

2009

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COMPARING VIEWPOINTS ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FROM
CHINESE AND AMERICAN VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

Thesis

Submitted to

The School of Education and Allied Professions

THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree

Master of Science in Teacher Education

by

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Dayton, Ohio

May, 2009

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ABSTRACT

COMPARING VIEWPOINTS ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FROM CHINESE AND AMERICAN VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

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The study of international education has moved from a purely theoretical and conceptual approach to a more analytical approach, a sign that international education has not only gained importance as a field of study, but also has become an important part of many vocational schools' and university curricula all over the world. As more and more schools are demanding an international experience in their programs, it is evident that more research is needed to improve the quality and effectiveness of the programs offered. Institutions recognize the merit of international education, as it has been described as a new educational vision that is able to provide our pluralistic society with an education that meets cultural and linguistic needs. Therefore, it is essential that there is an awareness of the need for globalization in education programs, as it impacts the development of intercultural relationships. Educational institutions need to improve the preparation programs of students for a rapidly evolving and increasingly diverse world. The purpose of this research was to determine the viewpoints of students who attended vocational schools in the U.S. and China.

Students were surveyed to determine their viewpoints regarding their study abroad programs, as it impacted their intercultural awareness regarding individuals different from themselves.

Based on the analysis it is apparent that students from China tend to be more open-minded and accepting of other cultures compared to U.S. The students in the U.S. did not understand the full impact of global events on their future careers. Both Chinese and American students believe that there is an insufficient amount of international studies related courses, thus schools, colleges, and universities need to provide more classes to meet the needs of students. Future research should focus on the effectiveness of study abroad programs, as the lived intercultural experience is the most critical element in gaining a meaningful understanding of intercultural awareness in a global society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my family who has always supported me in every endeavor I've undertaken.

I'd like to thank my advisor, Dr. Carolyn Talbert-Johnson, for helping and supporting me in my research and also the University of Dayton for this opportunity to study abroad.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Globalization in the 21st century has increased considerably and therefore it has become especially important for different countries and cultures to be respectful of one another and to be able to learn from each others' beliefs. Educational institutions also needed to improve in preparing students for a rapidly evolving and pluralistic society.

According to Goodman (2005) president of the Institute of International Education many U.S. campuses are recognizing that increasing global competence among the next generation is a national priority and an academic responsibility. International education is thus becoming one of the core educational missions in many different levels of American schools. As the nations of the world become more closely knit, mutual understanding and cooperation among them becomes increasingly important. Hamilton and Kean (2008) suggest that the U.S. cannot conduct itself effectively in a competitive international environment when our most educated citizens lack minimal exposure to, and understanding of, the world beyond the U.S. borders. Today, most of the nation's colleges and universities recognize the importance of heightening the intercultural and international understanding and competencies of faculty and students.

The history of cooperative work is varied. For example, 20 years ago, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) convened a group of experts to examine international higher education and make recommendations for the future of study abroad programs at U.S. universities. In its report to CIEE, the group represented by a wide range of experience in higher education, foreign language and international studies, and public policy called for increased international awareness among the nation's colleges and universities (McRobbie, 2008).

In the mid to late 1990s, the Chinese government endorsed Sino-Foreign education cooperation as a means of modernizing and expanding the Chinese education systems in order to better serve the developing market economy. According to the decree release by the China's Ministry of Education in 2003, there were 721 approved jointly run educational institutions in China. Activities ranged from co-developed new institutions, to a foreign degree franchised to an existing Chinese university. With 300 million people in China learning English and over 1 million studying abroad, a great disparity exists in the number of people in the U.S. who are participating in such similar programs domestically. The Chinese government, for example, is investing millions of dollars in China's top universities to enable the country to compete more effectively in the international arena (McRobbie, 2008). Statistics from the Ministry of Education showed that in 2007, China had 150,000 students leave to study abroad in 109 different countries, while in 2008 there were 200,000 and 400,000 students returned from studying abroad. Of these students, 129,000 of them went abroad

without receiving a scholarship. This is a drastic increase of more than 167 times when compared with statistics from 1978, in which a mere 860 students studied abroad. In all, a total of 1.21 million students participated in such programs during the past 30 years, and a total of 320,000 students have completed their studies and returned to China. As of 2006, China had the largest number of students studying abroad of any nation in the world and accounted for fourteen percent of the total number of students abroad (UNESCO, 2006). The most popular places to study abroad for Chinese students were the United States, Japan, and England.

In almost all higher education institutions, public or private, in the United States international programs have become an indispensable component in the curriculum (Liu, 2004). For instance, in two large higher education systems in California, the University of California and California State University, international programs are available on all of their campuses. Similarly, many international students, including Chinese students, have come to the U.S. to advance their education. These students have opportunities to discuss international affairs in the classroom, to participate in various extracurricular activities to broaden their views of the world, and even to gain first-hand experience by living and studying in a target country via study abroad programs. The programs make it possible for college/university students to explore and learn what they would not have been able to in a traditional instructional setting in their home country.

The recruitment and education of international students is a growing characteristic of the landscape of American education. Obst, Bhandari, and Witherell (2007) indicated that 564,766 international students were enrolled in American institutions of higher learning and international students currently represent 3.9% of the total enrollment (Jia & Bergerson, 2008). According to Calleja (1995), the presence of international students on American campuses benefits American students as it increases their cultural sensitivity and skills in working with people from difference backgrounds. In this era of internationalization and globalization it is wise to recruit international students as it can enhance America's international relationships.

Statement of the Problem

Internationalization is occurring at an increasingly rapid pace. However, the drastic changes it will cause are not emphasized nearly enough, thereby causing students to be inadequately prepared to function in a global, diverse society. Students will continue to be undernourished if education systems don't provide a restructuring of their curricula that focuses on international perspectives that address intercultural competencies. Institutions that do recognize this particular need will undoubtedly adjust their strategies and benefit from making these essential reforms. Schools and universities must provide global opportunities to enhance and increase the global skills of students.

Significance of the Problem

Globalization is necessary in the reform movement. Institutions that do not begin to make changes now will fall behind, causing them to be inferior and to lose their value and usefulness. Furthermore, institutions as well as communities and key stakeholders must be aware of these changes as they occur in order to adapt their strategies and programs. Most countries are witnessing the rapid expansion of secondary, technical and higher education. Historically, secondary and higher education institutions have been elitist, academic and somewhat isolated from the “real world”, while technical colleges have been seen as the “Cinderellas” of education designed to prepare non-academics for blue-collar occupations (Power, 2006). In essence, everywhere secondary and tertiary education are being called upon to develop the knowledge, skills and values that will enable students to anticipate and adapt to change and complexity, and to become active and creative citizens and workers in the world of tomorrow (Power, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

Universities and colleges are generally more proficient in preparing students for international studies. However, this is not reflective of all educational institutions, including secondary schools with students of diverse abilities. The purpose of this study is to investigate how these institutions, in this case vocational secondary schools, handle issues related to international

education in the preparation of students for future employment in a pluralistic society.

Research Questions

1. Are there differences in the viewpoints in international relations of students participating in a study abroad program in a vocational school in China and the US?
2. Are students participating in study abroad programs affected by their training and their preparation for future international opportunities?
3. What changes need to occur in vocational programs to ensure that students receive optimal benefits from study abroad programs?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of the literature regarding the following topics, the definition of international education, the importance of intercultural awareness and sensitivity, identification of the benefits of studying abroad in international education programs, the profile of the Butler Technical Vocational School, and the profile of the Nanjing Technical Vocational School.

Defining International Education

International education is the process of educating people to see themselves as international citizens in other nations and requires a crossing of national borders (Alfaro, 2008). International education describes educational work that allows students to undertake such work in countries other than their own (Crossley & Watson, 2006). Parker (2008) states that a new international education movement is under way in schools across the country. The movement consists of newly internationalized public schools along with state coalitions for international education by various constituencies in the government. International education is intended to address key problems posed by globalization. Parker notes that only schools can produce the enterprising individuals who will be successful in a global society.

There are varied opinions relevant to international education. For example, Harai (1972) views international education in three major strands, which consist of (a) international content of curricula, (b) international movement of scholars and students concerned with training and research, and (c) arrangements engaging U. S. education abroad in technical assistance and educational cooperation programs. Whereas, Burn (1980) thought that in order to prepare Americans to live in an increasingly interrelated world, international education must involve a major transformation of the entire educational system. While Fraser and Brickman (1968) held that international education involves intellectual, cultural, and educational relationships among people from two or more cultures. It is a conceptual movement of people, knowledge, or ideas, all involved in international cooperation, understanding, and exchange.

The popular belief that the school system is broken also fuels the international education movement (Gillom, 1981). It tirelessly broadcasts the claim that public schools are failing to educate students for life. It is not surprising that international education has come to have a number of different meanings in recent years. The terms global education, development education, comparative education, and international studies have been used, even though they have slightly different meanings (Hayden, 2006).

For instance, global education is often used interchangeably with international education. However, Clarke (2004) notes that the definition of global education integrates curricular perspectives, issues of cultural diversity, prejudice reduction, and human rights. Global education is more inclusive of all

aspects of diversity as it relates to individuals' performance and interactions with others (Frey and Whitehead, 2009). In addition, the literature supports the need to provide both secondary and preservice students global opportunities.

International education today is a broad movement containing a disparate mix of meanings and motives (Garavalia, 1997). It is being deployed to bolster the nation's economic and military defenses, to liberate multiculturalism from its national container to promote world citizenship, and, in some urban schools, to take advantage of a vibrant immigrant population. These are a handful of the alternatives curriculum planners will encounter when they consider how to internalize school programs.

Importance of International Awareness and Sensitivity

The lack of intercultural competencies among students in schools and schools of education is one of the most significant issues facing education today. As schools attempt to embrace the increasingly diverse student populations, mission statements have been revised and diversity initiatives designed to reflect their support for a more inclusive philosophy and for graduating interculturally competent students (Jurgens & Robbins-O'Connell, 2008). Unfortunately, the reality is that more and more students graduate from schools and universities with a little to no global awareness or sensitivity. Obst, Bhandari and Witherell (2007) note that even with a total higher education enrollment of 14 million, there remains a huge unmet need to expand American students' international experience, and an even greater challenge to ensure that access to study abroad

programs are available to all, including students of diverse backgrounds, low incomes, and underrepresented fields.

Jurgens and Robbins-O'Connell (2004) suggest that one of the most critical issues facing education in American, and society in general, is the lack of intercultural competencies among the student body. Deardorff (2004) refers to knowledge of others; knowledge of self' skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing oneself. It is not surprising that many Americans have limited international education and experiences and may result in a generally narrow-minded view of culture. International education is important in the development of intercultural competencies in students.

The reason behind the importance of international awareness is the effect it will have on future careers. Businesses have become more and more internationally oriented, and the skill set that members of the workforce currently have regarding international awareness will simply not suffice. International business will involve working with others who have significantly different backgrounds as well as expectations. Being able to communicate effectively with these individuals will be the difference between failure and success.

Because of the changing and rapidly evolving world, we are no longer insulated from cultural differences as we have been in the past. Today we meet each other; we discover differences in perspectives, behaviors, and communication styles (Olson & Kroeger, 2001). A globally competent person

has enough substantive knowledge, perceptual understanding, and intercultural communication skills to effectively interact in a globally interdependent world (Olson & Kroeger, 2001).

Substantive knowledge includes knowledge of cultures, languages, world issues, global dynamics, and human choices (Wilson, 1996). Debates rage between area studies and global studies specialists about how many cultures one should learn about and in what depth (Stohl, 1996). Perceptual understanding, as a positive global competency, has been identified to include open-mindedness, resistance to stereotyping, complexity of thinking, and perspective consciousness (Wilson, 1996). Intercultural communication skills include adaptability, empathy, cross-cultural awareness, intercultural relations, and cultural mediation.

During the 1960s and 1970s, it may have been acceptable to say: "I treat everyone the same." This was considered an appropriate and proper way of thinking. However, this stance has certain limitations; it assumes that sameness equals fairness, an assumption that only holds true if the values and norms of people involved in an interaction are similar. An outline of the process individuals go through to move beyond this assumption of similarity is provided in the work of Milton Bennett (1993). According to Bennett intercultural sensitivity includes six stages:

1. Denial: Does not recognize cultural differences
2. Defense: Recognizes some differences, but sees them as negative

3. Minimization: Unaware of projection of own cultural values; sees own values as superior
4. Acceptance: Shifts perspectives to understand that the same "ordinary" behavior can have different meanings in different cultures
5. Adaptation: Can evaluate other's behavior from their frame of reference and can adapt behavior to fit the norms of a different culture
6. Integration: Can shift frame of reference and also deal with resulting identity issues.

The Developmental Model Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) provides a structure for understanding how people experience cultural differences and also explains why cultural sensitivity and cultural differences represent a potential obstacle or benefit in developing relationships and communicating effectively with other people (Bennett, 1993). This is a beginning step in the process of understanding the individualized needs of others. It is equally important that individuals become cognizant of their own biases, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors as it impacts their ability to interact with others.

According to the book *The World's Business Cultures and How to Unlock Them* written by Barry Tomalin and Mike Nicks (2007), there are five C's that offer a simple and clear approach to cultivating people's own cultural competence. The Five Cs are cultural knowledge, cultural behavior, cultural values and attitudes, cultural preferences and cultural adaptation. In addition,

individual intercultural sensitivity is usually affected by six main influences, parents, social environment, education, religion, history and media.

Parents can significantly affect the thinking of their children. Education systems contribute to both what and how people think. In regards to intercultural sensitivity depending on if schools offer intercultural courses, the teachers' attitude, and the schools' environment are factors that can impact the attitudes and behaviors of students. For instance, if minority students do not connect with their European teachers, they are less likely to perform or cooperate for them. The belief systems that individuals possess can also be influential in their willingness to treat others in a humane manner and with respect. History also affects how a country views foreigners and the rest of the world.

The media has a great deal of influence in today's world. This results in the feeling that the world is smaller, where more and more people are aware of global events. What the media says about a country in both positive and negative ways, it contributes to people's images of the country. The influence of mass media can have a significant impact on children's learning and development. Education policy makers should look into possibilities of improving the quality of international education via extracurricular activities by collaborating with mass media agencies that bear social responsibilities and can make a contribution to enhancing the quality of international education. The literature supports that these influences can shape the thinking and behaviors of individuals perceptions of others.

A point that must be noted is that individuals should be able to communicate effectively with all types of people. Intercultural communication refers to skills individuals draw on to engage effectively with others (Williams, 2005). These skills include adaptability, empathy, cross cultural awareness, intercultural relations, and cultural mediation. Empathy refers to an individual's ability to put oneself into another's shoes, or treat someone in the manner that they would like to be treated (Olson & Kroeger, 2001).

A part of the necessary communication skills that an individual must obtain involves dealing with foreign languages. Because of the internationalization of society individuals simply cannot expect to perform all their necessary duties with knowledge of only their native language. Individuals should expect to travel to foreign nations and therefore must be acquainted with other languages. With this in mind, knowledge of foreign languages is now a requirement as compared to being a luxury. This is reflected in how foreign languages are booming on American college campuses. The latest figures from the Modern Language Association of America reflect a major push toward internationalization on college campuses, more government support for language study and simply more interest from students. Over four years, total enrollment in language courses has grown 12.9 percent (McCormack, 2006). Students have more choices for foreign languages other Spanish and French. Arabic is the fastest growing major language, breaking the top 10 for the first time with just under 24,000 enrollments, compared to about 10,600 in 2002. The number of institutions offering Arabic has nearly doubled to 466, including both two- and four-year

colleges. Other languages with major enrollment jumps since 2002 were Chinese, in which enrollment rose 51 percent to about 51,600. Five colleges, singled out for their efforts to expand their focuses beyond America's borders, won the Senator Paul Simon Award for *Campus Internationalization* this month (McCormack, 2006).

Communicating effectively with others is essential to intercultural relationships in diverse communities. This is definitely true at the high school level, as high school students prepare themselves for future careers (Aldridge & Christensen, 2008). However, students in discrete subject courses are not always given the bigger picture about the internationalization of the world. Students miss the connections of how all of these areas are interlinked (Loveland, Miyakawa & Hirayama, 2004; Yeh, Okubo, Ma, Shea, Ou, & Pitue, 2008). One example of a school attempting to rectify intercultural communication would be Ridgewood Highwood High School in Florida, which had worked on both group projects and individual assignments from 1999—2002 through the use of technology. During this program, students from both Japan and the United States communicated through video teleconferences, and were given a variety of tasks to perform. These activities helped the students obtain a better understanding of differences that existed in one another's lifestyles, such as the cost of everyday items. The goals of this collaborative effort were to teach students in both countries to be more respectful of each other's cultures and to see the relevance of studying global issues and perspectives (Alfaro, 2008; Cambridge & Thompson, 2004).

Intercultural sensitivity is not a natural human quality (Olson & Kroeger, 2001). In this era of globalization and the diverse communities that exist, it is vital that as a society we learn to communicate and interact with others and to explore new relationships across differences. There must be contexts in which we can learn about each other and practice our intercultural communication skills. The challenge becomes understanding better why we react the way we do to different cultures and develop a plan for change. International education is an excellent strategy for change, as it can enhance students' intercultural sensitivity and communication skills.

Glimpses into different cultures can provide students with a greater appreciation and understanding of diversity. With this knowledge, students can strengthen their intercultural competence, which will enable them to work and survive more effectively in a pluralistic society (Jurgens & Robbins-O'Connell, 2008).

Benefits of Studying Abroad in International Education Programs

The most common benefit to international education is the student's exposure to different social and cultural environments (Arndt, 1984; Calleja, 1995; Lamey, 1990; Saliba, 1995; Swanson, 1969). Living in another culture changes one's stereotypes of other nationalities (Stangor, Jonas, Stroebe, & Hewstone, 1994) and it presents one with an alternative view of the world (Remy, Nathan, Becker, & Torney, 1975). Students acquire a new-found recognition of the extent to which their own cultural values and norms differ from those of their

counterparts in their host country (Roberts, 1998). Also students who participate in exchange programs tend to be a little more mature than their peers who did not study abroad (Frisch, 1990).

At present, in almost all higher education institutions, public or private and secondary schools, in the U.S., various international programs have become an indispensable component in the curriculum. For instance, in two large higher education systems in California, the University of California and California State University, international programs are available on all of their campuses (Liu, 2004).

If American students were doing extremely well on international comparisons, perhaps it would be less important to consider what the nation could learn from other countries (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009). However, overall U.S. student performance, particularly among the country's adolescent learners, continues to decline. This is an alarming trend in an increasingly competitive world. In the early 1960s, the United States provided the highest high school completion rates among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member nations, but by 2005, it slipped to 18th out of 23 OECD member nations. The reality is that the United States once superior school system has lost its competitive edge due to the fact that it is not advancing as fast as others.

The Alliance for Excellent Education (2009) also posits that students' achievement levels are slipping in comparison to their global peers. Recent

international comparisons of 15-year-olds, ranked U.S. students as 25th out of 30 in mathematics literacy, 21st out of thirty in scientific literacy, 15th out of 29 in reading literacy, and 24th out of 29 in problem solving.

It is apparent that skill demands have increased, not only because the mix of jobs in the economy has shifted away from blue-collar and clerical work, but also because current jobs of all kinds are becoming more complex and demanding in three important ways: (a) computer technology has thoroughly infiltrated the modern workplace, not only for professionals and high-level managers, but also for all manner of technicians, craftsmen and sales personnel; (b) pressure from global competition has created a constant imperative for American companies to innovate, actively identify new markets, and develop new products and services; and (c) more and more Americans find themselves competing in an increasingly global labor market. Since the Internet connects co-workers around the globe, jobs are no longer tied to a particular location. In addition, the world outside the workplace is becoming more complex and society has become more pluralistic. If nations are to remain competitive, their citizens must be prepared to compete not only against their neighbors from different towns and states, but also against individuals worldwide (The Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008).

Canadian universities posted a 12 percent increase in foreign-student enrollments over the past two years. Foreign-student enrollment in Australia increased by 4.5 percent in 2008. International education is the country's third largest source of export income. According to the US Commerce Department,

the fifth most profitable institutions consist of universities and colleges.

International students contribute 13.5 billion dollars a year to these institutions (Labi, Birchard, & Overland, 2008).

Even though there are still some issues that must be addressed with study abroad programs, the number of these programs has increased substantially. The dramatic growth in the number of study abroad programs and students participating in them can be attributed to various factors: (a) American schools and campuses are providing more opportunities for students to have an international experience by offering more and different types of study abroad experiences that appeal to a broader range of students; (b) foundations and corporations are increasingly interested in encouraging students to study abroad and are offering a variety of scholarship programs. Examples include the Global Engineering Education Exchange consortium (ABB) and the Whitaker International Fellows and Scholars Program (Whitaker Foundation) to conduct research or study in the field of biomedical engineering; (c) the availability of more programs taught in English at institutions around the world has also helped to attract U.S. students; and (d) finally U.S. students and their parents increasingly recognize the value of study abroad in order to be prepared for leadership roles in the global economy and an increasingly interconnected world. Studying abroad gives students a career skill set that is increasingly valued by employers (Obst, Bhandari, & Witherell, 2007).

An important issue that should be noted is that U.S. institutions along with governments and other organizations, are beginning to address some of the

barriers to participation in study abroad, and are making efforts to diversify the types of students who study abroad and the fields in which they study. There are programs that have successfully managed to integrate a diverse set of students in unique study abroad programs. For example:

Florida A&M University – developed the Global Opportunities project to address the need for international awareness and understanding of its predominantly African American student body. With the GO I-10 project, FAMU's semester-long study in Kenya and short-term study initiatives in the Dominican Republic offer the university's students the opportunity to be exposed to different cultures through international travel as a structural component of their university education. The university is developing new programs in China and Brazil

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire – initiated an evaluation of barriers to study abroad for traditionally underrepresented groups, including students of color and ethnic minorities, and students majoring in education and nursing. To extend the reach of study abroad to these students, new programs are now offered, including one in Thailand, designed for students of the campus and the community's largest minority population, Hmong Americans and another in Costa Rica, designed for nursing majors. Since the program in Thailand began in 2004, 64 percent of the students have been Hmong and Hmong-American and 17 percent have been education or nursing majors. That same year, two new partnerships were created, one in South African for nursing and education majors, and another to facilitate student teaching in countries around the globe.

Of the 43 students who have traveled to South African, 21 percent have been nursing or education majors.

The RISE Program (Research Internships in Science and engineering), launched by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in 2005, provides North American undergraduate science and engineering students with rigorous research opportunities by pairing them with advanced doctoral students in Germany for up to three months in the summer. In its first year, DAAD received 383 applications from North American undergraduate students. In 2006, applications for the RISE cycle increased by 57 percent (over 600 applications were received). In 2007, the number of applications increased substantially.

Changes are occurring in secondary schools, as well. Teachers at one new public international middle school embrace global education as the school mission. On the school's web site, they display their objectives (Parker, 2008). The objectives focus on global consciousness and the interconnectedness of the world system, which are evident in the following: a) global challenges: examine and evaluate global issues, problems, and challenges (e.g., students understand the global issues and challenges are interrelated, complex and changing, and that most issues have a global dimension); b) culture and world areas: study human differences and commonalities (e.g., students understand that members of different cultures view the world in different ways); and c) global connections: analyze the connections between the U.S. and the world (e.g., students can describe how they are connected with the world historically, politically, economically, technologically, socially, linguistically, and ecologically).

While these are only a few examples, they are indicative of the growing trend to develop study abroad programs that are tailored to students' needs. New initiatives like these have begun to show success in attracting traditionally underrepresented students (Obst, Bhandari, & Witherell, 2007).

Heyl and McCarthy (2003) posit that there remain gaps with regards to international knowledge and preparation programs. They note that personal exposure and professional development of international activities can be beneficial in enhancing international competencies. Schools, colleges, and universities must ensure that graduates possess the skills to think globally, have international experience, and are able to incorporate a global dimension into the workforce.

Profile of the Butler Technology and Career Development Vocational School

The collaboration with Butler Tech officially began in 2005, with teachers and administrators traveling to China to determine the benefits of a study abroad program. In 2006, there were 14 students and 4 teachers who traveled to China. The trip was labeled the Butler Tech China Educational Program Discovery. The group visited Beijing, Shanghai, Guilin, Liuzhou, and Nanning. The trip lasted 18 days and was quite informative for the group. The next trip will be in the spring of 2009 and there will be 15 students, three teachers, a project manager, and an administrator in attendance.

Butler Tech wanted to establish a study abroad program with China to develop an international experience for their students. The China program objectives include: (a) providing students and teachers with a better

understanding of the Chinese culture and economy; (b) providing opportunities to enhance the educational experience of teachers and students; (c) allowing participants to develop a global perspective and become more culturally aware of the diversity in educational practices throughout China; (d) increasing awareness about the ever-changing and competitive global market-place; (e) connecting students with leaders from Ohio-based Fortune 500 companies such as Coca-Cola, Procter and Gamble, and General Electric; and (f) empowering students and teachers with global knowledge. The program has been successful in attracting students each year.

Butler Technology and Career Development School is located in southwest Ohio in the Cincinnati region and is one of Ohio's oldest vocational schools. It is comprised of four different campuses, and is currently home to over 30,000 students and 500 faculty, including those participating at partner institutions, making it Ohio's largest career-technical school. Butler Tech originally started as a single campus with emphasis in the mechanical, industrial, and office occupations. It has since expanded to offering over 200 different programs, which include biotechnology, culinary arts, veterinary sciences, and many others. After finishing a program from Butler Tech, students are able to then either enter the workforce or continue their education if they desire at a 2 or 4 year college. Butler Tech has operated a China exchange program for several years. In 2008 it also participated in the Ohio State University Chinese Language Program. Butler Tech's China exchange program strives to better educate students about other cultures and also stimulate interest in foreign

languages and international studies. In order to achieve these goals, students travel to China for a ten day trip in order to experience their education system and culture. During this time, students receive instruction from Chinese teachers and also experience hands on a different style of teaching. They are also able to interact with Chinese students, allowing them to forge a personal connection that will better help them understand a different viewpoint. The overall purpose is to better prepare future members of the workforce to deal with a changing work environment that incorporates international needs.

Currently, Butler Tech is seeking collaborative endeavors with other vocational schools in China, including Guangxi Mechanical and Electrical Industry School. The schools signed a letter of intent that would start a student-teacher exchange program in the near future and the collaboration would also include the development of one or two courses related to the study abroad experience.

Profile of Nanjing Technical Vocational School

To determine the differences between American and overseas schools, it is necessary to compare and contrast the two. By using Nanjing University as an example, one can notice just how involved the university is in terms of international awareness and education. Furthermore, by determining the percentage of students involved in such activities, it can be determined how differently Americans and foreign students view the importance of international awareness.

Nanjing Technical Vocational School received higher accreditation from Jiangsu Province's Department of Education in February 2005 and has become more involved in different educational levels. It was the first vocational school in all of China to begin an exchange program to Germany. The current student enrollment is 4500, with 280 faculty members that have made over 100 trips to Germany.

The school offers over 20 different majors in seven different departments, some of which include civil, electrical, and environmental engineering, and also computer management. The focus of this school is to make students more well-rounded and able to adapt to new and changing work environments. Also, as the majority of these students will be working in very technical fields, the school educates the students on the importance of having an open mind and is therefore able to maximize their creativity, as well. A number of students, despite being in the middle of their education, have begun working at German companies that have joint ventures with companies from other nations. Since this school was founded, over 40,000 students have graduated, with a 100 percent rate of employment.

The following are examples of programs that are offered at the Nanjing Career Vocational School and University.

Established in 1986, the Hopkins - Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies is an educational joint venture between NJU and the Johns Hopkins University in the US. Chinese students study the US and the international system

in English with American professors, while international students focus on contemporary China and are taught by Chinese professors in Mandarin. Additionally, with collaborative research projects, joint seminars and cross-registration opportunities, the center fosters a rich cross-cultural learning experience. Each year, it has approximately 100 students in the Certificate program and 40 in the MA program (half Chinese and half international).

Sino-Dutch International Business Center of Nanjing University (SDIBC) - With distinguished faculty from both China and Europe, SDIBC's primary objective is to foster professionals in business management who can adapt to the increasingly globalized economy and engage in international economic and technological cooperation

Sino-Canadian College was established in 2005 cooperatively by NJU and the University of Waterloo (UW) in Canada. It offers joint academic programs, currently at the undergraduate level, based on a "Two-Plus-Two" model. That is, students are enrolled by NJU and their initial two years of study are undertaken at NJU; upon meeting UW's academic requirements, students will be eligible to transfer to UW for their final two years of study. Students who successfully complete the requirements of the joint program will receive degrees from both universities.

Institute for International Students, Nanjing University - The Institute of International Students, founded in 1955, has received more than 18,000 international students from over 70 countries. Its present enrollment is around

1,700. Its website provides information about academic programs, application and admissions, tuitions, HSK, etc.

The goal of vocational schools is to provide a responsive and flexible education system that addresses globalization and the current technical needs of the work force. They typically provide multiple pathways and innovative approaches to education delivery that begin in the middle or high school years and continue throughout a lifetime (DeWitt. 2008). Vocational schools meets the challenges of a diverse and evolving workforce and addresses school reform as it relates to international perspectives.

Although a number of studies have investigated the diverse opinions and training of intercultural and global competency, few studies have investigated the impact of international experiences and education across two unique vocational settings – one is the US and the other China. A closer view of the impact of such programs on students' recognition of the importance of internal education for life and intercultural competencies is warranted. Ultimately, the challenge becomes, can students who participate in international study abroad programs determine the merit of the program as it enhances the educational, employment, and political opportunities of these individuals?

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods that were used to conduct this study. The topics discussed are: participants, setting, and data collection procedures.

Participants and Setting

Participants in the study were students between the ages of 15 and 19, who attended Butler Tech Vocational School (n=64) and Nanjing Career Vocational School/University (n=61). The participants were a diverse group across races, ethnicities, and experiences.

Butler Technology and Career Development School was located in a Midwestern city. The school offered programs in the arts, natural science, health and computer sciences. There was a total of 50 programs including administrative office technology, commercial arts, digital media, and network systems. The school consisted of four main campuses. Butler Tech collaborates with 13 high schools and provides vocational training for prospective students. Butler Tech had the second highest college attendance rate among high schools in the region

Data Collection

During the 2008-09 academic year, the researcher met with the director of the Butler Tech program to discuss the focus of the study and to obtain

permission to survey students (See Appendix A & B). The principal of the Nanjing Vocational Career School was also contacted to determine the participation of students in China's vocational program and to obtain permission (See Appendix A & B).. Once permission was granted, the researcher designed two surveys, one for students currently enrolled in the program and one for students who were previously enrolled in the program.

In order to conduct the research, two different surveys were designed one for Chinese students and one for American students. The survey for the American students was distributed to two different groups, one was given to the current population of students (See Appendix C) and the other was provided to students who previously were enrolled (See Appendix D). The same procedure was used for the students in China's cultural exchange program. Sixty-three responses were received from the general population students from Butler Tech, with 48 being sophomores and 15 seniors. The results were analyzed together for the purpose of examining the students' viewpoints as a whole.

The students were surveyed within a two-month time frame, both in the U.S. and China, beginning in February, 2009. Surveys were distributed on two separate occasions to the students who participated in the Chinese cultural exchange program. However, a large majority of the students had already matriculated to college or had relocated to other countries. This explains the lack of participation in the study from these students. There were a small number of surveys returned from the Butler group. Four surveys were returned. Furthermore, the only contact information available may have been out of date,

which could have also contributed to the lack of responses. In spite of this, results were available from a similar survey distributed by Butler Tech soon after the students had returned from their study abroad trip. The coordinator from Butler Tech was willing to share these results and valuable information was obtained, with approval for use from Butler Tech.

Surveys were unable to be distributed to Chinese students from Nanjing who participated in overseas program. During a telephone interview with the vice president

Of the school, it was learned that many of these students had already graduated from the school were studying abroad, which made it impossible to contact them. Furthermore, there were restrictions in time, which impeded the process as well. It was regrettable that these surveys were not returned as they could have contributed to the data regarding the viewpoints of students relevant to international education.

The Chinese and American versions of the survey were both extremely similar except for two questions being removed from the Chinese version. The first question, which asked the students about their first impression of the United States was removed because a negative or positive opinion of the U.S. would not affects its importance in the global economy. The second question asked whether or not globalization was important in the future and was removed as well. It was removed because of students' potential underexposure to such global events would skew their answers in such a manner that it would be impossible to determine whether or not they believed it was important or

unimportant based on lack of understanding or truly determining that globalization was unnecessary. However, the responses from students at Butler Tech revealed that many believed globalization would achieve greater importance in the future as compared to today's world. With this result, it was regrettable that this question was removed and therefore responses were not available for comparison.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter provides an analysis of the data in response to surveys by Butler Technology and Nanjing Technical Vocational School students.

Table 1

Survey Returns

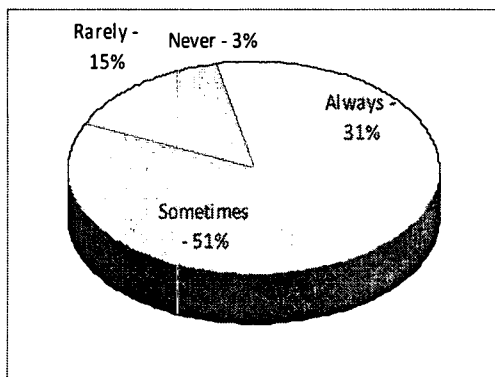
Target Group	Number Participating in Survey	Total Participants
Butler Tech survey for International Business/Marketing students	63	67
Butler Tech students who traveled to China	4	
Nanjing Technical Vocational College for International Business/Marketing students	61	61
Nanjing Technical Vocational College students who traveled to other countries.	0	

This table shows the distribution of the participants that were surveyed. A total of 67 were from Butler Tech, with 63 enrolled in international business and marketing and 4 who traveled to China in a cultural exchange program. There were 61 participants from Nanjing Technical Vocational College, with 61 enrolled in international business and marketing classes and 0 who traveled to other countries.

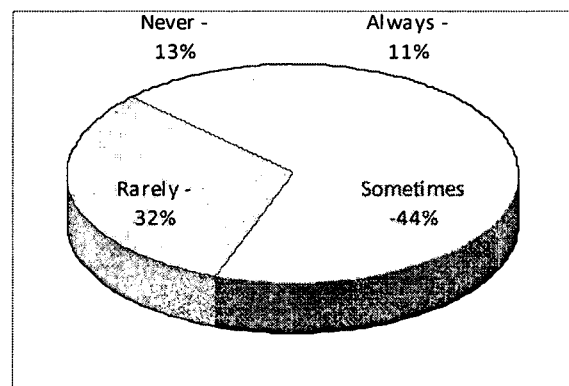
Figure 1

How often do you pay attention to international events?

Nanjing Technical Vocational School



Butler Tech

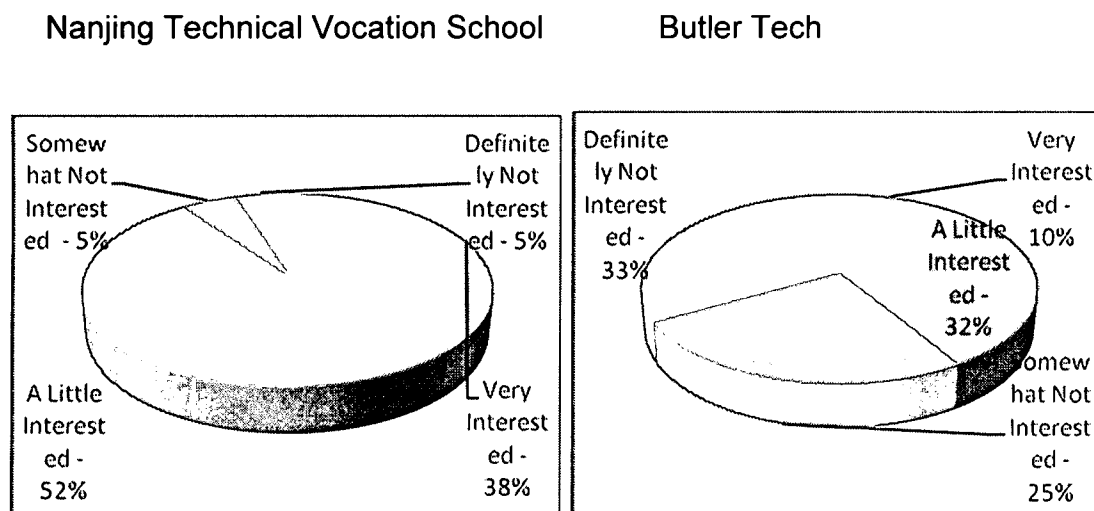


This graph illustrates that the majority of students at Butler Tech do not feel it is necessary or useful to pay attention to international events. Only 11% responded that they pay attention to international events very often, and another 44% responded that they did sometimes. 32% said that they rarely do, while 13% said never. Considering the importance of understanding international perspectives in a globalized economy, this is a disturbing trend. Furthermore, despite the fact that when these students enter the workforce these events will

have a significant impact on their careers, they do not seem to be that concerned. However, a majority of students at Nanjing Technical Vocational School, consisting of 82% of the responses, always or sometimes pay attention to international events. This is significantly higher than the 55% of students who gave a similar response from Butler Tech. This vested interest demonstrates that they understand the importance of global events to their careers and also to the world. Only 15% responded with rarely and only 3% responded with never paying attention to international events.

Figure 2

How interested would you be in having a career overseas after you graduate?



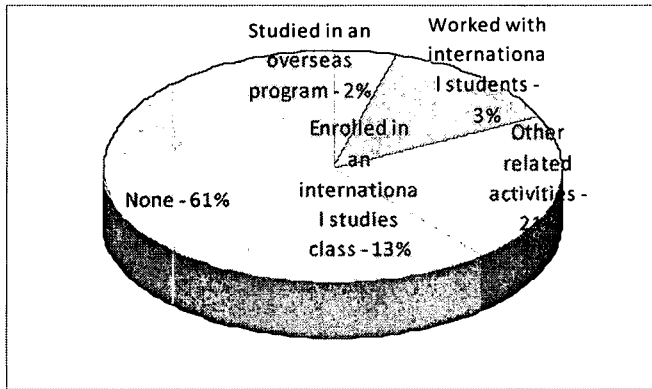
This illustrates a lack of interest by Butler Tech students in having a career overseas. With globalization rapidly taking place, only 10% were very interested in having such a job. This is similar to the 11% of students which responded that they paid attention to international events very often. This shows a correlation between understanding of global events and outlook on one's future career. 32%

responded that they were a little interested, 25% said they were somewhat not interested, and 33% said they were definitely not interested. The number who responded with definitely not interested was 3 times the amount of those who responded that they were very interested in having a career overseas. The responses from Nanjing Technical Vocational School shows a great deal of interest by Nanjing Vocational Technical Students in having a career overseas after they graduate, with 90% being very interested or somewhat interested, compared with only 42% of students from Butler Tech. Only 5% of students responded that they were somewhat not interested, with another 5% saying they were definitely not interested. This is very significant as China is developing very quickly and has many opportunities opening up, and yet many students are still open minded about traveling to other countries for their careers.

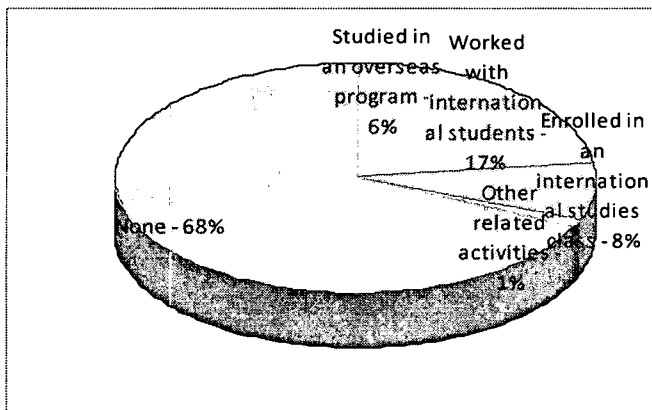
Figure 3

Have you participated in any of the following activities?

Nanjing Technical Vocational School



Butler Tech

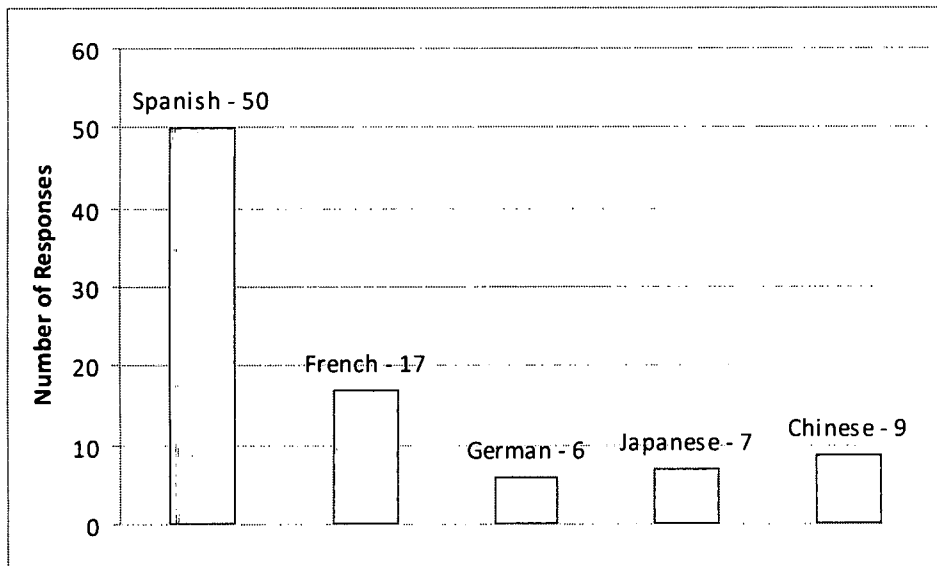


The graph illustrates an extreme lack of interest in foreign educational activities by Butler Tech students. Only 6% of students participated in a study abroad program, 17% worked with international students, 8% enrolled in an international studies class, and 2% participated in other related activities. However, an astounding 68% did not participate in any sort of these events. With all the international opportunities available to these students, this demonstrates an unwillingness to better understand other cultures and perspectives. This also

partially explains a lack of understanding behind globalization and its importance in today's world. The graph of Nanjing Technical Vocational School illustrates that Nanjing Vocational Technical School students have not participated in a great deal of foreign education related activities. Only 2% had studied in an overseas program, 3% had worked with international students, 13% had enrolled in an international studies class, and 21% had participated in other related activities. This is similar to the distribution seen from Butler Tech students. However, as seen from other responses in the survey, these students have an extreme interest in international activities and have greater international awareness. With such great interest in foreign events, it appears the most likely explanation for this is a lack of opportunities as well potentially a lack of means to participate.

Figure 4

Butler Tech Students: Do you plan on learning or studying any of the following languages?

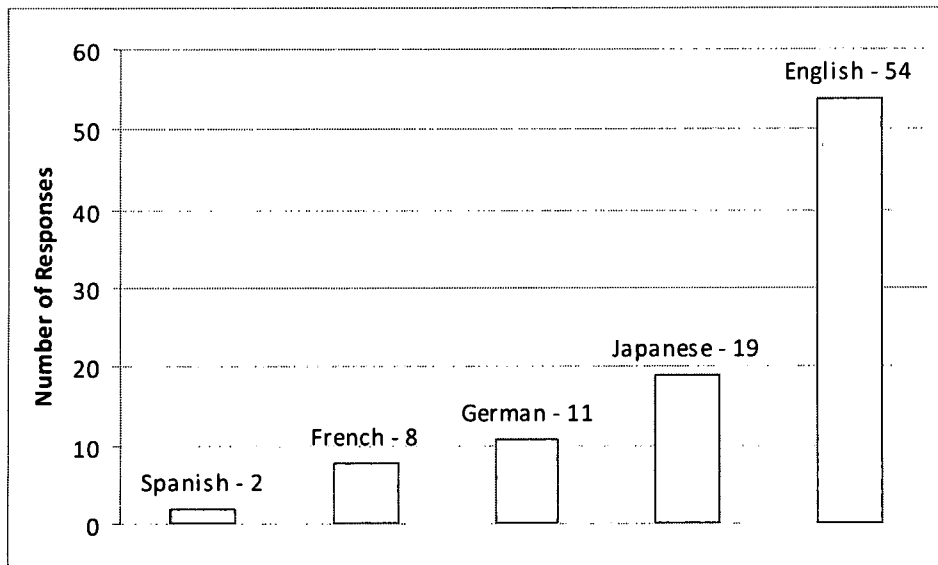


This graph illustrates which languages students plan on learning or studying.

There is an overwhelming majority that wishes to study Spanish, with 50 selecting this answer, possibly because such a large minority exists in the United States, and therefore they view this as being useful. Only 9 students selected Chinese, 17 selected French, 6 selected German, 7 selected Japanese, and 5 chose none. With China developing rapidly and with many opportunities available there, it appears students are unaware of this, and therefore their results do not show significantly greater interest in learning Chinese as compared to German and Japanese.

Figure 5

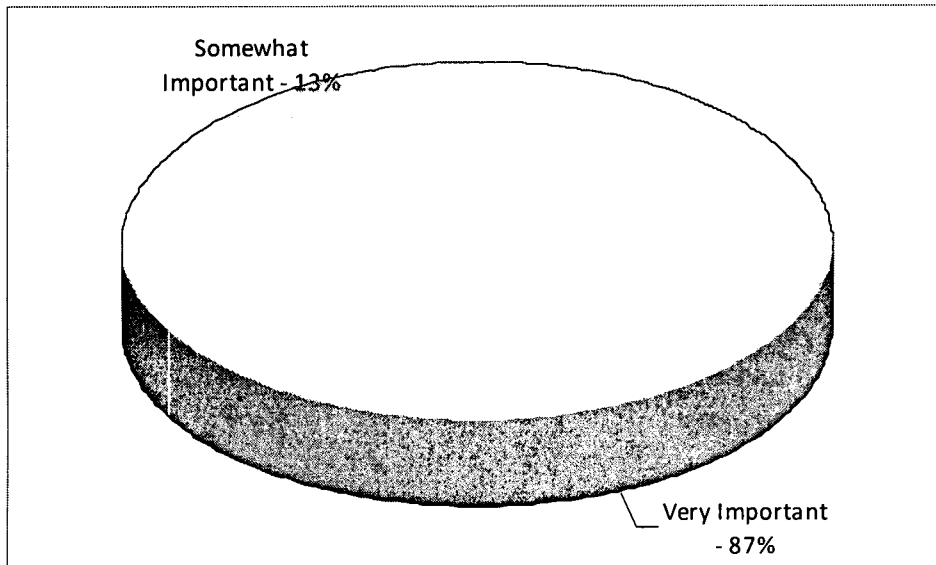
Nanjing Technical Vocational School students: Do you plan on learning or studying any of the following languages?



This graph illustrates a large amount of interest among Nanjing Vocational Technical School students to learn English. 54 responses chose English, much higher than any other language. 19 responses gave Japanese, 11 saying German, 8 saying French, and 2 saying Spanish. This is in significant contrast to the students from Butler Tech, who overwhelmingly believed Spanish held the most use out of any of the above languages. This illustrates how important English they feel is to their future careers and also to the global economy.

Figure 6

Nanjing Technical Vocational School Students: How integral do you believe globalization is to advancing today's world?



This graph illustrates that a vast majority of Students at Nanjing Vocational Technical School believed globalization was very important to today's world, with 87% selecting this answer and the other 13% selecting somewhat important. This is in great contrast to the students from Butler Tech, who only had 37% choosing globalization is very important to today's world. This demonstrates the different understanding that the two student groups have of how globalization affects today's world.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study of international education has moved from a purely theoretical and conceptual approach to a more analytical approach, a sign that international education has not only gained importance as a field of study but also has become an important part of many vocational schools and university curricula all over the world (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). As more and more schools are demanding an international experience in their programs, whether it be in the form of a semester of studies or a study abroad experience in an industry internship, it is evident that more research is needed to improve the quality and effectiveness of the programs offered. An examination of current programs is warranted to ensure that students receive an experience that will impact their international perspectives and abilities to work with individuals throughout the world.

To determine the merit of international programs in vocational schools, the following research questions were asked: a) Are there differences in the viewpoints in international relations of students participating in a study abroad program in a vocational school in China and the U.S.? Clearly, the data supported that there are definitely differences in the viewpoints of American students and students from China. Students from China were more open-minded and accepting of other cultures compared to American students. b) Are

students participating in study abroad programs affected by their training and their preparation for future international opportunities? Again there were noticeable differences between the responses of students from China compared to the American students. Both Chinese and American students feel that there is an insufficient amount of international studies related courses, and therefore colleges and other schools need to provide more classes to meet these students' needs. However, there is an understanding that course offerings are based on interest and financial funding, and therefore it can be accepted that not every students' needs will be met entirely. and c) What changes need to occur in vocational programs to ensure that students receive optimal benefits from study abroad programs? The response were varied to this question. The ultimate idea is that students would become more internationally aware by participating in a study abroad experience.

The viewpoints of the students were consistent with previous research in which students felt that an international education benefited them personally and that it helped them in becoming more mature and worldly individuals, more willing to work with individuals from another country, compassionate regarding the cultural differences of others, and they were able to live and function in environments that are dissimilar to what they were used to at home (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Basically students felt that the greatest benefit was that it helped them obtain a greater understanding of another culture and that it helped them appreciate their own culture more, which allowed them to learn more about themselves, and that it enriched them personally.

With a wide acknowledgement of the importance of international education among educators, specific standards are needed for students to be exposed to the learning of the world starting in the elementary years. Reform measures should include action plans that are designed to infuse international education into standard school curriculum. International education should be planned for children to understand about cultural diversity within their home country and the cultural differences that exist throughout the world. The earlier children are exposed to international education and an understanding of other nations and cultures, the more benefits they should enjoy on their journey to becoming a global citizen (Liu, 2004).

Educators must be cognizant that it is the skills learned in the process of acculturation learning that prepares students as global and cultural, internationally minded, and competent proficient citizens and future workers. The lived intercultural experience is, thus, the critical element in gaining a meaningful understanding of other cultures as well as one's own place in an interconnected world (Cushner, 2007).

Future research should focus on the effectiveness of study abroad programs and services to assist students in developing and enhancing their cultural competencies (Jurgens & O'Connell, 2008). The key is that schools and universities must be willing to support effective programs that create and maintain a diverse student population and ensures the graduation of interculturally competent students. It is important that the schools provide the necessary means to achieve these goals, as it will allow a bold response that is

more effective to the pressing demand for a globally oriented curriculum with carefully crafted international opportunities for students.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Coordinator

January 30, 2009

Ms. Lisa-Marie Ehlerding

Coordinator, Butler Technology and Career Development School

Middletown, Ohio

Dear Ms. Lisa-Marie Ehlerding,

I am currently working on completing my Master of Science in Education from the University of Dayton. As part of my thesis, I will be conducting a research study this semester. My study will be centered on the topic, *Comparing viewpoints on international relations from Chinese and American vocational students*. My intent is to use the results of this study to determine what issues exist on this topic from a non-traditional viewpoint.

I will be conducting this research by distributing surveys to Butler Tech students who are currently enrolled in the study abroad program and those who have completed the program. A survey is provided for your review so that you will be able to see the type of questions that are being asked. I will share the results of my study with you at the completion of the study.

This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Carolyn Talbert-Johnson. If you have any questions, you may email her at Carolyn.johnson@udayton.edu or by telephone at (937) 229-3082. I would also be willing to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Yuping (Peggy) Wang

APPENDIX B

Letter to Principal

January 30, 2009

Mr. Minggen Li Nanjing Technical Vocational School
58 Huangshan Road
Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China 210019

Dear Mr. Minggen Li,

I am currently working on completing my Master of Science in Education from the University of Dayton. As part of my thesis, I will be conducting a research study this semester. My study will be centered on the topic, *Comparing viewpoints on international relations from Chinese and American vocational students*. My intent is to use the results of this study to determine what issues exist on this topic from a non-traditional viewpoint.

I will be conducting this research by distributing surveys to Nanjing Technical Vocational School students who are currently enrolled in the study abroad program and those who have completed the program. A survey is provided for your review so that you will be able to see the type of questions that are being asked. I will share the results of my study with you at the completion of the study.

This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Carolyn Talbert-Johnson. If you have any questions, you may email her at Carolyn.johnson@udayton.edu or by telephone at (937) 229-3082. I would also be willing to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Yuping (Peggy) Wang

APPENDIX C

BUTLER TECH SURVEY OF CURRENT STUDENTS

Age _____

Date _____

Please respond to the following items.

Have you ever taken a trip to another country?

- A. Yes B. No

2. Which countries would you be most interested in traveling to?

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| A. Italy | D. South Africa |
| B. Brazil
countries | E. I'm not interested in traveling to these |
| C. China | |

3. How often do you pay attention to international events? (i.e., reading news or articles about foreign topics)

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| A. Very often | C. Rarely |
| B. Sometimes | D. Never |

4. What is the first through that comes to mind when you hear of China?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Cuisine | E. Communism |
| B. Martial arts | F. Massive population |
| C. Extensive history | G. Other _____ |
| D. 2008 Beijing Olympics | |

5. How integral do you believe globalization is to advancing today's world?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Very important | C. Somewhat unimportant |
| B. Somewhat important | D. Very unimportant |

6. How integral do you believe globalization is to the future?
- A. Very important C. Somewhat unimportant
B. Somewhat important D. Very unimportant
7. Have you ever done any of the following? (Circle all that apply.)
- A. Studied in an abroad program
B. Worked with international students
C. Enrolled in an international studies class
D. Other: (Explain)
8. Have any of your friends participated in one of the following events?
- A. Studied in an abroad program
B. Worked with international students
C. Enrolled in an international studies class
D. Other: (Explain)
9. Do you plan on learning or studying any of the following languages? (Circle all that apply.)
- A. Spanish D. German
B. Chinese E. Japanese
C. French
10. Do you believe that your current school's offering of international courses (cultures, language, other international studies) is sufficient?
- A. Very sufficient C. Somewhat lacking
B. Somewhat sufficient D. Very lacking
11. After you graduate how interested would you be in having a career overseas?
- A. Very interested C. Somewhat not interested
B. A little interested D. Definitely interested
12. How has your family influenced your view on international perspectives?

- A. They talk about their experiences often so it's crossed your mind a lot.
 - B. They occasionally talk about it but not enough for you to seriously consider it.
 - C. No family member has influenced your thinking
13. What is your attitude towards the importance of appreciating other cultures?
- A. It's necessary to understand other cultures in order to understand other people's thought process.
 - B. It's somewhat necessary.
 - C. It doesn't concern everyone and therefore only certain people should be interested.
 - D. It's not very necessary.
 - E. Domestic matters take precedence.
14. From where do you most often obtain your information concerning other cultures and societies?
- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Newspaper | E. Books |
| B. Internet articles | F. Classroom discussion |
| C. News broadcasts (radio/TV) | G. Workplace |
| D. Casual conversations | |
15. How much has the media shaped your perception towards other cultures and societies?
- A. Greatly affected
 - B. Somewhat affected
 - C. Barely affected
 - D. Not affected at all

APPENDIX D

BUTLER TECH SURVEY OF STUDENTS WHO TRAVELED TO CHINAAge _____

Date _____

Ethnicity _____

Please respond to the following items.

For what reasons did you decide to participate in this exchange program?

2. Before you went on this trip, what types of things did you associate with China?
3. What was your original impression of Chinese vocational schools?
4. After returning from your trip, what different things do you now associate with China?
5. In which of the following ways did the educational system differ from what you were used to in the U.S.?
 - A. Amount of homework (more/same/less)
 - B. In-class discussions (more/same/less)
 - C. Teacher/student interaction outside of class (more/same/less)
 - D. Student participation in class (more/same/less)
 - E. Transportation to and from school (more/same/less)

6. What were the overall conditions of the classroom compared to those in the US? (better/same/worse) Please explain.
7. What was your impression of Chinese students' work ethic?
- A. Very hard working
 - B. Somewhat hard working
 - C. Somewhat apathetic towards studying
 - D. Apathetic towards studying
8. What attitude did you believe the Chinese students had towards their teachers?
- A. Very respectful
 - B. Somewhat respectful
 - C. Somewhat disrespectful
 - D. Very disrespectful
9. For the following questions, mark your answer on a scale from 1-to-5 (with 5 being the highest).
- A. How enthusiastic do you believe Chinese students are towards learning foreign languages?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
- B. How accepting do you believe Chinese students are towards foreigners?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
- C. How knowledgeable do you believe Chinese students are about other cultures and societies?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
- D. How knowledgeable do you believe Chinese teachers are about other cultures and societies?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

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E. How much content did you believe the students were exposed to which had international themes?

1 2 3 4 5

- 10. People often have preconceived notions about things they are unfamiliar with. How did your opinion of China change after experiencing first hand their education system? Did you think more or less highly of China and for what reasons?**
- 11. In what aspects do you believe the Chinese school excelled?**
- 12. Upon what aspects do you feel the Chinese school could improve?**
- 13. Why do you believe that your current school's offering of international courses (culture, language, other international studies) is sufficient?**
- 14. Based on your experience, do you believe it is worthwhile for other students who may eventually have an overseas career to participate in this type of program and for what reasons do you feel this way?**