

International Students' Perceptions of the Learning Environment and Support Services at a New Zealand University



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Outline of the presentation

- Motivation for and background of the study
- Objectives of the research
- Literature review
- Research methodology
- Findings
- Conclusions and implications

A “quote” to start with

“Studying away from home to achieve their education and life goals can be a challenging experience for international students. But when provided with appropriate support and guidance, the experience can ultimately be very positive and rewarding”

- Henry Ho (ISANA conference, 2012)

Motivation and background

- **Motivation**

- Personal experiences
- IPGMS club members' experiences
- Observations at the campus in last 5 years

- **Background**

- Difficulties faced by international students
- Expectations and Experience
- Expectations vs Experience

Objectives of the research

International students' perceptions

- Learning and teaching environment
- Support services

Perceptions include:

1. Expectations from the programme
2. Experience in the programme and at the university

Significance of the study

The gaps have implications for institutes, teachers and support staff in terms of improving living and learning experience of international students

Literature review

- Difficulties faced by international students
- Students' expectations from international education
- Expectations and/vs experiences
- Satisfaction of international students NZ (BERL, 2013)
- Academic support to international students
- Support in living, work, life and society

CLE and assessment: College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI) (Fraser et al. 1986), CLE (Fraser, 2015). Scales: WIHIC, CLES, SLEI, Student QTI etc

Research methodology

Mixed-methods research

- Interviews
- Questionnaire- online
- Focus group discussions (proposed)

Participants

- 105 IPGMS club members (survey)
- 12 graduate and post graduate students (for interviews and FGDs; excluding PhD students)

Findings

1. Teaching and Learning Environment

The findings reveal that there exists a degree of inconsistency between students' expectations and actual experiences.

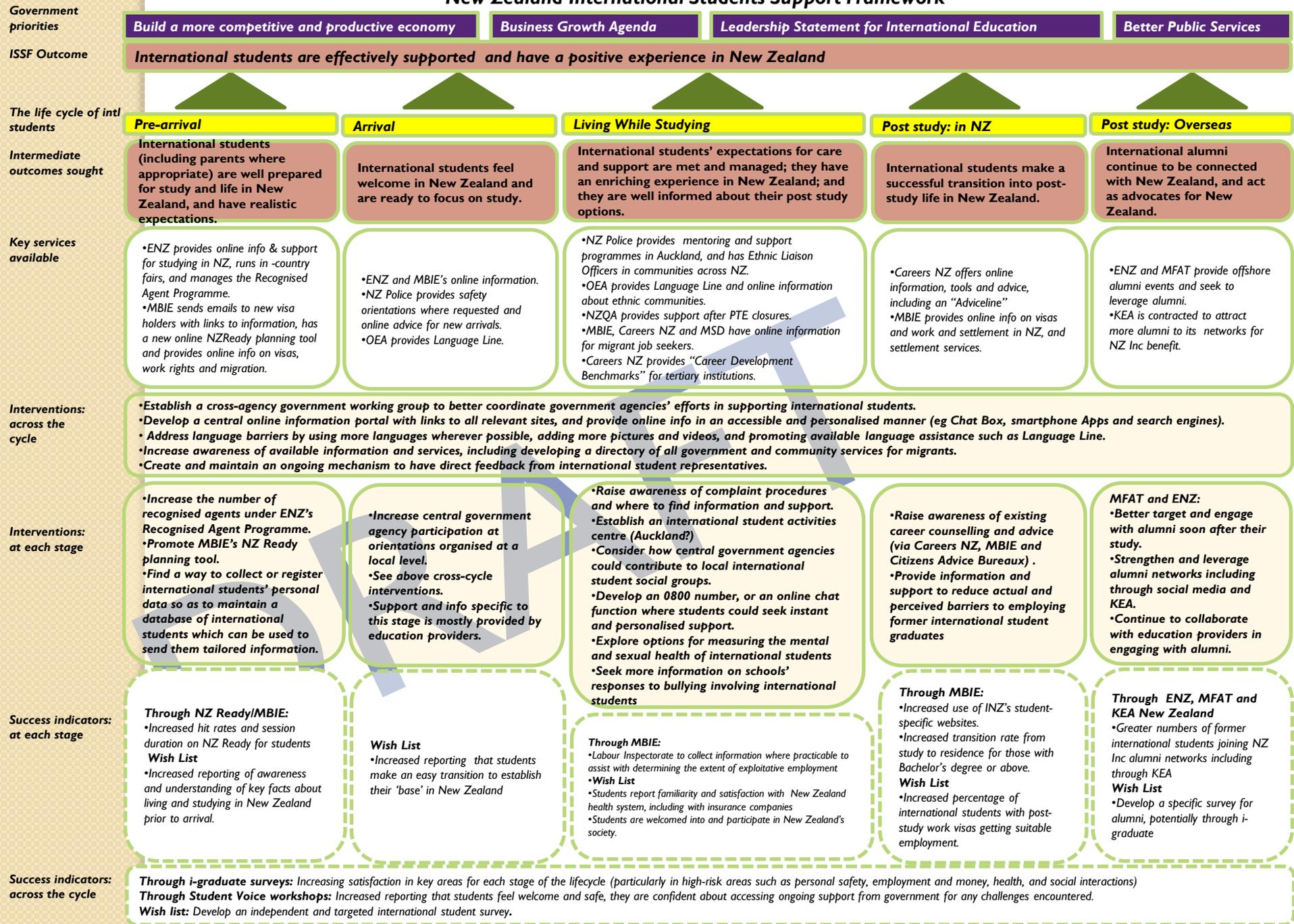
Aspects: Language and academic writing skills, Previous learning Env, Transition(s)

2. Support Services

High level of consistency between the perceived and experienced levels of support services

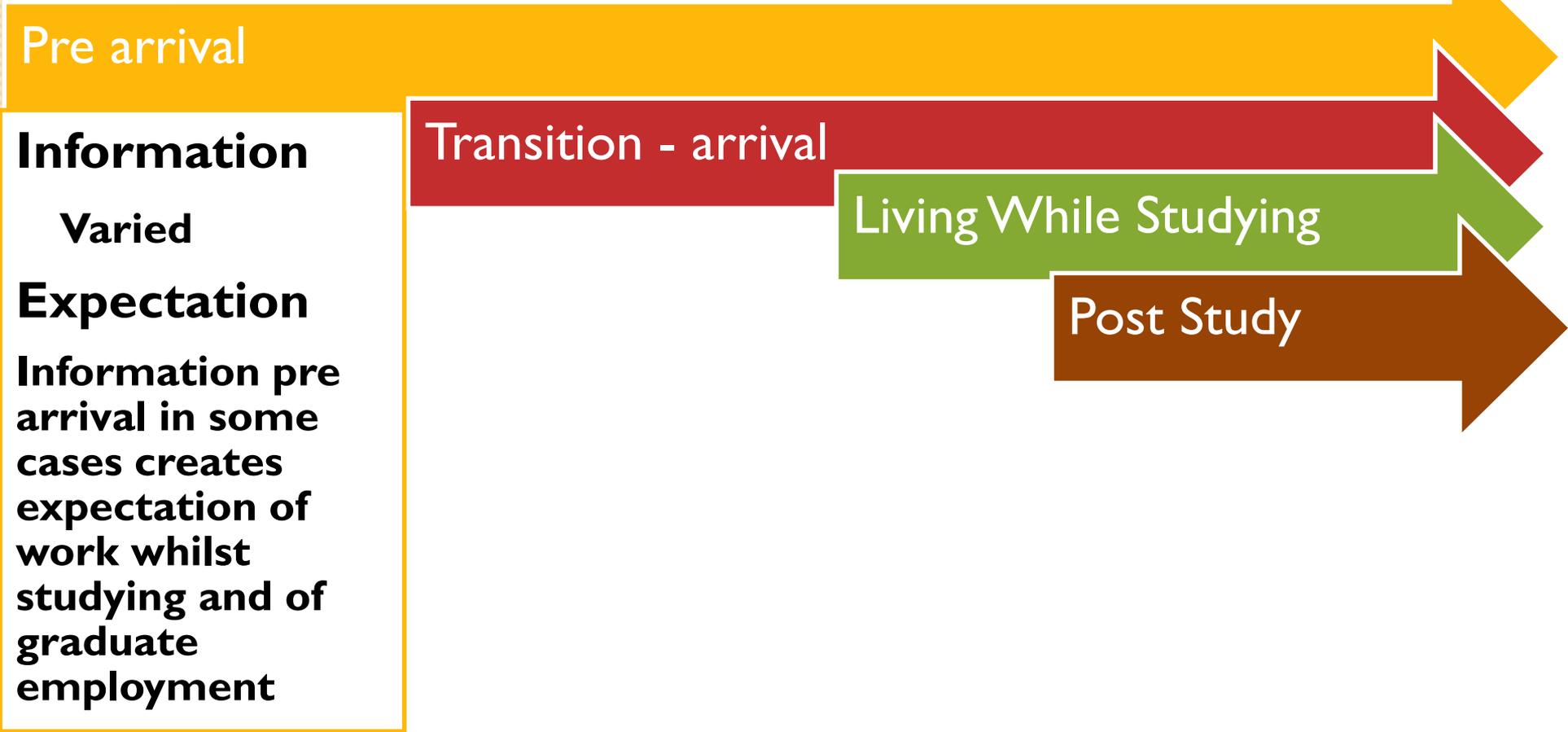
Aspects: The 4 stages of lifecycle of international student, living, health and well-being, inclusion in clubs, groups, societies,

New Zealand International Students Support Framework



Living Support Aspects





Pre arrival

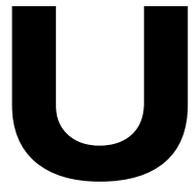
Information

**Varied
Expectation**

Information pre arrival in some cases creates expectation of work whilst studying and graduate employment

Transition - arrival

Expectation



Information
Varies – many fail to read the fine print

Living While Studying

Post Study

Pre arrival

Information

Varied

Expectation

Information pre arrival in some cases creates expectation of work whilst studying and graduate employment

Transition - arrival

Expectation

U

Information

Varies – many fail to read the fine print

Living While Studying

University support

Generally good

Community support

Good- students need initiative to find it – guidance helpful but not always apparent.

Post Study

Pre arrival

Information

Varied

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Post Study

Embedded advance:

preparation need + focus pre graduation

Community Programs

reintegration help varies

Work finding assistance for
Country of origin

Issues: Re-entry + staying

Embedded Prep:

- 1. Relevant work experience (and/or) experiencing any work)**
- 2. Engaging with life in context of intended work - NZ and/or home or intended third country - fitting in**
- 3. Understanding & knowledge of job context in NZ and/or home or other countries**
- 4. Networking - including family, friends, professional associations, govt agencies , companies**
- 5. Distinctiveness – identifying and being comfortable in communicating distinctiveness eg language , cross cultural relevance, social capital, project and study distinctiveness**
- 6. Identify and develop soft skills - communication, presentation, generic skills like research , project management, team and team leadership , critical thinking .**
- 7. Flexibility - uptake of varied and wide range of tasks, other interests, motivation for what desire and what must be done, work/life balance**



Implications

1. Need more learning support to succeed
2. Transition support
3. Post study work transition
4. More practical component

Future research directions

- System-wide study
 - Teachers' and University's expectations: Gaps
 - More comprehensive study
 - Teachers' expectations vs Students' perceptions about teachers' expectations



Thank You

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For ongoing support in the research