

Loving is Universal, Dating is not: Dating Experiences of International Students in Vancouver

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Abstract : The growing number of international students in post-secondary institutions in Canada has positively contributed to the country's economy and educational systems while also enriching cultural diversity in the classrooms. However, international students face social and relational challenges as they try to adapt to their host nation's culture. One specific area of cultural adaptation among international students that has yet to be studied extensively is dating experiences and romantic relationships. Although numerous studies have been done regarding the relational challenges and dating experiences of American international students, only a few studies have focused on international students based in Canada. Hence, this study examines the dating preferences, dating challenges, and dating adaptations of international students based in Vancouver, Canada. Using a social constructivist approach, a semi-structured interview was conducted among fifteen heterosexual international college students. Inductive thematic analysis was then used to analyze the gathered data and identify common themes. Findings suggest that students' (1) preferences were influenced by racial background and parental approval of dating partners; (2) students experienced language barriers and cultural differences; (3) students adapted through constant communication and being open-minded. Finally, the analysis intends to help counselors and psychologists in various colleges to help understand the issues of international students in terms of intimate and romantic relationships.

Keywords : higher education, international students, dating experiences, cultural adaptation

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