

Educational experiences of transnational and onshore students: The differences in academic integration, social integration, and institution commitment

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One of the most significant emerging trends in higher education is the growth of transnational education (Levatino, 2017). Transnational education is characterised as education offered to students based in a different country to where the awarding institution is located; whereby the university degree offered is partly or entirely taught offshore (Heffernan, Morrison, Basu, & Sweeney, 2010; Tsamitis, 2009). In particular, there has been a growth in Australian higher education providers in Asia. However, there is very little known about the educational experiences of these students, and how they compare to onshore students. Previous research has identified student perceptions of integration with their university, and institutional commitment as key antecedents of student satisfaction and intentions to persist. This study aimed to identify differences in social and academic integration, institutional and goal commitment in transnational and onshore students. Students (199 onshore students, 313 TNE students) enrolled at a Western Australian university completed an online survey. Obtained results will be discussed in relation to the key educational factors, as well as cultural and demographic factors that may account for the obtained differences between groups.

Understanding how transnational students experience Australian education is critical information for informing universities to better attract and retain these students. The results of this research also have practical implications for informing universities about how they should best support transnational students, including how best to prioritise support services and build student integration, Facilitating student interactions with faculty, as well supporting the operations of student associations and clubs are proposed as key methods for bolstering integration.