



'Responsibility in mobility': international students and social responsibility

Citation of the final article:

Tran, Ly Thi and Vu, Thao Thi Phuong 2017, 'Responsibility in mobility': international students and social responsibility, *Globalisation, societies and education*, vol. 15, no. 5, pp. 561-575.

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis *Globalisation, Societies and Education* on 20 June 2016, available at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14767724.2016.1195729>

©2016, Informa UK

Downloaded from DRO:

<http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30084816>

‘Responsibility in Mobility’: International Students and Social Responsibility

Abstract

Enhancing the educational experience and social connectedness for international students is the responsibility of different involved parties among whom international students themselves and host institutions play a key role. However, the question of how the condition of cross-border mobility has shaped and re-shaped international students’ responsibility towards the home and host country and other social relationships that have been formed via their mobility experiences is often neglected. This paper examines the social nature of international students’ responsibility. It is derived from a research project funded by the Australian Research Council that includes fieldwork and semi-structured interviews with 155 staff and international students from 25 institutions in Australia over four years. Using positioning theory as a conceptual framework, the study shows that it is important to take into account the tangible aspects of transnational mobility in understanding international student responsibility rather than merely locating their responsibility in simple cultural, personal or institutional parameters. The study suggests the important roles of host institutions and community in creating conducive conditions and opportunities for international students to exercise responsibility as social members and intercultural learners. Enhancing student social responsibility and capacity for enacting responsibility is essential for nurturing meaningful transnational citizenship.

Keywords: international students, international education, student mobility

Introduction

Understanding international students’ perception of their responsibility is essential to ensure and enhance the learning and well-being of this cohort. The issue of student responsibility and capacity to exercise responsibility is becoming increasingly important in the context of student mobility as these students have to live and study out of their socio-cultural comfort zone. However, globally, international student responsibility is a notion that is often neglected. The voices of international students in relation to their own responsibility as students and as sojourners in the host country have not yet accounted for in existing scholarship. Research on student responsibility concentrates exclusively on domestic students and is framed predominantly within the school context in relation to classroom discipline, learning and citizenship education (Ericson & Ellett, 1990; Duke & Jones, 2009; Lewis, 2000; Romi, Lewis & Katz, 2009; Whiteley, 2005). In practice, the extent to and the ways in which international students and involved parties including parents, teachers, host universities and host communities are responsible for the education, wellbeing and development of international students are rarely spelled out. How to support and gear students towards building and enacting responsibility in a socially, culturally and ethically productive way is also an important issue that needs further investigation. In this paper, we address the prevailing paucity of

knowledge on the responsibility of international students by drawing on a study of international student experiences funded by the Australian Research Council. Given the lacuna in theory and research, this paper opens up new possibilities of viewing international students with respect to their social responsibility in the context of global student mobility.

This paper extends the scope of recent literature on international students to include aspects of responsibility. It draws on a study that includes semi-structured interviews with 155 international students and staff from 25 vocational education and training (VET) institutes in Australia. VET is one of the two tertiary education sectors in Australia, alongside with higher education (HE). VET programs focus on enabling students to develop the competencies prescribed by the industry and accordingly, the Australian VET sector embraces the competency-based training model. There are private and public VET institutes, which are often referred to as Registered Training Organisations (RTO) and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) respectively in Australia. Australian VET is increasingly popular for international students just behind the HE sector with 169,700 international student enrolments by the end of 2015 (AEI, 2016). Using van Langenhove and Harré's (1999) positioning theory as a conceptual framework to interpret international student responsibility and introducing the concept 'responsibility in mobility', our research shows that engaging in education mobility provides international students with the unique transnational social fields to develop social responsibility towards the home and host countries. This also gives them the condition to perceive and develop responsibility for good citizenship.

In this paper, 'responsibility in mobility' is perceived to transcend the classroom boundary, extending to the home and host communities and other relationships that have been formed via their mobility experiences. Mobility shapes and reshapes students' perception of their own responsibility. The findings of this research show that it is essential to consider the relationship between international student responsibility and the complex conditions of student mobility which shape international students' learning and developmental experience, rather than purely locating their responsibility in simple cultural, personal or institutional parameters. Therefore, responsibility formed and reformed via the process of mobility can be fluid, dynamic and evolving as they involve both a sense of obligation and sense of intrinsic commitment tied to students' engagement in transnational mobility. It is also important to recognise that students' gender, ethnicity and social classes play a role in shaping their responsibility as mobile students. Yet within the scope this paper, we focus mainly on the social responsibility perceived by the students rather than addressing the gender and ethnicity aspects in detail.

This paper begins by addressing the key themes of the policy on international student rights and responsibilities as these two aspects are often simultaneously mentioned and seen as being interrelated in public policy discussions. It will proceed by discussing the scholarly research on international student experience and its implications for international student responsibility. The use of positioning theory as a framework for analysing the interview data as well as the research captured in this paper will then be discussed. The focus of the paper will then be on analysing the nature of international students' social responsibility including responsibility towards the home

and host countries and interpersonal responsibility, which emerges from their transnational mobility.

International Students, Rights and Responsibilities

The issue of student responsibility is often conceptualised in connection with their rights (Ericson & Ellet; 1990; Lewis, 2001; Romi et al., 2009). However, despite growing emphasis on international student rights, the issue of student responsibility in global education is largely overlooked. Increasing attention has been given to international student rights by the host nations in Australia and Europe. Policy text on international students such as “International Student Strategy for Australia: 2010-2014” was explicit in conceding that international students have specific rights. This document also spelled out specific strategies for international students to realise their right with regard to a high-quality education, consumer protection and employment. Within Australia, international students’ rights have been framed in accordance with the ‘consumer protection’ principle regulated by the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) and Immigration laws. Changes to the ESOL Act aim at more effectively protecting the rights of international students as consumers of education services. These include improvement in the regulation of education service providers and enhance the Commonwealth Ombudsman’s role to solve complaints about private providers. The ESOS Act also addresses international student responsibility but mainly in relation to visa and study conditions. The European Association for International Education develops a global charter for international students’ rights, which is often named as the international student mobility charter. The charter specifies a set of standards to protect and enhance the rights of globally mobile students while overlooking student responsibility (The PIE News, 2012). The International Student Mobility Charter was initiated in response to significant concerns about problems arising from the right and welfare vulnerability of the fast growing mobile student population globally in recent years.

Among the plethora of recent reports and studies on international student rights, there has been an absence of attempts to explore the nature of international student responsibility and their capacity for responsibility, which is central to their learning and welfare in cross-border life. This tendency aligns closely with the dominant tradition that sees host universities and teachers as the locus of accountability and responsibility in the education of cross-border students. This perspective has been criticised by seeing students as ‘lacking any interesting powers and capacities that could form a basis for developing a view on student responsibility’ (Ericson & Ellet, 1990, p.4). Also within the neoliberal commercialisation principle that drives the current practice of international education, host institutions have been seen to largely hold accountability for the education of international students who are often positioned as consumers of education services. This practice has drawn attention away from questions about international student responsibility.

International students and responsibility

This section casts a critical glance over the literature on international student experiences. This stream of scholarship does not directly discuss the topic of international student responsibility but has significant implications for understanding international student responsibility. The scholarly literature on international students appears to be dominated by salient themes such as choices of study destination, academic and language learning in host countries, engagement well-being, and identity. The most notable line of empirical research in international education appears to be concerned with international students' academic and cultural experience (Cruickshank, Chen & Warren, 2012; Holmes, 2004; Tran, 2011; 2015; Volet & Jones, 2012;). Prior to the 2000s, this stream of the literature appeared to be predominated by a 'deficit' view of international students. It sees international students' learning in the host institution as being problematic, and the challenges facing them are often attributed to their lack of 'adequate' skills to succeed in the 'Western academia' (Lacina, 2002; Samuelowicz, 1987). Accordingly international students' responsibility in the host institution is framed around the need for them to adapt to and assimilate into the 'Western' 'academia' (Ryan & Viète, 2009) and to adjust to what is required of them (McLean & Ransom, 2005, p.45). International students' learning typically equates with 'assimilation or socialisation' (Volet & Jones, 2012, p.246). In short, this 'deficit' principle locates international students' responsibility within the parameters of 'individual others' within 'our' system'.

The literature which sees international students' learning as acculturation and assimilation has been criticised by a growing number of researchers (Kim, 2012; Ryan & Viète, 2009; Tran, 2011; Tran, 2013; Volet & Renshaw, 1996). Kim (2012, pp. 2-3) for example maintains that this body of literature fails to acknowledge the ways in which "the global academic system and its hierarchy affect the international students." In addition, Ryan (2011, p. 641) calls for the need to take into account the rapidly changing contexts and realities within countries such as China and the "enormous diversity within these systems."

Researchers have challenged the body of literature that views Asian students' learning approaches as stable and fixed across educational contexts (Ryan, 2011; Tran, 2013; Volet & Renshaw, 1996). Volet and Renshaw (1996) for example argue that the images of Southeast Asian learners have been predominantly constructed based on a stereotyped, negative and static view of their learning styles and motivations. Such partial perspectives may fail to consider how international students may possess the capability to adapt their learning in response to the requirements of the new learning context or under the impact of their engagement in mobility. Other authors also contend that Asian international students' learning approaches adopted in Australian institutions seem to be contextually based rather than culturally situated (Volet & Kee, 1993). In other words, their learning styles have been tailored through the way they exercise their agency and responsibility in the new environment to meet the requirements of the specific learning context rather than being shaped by "characteristics of individual or cultural groups" (Volet & Kee, 1993, p.3). Tran's (2013a) study is congruent with this line of scholarly research which challenges the generalisations of Asian students and the essentialist view on their learning patterns. Based on discourse analysis

of Vietnamese and Chinese students' assignments and in-depth interviews, this study reveals that students' national culture and their background do not play a dominant role, but instead are found to be inflected in these individual students' learning and to interact with other factors. Also, in any case where culturally influenced ways of learning are reproduced, this does not typically happen in simple and uniform ways but rather in personalised ways, or ways that are personally adapted by the students (Tran, 2013a).

New movements in international student research, however, make it an especially appropriate time to move beyond the focus on a deficit frame and problem identification approach to an ethnorelative stance. The new perspective acknowledges the challenges facing international students in cross-border life but also draws attention to the need for reciprocal adjustment and learning of all the involved parties and to international students' capacity for agency and potential contributions. These shifts are based on the critique of a stereotyped, negative and static view of the learning styles of international students and accordingly on the assumption that international students should take the sole responsibility for adapting and making changes in the host institution. Theories about cosmopolitan work (Luke, 2004; Rizvi, 2009; Sanderson, 2011), and self-transformation (Marginson, 2014) offer the solid grounding to view international students' learning in a way that recognises and builds on their transnational experiences, cultural resources, self-transforming capacity and agency. This ethnorelative perspective on international students also redirects some of the focus on international students' responsibility and capacity for exercising responsibility to take control of their learning and acting as co-constructors of knowledge in the international classroom (Tran, 2013).

An important line of research points out the role of local students, local communities, institutions and families in supporting cross-cultural learning and networks rather than the exclusive focus on the responsibility of international students (Gu, Schweisfurth, & May., 2010; Jindal-Snape & Rienties, 2016; Rienties, Johan, & Jindal-Snape, 2015; Rienties & Nolan, 2013). 'The availability of support and the conditions of contact' have been seen crucial to international students' intercultural learning and human development in a transnational setting (Gu et al., 2010, p.7). In line with this, the responsibility of not only international students but also institutions, local students and communities who are the key stakeholders forming the 'conditions of contact' should be brought to the fore in building a socially and culturally productive learning in international education. Drawing on a mixed-method study with students from 28 nationalities, Rienties and colleagues (2015) develop a useful 'characteristics list of bridge builders' that teachers and students can adopt to enhance group dynamics and optimise cross-cultural networks and interactions for both international and local students. In their latest edited collection, Jindal-Snape and Rienties (2016) further argue for the development of a dynamic strategy called 'Social Network approach' of affective, behavioural and cognitive development to enhance the experiences for local and international students.

Student responsibility

Research on student responsibility tends to be framed within two primary dimensions: school discipline and academic learning (Duke & Jones, 2009; Ericson & Ellett, 1990; Romi et al., 2009) and citizenship education (Whiteley, 2005). The first perspective has resulted in support provision for fostering and enhancing student mobility around classroom discipline and learning. For example, Duke and Jones (2009, p.277) define student responsibility as being related to ‘the capacity and desire to (a) behave properly, without direct supervision, (b) try and correct one’s own behaviour when it is improper, and (c) assist others in behaving properly.’ This involves student responsibility not only for their learning but also for their engagement with class members and teachers to ensure an appropriate and conducive learning environment (ibid.). Echoing this perspective, Romi et al. (2009) classify two forms of student responsibility: personal responsibility and communal responsibility. Personal responsibility encompasses students’ commitment to acting responsibly and protecting their own and other members’ learning rights while communal responsibility is defined as students’ willingness to assist their peers in respecting these rights (Romi et al., 2009, p.441). Student responsibility has also been seen through the lens of moral responsibility or moral behaviour (Ericson & Ellett, 1990; Romi et al., 2009). Other authors see the correlation between responsibility in classroom and society, arguing fostering the development of responsible class members is essential to cultivating responsible citizens for society (Rothstein, 2000). In other words, enhancing student responsibility is interconnected with nurturing good citizenship.

The issue of student responsibility is also conceptualised in parallel with their rights. However, there are different perspectives on student responsibility with respect to their rights. Authors such as Lewis (2001) and Romi et al. (2009) term student responsibility as the extent to which students are accountable for the protection of the learning and well-being rights in the classroom. However, Ericson and Ellet (1990, p.3) contend students have both ‘a right to education and responsibility to use educational resources.’ The first perspective tends to link student responsibility to the act to protect rights while the second considers student agency in making effective use of educational resources and opportunities. However, both perspectives emphasize the ultimate duty or responsibility is ascribed on the students themselves rather than solely other involved parties have corresponding duties to provide for their learning or education. Student responsibility is associated with their capacity for rational agency (Ericson and Ellet, 1990, p.4). Both personal capacity that consists of skills, knowledge and attributes, and external opportunities to exercise their capacity are essential for students to act responsibly (Bandura, 1977, cited in Duke & Jone, 2009). As personal capacity as well as individual perceptions of responsibility vary among students, the extent to which they act responsibly also differs.

Positioning theory as a framework for conceptualising student responsibility

In this paper, the analysis of international students’ perception of their responsibilities draws on Harré and van Langenhove’s (1999) positioning theory. Positioning is defined as “the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate

as social acts and within which the members of the conversation have specific locations” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, p.393). In light of positioning theory, insights into a person’s acts or reasoning patterns are revealed through unfolding the positions that he/she takes or is assigned to in on-going discursive narratives (“storylines”) (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999). With its focus on the meanings and close association with narratology (Harré, Moghaddam, Pilkerton-Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009, p.7), positioning theory provides a useful methodological tool for the analysis of interview excerpts in which the participants give conversational accounts of *what* they perceive as their responsibilities as international students and *why* they think so.

Another reason why positioning theory is used in this research is that its attention to “rights and duties” is conceptually germane to the research focus on students’ responsibilities. Positioning theory sheds light on the actors’ “beliefs and practices” related to “rights and duties,” which constitute a “moral domain” of reasoning patterns that underpin their positions and contingent on the “local context” (Harré et al., 2009, p.6). In this study, moral positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) is helpful in bringing to light the students’ moral beliefs for what they are held responsible or feel responsible, and the connection between their perceptions and the multiple contexts which their identity is associated with, such as their home and host societies, institutional, social or workplace settings, and so on.

In this study, the interpretation of participating students’ perceived responsibilities in this study draws on the notion of moral positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) as revealed in the storylines of their interview responses. We use the following frameworks of positioning: deliberate self-positioning, forced-self positioning, positioning of others and re-positioning. *Deliberate self-positioning* refers to the actor’s intentional expression of identity or the self as he/she wishes (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, p.400). *Forced-self positioning*, in contrast, is self-positioning that is initiated and influenced by “somebody else rather than the person involved” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, p.402). We acknowledge that international students’ engagement in deliberate self-positioning or forced-self positioning might depend on the social context and webs of social relations in which they are embedded (Rienties et al., 2015). *Other positioning* denotes the positioning of someone else in the correlative position which results from one's intentional positioning of oneself (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Finally, *repositioning* occurs when the actor adopts a new position as a result of previous experiences and discussions (van Langenhove & Harré 1999).

The Research

This paper is derived from a larger research project funded by the Australian Research Council through the Discovery scheme. This research includes 155 interviews including 105 with international students and 50 with staff and fieldworks conducted in dual-sector and VET

institutions in three states of Australia: New South Wales (NSW), Queensland (QLD) and Victoria (VIC). It aims to examine international students' learning experiences including their rights and responsibilities as international students and teachers' adaptation of pedagogic work in teaching this cohort.

International student participants were recruited through an invitation sent to their institutions. The director of the international office within VET institutes helped circulate the invitation email to the potential respondents. The selection criteria for selection include they are international students who were enrolled in a VET course at the time of interviewing. The interview data indicates that the level of satisfaction with their educational experience varies among the respondents. Those who agreed to participate were asked to attend a face to face interview which lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. The semi-structured interview includes some key lines of questions while leaving space for some other questions that emerge naturally based on the participants' responses during the interview. Some of the key questions asked include what students see as their purposes in enrolling in a VET course in Australia, how they have changed during their study in VET, what they think about their educational experience and what they see as their rights and responsibilities as an international student in Australia. These types of questions allow their self-positioning to emerge naturally. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Second interviews were also undertaken with a small number of students who were willing to do so. Most of the interviews were conducted when the participants were in the first year of their VET program. With consent from the participants, the chief investigator took part in various student activities and visited them at workplaces. Participation in and observation of these activities enabled the chief investigator to have deeper insights into the multiple dimensions of international students' experiences in Australia, some of which may otherwise be invisible through formal interviews. This paper focuses primarily on the semi-structured interview data with 105 international students about their intercultural interactions. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, their names and institutions are kept anonymous.

Overall, China, India, Vietnam, Korea and Thailand are the five top source countries, contributing 26.4%, 11.2%, 4.6%, 4.5% and 4.3% of international student enrolments for Australia respectively (AEI, 2016). The national origins and courses of the student participants are summarised in the table below:

Nation of origin	Number of interviewees	VET course	Number of interviewees
<i>South Asia</i>		Food and hospitality	40
India	22	Management & commerce	10
Other	2	Building & Carpentry	16
<i>Northeast Asia</i>		Information technology	9

China	18	Hairdressing	8
Korea	10	Community welfare work	5
Japan	2	Automotive	4
<i>Southeast Asia and the Pacific</i>		Others	13
Vietnam	18	Total	105
Other (Malaysia, Philippine, Thailand)	7		
Mauritius	5		
<i>Europe and the UK</i>	12		
<i>South America</i>	3		
Others	6		
Total	105		

The interview data was coded using NVivo version 10. The preliminary coding of data was done by the first author and then the emergent themes were jointly constructed by both authors. We found the process of discussing and co-constructing the themes useful in allowing thorough peer engagement with the excerpts and reflection and ensuring reliability. We do not tend to treat the student participants as a homogenous group but recognise that the various quotes might represent international students' varying as well as distinctive individual characteristics. Some of the excerpts are quite unique and offer valuable insights into individual students' perspectives on social responsibility and capability to enact responsibility.

In light of Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) positioning theory, this study, as the first research of its type, identifies and unpacks the notion 'responsibility in mobility' which refers to the perceived responsibilities, both internally accepted and externally imposed responsibilities (terms suggested by Lauermaann & Karabenick, 2011), that international students hold in their transnational education experience. The following part focuses on two major aspects of international students' sense of social responsibility: their perceived responsibilities towards their home and host countries, as well as to other relationships related to their status of cross-border students.

Country-related responsibility

Associated with the students' engagement with transnational social fields, the presence of both home and host country-related responsibilities presents a unique aspect of international students' sense of responsibility. This is believed to be 'unique' because compared to domestic students who do not study across borders, mobility gives international students the condition to perceive and develop a new sense of responsibility towards their home country and host country. The following sections introduce and discuss these two dimensions of international students' sense of country-related responsibility: responsibility to the home and host countries.

Responsibility to the home country

Towards their home country, the student participants feel responsible for rightly representing their country overseas, and for returning and contributing to their homeland:

First and foremost that I represent my country. I represent my country, my India. So if I do anything wrong, then it's true that I am making bad impression for my country... Because if I do anything wrong, then people say that he is from India and he is doing these things. And I don't want to listen to that..... I don't do anything wrong or I try to... because I don't want to ruin the impression of my country... Because I have a great respect for my country because I belong to India. (Benvin, Indian, Hospitality Management, public college, QLD)

Before I come here I think I want to study, to come here to Australia to gain knowledge, everything from Australia to bring it back to my country. So for myself first and for the community as well. (Manh, Vietnamese, Hospitality, private college, VIC)

I want to work there and make the system [in India] much better because our government is spending billions of dollars for the betterment of the people, but still we do have malaria cases existing in our country. There are hundreds of these small diseases which are still existing in my country. So like government is spending on the top billions of dollars but here it is not reaching at the bottom level to the people who really require that... So I want to become a part of this system.... So that's why I wanted to have some formal education so I came here [Australia]. I joined the community welfare course. So right now I'm pursuing it. And as soon as I'll finish that, then I go back to [my] country and join that health system in our country (Sabrina, Indian, Community welfare, public college, NSW)

In light of positioning theory (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999), the students' positioning of their responsibility is embedded in their self-positioning of how they are bonded to their home country. The first student, for example, self-positions his connection with his motherland through *identity*, believing that how his manners and actions are other-positioned in another country affects how his home country is other-positioned overseas. Therefore, this student positions himself to be responsible for respectfully representing his motherland's identity in a foreign country. From different positioning, the second and the third students project their responsibility for making contributions to their country in their return, as both of them intertwine their personal *interests* of being able to study overseas with their home country's interest.

According to Lauermann's and Karabenick's (2011) conceptual framework of teachers' responsibility, responsibility is construed as "a sense of internal obligation and commitment to produce or prevent designated outcomes or that these outcomes should have been produced or prevented" (ibid., p.135). The finding of international students' responsibility to their home country reflects the first perspective of responsibility in this definition, which is also referred to as "*prospective*" responsibility. Unlike the "retrospective" judgment of responsibility usually associated with blame for past events (ibid., p. 124), prospective responsibility is conceptually embedded with *normative expectations* that steer one's values, beliefs, and behaviours (Bargh, 1990; Twiss, 1977, cited in ibid., p.130).

The students' prospective responsibility towards their home country emerging from these three interview excerpts entails both "*approach oriented* (producing outcomes) and *avoidance oriented* (preventing outcomes)" responsibility (terms suggested by Lauermann and Karabenick, 2011, p.135). For example, Manh and Sabrina self-position their responsibility in association with the future outcomes of their transnational education that they want to *produce* in the benefits of their home country. Differently, Benvin holds himself responsible for *preventing* any outcomes of his behaviours that can exert unfavourable effects on the identity of his homeland India. In short, while transnational education mobility enables the students to translate their existing bond with their home country into their internal sense of prospective responsibility, how the students position themselves in relation with their home country is shown to influence how normative expectations of their transnational mobile self are perceived, and thus the differences in how the students articulate their responsibility to their home country.

Responsibility to respect and contribute to the host country

Engagement in transnational social fields provides the potential condition for the international students in this study to extend their sense of responsibility to another country in addition to their homeland. Their perceived responsibility towards the host country, as a unique finding of this research, is a two-folded meaning concept, which is congruent to how they position themselves and other-position the host country. On the one hand, a group of student participants position themselves as outsiders migrating to the host country; therefore, "when in Rome do as the Romans do" is what they perceive of their obligation towards the host country.

I know my responsibility... I have respect for Australia also. *I know we are migrants. We are coming from outside. So really, it's on us that we, we have to mix with them, the owners. That we have to learn things and mix with them because it's their country, local people, it's their country and obviously they don't like that people coming from outside and taking their jobs or everything. [...]* (Benvin, Indian, Hospitality Management, public college, QLD)

I have to follow the rules from here, the rules and regulation from the Australian government. I think it's my responsibility. I have to settle down in this country. So I have to follow them, whatever

rules and regulations they made like that. I have to take all of that, like I have to take a test and everything. (Kim, Indian Cookery, private college, QLD)

I feel that our main responsibility is to stick to whatever rules and regulations we have concerning the immigration, concerning our visa permit and concerning the school by-laws. So we should respect that. So that's part of the study actually. And also if we want to get into the industry here, we should learn how to, we should know the rules and regulations. Because it's all about rules and regulations, the world is. Yeah, there's always laws for everything. (Marshall, Mauritian, public college, VIC)

We are in Australia and I think we should learn the Australian culture as well. And we should, we try to be Australian as well, because here is Australia. And just let's learn while we share a culture. I mean, Australian culture is very multicultural. So I mean we should learn... and we should understand about it ...because we're international students [...] during the international study, we try to study about that. I think that's our responsibility. (Joan, Korean, Cookery, public college, NSW)

The interview excerpts above reveal three overlapping types of the perceived responsibility for international students to *fit* themselves with the host country, that is, responsibility to blend in the local community, to comply with local rules, and to acculturate themselves to the local culture. This finding restates the tendency of international students to assimilate themselves with the host country that has been well discussed in the literature (Lacina, 2002; McLean & Ransom, 2005; Ryan and Viète, 2009). It is also noteworthy that from the angle of positioning theory, this study provides a refreshing perspective for interpreting the students' reasoning for their propensity of acculturation and adaption. Firstly, in light of positioning theory, the perceived obligation to 'fit' is associated with the students' positioning of themselves as *outsiders* who have to bring themselves into conformity with the more superior host society, whom the students other-position as "the *owners*", the *authority* who sets "rules and regulations" as well as the *dominating culture*.

Secondly, the notions of deliberate self-positioning and forced self-positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) shed light on the conceptual differences between "*internally accepted responsibility*" and "*externally imposed responsibility*" (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011), or "feel responsible for" versus "held responsible for" (Helker & Wosnitza, 2014, p.3). According to positioning theory, deliberate self-positioning is initiated by the stance lying within the person involved, whilst forced self-positioning occurs as the result of (perceived) requirements or expectations held by different social forces. The former is illustrated in the last three interview excerpts, where the students deliberately self-position their responsibility, or internally accept their responsibility, to follow legal rules and adjust themselves to the Australian culture when residing and studying in Australia. Meanwhile, in the first interview excerpt, Benvin forced-self-positions international students' responsibility to "mix" and maintain harmony with the host society to counter the perceived disapproving other-positioning held by local people towards international

students and migrants in general as outsiders. Therefore, different from the other three students', Benvin's perceived responsibility to the host society is more "externally imposed" and influenced by how international students are believed to be other-positioned by the host society.

Extending the first meaning of international students' responsibility to the host country, in the following excerpt, Phong, a Vietnamese hospitality student, explains his positioning of international students' responsibility to be a *contributing member* of the host community. Unlike previous interviewees, Phong does not position himself as an outsider relocating to a 'superior' society. He instead positions himself as a member of the society being in a rather equal relationship with the host country:

when I live here, I think Australia is a good country. [...] It's very kind, very good. *And I think, you know, yeah if you can bring something back for the community.* For example, when I study here, I study English in this building, I do the homeless project. Yes, we do a lot, it's going out, we talk to homeless people... *And I think, beside your studying, you should participate, contribute to some of the social activity [ies].* [...] A few months ago, last semester, I did the Bluey Day, we do fundraising for Bluey Day Foundation for the students who have cancer. (Phong, Vietnamese, Hospitality management, private college, VIC)

Phong's other-positioning of Australia as a "very kind, very good" host country indicates his favourable perception and appreciation of the transnational experience in the host community. Based on his subsequent self-positioning of his thinking and extra-curricular participation, not only did Phong *construct an idea* of "paying back" to the host country, but he also *took action* by taking part in voluntary activities that benefited local communities. According to the terms suggested by Anderson and Prawat (1983) (cited in Bacon, 1993, p.1), the positive affect and attitude Phong has towards the host country elucidate the formation of his cognition and action, the invisible and visible components of responsibility.

Importantly, Phong's sense of responsibility is self-determined out of intrinsic motivation, one of the core aspect of "being responsible" (Bacon, 1993, p.1). As an internal sense of responsibility, self-determination is posited to be a *positive* dimension of responsibility, compared to externally attributed sense of responsibility resulting from imposed obligation (Helker & Wosnitza, 2014, p.3). Previous studies cited in Helker and Wosnitza (2014, p.3) share a common view about the beneficial influence of internal sense of responsibility on the person's engagement (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and work satisfaction (Müller, 2009). The current study suggests an interrelation between international students' positive other-positioning of the host country and their deliberate positioning of their responsibility to contribute to the latter.

The connection between international students' perceived responsibility and their self-positioning with regard to the host country is further illustrated in the following interview excerpt, where the student articulates her responsibility towards her host institution, an institutional representative of the host country:

[M]y responsibility, I have to, as a student, no matter international or local student, I'm a student studying at [University name] so *I should behave like an [University name] student*. I mean, I can't do any, *I couldn't do any misbehaviour outside uni* like being caught by the police and he asks, what are you doing? I'm studying at [University name]. That's kind of a shame to this uni. So sometimes I need to remind myself as an international student, especially studying at [University name], that *my behaviour really represents this institution because I can't put dirty things or spoils on the face of [University name]* (Claire, Chinese, Diploma in Interpreting, public college, VIC)

What is significant about Claire's perceived responsibility to her host university is that it derives from her self-positioning as a representative of her institution. Claire's account of her responsibility as an international student to the host institution recalls the initial interview excerpt with Benvin, the Indian Hospitality Management student who similarly delineates his responsibility to represent his home country.

Together with the previous discussion of Phong's perceived responsibility to be a contributing member of the host society, the finding from Claire's positioning of her responsibility to represent and protect her host institution's identity expands and challenges the aforementioned mainstream literature about international students' engagement with the host society through assimilation. On the one hand, part of this research finding echoes prevailing comments on the inclination to acculturation among international students who view themselves as outsiders to the host country. On the other hand, it also points to a rather contrasting depiction of international students like Phong and Claire who position themselves as an insider of the host society, thus, self-determine their responsibility to represent and make contributions to the host country. The latter finding helps enrich the current literature about international students' transnational engagement, agency and intercultural competence in their educational mobility across social fields. It is noteworthy that the Confucian background that Phong and Claire share intriguingly hinted at the possible influence of geographic and cultural dimensions on the students' feelings towards the host countries. Nevertheless, due to the relatively small number of interviews, this fortuitous case does not suffice to provide a conclusive interpretation of the cultural and demographic variables of international students' sense of country responsibility. This may invite further investigations into this topic.

Last but not least, when international students hold themselves responsible for the host country in a similar term with their perceived responsibility to their countries of origin, the students' other-positioning of the host country, and relatedly, their self-positioned bonding with this foreign society emerges as a decisive facilitator. This finding suggests the importance of quality transnational engagement with the host country in nurturing a more sophisticated sense of responsibility to the host society among international students.

Interpersonal responsibility

Interpersonal responsibility refers to international students' perceived responsibilities to the social relationships that are formed via their transnational mobility experience. The following interview excerpts reveal that the participating students' interpersonal responsibility is largely related to those engaged with them in the learning context, particularly other international peer students:

Well, same responsibilities as everybody else really. You know, *treat people with respect*. (Mark, Carpentry, UK, public college, QLD)

Be nice to my class mates. (Jay, Carpentry, German, public college, QLD)

My first ever responsibility is to give my best in my college, in study, [...] by *giving my best to my teachers [...] be respectable to them, be honest to them* and that means just to give them a duty of care and full responsibility. (Parry, Indian, Community Welfare, private college, QLD)

As an international student, I think *one of the responsibilities is trying to [...] Help other international students because we are all migrated to this culture*. I think there are a lot of things that needs to be learned if I know something that some other people don't understand. So I'll be a very good asset to other international students as well. (Ivy, Vanuatu, public college, NSW)

During the recent ten years, all the international students in my age need to help each other. [...] For me, if there are any work opportunities, I will tell my friends... *We need to help each other* because this is the special time. At this time the government does not have experience about this. They do not know how to help you or what to do. And you know, from the start it is always very hard, until we are getting more power and more experience but at the moment *I will help any international students if I can*. (Chai, Chinese, Hospitality management, private college, VIC)

As briefly mentioned in the previous discussion, responsibility is comprised of “visible (behaviour) and invisible (cognition, affect, attitude)” components (Anderson & Prawat, 1983, cited in Bacon, 1993, p.1). The students' self-positioning of their interpersonal responsibility in the above excerpts vividly illustrates these different forms of responsibility. Specifically, the students feel responsible for maintaining a respectful and considerate attitude to other members participating in their learning space, harmonising with other students, being honest to their teachers, and helping other international students whenever possible.

It is important to recognise that although the mentioned forms of interpersonal responsibility pertain to those whom the students engage with in their learning environment, not all forms of international responsibility is necessarily bounded in the classroom setting. In the last two interview excerpts, the students position themselves with *concern* for other international students' needs, an internal sense of *commitment* to providing help, and *perceived efficacy* to help with various matters including cultural understanding or legal procedures, which, according to Conrad and Hedin (1981), constitute the construct of social responsibility. As the last student posits, “from

the start it is always very hard, until we are getting more power and more experience,” responsibility and capacity for responsibility is a result of developmental experience. The students’ engagement with spatial, intellectual and transnational mobility defines and redefines their perception of responsibility and the ways to exercise their responsibility. This research finding construes an important characteristic of responsibility in mobility, which is a developmental, multi-relational and fluid concept.

The finding of international students’ internal sense of responsibility to help other international students also supports previous studies that identify international students’ tendency to connect to one another for mutual support and exercise collective agency (Cullen et al., 1994 and Francis, 2007 cited in Hopwood, 2010, p.110; Gomes, 2015). Particularly, the participating students’ perceived interpersonal responsibility predominantly towards their international peers, rather than local students, manifests Gomes’ (2015, p.532) observation of the “parallel society” that international students tend to construct among themselves, other than with local students and other members of the host society. This finding, again, suggests the role of the students’ transnational mobility experience in constructing their perception of their responsibility.

Conclusion

Being in educational mobility provides international students with unique transnational social fields to develop responsibility towards the home and host countries. *Social responsibility* arising from mobility thus involves the students’ perceived responsibilities towards their home and host countries, as well as to other relationships formed in their transnational space. *Toward their home country*, international students’ social responsibility can manifest in their re-positioning themselves as being responsible for respectfully representing their motherland in a foreign country, and for making contributions to their country upon the completion of their study. Such social imaginary of themselves as representatives of their home country appears to become more visible under the conditions of mobility when they are in a foreign country and interact with people from different national backgrounds.

International students’ perceived *social responsibility towards the host country*, as a unique finding of this research, has two-folded meaning. If the students position themselves as *outsiders* to the host society, they are inclined towards *assimilation and acculturation* to the host society. On the other hand, if they are self-positioned as a *member* integrated into the host country, their responsibility involves *contributing to and representing* the local community. The presence of both home and host country-related responsibility presents a unique aspect of international students’ sense of responsibility, because compared to many students who do not study across borders, mobility gives international students the condition to perceive and develop responsibility for transnational citizenship.

Finally, *interpersonal responsibility* refers to international students' perceived responsibilities for maintaining a respectful and considerate attitude to other members participating in their learning space, harmonising with other students, being honest to their teachers, and helping other international peers whenever possible. The finding of international students' internal sense of responsibility to help other international students also supports previous studies that identified international students' tendency to connect to one another for mutual support and exercise collective agency

This study introduces the notion of 'responsibility in mobility' which arises out of international students' transnational education experience. 'Social responsibility in mobility,' as the focus of this paper, has a number of important characteristics. Firstly, it is a *developmental, multi-relational and fluid* concept, which supports previous conceptualisations of responsibility (See Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011). The students' engagement with spatial, cultural and educational mobility shapes and reshapes their perception of responsibility and their ways to enact responsibility. Secondly, the research findings critically reflect and conceptually enhance the *social* nature of international students' responsibility, which involves the students' beliefs attached to transnational or dual-social roles (adapted from the concept by Twiss, 1977, cited in Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011, p.127) and their 'concerns about others' (concept by Winter, 1992, cited in *ibid.*, p.126). Thirdly, in light of positioning theory, international students' perceived responsibility is dependent on how they position themselves in relation with the subject of their responsibility. It is also thought-provoking as to whether the students' feelings towards home/host communities are contingent on their demographic characteristics, given the diverse participant cohorts of this study and the dominant representation of student interviewees from an Indian or Confucian background in this paper. However, as the interview data in this research does not appear to provide concrete evidence for such an interrelation, the influence of the students' cultural backgrounds and other demographic factors on their sense of country responsibility remains a topic of interest for future studies. Finally, internal sense of responsibility based on self-determination is perceived to be a *positive* dimension of responsibility, compared to externally attributed sense of responsibility resulting from imposed obligation (Helker & Wosnitza, 2014, p.3) The study suggests the importance of creating a transnational education experience which is conducive to cultivating more positive forms of international students' responsibility towards the home-host countries and their study. In this respect, it is important to acknowledge that the construct of international students' realm of transnational social engagement and responsibility also involves equally significant perspectives of their family, local students and host communities. A limitation of this research was that its intended scope did not include interviews with these groups and the examination of their vantage points, which in turn would suggest other angles of study for future investigations.

Within the neoliberal commercialisation principle that drives international education, host institutions have been seen to largely hold accountability for providing the educational services for international students who are often positioned as consumers. This practice has to some extent drawn attention away from questions about institutional responsibility for building student

capacity for exercising both personal and social responsibility. The locus of institutional responsibility should therefore extend beyond simply providing the educational services to actually enabling international students to develop full capacity to enact responsibility in educationally, culturally and morally productive ways. In order to achieve this, it is important for host institutions to ensure the productive conditions and external opportunities for international students to exercise responsibility as intercultural members and learners. It is also imperative for host institutions *not* to ignore the ways in which student mobility intersects with personal agency and personal capacity as well as multiple and transnational logics of legal, social, cultural and academic practices in viewing international student responsibility. Enhancing student responsibility is indeed nurturing good citizenship.

Acknowledgement: We are grateful to the anonymous Reviewers for their valuable comments that help us considerably improve this paper. We acknowledge with thanks the useful insights shared by our participants and the funding from the Australian Research Council for this project.

References

- AEI (2016). End of year summary of international student enrolment data - 2015. Retrieved from [https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/International-Student-Data/Documents/Monthly%20summaries%20of%20international%20student%20enrolment%20data%202015/12 December 2015 MonthlySummary.pdf](https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/International-Student-Data/Documents/Monthly%20summaries%20of%20international%20student%20enrolment%20data%202015/12%20December%202015%20MonthlySummary.pdf)
- Bacon, C. S. (1993). Student responsibility for learning. *Adolescence*, 28(109), 199-212.
- Conrad, Dan & Hedin, Diane, (author.) & Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. Center for Youth Development and Research (1981). *National Assessment of Experiential Education. A Final Report*. Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse.
- Cruikshank, K., Chen, H., & Warren, S. (2012). Increasing international and domestic student interaction through group work: a case study from the humanities. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 31(6), 797-810.
- Duke, D. L., & Jones, V. F. (1985). What can schools do to foster student responsibility?. *Theory Into Practice*, 24(4), 277-285.
- Ericson, D. P., & Ellett, F. S. (1990). Taking student responsibility seriously. *Educational researcher*, 19(9), 3-10.
- Gomes, C. (2015). Negotiating everyday life in Australia: unpacking the parallel society inhabited by Asian international students through their social networks and entertainment media use. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(4), 515-536.
- Gu, Q., Schweisfurth, M., & Day, C. (2010). Learning and growing in a 'foreign' context: intercultural experiences of international students. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 40(1), 7-23
- Harré, R., & van Langenhove, L. (1991). Varieties of Positioning. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 21, 393-408.
- Harré, R., & van Langenhove, L. (1999). The Dynamics of Social Episodes. In R. Harré & L. Van Langenhove (Eds.), *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action* (pp.1-13). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Harré, R., Moghaddam, F., Pilkerton-Cairnie, T., Rothbart, D., & Sabat, S. (2009). Recent Advances in Positioning Theory. *Theory & Psychology*, 19(1), 5-31.

- Helker, K., & Wosnitza, M. (2014). Responsibility in the school context – Development and validation of a heuristic framework. *Frontline Learning Research*, 2(3).
- Holmes, P. (2004). Negotiating differences in learning and intercultural communication. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 67(3), 294-307.
- Hopwood, N. (2010). A sociocultural view of doctoral students' relationships and agency. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 32(2), 117.
- Jindal-Snape, D., & Rienties, B. (Eds.). (2016). Multi-dimensional transitions of international students to higher education: New perspectives on learning and instruction. London: Routledge.
- Kim, J. (2012). The Birth of Academic Subalterns How Do Foreign Students Embody the Global Hegemony of American Universities?. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 16(5), 455-476.
- Lacina, J. G. (2002). Preparing international students for a successful social experience in higher education. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 17(1), 21-27.
- Lauermaun, F., & Karabenick, S. A. (2011). Taking Teacher Responsibility Into Account(ability): Explicating Its Multiple Components and Theoretical Status. *Educational Psychologist*, 46(2), 122-140. doi:10.1080/00461520.2011.558818
- Lewis, R. (2001). Classroom discipline and student responsibility: The students' view. *Teaching and teacher education*, 17(3), 307-319
- Luke, A. (2004). Teaching After the Market: From Commodity to Cosmopolitan. *Teachers College Record*, 107(7), 1422-1443.
- Marginson, S. (2014). Student self-formation in international education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(1), 6-22.
- McLean, P., & Ransom, L. (2005). Building intercultural competencies: Implications for academic skills development. In J. Carroll & J. Ryan (Eds.), *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all* (pp. 45-62). London: Routledge.
- Rienties, B., Johan, N., & Jindal-Snape, D. (2015). Bridge building potential in cross-cultural learning: a mixed method study. *Asian Pacific Education Review*, 16, 37-48.
- Rienties, B., & Nolan, E.-M. (2014). Understanding friendship and learning networks of international and host students using longitudinal Social Network Analysis. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 41, 165-180
- Rizvi, F. (2009). Towards cosmopolitan learning. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 30(3), 253-268.
- Romi, S., Lewis, R., & Katz, Y. J. (2009). Student responsibility and classroom discipline in Australia, China, and Israel. *Compare*, 39(4), 439-453.
- Rothstein, R. (2000). Toward a composite index of school performance. *The Elementary School Journal*, 100, 409-441.
- Ryan, J. (2011). Teaching and learning for international students: Towards a transcultural approach. *Teachers and Teaching*, 17(6), 631-648.
- Ryan, J., & Viète, R. (2009). Respectful interactions: Learning with international students in the English-speaking academy. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(3), 303-314.
- Samuelowicz, K. (1987). Learning problems of overseas students: Two sides of a story. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 16(2), 121-132.
- Sanderson, G. (2011). Internationalisation and teaching in higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 30(5), 661-676.

- The PIE News. (2012). EAIE charter advocates for overseas student rights. <http://thepienews.com/news/eaie-charter-to-ensure-overseas-student-rights/>.
- Tran, L. T. (2011). Committed, Face-value, Hybrid or Mutual Adaptation? The experiences of International Students in Higher Education. *Educational Review*, 63(1), 79-94.
- Tran, L. T. (2013). Internationalisation of Vocational Education and Training: A Learning Curve for Teachers and Learners. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 17(4), 492-507.
- Tran, L. T. (2013a). *International Student Adaptation to Academic Writing in Higher Education*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Tran, L. T (2015). Mobility as 'becoming': A Bourdieuan analysis of the factors shaping international student mobility. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1-22.
- Volet, S. E., & Jones, C. (2012). Cultural transitions in higher education: Individual adaptation, transformation and engagement. *Transitions across schools and cultures*, 17, 241-284.
- Volet, S., & Kee, J. P. P. (1993). Studying in Singapore - studying in Australia: A student perspective. *Murdoch University Teaching Excellence Committee Occasional Paper*, 1.
- Volet, S., & Renshaw, P. (1996). Chinese students at an Australian university: Adaptability and continuity. In D. a. B. Watkins, J. (Ed.), *The Chinese learner: Cultural, psychological and contextual influences*. (pp. 206-220). Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Center.
- Whiteley, P. (2005). Citizenship education longitudinal study: Second literature review. Citizenship Education: the political science perspective. Research Report No.631. University of Essex.