

AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESOURCES IN CONNECTICUT

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to analyze the international education resources of study abroad programs (SAPs) and international students in universities and colleges in Connecticut (CT) with respect to developing global competency. Connecticut public universities, Capital Community College, Hartford Seminary, Saint Joseph College, Trinity College, and University of Hartford comprised the sample. The data was analyzed through the perspectives of internationalization strategies. The data was quantitatively evaluated. Results revealed that the SAP destination countries and the countries from where majority international students come to study in CT universities and colleges are complementary. The educational institutions in CT can build on their international diversity to prepare globally competent students. This study may have the potential to fine tune the internationalization approaches with respect to developing globally competent citizens of our students.

Keywords: Global competency, international education, study abroad programs, international students, intercultural competence

INTRODUCTION

Students require an international experience to be efficient citizens and workers in the emerging global order (Johnstone et al, 2010). One of the most important challenges facing the students now is learning to work with differently minded people across the globe to build constructive and sustainable response to the concerns and opportunities we all face. The world's diversity calls for developing global competence in our students. Global Competence is defined as "having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one's environment" (Hunter, 2004, p.1).

The most important educational challenge in the United States is to develop capabilities in students to be able to work together with people from diverse backgrounds to solve global problems. Global literacy has become a high priority for institutions preparing students to work within a system that relies on the greater interdependency of economics, politics, environment, and culture (Bartel, 2003; Knight, 2004; Qiang, 2003; Stier, 2004). University students need to have contact with, as well as, develop an understanding of other countries, languages and cultures.

A growing body of research has specified a gap between the ability of the higher education system and the need to supply the global demand for skills (Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010). With a few exceptions institutions of higher education are not focused on developing the graduates for global outlook and capabilities (Lewin, 2009). This is integral to students' future in a global economy. ACE, (2002) states that United States future success or failure in international endeavors depends mostly on the global competency of its students. Universities in the United States may not be prepared to meet that challenge (Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010, Olson, 2005).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

At the state level, the International Education Policy Advisory Council to the Board of Governors for Higher Education appointed an advisory council to report on Connecticut's colleges and universities with respect to the preparation of its students for global competency. This was done after identifying the importance of getting Connecticut citizens ready for life in a changing and multi-cultural society and world and for full involvement in a global economy (Report of the International Education Policy Advisory Council to the Boards of Governors for Higher Education, 2009). The Purpose of the Study is to analyze the international education resources of study abroad programs (SAPs) and international students in universities and colleges in CT with respect to developing global competency.

PERSPECTIVES OR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Internationalization strategies involve the activities of study abroad, recruitment of international students, curriculum and academic programs, campus-based extracurricular clubs and activities, mobility of academics through exchange, field work, sabbaticals and consultancy work, institutional agreements and networks, development projects, and the use of branch campuses to develop globally competent citizens (Johnstone et al, 2010). Of these this research will analyze study abroad and international students.

Educational institutions in the US invest heavily in study abroad as a key strategy to internationalize the campuses (Paige et al, 2009). The Lincoln Commission started a drive for American educational institutions to send one million American students abroad as part of their education. The US department of State expanded the Fulbright program and made available 2400 student scholarships towards SAPs (study abroad programs). With less than 1.5% of all American students ever availing the SAPs the importance is being placed on "internationalization at home" (Keeling & Robertson, 2008). United States attracts the largest number of internationally mobile students and has 22% of the world's foreign students according to organization for economic co-operation and development (OECD as cited in Keeling & Robertson, 2008) and 20% of the world's international post secondary students according to (OECD, as cited in ACE, 2009).

Long-term economic benefits of international students accrue in the form of internationalization of higher education creating additional skilled human resources needed to stay globally competitive. Direct economic benefits constitute institutional income and net economic effect of international students (Qiang, 2003, p.252). According to (Yepes as cited in Keeling and Robertson, 2008) international student's contribution to American economy was US \$ 12-13 billion.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCE

Data was collected from George R. Muirhead Center for International Education that is publicly available on the website. Data was also consulted from UNESCO institute for statistics. Connecticut public universities, Capital Community college, Hartford Seminary, Saint Joseph College, Trinity College, and University of Hartford comprised the sample. Only those SAP destination countries were taken into account that had more than four SAPs being taught in their countries. Those countries with more than 50 international student representations were taken into account. This enabled a more focused study of the principal representations of the phenomenon.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study may have the potential to fine tune the internationalization approaches with respect to developing globally competent citizens of our students.

Table 1. Long Term SAP Destination Countries

| <i>Long Term Study Abroad Destination Country</i> | <i>Long Term Study Abroad Programs (Full Year)</i> | <i>Long Term Study Abroad Programs (Fall)</i> | <i>Long Term Study Abroad Programs (Spring)</i> | <i>Average</i> | <i>Percentage of the total number of programs</i> |
|---|--|---|---|----------------|---|
| Australia | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5.24% |
| Canada | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17.83% |
| England | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10.48% |
| France | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5.67 | 5.94% |
| Germany | 10 | 0 | 10 | 6.67 | 6.99% |
| Greece | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4.19% |
| Korea | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4.19% |
| Spain | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4.33 | 4.54% |
| Sweden | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4.19% |
| Italy | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3.33 | 3.49% |

Source: George R. Muirhead Center for International Education

Table 2. Short Term SAP Destination Countries

| <i>Short Term Study Abroad Destination Country</i> | <i>Summer</i> | <i>Spring</i> | <i>Winter</i> | <i>Average</i> | <i>Percentage of the Total Programs</i> |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---|
| Canada | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1.33 | 4.21% |
| China | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1.67 | 5.26% |
| France | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1.33 | 4.21% |
| Germany | 6 | 1 | 0 | 2.33 | 7.36% |
| Italy | 7 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 9.47% |
| Spain | 9 | 1 | 1 | 3.67 | 11.5% |

Source: George R. Muirhead Center for International Education

Table 3. International Students by Country of Origin

| <i>Country of International Student Origin</i> | <i>Number of International Students</i> | <i>Percentage of the total number international students</i> |
|--|---|--|
| Brazil | 67 | 2.40% |
| Canada | 87 | 3.12% |
| China | 598 | 21.46% |
| Colombia | 69 | 2.48% |
| India | 340 | 12.20% |
| Japan | 57 | 2.05% |
| Saudi Arabia | 132 | 4.74% |
| South Korea | 179 | 6.42% |
| Taiwan | 64 | 2.30% |
| United Kingdom | 61 | 2.19% |

Source: George R. Muirhead Center for International Education

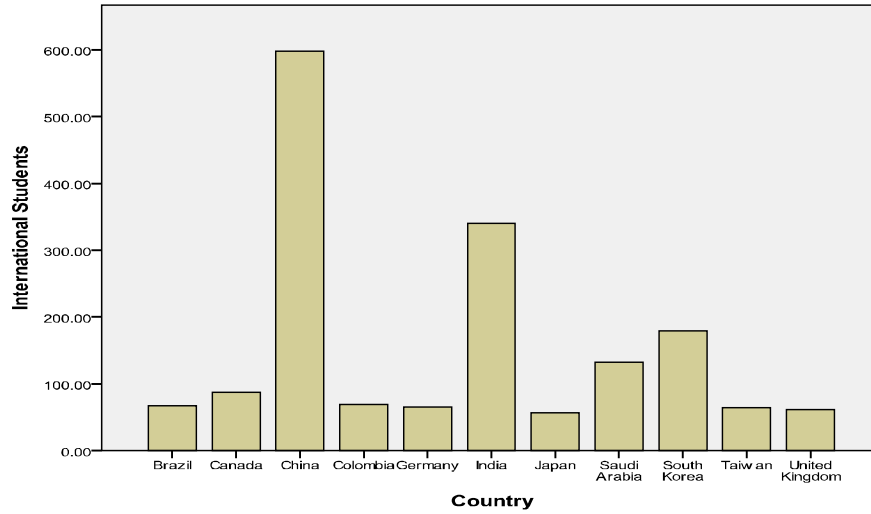


Figure 1. International Students Representation by Country of Origin

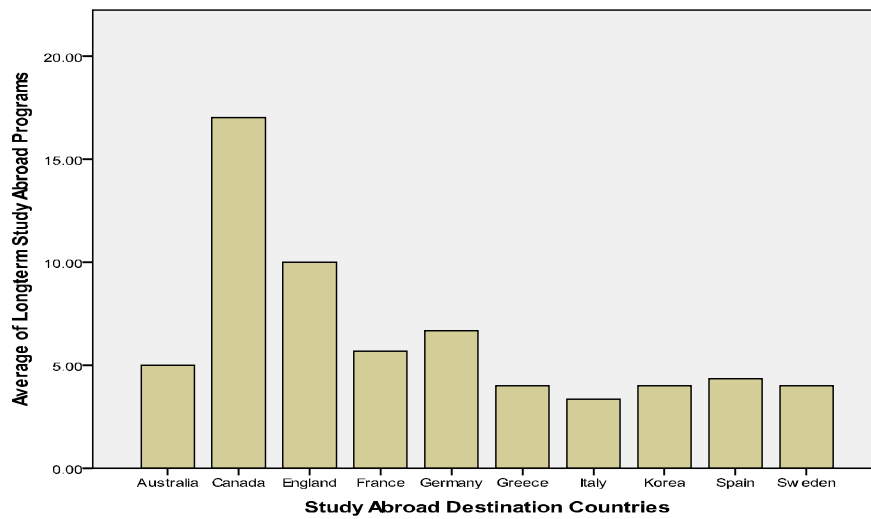


Figure 2. Long Term Study Abroad Destination Countries

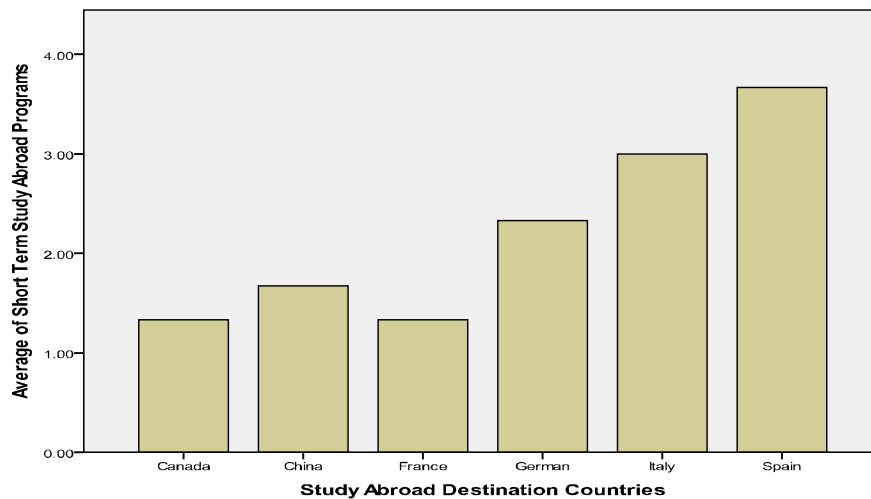


Figure 3. Short Term Study Abroad Destination Countries

RESULTS

The analysis shows that 17.8 % of SAP destinations in CT are from North America, 39.82 % from Europe, 5.24% from Australia and 4.19% from Asia of the total of 61.84% of SAP representation. Short term SAPs reflect a similar trend. International student inflow is from countries complementary to the study abroad destinations. Asia has the highest representation with 49.17% followed by North America 3.17%, South America 4.88% and, Europe 2.19 % of the 59.35% of the total international students taken into account.

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis reveal that the SAP destination countries and the countries from where majority international students come to study in CT universities and colleges are complementary. As a result international student body has the potential to affect the educational institutions' achievement of learning outcomes with respect to global competency (Johnstone et al, 2010). The educational institutions in CT can build on their international diversity to prepare globally competent students.

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