Professional Socialization of Foreign-Born Scholars into U.S. Academe: A Reflective Case Study*

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Abstract: Utilizing a reflective case study approach and the constant comparative method, two foreign-born scholars examine their experiences through the professional socialization process in the distinct U.S. academe arenas (e.g., cultural, institutional, interactive). The research questions guiding the study include: (1) What is traditionally expected of a scholar starting an academic career? (2) What does the professional socialization of foreign-born scholars into U.S. academe entail? (3) How can emergent scholars systematically reflect and learn about the profession? Videoconference meetings, transcripts and notes, email messages, and individual written reflective journal entries constitute the data collection sources. Data were analysed following the constant comparative method: (a) comparing different people, (b) comparing data from same individual at different points in time, (c) comparing incident with incident, (d) comparing data with category, and (e) comparing category with other categories. In addition, selective coding, grouping categories to reduce data, synthesizing, and explaining the data, were also part of the data analysis process. Meaningful narratives support study findings. These are presented following the order of the three research questions. Consequently, the need to re-conceptualize the professional socialization process of emergent scholars became evident. Without a doubt, to succeed in U.S. academe, emergent scholars must prepare for teaching, research, and service expectations. However, as illustrated in the proposed matrix of professional socialization, mastering these areas requires gaining understanding of values, traditions, politics, rules, and morals that regulate the academic society.
Keywords: Emergent scholars, Foreign-born scholars, Reflective case study, Professional socialization, U.S. academe.

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Introduction

> With the help of my dissertation advisor, I prepared for interviews to get a job as assistant professor. I dressed properly, had a list of questions to ask, knew how to negotiate my salary, and how to answer the search committee questions. Thus, I was hired and obtained a work-visa under the category of 'alien with extraordinary ability.' Once I got the job, I realized I didn't know so many other important things like the politics at faculty meetings, how to work with a mentor who was also a colleague, or how to react when a student in my class didn't like my accent or my feedback on a paper highlighting grammatical errors (Clarena).

> Graduating with a master's degree, I quickly learned that international faculty positions require having teaching experience in U.S. institutions. Now, while in the U.S., I want to gain such experience, but with an international student visa, we can only work on campus where teaching jobs are very competitive. Currently, I am volunteering to teach at a community-based organization. Coming from a background where volunteer work is typically not accepted, realizing its relevance has been a eureka moment for me. In fact, my mentor recently helped me organize my CV to prove all my service experienced valid! (HeeJae).

Foreign-born emergent scholars face similar challenges to those who are native to the United States. However, they also face distinctive barriers due to cultural, linguistic, and societal issues, as well as the stigma associated with their status as internationals. For example, strict immigration policies are one of the unique challenges that foreign-born scholars experience trying to obtain/keep a position in the U.S. grounds.

Furthermore, each year U.S. universities hire large numbers of international faculty and enrol even larger numbers of international graduate students. According to the 2019 Open Doors Report (The Power of International Education, 2019), in the 2018-2019 academic year, 5.5% or 1,095,299 of the total U.S. enrolment were international students. Additionally, many universities in the United States hired international scholars. For instance, during the same year, Harvard University hired the largest number (5,278) and Emory University hired the smallest number (1,095) of international scholars. These data illustrate a sizeable population of international scholars working and studying at U.S. universities, making this a topic worth studying.

The goal of the present article is to shed light into the professional socialization process of foreign-born scholars into U.S. academe and the expectations for emergent scholars to succeed. The article also aims to explore how emergent scholars can systematically reflect and learn about the profession. Research in these areas is scarce; the article addresses this gap in the literature. It documents the perspectives of two foreign-born scholars navigating U.S. academe and the higher education system. Using a reflective case study approach and storytelling, a full professor and a third-year doctoral student examine their lived experiences navigating the professional socialization process. The article describes true stories lived by the authors and proposes a conceptual matrix to guide emergent scholars for obtaining a good grasp of the politics involved while participating and becoming a member of U.S. academe. Therefore, this article aims to provide guidance to foreign-born and U.S. nationals who are emergent scholars or new assistant professors in U.S. institutions of higher education.

Professional Socialization and Expectations for Emergent Scholars

Professional socialization includes the integration of formal and informal norms, values, conduct, and expectations in relation to behaviour, relationships, and professional performance (Baz, 2016). This definition is present in the literature regarding teacher education; however, it also applies to the professional socialization of scholars in higher education. According to Baz (2016), the process of being socialized into a professional culture occurs through the transition

between institutions and cultures, the adaptation process, and other efforts trying to become an active member of a professional group.

Similarly, Lengeling, Mora Pablo, and Barrios Gasca (2017) assert that professional socialization requires learning and understanding values, actions, expectations, traditions, politics, regulations, and morals within the academic society. How the participants perceive themselves after entering the professional community is of extreme importance; becoming a professional entail more than an accumulation of skills and knowledge (Lengeling, et al., 2017). Once the participants start to feel accepted into the professional group, a new desire to move on sinks in, and they start visualizing a new identity.

Brody, Vissa, and Weathers (2010) explain professional socialization as "the process of developing a role-based identity with values, norms, and symbols that may span many organizations within or across multiple fields. It also refers to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to fulfill the duties of a professional into a specific field" (p. 615). Colleagues, therefore, play an important role. For Jordell (1987), colleagues are a confirming source of influence as they participate in the validation of our professional experiences.

In addition, Pollard (1982) suggests three layers of social contextualization inherent to the professional socialization process: Cultural, institutional, and interactive factors. Regarding *cultural factors*, each profession has its own distinctive culture and academia is no different. It may create "positive *pressures* to act in certain ways in addition to experiencing institutionally mediated constraints" (p. 24). According to Pollard, experiencing pressures links to competence anxieties, related to ambiguities in the professional role: "Many dilemmas and role conflicts will be resolved by recourse to the knowledge of contextually appropriate behaviour which is validated and constructed within the social world of the reference group…" (p. 25). Thus, it is crucial to get to know the values, norms, and implicit expectations that characterize the institution.

In relation to *institutional factors*, Pollard states that institutional bias recognizes power relationships and the structural context of organizations. Institutional factors reflect power differentials among participants and hypothesize understandings produced by negotiation among school personnel, each with their own interests, but aiming to reach common understandings. Pollard refers to the institution's finite resources, how they are made available, and are dependent on policies for allocation of resources. Institutional policies can be constraining by setting parameters of action and enabling when applying institutional values and understandings of what is negotiable.

Concerning *interactive factors*, Pollard explains them in terms of negotiating the parameters of a working consensus. Communication strategies are refined and developed in interaction with colleagues and superiors; these strategies entail projections and reviews of the tacit agreements that are reached among participants. Since each participant has specific interests, norms are needed to regulate their demands.

To summarize, different authors have conceptualized professional socialization and have agreed to include norms, values, conduct, relationships, and performance as the main aspects to explain the process of professional socialization. The process goes beyond an accumulation of skills and knowledge; it also entails developing an identity as a professional who has agency, self-confidence, and conviction of self-worth. The socialization process is enhanced through colleagues' validation when they extend invitations to become an active member of their professional circle. Furthermore, cultural, institutional, and interactive factors are intrinsic to the professional socialization process. These factors speak to the importance of

gaining knowledge about the culture of place, institutional policies, power differentials, as well as becoming adept at building long-lasting collegial relationships.

Role of Mentoring

Mentoring is the process of influencing and fostering intellectual development of the mentee, with teaching, learning, reflecting, coaching, and sponsoring as essential components (Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Roberts, 2000). Professors, advisors, supervisors, and colleagues have traditionally served as mentors in higher education environments. As an example, German, Sweeny, and Robbins (2019) investigated the role of the faculty advisor in Ph.D. students' career goals and outcomes and discovered that students who talked to their advisors about the job market were more likely to apply for tenure-track positions and consider these positions as prestigious. However, German et al., also report that receiving advisor mentoring was not a factor when examining how satisfied these graduates felt about their job offers. As such, the findings illustrate the complexity of mentoring in higher education.

Likewise, Ku, Lahman, Yeh, and Cheng (2008) "emphasize the importance of caring advisors, friendship...and the need to remember international students' uniqueness" (p. 376). An important recommendation is to foster connections with the campus community and other international students. These researchers found that doctoral international students describe the *caring mentor* as a person who is available, works with them, and shows extra patience. Thus, Ku et al. (p. 377) recommend viewing these learners as graduate students who have distinctive needs that mentors should be equipped to help them negotiate.

Similarly, a study by van der Weijden, Belder, van Arensbergen, and van den Besselaar (2015) reports that junior faculty benefit from having a mentor since it positively affects their motivation, scholarly performance, and group management practices. These authors "suggest that mentorship could stimulate and speed up the career development of scientists" (p. 284). They conclude that junior faculty have a more positive view of their work environment and manage their research more actively when receiving mentorship support. Likewise, Franzoni and Robles (2016) report on a formal mentoring program for novice professors coming from other cultures and who were recent Ph.D. graduates. Their findings demonstrate that the mentor program helped professors to improve the quality of their instruction and adapt to the new culture and the university. Franzoni and Robles also explain that the principal causes of deficient teaching performance among novice international faculty were the absence of pedagogical knowledge and the lack of teaching experience, as well as dearth of familiarity with the country culture and the organizational culture of the university. Faculty who participated in this mentoring program received better student evaluations after that.

Methodology

A reflective case study approach (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013) was used to analyze and report study findings. Focusing on the reflections of the researcher, reflective case study provides the researchers the opportunity to explore their past experiences and use the reflection as a learning tool to enhance their own practice (Tardi, 2019). Thus, the narratives of two foreign-born academics, a full professor and a third-year doctoral student, and their experiences in U.S. academe are the basis of this reflective case study. We have a professional relationship as supervisor/advisor and research assistant/student within the College of Education and have worked together in classes and conducting research for two full academic years. Through storytelling, we drew self-reflective data collected, first individually, and then, as a research team.

Storytelling was the strategy we used to generate the data for this article to report on our past experiences and personal knowledge. As Yow (2015) explains, stories evoke life experiences and are conducive to reminiscing and helping the narrator understand their lived experiences. Through storytelling, we aimed to transmit the meanings assigned to present and past events in academia. However, using stories to report findings can be a subjective process; Yow (2015) states that this approach "may result in a picture that is narrow, idiosyncratic, or ethnocentric" (p. 20). Even though this article presents two points of view, we looked at our journeys holistically and were mindful of the need for transferability and reflection as to benefit the reader. We monitored our biases to avoid the temptation of incurring into a false or negative narrative. We aim to share lessons learned and offer useful and positive advice to emergent scholars instead. Therefore, the research questions guiding the study were:

1. What is traditionally expected of a scholar starting an academic career?
2. What does the professional socialization of foreign-born scholars into U.S. academe entail?
3. How can emergent scholars systematically reflect and learn about the profession?

Participants

Clarena Larrotta: I was born in Colombia in a small town in the coffee region. At age 28, I left my country to pursue graduate studies. In the Unites States I experienced tremendous culture shock, which inspired my dissertation work with undocumented immigrants learning English. Obtaining a Ph.D. from a research-one-university prepared me well to start my career as university professor. However, needing a work visa limited my options and influenced my decision to accept the first job offer I received. This formidable experience lasted nine months. I got another job at a public university in Texas, where I earned tenure and the different promotions up to full professor.

HeeJae Chung: A third culture kid born in South Korea; I grew up in numerous countries around the world. Since entering adulthood, though, my academic and personal life have been split between Korea and the U.S. I completed my bachelor's in Georgia, my master's in Seoul, and am currently working on my Ph.D. in Texas. Despite two decades experiencing assimilation into new cultures, I still find myself entangled in the expectations of what I am supposed to do as an emergent scholar. In my second year of doctoral studies and working as a research assistant, I strive to successfully navigate the ambiguous contextual layers and build a core understanding of academia.

Data Collection and Analysis

For this reflective case study, data were gathered via videoconference meetings, notes and email messages, and individual written reflective journal entries during the fall of 2020. We jotted down anecdotes of our lived experiences through the professional socialization process and engaged in reflection connected to the topic, our experiences in the U.S. academe and interactions with people within academe. Therefore, the first step of the project consisted of personal reflective narratives to respond to the guiding research questions. Next, as suggested by Charmaz (2000), we examined the stories through the constant comparative method, which includes: (a) comparing different people, (b) comparing data from same individual at different points in time, (c) comparing incident with incident, (d) comparing data with category, and (e) comparing category with other categories. The following step was to engage in selective coding, grouping categories to reduce data, synthesizing, and explaining the data. As a result, we selected the most meaningful narratives to support the results of the analysis.

Findings

Study findings are presented following the order of the research questions that were formulated at the beginning of the study. Therefore, the first section presents traditional expectations of a scholar starting an academic career. The second section discusses findings related to the professional socialization of foreign-born scholars into U.S. academe. The third section proposes a matrix useful in studying the conditions supporting and hindering the professional socialization of foreign-born scholars.

1. *Expectations of a scholar starting an academic career*

There are three main areas required for tenure and promotion; these are: Teaching, research, and service. Experienced scholars understand the interconnectedness of these three areas. However, this may be new terrain for emergent scholars.

> After graduating with a Ph.D., it took me 13 years to achieve the rank of full professor. This doesn't mean I was successful since day one as assistant professor. Coming from a different educational system and academic tradition where obtaining a bachelor's degree was the last chance to land a career, grasping a better understanding of the new job took me a while. At first, I saw teaching, research, and service as three separate areas and that cost me a low evaluation for my second-year review. I had worked so hard the entire year, teaching, serving in committees, collecting data, and working on publications. However, in a scale of 1-4, I obtained 3 in teaching, 1 in research, and 3 in service. I was so worried and felt defeated. My whole life I had equated hard work with success, and for the first time, this formula was not working. Upset and frustrated, I retreated to reflect and plan a comeback for the following year, when I would have my third-year review! The traditional landmark when institutions decide if you are tenure material.
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> This was my second job as assistant professor. The first one was not a good fit; I felt isolated and overwhelmed teaching, reviving a reading program, getting to know the institution and colleagues, and trying to find my place in the community. I was determined to make this new position work. Here I was teaching and working with graduate students only. The place was familiar, and I had made a few friends already.
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> I made a list of strengths, resources, and university requirements. I reviewed the Policies and Procedures for Tenure & Promotion and promised to myself to succeed achieving the requirements for my next review. The first strategy was to stop trying to do it alone and started to invite colleagues to write with me; one of my strengths is the capacity to collaborate with others. Next, I had to combine teaching and community service activities and started to include a practical component in the classes and taking students to fieldwork with me. They got to know the community and stakeholders, this practice enhanced my teaching, plus I was building stronger community relationships and networks as well. It occurred to me that I could also combine research and service activities and in conversation with a colleague he mentioned how teaching, research, and service constituted an inseparable trinity of sorts. It all came together at that point! Succeeding as a professor required me to envision the three areas, the holy trinity of academia, as inseparable, and include as many collaborators as possible to go on this journey with me (Clarena).

Foreign-born emergent scholars may not have clear expectations and understanding of what the job entails once hired as assistant professors. Competitive by nature of the trade, they are ready to face the challenge, but at times they are underprepared and lack a good grasp or how to balance the different areas required for tenure and promotion. Excelling at teaching, research, and service, coupled with the need to acquire knowledge of the cultural, institutional, and interactive factors involved in performing the job may prove daunting.

Explicit and tacit expectations can be found in the application of Policies for Tenure & Promotion criteria. The written requirements are explicit; however, the application of the policy and the discussion by the personnel committee on how a candidate fulfils the requirements embody the tacit expectations. Some questions that may arise include: Is this colleague a team player? How do they relate to others? How much do they contribute to the daily workings of the program, the department, and the university?

Study findings bring awareness to assumptions that need to be examined and deconstructed. For example, it is expected that an emergent scholar knows all about the publication process and that they know about the cultural and interactive factors while learning about institutional factors (e.g., values, regulations, and politics). While these assumptions are debatable for native-born scholars, they are much further from the truth for foreign-born scholars, who bring with them other schemas of work and understanding of hierarchy proper to their home countries and school systems. For instance, in Colombia, in faculty meetings excuses are unacceptable, people should be direct, make decisions quickly, and keep formal meetings to a minimum. Outside campus interactions are more valuable, and decisions are made informally around a cup of coffee. On the other hand, typically in Korean culture, there is a strong presence of perfectionism. Asking questions or collaborating with a mentor or superior is extremely rare.

Another example is the contradictory nature between *faculty incivility* (Twale & De Luca, 2008) manifested in meetings and interactions with others and the politeness expected in verbal and written interactions. Following the norms of decorum, action vs. language, *do as I say, not as I do*, are contradictions that the foreign-born scholar must learn to navigate. Similarly, it is expected that the emergent scholar has impeccable communication skills orally and in writing. However, having an accent or belonging to a certain ethnic group may not sit well with everyone. In between jokes and friendly remarks, the foreign-born scholar should expect to experience microaggressions from colleagues who do not even realize they are committing these transgressions. Additionally, the value put on tradition while asking junior faculty to stay current with technology, pedagogy, and research trends constitute another contradiction.

2. *Professional socialization of foreign-born scholars into U.S. academe*

Professional socialization involves gaining understanding of the interconnectedness between norms, values, behaviors, relationships, and culture of place. Colleagues and mentors play an important role in the efforts to become an active member of the professional circle. Role models and mentors are present in the life of the emergent scholar and can influence their careers in a positive or negative way depending on the case.

> The moment I decided to further my education and apply for a Ph.D. program in the U.S., people around me, mainly those who were already in the academia, warned me that I would fail because I was underprepared. I was upset hearing such a comment, or more so with the word "underprepared," because I knew I did everything that was required to prepare for this. As soon as I began doctoral studies, though, I started believing that maybe they were right, and I was not prepared.
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> In the third week of my first semester in the Ph.D., I attended a professional development event on how to get accepted for conferences and publications. I left the session clueless, puzzled, and incredibly overwhelmed. First, what is 'call for proposal'? Second, how will I be able to write proposals, conduct research, present, publish, get good grades, and write a dissertation, all at the same time? I did not want to ask the professors because I came into the Ph.D. program with a scholar of promise fellowship and an assistantship. Maybe I could lose these opportunities by asking "incompetent" questions? That evening, I reached out to a senior-colleague and sent her a long email imbued with frantic thoughts and raw emotions. I was certain that she would think I was crazy. Beyond what I expected, however, she responded with a

> long and detailed explanation of the entire process of submitting proposals, how to collaborate with professors, and how to work purposefully and efficiently. To this day, I cherish this email thread since I felt more confident and encouraged that I have the capacity to navigate the ambiguous process. Without this support I might have dropped out of the program.

> In my second semester, as a research assistant, I was assigned to work with my current advisor and mentor. It was with her presence in my journey that I started evolving as a scholar. Now I felt a little braver and told her that I had never presented at conferences. Immediately, she invited me to collaborate on a project to present and publish together. During the whole process, she helped me understand the differences between local and international level conferences and between peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed journals. I had no idea this mattered so much!

> It's been over a year since I have been learning from my mentor. Every week I feel more confident to ask questions and seek her advice. She treats me as a colleague when we collaborate or when she needs help, guides me as a mentor when I am faced with dilemmas or barriers, and listens as a friend when I feel lonely during this journey in the U.S. A year ago, it was hard to imagine I would publish and collaborate with colleagues or feel encouraged to succeed upon graduation (HeeJae).

The impostor syndrome (i.e., doubting one's accomplishments and fear of being exposed as a fraud) is a common feeling in foreign-born emergent scholars. Lacking knowledge about the process of scholarly productivity and how to best navigate the many responsibilities as students and emergent scholars can explain these feelings of inadequacy. The narrative above also reinforces the vital role that mentors play, providing encouragement and access to practical knowledge relevant to the profession. Building relationships with colleagues and mentors and relying on these relationships to succeed are crucial for emergent scholars.

In addition, foreign-born scholars must be conscientious about developing a new professional identity without neglecting their own cultural identity. They should be flexible and adaptive while maintaining their ethical convictions.

> Having obtained credentials from a U.S. university created a false sense among my colleagues that I am one of them. Reminding them where I am from has been necessary at times to justify a different viewpoint about certain topics (Clarena).

> In my culture, coming to the U.S. to be a scholar is not only a huge adventure for the individual but also a big pride for the family. In some areas in Korea, the whole town celebrates this as an important event. Everybody feels proud when someone from their community can travel to the U.S. to involve in scholarly activities. So, during my first year as a Ph.D. student, it was much more painful when I felt my cultural pride was challenged. I was constantly questioning my inner voice, "am I tainting Korean scholars' professional image?" (HeeJae).

Bringing a different viewpoint and new sensibilities to the academic world will evoke innovation and critical development. Essentially, we will grow as professionals and help others grow as people. The emergent scholars must discover hidden capacities or develop their own tools to find creative solutions. They should create healthy and reliable networks, as well as increased self-esteem and self-value to find their place in academia.

> No job meant no Ph.D. studies. Thus, after reporting to the International Office, I started looking for a job on campus. I was convinced that with 10 years of teaching experience from Colombia and Puerto Rico, I was going to find a teaching job. With letters of recommendation from previous employers and colleagues, I applied to 17 job postings and was hired as assistant instructor by the Spanish and Portuguese Department. My education and hard work from previous years had paid off (Clarena).

With increased resilience, foreign-born scholars will be more confident to navigate the challenges. Therefore, as illustrated in the different examples, we examined our assets and found support on key relationships, our human and social capital, to overcome barriers. We identified our strengths and weaknesses to learn, to grow as professionals, and to continue to navigate the professional socialization process.

3. Tool for emergent scholars to systematically reflect and learn about the profession

Emergent scholars must behave as agents of change; they are expected to make decisions and behave as reflective and ethical individuals. Therefore, building on the literature (e.g., Baz, 2016; Brody, et al., 2010; Ku et al., 2008; Lengeling, et al., 2017; Pollard, 1982) and looking closely at the data for this reflective case study, a conceptual matrix (see Table 1) useful in studying the conditions supporting and hindering the professional socialization of foreign-born scholar into academia emerged. This matrix illustrates a systematic process for reflection and decision making, so that emergent scholars self-assess the different situations and events they face while participating of U.S. academe.

Table 1.
Conceptual Matrix

	Cultural	**Institutional**	**Interactive**	**Personal**
Values	Each institution has their own cultural values	Can be regulatory or enabling	Negotiating parameters of a working consensus	Reconfiguring and claiming one's identity
Regulations	Discovered upon affiliation	Established policies and procedures	Norms to regulate individual and group demands	Personal and professional principles
Behaviors	Predetermined contextually appropriate behavior	Civility, following rules of decorum, and effective communication strategies	Emphasis on collaboration and collegiality	Self-regulated Self-driven Agent of change
Expectations	Navigating and learning ambiguities	Explicitly established written regulations	Tacit agreements among participants	Success, wellness, balanced life, and growth
Traditions	Long-established custom or belief	Understanding power relations and structural context of organizations	Transmitted from one person to the other	Based on cultural background and religious/spiritual believes
Politics	Implicit expectations	Process to obtain resources	Governance and power dynamics	All actions are political
Morals	Socially accepted values	Preestablished ethical norms	Acceptable standards of behavior	Life compass to serve the public good

The horizontal axis presents four distinct academe arenas, cultural, institutional, interactive, and personal arenas. The vertical axis presents relevant aspects that permeate the four arenas; these are *values, regulations, behaviors, expectations, traditions, politics, and morals*. Looking at the many stories that constitute our trajectories as foreign-born scholars striving to belong in the U.S. academe, we provide a working definition to explain the intersection between the horizontal and vertical axes in the matrix. For example, when looking at the intersection between the *cultural arena* and the first aspect in the vertical axis, *values*, we explain that "each institution has their own cultural values." Every new job as a faculty member involves learning the cultural values of the new institution. Another example would be looking at the intersection of *institutional arena* and the *regulation aspect* to reflect that there are already "established policies and procedures" to regulate the tenure process and other areas of academic life.

Thus far, the formula to gain understanding of what the professional socialization of foreign-born emergent scholars entailed has been a guessing game. This conceptual matrix can assist emergent scholars to reflect on and demystify the professional socialization process. Foreign-born scholars should prepare for teaching, research, and service expectations. The matrix can help them to map-out their experiences and assets as well as identify the elements hindering/supporting their processes adapting to the academic culture and finding their place in academia.

Discussion and Conclusions

The article highlights the importance of the healing experience. No matter the obstacles and setbacks, ours is not a victim's narrative. It is crucial that foreign-born scholars be highly reflective and find creative solutions to overcome difficulties navigating the different challenges of academia. Developing an ability to collaborate and create partnerships with colleagues can help to gain the necessary knowledge and skills. These findings are congruent with Baz (2016) who recommends close collaboration with colleagues to narrow the gap between the unknown and actual challenges related to the socialization process.

Examining our narratives, the need to reconceptualize the professional socialization process of emergent scholars became evident. Without a doubt, to succeed in the U.S. academe, emergent scholars must prepare for teaching, research, and service expectations. However, as illustrated in the matrix for professional socialization, mastering these three areas requires learning and gaining understanding of values, traditions, politics, rules, and morals that regulate the academic society (Lengeling et al., 2017). For foreign-born scholars, adapting to the culture is important as well as reminding themselves and others to value who they are and where they come from. As Brody et al. (2010) explain, professional socialization implies developing a role-based identity with the values, skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to carry out the duties of a professional into a specific field.

Mentors and colleagues play a vital role in the socialization process. Advisors and mentors can guide foreign-born emergent scholars and advocate for their unique needs (Ku et al., 2008); they can support or hinder their success. Our narratives illustrate the impact that the mentor has on the intellectual and professional development of the mentee (Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Roberts, 2000). As stated by Weijden and colleagues (2015), emergent scholars benefit from having a mentor who can positively affect their scholarly performance and speed up their career development.

In summary, the professional socialization journey demands that the emergent scholar learns about explicit and implicit expectations (Baz, 2016; Lengeling et al., 2017). Therefore,

the article proposes a conceptual matrix to help emergent scholars reflect and become aware of what is involved in the process. This practice, coupled with collaboration with mentors, will assist them in closing the gap between what they know and real-life challenges obtaining and keeping a job in the U.S. academe. Conducting this collaborative research has been a powerful and satisfying experience. The stories provided aim to inspire international scholars aspiring to succeed in the U.S. academe.

Delimitations

The stories presented in this article are by no means universal or encompassing of all the experiences of foreign-born scholars and their professional socialization journeys. Study findings are drawn from the experiences and stories of two scholars from two different cultures. In addition, the authors are establishing comparisons of their lived experiences studying and working at institutions of higher education outside of the United States. The stories presented in this article are bound by time and space, as well as virtual interactions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implications

Bringing clarity to the professional socialization process of foreign-born scholars into academia is a must. Study findings bring awareness to assumptions that need to be examined and deconstructed. Obtaining a Ph.D. degree does not necessarily mean that the emergent scholar is knowledgeable of the expectations of U.S. academe. Therefore, becoming aware of the different layers involved in the process and being reflective, analytical, and resourceful are important skills to cultivate.

With increasing diversity trends and a renewed value placed on multiculturalism and globalization, professionals, administrators, and policy makers in higher education must cultivate tolerance and inclusivity as to acknowledge the value and contributions of foreign-born scholars. To start, difficult topics such as expectations, traditions, and politics should be openly discussed among emergent scholars, colleagues, and mentors.

Foreign-born scholars must develop their own compass and find the path that leads to success. In the process of cultural assimilation, they should also remember the importance of nurturing their own cultural identities. They should relate their viewpoint to U.S. colleagues with conviction and confidence.

The information presented in this article should be beneficial to all emergent scholars, not just foreign-born scholars. Bringing attention to the multiple layers of the phenomenon will hopefully get the conversation started.

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