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Who Cares About Their Names: Case Study in Starbucks

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Who cares about their names:
Case study in Starbucks

According to Institute of International Education report (2013), 764,495 international students enrolled in the U.S universities in 2012. The number of international students in the U.S continues growing. This study focuses on a common experience among international students on university campuses: their names are misspelled or mispronounced by cashiers or workers at on-campus coffee stores. The researchers chose a Starbucks at a Midwestern mid-size University as a site to conduct this study.

It is possible for anybody to have their name misspelled or mispronounced. Through observation and focus group, this study focuses on revealing how international students interpret the situation when their names are misspelled and mispronounced. As the first step, two researchers conduct multiple eight-hour observations to examine the behavioral patterns among international students. Then, through focus groups, the researchers will reveal the international students' interpretation about their experience.

The naming invokes expectations with regards to each other's and one's own behaviors. Naming is an important part of social identity and self-categorization. Therefore, this study utilizes identity theory as the theoretical framework in order to understand the experience among international students.

Keywords: Cultural study, International students, social identity, and identity theory