

TRANSITIONAL EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN STUDENTS STUDYING IN BEIJING, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the transitional experiences of African international students studying in Beijing, China. It was expected that an exploration of what students go through in their transitional process would help university student affairs personnel in the provision of effective services to the students. The study was qualitative in nature and employed a phenomenological study design which involved interviewing African students and also personnel from the student support department at one of the universities in Beijing. It was found that African international students are mainly grappling with issues of language, food, culture and the education system in their new environment. It was also established that technology, Chinese lessons, and local friends are particularly useful in helping them with transition. However, the study has shown that African students do not make effective use of the support services that are available at the university. Therefore the study recommends strong integration and interaction between Chinese students and African international students as a way of helping them to ease their transition difficulties. It is also recommended that the student services department should put in place measures to ensure that students are fully making use of the services.

Keywords: Transition; Experiences; Support services; Culture.