

EDUCATION ABROAD AND THE MAKING OF GLOBAL CITIZENS

[ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES OF COURSE-EMBEDDED]
FACULTY-LED INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMING

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ABSTRACT:

This study builds on education abroad, global citizenship and academic development literatures by assessing the extent to which embedding brief international travel experiences into residentially-taught courses enhances academic development and promotes global citizenship. A quasi-experimental study utilizing a nonequivalent control group design was employed (22 courses, n=425). Statistically reliable and valid scales were developed to measure academic development and global citizenship. Students in the embedded courses had significantly higher pre-test and post-test mean scores for both global citizenship and academic development. Both samples showed positive increases in global citizenship over time. Neither sample showed overall positive change toward academic development, but students in the embedded courses did show increases in academic self-efficacy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Grounded in Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning, the study addressed two primary research questions:

- to what extent does participation in embedded education abroad programming mediate changes in students' global citizenship and thereby, social responsibility, global competence and global civic engagement; and,
- to what extent does participation in embedded education abroad programming enhance academic development, specifically with regard to academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy?

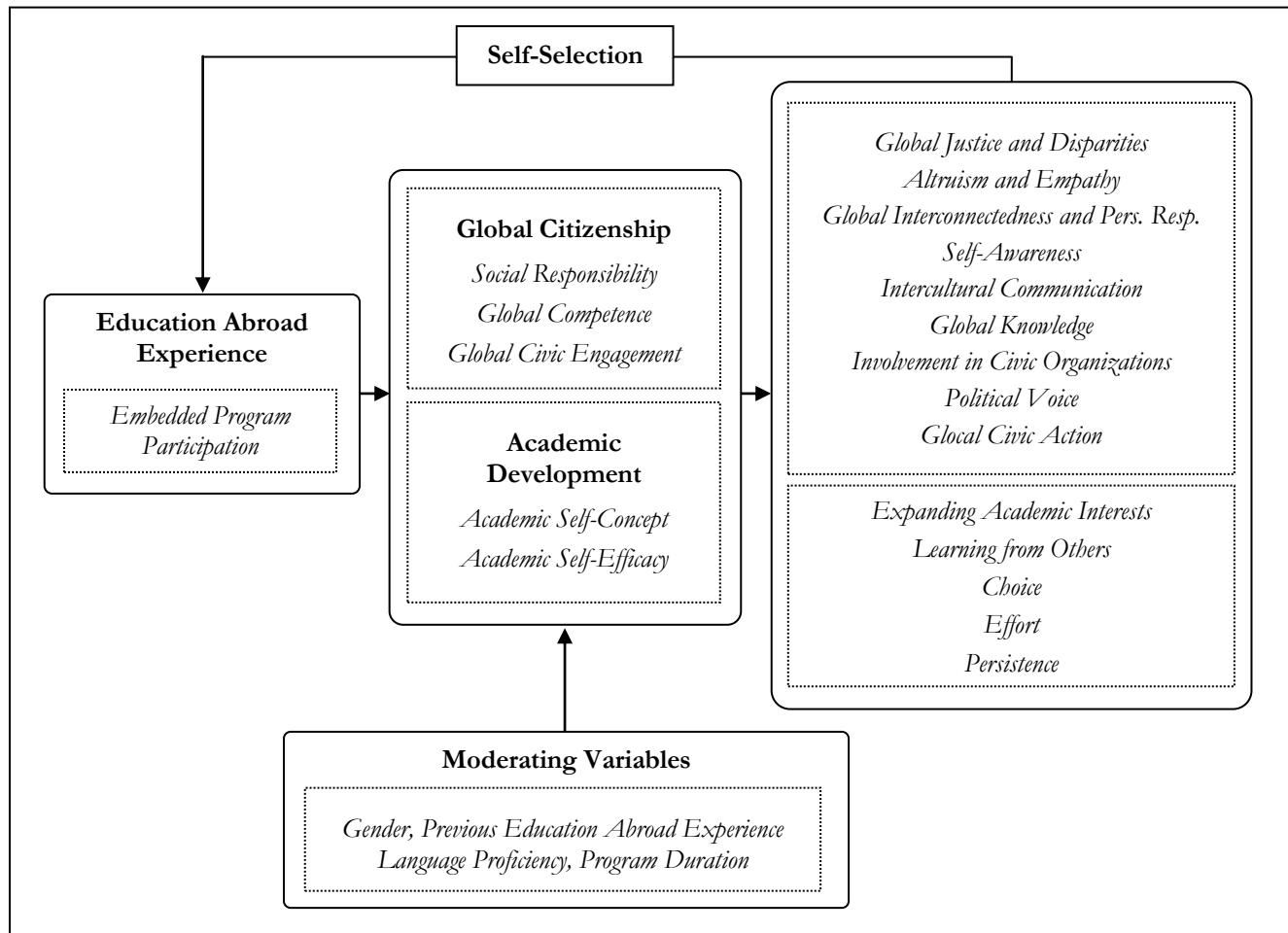
OPERATIONALIZING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP:

Although no one uniform or commonly accepted definition of global citizenship emerges from the academic literature, three overarching themes or dimensions of global citizenship are consistently and pervasively noted across the many disparate perspectives. Accordingly, and for the purpose of this study, global citizenship is understood as a multi-dimensional construct that entails: *social responsibility*, *global competence* and *global civic engagement*. Within each dimension of global citizenship are sub-dimensions that add further refinement of the construct. These interrelated dimensions align well with the prominent theoretical and philosophical perspectives described in the literature; reflect how governmental entities, associations and educators have framed global citizenship; and articulate ideas that resonate with the goals of undergraduate education abroad (see Figure 1).

OPERATIONALIZING ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Based on existing literature and the recognition of the limitations associated with utilizing academic achievement as a reliable indicator of student learning, a model of academic development emerges as a broader, interdisciplinary measure of student learning in education abroad outcomes research. Academic development is thus understood in relation to two interrelated dimensions: *academic self-concept* and *academic self-efficacy*. These dimensions align well with the overarching concept of academic development, have been clearly identified and discussed in the literature, and offer measurable constructs that closely resonate with the goals of undergraduate education abroad (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Research Model of Education Abroad Learning Outcomes: Global Citizenship & Academic Development*



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

- An eight-step scale development process yielded reliable and valid scales of global citizenship and academic development.
- The findings point to the presence of self-selection in the study, with students in the embedded courses showing significant and consistently higher global citizenship and academic development mean scores.
- Both embedded and match samples showed overall positive increases in global citizenship. Both showed increases in global civic engagement and global competence and significant decreases in social responsibility. At the sub-dimension level, only the embedded sample revealed increased mean scores on all sub-dimensions. Whereas students in the embedded courses experienced gains in global knowledge, students in the match courses showed slight declines.
- Neither sample showed overall gains in academic development. At the dimension level, both samples had higher academic self-efficacy scores compared to academic self-concept. Students in the embedded sample showed overall gains in academic self-efficacy, while students in the match courses experienced declines. Both samples experienced declines in academic self-concept.
- Student learning outcomes did not vary significantly by gender, previous education abroad experience, foreign language proficiency, or program duration. However, those who have not studied abroad before showed increases in both global competence and global civic engagement, suggesting a “first time effect” of education abroad. Those with some foreign language proficiency showed significant increases in global civic engagement.

For more information about this study or to request a copy of the paper, please contact Anthony C. Ogden at, aco3@psu.edu