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Benefits of Internationalization to Students Cosmopolitan Competency

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions across the world are responding to globalization through internationalization. However, there is limited research that focuses on the benefits of both internationalization-at-home and cross-border internationalization to students' cosmopolitan competency from the perspective of students. Therefore, this qualitative case study explored the benefits of internationalization to students from the perspectives of both domestic and international undergraduate and graduate students at two U.S. universities. Purposeful and snowball sampling strategies were adopted to identify sixteen students. Data were garnered via interviews, institutions' websites, and documents. Constant comparative method was employed to analyze the data. Findings from this study revealed that students acquired bilingual or multilingual abilities, firsthand cultural knowledge, global knowledge, cultural nuances critical to showing respect to people from different cultures and geographical backgrounds, friendship and networking, personal growth, high tendency to develop empathy through university internationalization, and opportunity to taste food from different parts of the world. The study recommends that, institutions of higher education should provide opportunities such as foreign language courses, Rosetta Stones, language laboratories, foreign language conversation hour sessions, English as a Second Language (ESL) or Intensive English Language program for students. Also, administrators and faculty are encouraged to provide a platform for study abroad returnees to share their experiences with their colleagues. Higher education institutions should continue to recruit more international students to enrich students' experiences and global learning.

1. Introduction

Universities across the world are responding to globalization in different ways, one of such responses to globalization is internationalization (Agnew, 2012;^[1] Jibeen & Khan, 2015;^[35] Jiang & Carpenter, 2011;^[34] Knight, 2004;^[41] Lam, 2010;^[42] Spencer-Oatey, 2013).^[65] Consequently, many universities worldwide have incorporated international perspectives into programs, course offerings, and research, provided funds for study abroad

programs, organized international events, and diversified student population by recruiting international students (Altbach, 2010;^[5] Armstrong, 2007;^[6] Becker, 2006;^[10] Gopal, 2011;^[26] Leask, 2009;^[45] Otten, 2003;^[54] Parsons, 2010).^[57] Internationalization of higher education has the potential to sustain and advance science and scholarship through dynamic academic exchanges and developing social and economic capacity in different countries (Jibeen & Khan, 2015).^[35] In addition, higher education internationalization helps to improve quality of education, pro-

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duce internationally oriented faculty, staff, and students (Jibeen & Khan, 2015;^[35] Leask, 2009).^[45] Jibeen and Khan (2015)^[35] opine that diversity in students, staff, and faculty population enhances the learning environment for the benefits of domestic students, the university, and the nation. Additionally, internationalization can alter the lives of students because it helps to hone students' cross-cultural sensitivity and international knowledge (Jibeen & Khan, 2015;^[35] Kalantzis & Cope, 2000).^[39] Apart from improvement in academic quality and advancement in science and scholarship, revenue creation and brain gain are potential benefits of higher education internationalization (Jibeen & Khan, 2015).^[35] Foreign students are revenue generating as they usually contribute higher tuition fees, and as they purchase services and goods during their stays: travel, accommodation, daily living expenses, telephone and internet services, health-related expenses, and entertainment (Hawawini, 2016).^[29] For example, in France, the cost to the State for hosting international students on campus nationwide was around 3 billion euros, whereas the contribution of the same international students to the French economy was about 4.65 billion (BVA-Campus France, 2014).^[13] In North America, during the 2017-18 academic year, more than 1 million international students studying at colleges and universities contributed the equivalent of 34.7 billion euros to the national economy and supported more than 455,622 jobs. Also, in Canada, the value of international education services in 2015, as measured by total spending by international students (the equivalent of 8.4 billion euros), amounted to 12.5 percent of Canada's total service exports to the world. This value increased to 14.5 percent of Canada's total service exports after a year. In Australia, in 2017, international education contributed over 32 billion Australian dollars to the economy, becoming the country's third largest source of export revenues. However, there is limited research that focuses on the benefits of internationalization to students' cosmopolitan competency. Besides, the limited research on the benefits of internationalizing higher education to students has focused on internationalization at home to the neglect of cross-border internationalization. Moreover, the benefits listed in the existing literature appear to be perceptions (Brandenburg et al, 2019;^[12] De Wit et al., 2019;^[20] Hayle, 2008;^[30] Jon, 2013).^[38] In general, there is little understanding of how internationalization of higher education is beneficial to students' experiences and value addition gained from internationalizing institutions of higher education. Knowledge about the benefits of internationalization to students' cosmopolitan competency could inform policy and practices toward university internationalization. Thus, the current study seeks to explore the benefits of

internationalization to students' cosmopolitan competency through at-home and cross-border internationalization at two U.S universities. The research question that guided this study was what benefits do students derive from internationalization of higher education?

2. Literature Review

Internationalization of higher education is critical to students' ability to function effectively in today's world (Wiley, 2001).^[69] Internationalizing higher education is an effective way to produce a workforce that appreciate and understand cultural differences (Altbach & Knight, 2007;^[4] Ayoubi & Massoud, 2007;^[8] Jie, 2006).^[36] Therefore, internationalizing the curriculum is not to change the curriculum, but to change the perspectives of students (Bond, Qian, & Huang, 2003).^[11] Internationalization activities such as curriculum internationalization, study abroad, and institutions' intentional efforts to nurture interaction between international students and domestic students have significant effect on students' multi-lingual abilities, cross-cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Jon, 2013;^[38] Parsons, 2010).^[55] Nesdale and Todd (2000)^[51] argue that international orientation programs, resident hall tutorials, and floor-group activities positively impacted domestic students' cross-cultural acceptance, intercultural knowledge, and openness. Several researchers concur that domestic students' intercultural knowledge development increased through class projects with international students and students' engagement in campus international events (Eisenchlas & Trevasques, 2007;^[21] Gordon & Newbury, 2007;^[27] Jon, 2013;^[38] Klak & Martin, 2003;^[40] Leask, 2009).^[45] Similarly, Tedrow & Mabokela (2007)^[66] argued that internationalization improved students' personal abilities and socio-cultural skills. Likewise, Gill (2007)^[28] studied a small group of Chinese students studying in the United Kingdom and found that intercultural learning enhanced students' skills and understanding, changed their ways of thinking and perceiving, and affected the "reconstruction of their self-identity" (p. 176). Presence of international students on campus is likely to foster interaction that will lead to cross-cultural knowledge, understanding, and competency among students. In addition, having international students on most campuses of higher education provides opportunity for students of the host country to acquire cultural understanding through interactions with international students (Foster, Yao, Buchanan-Butterfield, & Powell-Brown, 2013;^[22] Lin, 2012).^[46] Also, analysis of whether students who go on study abroad exhibited high global awareness skill than students who studied at-home institutions, Chieffo and Griffiths (2004)^[14] found that students who participated in study abroad pro-

grams displayed “confidence in intercultural awareness and functional knowledge” (p. 167) than their counterparts who did not participate in study abroad program. Moreover, studies show that students who embarked on study abroad programs acquired employable skills which prepared them for opportunities and challenges in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world (Crossman & Clarke, 2010;^[18] Hser, 2005;^[32] Murphy, Sahakyan, Yong-Yi, & Magnan, 2014).^[50] For example, Prospect Marketing (2006)^[59] reported that Australian employers recognize the potential for overseas study to enhance soft skills. Consequently, students who have studied abroad had an advantage over their counterparts who have not had any study abroad experience.

Benefits of Internationalization to Students

Internationalization of higher education inculcates in students, qualities such as international mindedness, and open-mindedness, second language competency, flexibility of thinking, tolerance, and respect for others which are critical to cosmopolitan competencies (Jibeen & Khan, 2015, p.197;^[35] Wiek, Bernstein, Foley, Cohen, Forrest, Kuzdas, Kay, & Keeler, 2016).^[68] Leask (2009)^[45] argues that “the development of intercultural competencies in students is a result of an international curriculum which calls for a campus environment and culture that encourages and rewards interaction between international and domestic students within and outside the classroom. Similarly, Kalantzis and Cope (2000)^[39] maintain that “changes to student population due to increases in student mobility provides the opportunity for a valuable resource for the creation of an open, tolerant and cosmopolitan university experience” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000, p. 31).^[39] Such an experience is pivotal to ensuring that domestic and international students develop the skills and knowledge required to work in a global setting” (Leask, 2009, p. 206).^[45] Diversification of the student population through the presence of international students is likely to transform higher education institutions and classrooms into a vibrant microcosm on the world when their contributions and experiences are harnessed and incorporated into the curriculum (Leask, 2009).^[45] However, students’ perspectives on the benefits associated with higher education internationalization has received little attention. Moreover, the limited research on the benefits of internationalizing higher education to students has focused on internationalization at home to the neglect of cross-border internationalization (Brandenburg et al, 2019;^[12] De Wit et al., 2019;^[20] Hayle, 2008;^[30] Jon, 2013).^[38] In general, there is little understanding of students’ experiences and value addition gained from Higher education internationalization.

Thus, the current study seeks to explore the benefits of internationalization to students’ cosmopolitan competency through at-home and cross-border internationalization at two U.S universities from the perspective of domestic and international students.

3. Methodology

This project that is part of a larger study used qualitative case study to explore the benefits of higher education internationalization to students from the perspectives of students from two U.S universities. Case study was appropriate for the study because internationalization of higher education consist of events, activities, and processes (Yin, 2014).^[71] Also, the researcher was interested in gathering data through triangulation of data sources such as interviews, documents, and institutions’ websites (Creswell, 2014;^[17] Glesne, 2011).^[24] Besides, internationalization is bound to a real-life context (Creswell, 2014;^[17] Glesne, 2011;^[24] Johnston & Christensen, 2012;^[37] Yin, 2014).^[71] Moreover, the researcher was interested in comparing findings from the two universities to obtain in-depth understanding of the benefits of internationalization to students (Bazeley, 2013, p. 255).^[9]

3.1 Study site

University A and University B share some similarities that make the two sites appropriate for this research. Both universities had international offices charged with internationalization. The two universities offered and coordinated study abroad programs. University A and University B are in the United States. Recruitment and admission of international and exchange students to University A and University B. International faculty recruitment was common to the two study sites. Both universities are accredited research institutions.

Differences

The two study sites are different in several ways. University A is in the Midwest of the U.S, whereas University B can be found in the southern region of the U.S. University B won the Senator Paul Simon Award in 2011 for comprehensive campus internationalization, however, there was no evidence that University A received any accolades for internationalization. Whilst University A covers 1,850-acre land, University B covers a total land area of 384 acres. The overall student population at University A was 38, 857, with international students’ population of 1, 859, whereas, University B had a total student population of 29,114, with international student population of 1300 at the time of data collection. University A was

awarded the Senator Paul Simon and Andrew Heiskell awards for comprehensive campus internationalization and innovation (Childress, 2010)^[15] however, such cannot be said about University B. University A is a predominantly black university whilst University B is mainly a white institution.

3.2 Sampling Strategy

Purposeful sampling was employed to identify eight students from each of the universities (Creswell, 2014;^[17] Johnson & Christensen, 2012;^[37] Patton, 2002).^[56] American undergraduates in their junior and senior years, American graduate students, international students in junior and senior year, and international graduate students were purposively sampled for the study. The first author attended international students' events to recruit international students for the study. To recruit American students for the study, email addresses of students were requested from the registrar's office. Based on the sampling criteria, the researcher used excel spreadsheet to sort out the email addresses of international students.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection commenced after ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Boards of the two universities (Roberts, 2010).^[60] Face-to-face semi-structured interview guided by an interview protocol was used to garner information on the benefits of internationalization to students. Additionally, data were mined from documents such as study abroad flyers, *Year of flyers*, and websites of both universities (Ahwireng, 2020).^[3]

Ethical Considerations

The study's procedures were approved by the institutional review boards of both universities (approval number: 13E154) (Roberts, 2010).^[60] Subsequently, participants' consents were sought before the interview began. The researcher explained the purpose of the research to participants at the beginning of the interview and informed them of their right to discontinue the interview if necessary (Creswell, 2014).^[17] Participants granted the researcher permission for the interviews to be audio recorded. Pseudonyms were assigned to each of the participants and the two research sites (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).^[47]

3.4 Data analysis

Constant comparative method was employed to analyze data from the two universities. Interviews were transcribed and codes were generated from the transcripts (Creswell, 2014;^[17] Glaser & Holton, 2004;^[25] Patton, 2002;^[54] Sal-

dana, 2012).^[63] Within-case analysis were conducted for each of the universities. The researcher started with open coding, by reading through the transcripts several times, and recorded words or phrases related to benefits of internationalizing higher education to students, on the margins of the transcript. Words or phrases noted in the margins served as preliminary codes (Glaser & Holton, 2004;^[25] Johnson & Christensen, 2012;^[37] Saldana, 2012).^[63] Subsequently, relevant quotes were extracted from transcripts, internationalization documents, and online sources to support the codes to provide understanding of benefits students gained from internationalization of higher education. Subsequently, a master coding list was developed. Responses were sorted and grouped according to the research question with the help of the master coding list. The master coding list served as guided to fully code the transcript of each of the research participants as second and third inferences received attention in a response category. To do axial coding, categories from the transcript of each research participant were organized to ascertain the relationships among the categories (Saldana, 2012).^[63] The researcher reviewed transcripts and compared it to the initial codes to help refine the codes into themes. After the within-case analysis of each of the institutions, the researcher commenced with cross-case analysis, a process peculiar to comparative analysis (Miles et al., 2014).^[49] Miles et al. (2014)^[49] argue that cross-case analysis is a good way to ensure transferability of findings from research to other contexts, thus, to transcend the particular to understand the general. Further, cross-case analysis yields in-depth "understanding and explanation as well as helps find contrarian cases to augment theory, generated via drawing similarities and differences across cases" (p. 101). Therefore, clustered matrix was adopted to unearth the similarities and differences in the benefits that students from each of the universities gained from internationalizing higher education.

To conduct analysis across University A and University B, the researcher depended on the cases for the individual universities to develop a conceptually clustered matrix. The clustered matrix helped to draw differences and similarities in responses from the research participants based on the research question. Six cell entries were created—themes, quotes, names, differences, similarities, and short narratives. The quotes provided explanations to internationalization practices, efforts, events, and initiatives at both universities that potentially benefited students. Similarly, the short narratives helped to avoid lumping together responses that convey different meanings (Miles et al., 2014).^[49] Finally, results from the cross-case analysis were compared to the theoretical frameworks and relevant pre-

vious literature to highlight consistency and contradictory views (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).^[37]

3.5 Credibility and trustworthiness

To ensure rigor in this study, member checking was adopted. Interview transcripts were emailed to the participants to authenticate the interview as well as elicit more insight and clarity to the data (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).^[37] In addition, documents, interviews, and institutions' website searches were triangulated (Johnson & Christensen, 2012;^[37] Yin, 2014)^[71] to glean detailed information about the case under study. Besides, each of the data collection tools compensated for the weaknesses of the other. Further, the researcher provided a detailed description of the study sites through audit trail. Audit trail enabled the researcher to present all the process undertaken during the research. These processes include the basis for selecting the participants, the site selected for the study, as well as the interview process (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).^[37] This provides readers the opportunity to clearly follow the decision trail and judge the dependability of the research (Ahwireng, 2022;^[2] Anney, 2014;^[7] Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017;^[52] Treharne & Riggs, 2014).^[67]

3.6 Findings

This qualitative case study explored the benefits of internationalization to students' cosmopolitan competency from the perspectives of both domestic and international undergraduate and graduate students at two universities in the U.S. The study showed that students acquired bilingual or multilingual abilities, firsthand cultural knowledge, global knowledge, cultural nuances critical to showing respect to people from different cultures and geographical backgrounds, friendship and networking, personal growth, high tendency to develop empathy through university internationalization, and opportunity to taste food from different parts of the world.

3.7 Bilingual or Multilingual abilities

Websites of both universities led to findings that were in line with participant responses regarding opportunities available to students to learn foreign languages. For example, the department of Foreign Languages at University A offered languages such as—French, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Latin, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi, Russian, and Turkish, whereas, the departments of Modern Languages and Linguistics at University B offered French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese. There was also a

general agreement among the respondents that having the opportunity to learn a foreign language is a bilingual or multilingual value addition. For example, Angela said, "I learned Chinese and Swahili at University B. I know how to say *akwaaba, wo hõ ye fe* in Twi from having a Ghanaian roommate." Similarly, Samuel said, "I am learning Spanish ... to be able to interact with my Hispanic friends and neighbors." Similarly, Jennifer mentioned that "I am learning Wolof because I have a scholarship from Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS)." Additionally, Cyril said,

I am learning Turkish ... I have a friend from Turkey, she used to teach me, but she graduated ... but she gave me the notes I need so I am building on.

Also, international students who are non-native speakers of English had the opportunity to become bilingual, because such group of international students are required to enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL). Students enrolled in English as a Second Language were required to regularly engage with native speakers of U.S American English. Acquisition of English language was clear in a statement from Kelsey of University A, "international students register for the program, and they are paired with an American student, and they meet five times during the semester to interact ..."

Both universities provided study abroad opportunities for students to travel to countries where they can communicate with native speakers to acquire a high level of proficiency. For example, Emily hinted that, "... I was able to [use my] Spanish ... when I went on study abroad. Because we stayed in a particular housing situation where everyone in that area spoke Spanish."

Knowledge about different faiths, cultures, and countries

Firsthand knowledge about different religions, cultures, and countries emerged as a benefit of internationalization to students at both universities. International students had the permission to hold cross-cultural events to showcase their culture. Consequently, students acquired cultural traditions by attending cross-cultural events on campus. Knowledge of cultures gained through involvement in international and cross-cultural events was evident in a comment from Ellis of University A, "international students get the chance to celebrate their culture, at the same time, people who are not aware of that culture can immerse themselves in this new experience. ..." Similarly, Angela of University B noted that, "at the Arabian Night, I [learned that] in Saudi Arabia, the culture is, boys dance with boys and girls dance with girls." Additionally, Brittney of Uni-

versity A explained that,

if I were in Korea, I would not have had this opportunity to see foreigners and be exposed to different cultures. [University A,] offers events like salsa, *Year of Ghana*, *Year of Japan*, and the *Breaking Barriers*. ...

Olivia of University B emphasized that, "... to have people [at University B] to be able to immerse in a diversity of culture is [great]. ..."

Also, Jennifer said, "there is French hour. Department of Linguistics have Swahili conversation hour, so learning a language does not just provide proficiency in a language, you learn culture too." Similarly, Andrew of University B commented that,

when you talk to an American professor ... he can raise his legs on the table. I asked the professor why are his legs on the table? ... He [said] ... it is a sign of relaxation. ... It is not disrespectful.

Similarly, Scot from University B said, "in America people can address their elders by their first names. That does not mean they do not respect but that shows how relaxed the American culture is." Further, because both schools recruit international students, students who take classes with international students get the opportunity to gain some cultural knowledge from their international colleagues. For instance, Stephen said that "real intercultural learning is during break time, there was a guy from Jordan, me, and a guy from Ghana ... those moments are when I really pick up little bit [of cultural and international information]". Also, professors engaged international students in the classroom to provide students with firsthand knowledge about other countries. This was obvious in a comment from Jacob of University A,

When we were talking about South Africa in my International Relation Introduction to Africa class, there was a girl from South Africa ... One of our presentations was on FIFA and their influence on the economy and the politics of South Africa ... because she is a South African, she gave a firsthand account of the situation.

Also, acquisition of religious knowledge from internationalization became apparent, because international students had the freedom to practice their religions. For example, Cyril of University A said,

I never interacted with Christians. I never understood their beliefs. But at [University A] I engage in conversations with Christians. ... I find a lot of similarities between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

Similarly, Senousi of University B noted that,

during Ramadan, Muslim students are not eating or drinking, by mid-afternoon they [are hungry] ... My teacher told the Muslim students [to] explain Ramadan to the us. We said, we will not snack in class...

4. Job opportunities

Through the personal interactions in class and at events, students agreed that knowledge about and sensitivity to different cultures and religious practices are pivotal to opening job opportunities. This perspective was highlighted in a comment from Samuel of University A,

If you do not educate yourself on different practices of different places you may do business with ... say a Japanese and you might offend him if you do not study his business card in front of him if [he] gives you his business card.

Also, Spencer of University A, pointed out that, whether students will seek employment outside of the U.S or not, at some point students will interact with someone from another culture, be it a teacher who teaches a couple of immigrant students in his/her class.

Similarly, Angela of University B commented that,

If you want to work in a company, they will have offices in different countries, so you are expected to be able to adapt to [the cultures] ... so exposure [and] understanding of different cultures is helpful.

Elimination of stereotypes

There was consensus among respondents from both institutions that elimination of stereotypes were moral imperatives derived from internationalization. Lois of University A intimated that, "I had stereotype about Nigerians. [I] got closer to Nigerians to know that not all Nigerians are the same. Similarly, Jennifer of University B reported that,

we talked about some African societies and how [there was lack of] democracy. ... You need to understand the culture—how ... they regard the elderly ... it was easier for me to judge them but now I do not.

Expansion of geographical knowledge

Expansion of students' geographical knowledge was highlighted as a benefit of internationalization to students. The cultural events held by the different nationals represented on campus and flags of different countries hanging at strategic places on both campuses, exposed students to different countries. Kelsey of University A noted that "through the Political Science and International Affairs

program, students garnered knowledge about the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and their relationships with the U.S.” Also, Jennifer of University B mentioned that “flags of different countries on campus, might motivate students to google this later... [For instance,] the Arabian Night exposed students to where ... Arabs are from.”

Opportunity to sample food from different parts of the world

Respondents from both universities agreed that because food formed part of the cross-cultural events that are held on campus, students got the opportunity to sample food from different parts of the world. For instance, Kelsey also said, “I learned about Jamaican ... cuisine by tasting it.” Jacob of University B too indicated that “being able to sample all these different foods ... and ask someone how you made this? where is it from?”

Similarly, Ellis of University B stated that, “nine out of ten people will tell you they want to go to international events for food.”

Global perspectives

Respondents agreed that students at University A and University B gained global perspectives through internationalization. For example, through study abroad programs, students got the opportunity to garner global perspectives. For example, Scot, from University A mentioned that “some Americans went to Brazil; one went to Japan. Another person went to Spain. We got different perspectives [from the stories they shared]. It was very interesting.” Also, Jennifer of University B indicated that

I think that my experience in Senegal helped me to understand and conceptualize a lot of my courses, especially, African Politics in African Studies versus [learning about African Politics] in the abstract.” American students are used to this lens of viewing Africa through the invisible child saying everybody needs to save these African children. In America I can be the intermediary to start this dialogue about ... hey! Wait, there are other stories about Africa that you do not hear.

Additionally, students gleaned global perspectives from anecdotes shared by international students in class, assignments about a different country in relation to class topics, Global Studies Certificate, and Area Studies Programs. For instance, Nicole of University A mentioned that,

I kind of understand the perspectives of Japanese on World War I and II better from listening to Japanese

whose parents have lived through it than gaining it from a professor sitting in class.

Similarly, Scot of University B said,

there are international students and Americans in my program. ... We share information [about our countries] in class that are related to class topics. ... In our Phonology class ... one of my ... Turkish classmate did Kazakh for his project. ...

Equally, Stephen of University B noted that, this semester [in one of my] classes, there is a Yemen, Jordanian, American, and Ghanaian. [So] in that class a student may say ... in my country we do this.

Additionally, findings showed that international and domestic faculty on campus contributed to students’ global learning because faculty shared anecdotes about their countries, travel experience, and research findings with students. For instance, Olivia of University B said, “Dr. Riverson, is an American. He specializes in Nigeria, so he talks about his Nigerian experiences. Also, Angela of University B mentioned that “my professor is from Turkey, he always shares his experience working in Puerto Rico and going to industries and trying to improve their system.” Similarly, Scot of University B said, “I remember one of my professors shared his experience living and teaching in Italy with us.”

In addition, students gained global perspectives through Area Studies Programs such as African Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, and Latin American Studies African and African Diaspora Studies, and Asia Studies which are offered at both study sites. For example, Kelsey of University A said, “I believe that my bachelor’s degree in International Affairs had been helpful by giving me knowledge of how to analyze international issues.” Also, Olivia of University B

commented that,

[In] my History of Africa class, we read a text written by *Ibn Battuta in black Africa* ... and in another class, we read a novel by Chimamanda Adichie, she is a Nigerian author.

Reviews from course syllabi revealed that students in the African Studies program read the following novels authored by Africans—*Half of a Yellow Sun*, *Things Fall Apart*, *Wretched of the Earth*, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, and *Our Ways of Dying*.

Also, students garnered global perspectives through

international forums held on campus. This finding was obvious in a statement from Kelsey of University A said,

“I have been to several [lectures] that have speakers that ... come from different cultures to campus ... to talk to students about what is happening in different parts of the world.

Stephen of University B too said that “last year I went to a forum on the Khmer Rouge Cambodia. Another talk presented by a lady from the Middle East.” Similarly, Nicholas of University B said, “the human rights lecture that I attended, I learned global things about women ... and the perspective for that is different from my country.”

Behavioral adjustment through encounter with people with different religious practices

Respondents from both schools agreed students acquired cross-cultural and interfaith knowledge through interactions with friends and involvement in cross-cultural events. For example, Emily said,

I learned religiously appropriate dressing when I studied abroad in predominantly Muslim societies. Likewise, having interacted with students from Saudi Arabia, I learned that if you are a woman and you go there you must be covered. You cannot wear jeans.

Similarly, Jennifer said,

I decided to wear pant instead of shorts under warm conditions because I did not want to unprofessionally present myself to my Senegalese male colleagues who are not used to girls wearing shorts.

Empathy

Empathy emerged as a benefit of internationalization to students. This finding was crystallized in a comment from Angela from University A, “peer advisors read the gestures of international students to [reach an understanding] of what they are saying during orientation.” Also, Olivia of University B observed that,

A lot of ... Americans who work at university coffee shops, [if] the international student tries to order something, and their English is not perfect, or they have a strong accent with perfect English. You ... can notice a lack of patience to understand. ... I have ... developed skills, patience, and desire to be understanding and I have

developed an ear for accents through interaction with international students.

Development of empathy through the curriculum was unique to students at University B. Students were presented with articles, books, and videos about political, economic, social, and cultural phenomenon to critique from a non-western perspective. For instance, Mavis said,

I read *Female ritual servitude: The trokosis in Ghana* about girls sold into slavery to atone for... their father for my EDCS 205 class. ... I tried to put myself in the mindset of how that is fair. ...”

Network and friendship

Formation of friendships at events and in classrooms emerged as a parallel benefit of internationalization at both universities. For example, Spencer said that “through the events, relationships are built ... you walk away with each other’s phone numbers...” Angela too commented that “I had a Ghanaian roommate and [we keep in touch.] ... If I want to go to Ghana, I can contact her.” Similarly, Scot said, “I talked to my Turkish professor, he said I might have the opportunity to teach in Turkey ... my Chinese friend told me [I] can go [to China and] teach Arabic.” Also, Lois of University A indicated that

international students told me which classes to take. They told my brother and I about tuition waivers [for] international students. We applied and we got it. International students gave me the community and the courage ... to survive.

Professional and personal development

Professional and personal development emerged as one of the benefits of internationalization to students from both universities. Both study sites recruited international students and provided them with funding support to serve as Teaching/Research assistants or graduate associates, peer advisors. Students acquired teaching, research, and administrative skills as they work with professors and administrators. For example, Brittney of University A shared that “I am a student worker at Education Abroad Office. I learned how to organize events in a certain order.” Similarly, Ellis of University B said, “... a better environment is created for international students to come and learn. They are given opportunity they might not have in their country.”

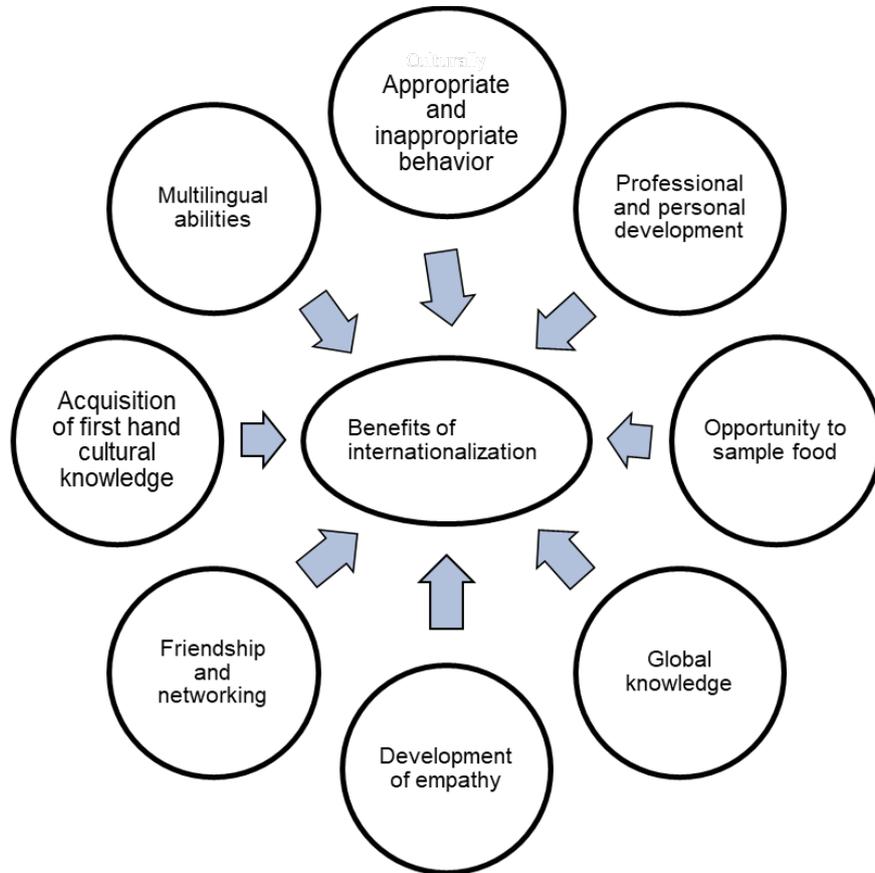


Figure 1. Benefits of internationalization to students.

Discussion

The current study explored benefits of internationalization to students’ cosmopolitan competency. Findings from the present study revealed that students acquired Findings from this study revealed that students acquired bilingual or multilingual abilities, firsthand cultural knowledge, global knowledge, cultural nuances critical to showing respect to people from different cultures and geographical backgrounds, friendship and networking, personal growth, high tendency to develop empathy through university internationalization, and opportunity to taste food from different parts of the world.

Acquisition of multilingual abilities through the provision of foreign language opportunities such as foreign language courses, Rosetta Stones, language laboratories, foreign language conversation hour periods, Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship, study abroad, English as a Second Language (ESL) program at University A, and the University B Intensive English programs is consistent with previous studies (Jon, 2013).^[38] Proficiency in a second language is critical to students’ employability as Hénard, Diamond, and Roseveare (2012)^[31] observed that multilingual skillset is increasingly becoming a preferred

skill that some employers in the corporate and educational arenas look out for when hiring graduates. Attachment of foreign language learning to study abroad is pivotal to facilitate proficiency through immersion. Studies have revealed that institutions that provide opportunities for students whose lingua franca is not English to acquire English language proficiency, stand the chance of attracting international students as well as reap the economic and intercultural exchange benefits associated with international students’ presence on campus (Altbach, 2010;^[5] Hayle, 2008;^[30] Özturgut, 2013).^[55] Also, ability to communicate in a second language can help break barriers and provides entrée into a community, especially for research purposes, because research participants are more likely to open-up to foreign researchers who know their language (Ross, 2004).^[61] Moreover, findings of this research aligns with previous studies that show “the use of language as another fundamental aspect of acquiring intercultural proficiency. Language is one of the key means by which cultural knowledge is shared and revealed” (Gopal, 2011, p. 376).^[26]

Consistent with previous research, students gleaned international, intercultural, and inter-faith knowledge through curricular and co-curricular activities (Clark, Flaherty, Wright, & Millen, 2009,^[16] Hayle, 2008,^[30] Lee

et al., 2012;^[44] Soria & Troisi, 2014).^[64] Attainment of cultural and religious knowledge has the potential to help eliminate stereotypical and xenophobic tendencies that might exist among students and provides an “adaptive and comparative thinking lens through which to assess oneself to obtain self-awareness of one’s own culture” (Deardorff, 2006, pp. 247-248).^[19]

Findings indicated that students gained global perspectives related to teaching pedagogies through internationalization efforts such as study abroad and the shared knowledge and experiences of international students in class. Knowledge about different teaching pedagogy is critical to stimulating students’ international comparative research desires to investigate best practices for teaching and learning. Acquisition of different pedagogies can be utilized to complement what students already know to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. Experiences and perspectives that study abroad returnees shared with their colleagues, served as a learning tool, to enhance the international perspectives of students who could not go on study abroad. Further, Gender and Women’s Studies certificate programs increased students’ global knowledge on gender and women’s issues. However, a higher percentage of the content focused on women in North America. Consequently, imbalances in the content of the program in favor of American feminism did not provide opportunity for objective understanding of issues concerning women.

Additionally, anecdotes related to class topics shared by international faculty increased students’ global knowledge and perspectives. Opportunity available for students to enroll in Area Studies programs such as African Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, Asia Studies, Latin American Studies, and African and African Diaspora Studies enhanced students’ global knowledge and perspectives. Comprehension gained through the perspectives of authors from the respective regions of studies is pivotal to making students circumspective in their thoughts about Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Through guest lectures at international forums, students gained international knowledge about global problems. This strategy is critical to motivating students to get engaged and contribute their quota to their various fields through research, as traits that define global competence is to exhibit interpersonal skills in problem solving (Matherly and Nolting, 2007)^[48] and the crave to make the world a better place and the desire to make the world a more sustainable place (Woolf, 2010)^[70] because, the solution to world problems is not the responsibility of a few people or a country, collaborative efforts of globally competent citizenship is required (Zhao, 2010).^[72] It is important to note that the guest lectures created the awareness of global issues, however, there

were no opportunities at either school for students to get involve. Unfortunately, this internationalization strategy perpetuates banking system of learning (Freire, 2008),^[23] and falls short of Rexeisen, Anderson, Lawton, and Hubbard (2008)^[62] intercultural awareness definition that suggests community engagement. Consequently, there is an urgent need for administrators to connect international forum presentations with some student clubs and associations on campus for interested students to connect and get engaged in addressing global issues. Acquisition of empathy through internationalized curriculum and co-curricular activities emerging from the study confirmed Odgen, Stretwieser, and Crawford’s (2014)^[53] view that internationalization helps students to learn in a reflexive manner.

Consistent with Lambert and Usher (2013)^[43] internationalization offers students the opportunity to establish friendships with peers from different cultures through formal and informal gatherings. Friendship and networking formed because of internationalization provide economic benefits as friends helped each other to secure jobs in other parts of the world, instead of relying on limited jobs in one’s own country. Thus, the worries associated with unemployment after graduation will be minimized. Also, the fear of the unknown which is likely to deter graduates from accepting job offers outside their comfort zones is likely to reduce, because students can rely on friends’ families for support while away from their home countries (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005).^[58]

Engagement of international students in teaching, research, administrative, and leadership roles is critical to their future career development and growth (Jean Francois, 2010).^[33] Opportunity granted to international students to come to the U.S for further studies provides a value addition to students’ personal and professional growth. Knowledge and exposure that international students acquire while studying in the U.S helps students to be critical about decisions made by leadership in their various countries. This critical mindedness will help students to challenge any unpopular decisions taken by people in leadership positions that will be detrimental to the growth and development of the nation. Similarly, students’ interpersonal skills gained through interactions with host citizens whilst on study abroad extends Jon’s (2013)^[38] view on acquisition of interpersonal growth through interaction with people from different nationalities. This finding provides administrators with strategies to hone students’ development through internationalization at home and across borders.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Understanding students’ perspectives on the benefits

of internationalizing higher education provides a leverage for university leadership to initiate policies and practices towards effective campus internationalization. Therefore, institutions of higher education should provide opportunities such as foreign language courses, Rosetta Stones, language laboratories, foreign language conversation hour sessions, English as a Second Language (ESL) or Intensive English Language program for students. Also, administrators and faculty are encouraged to provide a platform for study abroad returnees to share their experiences with their colleagues. International students' presence at U.S universities is critical to enriching students' global learning. Therefore, it is imperative for faculty to intentionally motivate and elicit international students' experiential learning in class discussions, assignments, and projects. Therefore, university administrators and faculty are encouraged to incorporate intercultural and interreligious perspectives into the curricula and co-curricular aspects of the institution to enhance students' international, intercultural, and inter-faith competences. Findings of this qualitative case study has expanded theoretical proposition on internationalization by highlighting the benefits of internationalization of higher education, however, findings cannot be generalized to the entire student body because of the small sample size (Yin, 2014).^[71] Consequently, similar research that focuses on a non-Western context using a quantitative, or mixed methods approach will warrant generalization of the findings.

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