Research Article

Anything Students Can Learn, Staff and Faculty Can Learn Too: Intercultural Learning in Staff and Faculty Study Abroad

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of intercultural learning modules introduced to a faculty and staff study abroad program. Using data from 2014-2018 of Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) scores, this study compared control (2014-2015) and treatment (2016-2018) IDI mean score differences due to the new modules introduced in 2016. The results indicate that the introduction of five intercultural learning modules and individualized goal-setting led to positive IDI growth in comparison with the control group. Despite program participants of all years taking part in daily journaling with program mentors, these results suggest that participating in intercultural learning modules before, during, and after travel and setting individualized intercultural goals were key to intercultural learning. In addition, this study provides evidence that best practices for student study abroad programs can also be applied to faculty and staff intercultural professional development.

Keywords:

Study abroad, staff, intercultural learning, Intercultural Development Inventory

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Introduction

Most, if not all, post-secondary institutions desire to be a "global institution" that prepares their students for a globalized economy and imparts intercultural knowledge and skills to impact society. In the twenty-first century, the U.S. college environment on many campuses has changed dramatically. In particular, international student participation on U.S. college campuses has doubled nationally over the past two decades, with the vast majority of that increase coming from various countries in Asia (Institute of International Education, 2019c). Institutions often adapt to the changing student demographics and a changing global economy by providing services catering to the new populations, focusing on developing student intercultural competence, and increasing the numbers of domestic students studying abroad (Hopkins, 2012). The focus on study abroad participation has led to yearly gains in the number of U.S. students studying abroad, while the average duration of stay abroad decreases (Institute of International Education, 2019a). However, one of the most critical factors in these efforts has often been an ignored piece of the campus internationalization puzzle: the university faculty and staff. In most institutions, academic advisors and faculty play a critical role in both supporting international students and promoting study abroad experiences to all students; despite the fact that many in these roles lack experience abroad, professional development related to intercultural learning, or even confidence in their own abilities to support globally diverse students (Long, 2018).

While study abroad seems to be a key component for intercultural competence and is implemented to help students develop intercultural and global competencies, most institutions seem to have neglected the importance that such experiences have on staff effectiveness and, as a result, the effectiveness of their institution to truly be a global institution. Zhang (2016) found an academic advisor's lack of cultural competence negatively affects an international student's feelings of validation and their emotions towards their respective advisors. Moreover, and perhaps more worrying, academic advisors who work with these diverse international populations are often left on their own to seek out intercultural competence training or professional development experiences abroad (Zhang & Dinh, 2017).

Research has shown that study abroad contributes to student academic success, foreign language use, and intercultural development (He et al., 2017; Heinzmann et al., 2015; Lokkesmoe et al., 2016). In the same way, it is sensible

to assume that an experience abroad is equally important for staff and faculty intercultural competence development and career success in serving the needs of a globally diverse student population. In addition, an experience abroad focused on comparing cultural differences will afford faculty and academic advisors the opportunity to recognize, empathize with, and attempt to address the needs of students coming from overseas (Liu, 2019). However, while such experiences are needed for key college staff, there is a lack of research into the effective implementation of such opportunities. As has been shown in student study abroad learning, research that provides evidence of the effectiveness of such experiences on faculty and staff intercultural competence is needed.

A lack of institutional support for faculty and staff experiences abroad also affects student enrollment in study abroad programs; as faculty and staff advisors play a significant role in encouraging students to participate in study abroad (Lee & Metcalfe, 2017). For instance, whether U.S. domestic students choose to study in a non-traditional country, where most of their international student classmates are from, may depend on the experience of those advising them on potential destinations. While the vast majority of international students in the United States come from outside Europe, over 40% of U.S. students studying abroad choose to do so in just five western European countries; the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, and Germany (Institute of International Education, 2019b). Faculty or staff face an extremely difficult task in effectively advising students on studying abroad to a non-traditional destination if they have never been abroad themselves, particularly to a destination outside of Europe. Nevertheless, while their institutions expect faculty and staff to serve international student needs, they are also often assumed sufficiently capable to encourage study abroad participation.

This study was one such example meant to address the intercultural learning needs of faculty and staff. To address the role that faculty and staff play and the potential lack of experience abroad, the institution in this study created an opportunity for professional development that would help advisors, staff, and faculty to empathize with the international student experience and promote the value of study abroad to domestic U.S. students. The study follows five years of data collected from a yearly study abroad opportunity for faculty and staff.

Literature Review

Institutions of higher learning have a myriad of reasons for implementing goals related to internationalizing the campus. Some may be driven by the globalized market economy, both for the reputation of being a global institution and for positioning their graduates with skills needed for the marketplace (Agnew & Kahn, 2014). Others are driven to make their campus more attractive to potential international recruits and focus primarily on the unique difficulties international students have while studying in the host country (Lantz-Deaton, 2017). Professional organizations, like NAFSA and IIE, often support internationalization efforts by recognizing institutional efforts with awards and providing professional networks (NAFSA, 2020), or in collating data on campus international exchanges (Institute of International Education, 2019b). International student populations struggle to participate with U.S. domestic majority and minority groups both in and outside the classroom. There are studies suggesting that those students with host culture peers as friends in a foreign cultural environment tend to have greater intercultural adjustment, academic success, and overall satisfaction with their study abroad experience (Chen, 2006; Geary, 2016). Efforts to set intercultural competence goals and develop intercultural competence is a common way that institutions seek to address the difficulties experienced by their international populations. (Lantz-Deaton, 2017). Universities pursue internationalization by setting educational goals and strategies, planning intentional cross-cultural encounters on campus, and redesigning curriculum to focus on intercultural learning (Hopkins, 2012). However, Agnew and Kahn (2014), in identifying needed practices for internationalizing the home campus, assert that faculty and staff must buy into the need for internationalization through the provision of intercultural professional development and the rewarding of innovative attempts to achieve these goals. Both efforts require general support from institutional leadership to implement, and any institution which seeks to address internationalization without addressing staff and faculty needs is unlikely to be effective (Agnew & Kahn, 2014).

While institutions make an effort to teach or train intercultural competence in a traditional classroom or workshop setting, direct experience or contact with cultural difference, often through study abroad, continues to be the foremost vehicle for intercultural learning and assessment in post-secondary institutions (Koseva, 2017). As a result, there is greater urgency to increase the

numbers of students studying abroad (Institute of International Education, 2019b). This urgency, along with the need to expand options for students in demanding majors have led to an expansion of short programs that include assessment of participant growth in intercultural competence (Koseva, 2017).

But simply having contact with cultural difference is not enough to realize intercultural competence goals among learners. Students need cultural mentoring before, during, and after the experience to realize gains in intercultural competence (Vande Berg et al., 2009). Study abroad experiences, coupled with intercultural competence goal-setting and mentorship, have the potential to address both intercultural competence and empathy with those who are in second-language cultural environments. Additionally, while excursions of one semester or more are ideal for intercultural learning, there has been evidence that gains are also possible in short experiences of eight weeks or less (Vande Berg et al., 2012; Walters et al., 2017). This is important as while it may be difficult to provide long duration professional opportunities abroad for faculty and staff, it is more likely that institutions already send delegations abroad for one or two weeks that might prove to be viable vehicles for intercultural development.

Intercultural Competence and Assessment

Bennett (2009) defines intercultural competence as "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 122). This description has guided other intercultural learning researchers as they develop and review various assessments for intercultural competence (Arasaratnam, 2015; Deardorff, 2015; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Despite some shared language regarding the definition of intercultural competence, there are a plethora of models to describe and assess the components of intercultural competence. Some assessment models focus on cultural knowledge or on identifying and assessing specific desired characteristics or skills; while assessments like the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) focus on the developmental change of worldviews concerning culture through impactful experiences (Fantini, 2009).

Hammer and colleagues (2003) argue that people with a more ethnorelative framework are more likely to act appropriately and effectively across culture. This theoretical framework does not require specific

identification of the knowledge, skills, or attitudes that are indicative of intercultural competence, rather the focus is on the development of ethnorelative worldviews (Hammer et al., 2003; Hammer, 2007). In other words, they contend that organizations should assess the framework with which learners approach cultural difference, with the goal being to have a more ethnorelative worldview that accepts other ways of being and appropriately adapts one's own behavior, when needed.

Instruments like the IDI allow facilitators to assess movement on the continuum from the ethnocentric stages of denial, polarization, and minimization to the ethnorelative stages of acceptance and adaptation. Bennett (1993) explains that ethnocentric mindsets view all people and cultures through their own cultural lens, resulting in either missing out on cultural differences (Denial stage), seeing the culturally different as other (Polarization stage), or minimizing differences that exist (Minimization stage). The ethnorelative stage of Acceptance recognizes and appreciates deep cultural differences but may lack the ability to learn from and adapt to differences that people in the stage of Adaptation do (Hammer, 2009). Generally, higher post-experience IDI scores on the continuum are considered evidence of the effectiveness of the study abroad experience or other related learning activity, even if the learning is still assessed within the same stage of intercultural development (Vande Berg et al., 2012).

The IDI has increasingly been a tool of choice in study abroad research for assessing the intercultural development of learners and has been used frequently by recent studies measuring the effectiveness of study abroad learning (e.g., Anderson et al., 2016; He et al., 2017; Krishnan et al., 2017; Lokkesmoe et al., 2016; Paras et al., 2019; Spenader & Retka, 2015). Tools like the IDI are used to orient the instructor and learner to developmentally appropriate learning that takes into account the learner's prior knowledge of cultural differences, or their stage. The challenges and interventions placed on the learner are meant to be subjective to the individual and usually involve an attempt to approximate the understanding, emotion, and behavior that are experienced or needed in a real-life situation. Finally, assessment tools like the IDI are meant to be used in conjunction with learning experiences, such as study abroad, that expose the learner to lived cultural differences.

Study Abroad Best Practices

Intercultural competence has increasingly become a critical component of study abroad programs for students. Study abroad facilitators have identified a number of programmatic interventions that are considered best practices for intercultural competence growth in study abroad. Generally, there is agreement that experiences abroad should include: pre-departure sessions, in-country reflections and journaling, individualized intercultural goal-setting according to learner needs, and general discussions of cultural assumptions, values, and behavior differences (Niehaus et al., 2018; Paige & Goode, 2009; Vande Berg & Paige, 2009). Recent literature also argues that U.S. students who go abroad will gain more from the experience when there are opportunities for cultural mentorship and guided reflection (Vande Berg & Paige, 2009; Pedersen, 2009; Rennick, 2015). The leaders of this program assumed that best practices learned and applied to student learners would be similarly effective with adult learners, i.e., any faculty and staff study abroad experience should include pre-departure sessions, reflective journaling, individualized goal-setting and mentorship, and a general focus on cultural differences and similarities. However, it is likely that adult learners require different, or more specialized, support to develop intercultural competence. Understanding these specialized needs and utilizing these best practices for adult study abroad programs will help facilitators realize their intercultural learning goals.

The studies that identified these best practices focus almost exclusively on undergraduate students from North America studying in other countries. Nevertheless, some recent studies are attempting to apply similar interventions and intercultural learning goals for staff and faculty professional development (Liu, 2019). Thus, this study was conducted in an effort to explore the extent to which best practices typically applied with student study abroad can support faculty and staff intercultural learning abroad.

Method

Study Context and Sample

This study examined a yearly delegation to China over five years, utilizing the IDI tool to assess the overall effectiveness of the experience in relation to intercultural competence. It took place at a large public university in the Midwest and the trend at this institution reflects the national trend, with international student participation doubling in past two decades (Institute of

International Education, 2019c). As the institution sought to serve and teach these new international populations, they followed other institutions by devising orientation programs and new year-round programs designed specifically to encourage international and U.S. domestic students to "integrate" and develop intercultural competence. In 2012, the international office implemented the Global Partners Program (GPP), which brought faculty and staff to China on a two-week travel experience. Initially, the program was funded entirely by the international office, but during the years this study was active (2014-2018), each department funded their own staff nominees. Each year, 12-14 faculty and staff would be nominated and apply for the university delegation going to China for two weeks in May. The participants were not randomly selected but were required to have never been to China to be eligible. Data was collected from 63 faculty and staff who participated in the GPP between 2014 and 2018. It is assumed that the sample represents faculty and staff at large public institutions who may have limited experience traveling outside the United States.

The Global Partners Program (GPP)

The GPP included two in-country pre-departure orientations for incoming students from China and visits to three Chinese campus partners. While the program consisted of official university partner visits and orientations for incoming Chinese students, the program leaders designed the experience with the goal of intercultural professional development in mind. Over the five years of study, the program was led by two staff from the international office. The first program leader led the travel portion of the GPP for the first three years and the second leader led it for the final two years. Both program leaders were not from China but had lived and worked in China for more than a year and worked together closely to ensure the program details remained consistent. The leaders were responsible for the IDI assessments, debriefs, program logistics, journal responses to participants, and the intercultural modules hosted in the last three years of the program.

The program had three main goals: (1) providing two pre-departure orientations for large numbers of incoming Chinese students, (2) providing an experience of study abroad for faculty and staff who may not have had it that would then encourage them to promote study abroad or consider implementing study abroad programs to places in Asia, and (3) to develop faculty and staff intercultural competence. A further underlying hope of focusing on

intercultural competence was that the experience would assist faculty and staff who had never been to China so that they might be more effective in their respective roles as they relate to international students, especially students from China. This was especially important as the majority of staff who participated in the program were academic advisor representatives from each of the academic colleges. The first two goals were achieved by (1) completing in-country events such as the pre-departure orientation and (2) setting expectations for faculty and staff in relation to study abroad promotion upon their return. The final goal, intercultural competence, was initially pursued by requiring daily journaling while in country, which was read and responded to by the program leaders, and by utilizing the IDI assessment.

For all five years of this study, the pre-departure program included sixteen one-hour meetings beginning in March of each year and ending before the travel experience in May. These sessions included eight basic Chinese language classes taught by a faculty member from the languages department. They also included eight other classes led by the program leaders, which ranged from participant presentations on a Chinese cultural topic to general discussions of program logistics and Chinese culture. In addition, for all years of this study the groups traveled to the same three cities, stayed in the same hotels, and visited the same campus partners in China. Official group activities in China were the same over the course of the five years although the specific order and dates of activities varied slightly each year. Finally, mentor-led journaling was in place for all five years of IDI assessment, from 2014-2018.

Assessment of Intercultural Competency

In 2014, the start of this study, program leaders implemented the IDI to assess the effectiveness of the experience in growing intercultural competence. The assessment consists of 50 survey items with multiple choice answers, each of which are connected to one of five orientations on the continuum ranging from denial, polarization, minimization, acceptance, and adaptation. A score is derived for each orientation, with the highest score defining a primary orientation for the learner. The creators of the IDI have provided evidence of its validity (Hammer, 2011; Paige et al., 2003; Wiley, 2017). While previous versions of the IDI do have optional open-ended questions, they were not required for this program (IDI, 2022). For this study, each group was given group debriefs of the group IDI scores; however, only the last three years of the treatment group participants were given individual pre-travel debriefs of their IDI assessment.

Each group of participants was given an IDI pre-test in February before the first pre-departure meetings commenced. After the two-week travel experience occurred in May, and group post-travel meetings were completed in July or August, each group took an IDI post-test between October and December. Therefore, the cycle of the program began in February and ended in December each year. Some studies have shown that intercultural competence gains made during short study abroad programs are lost over time, hence this study introduced delayed post-testing (Heinzmann et al., 2015). The delayed post-testing ensured all post travel group meetings were completed and participants had "returned to normal life" before assessing impact of the program.

New Interventions

After reviewing the results of the program assessment for the first two years (2014-2015), the program leaders implemented five intercultural learning modules, starting in 2016. In this study, the groups who participated in the program between 2016 and 2018 were designated as the treatment group and were required to set additional intercultural learning goals based on their pre-departure IDI assessment. The only other change for the treatment groups was the introduction of five intercultural learning modules. These modules covered (1) cultural identities and (2) cultural values during the pre-departure meetings, (3) cultural communication and (4) cultural worldviews while in-country, and (5) a discussion of Hofstede's (2001, 2019) cultural dimensions during one post-travel meeting. All treatment groups were asked to complete a journal reflection after each module. The pre-departure modules helped participants identify their own cultural identities or values and invited current students from China to do an activity on value differences with the members of the program. The two modules in China were individual worksheets, one focused on observing communication and interactions of local people in public, and the other on interviewing local Chinese college students studying at a partner institution. The final module was a group discussion of observations and experiences while in China in relation to Hofstede's cultural dimensions. All modules were led by the program leaders. As mentioned, the individual debriefs for the treatment groups were connected with the setting of individualized intercultural learning goals and these goals were revisited in post-travel meetings. Given the uniformity of the travel program across all five years, this study was interested in any difference in average IDI score changes between the control and treatment groups as a result of the additional five intercultural modules and

individual intercultural goal-setting used from 2016 to 2018. As these were implemented in 2016, those participants from 2014 and 2015 were compared with participants from 2016-2018.

Data Analysis

This study focused on IDI score change following the introduction of directed intercultural learning sessions and the setting of personalized intercultural goals. A quantitative study was appropriate in this case because (1) the primary assessment data across all five years was a numerical score from the IDI, and (2) the lack of positive outcomes in the first two years when compared with final three years was the primary focus of the study, i.e., was the change in assessment scores statistically significant. While the outcome variable of the analysis is change in IDI test scores before and after the travel experience, the explanatory variable is the implementation of five cross-cultural learning sessions and the setting of individualized intercultural learning goals. Of the 66 participants in this study, three participants failed to complete the post travel IDI assessment and were therefore not included in the analysis. Data analysis started with a descriptive analysis to explore the change in IDI scores among participants. Change in pre/post scores on the IDI was then compared between control and treatment groups with a two-independent samples t-test. Only an increase of mean scores for cultural learning is meaningful to the program, hence a one-tail test was conducted.

Results

Descriptive Results

Around 38% of the data belongs to the control group (n= 24) and around 62% of the data belongs to the treatment group (n= 39). While participants represented both faculty and staff, only 1-2 faculty participated each year, with the rest comprising staff from various campus partners, including academic advisors from each college, university residences, the dean of students, student activities, and the career center. Table (1) contains the descriptive statistics of the IDI score change factored by whether the participant was in the control group or the treatment group. The table shows the control group to have a mean change of 1.13 and a standard deviation of 12.23. The minimum change is -20 while the maximum change is 26 with a total range of 46. The treatment group has a mean change of 10.77 with a standard deviation of 11.97. The minimum change is -11 while the maximum change is 41 with a total range of 52.

	n	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Control	24	1.13	12.23	-20	26	46
Treatment	39	10.77	11.97	-11	41	52

TABLE (1): DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF IDI SCORE CHANGE

Figures (1) and (2) show the distribution of both the control and treatment groups respectively in a histogram. Figure (1) shows the control group distributed around the mean of 0 while Figure (2) shows the treatment group distributed around the mean of 10. These figures suggest that the data for both groups are normally distributed. However, there is one outlier for the treatment group, a value of 42. Combined with descriptive statistics the figures are appropriate evidence that the data for both groups are normally distributed around their respective means. Figure (3) provides a visual representation of the group IDI pre and post test scores by year (or the pre-travel development orientations and post-travel development orientations). The pre developmental orientation and post developmental orientation values are the aggregates of all pre-tests and post-tests taken in the respective year. These aggregates by year show that the starting point (pre developmental orientation) for each year were all within a five-point range. This suggests that both control groups (2014-2015) and treatment groups (2016-2018) have a similar starting point in terms of intercultural sensibility as measured by the IDI.
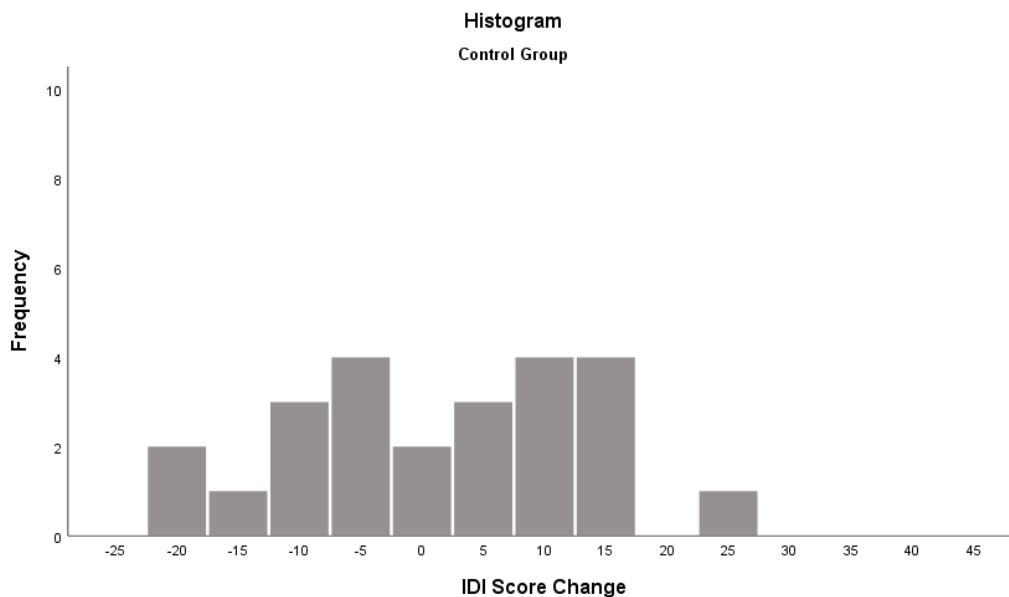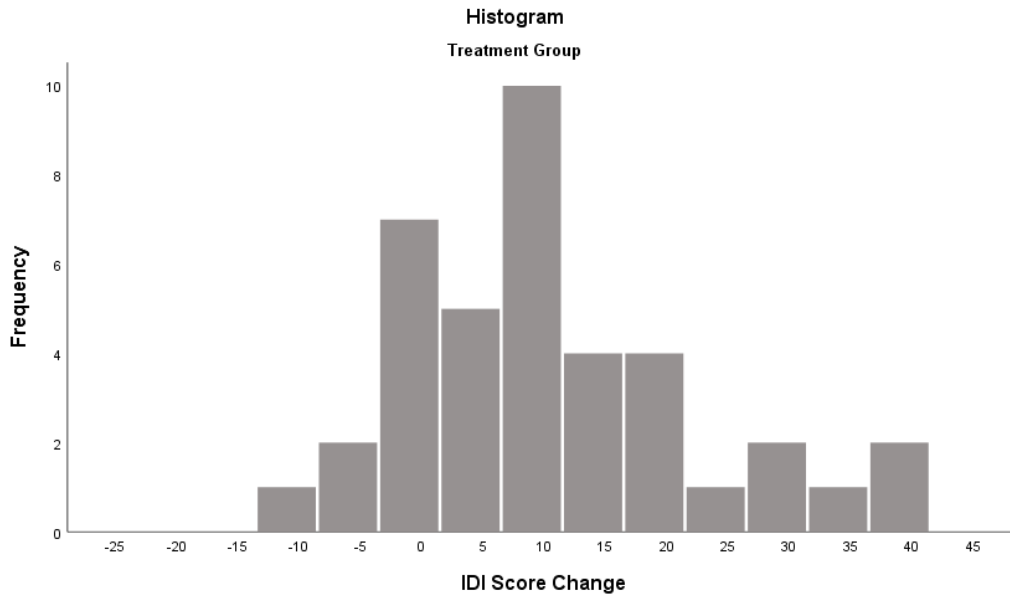

FIGURE (1): CONTROL GROUP HISTOGRAM
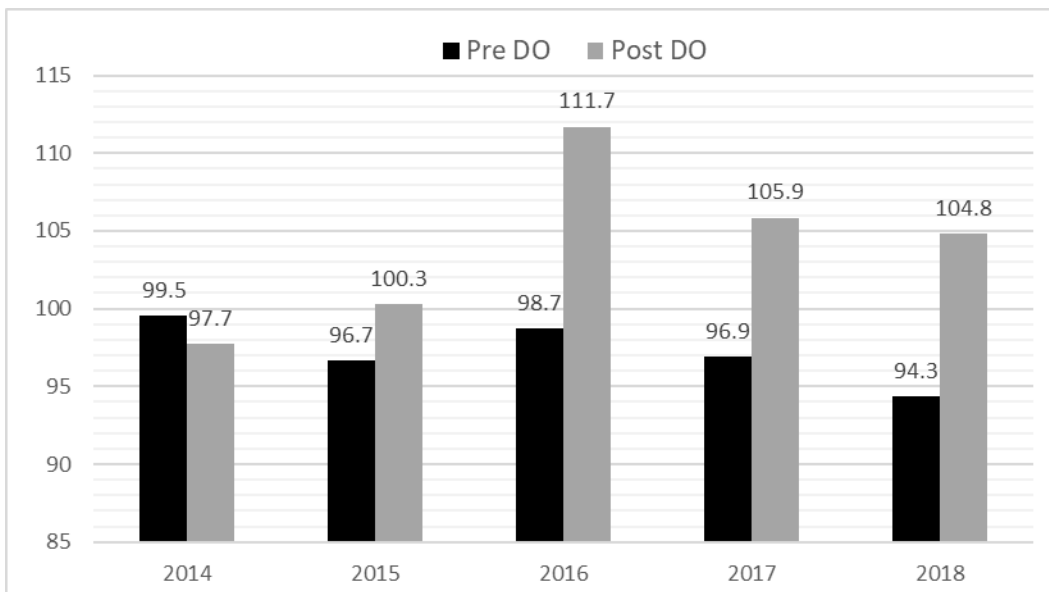
FIGURE (2): TREATMENT GROUP HISTOGRAM

FIGURE (3): AGGREGATE IDI SCORES BY YEAR

Inferential Results

A two-independent samples t-test was run to compare the IDI score means of the treatment and control groups for the program. The null hypothesis is that the IDI mean score for the control and treatment groups is the same. The results of Levene's test for equality of variances is greater than 0.05, which means that the variances of both samples are homogeneous and supports the

study assumption that both samples have normal distributions and similar variances. The value for the t statistic with 61 degrees of freedom is 3.08 with a p-value of 0.002 for a one-tail test. The mean of the differences between the treatment and control samples is 9.6 with a standard error of 3.1. The confidence interval suggests that, within a 95% probability, the true mean difference between the treatment and control groups is between 3.4 and 15.9. These results mean that the null hypothesis is rejected, and the statistical test supported the hypothesis that the treatment mean difference is greater than the control group. The Cohen's d is 0.80, indicating that the effect size is large, or that participants in the treatment groups had on average .8 standard deviations higher growth on the IDI assessment than those in the control groups. Finally, the power for this test was calculated at 0.919.

Discussion

This study highlighted one effort meant to address the need for faculty and staff intercultural competence. This study explored mean IDI score changes between the first two years of the control groups with three further years of the treatment groups, which implemented five intercultural learning modules and individualized goal-setting. Research using the IDI tool with student short-term study abroad suggests that individual and group mentoring during the study abroad experience is important for growth in intercultural learning (Vande Berg et al., 2009; Vande Berg et al., 2012). More explicitly, average IDI growth of over six points is considered significant growth for short-term experiences that mentor students in intercultural learning (Anderson et al., 2016; Vande Berg et al., 2009). The pre-post growth in the control groups falls in line with findings from Vande Berg and colleagues' Georgetown Consortium Study on student study abroad (2009), specifically that few lasting gains are made from overseas study experiences without guided, intentional intercultural learning. Therefore, that the treatment groups in this study show a significant positive difference of almost ten points for a two-week global experience when compared with the control groups is a positive sign for future faculty and staff overseas professional development programs. In addition, the results suggest that setting individual intercultural goals and the inclusion of specific learning modules discussing intercultural competence should be included with other best practices, such as journaling and mentorship.

As this program targeted faculty and staff development rather than young adults or students, it is also significant that implementing personalized goals and intercultural learning sessions saw growth that mirrored or exceeded the results of recent IDI studies with study abroad students (Anderson et al., 2016; Paras et al., 2019; Vande Berg et al., 2009). Pedersen's (2009) study suggests that short-term programs have the greatest impact on learners in denial/defense stages whereas long-term programs have the greatest impact on those in minimization. This study's finding seems to support the assertion that learners in the earlier ethnocentric stages make the greatest gains in short term experiences abroad. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify that participants in the minimization stage also made strong gains and that the vast majority of staff and faculty who participated were in the minimization stage at the beginning of the program.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are limitations in this study and opportunities for further research. First, Spenader and Retka (2015), in their comparison of study abroad programs found IDI growth greater in groups that traveled to countries outside Europe, like Chile and South Africa, as opposed to programs to European countries, like Spain and Ireland. This might suggest that intercultural learning growth through experiences with cultural differences correlates with the prosperity of the environment a student enters. The efficacy of the treatment implemented in the current study was only explored with one country, China. Thus, there is a need for further studies to consider how much the environmental conditions affect a learner's intercultural development or if all environments are relatively consistent in the potential for intercultural gains.

Second, Deardorff (2009) and Fantini (2009) argue that intercultural competence must be measured through both qualitative and quantitative measures and that no one assessment tool is sufficient for approximating cultural competence. Hammer (2015) argues that the IDI includes both a quantitative assessment and optional qualitative feedback which can be used during individual debriefs with learners. This study did include qualitative questions on pre and post IDI assessments as well as collecting qualitative journals of participants over all five years of the program. However, the journals were not complete and the open-ended questions on the IDI were not used, therefore qualitative data was not included in this study. In addition, the focus

of this study was whether the difference between the treatment and control groups was statistically significant, rather than specifically describing what was happening in the intercultural development process. Further studies which replicate these results would do well to include qualitative data to help describe what aspects of ICC participants are experiencing or growing in.

Third, there are the criticisms of the DMIS model and the IDI tool, specifically that learners should be guided away from comparisons of national culture and consider the impact of power relations in intercultural contact. As Hofstede (2001, 2019) clarifies, the differences within national cultures are just as meaningful as the differences between national cultures and national cultural differences are useful only in comparisons. This does not change the fact that, on average, national cultures do have significant value differences and these value differences can and do impact intercultural experiences. Therefore, a focus on "cultural general" learning is important as this method focuses on awareness of and bridging between differences, while recognizing the non-homogeneity and context specific factors in all cases of intercultural interaction (Bennett, 2019). Furthermore, while it is true that all intercultural interactions involve disparate power relations, the IDI tool was designed to assess the general framework with which a person approaches culture, not the conditions and environment of a specific interaction. In this purpose, Bennett (1986, 1993) has made a strong case for the use of "intercultural sensibility" as a measure of intercultural competence. There is also evidence that supports the IDI as a reliable statistical tool (Griffith et al., 2016; Hammer, 2015). Rather, the primary weakness of the IDI is one that is shared with many intercultural assessment tools: in that it assesses a framework or attitudes without assessment of associated desired behavior. Ultimately, further studies which replicate faculty and staff study abroad learning and utilize other assessments, including desired behavioral outcomes, would be ideal.

Fourth, although participants of the study are purposively selected, participants' characteristics, such as previous overseas experience, gender, and age, were not controlled for in this study. Studies with a larger number of participants that are randomly selected according to certain criteria, for instance, randomly selected among staff who have never been abroad before, may be needed to strengthen the internal validity of these results. Finally, it is worth noting that the treatment learning modules were designed with the IDI assessment and framework in mind, meaning that the change in growth could

be argued to have been part of "teaching to the test." Thus, further support with qualitative data in future studies will add valuable insights into understanding how and in what way staff and faculty grow their intercultural competencies through participation in experiences abroad. Further research which replicates similar intercultural professional development experiences for staff and faculty are needed, especially those that include intercultural learning modules and individual intercultural learning goals.

Implications to Practice

First, this study provides evidence that intercultural learning opportunities can and should be offered to faculty and staff working in higher education roles, especially those that advance the international or global mission of their institutions. Second, this study highlights the need for more research directed at faculty, advisors, and other administrative support staff that seek to serve a diverse student population. For those looking to address these needs through a similar program, there are several recommendations.

To implement a study abroad experience is expensive whether for staff or students, which requires investment from a group of departmental partners and is more likely to be implemented if the ICC professional development program can be combined with overseas travel that is already being conducted by the institution, i.e., partner and site visits or in-country orientations. It is also recommended to target countries which already send a high number of international students to the institution in question. Along with identifying the goals, investing time and effort in the planning of pre-departure and post-travel ICC sessions and assessment is critical. As mentioned earlier, this study identified the need for assessment of behavior, along with any assessment of frameworks, attitudes, or skills. In the case of faculty or staff, if the purpose of such ICC work is to improve their interactions with students they serve, then assessing the impact on student advising or support, especially diverse student populations, after an ICC experience would be an important metric.

Conclusion

Staff and faculty at higher education institutions represent the institution in everyday interactions with students, parents, and the community; to be a truly global institution means not just having interculturally competent students, but also globally prepared staff. These positions play a critical role related to the internationalization goals of their respective institutions. They

need help, they need experiences, and they need professional goals that set them up for success in a multicultural campus environment. Institutions generally accept that study abroad remains a key component for students in developing intercultural skills, empathy, and knowledge for a global economy and this study suggests that such experiences are key for staff too. This study finds that personalized goal-setting and intercultural learning modules are important to the learning process. This suggests that implementing only some of the study abroad best practices, like mentorship and journaling, without intercultural modules and personalized goals, may be ineffective.

In addition to reinforcing the feasibility of applying study abroad best practices to staff and faculty intercultural professional development, this study serves as a call for more work and assessment that targets intercultural professional development in higher education. Further studies are needed to understand the specific needs and learning that can be achieved through similar staff and faculty learning abroad or on the home campus. There is also a need to research how gains in staff intercultural learning are connected to institutional internationalization and the support or service provided by such staff to diverse student populations. Assuming that institutions value internationalization, this study reinforces that developing intercultural development amongst professional staff through experiences abroad that include intercultural learning as a primary goal is an important step. Staff, especially academic advisors, serve important roles that connect students with most services of the institution and are essential in achieving larger institutional goals (Long, 2018; Pellegrino et al., 2015). Not every institution will have the resources or time to implement faculty and staff study abroad experiences. But in an era of overseas branch campuses, significant investments in student study abroad and intercultural competence, and yearly delegation visits or international research collaborations, they cannot forget about the crucial staff positions who have little or no experience with the internationalization efforts of the institution they are meant to advance. If educational institutions truly want to be global institutions that prepare students for a global economy, while effectively supporting their diverse study body, then they cannot afford to neglect the needs and roles of their frontline staff in achieving these internationalization goals.

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