuals. On the other hand, stress becomes detrimental to health only when it is excessive. Thus, an individual needs a certain level of stress for motivation, creativity and to face challenges. However, long and continual unresolved stress can lead to physical and mental exhaustion (Carney et al., 2005; Nes et al., 2005).

Several factors are noted to influence the way we perceive, interpret, and manage stressful events (Rosenbaum, White & Gervino, 2012; Frazier, Steward, & Mortensen, 2004; Jones & Bright, 2001). Workers with high perceived control see high-demand jobs as challenges to overcome rather than threats. Thus, control influences a person's choice of coping strategies. People with perceived control tend to employ constructive coping mechanism while those who perceive a lack of control seek destructive coping mechanism (Rosenbaum et al, 2012; Frazier et al, 2004; Jones & Bright, 2001). The individuals who perceive they have high control are likely to interpret the environment as stressful with lower negative emotional responses, and less strain exhibition (Rosenbaum et al, 2012; Jones & Bright, 2001). However certain events, perceived job stressors, when they are interpreted as threats can cause negative emotional reactions, mostly in the form of anger or anxiety (Rosenbaum et al, 2012; Frazier et al, 2004; Jones & Bright, 2001). The resultant negative emotion then leads to strain which are both in behavioral and in physical conditions associated with the stress.

For an international student, the issue of cultural adjustment and adaptation is a pressing concern (Poelzl, 2012). The idea of being accepted culturally and socially in his or her new

community puts the student under the pressure of his host school and immediate community to adjust to the new culture (Poelzl, 2012; Sorti, 2007). For a sojourner to successfully live and function well in his host country he is expected to forgo his acquired culture to learn the new one of his host country. One's failure or inability to quickly learn the culture of his host country can result in various misfortunes and experiences (Poelzl, 2012; Sorti, 2007).

Research Design

Research Approach

This study was conducted using qualitative research design. A qualitative research assumes that some fundamental aspects of human social experiences are missed when data are reduced to numbers and therefore produces findings that are not arrived at by means of statistical procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012; Maxwell, 2012; Reed, 2007).

The international students' experiences with studying and working are a complex phenomenon. The full complexity of the experience of the study population is not easily captured and understood through using a quantitative approach. Within the phenomenological research frame of this study, the researcher sought empathetic understanding (verstehen) to explore international student experiences of studying and working. Verstehen *is* construed as a methodical, systematic, and rigorous form of sociological analysis that involves empathic, non-empirical or participatory examination of a social phenomenon (Calhoun et al, 2012; Patton, 2002). A phenomenological study is an approach that tends to capture and describe the lived experience of several individuals about a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). This approach allows the researcher to penetrate and capture the meaning, essence and structure of the experience of people (Patton, 2002).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

According to (Patton, 2002), qualitative researchers often select those participants who possess specific attributes they want to investigate. Instead of estimating the population parameters, qualitative researchers tend to employ qualitative strategy. Purposeful sampling is used to select the subjects who are "information rich" for the study (Reed, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Specifically, criterion sampling was used to select the subjects for the study. Criterion sampling ensures that selected respondent meets certain criteria to be a good source of information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012; Maxwell, 2012; Reed, 2007). The criteria used to select the study participants include one being a full-time international student and also engaged in on-campus employment.

Twenty international students who engaged in both studying and working at a Northeastern public university in the United States were selected for this study. The researcher personally knew few international student employees. Utilizing snowball sampling technique, the researcher first contacted and asked four international student employees to participate in the study. Each of the recruited participants helped the researcher to reach and select the subsequent sample units until the desired sample size was obtained. The individuals who decided to participate in the study were asked to sign a consent form. The research data were collected between the dates of March 25, 2005 and June 15, 2005. Although a snowball sampling technique was used to select the study sample, it was interesting to note that the study participants came from different countries. Within the cultural perspective of the United States, the study population would be considered minorities, as they are international students with F-1 visas and they also come from developing countries including Malaysia, China, India, South Korea, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Kenya and Jordan. The study participants consist of nine female and eleven male students. The participants aged within the range

of 21 to 45 years. The researcher first established a rapport by engaging each of the research participants in casual talk for few minutes to allow him or her feel more comfortable about participation in the study. Building a rapport between an interviewer and interviewee can increase the respondents' willingness to participate in the study (Patton, 2002). After the rapport was built, the researcher explained the procedures of the interview and photo-elicitation to the research participants.

Data Collection and Interview Approach

The researcher employed face-to-face in-depth interview and photo-elicitation techniques. Two types of data, narrative and visual, were used to assess the same phenomenon, the international students' experiences of studying and working. While interviews provided verbatim transcripts of participants' experiences, photos accounted for detailed pictures of specific events. Both data collection instruments and sources of data were triangulated. Maxwell (2012) and Denzin and Lincoln (2012) underscores the importance of triangulation. Triangulation increases the quality and credibility of qualitative data. Triangulation helps to reduce the risk of systematic bias to specific method, and increases general explanation from what one is studying.

Specifically, the researcher used semi-structured interview approach to obtain information from the respondents. A standard semi-structured interview is a data collection method which allows a set of fully worded questions to be asked to each respondent during an interview (Patton, 2000). It ensures that relevant questions are determined in advance and the study could be replicated by other researchers. It also allows individual respondents to answer the same questions in the same order, and this increases the chance of comparing responses (Patton, 2002). This type of interview also allows for flexibility during the interview for further probing if the need arises. The researcher audio taped this interview but names and other identifying information were held in strict confidence.

Photo-Elicitation

Face-to-face interview can be challenging when there is a potential for a communication gap between the researcher and the respondents such as when they come from different cultures (Harper, 2002). The use of photo-elicitation helped to overcome this difficulty associated with in-depth interviewing. Photo-elicitation involves the process of eliciting information from respondents as they view their private photos and talk about them during photo-feedback or photo-essay (Harper, 2002). Visual records and data are considered as "truth revealing mechanisms" in image-based research (Sampson-Cordle, 2001). Harper (2002) and Sampson-Cordle (2001) noted that private photographs evoke memories and self-expressions of lived experience that could not be recalled easily in interviews. Photographs used in photo-elicitation usually depict people, scenes and symbols, and they tend to facilitate memory and promote triangulation of data collection and analysis, especially when used with in-depth interviewing.

The researcher gave a disposable camera to each of the study participants. Each participant was asked to take about 10 pictures of studying and work related events that were considered very significant to him/her. The photo-elicitation took place at the same session after the interview was conducted. During the photo-elicitation, each participant was asked to speak about his/her feelings and perceived experiences as depicted in the photos. The researcher audio taped the participants' information during the photo-essay session.

Data Analysis and Credibility of the Study

Data analysis involved transcription, data coding, and development and discovery of patterns. The researcher first read through the transcripts several times. The researcher took a closer examination at the frequent and outstanding words, phrases and sentences that emerged from the transcripts. The researcher identified and coded recurring words, phrases and sentences. The qualitative analysis led to the emergence of many themes. The researcher reduced overarching themes for the initial codes by collapsing similar categories into five main factors, namely reasons for working, nature of student's part-time work, consequences of working, culture shock, and coping strategies.

Credibility is the ability of a research work to yield quality or trustworthy explanations or conclusions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012; Maxwell, 2012). Credibility (validity) can be affected by validity threats in any research study, and care should be taken to deal with any possible validity threat. In this study, the researcher considered the use of interviews as well as coding of interview transcripts to be the most serious validity threats (alternative explanations) that can negatively influence the credibility of findings of this study. Member check and triangulation were employed to deal with subjectivity that might arise during data collection and analysis (Maxwell, 2012). The researcher triangulated the data sources, narrative and visual data, as well as the methods of data collection, including interviews and photo-elicitation. Triangulation is a major factor that promotes conformability and therefore objectivity (Maxwell, 2012). Member check is the situation where the researcher asks participants for their feedbacks on the findings. The research findings were shared with the participants and their advisors through e-mail in March 2006. They confirmed that the findings represented a true picture of international students' experiences with studying and working at the institution. The research findings were also shared with the Vice President of the Office of International Education in April 2013 to confirm its relevance. She confirmed that the 2006 findings related to international students from developing countries engaged in dual roles of studying and working continue to be relevant today as there have been no significant changes in the U.S. immigration laws.

Findings

A number of factors emerged from the qualitative analysis: Reasons for working, nature of student's part-time work, consequences of working, culture shock, and coping strategies. These factors provided the basis for understanding the respondents' perceived and constructed systems. The study participants used quotes, phrases, sentences and sometimes photos to explain their experiences with effects of working, culture shock, and coping strategies.

Reasons for Working

The study participants at this institution engage in part-time jobs for many reasons. All of the participants talked about their desire and ambition to come to the United States to obtain a college degree. Three main reasons were given for this important decision: 1) perception of the students that the education in the United States is high in quality compare to the rest of the countries, 2) inadequacy or lack of educational facilities in the students' home countries, and 3) identification with the American dream. Students believe that they will be able to achieve high social and economic status when they have a degree from an American school. To them this means easy access to a good job with good pay. The international students who participated in this study are self-sponsoring students. They are not qualified to access loans in the USA. These students pay higher tuition fees than some American students who pay in-state tuition. In order to meet their

educational and daily living expenses these students engage in part-time work to generate money to supplement the financial resources they receive from their families (Misra & Mckean, 2000).

Nature of Student's Part-time Work

The kind of work students do may influence the development of their future careers. According to Applegate and Daly (2005), the nature of student's part-time work is very important because different jobs offer different qualities of experiences to students. Employment that enhances students' professional skills is more rewarding to student workers than those that do not improve their professional skills. The majority of study participants said that they had previously held professional positions as teachers, research workers and administrators in their home countries before they came to the US. By their student visa status, F-1, they are not qualified to accept on-campus federal jobs. Unfortunately, majority of the participants engage in physically demanding work in the university dining facility. The nature of their work usually involves cooking, cleaning, and lifting of heavy items. Study participants who engaged in jobs such as graduate assistantship reported that their responsibilities enhance their professional skills. Although many of the participants work in the school dining facilities, three students have the opportunity to work as graduate assistants and computer laboratory attendants. The graduate assistants pointed out that they have gained work experience for carrying out their assigned duties. One of the graduate assistants who is from India noted,

> *"I work as graduate assistant and the work relates to my major, Physics. I get experience by grading assignments, teaching physics and helping the undergraduates with their homework. Generally my work as graduate assistant helps my study."*

One student reports,

> *"Right now I am working at a computer laboratory. I normally work 20 hours a week. I'm a computer attendant. If any student has a problem using the computer, I help to solve that problem. Working in the computer laboratory has helped me to gain professional experience. This work is less stressful. The situation allows me to work my own school assignments."*

A female student also notes,

> *"Now I am a graduate assistant in my department's library. The responsibility in library involves helping students if they have problems using the library. So, I will say, my work reinforces my professional experience."*

As the quotes above indicate, part-time work responsibilities that relate to academic work were reported to reinforce student employees' professional experiences. However, only few of the student employees had their job responsibilities related to their academic works. Majority of the study participants engaged in blue-collar jobs.

Consequences of Working

The effects of working while studying included both positive and negative impacts. Students benefit from working by having access to extra cash, good nutrition, development of interpersonal and communication skills, making more friends, and cultural adjustment. On the other hand, the

students negatively experienced the effects of physical and emotional stress due to having demanding physical responsibilities, workplace relation issues and conflicts caused by dual role.

All the participants benefited from working by having access to cash, good nutrition, development of interpersonal and communication skills, making more friends, and cultural adjustment. Majority of the students report that their interpersonal and communication skills with Americans developed as they interact with other students. The students are happy to learn how to speak the American accent with customers at the work places. One female (Kenya) student said,

> *"There was a time I was serving in the line and I came to get different accents of the American people and students from European countries. I meet so many friends. It was really a good experience."*

A male undergraduate student from Malaysia described his experience of interacting with others by saying,

> *"Besides workaing in the dining hall to make money, I also have the opportunity to meet a lot of nice people and I learn a lot from them. Sometimes, I see many people coming in and out to buy things from you to eat. I meet all sorts of people in the US, and it is a good experience for me as an international student."*

Although these students are happy for the benefits that they gain from working, they also report negative impacts of working on their daily lives. The students' feelings of stress could be attributed to their dual roles (studying and working) conflict and challenging workplace environment. Some of the students feel that they perform physically demanding jobs and that they were not adequately rewarded for the jobs they do. A typical statement was made by one of male students from Africa saying,

> *"With regard to the dining services (name of the company withheld), I think we probably put in too many hours to get the money I want. It is a hard job. It is physically demanding but with minimum wage. We are compelled to work many hours."*

One of two male students who quit their first jobs at the dining facilities to become computer attendants shared his experiences as follow,

> *"Last semester in spring I changed my job at dining facility to work at a laboratory. The dining facility involves catering serving food and cleaning dishes. They will expect you to work seven hours cleaning dishes. It is more stressful and is much more physical work. First semester I used to work in the dining hall. In the dining facility they have different food stations, about five. The manager usually switches me from one station to another. It is more stressful to work there so I quit."*

Some of the study participants note unsafe conditions at their work environment. They complained about their exposure to undesirable temperatures and odor. A female student from China who takes care of the trash at the work place comments,

> *"Dining hall cleaning is a very tough work. I have to take trash, which is very heavy, and it has a terrible smell. I need to tolerate this. I am very tired, and sometimes I feel heat and ache at the muscle of my legs. I have nobody to talk to. I need to work hard. I think the manager could not find anybody to do this work. This is not a good job especially for girls."*

A male student mentions that cooking on the grill dehydrates him due to high temperatures of the grill. He mentioned working on the grill is very tiresome because of the high temperature. He says: *"It dehydrates my body. I feel more tired when I work on the grill than other places."*

Some of the participants complain about what they perceived as discrimination against them by other co-workers who are American students. Although, their experience with Americans may not be direct discrimination, they reported what they perceived as discrimination against them. They said there were instances of backbiting and discrimination against them as foreigners. A male student from Africa talked about an unpleasant incident that he had with a female student at the workplace saying,

> *"I used to work hard, even the supervisors recognized that. There are many injustices. The way they (American students' employees) talk to you. I know that I work hard but they will not respect you. I was a teacher. I was a middle class person. Here I am in the midst of young children who do not respect. Even Americans, the way they talk to you, it seems like you are nothing. One female student talked to me rudely over an issue of using a broom. They would not like you to talk to them like that."*

Many students complained about experiencing stress due to time constraint as they have to manage their school work and the job responsibilities A female student from Kenya who shared her conflicts of working while studying says,

> *"You could imagine the past semester. I often woke up every day at 7:00am or 6:00am or even earlier to work on my school assignments. By 8:00am, I was in class. After that I have only couple hours to myself to eat and to do class assignment. I then went to work. After work I would become tired and could not work on my school assignments. What kind of stress is it? I get frustrated. I cannot explain the experience I am going through."*

Culture Shock

The early years for international students can be stressful in their host country. The challenge of leaving one's own culture to learn and adjust to new norms and values can sometimes be exciting and rewarding to these students. Many of the study participants in this study not only reported experiencing challenges from their dual role of studying and working but also encountered stress in their new environment. Some of them recalled feelings of homesickness during their early period in the United States. One male student from Malaysia reported feeling homesick due to changes in the weather. He noted: "*Within one week it was snowing, raining, and sunshine.*"

Another female student also commented,

> "*Everything in the US is culture shock. I feel lonely. I see unfamiliar food, unfamiliar people and things. These things make me feel homesick. I see things I am not used to. I cannot help and this makes me feel homesick.*"

Although culture shock is a general challenge to many international students during their early period in the United States, these student employees had to adjust their new environment, particularly both in the classroom and workplace. They had to work with people of different cultures and adjust to changing weather patterns.

Coping Strategies

Given the students experience various emotional and physical symptoms of stress on daily basis, it might be expected that these students could suffer severe health problems. All the students use leisure and non-leisure activities to break away stressful feelings. All the study participants reported sometimes going for shopping, cooking, swimming, playing games or to engage in sporting activities. More than half of the study participants reported that they get social support from their loved ones by being in contact with them. All of them reported getting in contact with their friends and classmates in other parts of the United States. Their social interactions take many forms. One male student from Africa noted,

"When I am experiencing stress, I try to speak to my friends. We usually come together to discuss our problems. Sometimes your friend will tell you things will get better. This serves as a sort of encouragement to us"

A student from Malaysia shared his experience saying,

"Usually when I have a stress, I just sit down and relax. I don't think about the stress. Sometimes I talk to my friends and roommates. I call my family. I am a family oriented person. I called my parents about 2 to 3 times a week. At times, I talk to them about the problem and challenges I am facing. And after I talk to them I feel a little bit better. And you know, your parents and family are behind supporting you. So, it is a good thing.
Individual student sometimes engages in activities without their friends."

One of the students says she stays by herself to play game to release tension. She recalled,
"Sometimes I do not want to go to work when people hurt me. I stay by myself to listen to music. I do turn on the computer and play computer game and watch movies."

Students sometimes use leisure activities to break away stressful feelings resulting from their dual roles of studying and working. A female student from China took a photo (Figure 1) of one of her leisure activities with her friends on the field. They were having fun near a stream as they engage in different outdoor activities to relieve their stress feelings of the day.

Figure 1 – Picture of a leisure activity of a participant

Discussion

Previous studies on college students have shown that the college years are stressful due to many life challenges that may include missing their loved ones, academic pressure, financial worry and involvement in part-time jobs (Rochford et al, 2009; Schroeder, 2004). Although this prediction is true for traditional students, international students find themselves in an even harsher situation. However, the students in this study benefited both positively and negatively from working and studying.

Consequences of Working while Studying

Many international students in the U.S. engage in part-time jobs to supplement income from their families (Derous & Ryan, 2008). Studies indicate that the well-being and academic achievement of college students can be affected by their part-time job involvement (Rochford et al, 2009; Salamonson & Andrew, 2006; Schroeder, 2004). The study participants' working experiences reveal positive influences on their health and well-being. Some of the benefits of working include development of students' interpersonal relation and communication skills and these could serve as assets for their future job prospects. Students primarily engaged in campus jobs to earn money. Majority of the students mentioned that they work to earn money to purchase groceries. Increased access to food means good health and nutrition. The money students make from their jobs allows them to pay their utility bills. This helps to relieve them from worries associated with debts settlement.

Interestingly, some of the students report that their interpersonal and communication skills with Americans developed as they interact with other students. As students serve in the serving lines they try to speak the American slang while talking to student customers who come to eat in the dining hall. The students also had the opportunity to socialize and make friends with the other students they serve. This is a good experience for international students since this helps them to blend and orient themselves to their new culture and environment. The part-time job also enhances the work experience of few of the student employees. The graduate assistants point out that their work is mostly related to their academic work and this reinforces their professional experience.

On the other hand, all of the research participants reported experiencing various forms of stress. The students negatively experienced physical and emotional characteristics of stress in the form of tiredness, lack of sleep, lack of appetite, shouting, headaches, homesickness, anger, distress and frustration. The students are engaged in campus employment mainly because of economic problems. They earn money from these jobs to supplement funding that they receive from home. Many of the study participants reported performing manual work which includes stirring, lifting and cooking. Although these students engaged in high demanding jobs, they were paid minimum wage. As noted by Salamonson and Andrew (2006) and Carney et al (2005) laborious work can create negative experience for part time student workers. The demand for high profit by business organizations has led to high work demand from workers. Such practice is found to create feeling of unhappiness for these student workers. Calhoun et al (2012) argues that the employer makes profit as a result of exploitation of workers. They point out that employers treat workers as mechanistic beings by demanding more labor inputs for less pay in order make more money (Calhoun et al, 2012).

The organizational climate within which an individual works can build one's self-esteem and confidence (Mondy, 2010; Pynes, 2004)**.** Working in an environment where individuals' needs

and feelings are not met can contribute to job dissatisfaction. Workplace safety is an important factor that can affect employees' health (Mondy, 2010; Pynes, 2004). Some of the students reported working in areas of high temperatures and objectionable odors which are some of the workplace safety issues that demand careful attention. Some of the study participants mention instances where other students (America's students) talk to them rudely and even reporting them to their bosses for things they had not committed. This situation sometimes produces anger and hatred among employees.

Culture Shock

Studying abroad means a big change in the life of these students since they are confronted with new experiences and perspectives in their new and unfamiliar country of residence, the United States. This is in line with Poelzl (2012) and Sorti's (2007) model of cultural adjustment, that foreigner's arrival in a new setting is normally associated with a rising tide of emotions. More than half of the students report experiences of culture shock. Some of the students relate their homesickness and depression to unfamiliar people and things around them.

While international students are expected to adjust to new cultures during their early period in the United States, these student employees had to fine-tune to new ways of doing things both in the classroom and their workplace. Although some of these student employees complained of discrimination at their workplaces, their negative workplace experiences could also be attributed to adjustment challenges in their new working environments.

Coping Strategies

Given the students experiencing various emotional and physical symptoms of stress on daily basis, it might be expected that these students could suffer severe health problems. Surprisingly, these students report overall feelings of well-being. This could be attributed to the students having high perceived control and using various coping strategies to offset the negative effects of their feelings of stress resulting from their dual role experiences. According to Rosenbaum et al (2012), Frazier et al (2004) and Jones and Bright (2001), perceived control is found to buffer the effects of job stressors, such that high demanding jobs lead to adverse reaction only among employees who have low perceived control. The students seem to have a high level of perceived control that tends to influence their choice of positive coping strategies to help them deal with their feelings of stress. The students' behavioral actions seem they effectively utilized perceived control mechanism (Rosenbaum et al, 2012; Frazier et al, 2004; Jones & Bright, 2001). They choose positive coping strategies which include social support, leisure activities and non-leisure activities to cushion the feelings of stress symptoms. Although they experience various symptoms of stress, they end up feeling healthy and well.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study represent the voices of the study participants' experiences of studying and working at a Northeastern public university. Although the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population of international students, the findings can be transferred to international students, particularly those from developing nations, sharing related experiences. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that though these students are able to cope with their dual role of studying and working, they do experience challenges on regular basis. While international students will pursue employment to enable them to achieve their lifelong goal of an American education, this study suggests many would not work if they had a choice, or not in the types of

campus jobs available to those with F-1 visas, considering the negative symptoms of stress experienced by these students. If current trends continue, fewer international students may be coming to the US in the future. Data on international student enrollment in higher education in the United States have shown a steady decline in total enrollment from 3.8 percent in 2001 to 3.5 percent in 2011 (Open Doors Data, 2013).

One major concern voiced by the students relates to the poor rewards they receive at their workplaces. They feel that they been cheated by the companies they work for. Some of them suggest that the university authorities should play a role to compel the companies, especially the dining facilities, to increase the minimum wage. If the students are properly remunerated, they are likely not going to work for many hours. This will go a long way to reduce their stress level. It is true that these students do not belong to any labor union and they are therefore not been protected from their employers' exploitation. Although working on campus exposes the student to outside world more and helps deal with some of the culture shock issues, culture shock which has been found to contribute to students' stress. The researcher suggests that the university officials should develop programs that will help these students adjust in their new environment. Although the Office of International Education provides orientation training to these students, such a training program is inadequate to help these students to cope with culture shock. By sharing the voices of these students with academia and social issue advocates, it is hoped that an increased understanding of the causes and consequences of the students' dual role of studying and working will stimulate the development of appropriate intervention policies and programs.

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