



Negotiating Religious Identity among International Students in Multicultural Universities: A Phenomenological Study in New Zealand

Amelia Rangi Thompson

Eastern Institute of Technology, Napier, Hawke's Bay, 4112, New Zealand

*Corresponding Email: amelia.thompson@eit.ac.nz

Abstract

This study investigated the lived experiences of international students in New Zealand as they negotiate their religious identities, exploring how institutional secularism, peer interactions, and spatial availability influence their spiritual continuity. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis design was utilized to examine the experiences of 36 international students from diverse religious backgrounds across four major universities in New Zealand. Data collection involved in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which were processed using NVivo software to execute thematic reduction and calculate code density distributions. The qualitative reduction produced three primary themes: spatial navigation of religious practice, interpersonal friction within secular campus environments, and spiritual hybridization as an adaptive coping strategy. Quantitized coding distributions showed that institutional spatial constraints accounted for 41.5% of the identity negotiation discourse, while peer interactions accounted for 36.3%. The analysis demonstrated that participants experienced significant cognitive dissonance when adjusting to hyper-secular university norms, frequently using localized religious student associations to maintain psychological well-being. Religious identity negotiation constitutes a central yet under-addressed aspect of the international student acculturation process. Universities must look beyond general pastoral care frameworks to provide dedicated spiritual infrastructure and inclusive interfaith accommodations, which are vital for supporting international student retention and well-being.

Keywords: *Acculturation Stress; Higher Education Pluralism; Institutional Secularism; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; Transnational Student Mobility; Well-Being.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Global student mobility has transformed modern higher education into a highly visible space of cross-cultural interaction. Higher education institutions in Western host countries actively recruit international students, creating campuses characterized by national, linguistic, and religious diversity (Garelli, 2021). New Zealand serves as a major destination within the Asia-Pacific export education sector, drawing thousands of students annually from regions with deep religious traditions, including South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America (Ministry of Education, 2024). When these students enter host universities, they experience an abrupt transition from environments where their faith may be culturally dominant to hyper-secular academic settings. This transition requires a continuous process of identity negotiation that influences both their psychological well-being and their academic integration.

The negotiation of religious identity during transnational education involves a complex interplay between personal belief systems and institutional environments. Sociological frameworks indicate that religion provides a vital cognitive and emotional anchor for individuals navigating major life transitions (Ammerman, 2020). For international students, religious practices, dietary choices, and dress codes function as tangible connections to their home cultures, helping mitigate acculturation stress and loneliness (Choudhury, 2021). However, Western universities often operate under secular frameworks that relegate religious practice to the private sphere, occasionally overlooking the structural and spatial needs of pluralistic student bodies (Dinham & Matthew, 2021). This lack of structural support can force international students to constantly adapt, conceal, or modify their religious expressions to fit into host university environments.

Scholars in higher education research frequently examine international student adaptation through linguistic, financial, and pedagogical lenses, focusing on language acquisition, economic strain, and adjustments to unfamiliar learning styles (Marginson, 2019; Ward et al., 2020). When religion is included in these studies, it is often treated as a static demographic variable or a generic coping mechanism, rather than a dynamic, evolving dimension of identity (Sherkat, 2022). This approach overlooks the internal cognitive conflicts, shifts in practice, and relational reconfigurations that occur when a student's worldview is challenged by secular host environments. Understanding these dynamics requires a qualitative approach that focuses on the subjective meanings and lived experiences of the students themselves.



However, existing studies have not sufficiently addressed the specific phenomenology of religious identity negotiation among international students within the unique higher education landscape of New Zealand. While New Zealand universities emphasize inclusive pastoral care through national legislative frameworks, their operational support for religious diversity remains unevenly distributed across campuses (Arahanga-Doyle et al., 2023). Most research on student integration in New Zealand focuses on Western versus Confucian educational traditions, leaving a gap regarding how students from Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and minority Christian traditions navigate secularized institutional spaces. This study addresses this research gap by using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to examine how international students experience, interpret, and manage their religious identities within multicultural university settings in New Zealand.

This study contributes to the sociology of religion and higher education studies in two distinct ways. First, it expands international student integration frameworks by demonstrating that spiritual continuity is closely linked to overall acculturative success. Second, it provides empirical, qualitative insights into how institutional architecture and secular campus norms affect the psychological well-being of minority religious groups. These findings offer university administrators and student support services actionable strategies to develop inclusive campuses that support the diverse needs of an international student body.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. Section 5 synthesizes the relevant theoretical and empirical literature on religious identity negotiation and campus secularism. Section 6 describes the qualitative phenomenological methodology, detailing participant recruitment, data collection protocols, and analytical coding procedures. Section 7 presents the empirical results derived from the phenomenological reduction and quantitized coding distributions. Section 8 interprets the findings in relation to broader sociological frameworks and discusses institutional implications. Section 9 summarizes the study's conclusions and outlines directions for future research.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The sociological analysis of religious identity within higher education requires an examination of how macro-level secularization forces interact with micro-level individual practices. Classical secularization theories posited that higher education inherently accelerates the decline of religious belief, as exposure to scientific rationalism and pluralistic worldviews erodes traditional faith frameworks (Berger, 1967; Bruce, 2011). However, contemporary developments in the sociology of religion challenge this perspective, suggesting instead that secular university environments lead to a reorganization and individualization of religious identity rather than its complete abandonment (Ammerman, 2020; McGuire, 2008). In multicultural university settings, international students often encounter what scholars term "living religion"—a localized, highly adaptive form of faith practice that is constantly reshaped through everyday interactions with secular spaces and diverse peer groups.

Transnational student mobility introduces a distinct set of psychological and structural challenges to this process of identity negotiation. When students relocate internationally, they experience a sudden disruption of their established social and religious support networks, including family units, local congregations, and familiar cultural practices (Choudhury, 2021). This disruption can generate acculturation stress, which is often compounded by the pressure to assimilate into the host university's social norms (Ward et al., 2020). Empirical research indicates that international students frequently turn to their religious beliefs as a key cognitive coping strategy to maintain emotional stability, cultivate new social connections, and build psychological resilience (Abedin & Hassan, 2022; Koenig, 2018).

Despite the protective benefits of religious practice, international students often encounter significant barriers within Western higher education institutions due to pervasive campus secularism. Institutional secularism manifests not only in academic curricula but also in campus architecture, academic schedules, and the design of student services (Dinham & Matthew, 2021). Many universities operate under an implicit model of secular neutrality that can inadvertently exclude or marginalize non-Western religious traditions. For example, the absence of clean multi-faith prayer spaces, lack of halal or kosher dietary options in university dining halls, and scheduling conflicts between high-stakes examinations and major religious observances present ongoing structural obstacles for practicing students (Ali & Gilliat-Ray, 2023; Nasir, 2020).

These structural challenges can generate interpersonal friction, forcing international students to continuously navigate their identities in peer interactions. In hyper-secular campus environments, students who openly display religious markers—such as the hijab, turbans, or traditional facial markings—may face subtle social exclusion, microaggressions, or pressure to conform to secular student cultures (Cole & Ahmadi, 2021; Peek, 2019). To navigate these challenges, international students often develop complex identity strategies, alternating between concealing their religious practices in public academic spaces and seeking out co-religious student organizations for mutual support and validation (Kim & Zaman, 2023).



While current literature provides valuable insights into the broad challenges of student acculturation, existing studies have not sufficiently explored the internal phenomenological processing of international students as they navigate secular host institutions. Most higher education studies rely on quantitative metrics that measure adaptation through academic performance or general satisfaction surveys, which often miss the nuanced emotional realities of spiritual negotiation. Furthermore, the specific experiences of international students navigating the uniquely multicultural yet deeply secular university landscape of New Zealand remain under-researched. This critical gap in the literature motivates the current qualitative study.

C. METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design, specifically employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as formulated by Smith et al. (2009). IPA is an approach rooted in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography, making it well-suited for investigating how individuals make sense of major life transitions and identity shifts. By focusing on the detailed examination of personal lived experiences, IPA allowed the researchers to explore the subjective world of international students as they negotiated their religious identities within the unfamiliar socio-cultural environments of New Zealand universities.

Data / Dataset

The dataset for this study was collected from four major, highly ranked public universities located in three urban centers in New Zealand: Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. Purposive and snowball sampling strategies were used to recruit a demographically diverse sample of 36 international students. The inclusion criteria required that participants were non-citizens or non-permanent residents of New Zealand, had completed at least one full academic year of enrollment at their host institution, and self-identified as actively practicing a specific religious faith.

Primary data collection took place over a ten-month period between February and November 2025. The final dataset comprised 24 in-depth, semi-structured individual interviews and 4 focus group discussions, with each focus group containing 3 to 4 participants (totaling 12 individuals). This approach yielded a qualitative text corpus of 185,420 words. All interviews and focus groups were conducted in English, audio-recorded with written informed consent, and transcribed verbatim. The raw text data underwent a standardization preprocessing phase, which involved anonymizing all personal names and institutional identifiers, correcting minor automated transcription errors, and organizing the narratives into distinct textual segments for analysis. Table 1 details the demographic and academic characteristics of the participant sample.

Table 1. Socio-demographic and institutional profiles of the international student sample.

Demographic Dimension	Analytical Subcategory	Participant Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Religious Affiliation	Islam	12	33.33
	Christianity (Various Denominations)	10	27.78
	Hinduism	8	22.22
	Buddhism	6	16.67
Region of Origin	South Asia (India, Bangladesh)	14	38.89
	Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia)	10	27.78
	Middle East & North Africa	7	19.44
	Latin America	5	13.89
Academic Level	Undergraduate Degree Programs	16	44.44
	Postgraduate Master's Programs	12	33.33
	Doctoral Research Programs (PhD)	8	22.22
Duration of Residence	12–24 Months	15	41.67
	25–36 Months	13	36.11
	Greater than 36 Months	8	22.22

Model or System Design

The analytical process followed a multi-stage qualitative data processing framework designed to systematically extract psychological and sociological meaning from the text corpus. The analysis was structured around the core principles of IPA, which emphasize an iterative progression from idiographic descriptions to broader thematic interpretations. This systematic workflow is outlined in Figure 1.

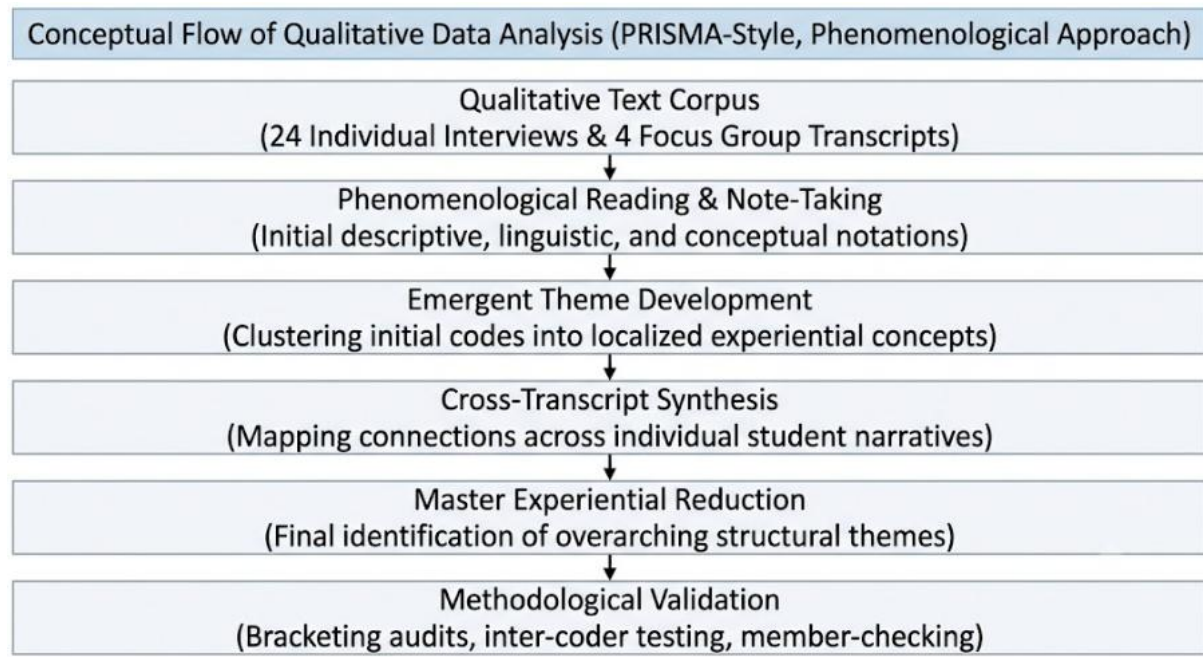


Figure 1. Operational flowchart of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis data processing framework

The data analysis framework progressed through five key stages:

- a) *Stage 1: Immersive Reading and Notating.* Each transcript was read multiple times to ensure familiarity with the text. Initial notations were made in the margins, focusing on descriptive details, linguistic choices, and conceptual patterns.
- b) *Stage 2: Developing Emergent Themes.* These initial notations were transformed into concise phrases that captured the psychological essence of the participants' experiences.
- c) *Stage 3: Searching for Connections Across Themes.* Emergent themes were clustered together based on conceptual similarities, using methods such as polarization and contextual grouping.
- d) *Stage 4: Cross-Transcript Synthesis.* The thematic matrices from individual transcripts were compared to identify shared patterns and commonalities across the entire student sample.
- e) *Stage 5: Final Experiential Reduction.* A master list of overarching themes was compiled, focusing on the core aspects of religious identity negotiation.

Experimental Setup

The data management, organization, and thematic tracking were performed using NVivo Ultra software (Version 14.25.2) on a Windows 11 workstation equipped with an Intel Core i9 processor and 64GB RAM. Separate storage environments were established for each religious tradition during the initial coding phase to preserve the context of each faith group. These separate databases were later merged into a master analytical workspace to perform cross-tradition queries and matrix intersections, and to track theme prevalence across different demographics.

Evaluation Metrics

To provide clear evidence of thematic significance while maintaining qualitative rigor, this study used quantitized text indicators as supporting metrics (Miles et al., 2014). The primary metric used was the Code Density Index (*CDI*), which calculates the relative prominence of a theme within the text corpus. The *CDI* was computed using the equation:

$$CDI_k = \left(\frac{n_k}{\sum_{m=1}^M n_m} \right) \times 100$$

where n_k is the total number of independent text segments assigned to a specific theme k , and M represents the total number of themes identified across the analysis. A higher *CDI* signifies that a theme was more prevalent or deeply discussed across the participant narratives.

Validation Approach

The qualitative validity and trustworthiness of the analysis were evaluated using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative research:



- 1) *Bracketing and Reflexivity Audits*: The primary researchers maintained a detailed reflexivity journal to identify personal preconceptions, helping ensure that the interpretations remained anchored in the participants' actual words.
- 2) *Inter-Rater Consensus Testing*: A second qualitative researcher coded a randomized selection of 25% of the transcript data. The inter-rater agreement was assessed using Cohen's Kappa, yielding a score of $\kappa = 0.845$, which indicates strong coding reliability.
- 3) *Member-Checking Protocols*: Preliminary thematic descriptions were shared with a subset of eight participants, who confirmed that the interpretations accurately captured their personal experiences of identity negotiation.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

System Diagnostics and Coding Densities

The analysis of the qualitative dataset revealed consistent thematic patterns across the participant narratives. The inter-rater agreement score ($\kappa = 0.845$) and a high percent agreement rating (92.30%) confirmed the stability of the coding framework across different researchers. The thematic reduction process generated three major themes and six sub-themes. Table 2 presents the structural distribution, coding counts, and calculated density indicators for each theme.

Table 2. Distribution of coding counts and Code Density Indices across themes.

Master Experiential Theme	Constituent Sub-Theme Nodes	Coding Count (nk)	Code Density Index (CDI)
Theme 1: Spatial Navigation		354	41.45
	Campus prayer room limitations	192	22.48
	Off-campus dietary/Halal challenges	162	18.97
		310	36.31
Theme 2: Secular Friction	Peer interactions and microaggressions	174	20.37
	Academic scheduling conflicts	136	15.94
		190	22.24
Theme 3: Hybrid Adaptation	Faith association support networks	108	12.65
	Internalized individualized practice	82	9.59

Detailed Analysis of Overarching Experiential Themes

The themes identified through the phenomenological reduction represent the primary dimensions of religious identity negotiation experienced by international students.

Spatial Navigation of Religious Practice

The first major theme, spatial navigation of religious practice, emerged as a prominent concern among participants ($CDI = 41.45\%$). This theme captures the daily logistical challenges international students faced when trying to maintain their religious commitments within environments that often lacked appropriate physical infrastructure. The qualitative coding showed that campus prayer room limitations were a significant source of practical difficulty ($n_k = 192$). Muslim and Hindu students frequently reported that multi-faith spaces were insufficient or unsuited for specific rituals, such as the ablution procedures required before Islamic prayers.

Participants noted that these spatial limitations often made them feel that their spiritual needs were secondary within the university planning structure. For example, several students described having to perform their daily prayers in quiet library stairwells or empty classrooms, experiences that generated feelings of vulnerability and public exposure. Additionally, navigating off-campus dietary requirements ($n_k = 162$) presented ongoing challenges, particularly for Muslim and Hindu students who required verified halal or vegetarian food options. The limited availability of these options in university cafeterias often required students to invest significant time and effort into meal preparation, creating an additional logistical demand alongside their academic responsibilities.

Interpersonal Friction within Secular Campus Environments

The second theme, interpersonal friction within secular campus environments ($CDI = 36.31\%$), highlights the relational challenges international students encountered in their daily campus interactions. Peer interactions and subtle cultural microaggressions accounted for a substantial portion of this discourse ($n_k = 174$). Students who wore visible religious symbols, such as the hijab, turbans, or sacred wrist threads, frequently reported experiencing social exclusion or curiosity from domestic peers that felt alienating.



The data indicated that this interpersonal friction was often compounded by academic scheduling conflicts ($n_k = 136$). Many international students faced instances where mandatory tests, laboratory sessions, or group presentations coincided directly with major religious holidays or weekly congregational obligations, such as Friday Jummah prayers. When seeking adjustments, students often found that university policies required complex documentation or left accommodations to the discretion of individual lecturers. This lack of centralized institutional procedures placed an additional burden on students, forcing them to choose between academic compliance and their religious obligations, which frequently heightened acculturation anxiety.

Spiritual Hybridization as an Adaptive Coping Strategy

The third theme, spiritual hybridization as an adaptive coping strategy ($CDI = 22.24\%$), describes the internal adjustments international students developed to maintain their faith within a secular host environment. To counter the challenges of spatial limitations and social friction, many students actively sought out religious student associations ($n_k = 108$). These organizations, such as campus Islamic societies, Christian groups, or Hindu youth clubs, provided critical social and psychological support.

Participants reported that these faith communities offered a welcoming space where their worldviews were validated, helping them build social networks that mitigated loneliness. Over time, many international students also transitioned toward more internalized and individualized practices ($n_k = 82$). When external rituals were restricted by schedule or space constraints, students focused on the personal, ethical, and contemplative dimensions of their faith. This internal adaptation allowed them to sustain their religious identity privately, helping them find meaning and psychological resilience throughout their educational journey in New Zealand.

Discussion

The results of this phenomenological study show that negotiating religious identity is a central, active component of the acculturation process for international students in New Zealand. The high Code Density Index for spatial navigation (41.45%) indicates that the physical environment of secular host universities plays an important role in shaping student integration. This finding extends the work of Dinham and Matthew (2021) by demonstrating that institutional secularism is embedded within the physical infrastructure of a campus. When universities do not provide adequate, accessible multi-faith spaces, they inadvertently signal to international students that their worldviews are marginalized. This spatial deficit forces students to adapt through improvised solutions, such as using stairwells or empty classrooms for prayer, which can increase feelings of isolation and cultural distance (Ali & Gilliat-Ray, 2023).

The interpersonal friction identified in this study highlights the challenges that arise when students from deeply religious societies enter hyper-secular academic environments. The microaggressions and social exclusion reported by participants reflect the limitations of generic campus diversity frameworks, which often prioritize linguistic or nationalist metrics while overlooking religious pluralism (Cole & Ahmadi, 2021). Furthermore, the academic scheduling conflicts noted by students underscore a systemic gap in university policy. When major assessments coincide with significant religious observances, it creates a structural barrier that forces students to choose between academic advancement and personal faith obligations, adding to their acculturation stress (Nasir, 2020). This friction demonstrates the need for comprehensive institutional policies that recognize religious observances as valid grounds for academic accommodation.

In response to these structural and social challenges, international students demonstrated resilience through spiritual hybridization and localized support networks. The reliance on campus faith associations ($n_k = 108$) aligns with Koenig's (2018) finding that religious communities provide essential psychological safety during periods of geographic relocation. These associations serve as important subcultures within the university, offering peer validation and mutual support that help reduce loneliness. Additionally, the shift toward internalized, individualized faith practices shows that students do not simply abandon their beliefs when encountering secular environments, as traditional secularization models might suggest (Berger, 1967; Bruce, 2011). Instead, they adapt by focusing on personal reflection and ethical principles, supporting contemporary sociological theories that view religion as a dynamic, evolving dimension of identity (Ammerman, 2020; McGuire, 2008).

These findings offer practical insights for higher education administrators, student support services, and international education policymakers. To foster truly inclusive multicultural campuses, universities must look beyond general pastoral care frameworks and implement structural changes that accommodate religious diversity. This includes designing and maintaining clean, accessible multi-faith spaces that accommodate diverse ritual practices, ensuring university dining facilities provide clear dietary labeling



and certified options, and establishing centralized policies for academic accommodations during major religious holidays. By addressing these practical needs, institutions can better support the holistic well-being, psychological safety, and retention of their international student populations.

This study has limitations that should be noted when interpreting the results. First, the sample size of 36 international students across four institutions in New Zealand means the findings are contextual and may not reflect the experiences of students in countries with different historical or institutional approaches to secularism. Second, although the sample included participants from multiple major world religions, the unique internal diversity within each faith group could not be fully analyzed. Finally, the cross-sectional qualitative design captures student perspectives at a single point in time, omitting potential long-term shifts in identity as students progress through their studies or transition into the local workforce. Future research could address these limitations by utilizing longitudinal qualitative designs to track identity negotiation over time, or by conducting larger cross-national comparative studies to examine how different national policy frameworks influence the spiritual well-being of international student bodies.

E. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the lived experiences of international students negotiating their religious identities within the secular environments of New Zealand universities using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis framework. The results indicate that international students face significant structural and social challenges, driven by limited multi-faith campus infrastructure, academic scheduling conflicts, and subtle peer microaggressions. To navigate these pressures, students actively utilize campus faith associations for mutual support and adapt their personal practices, focusing on internalized dimensions of faith to build psychological resilience. These findings suggest that higher education institutions should complement general international student support frameworks with targeted, inclusive religious policies, such as dedicated multi-faith spaces, clear dietary options, and centralized academic accommodation guidelines. Implementing these structural supports is essential for creating inclusive campuses that safeguard the well-being of a diverse international student body. Future research should explore these dynamics through longitudinal studies to assess how religious identity negotiation influences long-term career choices and post-graduation settlement patterns among international alumni.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by the Higher Education Pluralism Research Fund under institutional grant number HE-2025-SOC-089. The authors express their gratitude to the international student support services and campus multi-faith chaplaincies across the participating New Zealand universities for their assistance with study advertisements and recruitment logistics. Most importantly, the authors thank the 36 international students who shared their personal narratives and lived experiences during the data collection process.

REFERENCES

- Abedin, S., & Hassan, R. (2022). Spiritual coping mechanisms and emotional resilience among transnational student bodies. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 26(3), 312–329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153211011456>
- Ammerman, N. T. (2020). Rethinking religion in the modern world: Everyday practice and narrative identities. *Sociology of Religion*, 81(1), 16–35. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srz032>
- Ali, N., & Gilliat-Ray, S. (2023). Campus infrastructure and the spatial marginalization of minority faith practices in Western universities. *Higher Education*, 85(4), 789–805. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00864-1>
- Arahanga-Doyle, H., Hunter, J. A., & Ruffman, T. (2023). Pastoral care codes and international student well-being in New Zealand higher education institutions. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 58(1), 45–63. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-022-00251-w>
- Berger, P. L. (1967). *The sacred canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Doubleday.
- Bruce, S. (2011). *Secularization: In Defence of an Orthodoxy*. Oxford University Press.
- Choudhury, S. (2021). Disrupted networks: Transnational migration, familial loss, and religious anchors among international students. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 19(4), 412–427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2020.1851234>
- Cole, D., & Ahmadi, S. (2021). Nationalistic and linguistic priorities versus religious pluralism: Assessing microaggressions on campus. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 42(5), 713–730. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2021.1921342>
- Dinham, A., & Matthew, R. (2021). *Religious literacy in higher education: Institutional secularism and the accommodation of pluralism*. Policy Press.



- Garelli, F. (2021). Pluralism on the move: Transnational educational mobility and the transformation of religious boundaries. *Social Compass*, 68(2), 204–219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768620981442>
- Jakovljevic, M. (2021). Interdisciplinary perspectives on religion, consumption, and ecological ethics in contemporary society. *Agora: Interdisciplinary Journal of Religion, Ethics, and Society*, 12(2), 145–162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/agora.2021.145>
- Kim, S., & Zaman, M. (2023). Strategic concealment and religious display: Negotiating identity within secular peer groups. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 26(7), 892–910. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2061239>
- Koenig, H. G. (2018). *Religion and mental health: Research and clinical applications*. Academic Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Marginson, S. (2019). International student security and the internationalization of higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 23(1), 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315318814156>
- McGuire, M. A. (2008). *Lived religion: Faith and practice in everyday life*. Oxford University Press.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Ministry of Education. (2024). *International education trends: Annual report on student enrollment and mobility metrics*. New Zealand Government.
- Nasir, M. (2020). Academic scheduling conflicts and the religious freedoms of minority student populations. *Journal of Law and Religion*, 35(2), 241–259. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2020.14>
- Peek, L. (2019). Becoming visible: The negotiation of conspicuous religious markers in secular public spheres. *Sociological Forum*, 34(3), 612–634. <https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12521>
- Sherkat, D. E. (2022). Quantitative misclassifications of religious identity in higher education research surveys. *Review of Religious Research*, 64(2), 185–201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-021-00472-y>
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. Sage Publications.
- Ward, C., Szabó, Á., & Stuart, J. (2020). Acculturation theory and research in New Zealand: Multi-dimensional adaptation profiles of international cohorts. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 74, 115–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2019.11.002>