ABSTRACT

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Higher Education Administration

A QUANTITATIVE-FORWARD MIXED METHODS STUDY EXAMINING REPORTED DISTRESS BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN JURIS DOCTORATE PROGRAMS AT U.S. MIDWESTERN LAW SCHOOLS (142 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to identify distress experienced by international students enrolled in the Juris Doctorate (JD) program in U.S. law schools in Midwestern states.

Twenty-seven international students enrolled in juris doctorate programs at several Midwest law schools responded to an online survey instrument presented in two parts: (a) the collection of quantitative data through selections based upon frequency within the construct of the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), and (b) the collection of qualitative data through responses to an open-ended inquiry. Quantitative data were compared against the BSI normative adult nonpatient sample and qualitative data were analyzed for common terms and themes.

International students scored significantly higher in all nine dimensions of the BSI comparative to the BSI adult nonpatient normative sample. They also scored higher on all nine dimensions than two previously reported studies examining law students in general using the same instrument. Four themes emerged as sources of distress among the sample under study: pedagogy, immigration and employment, intercultural difficulties, and coping mechanisms.