

[Materials]

## Review on the Impact of COVID-19 on International Students

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### Background

The novel Coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei province, China, at the end of 2019 and spread rapidly. The worldwide impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has been significant, ranging from the social, political, cultural to economic domains. The disruptive effects of the COVID-19 outbreak have effected almost all sectors of society and higher education is no exception. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the mobility of international students in various ways. It has not only brought a huge change in terms of the number of inbound and outbound international students but also had a tremendous impact on each individual international student's learning experiences and living condition in the host countries. In addition to adjusting to a foreign culture, a series of draconian policies and constant changes in those, hate crimes during the pandemic have put international students in an even more vulnerable position.

International students are those who received their prior education in another country and are not residents of their current country of study (OECD, 2019). In average across OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries, international students account for 6% of total enrolment in tertiary programs (post-secondary education received at universities and colleges) (OECD, 2019). International students studying abroad is heavily influenced by the government foreign student acceptance policy of the host countries and natural disaster such as earthquakes and pandemic.

OECD (2021) reported that in 2020, 1.5 billion students in 188 countries and economies were locked out of their schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic and students all over the world have been faced with schools that were open one day and closed the next, causing massive disruption to their learning. Aucejo et al. (2020) pointed out that university students faced an increasingly uncertain environment, where financial and health shocks to students, along with the transition to online learning may have affected their academic performance, educational plans, current labor market participation, and expectations about future employment. International students are no exception. All international students have been put in an unstable situation and they had to cope with the day-to-day change on top of all the difficulties they have already faced as international students. While, university students must adapt to their new educational

and social environment, international students face heightened demands compared to domestic students (Arthur, 2004). In the United States, Asian international students encounter a variety of acculturative stressors, including language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and racial discrimination; they also often experience a loss of social support because the distance from their social support network in their home countries (Yakunina & McCarthy, 2011). On top of those existing difficulties and challenges for international students, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of new challenges to all the international students around the world.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread around the world, there has been various research shedding light on the impact on international students. However, amongst the myriad of different papers and perspectives on regarding the pandemic and university impact, there are still few review papers to overview the existing studies and discuss the topic comprehensively in an integrated manner. Therefore, this paper aims to provide an overview of the existing research on topic of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students during the first 2 years pandemic, and in doing so, we hope to provide some practical insights from an integrated perspective. This will not only help researchers to grasp the situation that international students are facing but will also provide hints to the necessary support that required by international students to university faculty, administration, and policy makers.

## **Method**

This paper undertakes a review of the currently available literature pertinent to the impacts of COVID-19 on international students. Electronic database PsycINFO and ERIC were used for researching related research paper. In May of 2022, “COVID-19” AND “international students” were put in at the same time as a search string to gather paper written in English relevant to this topic. Papers that included both two keywords would be found as the initial target review papers of our search. The year of publication is not limited, but due to the recent nature of the paper and the pandemic, search results for the keywords were limited to recent 2 years. As a result, 75 research paper were obtained based on the search from PsycINFO and ERIC. We examined each paper and excluded the papers that do not match the purpose of this paper, such as paper only focuses on higher education, governments and universities’ responses. Finally, 15 researched papers were selected as the target of review.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Travel restrictions, stay-at-home and their impacts**

A significant number of countries in the world closed their borders to prevent the importation of the COVID-19 virus right after the World Health Organization (WHO)

declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Other countries instituted a total or partial ban on international travels, barring travelers from certain countries. This not only caused difficulties for new incoming international students entering host countries but also for the international students already staying in those host countries, as many were not able to return to their home countries during the break, or after graduation as they might have planned (Alaklabi et al., 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, throughout the world many people were forced by their situation or government orders to stay at home at some point during the past several years. This was intended to reduce the transmission for the virus, but at the same time it limited human activities on many levels. Alsulami (2021) interviewed 12 male international students from various countries in Africa and the Middle East (ages 25-40, undergrad to masters and Ph.D.) and reported religious issues ranging from difficulty in visiting the mosques to acquiring necessary dietary items. Social challenges such as the lack of social options due to the pandemic, as well as the fear when the partial bans took effect of infection was also reported (Alsulami, 2021). Honegger & Honegger (2020) also reported international students concerns were of visas, reentry, finances, loss of human interaction from their narrative answers. The travel restrictions and stay-at-home policies caused difficulties in basic daily activities and also put international students into an even more isolated situation.

### **Financial difficulties**

There are international students faced more financial difficulties during the pandemic. The freezing of on-campus and off-campus employment opportunities available for international students caused a financial plight for international students on top of the decrease in income of their parents due to the economic crisis also caused by the pandemic across the world (Alaklabi et al., 2021). Alsulami (2021) interviewed 12 male international students from various countries in Africa and the Middle East and identified financial difficulties such as electricity bills were an issue due to the amount of time spent at home, and money transfer became an issue for some as well. The above previous research showed that some of the international students were put in a financial crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, more research is necessary to discover the specifics of their financial situation, such as the percentage and severity of their financial difficulties.

### **Impact on learning**

From the initial stage of the pandemic, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on learning institutions. Alaklabi et al. (2021) discusses the matters of suspended learning and the shift to e-learning along with the associated challenges due to the rapid spread of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic left no time for learning institutions to prepare for decision on how to cope with the pandemic. Some

institutions chose to close their doors to students, which led to delays in the start of classes and admissions. Alaklabi et al. (2021) suggests the possibility that this response led to the increase of some of the international students dropping out of school. Meanwhile, the rushed transition to e-learning also presented challenges since both the educator and student were not adequately prepared for the sudden change to the new form of learning. For students especially, it can cause various difficulties on learning due to the greater sense of self-discipline and motivation that is required (Aristovnik et al., 2020). For international students, Alaklabi et al. (2021) suggested the possibility of amplifying inequalities in education considering the truth that international students might not have the access to communication infrastructure including the internet. International students' vulnerability left them in even more precarious situation during the pandemic. Alsulami (2021) interviewed 12 male international students from various countries in Africa and the Middle East (ages 25-40, undergrad to masters and Ph.D) also reported on the difficulties of online learning, such as connection issues, use of online tools, course duties during the pandemic, and instructors not using PowerPoint or cameras during the online classes. Honegger & Honegger (2020) also reported concerns regarding the effectiveness of online courses and internet connectivity issues.

While the pandemic prolonged the borders restrictions and online learning situation for international students, there were many international students studying from their home country. Wilczewski et al. (2021) compared the academic effects of studying from the home and host country during the COVID-19 pandemic using online survey data and found that international students who were older tended to stay in the host country during the pandemic situation, but no other significant difference regarding personality traits were found between host and home country students; international students in their home country found online communication with other students important and contributing to their online experience and showed higher adjustment, while students in the home country show higher levels of academic adjustment than students in the host countries.

International students' learning opportunities and experiences were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the learning institutions response, and inadequate support for online learning. Both international students and learning institutions were not experienced or prepared for the pandemic situation; however, it is the institutions' responsibility to secure the quality of the learning for international students. Providing necessary support for international students and ensuring the quality of learning and the experience of studying abroad is a core expectation. Learning institutions, such as universities, are supposed to function as a place providing knowledge by proper classes and other learning opportunities, and also play a role in providing a place for international students to communicate with their international students peers and local students peers, expand their learning and living experiences by using different facilities such as libraries, gyms, various of support centers, and opportunities for participating in

different activities such as students groups, clubs (or circles in the Japanese context), etc. The COVID-19 pandemic developed into a huge hurdle for many of those activities and limited international students' experience on many levels. However, universities should not stop striving to create alternatives and opportunities for international students, and should assist them toward fulfilling their goals and progressing toward their future careers.

### **Psychological impacts**

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in various limitation on daily behavior and has a notable negative impact on the emotional wellbeing of human beings. A wide range of psychological issues, such as depression, anxiety, loss, grief, and fear were experienced by individuals, families, and communities all over the world during the pandemic (Alateeq et al., 2020; Asmundson & Taylor, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Regarding the impact on students' group, Aucejo et al. (2020) examined the causal impact of the pandemic on students and the results showed large negative effects across many dimensions. International students' group are more vulnerable than local students in terms of the increased difficulties and challenges emerging from the pandemic.

The difficulties and challenges faced by international students during the pandemic has been presented by a few studies. Honegger & Honegger (2020) identified the difficulties and challenges faced by international students during the pandemic in the US as concerns about visas, reentry, finances, effective online courses, social support, loss of human interaction, discrimination, and mental health from narrative answers. Xu et al. (2021) showed concerns of Chinese international students in the US included discrimination, worries of parents wishing for child to return, concerns over the lack of proper masking behavior in the US, and difficulty with using the English language during the crisis when some were still learning the language.

Several research focuses on the psychological distress and its related factors. Aristovnik et al. (2020) noted that the health concerns and financial burdens made international students anxious and frustrated through literature review. Song et al. (2021) reported that more than one-third out of 261 Chinese international student participants enrolled in universities in the US rated their PTSD PCL-C (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Check List - Civilian Version) score as moderate-to-severe and nearly half of them reported moderate-to-severe anxiety and they identified factors such as future academic plan, economic pressure, and health status are positively associated with high levels of psychological impact and negatively associated with mental health status. Ma and Miller (2021) conducted online survey to examine the psychological state of the Chinese overseas Students during the COVID-19 pandemic and how may Chinese overseas Students living conditions influence their anxiety. The research paid special attention to the double-bind situation that these students were put in and the psychological threats that faced them. It found that the participants were at a

significantly higher level of anxiety than the Chinese population overall, and females showed moderately higher levels. Participants reported perceiving a moderate level of social support, but a t-test showed that males perceive significantly lower levels of social support (Ma & Miller, 2021). Ma and Miller (2021) also found that almost half of participants reported experiencing a double-bind situation, and 14 % being unable to resolve the conflicting messages. Being entrapped in a double-bind situation is likely to cause anxiety, depression, and the perception of discrimination may influence anxiety too. Being asked to consider returning to China was a common issue with participants, and 43% reported they had experienced a double bind situation, such as being asked to return, but warning them against it because it might be safer due to in-flight risk. 14% of those stated that they were unable to differentiate the opposing messages and couldn't decide what to do, and this led to feelings of depression, anxiety, and guilt (Ma & Miller, 2021).

Lu et al. (2022) also conducted a survey on international students studying at China Medical University and that found the international student population's depression to be measured at mild (9.83%), moderate (3.08%), and severe (2.12%) within population of study, positive association between COVID-19 pandemic-related stress and depressive symptoms, and negative coping (such as relying on somebody else to solve the problem, worrying, etc.) mediated the association. The research group also found out that perceived social support played a moderating role in the relationship between negative coping and depressive symptoms, and moderated the indirect effect of pandemic-related stress on depressive symptoms via negative coping (Lu et al., 2022). The finding indicated that the international students who perceived more COVID-19 pandemic-related stress tended to adopt more negative coping and it may lead to more subsequent depressive symptoms (Lu et al., 2022). The pandemic situation probably worsened the tendency of positive coping considering how little control individual would have over the stressful environmental situation. When facing less personally controllable stress, An et al. (2022) found the potential of NMREs to buffered the effects on distress of stressors that individuals have little control in Chinese international students population and this result indicate that when active coping attempts fail to ameliorate one's stress, being more confident in their emotion regulation, which means simply believing that one can make oneself feel better—stronger NMREs—may mitigate the effects of an uncontrollable stressor on one's well-being. Especially in COVID-19 pandemic, many stressors are not easily changed by individuals' power and efforts. There is not much that individuals can do to solve the stressful events happening or change the stressful environment. This prolonged situation could result in negative emotions such as hopeless, powerless over the situation. In this situation, emotion regulation would be more important and applicable in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Khan et al. (2021) conducted an online survey 10 days after the start of the

lockdown in Wuhan, China. The results showed that the international students' perception of trust in university management was negatively associated with their anxiety levels, and positively associated students' commitment to the self-quarantine guidelines. Honegger & Honegger (2020) also reported concerns of discrimination (especially from Asian students), difficulty sleeping and keeping a regular daily schedule, mental stress, concerns about their situation in the US and needing to go home, and generally poor mental and physical health from narrative answers in responses to the survey.

Some international students were left with no choice but staying in their home countries and joining online learning courses because of the prolonged borders restrictions, and various other difficulties in regard to entering the host countries. Wilczewski et al. (2021) compared the psychological effects of studying from the home and host country during the COVID-19 pandemic using online survey data. They found that international students in self-isolation in the host country showed higher social and emotional loneliness than those who did not; there were no country-specific differences in acculturative stress, perceived discrimination and communication stress, while those who stayed in self-isolated faced higher discrimination stress than those who did not self-isolate in the home country, but no such difference for communication stress was found. Online learning drastically reduced the opportunities of communication and integrations between international students and their peers, between international students and local students. Quarantine and long-term self-isolation exacerbated the isolation of all international students. Self-isolation potentially exposes students to smartphone/ internet overuse that has been linked with depressiveness (Duan et al., 2020). Therefore, Wilczewski et al. (2021) implied that self-isolating students may attribute their dissatisfaction with the disrupted experience to the university; thus, it is important for university to minimize the negative impact of self-isolation for international students by providing more effective and culture-sensitive communication of pandemic-related messages and support structures available at the university.

Solomou et al. (2021) conducted an online survey consisted of five major sections: Sociodemographic, study-related info, daily activities/behaviors during and after the outbreak, COVID-19 related perceived worries, and mental health well-being to examine the international students' well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of respondents were women (73%) between ages 19–20. A majority of students were in the bachelor's program (72.9%) and had completed their first year of study (68.2%). Of important note is that 65.1% are Cypriot citizens, and 16.0 permanent residents. They found out that 89.7% of the sample were considered to have depressive symptoms and students with poorer economic capital systems were more likely to feel depressed, and those who were younger tended to more than those who were older (Solomou et al., 2021). Students with greater academic stress and lower academic satisfaction reported more symptoms of depression and felt lonelier. Depression was positively correlated

with perceived risk of infection, perceived risk of severe illness, and perceived risk of severe illness in the personal network. Participants in the study expressed stress and depression associated with changes in the educational mode during the pandemic, and also changed some of their behavior and activities (Solomou et al., 2021). Consistent with previous research, the results push for the need of supporting students financially and psychologically both for the pandemic and aftereffects. The results match with several other studies that show college students, including international students, being a population that are vulnerable to mental health concerns, and that a decrease in social interaction leads to higher reported stress, anxiety, and loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a negative impact on international students in different ways and little support left them in plight situation. The difficulties and challenges also caused international students' psychological distress and put their mental health in high risk. Improving their situation and relieve their distress is urgent. However, providing proper mental health support such as group counseling and individual counseling is important too. Mental health state screening test would also help international students to understand their state of mental health and help them to tell when to seek mental health support.

### **Racism and discrimination**

Racism and discrimination was another issue that was a significant factor during the pandemic. Koo et al. (2021) conducted qualitative research using culturally responsive focus groups. The participants were US 4-year degree students at universities during the 2020 Spring semester. A total of 18 international students participated in 3 focus groups. The gender split was 8 men and 10 women. Students were from a total of seven different countries including China, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Nigeria, and Mexico; approximately half of the students were doctoral students. Three focus groups were conducted, with four, six, and eight students in each group online. Students were asked about matters concerning social, academic, professional matters, and experiences of racism and discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three key themes were identified summarizing racism and challenges perceived by participants: 1) perceptions of racism; 2) feelings of both unwelcomeness and lack of safety; and 3) navigating tensions and relief of quarantine. Among 12 students from East Asia, 11 stated they faced explicit racism, and some faced scary incidents such as threats. Students experienced physical attacks and racist comments online, sometimes during class. Most students in the study had a strong desire to return back to their countries due to feeling unwelcome in the US. They stated they no longer wanted to study or live abroad in the US and were concerned about the racism they may face. Students all stated they felt relieved when the campus and stay-at-home orders were announced and implemented because no one helped them to resolve issues



and they felt that staying-at-home would help prevent physical threats and verbal assaults to students related to racism and discrimination. However, at the same time many of the students also reported feeling more isolated during this period. The students reported that their motivation for studying abroad was not fulfilled during this COVID-19 pandemic due to the lack of interaction with diverse people in in the US, as that had been an important motivation. This lack of interaction and reduction in motivation led to some students being unmotivated during their time in the US. Koo et al. (2021) proposed the following suggestions based on their findings: 1) professional organizations for educators, policy makers and student affairs professionals need to provide meetings and open forums for students to express their experiences in the US; 2) colleges campuses and international student offices play a significant role, and need to help provide a safe place for students to report incidents on and off campus, including virtual spaces, support groups and check-ins; 3) campus resources need to expand their resources to cover more diverse minority groups, especially those groups who are faced targeted racism. Overall, Koo et al. (2021) pointed toward an urgent need for college universities to strive to create a climate at the university that provides social and emotional support for international students.

Xu et al. (2021) interviewed 12 students and 2 visiting scholars for a total of 14 students studying in the US and aimed to look at the lived experiences of Chinese international students in the United States during the start of the pandemic in 2020. While students didn't specifically use the word "racism", the researchers recommended that there be considerations for support by the university for dealing with racism and discrimination since interviewee concerns did connect with racist related concerns (Xu et al., 2021).

Coffey et al. (2021) also shed light on the experience of international students in Australia from the narrative of 32 participants. In Coffey et al. (2021), the participants were exposed to extreme financial precarity, which rendered them vulnerable to other gendered forms of risk and exploitation including taking part in experimental drug trials and having to take off-the-books cleaning work for a "creep". These students described feeling "unwelcome" or "unwanted" through open racial discrimination, or comments from the Prime Minister that international students should "go home" (Coffey et al., 2021). Those narratives could not present all the international students' experiences, but they demonstrated the position of marginality that the participants faced were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Including economic and social dimensions, and it went to the point of threatening safety in some cases. International students in the study faced significant hardships and it highlights the broader exploitative and unequal nature of the international student market. Although the escalating racism and discrimination is not new. Pandemic othering was defined as the exclusion and distancing of outgroups from ingroups by blaming outgroups for virus outbreaks and implying outgroups are sick and unhealthy, unlike the ingroups (Dionne

& Seay, 2016). Pandemic can inflame underlying xenophobia (Monteiro & Renugaa, 2020) as observed in 2020 with vast increases in hate speeches, escalating racism caused by COVID-19, which may continue even after the pandemic (Barrett & Brown, 2008). Especially it is reported that the coronavirus was identified in China, Chinese international students are even more likely perceived as COVID-19 carriers and discriminated. Ma and Miller (2021) conducted online survey to examine how may Chinese overseas Students living conditions influence their anxiety and found that a third of the 182 Chinese international student participants were experiencing discrimination in their local communities, and two thirds via media during the pandemic. Ma and Miller (2021) showed that perception of discrimination may influence anxiety, and multiple linear regression showed anxiety based on perceptions of local and media discrimination being significant. Song et al. (2021) also pointed out that Chinese international students who were abroad may face unfair treatment and be discriminated against in some countries, being viewed as possible COVID-19 carriers and this misconception causes public fear, alienation, and discrimination which may also lead to mental health problems such as denial, stress, anxiety, and fear. Further future research is necessary to explore the reality of the international students' situation world widely especially considering the high risk of international students facing racism and discrimination. The negative impact of racism and discrimination is yet to be explored too.

### **Support strategies**

All previous studies pointed to the necessity of effective support for international students; support ranging from the state of the learning environment, daily life, finance, communication, and psychological distress.

Isolation was one of the results of the COVID-19 pandemic. It worsened the isolation and loneliness of international students even more, who already had faced risks of isolation prior to the pandemic. Hasnain & Hajek (2022) also looked at connectedness of international students during the COVID-19 pandemic especially in Australia and identified five elements of connectedness as social, cultural, political, place, and translocal. Hasnain & Hajek (2022) suggested that connectedness was seen to be as possible to be embedded within the broader concept of intercultural adjustment, an essential part of adjustment and mental wellbeing of international students. Support strategies were discussed for students who are in their host countries, not just for the international students but also for the institutions, communities, universities, and governments hosting the students (Hasnain & Hajek, 2022). It is important that universities not make assumptions about the support international students receive through their social networks, but to provide continuous assistance with academic, language and social skills throughout classrooms, administrations, and students services; for example by providing ongoing networking opportunities especially during the

COVID-19 pandemic (Hasnain & Hajek, 2022).

Regarding individual support of international students during COVID-19 pandemic, Anandavalli et al. (2020) argued based on their review of how institutions failed international students on many levels during the pandemic, and how counselors would have benefited international students in many ways. Anandavalli et al. (2020) suggested that professional counselor much be well prepared to support the community of international students by understanding their needs and being more active advocating the dismantling of systems that oppress students at various levels. In this context, the intersectionality framework by Crenshaw 1999 was recommend for handling the vast range of backgrounds that international students source from.

On the other hand, Nguyen & Balakrishnan (2020) argued how the Australian government failed international students greatly by the Prime Minister taking the stance of telling students to return to their home countries. Nguyen & Balakrishnan (2020) discussed the Australian Government's refusal to provide international students with adequate support during the COVID-19 pandemic, in spite that international students faced significant difficulties in relation to financial hardship, mental health, exploitation and the risk of homelessness. As a result, the author argues that Australian government has done significant damage to its reputation in that international students are showing to consider the response to the pandemic as a factor in the choices of where they go, which could impact Australia needs to look at what treatment and support is offered to international students; not just when it reopens borders. Xu et al. (2021) also argues that there could be long lasting impacts on the universities and US education when looking back at how this pandemic was handled.

Firang and Mensah (2021) looked at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students and universities in Canada. The paper argued that international students were vulnerable due to their temporary immigration status since they were excluded from most government relief programs aimed at supporting Canadians during the pandemic even though most international students experienced psychological and financial difficulties (Firang & Mensah, 2021). Firang and Mensah (2021) stated that there was a notable risk of triggering a further decline in international students' admission, and that the situation created economic implications for Canadian universities. They suggested that it was a necessity to explore the challenges facing international students and provide more care and support for international students during such crises.

Australia, US and Canada are the few countries hosting a big population of international students. Yet, international students in those countries faced many challenges, partially because of the way the pandemic situation has been handle by the governments and universities. The international student experience was dramatically affected by the pandemic, but at the same time, how they experienced the pandemic could have been better supported by the governments and universities' support

strategies. The messages sent out by the governments and universities can change how international feel about the situation. As Koo et al. (2021) suggested, creating a welcome and supportive climate for international students at the university is extremely important considering the plight situation they are in.

### **Implications and limitations**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of changes in various domains of human society dramatically. It has cast a long shadow over both society and each individual's lives. International students had to not only survive the long pandemic but also make a series of decisions towards their future. The day-to-day changes and uncertainties during the pandemic put international students in even more vulnerable position. Government and universities left them under no protection and little support. Travel restrictions, stay-at-home and their impacts, impacts on learning, psychological impacts, racism and discrimination, support strategies have been discussed in this paper. The results showed that the COVID-19 pandemic caused negative impact on international students in different ways and little support left them in plight situation. The difficulties and challenges also caused international students' psychological distress and put their mental health in high risk. During these challenging times, governments and universities can play an important role in providing support, or even providing a supportive and welcome climate would make a change to relieve their distress and improve their experiences of studying abroad.

This paper has the following limitations. First, the literature review was limited to the English language, thus allowing the authors to grasp a wholistic picture of the international students situation from all over the world. Moreover, most of the literature review targeted the international students who were studying in the US, Australia, and Canada. Those countries host a huge population of international students, but the authors recognized that international students in other countries might have had different experiences considering that international students' experiences can be impacted by the governments' messages, infection control measures, and the universities' responses in terms of how they protect and support international students. Second, this paper focused on the international students' experiences instead of government and university responses—still noting that how these institutions responded to the pandemic may have changed international students' experiences. Future research may wish to further examine the government and university side in order to make further suggestion for preparation of future disasters or crises. Each university and accrediting agency should review current research on the responses to COVID-19, worldwide.

Finally, with the large surge in research in response to the pandemic and its impact on universities, we believe that this sets an important precedence: the necessity

of an immediate response to a crisis via research and review. Even after this pandemic is under control, we argue that there needs to be a continuing, active discussion on policy and awareness of the challenges being faced, not just a single voice in response to government policy that may be primarily focused on economy interests. International education researchers and support staff especially must be active in their analysis of how higher education institutions responded—or failed to properly respond—to the crises that the COVID-19 pandemic presented, and continue to update their response policy and practices.

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—Abstract—

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread around the world, there has been various research shed lights on the impact on international students. However, there are few review papers providing an overview of the existing studies and discussion about this topic comprehensively in an integrated manner. Therefore, this paper examines the impact on international students during the first 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic and include: travel restrictions, stay-at-home orders, the impact on learning, psychological issues, racism and discrimination, and support strategies were discussed. The result show that the COVID-19 pandemic created a negative impact on international students in different ways and left them with little support as the juggled numerous difficulties and challenges along with caused the international students' facing psychological distress that put their mental health at risk. This paper also highlights the role that governments and universities can play in providing support to improve their experiences during such challenging times.