

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

# International Student Integration in the Global South

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The Academic and Social Integration of International  
Students in Manipal University

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## Abstract

The growth of South-South student migration, with India being a major destination, has started the internationalization of university campuses in India. International students encounter, more so than domestic students, challenges that can affect their academic performance. The student integration of international students which consists of both academic and social integration is a good predictor of how well students are going to succeed in a new academic setting.

This research attempts to capture the experiences of international students from the global south in their integration in Manipal University, India. It looks at how well students both academically as well as socially integrate. Furthermore it tries to understand how extracurricular activities contribute to the social integration of international students.

By conducting and analyzing ten in-depth interviews as part of a qualitative research study the purpose of this study is to gain knowledge on the experiences from international students in their integration in Manipal. As a secondary research method observations were conducted. This allows the researcher to experience the integration phenomenon first hand and actively discover interesting aspects of the research mentioned by the international students during the interviews.

Initially the academic integration of international students starts rough, since the Indian educational system is different. After they got more used to the system their academic performances start to improve. Student integration has also an influence on the academic performance. The support from other students helps international students to cope with the challenges they face while adjusting to a different educational system and a new environment. By finding the right balance between the academic and social life, international students allows themselves to enjoy their time in Manipal. At first making friends is more focused on similar, like-minded people and after the comfort levels rises, international students start connecting more with domestic students. Thus, creating a Manipal University campus with an academic friendly environment and a global mixture of nationalities.

*Keywords: South-south migration, International students, Student integration, Academic integration, Social integration, Academic performance, Extracurricular activities.*

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

International student migration is becoming a bigger aspect within international population movements (UNESCO, 2016). For decades, the number of students who were enrolled outside their country of citizenship has risen continually. In 2010, more than 4.1 million international students were enrolled abroad (OECD, 2012, p.362). This figure increased to 5 million in 2014 (ICEF Monitor, 2015).

Europe (41%) and North America (21%) are still the most preferable destinations for international students. However, recently other destinations such as Latin-America, the Caribbean, Oceania and Asia are becoming more popular (OECD, 2012, p.361). The south-south migration of students, meaning students from the global south to another country in the global south, is growing. This south-south pathway accounted for 18% of the total international students abroad in 2012 (International Organization for Migration, 2013, p.70). Data from UNESCO shows that Asian countries already are a compelling destination for international students within the region (UNESCO, 2016; ICEF Monitor, 2015). While China and India still send a significant number of students abroad, they also improved their own tertiary educational system and by doing so, became more attractive for international students (Brooks & Waters, 2011, p.2).

Currently, India has the third largest higher education system in the world after the United States and China (Guruz, 2011, p.291). Nonetheless, the number of international students is lacking, even though English is the main language of teaching in higher education. India hosted more than 35.000 international students in 2013, most of them from surrounding countries (UNESCO, 2016). This number is by no means equivalent with either the growth of the Indian tertiary education or the global growth in international student mobility (Bhalla & Powar, 2015, p.23). Bhalla and Powar (2015, p.24) state that Indian universities need to find a way to attract more international students.

A lot of the research on international student migration is currently on short-term exchanges in which students attend a university in another country for a maximum of one year. This type of migration, also known as *year abroad migration*, is generally characterised as *mobility* instead of *migration* since it highlights the movement within migration, rather than privileging the sending and receiving localities and their perspectives (King & Raghuram, 2013, p.129). Long-term movement, completing a full-degree abroad, better fits the statistical definition of *international migration*. These movements last at least a year and there is a more open-ended likelihood of return to the country of origin (King & Raghuram, 2013, p.129).

Student integration, both academically and socially, is an important predictor in how well students perform in their academics. The experiences students have during this time abroad can vary based on individual choices as well as environmental conditions (King & Raghuram, 2013, p.130). Most of the studies are focussed on international student migration in the US and the UK. Since it is debatable if the process of integration is the same for all international students given the variety of cultures, it is important to conduct research in different countries of destination (Manguvo, et al., 2013, p.118).

The prime goal of this study is to discover the academic- and social integration experiences from international students in the global south due to south-south migration. It attempts to understand the influence of student integration on the academic performance of the student. The research tries to gain knowledge on how international students academically and socially adjust to the host country and the university by analyzing individual experiences.

## 1.2. Research problem

This research focuses on the international students from the global south at Manipal University, India. Manipal University is a private institution which is known not only for their academic reputation in the global south but also for their large amount of international students (Bhalla & Powar, 2015, p.23). International student encounter, more so than their host national counterparts, challenges by studying in a different country. Students have to deal with stress from the academic life, economic independence and identity formation. International students however also have to cope with issues such as: a culture shock, language difficulties, differences in educational system, isolation and loneliness, homesickness and loss of their social life (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002, p.363-364).

The way these international students integrate in the host country is an important aspect for studies. A better academic and social integration can affect the academic performance of the student.

Therefore this research focuses on the academic and social integration from international students in Manipal. It tries to understand the experiences from the students and addresses how international students are able to adjust to the academic and social life. Also the role of extracurricular activities in the integration process was investigated. This results in the following research questions:

### Main question:

*How does academic integration and social integration influence the academic performance of international students from the global south in Manipal University, India?*

### Sub questions:

- *In what ways do international students from the global south integrate academically in Manipal?*
- *In what ways do international students from the global south socially integrate in Manipal?*
- *To what extent do extracurricular activities at Manipal University contribute to the student's social integration?*

## 1.3. Research structure

This paper continues with the theoretical framework section in which the student integration model is introduced. This theory explains how academic and social integration can help the academic performance of students. Furthermore, four academic integration scales on how students can integrate are explained and also the role of extracurricular activities is taken into account. The next chapter provides information on the methodology of the research. What research methods were used, how the data was collected and analyzed and also ethical questions is addressed. The next section shows the results of the research by looking at the academic and social integration of international students. Finally in the discussion and conclusions the results are discussed with different theories before the final conclusions are made. The chapter finishes with recommendations for further research.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Introduction

Diversity in university campuses is very common in the 21st-century. The internationalization of higher education, in particular the increase of student mobility across national borders, has been a large contributor for these culturally diverse campuses. They provide a window on the world which offers opportunities for students to listen to each other, learn from each other and develop the necessary skills to be productive in a globalised world (Leask, 2009, p.219). Universities in a globalised world are a meeting places of many cultures where valuable intercultural learning can occur for students from the host country and the international students. It represents an ideal social forum which also promotes cultural understanding, raises tolerance of diversity and discovers alternative ways of thinking (Volet & Ang, 1998, p.6). However, there are some general assumptions in higher education regarding international students. For one, the way international students adapt to the academic way of life seems not always well-aligned with the requirements of higher educational institutes (Rientjes, et al., 2011, p.686). Furthermore, an implicit perception is that international students do not always socially mix with students from different cultures and choose to remain in their own national groups (Montgomery, 2010).

### 2.2. Student integration

Most of the studies on student integration address student persistence or academic performance in higher education. They are drawn from the *student integration model* of Tinto (1975), in which he distinguishes between academic and social integration. Not only *academic integration*, the extent to which student adapt to the academic way of life, is important in the students persistence, but also the participation in the student culture both within and outside the learning environment (i.e. *social integration*). He considers that students have a variety of educational skills, experiences, competences and values as well as family and community backgrounds before entering into higher education. As a result, both individual and social influences attribute to the integration of students (Tinto, 1975).

Similar to the model of Tinto, Baker & Siryk (1999) discovered that academic and social integration influences the student performance in higher education, at US universities. They identify four academic integration scales that influence academic performance: academic-, social-, personal-, and emotional adjustment and attachment. Academic adjustment accounts for the degree of the success of the student in dealing with educational demands such as motivation, performance, application and satisfaction with the academic environment. Social adjustment refers to the interpersonal demands such as taking part in extracurricular activities, being able to work in groups and make friends. These aspects are part of the social life and social network of the student. Emotional and personal adjustment indicates how students cope with psychological and physical distress while adapting to the academic way of life. Lastly, attachment to what extent students commit to the educational-institutional goals (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

The importance of social integration in academic performance is sometimes overlooked compared to the academic integration. Wilcox et al. (2005, p.720) found that social support networks and interactions are a large factor for first year students to decide whether to leave or stay in the academic life. Having a direct emotional support from friends help students to better cope with stressful situations which occur in adjusting to the higher education (Wilcox et al., 2005). These integration and adjustment factors are significant for both domestic and international students. International students however, do also have to deal with other issues that can give added stress (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002, p.363).

Extracurricular activities, which are part of the social integration, can play an extra role in the integration for international students. Toyokawa & Toyokawa (2002) found in a study of Japanese students in an American University that students who were more engaged in extracurricular activities enjoy their time in the academic environment more. Also, those students were more involved in the academic life and perceived more benefits from it. (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002, p.373).

### 2.3. Conceptual Model

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this research in which the international student experiences play a central role. In the theoretical framework it became clear that academic-, social- and emotional and personal adjustment and attachment are all indicators to both the academic- and the social integration of students. Furthermore, the role of extracurricular activities for the social integration of international students is also going to be part of this research. Finally, the research looks at how the student integration is going to be beneficial for the academic performance of the international students.

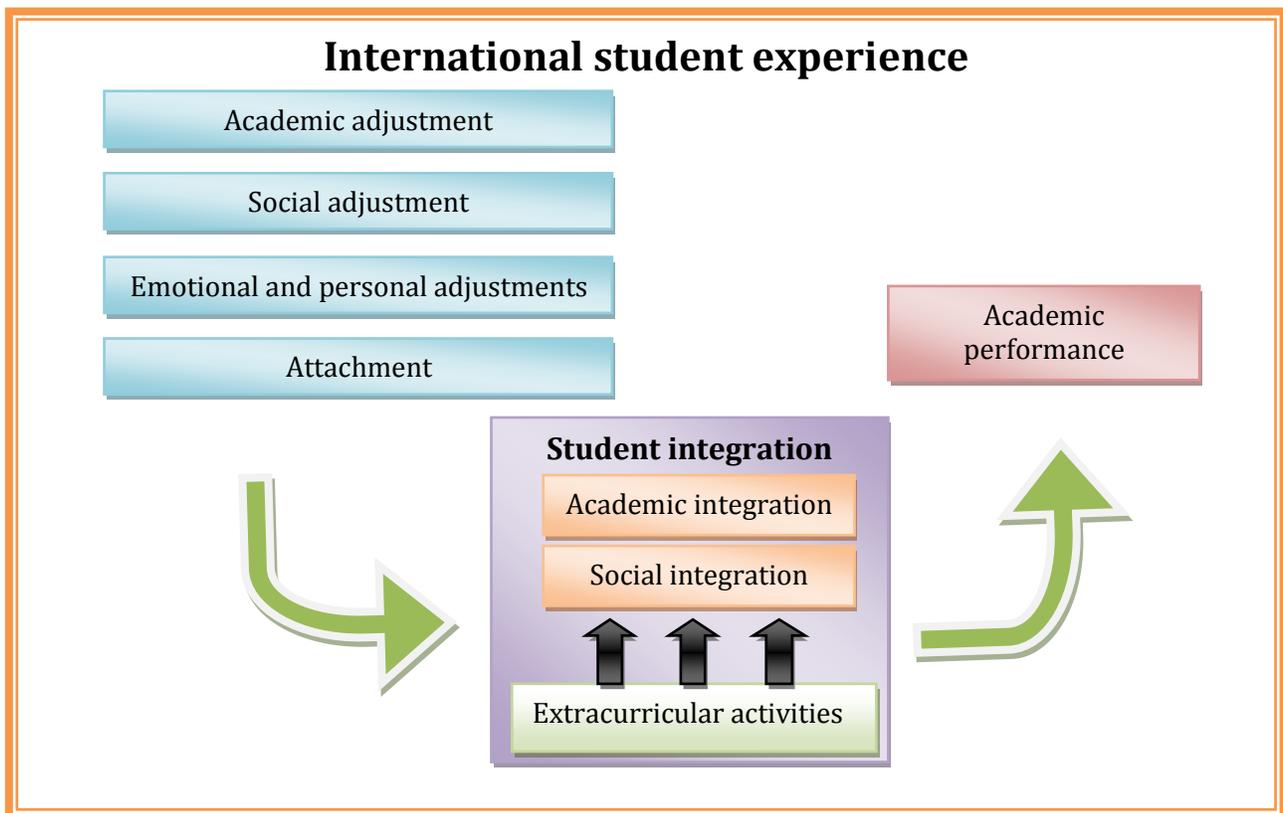


Figure 1: Conceptual model of student integration in relation to academic performance measured by experiences from international students.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Introduction

This section explains the research methods, data collection and data analysis that are used for this research. Furthermore, it deals with ethical questions that occur while carrying out this research.

### 3.2. Research methods

This research consists of qualitative research methods since the purpose is to understand the experiences from students from the global south in academic- and social integration. It also looks at how this affects their academic performance. Instead of trying to discover underlying meanings and patterns of relationships by using a quantitative methods, this research explored and gained an understanding of the experiences, motivations and opinions on the international student integration in Manipal University. This way the data shows how the international students from the global south perceive the student integration. The main focus in this qualitative research method lies on the academic and social integration of the student and how this influences the academic performance of the student.

As a secondary research method, the method *observations* is used. This method gave the opportunity to experience the campus itself since the researcher lived on the same university campus together with the research population during the data collection phase. This allowed the researcher to experience the integration phenomenon first hand and actively discover interesting aspects of the research mentioned by the international students during the interviews (Laurier, 2012, p.118-119). Furthermore it helped with a more fluent conversation between the interviewees and the researcher since the researcher got a better understanding of the university environment.

### 3.3. Data collection

The greater part of the data in this research derives from ten *semi-structured in depth interviews* with international students from the global south attending Manipal University. The interviewees differ from each other by characteristics as: nationality, country of residence, study programme, study year and admission status, for an overview of the interviewees see appendix A.

By using predetermined questions as a framework (see appendix D) the interviews were structured and it also prevented the interviews from turning into regular chats (Longhurst, 2012, p.103). At the same time, it gave the possibility to freely interact with the students and explore interesting subjects the interviewees bring up.

Interviewees were collected by face-to-face contact with different connections. Through a concept called *snowballing* more participants were recruited since participants helped setting up more interviews afterwards.

As an addition to the semi-structured in-depth interviews, a second research method was used, i.e. *observations*. Spending time at the university campus and visit places students go to (i.e. student clubs, sport facilities, etc.), is useful for a better understanding of the international students attending Manipal University. As a researcher from a different country you can to a certain extent, experience the same dilemmas international students from Asian countries face in the integration in the host country. While observing these places field notes were made (see appendix C) of interesting observations and also visual data was collected in the form of photographs (see figure 3).

### **3.4. Data analysis**

The interviews are transcribed and analyzed by using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis and research software. This software allows the researcher to analyze the required data and assign either inductive or deductive codes to useful parts of the data. Deductive codes are predetermined codes that are based on theories that are used in this research. Whereas inductive codes are assigned to data that gives new insights to the research. Later these codes were put into groups named as 'code families' (see appendix B). These code families were used to write the results in this paper.

The first two sub questions are solely answered by the data from the ten in-depth interviews. The third sub question however also used the data from the observations and conversations with students that are active in extracurricular activities in Manipal.

### **3.5. Ethical considerations**

For using in-depth interviews as a research method, a few ethical questions were taken into account. At the start of the interview the interviewee was always well informed about the purpose of the research. Before the interview started the researcher told in what way the data from interview was going to be used, who would have access to the data and how the data is going to be incorporated into the final product. No names would be published and the interviewees are assured the data stays strictly confidential. By signing a consent form they gave permission to record the interview and use the data from the interview for research purposes only. If somehow the interviewee wanted to discontinue the interview, he was completely in is right.

The research is part of a cross-cultural research since it involves working in a distant place. For the research this meant to be sensitive to local attitudes and customs and be respectful to the culture and physical environment (Smith, 2012, p.157-158).

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Student integration in Manipal

Manipal University is a private university that is well-known for the quality of academics, i.e. outstanding medical and dentistry programmes in the global south. In 2013 the university hosted the largest number of international students (2.742) in India (Bhalla & Powar, 2015, p.23). The interviewed students were all really satisfied with the quality of the academics as well as the University and its facilities. All the students said that Manipal especially scores really high because they allow students to get a lot of experience with patients during the practical clinics. Although the University is not perfect and some ways to improve were mentioned during the interviews, for international students Manipal is a great place to study, as an interviewee from Kuwait stated:

*"In India this is the best place to be, because you will not get this atmosphere anywhere else. You will never have so many foreign people interactions in any other place in India other than Manipal."*

Initially in the first few weeks some students encountered challenges which needed time to overcome. Some are not just applicable for foreign students, the newfound freedom of not living under the rules of parents, living on your own and finding a balance between social and academics are issues every student can face if they start their academic career.

The interviewed students however also mentioned a few challenges pertinent for international students only. Having a culture shock upon arrival was one of them. Furthermore some students experienced a language barrier. Even though some of the interviewees can speak Hindi, most of the NRI's interviewed speak Hindi, they still experienced problems with the language since throughout India a vast amount of languages are spoken. For example the official language in the Karnataka, the state in which Manipal University resides, is called Kannada which is a language spoken by more than 40 million people. By not speaking Kannada for some of the students this impeded their communication with the locals or during practical's in the interaction with patients. The interaction with other students was often times no problem since everyone converses in English. However, one interviewee from Tanzania mentioned that in the beginning some of the Indians only talked in their own tribal language to each other which made it hard to connect with them.

*"In this class of 34, almost twenty of them are from the same place and they have the same tribal language. And whenever you go up to them they start talking in their tribal language which is very difficult. You feel left out. It is very difficult to adjust so I was very homesick the first week. I had no friends literally. And slowly we started understanding each other. That's when these people realized we do not understand their language."*

How interviewees experience the student integration differs. On the question how do you experience the student integration of international students in Manipal mixed answers were given. Most of the students mentioned how well international students mix with each other. They perceive Manipal University as a multicultural environment with a large international base. Because of this they feel that students have a lot of like-minded students around them and that makes them integrate really well. Others described different experiences in which they encounter groups of a certain nationality that do not like to mix very well.

Manipal University is for the interviewees a great place to start their academic career by following an under-graduate programme. The degree that they eventually receive holds value and students feel they are getting well educated. The facilities the University offers are mostly perceived good and regarding the social aspect students are also really pleased. As one student from Qatar concluded on her experience in Manipal:

*"Make friends for life, which is what I've done here. I think that was the best part, more than the academics, they have really good facilities here, they have a really good medical college here. But for me it was the people."*

#### 4.1.1. Academic adjustment

To truly see how successful international students are in the adjustment in academics in Manipal is somewhat out of the scope of this research. Quantitative research is able to study if on a large scale international students get accustomed to the educational in Manipal by looking at academic performance throughout the years. The conducted qualitative research however gives a great addition to see what the different experiences these international students have in the process of integrating in the academic environment. The interviewees were asked how well they perform academically and since it is their own personal perception it gives an insight in how the students themselves think they are adjusting to the academics.

The answers on the question how well the interviewee performed academically were rather mixed. Students saying they are getting distinction which means scoring above 75% but also students that do not cope with the different academic system and are just passing their exams. First year students who had to adjust to a different educational system had or still have a hard time. One particular first year dentistry student from Kuwait said:

*"Actually all of the foreign students we are doing really bad academically. By really bad I mean we are just passing. And all of us, we came through scholarships, we used to do really well, we were like on the top of our class. So nobody is like stupid. And then we come here and it kind of hurts our self esteem."*

A third year student from Nigeria who follows the same dentistry programme gave a similar answer:

*"Compared to first year it is much better, as I said for international students it is very tough for us. At least in first year, everything is new, the place is new. We dont know how things work, it is not as easy as it was back home."*

The programmes in Manipal University follow the Indian school system. For the exams students have to memorize the syllabus which for some international students is different since they are more used to understand the syllabus. However, not every interviewee had to adjust to a different educational system. A NRI (Non Resident Indian) student mentioned she was in an Indian based college in her country of residence. For her, the fact that she had to memorize everything made it easier since she knew what the teachers are expecting and looking for during the exams.

It looks like both international students and NRI students do have problems adjusting to the academic environment in Manipal University. A different school system that challenges one in a different way than usual makes the student perform less than their academic peers. Sometimes even to the point of hurting their self esteem. The foreign students that are already in second or third year did cope with the new system and do much better than before. However, one must take in account the first year students that did not adjust to the academic environment and had to leave the course due to bad grades. Since data on this topic is not available, one can only speculate a certain amount of international students drop out due to not adjusting to a different school system.

#### 4.1.2. Social adjustment

Whereas academic adjustment mainly focuses on the academic integration of the student, Baker and Siryk (1999) also explained that social adjustment affects the integration of students and therefore can affect the academic performance. They defined social adjustment as being able to make friends, work in groups and take part in extracurricular activities. For international students in Manipal this means the capability to balance academics with the social life.

For a better understanding of the social adjustment of international students in Manipal it is important to know the social life. All the interviewees are following a somewhat similar daily routine. In the morning, classes start around 8-9am, and between 12-1pm students have a lunch break. In the afternoon students often times have even more classes or they start clinics with the patients. This regular routine occurs from Monday till Saturday since Sundays is their only day off. Also because there is a 75% attendance required to finish a course, students cannot afford not showing up for class. Before classes or in the evenings students have different side activities that keep them entertained, like going for a walk, working out in the sports complex or do activities for a student club. Having something to distract you is going to be essential in Manipal. A student from Dubai said:

*"If you just focus on one thing, it will get really boring. The focus kind of goes, so if you have a bit of distraction or something else, working on this, you can actually go back to study."*

For foreign students the need to these interpersonal demands is maybe even higher than for domestic students since often times a foreign student will mostly migrate all by himself. This makes the need of building a new social life in the host country more urgent. Although the context matters, considering some foreign students study in Manipal because of a foundation programme which allows them to arrive with a group of people from the same nationality. Having a good social life is beneficial for most students so there is a distraction outside the academic life. A student from South Africa stated:

*"I think if you are more social you can get higher grades. The more happier you are the more you can study and the more you can pass."*

Making friends as a foreign student in a different country can be challenging. Initially most of the interviewees came to Manipal by themselves. After the Orientation day<sup>1</sup>, as a student from Dubai explained, students were able to meet their new batch mates:

*"The students were just interacting with one another. You had no idea who is around you, and you are like from a different country all together. And you meet new people, so it was really scary."*

During the interviews it became clear that most interviewees initially bonded easier with students from the same nationality, other international students or students with a similar same background, i.e. having a NRI status. In the beginning the social circle of international students consists mostly of foreign students. The interviewees stated the connection between them was better with likeminded students whom face the same problems. Foreign students that moved to Manipal as well would most likely experience the same challenges which automatically pulls them towards each other. After a period of adjustment students start opening up more with each other. According to a student from Qatar, she initially interacted mostly with international students since she was more comfortable with them, after some time passed she started bonding with Indian students and her social circle started to become a '*global mixture*'.

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<sup>1</sup> Orientation day is organized by the University a few days before the courses start to provide new students with information about their stay in Manipal. On this day students roughly get an idea who their batch mates are going to be.

Since batch mates have to work together due to academic obligations, students end up becoming friends in class. Also the hostel is a great place to meet new students. The university campus offers facilities and social places for students to meet each other. Figure 2 shows the campus map which highlights a few of these meeting places, i.e. Tiger Circle (1), KMC Greens (2), Marena sports complex (3), and Kamath Circle (4). These places are explained in figure 3 and its caption with the help of photos taken during several *field trips* in Manipal (see appendix C).

## Social places on Manipal University campus

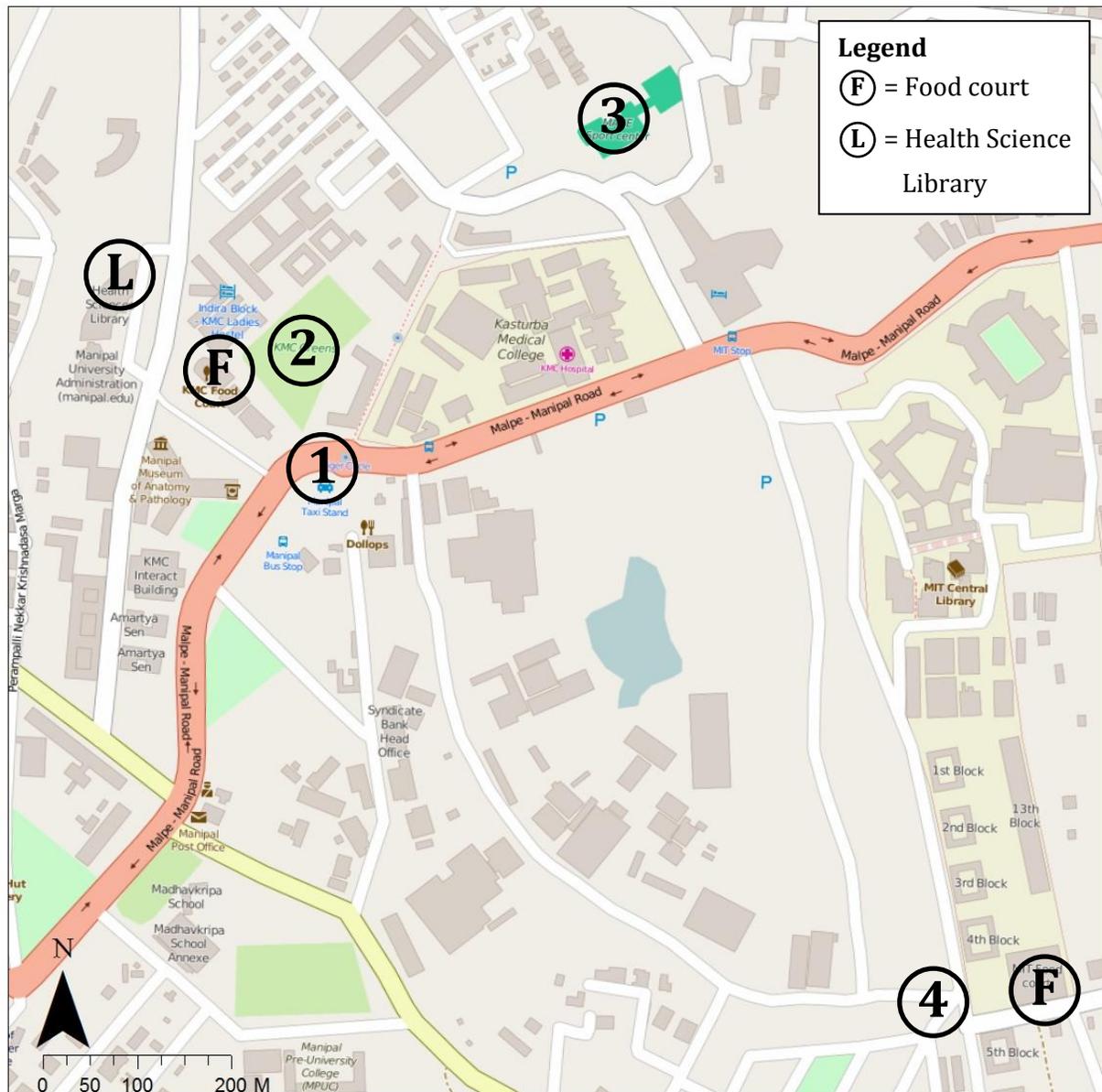


Figure 2: Places on campus where students meet each other based on the responses from the interviewees. The library and the food courts are every day places where student go for academic purposes or in between classes. The other four places are explained with the help of photos in figure 3. Source: Interviews with international students in Manipal and observations (see appendix C).



Figure 3: (1) Tiger Circle is the centre of Manipal. The bus stop, auto rickshaws and the normal traffic makes this place always crowded. This large sign on Tiger Circle announces the annual cultural event called 'UTSAV' where students from different Manipal branches compete in cultural and sports activities.

(2) KMC Greens is the place where students hang out or to either watch or participate in the events that are hosted, in this case Verve2016. In this intra college event medical students from each batch compete in cultural activities i.e. singing and dancing.

(3) After classes students who like to stay active go to the Marena sports complex where they can do a variety of sports the whole year, even during the Monsoon period. Marena is one of the largest and best equipped facilities in the country and for students it is a great place to find a distraction from their academic life.

(4) Kamath Circle is located in the MIT part of Manipal, here students from different courses like to hang out. Students eat at the MIT- food court and do sports such as basketball and fitness. This area is most evenings crowded, on this particular evening in the photo because student clubs promoted their activities and tried to recruit new members.

Source: Photos taken in Manipal during observations, see appendix C for field notes.

Taking part in extracurricular activities is also an aspect that Baker & Siryk (1999) mentioned in their approach for a better social adjustment. Manipal University offers a lot of extracurricular activities for students, meaning activities outside of the curriculum. According to several students most programmes (i.e. medicine, dentistry) organize intra college events and once or twice a year inter college events are held for the whole university at the Manipal campus in India. During these events students can show their variety of talents and bond with different students (see field notes Appendix C-3). A student from Dubai who is part of dance club herself said these extracurricular activities are helpful for new students to integrate. She stated, heavily emphasizing the word *yourself*:

*"Manipal is a place that has a lot of clubs, a lot of places to explore yourself. The thing is, you have to go out for yourself and figure out these places and explore it by yourself."*

International students like keeping themselves distracted in their free time and Manipal offers enough options. However the interviewees were also considering why they are in Manipal in the first place. Academic activities have to be their main interest and therefore finding the right balance between social and academic activities is essential. The right balance allows social integration to help in the adjustment in a new academic environment and influence the academic performance.

#### 4.1.3. Emotional and personal adjustment

Since the lines between academic, social and emotional and personal adjustment are not sharp, the latter can occur because academic and social adjustment is failing while adapting to the academic way of life. Anxiety, feeling lonely, having a lower self-esteem or even depression can all be part of emotional and personal adjustment. The interviewees did not experience those things in extreme conditions when asked. One student initially felt inferior to other students since she was struggling with the new educational system and that lowered her self-esteem. But this was balanced out after a couple months once the different system became more familiar.

Another student remembered a particular student, one of her juniors, who committed suicide after being depressed. Students can get really lonely if they do not have a good friend that can become family to them. All the interviewees did find their own social circle whom they can rely on. The students that initially felt homesick were all really happy with their choice of coming to Manipal after a few months since they had found a group of friends for support if they needed it. As a student from Kenya mentioned:

*"It's good to have a lot of friends here. When you are away from home you need to have a good group of friends because otherwise you will be homesick and you won't like anything."*

#### 4.1.4. Attachment

Because all the students that were interviewed followed an under-graduate programme at Manipal, a good way to see how committed they were with the institution itself was by asking if the interviewees would like to a post-graduate programme afterwards. However, none of them answered positively on this question. Post-graduates programmes in Manipal seem less interesting for international students since they do not wish to work in India. This corresponds with a report from the Government of India (2014) on the status of international students in India. This report concluded that the enrolments at a post-graduate level drop drastically compared to under-graduates for international students.

The reasons for coming to Manipal were clear. Most of them wanted to have a good educational degree and thought an under-graduate degree from India holds more value than one in their home country. Also a big advantage is that the medical programmes in Manipal are shorter than in other countries. Due to costs the interviewees did not migrate to the UK or the US and was Manipal a good second option. Also, since some of them were NRI's they felt the need to learn more of their own culture, a student from Kuwait mentioned:

*"Since I've spend all my life in Kuwait, I thought I'd have to come to India and learn the culture over here, interact with a lot of the Indians."*

#### 4.1.5. Summary

In this chapter the student integration of international students is explained with the use of four academic integration scales: academic-, social-, emotional and personal adjustment and attachment. The chapter is heavily focused on the academic and social adjustment of the students since these two indicators were more related to academic and social integration. Since the definitions of the indicators can be subjective by different interpretations, emotional and personal adjustment and attachment are also partly discussed in the results from the first two scales.

Both academic and social integration has an influence on academic performance according to the interviewees. Students prefer to have the right balance between the two. Academic adjustment is essential for academic performance while social adjustment can be a relaxation of the academic life and therefore, in the right amount, also positively influence the academic performance of international students.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

### Discussion

The results show that the international students in Manipal experience both academic and social integration as essential for their academic performance. With the help of their new social life they are able to better cope with the challenges they encounter in a new environment. This corresponds with the student integration model from Tinto from 1975 even though this model was not primarily focused on international students (Tinto, 1975).

Rientjes et al. (2011) did a similar research with the four academic integration scales from Baker & Siryk and added five additional factors for social integration to make it more suitable for international students: i.e. perception of the faculty by the social network of students, social support by family and friends, social life, ethnic background and financial support. However, they found that social integration has a negative influence on the academic performance from international students in Dutch business schools. Mannan (2007, p.160) found comparable results and calls this a *compensatory relationship* between academic and social integration. Students who are heavily involved in extracurricular activities may devote less time on academic activities whereas students with less social activities are able to focus more on the academic integration and therefore increase their academic performance (Mannan, 2007; Rientjes et al., 2011).

However, on complicated issues as student integration, one cannot allow himself to study those indicators separately. The results in this research emphasize the balance between academic and social integration. Studying at University grants students the freedom to plan their own life. How much time they are willing to spend on academic activities is up to them. The students that eventually succeed to find the right balance between social and academic activities are not only successful in academic performance but also in their future careers.

### Conclusions

Compared to other Indian universities, Manipal hosts a lot of international students in their undergraduate programmes. For public universities in India the internationalization of university campuses has not yet begun. On the other hand, private universities are enrolling more and more international students (Bhalla & Powar, 2015, p.24). Since Manipal hosts a large amount of international students, a multicultural environment is arising. In this setting the international students encounter challenges their host country counterparts do not experience. By not integrating in the academic and social life in Manipal, international students can set themselves up for failing in their academic career.

Based on the data in this research the academic and social integration of international students from the global south is positively influencing the academic performance.

The first finding in this research is that academic integration is beneficial to academic performance. Initially the academic adjustment may have been the biggest challenge international students would face but since there are a lot of students who encounter similar problems it is not that much of an issue. This so-called safety net helps students getting used to a different educational system which is more focused on memorizing instead of understanding. The students that were not familiar with the Indian educational system initially experienced difficulties with getting similar study results as the Indian students, even to the point of feeling inferior or losing self-esteem. Students who choose to study in a different environment for their academics are often times one of the brightest in their home country. So not being able to keep up with domestic students is perceived as something new and a tough experience.

Secondly, social integration plays a role in how the international students can cope with the academic life. By bonding with other international students, the interviewees are able to adapt to the different environment. The support from other international students helps the students in their academic performance. In the process of making friends at first, most international students tend to incline towards similar students with similar mindsets and who encounter the same problems, i.e. students with the same nationality, same continent or whom also has a non-residential Indian citizenship. Initially, international students like to have a certain comfortable fundament since the large base of international students gives them enough opportunities to meet people with a somewhat similar background. After the first weeks everyone starts to open up more to each other and the global mixture of different nationalities becomes more visible on campus. However, the closest friends are still the ones with whom they share a lot of similarities with, i.e. from the same country of origin.

Non-residential Indians have the opportunity to act as a bridge between foreign and the domestic students. They are able to relate with the foreign students since they experience migrating to another country all by themselves as well. However, NRI's are also able to easily connect with the Indian students due to their background. The interviews clarified that NRI's do find it easier to interact with students on campus no matter who they are talking to.

Thirdly, since the university has an *international student friendly* image, foreign students enjoy coming to Manipal. Housing compared to the rest of India is really good and the university campus has a lot facilities to offer. KMC Greens is a great place for events, the library is of high quality and the Marena sports complex is a well-known place for all students on campus. By doing extracurricular activities at these facilities studying in Manipal becomes more enjoyable since it gives students options to do things outside their academic life. Students need to have a distraction from the academics from time to time since every everyday classes can be really stressful. Students do however feel they are left by themselves to integrate in the Manipal community. The campus has some high quality facilities , i.e. KMC Greens, library and Marena sports complex, where students can meet their friends. But it seems that sometimes the university does not always encourage having an active social life since the pressure to perform in academics is high. By actively promoting extracurricular activities, increase the value of social activities or let loose of the academic pressure the university can create an environment where students have their own responsibility to balance their academics with their social life. This way students maybe mess up in the beginning but eventually grow up and become more mature.

### **Recommendations**

Personal characteristics can students make more prone to the challenges international students generally encounter in adjusting to the academic and social life. This immediately is a large disadvantage for the conducted research in this study. Due to the small scale of the research it is hard to make solid conclusions on whether international student integration in Manipal has a positive effect on academic performance. Also, in-depth interviews are not considered reliable methods to study the academic performance of students. To see how the international students perform academically, a longitude study should be conducted which can also include the amount of international dropout students. In this research only international students from who are still studying in Manipal were interviewed which basically implies they are not failing in their academic performance.

Another recommendation for further research on south-south student migration and integration in Manipal would be to look at the role of non-residential Indians in the integration process of international students. The large sum of NRI's in Manipal can be helpful in the social integration of foreign students and in making the university campus more academic friendly for all different nationalities.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Overview of the interviewees

<b>Student</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Country of residence</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Admission Status</b>
<b>S1.</b>	23	Qatar	Medicine	5th*	NRI
<b>S2.</b>	21	Nigeria	Dentistry	3rd	NRI
<b>S3.</b>	21	Kenya	Medicine	4th	Foreign
<b>S4.</b>	20	Tanzania	Medicine	1st	NRI
<b>S5.</b>	21	Dubai	Dentistry	3rd	NRI
<b>S6.</b>	19	Kuwait	Dentistry	1st	NRI
<b>S7.</b>	21	Malaysia	Dentistry	2nd	Foreign
<b>S8.</b>	19	South Africa	Pharmacy	2nd	Foreign
<b>S9.</b>	19	Singapore**	Dentistry	2nd	NRI
<b>S10.</b>	19	Kuwait	Dentistry	1st	NRI

Table 1: Overview of the students interviewed for the qualitative research method..

\* Medicine in Manipal programme is 4,5 years plus one year of compulsory rotating internship course at Kasturba Medical Hospital.

\*\* Although Singapore is geographically in the global south it is not always considered as such since it is a developed country.

**Appendix B: Code families**

<b>Student integration in Manipal</b>	<b>Social adjustment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges</li> <li>• Dealing with the freedom</li> <li>• Experiences in first week</li> <li>• Multicultural environment</li> <li>• Student integration in Manipal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance academics and social</li> <li>• Bonding with students with the same background</li> <li>• Common problems</li> <li>• Connect with students with similar problems</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Extracurricular activities</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Interaction with new students</li> <li>• Making friends</li> <li>• Same nationality</li> <li>• Similarities</li> <li>• Social interaction</li> <li>• Social life</li> <li>• Student routine</li> </ul>
<b>Academic adjustment</b>	<b>Emotional and personal adjustment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic adjustment</li> <li>• Academic performance</li> <li>• Different school system</li> <li>• Indian system</li> <li>• memorizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Feeling inferior</li> <li>• Missing home</li> <li>• Feeling lonely</li> </ul>
<b>Attachment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons of studying in Manipal</li> <li>• After graduation</li> </ul>	

Table 2: Selected codes in code families which are used in the data analysis.

## Appendix C: Field notes from observations in Manipal

### C-1: Promotion and recruitment evening for student clubs at Kamath circle, 14-4-2016

After getting in touch with the *Manga and Anime Club, MIT* via Facebook, I get invited to talk to them about how their student clubs help integrating new students. Their contact person invited me to come to Kamath circle since there were going to be a lot of students clubs that were promoting their club. Because I have not been to the MIT part of Manipal, I decided to go a little early. Upon arriving I see a lot of students on the basketball court playing a friendly game and other students working out in a gym with really old equipment. The MIT food court is large but there are not a lot of students since it is not yet time for dinner. I met two students from the *Manga and Anime Club* and we start talking about their club. The club was recently founded and they want to bring students who like Manga or Anime together by doing activities. They are a smaller club that just wants to share their common interests with other people. There are a few students from different countries that are in the club but not that much. Their point of view is that clubs like theirs can help students in finding different things to do outside their academic life. They believe that having some different activities outside the classes will help students enjoying Manipal more.

After the conversation with the *Manga and Anime Club* I decided to eat something at the food court which is a lot more crowded right now. Students from the basketball court and the students that live nearby all went to eat something.

After the food, Kamath circle was really busy. There were little stalls made of tables with students from different clubs recruiting new members or promoting their activities. A theatre club actively promoted their plays for next weekend by explaining what the themes are. Everything is written, performed and organized by the students for the students. After weeks and months of practicing the students are finally ready to perform their plays this coming weekend. The promoters explain to me that everyone can join their club and are able to participate in the process of making plays. They are the largest theatre club in Manipal and are very proud of that.

Extra notes:

- More MIT students, since this is the MIT part of Manipal.
- There are a lot more guys here in comparison with the KMC part of Manipal where it is more 50/50.
- The members of the club look really proud of what they accomplished outside their academic life and want to show it to the rest of the students. They actively promote their activities by starting conversations with everyone at Kamath circle.

### C-2: Visit Marena sports complex, 20-4-2016

For the reason that the Manipal website is really promoting the Marena sports complex on their website and it was mentioned during several interviews with students, it seemed like a nice place to do some observations. According to the website the sports complex is one of the largest and the best-equipped sport facility in the country. The international students from the first few interviews all stated that the complex is of western standards, although it can be a little too crowded sometimes which is why they do not always want to go there.

Because I already paid to work out in the gym I got the perfect opportunity to visit Marena and mainly just talk to a few people to see what the influence of the sports complex is in how they like it in Manipal. Since it is not only for international students I met a few Indian students that were going to work out. In the conversation we had they told me that Marena is a really nice place to come because for Indian standards the sports complex is really good. It offers a lot of possibilities to stay active outside of the academic life which for some students is much needed.

At the basketball stadium a few friends were shooting some hoops. For those sports you don't even have to pay. Only for the gym, simulation games and cricket-bowling machine a fee has to be paid.

Playing badminton, basketball, table tennis, squash or jogging on the indoor track is all free for students. The threshold for students to go is therefore really low. Students that want to stay healthy and active can easily come before classes and go for a jog since the opening hours start from 5:30. The sports complex is a good place for students to do something with each other which is not academic-related. It offers a place where students can do activities together. The low threshold makes it easy for students to go one time even if they are not the type of person to do sports.

### **C-3: Second day of Verve2016 festival, 25-4-2016**

Verve2016 is an annual event which is organized for students by students from Kasturba Medical College. In this event batch students from different years are competing with each other in cultural, literal and sport festivities. This one-week event is held mostly on KMC Greens where performances and sports activities take place. Since every year can participate this is a good way for students to get to know their seniors according to several students that were attending the event this particular day. After classes the activities start and students from different batches wear the same colour shirts to recognize each other. Today on day 2 Western group dance is going to be the main event. Three teams from different years are competing for the price. It becomes clear there is a lot of variety of nationalities among the students, not only in the crowd but also in the teams. The performances are really good and crowd is very cheerful.

In conversation with a student who is making pictures for the [www.manipalthetalk.net](http://www.manipalthetalk.net), I hear the students really like to perform well, they take these cultural events serious. It is a good way to let loose of the academic stress and is a good opportunity to meet different batches and also teachers are most likely take part in one or two events. Although everyone is really competitive, this is not a hostile environment.

After the last performances the prices are distributed. The second years (4th semester) win the last price for Western group dance category. Suddenly the crowd starts moving and everyone leaves the grass of KMC Greens. Somebody says, that they have to leave since classes start around 9 and people still have studies to complete.

Extra notes:

- Both the crowd and the participants to the activities really enjoy these cultural events.
- Events like this looks are a nice place to interact with the different batches.
- Such events can help break the academic routine.
- Open environment to just stop by and enjoy the performances.

## Appendix D: Interview guide international students from the global south.

### General information

Who are you? How old are you? Where are you from? What do you study? In what year? What are the reasons for studying at Manipal University?

### Student Integration

#### Context

How does a regular day look like for you?

*(Lectures, group assignments, friends, social activities e.g.)*

With whom do you interact on a daily basis?

*(How did you meet these people? Peers from study, housemates, Indian students, international students with same nationality, international students with different nationality, nationalities?)*

What similarities do you have with the people you interact on a daily basis?

*(Same nationality? Both international students? Same interests (e.g. social activities, sports))*

What kind of social activities you do outside your study program?

*(What places you visit? Bars, cafés? What sports are you doing? Are you a member of a student club? How about volunteering?)*

How well are you performing academically?

*(What are your grades? When do you plan to graduate? Are you completing the program in the designated timetable?)*

### Experience of personal integration

What expectations did you have on the integration at Manipal University?

*(Were you nervous at first? Did you expect to make friends easily?)*

How was your first day/week on campus in Manipal?

*(When did you arrive? With whom? What was the first activity you attended on campus?)*

What is your best experience from that week? (And/or worse?)

*(Did you feel at home that week? Did you miss your social life/ network from your home country?)*

Did you have a 'study-buddy' that showed you around when you first came here?

*(Did this help you feel more at home? Did this help you make friends? Do you think this system is beneficial for a better integration?)*

Can you describe how your first interaction went?

*(At what place? With whom? Do you still have contact with that person?)*

Was it easy for you to make new friends on campus?

*(Are you an introvert or extravert? Academic friends that are now part of your social life?)*

What occasions do you miss home?

(How often you go back to your home country? Or how often do your friends/family come over to Manipal?)

(When you feel alone? After you contacted your family/ friends? After they visited you?)

Do you think your social life and network helps you in your academic performance?

*(If yes, in what way? Because of them, are you enjoying your time at Manipal University more?)*

#### Experiences at Manipal University campus

How do you experience the student integration from international students at Manipal University?

*(Do international students mix well with other students? Or do international students lean to students with the same nationality?)*

Do you experience moments when you feel you (or someone else) are (is) not integrated on campus?

*(Can you give an example? How do you think this happens? Do you feel that the University can do something about these moments?)*

At what (social) places do you meet your friends, peers, etc. on campus?

*(Student clubs, bars, sports complex)*

*(Are you happy with these places? Are there enough of these places in your opinion? Can you give an example of what you do at such places? Best experience?)*

Can you point out the places where you meet with your friends on this campus map?

*(Your hostel? Sports Complex? University facilities?)*

Where and when do you meet friends outside the University campus?

*(House parties, the beach? Spending weekends in different cities?)*

Do you think the University Campus and its facilities are important for the integration in Manipal?

*(Outside the campus enough options to integrate in Manipal? Do miss facilities/ locations that you would prefer to have on Campus)*

Do student clubs help with the student integration of international students?

*(New network of people with similar interests? Do you have any first hand experiences with this? Does being active in a student club help with social integration?)*

Do you visit the sports complex regularly?

*(Experiences at the sports complex? Is it a place to make new friends?)*

#### Ending questions

Do you think there are better ways for students to integrate on the campus?

*(What would you change if you had the power to do so?)*

Do you have anything relevant to say that will help me with my research?

*(A funny story/ anecdote about your experience in Manipal University?)*