

Exploring Academic Validation Experiences of Internal Migrant College Students Toward a Proposed Psychosocial Support Activities

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Abstract

This study explored the academic validation experiences of internal migrant college students and their implications for proposed psychosocial support activities. Specifically, it examined forms of academic validation, their influence on psychosocial well-being and academic persistence, and challenges in obtaining institutional support. Using a qualitative research design and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the study examined interview accounts from eight internal migrant college students at Cavite State University–Main Campus during the academic year 2025–2026. Findings revealed that students experienced academic validation through faculty recognition, constructive feedback, peer encouragement, and academic achievements. Such experiences fostered motivation, confidence, belonging, and continued academic engagement. Conversely, limited recognition contributed to discouragement, self-doubt, and emotional distress. Participants also described homesickness, social isolation, language barriers, unfamiliar cultural practices, communication difficulties, and hesitation in seeking academic or emotional assistance. Despite these challenges, personal resilience, supportive classmates, and determination helped students adjust and persist in their studies. Based on the findings, the study proposed the BRIDGE Program, emphasizing peer mentoring, support circles, cultural integration, wellness activities, academic assistance, counseling, and opportunities for emotional expression. The study concluded that academic validation and accessible psychosocial support are important to the adjustment and educational persistence of internal migrant students. It aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3, Good Health and Well-Being; Goal 4, Quality Education; and Goal 10, Reduced Inequalities. Its potential sustainability contribution lies in guiding inclusive institutional support practices that strengthen student welfare, social belonging, and equitable participation in higher education. These practices may also encourage more responsive and supportive campus communities.

Keywords: Academic Persistence; Academic Validation; Inclusive Education; Internal Migrant College Students; Peer Support; Psychosocial Support Activities; Psychosocial Well-Being; Student Adjustment

1. Introduction

Internal migration has become an important consideration in higher education as students relocate within their countries to pursue educational opportunities. Although relocation may improve access to higher education, it can also expose students to unfamiliar institutional cultures, disrupted social relationships, and psychological pressures. Academic validation is particularly important because recognition and affirmation of students' abilities contribute to motivation, confidence, and educational persistence. Internal migrant students may experience

alienation, perceived prejudice, and difficulties integrating into new academic communities. Such experiences can weaken their academic self-efficacy and sense of belonging. Financial insecurity, social isolation, and limited family support may further affect academic commitment and psychosocial well-being. These challenges demonstrate that student success depends not only on academic competence but also on meaningful social relationships and institutional recognition. Supportive academic environments can address these difficulties through inclusive practices, peer relationships, and psychosocial assistance. Community connections and cultural inclusiveness strengthen students' sense of acceptance and academic validation. Accordingly, higher education institutions must recognize the distinctive circumstances of internal migrant students and provide support that addresses both their academic and psychosocial needs.

Related literature identifies several interconnected themes concerning academic validation, social support, cultural adjustment, psychosocial challenges, and academic persistence among internal migrant college students. Academic validation and institutional recognition are essential to students' educational experiences. According to Dykema (2024), validation involves recognizing students' academic efforts and establishing supportive relationships that promote personal and educational development. Faculty encouragement and peer recognition contribute to academic confidence, while inclusive learning environments strengthen student engagement. Blalock et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of positive faculty-student interactions, while Azpeitia et al. (2025) highlighted the relationship between institutional recognition and students' sense of belonging. Similarly, Andrade (2025) emphasized the importance of institutional support in addressing the adjustment difficulties of migrant students. These findings reinforce the need for inclusive academic practices (Andrade, 2025; Blalock et al., 2024). Social support represents another major theme. Liu et al. (2025) argue that social support influences students' identity, motivation, and academic performance. Emotional encouragement strengthens acceptance and resilience, while academic assistance and informational resources help students navigate institutional expectations. Cultural recognition also supports positive relationships between students and educators. Peer networks facilitate shared learning, encouragement, and resource exchange, contributing to academic success. Cultural adjustment and acculturation influence how migrant students perceive academic validation. Acculturation involves cultural, social, and psychological adaptation to unfamiliar environments (Berry, 1997). Successful adjustment contributes to academic confidence, whereas language differences and unfamiliar educational expectations can weaken belonging and self-efficacy. Communication barriers may restrict academic participation and social relationships, while differences in institutional expectations may produce feelings of inadequacy. Limited support can intensify isolation, whereas supportive communities encourage motivation and confidence.

Inclusive institutional strategies are therefore important. Academic mentoring and guidance can help students adjust to unfamiliar learning environments (Waqar et al., 2025). Culturally responsive practices strengthen identity recognition and belonging. Related literature also emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive psychosocial assistance, institutional counseling, and comprehensive validation practices. As Milagres and Reis (2024) point out, academic validation must extend beyond academic performance to address students' broader developmental needs. Personal resilience, family support, and belonging also influence academic persistence. Tulowiecka (2024) identified family involvement and personal determination as protective factors. Supportive family relationships provide stability during educational transitions. Perseverance toward long-term goals contributes to continued academic engagement (Duckworth et al., 2007), while resilience-building activities help students manage academic pressures. These protective factors are especially relevant when students experience cultural displacement and identity conflicts. Difficulties balancing academic expectations and social adjustment can undermine belonging. Psychosocial support activities constitute another recurring theme. Peer mentoring may strengthen student relationships and encourage mutual academic and emotional support. Faculty awareness of students' diverse identities can contribute to more inclusive and supportive educational environments. Ngo et al. (2025) also present the importance of recognizing the specific circumstances of migrant students. However, limited academic resources, social exclusion, and inadequate guidance can contribute to disengagement. Targeted institutional assistance may help students overcome adjustment difficulties and access appropriate academic support. However, stigma and reluctance to seek psychosocial services may remain additional barriers.

Academic adjustment is further influenced by structural and socioeconomic conditions. Abdusamatov et al. (2025) identified educational and economic barriers that complicate migrant students' academic transitions. Waqar et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of academic and social assistance, while Fatima and Niazi (2024) examined psychosocial difficulties associated with adjustment. Beri et al. (2025) discussed challenges associated with educational transitions, including unfamiliar academic expectations, social integration, adaptation to competitive educational environments, and resource limitations. Supportive institutional environments and inclusive educational practices can strengthen students' sense of belonging and promote positive academic experiences (Johnson, 2022). Academic disruption and adjustment difficulties may affect students' educational participation. Economic disadvantages and limited institutional resources can further intensify these difficulties. Cultural displacement and identity-related concerns also influence adjustment, while inclusive educational environments and culturally responsive guidance can promote belonging. Institutional approaches that recognize students' diverse experiences support more individualized assistance. The literature also emphasizes the relationship between academic recognition and psychosocial well-being. The literature discusses the challenges of displacement and belonging, while previous literature also emphasizes the importance of supportive academic relationships. Potential challenges include institutional support as relevant to student adjustment, and the literature

highlights initiatives that encourage interaction and inclusion. Academic assistance and supportive educational activities may also strengthen resilience. Torres Stone et al. (2024) further underscored the importance of addressing psychosocial concerns affecting students' educational experiences.

Coping strategies are essential when internal migrant students experience isolation, cultural dislocation, and academic pressures. Students may respond to these challenges by seeking support, participating in culturally relevant activities, and developing supportive relationships. Peer tutoring and collaborative learning encourage academic and emotional connections, while culturally responsive activities promote adjustment, well-being, and a stronger sense of belonging. Institutional recognition and culturally sensitive counseling may also encourage students to access appropriate support services and manage psychological difficulties. Academic validation may strengthen students' motivation, confidence, and perceptions of academic achievement. Supportive educational experiences further contribute to engagement and positive adjustment to university life. Moreover, migration experiences may be shaped by family circumstances, social relationships, and educational opportunities, which influence how students adapt to unfamiliar academic and social environments. Collectively, these considerations suggest that academic validation should be understood alongside students' personal backgrounds, social relationships, and adjustment experiences.

Globally, internal migration for higher education reflects broader concerns regarding educational mobility, equity, cultural adjustment, and psychosocial well-being. Students moving between regions may encounter unfamiliar academic cultures, limited resources, and difficulties establishing support networks. These conditions can affect their educational participation and academic confidence. Research emphasizes the need for inclusive environments that recognize diverse cultural experiences and support student adjustment (Johnson, 2022). Institutional recognition and social assistance are particularly important in addressing migration-related disadvantages (Liu et al., 2025). At the national level, internal migration raises concerns about unequal educational opportunities, financial pressures, student welfare, and differences between rural and urban academic environments. Students relocating for higher education may experience unfamiliar institutional requirements and limited social support. These difficulties highlight the importance of accessible counseling, academic mentoring, inclusive instruction, and student assistance programs. Economic and institutional inequalities may further complicate educational transitions, while supportive academic practices can strengthen students' sense of acceptance and participation. In the Philippine higher education context, internal migrant students may relocate from provincial communities to institutions offering broader academic opportunities. Their adjustment involves academic, emotional, cultural, and social dimensions. Educational institutions therefore have an important responsibility to provide recognition, guidance, and psychosocial assistance responsive to their circumstances. Locally, the study focuses on internal migrant college students enrolled at Cavite State University–Main Campus during the academic year 2025–2026. It examines how faculty recognition, peer encouragement, and institutional practices influence their academic validation experiences. Particular attention is given to psychosocial challenges, academic persistence, and the availability of support mechanisms. Understanding these experiences provides a contextual basis for developing psychosocial support activities appropriate to the student's identified needs.

The study is conceptually grounded in academic validation, social support, cultural adjustment, resilience, and student belonging. These interconnected concepts explain how internal migrant college students experience recognition, respond to educational transitions, and maintain academic engagement despite psychosocial challenges.

Academic validation emphasizes the recognition and affirmation of students' intellectual capacities, efforts, and educational potential. According to Dykema (2024), supportive relationships between students and educators strengthen confidence, motivation, and academic development. This perspective recognizes that students' educational experiences are influenced not only by academic outcomes but also by meaningful interactions within the institution. Social support provides another conceptual foundation. Liu et al. (2025) argue that support networks influence students' self-identity, motivation, and academic performance. Emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance contribute to students' ability to manage adjustment difficulties. Supportive relationships encourage acceptance and resilience, while peer networks facilitate academic cooperation and resource sharing. The concept of acculturation explains how students adapt to new cultural and educational environments. Berry (1997) described acculturation in relation to cultural, social, and psychological adjustment. For internal migrant students, this process involves adapting to unfamiliar institutional expectations while maintaining their cultural identities. Successful adjustment is associated with confidence and positive educational experiences, whereas difficulties in communication and social integration can weaken belonging. Resilience and academic persistence also provide important conceptual perspectives. Duckworth et al. (2007) emphasized perseverance toward long-term goals. Resilience-building approaches may also help students manage educational difficulties and maintain academic persistence. Academic belonging further strengthens students' motivation to participate in institutional activities and maintain their educational commitments. These concepts collectively guide the study in examining how academic validation from faculty, peers, and institutional structures relates to psychosocial well-being and academic persistence. They also provide a foundation for identifying support activities that address students' academic, emotional, social, and cultural adjustment needs.

Despite growing research on academic validation, migration, and psychosocial well-being, several gaps remain concerning the experiences of internal migrant college students. Existing literature frequently addresses international migration or general student adjustment, while the academic validation experiences of students

relocating within their own countries receive comparatively limited attention. A theoretical gap exists in integrating academic validation with psychosocial support and cultural adjustment specifically for internal migrant learners. Although previous studies emphasize the importance of supportive relationships (Blalock et al., 2024) and institutional recognition (Azpeitia et al., 2025), further understanding is needed regarding how these experiences influence the academic and psychosocial adjustment of internally mobile students. An empirical gap concerns the relationship between academic validation, emotional well-being, belonging, and academic persistence. While studies have examined psychosocial barriers and institutional support, the distinct experiences of internal migrant students require closer investigation. Limited attention has also been given to how students interpret recognition from faculty, peers, and institutional structures. Methodological and contextual gaps are likewise evident. Existing research provides limited understanding of how internal migrant students describe their academic validation experiences within particular institutional settings. Differences in educational backgrounds, socioeconomic conditions, cultural expectations, and available support services may shape these experiences in ways that require context-sensitive examination. A practical gap concerns the availability of psychosocial support activities specifically designed for internal migrant college students. Peer mentoring, academic assistance, and culturally responsive programs may provide valuable support to students. However, institutions require a clearer understanding of students' lived experiences to develop interventions that address their specific academic and psychosocial needs. To address these gaps, the present study explores the academic validation experiences of internal migrant college students at Cavite State University–Main Campus. It examines the forms of validation received, their perceived influence on psychosocial well-being and academic persistence, and the challenges encountered in obtaining support. The study seeks to provide an evidence-based foundation for proposed psychosocial support activities that promote recognition, resilience, belonging, and educational inclusion.

The study aligns with three relevant Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being, SDG 4 – Quality Education, and SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities. These goals correspond to its emphasis on psychosocial well-being, inclusive educational opportunities, and equitable institutional support for internal migrant college students.

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being. The study supports this goal by examining the emotional and psychosocial challenges associated with internal migration, including isolation, homesickness, stress, and difficulties adjusting to unfamiliar educational environments. By identifying students' support needs, the research provides a basis for proposing counseling, wellness activities, and peer-support initiatives that may promote psychological well-being and resilience.

SDG 4 – Quality Education. The study contributes to this goal by emphasizing inclusive and supportive higher education environments. Academic validation through faculty recognition, constructive feedback, peer encouragement, and institutional assistance can strengthen students' confidence, participation, and persistence. The proposed psychosocial support activities are intended to help internal migrant students participate more effectively in academic life and access appropriate educational support.

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities. The study relates to this goal by examining the challenges encountered by students relocating from different geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds. Differences in educational preparation, cultural familiarity, access to institutional resources, and social support may create disadvantages for internal migrant students. Identifying these challenges can guide institutions in developing more equitable and inclusive student assistance mechanisms. Together, these SDGs reflect the study's commitment to promoting psychosocial well-being, educational inclusion, and equitable opportunities in higher education. Its contribution is primarily educational and psychosocial, rather than environmental or ecological.

The study contributes to multidisciplinary sustainability by integrating perspectives from education, psychology, sociology, guidance and counseling, community development, and institutional governance. Its importance lies in understanding how academic validation and psychosocial support can strengthen the capacity of internal migrant college students to adjust, participate, and persist in higher education. In terms of educational sustainability, the study emphasizes the importance of maintaining inclusive learning environments that recognize students' diverse backgrounds and educational experiences. Faculty encouragement, constructive academic feedback, and peer mentoring may strengthen student engagement and academic persistence. Understanding these mechanisms can assist institutions in developing continuing support practices responsive to student needs. Regarding psychosocial and public health sustainability, the research highlights the relationship between academic experiences and emotional well-being. Internal migrant students may encounter loneliness, stress, uncertainty, and adjustment difficulties. Identifying these concerns provides a foundation for counseling, wellness activities, and psychosocial assistance that support students' resilience and psychological stability. The study also contributes to socioeconomic sustainability by recognizing that educational mobility may involve financial constraints, unequal access to resources, and differences in institutional familiarity. Inclusive academic and psychosocial support can help reduce barriers to participation and assist students in continuing their education despite challenging circumstances. In relation to cultural and community sustainability, the study acknowledges the importance of respecting students' cultural backgrounds and strengthening their sense of belonging. Peer-support networks, cultural integration activities, and supportive campus relationships may promote mutual understanding, social inclusion, and positive interaction among students from different communities. Finally, the study supports institutional and governance sustainability by providing insights that can guide higher education institutions in improving student welfare services. The identification of academic validation experiences and psychosocial challenges can inform the planning of guidance programs, peer mentoring, academic support groups, and other student-centered activities. These initiatives may contribute to more responsive and inclusive institutional

practices. Overall, the study demonstrates that academic validation is relevant not only to individual academic success but also to the sustainability of supportive and equitable higher education environments. By examining the experiences of internal migrant college students, the research provides a foundation for psychosocial support activities that promote educational participation, resilience, belonging, and institutional inclusion.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative research design to examine the academic validation experiences of internal migrant college students. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore and understand individuals' experiences, perspectives, and the meanings they assign to social phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2024). Specifically, the study adopted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which emphasizes understanding individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they assign to them (Nizza et al., 2021). This approach enabled the researcher to explore how internal migrant students perceived academic recognition, encouragement, and institutional support, as well as how these experiences influenced their psychosocial well-being and academic persistence. Through participants' personal narratives, the study sought to identify meaningful experiences and generate insights relevant to developing psychosocial support activities.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Cavite State University–Main Campus in Cavite, Philippines, during the academic year 2025–2026. The institution was selected because it accommodates students from different provinces and regions who relocate to pursue higher education. This setting provided an opportunity to examine academic validation experiences among students adjusting to unfamiliar academic, social, and cultural environments. The study focused on students' experiences within the university, particularly their interactions with faculty members, peers, and institutional support structures.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The participants were internal migrant undergraduate students enrolled at Cavite State University–Main Campus. They included first-year to fourth-year students from different degree programs who had relocated from other provinces or regions to Cavite for educational purposes. These students were considered appropriate participants because their experiences involved adapting to unfamiliar academic expectations, establishing new social relationships, and managing the emotional and psychosocial challenges associated with relocation. Their accounts provided insights into academic recognition, belonging, resilience, and institutional support. Students who were native residents of Cavite, those living in their permanent family residences within the local community, graduate students, and individuals enrolled in short-term or non-degree programs were excluded.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed intentional participant selection, focusing on undergraduate students who met the criteria for internal migration. Eligible participants were originally from provinces or regions outside Cavite, had relocated specifically for educational purposes, and were officially enrolled in first-year to fourth-year degree programs at Cavite State University–Main Campus. The selection sought representation across academic levels and degree programs to capture different stages of adjustment and educational experiences. The methodology also indicated an intention to include male and female participants to obtain diverse perspectives. Recruitment was facilitated through school officials and student groups to identify eligible participants. A total of eight (8) internal migrant undergraduate students participated in the study. They were selected based on the established inclusion criteria to ensure that their experiences were relevant to the research objectives.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study primarily utilized semi-structured interviews to gather detailed accounts of internal migrant students' academic validation experiences. These interviews allowed participants to describe instances of recognition, encouragement, affirmation, and the absence of validation within their academic environments. The methodology also described focus group discussions to encourage participants to share and compare experiences, open-ended questionnaires to gather additional perspectives, and reflective notebooks or written narratives to document personal challenges and achievements. Audio recordings and field notes supported the documentation of participants' responses. These qualitative instruments were intended to capture academic, emotional, social, and cultural dimensions of students' experiences and provide information for the proposed psychosocial support activities.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process began with identifying and recruiting internal migrant college students who satisfied the established inclusion criteria. School officials and student groups assisted in identifying potential participants. After obtaining informed consent, the researcher arranged interview sessions based on participants' availability and accessibility. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online, allowing students to describe their

experiences of academic validation, adjustment difficulties, and psychosocial support. Semi-structured interviews served as the principal data collection method, supplemented by focus group discussions, open-ended questionnaires, and reflective narratives as described in the methodology. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences of academic recognition, peer relationships, institutional assistance, and challenges associated with relocation. Interview sessions were audio-recorded with consent, while field notes documented relevant information. The collected responses were transcribed, organized, and categorized for qualitative analysis. Throughout the process, the researcher emphasized confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and sensitivity when discussing personal or emotional experiences.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and thematic interpretation to examine the participants' academic validation experiences. Interview transcripts, field notes, and other qualitative responses were organized and reviewed to identify recurring experiences, meaningful statements, and common patterns. The analysis focused on understanding how students interpreted academic recognition, institutional support, adjustment challenges, and their effects on psychosocial well-being and academic persistence. The thematic interpretation addressed four interconnected dimensions: sense of belonging, academic recognition, coping and resilience, and psychosocial support needs. Sense of belonging concerned students' experiences of acceptance and inclusion within the university community. Academic recognition reflected the importance of faculty encouragement, peer acknowledgment, and affirmation of students' efforts. Coping and resilience involved responses to homesickness, financial difficulties, academic pressures, and unfamiliar environments. Psychosocial support needs emphasized the importance of counseling, peer mentoring, wellness activities, and other institutional assistance. The analysis also incorporated a comparison of the participants' experiences with existing literature. Previous research identified social isolation, financial difficulties, cultural adjustment, and limited support networks as challenges associated with internal migration (Abdusamatov et al., 2025). Academic validation was examined in relation to educational persistence, belonging, and student development (Rendón, 1994). The absence of academic recognition was associated with disengagement and reduced academic self-efficacy (Felten & Lambert, 2020), while psychosocial support initiatives were considered important in addressing students' emotional and social adjustment needs. Through thematic interpretation and literature comparison, the study examined the relationship between academic validation, psychosocial well-being, and academic persistence. The resulting insights provided the basis for proposing psychosocial support activities responsive to the academic, emotional, and social needs of internal migrant college students.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical procedures to protect participants' rights, privacy, and well-being throughout data collection. Informed consent was obtained before conducting interviews and recording participants' responses. Participants were informed about the research process and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by protecting identifying information and anonymizing responses. The researcher also considered the sensitive nature of participants' experiences, particularly those involving emotional distress, social isolation, and adjustment difficulties. Discussions of personal challenges were approached with empathy and respect. When necessary, participants could be referred to university guidance offices or psychological support services for appropriate assistance. These measures were intended to promote voluntary participation, protect personal information, and minimize potential emotional discomfort.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Academic Validation Experiences of Internal Migrant College Students

3.1.1 Faculty Recognition and Academic Validation

The findings revealed that academic validation was experienced through recognition from professors, particularly when students were remembered by name or face despite large class sizes. Participant 1 associated this recognition with satisfactory academic performance and a sense of personal achievement. Other participants identified encouragement from teachers, positive feedback, passing examinations, and continued enrollment in their academic programs as meaningful forms of validation. These findings indicate that academic validation extends beyond grades and academic performance to include acknowledgment, encouragement, and recognition from faculty members. Such experiences reinforce students' confidence, sense of belonging, and perception that their academic efforts are valued. Recognition from professors therefore represents an important aspect of students' adjustment to an unfamiliar academic environment.

3.1.2 Language and Cultural Adjustment

The participants reported difficulties adjusting to language differences, communication styles, and unfamiliar cultural practices. Participant 2 experienced challenges transitioning from the languages commonly used in Masbate to the communication practices in Cavite. Participant 5 encountered culture shock, while Participant 7 initially struggled with Tagalog because of an Ilocano linguistic background. However, participants gradually

improved their communication and adaptation through interactions with classmates and other members of the university community. These experiences demonstrate that linguistic and cultural differences influence how internal migrant students establish relationships and participate in academic activities. Unfamiliar communication practices may initially create discomfort and uncertainty, while regular social interaction and supportive relationships facilitate adjustment. The findings emphasize the importance of an inclusive academic environment that recognizes students' diverse regional and cultural backgrounds.

3.1.3 Homesickness, Social Isolation, and Environmental Adjustment

The findings showed that separation from family, unfamiliar surroundings, and limited social connections contributed to adjustment difficulties. Participant 3 experienced loneliness and uncertainty while living in a dormitory away from home. Participant 4 struggled with unfamiliar people and surroundings, while Participant 8 initially found the new environment challenging. In contrast, Participant 6 viewed relocation positively as an opportunity for personal development. Several participants eventually adjusted through companionship, supportive peers, and increased familiarity with their surroundings. These findings suggest that internal migration produces varied emotional and social experiences. While some students initially experience homesickness and isolation, others approach relocation with excitement and optimism. Peer companionship and social acceptance help students manage adjustment difficulties, develop confidence, and establish a stronger sense of belonging within the university.

3.2 Influence of Academic Validation on Psychosocial Well-Being and Academic Persistence

3.2.1 Academic Validation and Emotional Well-Being

The findings revealed that academic validation influenced participants' emotional experiences and perceptions of personal achievement. Participant 1 reported difficulty appreciating personal accomplishments, resulting in reduced morale and self-worth. Participant 2 emphasized self-regulation and personal well-being rather than depending entirely on external recognition. Participant 4 experienced motivation when validated but discouragement when recognition was absent. Participant 8 associated passing examinations and positive academic outcomes with happiness, relief, and confidence. These results indicate that academic validation contributes to emotional well-being by strengthening students' appreciation of their achievements and reinforcing their sense of competence. Conversely, the absence of recognition may contribute to discouragement and diminished self-confidence. However, students who prioritize self-care and personal goals may maintain emotional stability even when external validation is limited.

3.2.2 Academic Motivation and Learning Engagement

Participants described academic recognition and encouragement as important sources of motivation. Participant 3 gained encouragement from supportive professors and classmates, while Participant 5 became more eager to learn and share knowledge when academically validated. Participant 7 reported increased determination to study following encouragement from teachers and peers. Participant 4 similarly associated validation with greater motivation to continue academic responsibilities. These findings suggest that supportive academic relationships encourage students to participate actively in learning and sustain their educational efforts. Recognition reinforces students' confidence in their abilities, while encouragement from teachers and classmates creates a learning environment in which students feel supported. Academic validation therefore serves as a motivational resource during adjustment to new academic expectations.

3.2.3 Academic Persistence and Personal Resilience

The findings showed that participants continued pursuing their studies despite academic and emotional difficulties. Participant 6 viewed academic setbacks and the absence of validation as opportunities for improvement. Participant 7 demonstrated determination through continued effort and encouragement from classmates and teachers. Participant 8 regarded passing examinations and remaining in the academic program as meaningful achievements that supported continued enrollment. Participant 2 maintained persistence through self-monitoring and attention to personal well-being. These experiences indicate that academic persistence is supported by both external encouragement and internal determination. Although recognition strengthens motivation, some students also respond to difficulties by developing resilience and focusing on personal improvement. The findings highlight the importance of academic support and individual coping strategies in helping internal migrant students continue their education.

3.3 Challenges and Gaps in Academic Validation and Psychosocial Support

3.3.1 Emotional Isolation and Homesickness

The findings revealed that emotional isolation and separation from family were significant challenges among internal migrant college students. Participant 1 experienced difficulty expressing personal concerns because of limited friendships and minimal emotional openness within the family, resulting in suppressed emotions and emotional breakdowns. Participant 2 experienced homesickness and emotional distress due to separation from parents. Both experiences reflected the difficulty of maintaining emotional stability while adjusting to university life away from familiar support systems. These findings suggest that separation from family and limited emotional

connections may increase students' vulnerability to loneliness and distress. The development of supportive peer relationships provides opportunities for emotional expression, shared understanding, and companionship. Strengthening social connections within the university may therefore help students manage homesickness and develop a sense of emotional security.

3.3.2 Sociocultural Adjustment and Communication Barriers

The participants encountered difficulties adapting to unfamiliar communication practices and social expectations. Participant 3 experienced challenges interacting with peers and adjusting to increased academic demands. Participant 5 reported limited familiarity with local culture and relied on classmates for clarification and guidance. Participant 7 experienced language barriers and difficulty expressing emotions openly, which affected communication and social interaction. These findings indicate that sociocultural differences can influence students' confidence, communication, and ability to establish supportive relationships. Language barriers and unfamiliar social practices may discourage students from participating in academic and social activities. Supportive peer interactions and opportunities for communication development can facilitate adjustment and encourage greater involvement in the university community.

3.3.3 Hesitation in Seeking Academic and Emotional Support

The findings showed that some participants experienced difficulty seeking assistance. Participant 4 hesitated to approach others because of shyness, unfamiliarity, and limited social connections. Participant 6 had difficulty identifying and explaining personal support needs. Participant 7 also struggled to express emotions openly, while Participant 1 initially lacked trusted individuals with whom to discuss personal concerns. These experiences suggest that access to psychosocial support may be affected by students' willingness and ability to communicate their needs. Shyness, unfamiliarity, and difficulties with emotional expression may prevent students from seeking timely assistance. The findings highlight the importance of approachable support services and safe opportunities for students to communicate academic and personal concerns.

3.3.4 Academic Pressure and Peer-Based Support

The findings revealed that academic demands contributed to students' adjustment difficulties. Participant 3 experienced increased academic pressure while adapting to unfamiliar social and educational expectations. Participant 5 relied on classmates for academic explanations and guidance, while Participant 8 experienced stress from a demanding workload. Despite these challenges, participants described collaborative studying, shared academic responsibilities, and assistance from dormmates and classmates as helpful coping mechanisms. These results indicate that peer-based academic support plays an important role in managing academic stress. Collaborative learning allows students to exchange knowledge, clarify difficult lessons, and receive encouragement from individuals experiencing similar challenges. Such relationships provide both academic assistance and emotional reassurance, supporting students' adjustment and continued participation in their studies.

3.4 Proposed Psychosocial Support Activities for Internal Migrant College Students

3.4.1 Development of the BRIDGE Program

Based on the identified academic, emotional, social, and cultural challenges, the study developed the proposed BRIDGE Program, which stands for Building Resilience, Inclusion, Development, Guidance, and Empowerment. The program was designed to address homesickness, social isolation, language barriers, adjustment difficulties, academic pressure, and limited access to support systems. Its principal objectives were to strengthen psychosocial well-being, academic adjustment, social integration, emotional resilience, and students' sense of belonging. The proposed program responds to the participants' experiences by integrating academic guidance, emotional assistance, peer relationships, and cultural inclusion into a structured psychosocial support initiative. Its development reflects the need for institutional assistance that addresses both academic performance and personal adjustment. The program represents a proposed intervention rather than an implemented or experimentally evaluated support program.

3.4.2 Peer Support, Mentoring, and Cultural Integration

The proposed activities included "Kumustahan Circle," which provides guided peer-sharing sessions for discussing emotional concerns and adjustment experiences; "Buddy Beyond Borders," which connects newly enrolled migrant students with peer mentors; and "Home Away from Home," which encourages cultural appreciation through the sharing of regional traditions, languages, and experiences. These activities were designed to address emotional isolation, limited social connections, and unfamiliarity with the university environment. These activities emphasize the role of peer relationships in supporting students' emotional and social adjustment. Guided sharing provides opportunities for emotional expression and mutual understanding, while mentoring assists students in navigating academic expectations and institutional practices. Cultural integration activities recognize students' diverse backgrounds and encourage acceptance, inclusion, and a stronger sense of belonging.

3.4.3 Mental Wellness, Communication, and Academic Support

The proposed program also included “Stress Less Hub,” which focuses on stress management, emotional resilience, self-awareness, and coping strategies; “Study Together, Grow Together,” which promotes collaborative learning and academic assistance; and “Find Your Voice,” which develops communication skills, confidence, and emotional expression. These activities were intended to respond to academic pressure, language barriers, low confidence, and difficulties communicating personal concerns. These proposed interventions address the relationship between academic adjustment and psychosocial well-being. Wellness activities provide opportunities to develop coping strategies, while academic support circles encourage cooperation and shared learning. Communication-building sessions are intended to help students express their concerns, participate in social interactions, and develop confidence in unfamiliar environments.

3.4.4 Counseling, Reflection, and Family Connection

Additional proposed activities included “Check-In Corner,” which offers accessible counseling, psychosocial guidance, and referral services; “Roots and Routes,” which encourages reflective journaling about migration experiences, challenges, achievements, and personal growth; and “Family Connection Hour,” which provides opportunities for virtual communication with family members. The program also identified “Life Skills for Independent Living,” focusing on practical skills such as time management, budgeting, and dormitory adjustment. These activities address the participants expressed difficulties involving emotional isolation, hesitation in seeking support, separation from family, and independent living. Counseling services are intended to make psychosocial assistance more accessible, while reflective activities encourage self-awareness and emotional processing. Family communication and independent-living activities are designed to support students’ adjustment and strengthen their ability to manage personal and academic responsibilities.

3.5 Relationship Among Academic Validation, Psychosocial Well-Being, and Academic Persistence

The findings showed recurring connections among academic recognition, emotional well-being, motivation, and persistence. Participants who received encouragement from professors and classmates described greater motivation, confidence, and willingness to continue their studies. Those who experienced limited validation reported discouragement, reduced morale, or difficulty recognizing personal achievements. Nevertheless, several participants demonstrated resilience through self-regulation, personal determination, supportive relationships, and continued academic effort. These findings suggest that academic validation and psychosocial support are interconnected aspects of internal migrant students’ educational experiences. Recognition from faculty and peers reinforces confidence and belonging, while emotional and social support helps students manage the challenges of relocation and academic adjustment. Although participants responded differently to the presence or absence of validation, their experiences collectively emphasize the importance of supportive academic environments that recognize individual achievements, encourage social integration, and provide accessible psychosocial assistance. Overall, the study identified academic recognition, peer encouragement, cultural adjustment, emotional well-being, and institutional support as central themes in the experiences of internal migrant college students. These findings provided the basis for the proposed BRIDGE Program, which aims to address the participants’ academic and psychosocial needs through structured support activities.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that internal migrant college students experienced academic validation through faculty recognition, peer encouragement, supportive feedback, and academic achievements, which contributed to their sense of belonging, motivation, confidence, emotional well-being, and academic persistence. However, limited recognition and support contributed to emotional distress, self-doubt, and reduced confidence. Students also encountered challenges involving homesickness, social isolation, language and communication barriers, unfamiliar academic environments, and hesitation to seek assistance. Despite these difficulties, peer relationships, personal resilience, and individual determination helped students adjust and continue their studies. The findings emphasized the importance of structured psychosocial support activities, including peer mentoring, support groups, cultural integration, wellness programs, academic assistance, and counseling services, in promoting emotional resilience, inclusion, academic adjustment, and overall student well-being.

Higher education institutions should strengthen accessible psychosocial support programs, including counseling services, peer mentoring, and student engagement activities, to address the academic and emotional needs of internal migrant college students. Faculty members should practice inclusive teaching by consistently recognizing students’ efforts, providing constructive feedback, and maintaining supportive classroom environments. Student affairs and guidance offices should implement structured support groups, wellness programs, and cultural integration activities to facilitate emotional and social adjustment. Peer and student organizations should promote collaborative learning, mentoring, and cultural exchange activities to strengthen social connections and students’ sense of belonging. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct studies involving larger populations and comparative analyses of internal and external migrant students to further examine academic validation experiences and psychosocial support activities.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The study adhered to ethical standards in conducting qualitative research involving internal migrant college students. Informed consent was obtained before data collection, and participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature. Their right to withdraw at any time was respected. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by protecting personal information and using anonymized responses. Interviews were conducted with sensitivity to participants' emotional and psychosocial experiences to minimize potential discomfort. The researcher ensured that participants were treated with dignity, fairness, and respect throughout the research process.

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