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A Case Study of Internationalization at Western Kentucky University

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A CASE STUDY OF INTERNATIONALIZATION
AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

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2014

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the student levels of satisfaction and engagement with internationalization at Western Kentucky University (WKU). This study surveyed 418 undergraduate students (84.50% domestic and 15.50% international students) on WKU's main campus to examine how students perceive and interact with various components of the institution-wide internationalization efforts: international-related curriculum and extra-curricular activities, presence of international students and faculty, study abroad opportunities and cross-cultural friendships. Statistical methods were used to analyze student responses. Research findings show that students are more satisfied with international efforts at home when faculty actively engages in promoting international learning in the classroom. Furthermore, students who have study abroad experience are more likely to have cross-cultural friendships.

Keywords: internationalization, higher education, intercultural understanding, cross-cultural friendship, study abroad

Dedicated to
My wonderful family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Originally founded in 1906, Western Kentucky University (WKU) is currently the second largest Kentucky Public University with a total enrollment of 20,456 students in Fall 2013. With its main campus located in Bowling Green, a city of nearly 60,000 residents, most of WKU's students (78.6%) come from within the state, 16% from out of state, and 5.4% from overseas (WKU, 2014a). When Dr. Gary A. Ransdell began to serve as the ninth president of WKU, Kentucky was calling for its Higher Education reform. The state needed its universities to become economic development forces that could adapt to ever-increasing globalization. This event marked the significant transformation in WKU's vision and mission. WKU was no longer satisfied with being a strong regional university, but embarked on a new vision to become "A Leading American University with International Reach" (WKU, 2012a). Internationalization, consequently, has become an integral part of the university's mission of preparing its students to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible global citizens (WKU, 2012b).

The university has made major achievements in its internationalization effort. The number of international students at WKU has increased tenfold from 84 students in 1997 to 877 in 2014 (WKU, 2012a, p.6). WKU also expanded its international reach by

encouraging students to study or work abroad. WKU's students have become more engaged in the culturally diverse environment and have gained knowledge and experience with different cultures around the world through study abroad, exchange programs, global internships and fellowships (WKU, 2012a). The number of students who participated in credit bearing education abroad programs has increased from 351 in 2011 to 556 in 2014 (WKU, 2014c). In the 2011-2012 academic year, 7.7% of WKU students engaged in study abroad as compared to the state's 1.24% and the national 1.35% participation rates (NASFA, 2013). The university claimed that the ever-increasing population of international students has added to WKU's students' cultural understanding and experience which is an important element of students' success in a global context (WKU, 2012a).

In 2009, WKU became the home of one of only nine Chinese Language Flagship Programs in the U.S. Students who enroll in this program take Chinese courses every semester and may travel to China at least once per year. WKU established the Confucius Institute in 2011 has enabled the university to bring Chinese language and culture to elementary and secondary schools in the Kentucky region (WKU, 2012a). In 2010, WKU announced its affiliation with Navitas to establish a University Pathways Program for international students at WKU (WKU, 2012a). Navitas is a leading global education provider and the industry leader in pre-university and university pathway programs. WKU also has established exchange partnerships with universities in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, France, and Ecuador, research partnerships with universities in China and Taiwan, and teaching partnerships with universities in Spain, Ecuador, Belize, Germany, South Korea, and Sweden (WKU, 2012a).

Moreover, the university has established a variety of institutional units to foster the development of WKU's internationalization efforts. The Office of International Programs plays an important role in strengthening WKU's international profile locally, nationally, and internationally. The Chief International Officer—Global Learning is advised by the International Education Advisory Council on issues related to internationalization at WKU. The International Student Office provides immigration advising, organizes events, and helps international students adjust to the new culture. The Office of Study Abroad and Global Learning gives students, faculty, and staff an opportunity to gain cultural experiences globally through international study abroad programs (WKU, 2012a). In short, internationalization has impacted important facets of the university's organizational structure.

Because WKU's Internationalization efforts are considered as the core of the university's action plan, they are discussed in President Gary Ransdell's Opening Convocation at the beginning of each academic year. At the 2014 Opening Convocation, Dr. Ransdell highlighted major progress and achievements, remarking:

Over the course of the last year, we took international reach to a new level at WKU as a growing number of our students engaged in transformative global experiences. In fact, our study abroad participation has grown by 50 percent since 2010, as a record of 642 students studied in another country last year. We also welcomed more than 1,100 students from other countries to study on the WKU campus, thereby increasing the likelihood of international reach for our domestic students who do not pursue a study abroad opportunity. Our international students are wonderful learning resources for all of us. We need to embrace them, serve

them, understand their anxieties and apprehensions, and ensure that they complete the degrees that they are here to pursue (WKU, 2014b, p. 5).

In Fall 2013, the international student population at WKU came primarily from Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries, such as Saudi Arabia (497), China (168), India (85), Vietnam (45), Bangladesh (16), Nigeria (16), United Arab Emirates (16), Republic of Korea (15), Taiwan (15) and Iran (14), whereas in the academic year 2013-2014, the three study abroad destinations were Western countries—England, Spain and France (WKU, 2014a). In his Convocation speech, the President stressed the importance of immersion-based study abroad learning and cross-cultural friendships to ensure that students take full advantage of the international opportunities offered to them.

One may assume that such valuable inputs as the ever-increasing population of international students and the higher growth in study abroad participation will bring about the expected international learning outcomes and college experiences. However, while these measures may be necessary to track the internationalization progress, little is known about students' actual experiences and attitudes towards the university's efforts in promoting international learning and expanding its international reach. As Tian and Lowe (2009) suggested, for internationalization to be truly transformative, it must come from a personal level rather than an institutional one. Henceforth, this study aims to investigate how WKU students perceive, experience and evaluate the integration of international perspective and opportunities in their college career.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last two decades, internationalization has remained a central force in higher education's response to the rapid increase of global interdependence (Hser, 2005; Bartell, 2003; Taylor, 2004). Many universities in the U.S. foster international development in order to prepare students to live and work in a global society. However, the current status of internationalization varies from institution to institution as each university employs different methods and strategies in its internationalization efforts (Hser, 2005). Internationalization has been found to have a positive influence on universities' reputations as well as universities' performances with respect to teaching, research, and service functions (Delgado-Marquez, Escudero-Torres, & Hurtado-Torres, 2013).

Definitions and Rationales

Definitions. Internationalization has been described as the process of integrating an international perspective into a college or university system (Knight & De Wit, 1997, Ellingboe, 1998) and as “an ongoing, future-oriented, multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary, leadership-driven vision that involves many stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused, ever-changing external environment” (Ellingboe, 1998, p. 199). Internationalization should not be mistaken with globalization. While

globalization is the term for economic trends that take place in the 21st century, internationalization refers to the policies and practices employed by institutions to cope with the rapid growth of globalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Rationales. While institutions may differ in the way they understand, interpret, and apply internationalization, such as securing funding for study abroad programs, enhancing student exchanges, and conducting international research, the rationale for integrating international elements into the life and culture of institutions reflects the ideals and philosophies of higher education, and the recognition of the competitive economic and financial realities posed by globalization (Bartell, 2003; Taylor, 2004). Many rationales have been used for the internationalization of higher education. First, it has been argued that the knowledge of other countries and their cultures, languages, and people is essential to promote diplomatic relations and enhance national security (Knight & De Wit, 1995; Hser, 2005). Second, international education prepares students to live and function well in a global world. As a result of globalization, once they graduate, it is very likely that students will have to compete with people from other countries for job positions and have to work in an international environment (Knight & De Wit, 1995). Third, it is believed that internationalization is essential for the development of global collaboration (Hser, 2005). In order to solve many global issues and problems such as hunger, pollution, and disease, global collaboration needs to happen.

Indicators of Internationalization

In order for internationalization efforts to be effective, an overarching understanding of internationalization, as a concept, needs first to be commonly understood across the institution and then must be operationalized within and across

academic programs and administrative functions (Coryell, Wright, Pate, & Nguyen, 2010) because internationalization of education cannot succeed without congruence with institutional values, beliefs, and practices (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009).

Internationalization is a complex concept and how it is operationalized depends on each institution's unique goals, culture, and organizational structure (Coryell, Wright, Pate, & Nguyen, 2010).

Assessing internationalization's outcomes is not an easy task, since internationalization is a complex concept and the way it is operationalized varies from institution to institution. However, efforts to monitor international initiatives and ensure quality have been integral to the international higher education development (Altbach & Knight, 2007). In the case of WKU, its 2010-12 Strategic Guide explains how internationalization is operationalized at WKU. According to this strategic guide, WKU is committed to expand its international reach by increasing international enrollments, providing students with the study abroad opportunities, encouraging faculty to engage in research abroad, establishing partnerships with universities in other countries, and strengthening international curriculum (WKU, 2010a); interestingly, these main areas are congruent with the way Dewey and Duff (2009) have operationalized internationalization. Based on this operationalization, it could be concluded that internationalization has taken place in many important facets of the university structure.

Engberg and Green (2002) explain that to assess internationalizing programs, higher education institutions should "take a closer look at learning goals, course, content, pedagogy, campus life, enrollment patterns, and institutional policies and practices" (p. 18). Some scholars suggest that one way of measuring internationalization is to assess

student's intercultural competence (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012; Deardorff, 2006, 2011; Fantini, 2009; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Lough, 2011). Deardorff (2011) discusses practices that lead to the development of intercultural competence through transformative learning, including service learning on campus and study abroad. Fantini (2009) points out a number of intercultural competence assessment instruments such as language proficiencies, world knowledge and working skills.

Tian and Lowe (2009) argue that assessing internationalization outcomes should be focused on student-centered outcomes. For example, Marginson, Nyland and Forbes-Mewett (2010) have looked at international student experiences and their views on international student security in such areas as finance, housing, health, personal safety, communications capacity, discrimination and abuse. Parsons (2009) examined the outcomes of internationalization on domestic students by examining the preparation of students to become responsible global citizens, their ability to work in multicultural workplaces, and the international friendships they establish during their college years. They suggest that curriculum internationalization and cross-cultural friendships have a greater impact on increasing students' international learning outcomes than does study abroad.

Coryell, Wright, Pate, and Nguyen's (2010) research findings indicated that foreign experience and study abroad are essential components of internationalization goals, but cannot be the main focus of internationalization in higher education. Opportunities to study, work, conduct research and learn with and about individuals from other cultures must be developed on campus. Soria and Troisi (2013) argue that internationalization's outcomes should be measured in the context of

“Internationalization at Home,” which means that rather than relying on study abroad alone, campus internationalization can have a significant impact on fostering international outcomes, which may include international curricular activities, extracurricular activities with international content, and cross-cultural friendships.

In 2012, WKU established The Global Pathways Initiative—College-based strategies for all WKU students to meet international learning outcomes with a goal that every student who graduates from WKU will be able to have the global knowledge, skills, and attitudes based on the university’s five standards of international reach. These outcomes are expected of every WKU graduating student, ensuring that each student earns a degree with international reach, including the ability to demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of peoples and cultures and incorporate this knowledge into students’ lives, the ability to apply global perspectives to problem-solving, the ability to interact and work with people of different cultures, having respect for global diversity, and the capacity to become agents of change and leaders in global issues. The ways Global Pathways Initiative is pursued may vary from college to college within the university itself (WKU, 2010). However, there is no known measurement instrument used to assess these outcomes to date. Hence, this study focuses on an alternative student-based outcome by investigating student perception, engagement and satisfaction with WKU’s internationalization efforts.

Even though research shows that faculty’s effort in fostering international learning, study abroad experience, and cross-cultural meaningful interaction are considered important factors in internationalizing campus (Hser, 2005; Parsons, 2009; Sias, Drzewiecka, Meares, Bent, Konomi, Ortega et. al, 2008), little is known about how

each of these factors affect students' satisfaction with international opportunities and experience provided at their institution. Furthermore, little is known about whether having participated in a study abroad opportunity will increase the likelihood of having cross-cultural friendships. Therefore, this study also aims to explore this relationship. The following research questions were developed:

1. How is increased internationalization perceived by WKU students?
2. Are students who have studied abroad more likely to have friends of the other group as compared to those who have not?
3. To what degree do faculty efforts in promoting international learning, study abroad experiences, and cross-cultural meaningful interaction predict WKU students' satisfaction with the school's internationalization efforts?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Procedure

This study employed a survey questionnaire administered in WKU classrooms with a convenience sampling method. After approval from WKU's Institutional Review Board (IRB), instructors from diverse disciplines were contacted for permission to administer the survey in their classes. Either at the beginning or at the end of the class session, the researcher introduced herself and the purpose of the study to the students. She asked students to read carefully the consent form attached to the survey and explained that the survey was voluntary and anonymous and that by completing the survey, the students gave their consent. The researcher also explained to the students that if they completed the surveys, they would be entered in a drawing for two \$50 gift cards and four \$25 gift cards. If they would like to be entered in the drawing, they needed to provide their email address on a detachable page at the end of the survey. In order to protect participants' confidentiality, the researcher asked students to rip off this page when they turned in their survey and place it in a separate pile.

Participants

This study had a total of 418 participants ($N = 418$), who were enrolled in a range of undergraduate courses offered by a variety of departments at WKU, courses such as Intercultural Communication, Writing in the Disciplines, Using Statistics in Sociology,

Introduction to Leadership Studies, General Microbiology, Introductory Statistics, Multivariable Calculus, Marriage and Family, Introductory Probability and Applied Statistics, Human Anatomy and Physiology, Personal Health, and Organizational Communication. The sample size consisted of 50% male (n = 207) and 50% female (n = 207) and 0.96% (n = 4) for whom these data were missing. The ages of respondents ranged from 18 to 50 (M = 21.73, SD = 3.31). The sample was comprised of 349 (84.50%) domestic students and 64 (15.50%) international students. Students came from a variety of classifications: 21.50% Freshman (n = 89), 29.95% Sophomore (n = 124), 24.15% Junior (n = 100), 23.67% Senior (n = 98), and 0.72% (n = 3) Graduate students. Of all the students, 54 (12.92%) students have studied abroad. Among them, the most represented ethnicity groups were Caucasian (67.31%, n = 278) and African American (14.29 %, n = 59).

Measures

The survey employed in this research study was a cross-sectional survey. This type of survey gave the researcher an idea about the perception, experiences, and attitudes of respondents at the particular point in time that the survey was administered.

The questionnaire used in this study had a total of 100 questions and was divided into eight main categories. Students were asked about their level of awareness and perceptions of WKU's internationalization efforts, their experience with study abroad programs, their classroom learning experience, their personal assessment of academic and social skills, their engagement with extracurricular activities with an international component, their international friendships, their language proficiency, and their views about competing successfully in the job market.

Perception and Satisfaction with Internationalization. The first section measured the level of student awareness and views on various aspects of the school's efforts in promoting global learning and cultural immersion experience. Sample items included "I am familiar with WKU's motto 'A Leading American University with International Reach,'" "I am fully aware of cultural diversity on campus," and "I am provided with opportunities to interact with people from different cultures." Responses were solicited on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Study Abroad. The section on study abroad was divided into two separate sets of questions. The first part solicited responses from those students who have not studied abroad, asking for reasons why they did not participate. Sample statements were "I have no interest in studying abroad," "I cannot afford the cost to study abroad," and "My parents did not want me to go." The second part was tailored for students who had participated in study abroad. Sample statements were "Studying abroad helped me relate better to international students on WKU's campus," and "Studying abroad made me more marketable." Response categories were on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Curriculum Internationalization. There were 11 items in the third section of the survey, which sought student level of agreement with statements regarding international perspective in the classroom. Example statements included "My classmates respect my cultural background," "An international instructor has negatively affected my ability to perform well and successfully complete a course because of his/her English proficiency,"

and “Having international students in class has considerably enriched my classroom learning experience” (Lambert & Usher, 2013).

Academic and Social Skills. In the fourth section, students were asked to rate 10 items about their academic and social skills. Sample items were “I have the skills to interact effectively with people of other cultures,” “I know where to go on campus to learn about international opportunities,” and “I am competent in building and maintaining relationships.” Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

International-related Activities. The fifth section asked students about their engagement with international activities offered on campus such as international festivals, international clubs, and cultural sharing projects. Five response categories were “Yes, and I would like to participate again,” “Yes, but I am not likely to participate again,” “Not Sure,” “No, but I would like to participate,” and “No, and I am not likely to participate.”

International friendships. International friendships (a domestic student befriending an international student, and an international student befriending an American) were explored in the sixth section. Students were asked to indicate the number of cross-cultural friendships. They were also asked to report how they first met as well as evaluate the quality of their cross-cultural friendships by indicating their level of agreement with such items as “I am happy with my international friendships,” “We text message each other regularly,” and “I seek them for advice.” For those who did not have any cross-cultural friends, they were asked to indicate their reasons.

Language Proficiency. There was a total of 4 items, asking students about their language proficiency. Response categories were Yes/No. Sample items are “I studied a foreign language before starting college,” and “I have studied or am now studying a foreign language in college” (Olson, Green & Hill, 2006).

Job-Market Preparedness. The last major section included 7 items on student views about the relationship between international learning and their job market competitiveness. Responses were solicited on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items included “In order for me to compete successfully in the job market, it is important for me to speak a foreign language” (Olson, Green & Hill, 2006) and “In order for me to compete successfully in the job market, it is important for me to be knowledgeable about international issues.”

Dependent and Independent Variables

Dependent or independent variables were chosen arbitrarily by the researcher. Therefore, a causal relationship cannot be drawn and results cannot be generalized to the whole population.

Dependent Variables

Cross-cultural friendships. This variable was used as a dependent variable for the second research question. Students were asked to indicate the number of cross-cultural friendships (0 = None, 1 = 1-5 friends, 2 = 6-10 friends, 3= 11-20 friends, 4 = Over 20 friends). When running the descriptive statistics, the researcher saw that the number of students who had more than 5 friends of the other group was very small. Therefore, a decision was made to collapse this variable and made it dichotomous with 0 = Don't have friends, and 1 = Have friends.

Satisfaction with International Opportunities. This variable served as a dependent variable for the third research question. The level of satisfaction with international opportunities was measured by the level of agreement with a statement. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with whether they are satisfied with the international opportunities offered at WKU, using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Since for this research question, the researcher wanted to look particularly at whether students agreed or disagreed that they were satisfied with international opportunities rather than focus on the level of agreement or disagreement, the researcher made a decision to recode this 5-point scale and made it a dichotomous variable with 0 = Disagree and 1 = Agree. The “Not Sure” category was recoded as missing.

Independent Variables

Faculty’s Effort in Promoting International Learning. This variable was used as an independent variable for the third research question. Six items were used: four regarding how faculty/instructors provide examples or applications of countries or cultures other than the United States, require or suggest readings by authors or on topics with international perspectives, bring in a speaker from another country or culture, and bring in a speaker with an international topic (Green, 2005) and two more developed by the researchers (“Instructors/professors contribute to my awareness of international opportunities on and off campus” and “Instructors/professors encourage interaction between me and my international classmates”). The initial response categories of all of these items were on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. These items were then coded as 0 = Strongly Disagree, 1 = Disagree 2 =

Neither, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree. An additive Index was created for the 6 items with 0 = Disagree with all six questions and 24 = Agree with all six questions. The Cronbach's Alpha for this 6-item scale was 0.82.

Study Abroad. This variable was used as an independent variable for both the first and the second research question. The yes/no measure was used to indicate whether or not students have studied abroad. To be used in a Logistic Regression, these were coded as 1 = Yes and 0 = No.

Cross-cultural friendships. This variable served as a dependent for the second research question; however, for the third research question, it was used as an independent variable.

Control Variables

The researcher controlled for three variables: respondents' sex, respondents' classification, and whether they are domestic or international students in a Logistic Regression. A set of four dummy variables was created to indicate respondents' classification: Sophomore, Junior, Senior, and Graduate Student, with "Freshman" being a reference category. The researcher controlled for respondents' sex by recoding respondents' sex as the dummy variable "male" in reference to "female." One dummy variable was created for "domestic students" with "international students" being a reference category.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the independent variables, dependent variables, and control variables for the logistic regression model are presented in Table 1a and Table 1b.

Table 1a

Descriptive Statistics for Independent, Dependent and Control Variables (N = 418)

Variables	%	n
Sex		
Male	50.00	207
Female	50.00	207
Students		
International	15.50	64
Domestic	84.50	349
Classification		
Freshman	21.50	89
Sophomore	29.95	124
Junior	24.15	100
Senior	23.67	98
Graduate	0.72	3
Cross-cultural friendships		
Have friends	33.33	131
Don't have friends	66.67	262
Study abroad		
Have studied abroad	12.92	54
Have not studied abroad	87.08	364
Ethnicity		
African American	14.29	59
Native American	0.73	3
Asian American	0.97	4
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.24	1
Hispanic Origin	3.63	15
White/Caucasian	67.31	278
Other	12.83	53

Table 1b*Level of Agreement with Perceived International Satisfaction and Faculty's Efforts (N=418)*

	Disagree		Agree	
	%	n	%	n
Satisfaction with International Opportunities	8.87	29	91.13	298
Instructors/Professors...				
• providing examples of countries or cultures other than the United States	18.78	68	81.22	294
• bringing in speakers from another countries or cultures	54.60	184	45.40	153
• contributing to international awareness	28.62	89	71.38	222
• encouraging interaction between domestic and international students	32.17	101	67.83	213
• bringing in speakers with international topics	51.68	154	48.32	144
• requiring readings by authors or on topics with international perspective	48.81	143	51.19	150

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSES

RQ1: How is increased internationalization perceived by WKU students?

The first set of analyses addresses the first research question, which investigates how increased internationalization is perceived by WKU students. In order to answer this question, descriptive statistics are used. Specifically, data are tabulated and each variable is described in terms of number and percentage.

Level of Awareness and Perceptions. The majority of students (73%) report that they are familiar with WKU's vision (see Table A in Appendix). A quarter (23.81%) of international students strongly agrees while nearly half of domestic students (47%) strongly agree that they know the motto. More than half of the students (64%) would like to have more meaningful interaction with people from different countries. Approximately 64% of them are satisfied with international opportunities at WKU. The majority of students (73%) believe that most WKU's students respect values and customs of other cultures.

Experience with Study Abroad Program(s). Of those students who have not studied abroad, about 59% of students indicate cost as a major deterrent and 72% disagree with the statement that they have no interest in studying abroad. A total of 54 students (28 international students and 26 domestic students) out of 418 surveyed

reports as having studied abroad. The participation rate of domestic students in a study abroad program is roughly one student participating and ten remaining at home (see Table B in Appendix). Most students who have studied abroad are White/Caucasian (72%), African American (12.50%), and Hispanic Origin (12.50%). Interestingly, the Office of International Programs and Study Abroad & Global Learning's 2013 – 2014 Annual Report also shows that these three ethnicities are the most represented in the study-abroad enrollment (WKU, 2014c).

When asked about the benefits of study abroad, 89% reports studying abroad helps them relate better to international students on WKU's campus, 85% of students who have studied abroad report that study abroad improved their foreign language skills, and 84% indicate that study abroad makes them more marketable.

Classroom Learning Experience. Most students (75%) agree that their classmates respect their cultural backgrounds. About half of the students agree that having international students in class enrich their learning experience. An almost equal percentage of domestic students and international students (roughly 33%) reports that their class performance has been negatively affected by having classes taught by international instructors (see Table C in Appendix).

Academic and Social Skills. Over half of the students (58%) indicate that they know where to go on campus to learn about international opportunities. The majority of the students (83%) reports as having the skills to interact with people from different cultures, and 86% of them agree that they are competent in changing behaviors to adapt to different norms, rules, beliefs, and customs.

Extracurricular Activities with an International Component. About a third of the students in the survey reports that they have taken part in international festivals (35%) and have attended presentations by international speakers (34%). A fifth (19%) of the students has been involved with international clubs and in cultural sharing projects (20%).

International Friendships. Of those students who report that they have friends from the other group, 51% has 1-5 friends, 7% has 6-10 friends, 5% has 11-20 friends, and 5% over 20 friends. Nearly two-thirds of the students (70%) report that they first met their cross-cultural friends on campus. For items on quality of the friendships, 82% indicate they would miss their cross-cultural friends if they left, 85% report they are happy with their friendships, 63% report they get together with their friend(s) at least once a month, 52% say they make time to hang out outside of classes, and 44% text message their friends regularly. For those students who indicate not having international friendship(s) (Table 2), a third of respondents indicates having a busy work life schedule (30%) and not being provided with the opportunities to interact (26%) as their main reasons.

Table 2

Top 5 Reasons Why Students Do Not Have Any Intercultural Friendships

	%	n
I have a busy work life schedule.	30.51	72
I am not provided with the opportunities to interact with them	26.27	62
I do not know how to reach out to them.	11.02	26
I have never thought about making friends with them.	10.17	24
I do not want to get out of my comfort zones.	7.63	18

Language proficiency. A vast majority of students (93%) report as having studied a foreign language before starting college. Over half of the students surveyed (55%) report as having studied or currently studying a foreign language at college. Most of the students who have studied abroad (38%) speak other languages in addition to English (see Table D in Appendix).

Job-market Preparedness. Nearly all of the students (95%) believe that knowing how to work with people from different cultures/countries would make them more competitive in the job market. The majority of students (84%) report that it is also important for them to be knowledgeable about international issues. About half of the respondents disagree that having a study abroad experience will help them compete more successfully in the job market.

RQ2: Are students who have studied abroad more likely to have friends of the other group as compared to those who have not?

The second set of analyses addresses the second research question, which focuses on whether or not study abroad experience increases cross-cultural interaction. Cross-tabs are used to conduct the analysis. Cross-tabs are suitable for this part of the analyses because cross-tabs show the relationship between one independent and one dependent variable that are nominal or ordinal, in this case whether or not students have studied abroad and whether or not they have intercultural friends. The dependent variable and the independent variable were chosen arbitrarily by the researcher.

Results from Table 3a and Table 3b show a significant relationship between having study abroad experience and having friends of the other group ($p < .05$). Results

from Table 3a show that students who have had participated in a study abroad opportunity (82%) are more likely to have intercultural friendships as compared to students who have not studied abroad (64.43%). The percentage difference indicates a moderate relationship, and the chi-square test shows this to be a significant relationship at $p < .05$. A number of control variables are also added to these analyses, such respondents' sex, respondents' classification, and whether they are domestic or international students. These results are not shown because, given the small number of students who have studied abroad, the addition of control variables in the form of a tabular elaboration analysis yield cell frequencies too small to reveal reliable findings.

Table 3a

Relationship between Study Abroad and Intercultural Friendships

	Study Abroad		
	Yes	No	Total
Intercultural Friendships			
Yes	82.00%	64.43%	66.70%
	41	221	262
No	18.00%	35.60%	33.33%
	9	122	131
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	50	343	393

Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 6.0611$, $Pr = 0.014$

In reference to the method limitations, for the purpose of demonstration, the researcher takes these two variables and flips them. Study abroad participation becomes a dependent variable and cross-cultural interaction becomes an independent variable.

Table 3b*Relationship between Intercultural Friendships and Study Abroad*

	Intercultural Friendships		
	Yes	No	Total
Study Abroad			
Yes	15.65%	6.87%	12.72%
	41	9	50
No	84.35%	93.13%	87.28%
	221	122	343
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	262	131	393

Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 6.0611$, Pr = 0.014

Results from Table 3b show that students who actively engage in cross-cultural interaction are more likely to participate in a study abroad program as compared to students who do not. The majority of students who have cross-cultural friends (84.35%) or do not have cross-cultural friends (93.13%) have not participated in any study abroad opportunities. The percentage difference indicates a weak relationship, and the chi-square test shows this to be a significant relationship at $p < .05$. This demonstrates the issue of causality mentioned in the method section. Since this study uses a cross-sectional survey, it is arbitrary whether having study abroad experience encourages students to engage in cross-cultural interaction or having cross-cultural friendships encourage students to study abroad.

RQ3: To what degree do faculty efforts in promoting international learning, study abroad experiences, and cross-cultural meaningful interaction predict WKU students' satisfaction with the school's internationalization efforts?

The third set of analyses addresses the third research question, which examines the influence that faculty's efforts incorporating international dimensions into their course, study abroad experience, and cross-cultural friendships have on students' satisfaction with international opportunities provided by the university. The dependent variable and the independent variables are chosen arbitrarily by the researcher. To conduct this part of the analyses, Logistic Regression Models are employed. Logistic Regression Analysis is used because this type of regression is suitable for dichotomous dependent variables, in this case being satisfied or unsatisfied with international opportunities. Logistic Regression tells us how a one unit increase in the independent variable translates into greater or lesser odds of the occurrence of what is coded as 1 in the dependent variable, holding all other independent variables in the model constant.

The results in Table 4 show the effect of aforementioned independent variables on the dependent variable. The total number of cases is 302. Model 1 includes three important indicators of internationalization according to literature, minus the inclusion of any control variables. A correlation matrix is run to test for multicollinearity, making sure that these three variables do not highly correlate with each other. The results show that there are no collinearity issues among these independent variables. The relationship between faculty's efforts in promoting international learning and the level of satisfaction is statistically significant ($p < .05$), holding study abroad experience and reported cross-cultural friendships constant. More specifically, as students' level of agreement with faculty's efforts in promoting internationalization increases, they have 11% greater odds of reporting that they are satisfied with the international opportunities offered at WKU. Having study abroad experiences and cross-cultural friendships, on the other hand, do not

Table 4*Logistic Regression Models of Perceived Satisfaction with International Opportunities*

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	O.R. / se	CI (95%)	OR / se	CI (95%)	OR / se	CI (95%)
Faculty's efforts	1.11* .05	1.02 - 1.21	---- ----	---- ----	1.12* .05	1.03 - 1.23
Study abroad	.50 .28	.17 - 1.50	---- ----	---- ----	.62 .37	.19 - 1.20
Cross-cultural friendships	.71 .32	.30 - 1.74	---- ----	---- ----	.82 .38	.33 - 2.05
Respondents' sex (Male)	---- ----	----	.82 .34	.36 - 1.87	.75 .32	.33 - 1.74
Domestic students (International students = 0)	---- ----	----	1.60 .86	.56 - 4.60	1.54 .89	.50 - 4.77
Classification (Freshman = 0)						
Sophomore	---- ----	----	1.22 .72	.38 - 3.86	1.37 .82	.43 - 4.40
Junior	---- ----	----	1.60 1.08	.42 - 6.04	2.01 1.40	.52 - 7.80
Senior	---- ----	----	.73 .43	.23 - 2.30	.91 .54	.28 - 2.93
Graduate	---- ----	----	.09 .14	.00 - 1.73	.07 .11	.00 - 1.59
Pseudo R-Square	.04		.03		.07	
- 2 log likelihood	-87.61		-88.25		-84.70	
N (sample size of model)	302		302		302	

* = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

have a statistically significant influence on students' perceived satisfaction with international opportunities provided.

Model 2 examines the effect of control variables on the dependent variable alone. The results of Model 2 suggest that there are no statistically significant relationships between sex, classification, a student's residency status, and a student's level of international satisfaction. Being male in relation to female, being domestic students in relation to international students, and having class standings other than freshman do not have any effect on whether or not students perceive the international opportunities they receive as satisfying.

Model 3 investigates the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable when combining the variables included in Models 1 and 2. This model shows the relationship between faculty's internationalization efforts and a student's perceived satisfaction remains statistically significant ($p < .05$) net of the control variables. Moreover, study abroad and cross-cultural friendships fail to reach the level of statistical significance, as also demonstrated in Model 1. The value of log likelihood of Model 1 is 39.27; the value of Model 3 is 37.47. It declines by 1.8. The degree of freedom is 6 (by adding 6 variables). When using the Chi Table, the statistics indicate that Model 3 is not a better model compared to Model 1.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Internationalization has become a crucial factor in fostering the development of higher education institutions, and WKU is not an exception. WKU Study Abroad and Global Learning has made a great effort in encouraging students to study abroad through faculty-led programs, third-party providers, and exchange programs. WKU also offers several study abroad scholarships that make study abroad more accessible to some students. Moreover, WKU also actively recruits international students to study at the university. They collaborate with such international institutions as ESLI and Navitas to strengthen international student enrollment. Furthermore, WKU's Office of International Programs provides grants to support faculty and staff in their international activities, offers workshops and trainings for faculty and staff on international issues, and assists visiting international scholars while they are teaching and speaking at WKU.

Most students who have participated in study abroad programs agreed that their study abroad experience helped them relate better to international students, improve their foreign language skills, and make them more marketable. These responses are congruent with the kinds of learning that study abroad enables, such as reducing ethnocentrism, increasing tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, and understanding the value of language study (Goldstein & Kim, 2006).

It is interesting to note that the majority of WKU's students reported that they are satisfied with the international opportunities offered by the university, regardless of having study abroad experience or not. In fact, many students in this study showed an interest in study abroad, but such factors as cost and delay in graduation prevented them from participating in an international experience abroad. International opportunities on campus and in the Bowling Green community provide students a chance to engage in international learning and to work and interact with people from other countries and cultures without having to go abroad. In fact, the majority of students in the study indicated that having international students in class enrich their learning experience. A third of the students (regardless of their residency status) reported that their class performance was negatively affected by having classes taught by international instructors.

When being asked about what factors would make them more competitive in the job market, the majority of students in the study indicated that it is important for them to know how to work with people from different cultures or countries, to be knowledgeable about international issues, and to be able to demonstrate understanding of other cultures and customs. About half of them disagreed that having study abroad experience will help them compete successfully in the job market. These views are actually consonant with those views of senior managers and HR personnel who valued interpersonal skills and intercultural/global competence more than just study abroad alone (Trooboff, Vande Berg & Rayman, 2008).

As Hser (2005) suggested, three important indicators of internationalization are faculty's efforts in incorporating international elements in their courses; students'

experience with study abroad programs; and cross-cultural interaction. However, little is known about how each of these elements predicts the perceived satisfaction that students have with the provided international opportunities. Hence, this study provided a case study of internationalization at a medium-sized university located in the South through examining these relationships. Results show that with the exception of faculty's internationalizing efforts, the remaining variables have no influence on students' perceived satisfaction with international opportunities. Students are happier with the international opportunities at WKU when faculty actively promotes international learning in the classroom.

One of the important rationales for study abroad is that study abroad is often perceived as helping students develop a broader understanding of global issues, to experience different cultures, and to improve their communication skills. This study, hence, also aims to explore the relationship between participation in a study abroad program and cross-cultural friendships. Results show that there is a significant relationship between study abroad and having friends of the other group. Students who have studied abroad are more likely to have cross-cultural friendships. It is also found that students who engage in cross-cultural interaction are more likely to participate in study abroad opportunities compared to those who do not.

This study sheds light on how such factors as faculty's active engagement with internationalization efforts, experience with study abroad, and having cross-cultural friendships predict the students' perceived satisfaction with the university's internationalization. The results show that faculty and instructors play a key role in higher education institutions' internationalization efforts. Faculty and instructors can help

facilitate this process by providing examples of countries or cultures other than the United States, bringing in speakers from other countries or cultures, encouraging interaction between domestic and international students, requiring readings by authors or on topics with international perspectives, and bringing in speakers with international topics. The results could be interpreted to show that even though some students in the study reported having studied abroad and/or having friends from the other cultures, the number is still small. Faculty and instructors can help increase study abroad participation and cross-cultural friendships by encouraging students to study abroad, and by facilitating the interaction between international and domestic students. In fact, students in the study reported that the second main reason they did not have any intercultural friends was due to lack of the opportunities to interact. It is important that institutions provide necessary support and rewards to motivate faculty and instructors to become actively involved in the internationalization process. There should be more student-centered forms of support and for education that brings international and local students together (Marginson, Nyland, & Forbes-Mewett, 2010). The researcher hopes to conduct a second study to investigate how faculty at WKU perceive and understand internationalization and to examine their needs and expectations of the university regarding internationalization efforts.

This study also indicates that the study abroad experience might have a positive impact on students' intercultural communication skills. Those who have at least participated in a study abroad opportunity were more likely to report that they had friends of the other group as compared to those who have not studied abroad. This study helps strengthen the assumption that participating in study abroad programs can help students

improve their intercultural competence and become global citizens (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). However, it is worth noting that this study employs a cross-sectional survey; the independent variable and the independent variable are chosen arbitrarily by the researcher. Therefore, a causal relationship cannot be drawn. It is arbitrary whether study abroad experience encourages cross-cultural interaction or cross-cultural friendships motivate students to study abroad.

Future researchers could benefit from this study since there had been no known research that examined the extent to which three important indicators of internationalization—faculty’s instruction, study abroad experience, and cross-cultural friendships— predict students’ perceived satisfaction with the international opportunities they receive from the higher education institutions. Furthermore, researchers can expand this research study by adding more independent variables to the examined model and exploring if the influence of each of the aforementioned factors on the perceived satisfaction will change.

Despite producing significant results, this study has several limitations. First, it employed a convenience sampling method. The researcher depended upon instructors/faculty’s permission to visit their classes to administer a survey. Second, students who have studied abroad and have cross-cultural friendships were underrepresented in the sample. Third, the number of international students in the study is very small; this poses a challenge in making a comparison between international students and domestic students. Fourth, this study employs a self-reporting questionnaire; this may induce bias to the students’ responses to the questions (Holmes & O’Neill, 2012). Fifth, the researcher administered a single, one-time only, cross-sectional survey to a

convenience sample of 418 participants; therefore, the results of this study could not be generalized to the whole population.

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APPENDIX

Table A

Familiarity with WKU's Vision

	International	Domestic	Total
Strongly Disagree	4.76%	5.44%	5.34%
	3	19	22
Disagree	6.35%	11.17%	10.44%
	4	39	43
Not Sure	22.22%	8.88%	10.92%
	14	31	45
Agree	42.86%	27.51%	29.85%
	27	96	123
Strongly Agree	23.81%	46.99%	43.45%
	15	164	179
Total	100%	100%	100%
	63	349	412

Pearson chi2 (4) = 20.74, Pr = 0.000

Table B*Study Abroad Participation of Domestic Students*

	Yes (%/N)	No (%/N)	Total
African American	12.50% 4	16.77% 55	16.39% 59
Native American	0.00% 0	0.91% 3	0.83% 3
Asian American	3.13% 1	0.91% 3	1.11% 4
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.00% 0	0.30% 1	0.28% 1
Hispanic Origin	12.50% 4	3.35% 11	4.17% 15
White/Caucasian	72.00% 23	77.74% 255	77.22% 278
Total	100% 32	100% 328	100% 360

Table C

An International Instructor Has Negatively Affected My Ability To Perform Well and Successfully Complete a Course Because of His/Her English Proficiency

	Students		
	International	Domestic	Total
Strongly Disagree	20.63%	19.60%	19.76%
	13	68	81
Disagree	25.40%	32.28%	31.22%
	16	112	128
Not Sure	22.22%	12.68%	14.15%
	14	44	58
Agree	23.81%	20.46%	20.98%
	15	71	86
Strongly Agree	7.94%	14.99%	13.90%
	5	52	57
Total	100%	100%	100%
	63	347	410

Table D*Study Abroad and Foreign Language*

Speak a Language other than English	Study Abroad		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	76.00% 38	40.56% 144	44.94% 182
No	24.00% 12	59.44% 211	55.06% 223
Total	100.00% 50	100.00% 355	100.00% 405

Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 22.24$, Pr = 0.000