

## **Academic, Socio-Cultural and Psychological Satisfaction of International Higher Degree Research Students (IRHD) in Australia**

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**Abstract :** In line with wider trends in the expansion of international student mobility, the number of international higher degree research students has grown at a significant rate in recent years. In particular, Australia has become a hub for attracting international higher degree research students from around the world. However, research has identified that international higher degree research students often encounter a wide range of academic and socio-cultural challenges in adapting to their new environment. Moreover, this can have a significant bearing on their levels of satisfaction with their studies. This paper outlines the findings of a mixed method study exploring the experiences and perceptions of international higher degree research students in Australia. Findings revealed that IRHD students' overall and academic satisfaction in Australia were highly related to each other, and they were strongly influenced by their learning and research, moderately influenced by co-national support and intercultural contact ability. Socio-cultural satisfaction seemed to belong to a different domain from academic satisfaction because it was explained by a different set of variables such as living and adaptation and intercultural contact ability. In addition, the most important issues in terms of satisfaction were not directly related to academic studies. Instead, factors such as integration into the community, interacting with other students, relationships with supervisors, and the provision of adequate desk space were often given the greatest weight. Implications for how university policy can better support international doctoral students are discussed.

**Keywords :** international higher degree research students, academic adaptation, socio-cultural adaptation, student satisfaction

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