



INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

# International Higher Education in Citizen Diplomacy


Examining Student Learning  
Outcomes from Mobility Programs


Shingo Hanada

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# International and Development Education

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The theme of this book came initially from my empirical study examining the impact of study abroad programs on intercultural competence. In the context of globalization, international higher education, especially in the form of student mobility programs, has become a major feature of higher education throughout the world. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, international higher education is facing a new challenge, and it seems certain that students will continue to face higher barriers to participating in mobility programs than ever before. At the individual level, more students will take a stronger interest in understanding what they can expect to learn through mobility programs because many of them will consider both the benefits and the risks from various perspectives, including the learning experience gained through the programs, career

development, finances, health, safety of the destination for foreigners, etc. At the social level, the increasing fragmentation of the world and widening disparity led me to assume that looking for clues about how to improve people-to-people relationships is precisely what is needed for the sustainability of global society. I was therefore inspired to examine whether international higher education contributes to sustaining and promoting people-to-people relationships aimed at citizen diplomacy. It is important to note that international higher education includes various modes and programs, and this study does not cover all of them. This study focuses on five types of mobility programs: outbound study abroad, inbound study abroad, international service-learning, international internship, and online study abroad programs. Although this is just one contribution to a broader debate, I sincerely hope it will provide some insights which prove useful in subsequent international higher education research.

Last but not least, I would like to express my special gratitude and thanks to my wife for her continuous support and understanding to complete this work, and my little son and daughter for giving me the inspiration to pursue this undertaking.



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## Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the impacts of international higher education on citizen diplomacy through empirical studies. Citizen diplomacy is the concept that “every global citizen has the right, even the responsibility, to engage across cultures and create shared understanding through meaningful person-to-person interactions” (The Center for Citizen Diplomacy, 2019). It not only aims to build person-to-person relationships, but also has the potential benefit of sustaining goodwill between foreign peoples when formal diplomacy suffers disruptions (Lawton & Sharnak, 2010). Thus, citizen diplomacy is not an alternative but a complementary diplomacy, which has advantages and opportunities unavailable to formal diplomacy (Davies & Kaufman, 2002). Citizen diplomats encompass students, teachers, athletes, artists, business people, humanitarians, adventurers, and tourists (Lawton & Sharnak, 2010). Since entering the era of globalization and digitalization, the role of citizen diplomacy is increasing, in that more and more citizens can exert influence on an international stage through both face-to-face and online modes (Lawton & Sharnak, 2010).

In the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, diplomacy is defined as “the activity of managing relations between different countries.” It is a practice that a country uses in building and maintaining favorable relationships with other countries without offending them in order to achieve its own interests (Hosoya, 2007). It includes the use of negotiation, mediation, conflict

resolution, and cooperation to achieve consensus between countries (Copper et al., 2013). In classic studies of diplomacy (e.g., Nicolson, 1954; Satow, 1917/2011), it is recognized as a peaceful and intelligent method employed only by official diplomats in government. Since the 1990s, however, information has spread rapidly throughout the world as the Internet has become mainstream. This has enabled not only governments and official diplomats but also citizens and non-governmental organizations to obtain a wide variety of information and communicate with foreign citizens across borders. It is one of the factors that has promoted information transfer and dialogue between people in public diplomacy. With this in mind, the influence of information technology on diplomacy is something that cannot be ignored, and diplomacy has entered a period of diversity which includes non-governmental people-to-people contact, called citizen diplomacy or people's diplomacy (Bhandari & Belyavina, 2011; McDonald, 2007; Mueller, 2020; Yu, 2015). This study assumes that international higher education has its role in citizen diplomacy.

The following four points regarding the impact of international higher education on citizen diplomacy are worth bearing in mind. Firstly, previous studies have anticipated certain impacts of international higher education programs on citizen diplomacy. For example, Bhandari and Belyavina (2011), in a study by the Institute of International Education, state that postsecondary exchange and study abroad programs are expected to contribute to citizen diplomacy. Yu (2015) indicates that educational and cultural communication is one of 225 American citizen diplomacy programs, and that its function is to enhance mutual understanding between ordinary citizens. Secondly, many of the previous studies in citizen diplomacy have been based on Western contexts. For example, Wilson (2014) examines the impact of intra-European mobility programs and concludes that there is little evidence of a positive change in students' attitudes toward the host country. On the other hand, Wilson (2017) mentions that mobility across greater cultural differences could have a much greater impact on attitudes. Similarly, Bhandari and Belyavina (2011) introduce the case studies of postsecondary exchange and study abroad programs, and professional and leadership exchange programs in citizen diplomacy, but these are based on American contexts. Thirdly, there are many studies which rely on participants' self-reporting and perceptions as evaluation methods. While it is important to examine such qualitative self-assessment by participants as one aspect of the question, a more systematic assessment is also desirable when an empirical study is conducted. Fourthly, the number of

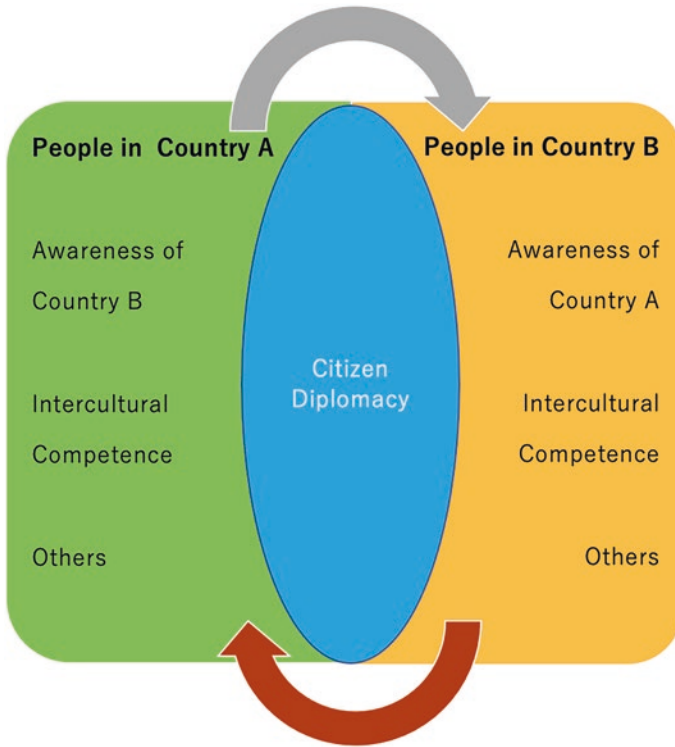
people participating in international education in general is large. Although there are no official statistics provided by international organizations on the number of participants in all types of international education program, the number of participants in study abroad programs was said to be about 5.3 million in 2017 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020). Given the scale of involvement in international education programs, it is sizeable enough to play a significant role if it is proven that international education in higher education impacts citizen diplomacy.

In light of this background, this study intends to provide some insights into the impacts of international higher education on citizen diplomacy in the Japanese context through both quantitative and qualitative empirical research. As there are many different modes of international higher education, this study does not seek to cover them all. A typical classification of international higher education is mobility programs and international education programs on the home university campus. The former refers to programs in which learners travel abroad to study, such as study abroad, international service-learning, and international internship. In contrast, the latter refers to programs provided mainly on a student's own university campus, such as intercultural education and global citizenship education. Among the different types of international higher education program, this study aims to examine the impacts of five types of mobility program on citizen diplomacy: outbound study abroad, inbound study abroad, international service-learning, international internship, and online study abroad programs.

## SCOPE

There are various qualities that contribute to building and maintaining citizen diplomacy. Figure 1.1. indicates three qualities: awareness of the partner country (i.e., the awareness of country B among people in country A), intercultural competence, and others. These other qualities may include proficiency in the language(s) spoken in the partner country, knowledge of the partner country, or familiarity of values such as political ideology, economic system, religion, etc. Among these, this study focuses on two qualities: awareness of the partner country which the participants of international higher education programs visit and intercultural competence on the Japanese side.

The reason for choosing these two qualities is that this study assumes that they encompass goodwill toward and cultural understanding of foreign



**Fig. 1.1** The scope of this study

countries, both of which are indicated as components of citizen diplomacy. Awareness, which is exemplified by interest, empathy, and goodwill toward foreign countries, is an indispensable attitude. However, it is not sufficient. Even if people have awareness, they need to be equipped with intercultural competence (i.e., intercultural mindset and skillset) in order for them to be able to adjust to the cultural differences that exist between countries and build and maintain the relationship in the real world. Communication and intercultural understanding are required in the spheres of skill and mind, respectively, to adjust to cultural differences. Thus, intercultural competence is different from knowledge of the specialist areas of politics, economics, or the environment. On the other hand, even if one has intercultural competence, it does not necessarily mean that one has such



awareness of a specific foreign country. Therefore, these two qualities are closely related but not necessarily identical.

This study believes that one of the *raison d'être* of international higher education is to foster people who are equipped with both qualities, based on the following extensive contexts for international higher education. The basic purpose of international higher education is to foster people who can play an active role in various situations, globally and domestically. Needless to say, this student development (or human development in a broader sense) is not itself a diplomatic practice. On the other hand, ever since the Middle Ages, when the university system was first established, a mission of universities has been to nurture people who can contribute to the realization of international peace, the state in which people in the world respect and trust each other. Today, governments sometimes expect universities to foster people who can contribute to people-to-people relationships between their country and foreign countries. This might include increasing the number of citizens who are familiar with the other country, citizens who have friendly feelings toward the other country, and foreigners who have friendly feelings toward their own country. Furthermore, in the contemporary era, there is a call from the international community to foster such people, which can be confirmed by the UNESCO's statement: "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace" (UNESCO, 1974, p. 2). It also lays out the different components required of education for building and maintaining peace, which are "sometimes gathered together in a concise expression, international education" (UNESCO, 1974, p. 1). In this respect, UNESCO refers to the role of international education in building and maintaining international peace. In order for countries which are culturally distinct groups to aim to build trust, it is necessary to dispel ignorance and distrust of the other group, and seek to build a relationship for coexistence and co-prosperity by communicating with each other.

However, it is not easy for people with different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds to build such relationships. Today, about half a century after UNESCO set out the above clause, for example, the increasing fragmentation of the world due to economic disparity is often discussed. Based on the concept of realism at a national level, a nation cooperates with other nations because it is in its interests to do so, and

when there are no such interests, the cooperation will not function effectively. Therefore, the existence of interests becomes a condition for cooperation. It is precisely because of this aspect of international relations that citizen diplomacy is required in order to build a relationship between people in different countries at the individual level. If it can be demonstrated that international higher education has the effect of fostering students' awareness and intercultural competence, it could be said that international higher education has certain impacts on citizen diplomacy.

### AWARENESS OF HOST COUNTRY

This study considers awareness of the host country to have two elements: empathy and goodwill. According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, empathy is defined as "the ability to understand another person's feelings, experience, etc." This element involves trying to put oneself in the other person's place, such as standing in their shoes, understanding their values and customs, and empathizing with them. In comparison, interest is defined as "the feeling that you have when you want to know or learn more about somebody/something." Compared to empathy, interest is a motivation to understand the host country from the standpoint of one's own cultural perspectives. Interest is an important element of citizen diplomacy as the foundation of awareness of foreign countries, but this study does not include it in the analysis because the participants of mobility programs are generally more or less interested in the countries which they visit.

The other element, goodwill, is defined as "friendly or helpful feelings toward other people or countries." In addition to understanding things from the other person's point of view, as seen in empathy, this element shows that one has a favorable feeling toward others. This study examines whether international higher education brings about empathy and goodwill toward the host country among the students who participate in it.

### INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Generally speaking, intercultural competence is recognized as the ability to function effectively across cultures, to think and act appropriately, and to communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds. (Monash Intercultural Lab, 2021). There is extensive previous literature related to intercultural competence. This literature seems to show that

different researchers have focused on various components of intercultural competence, although it is broadly recognized as a capability that supports effective and appropriate interactions with people in different cultural contexts. Scholars have used varying perspectives to explore the specific components that comprise intercultural competence. For example, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) indicated that scholarly works have advocated for many different components of intercultural competence. These components were generally perceived as intercultural competence in one context but not in another. Jackson (2018) mentioned that easy formulae and ready-made clichés should be avoided when examining intercultural encounters and diversity. This assertion implies that no particular component of intercultural competence could ever be universally applicable.

One approach which could help us to grasp the nature of intercultural competence is to review the terminology of the two terms involved, “intercultural” and “competence.” The word “intercultural” refers to individuals or people in a culture interacting with individuals or people who have different cultural backgrounds. The word culture has roots in the terms “cultivate” and “agriculture,” and has been used since the seventeenth century (Shaules, 2007). Many sociologists and anthropologists have defined culture from their own perspectives. In a classic scholarly definition, for example, Tylor (1871, p. 1) regarded culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Storti (1999, p. 5) defined culture as “the shared assumptions, values and beliefs of a group of people, which result in characteristic behaviors” and “cultural differences, or the ways in which a person from one culture thinks and behaves differently from a person from another.” As an example of the views of international organization, in UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001, p. 1), culture is regarded as “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and [that] it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” Reviewing these definitions makes clear that culture has at least four characteristics. First, culture is the synthesis of knowledge, values, beliefs, and habits shared by members of a society. Second, culture influences behaviors which are endorsed by the synthesis of knowledge, values, beliefs, and habits shared by members of a society. Third, culture has both visible and invisible properties. Fourth, culture is neither innate nor static, but is inherited by later generations learning from previous generations.

In contrast, the term “competence” is often employed imprecisely with insufficient attention paid to the complexity of its meaning. The criteria to describe the concept have also been debated in the literature (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) compared the definitions of competence proposed in ten studies which were published from the 1950s to the 1970s. Their conclusion was that the fundamental competence is “an individual’s ability to adapt effectively to the surrounding environment over time to achieve goals” and that “no other aspect of competence and effective social functioning seems so universally accepted as the ability to adapt to changing environmental and social conditions” (p. 35). With this in mind, this study defined competence as “specific abilities underlying or manifested in the performance of competent behavior” (p. 41). As another example, the OECD’s Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) Project sees competence (this study uses the term *competencies*) as being more than knowledge and skills: it involves “the ability to successfully meet complex demands in particular context through the mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitude, and values” (OECD, 2005, p. 4). Although competence is likely to be understood as similar in meaning to performance, Boys (1995) proposed a distinction between the two terms, defining competence as comprised of a mixture of unconscious and conscious components. Observing only performance as a visible component is not necessarily an appropriate way to evaluate competence. As examples of unconscious components, it was noted that individual competence is affected by one’s experiences, opportunities, and motivation.

Despite the fact that no authoritative definition of intercultural competence prevails in the relevant literature, intercultural competence can be said to include, at the least, cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements, as some scholars have indicated (e.g., Bennett, 2011; Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). According to Bennett (2011), the cognitive element deals with cultural general and specific knowledge, cultural self-awareness, and interaction analysis. The emotional element relates to how one sees different cultural qualities, such as curiosity, motivation, and open-mindedness to adjust to varying circumstances. The behavioral element relates to one’s behavior and the skills adopted in intercultural environments. Another example is Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), who propose their definition of intercultural competence as “the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive and

behavioral orientations to the world” (p. 7). Deardorff (2006) offers another empirical study that conceptualizes intercultural competence. In this research, she argued that the major components of intercultural competence are shared by intercultural scholars and higher education administrators. She surveyed both intercultural scholars from a variety of disciplines and higher education administrators from across the United States, from community colleges to research universities, administering questionnaires to them in order to measure the desired components of intercultural competence. The results show that knowledge of others and knowledge of self, and the skills of interpreting others’ values, beliefs, and behaviors, and relativizing oneself were the most commonly shared competences among the group.

Based on these understandings of intercultural competence examined through the terminologies and previous studies, this study sees intercultural competence as composed of an intercultural mindset (cognition and affection, as the invisible elements) and intercultural skillset (behavior, as the visible element), which support understanding and effective interaction with people in different cultural contexts.

## OBJECTIVE

This study seeks to ascertain the impacts of the five different mobility programs of international higher education on citizen diplomacy by empirically verifying these impacts on cultivating awareness of the host country and on intercultural competence. The five empirical studies examine outbound study abroad for Japanese students going overseas, inbound study abroad for foreign students coming to Japan, international service-learning, international internship, and online study abroad programs. The two qualities of awareness and intercultural competence are examined by the empirical research based on three hypotheses: (1) international higher education is effective in cultivating both intercultural competence and awareness of the host country, (2) international higher education is effective in cultivating either intercultural competence or awareness of the host country, and (3) international higher education is not effective in cultivating either of the two qualities.

These empirical studies are expected not only to contribute to research, but also to help students and international higher education practitioners who are considering participating in international higher education programs. This study presumes that COVID-19 will encourage students to

take a stronger interest in understanding what they can expect to learn through physical mobility programs because many of them will consider both the benefits and the risks from various perspectives, including the learning experience gained through the programs, career development, finances, health, safety of the host country for foreigners, etc. There is no doubt that we currently live in turbulent times for international higher education and a deeper focus on the learning outcomes will be required of both academics and practices undertaken in the field. The studies also provide empirical data on learning outcomes to educators and coordinators at universities to enable the arrangement of more systematic international higher education programs.

### OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

This book is organized into ten chapters. The subsequent chapters cover the following content.

Chapter 2, *A Review of International Higher Education in Diplomacy*, reviews the literature to understand the relationship between citizen diplomacy and international higher education. This chapter also looks at the background as to why international higher education is sometimes understood as a resource for promoting cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy as well as citizen diplomacy.

Chapter 3, *A Review of International Higher Education*, provides a concise but nonetheless comprehensive examination of the existing literature on international higher education. This literature review shows how it has transformed over time and outlines what debates have developed in international education as an academic field. International higher education, as the international education in higher education, has developed and transformed along with the changing eras. Still, one challenge is to develop its position as a well-established discipline. The author believes that clarifying the diplomatic impacts of international higher education would make a contribution to this situation by helping to demonstrate one of its missions, to contribute to international peace.

Chapter 4, *Research Methodology and Method*, lays out the research methodology and method used in this study. Based on a review of major research approaches used in previous empirical studies in the international higher education field, this chapter clarifies the approaches used to answer the research question, including instrumental tools, sample size, data collection procedures, and limitations. The following chapters empirically