

REFRAMING STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN EDUCATION ABROAD
[REPORTING ON A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES]

RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

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ABSTRACT:

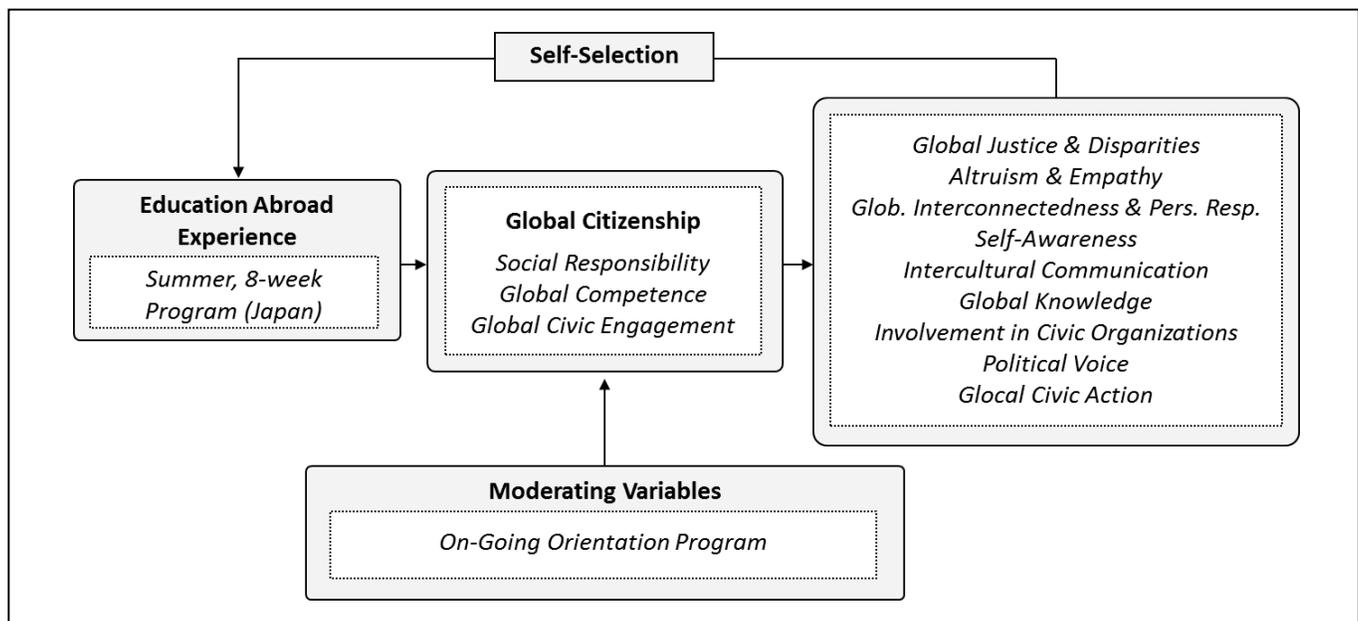
All too often student accommodation is understood as a minor component of an education abroad program with only trivial impact on the overall educational experience. As such, students are frequently permitted to choose housing based on location, cost, convenience and more frequently, on the availability of amenities, such as wireless Internet, cable, and telephone. Unfortunately, the prioritization given to such logistical and practical arrangements tends to overshadow the fundamental learning potential of student accommodation. Through active reflection and experimentation, the learning that takes place in student accommodation can lead to meaningful and transformative learning.

This “theory to practice” pilot study assessed the extent to which reframing student accommodation as a core learning component mediates changes in students’ global citizenship and thereby, social responsibility, global competence and global civic engagement. Conducted in Japan, this mixed-methods, two-year comparative analysis followed 30 pairs of students (n=60) for the duration of an eight-week, summer program (2011, 2012). Each pair, one education abroad participant from a U.S. university or college and one Japanese student from the host university in Japan, shared an apartment located within walking distance to the campus. All students voluntarily participated in the *Seikatsu Share Housing Program* and all agreed to a Japanese-only language pledge for the duration of the program. To further engage students in active reflection of their experiences, a multi-phase, on-going orientation program was facilitated. All students completed a learning contract at the outset and reported on their progress throughout the program.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION:

- To what extent does student accommodation mediate changes in students’ global citizenship and thereby, social responsibility, global competence and global civic engagement, and how does change over time differ between visiting and host students?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:



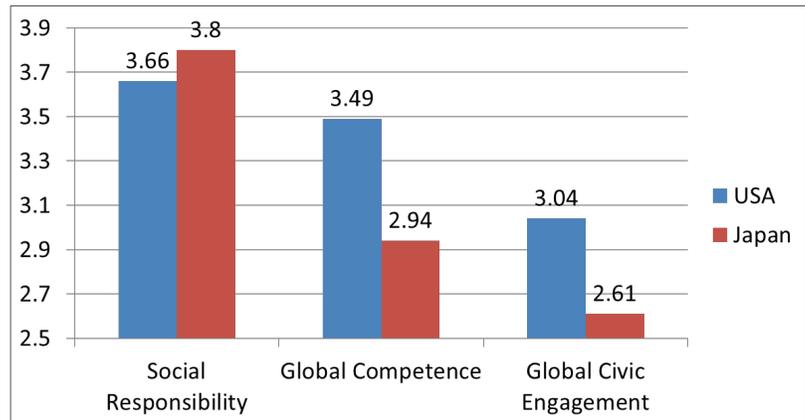
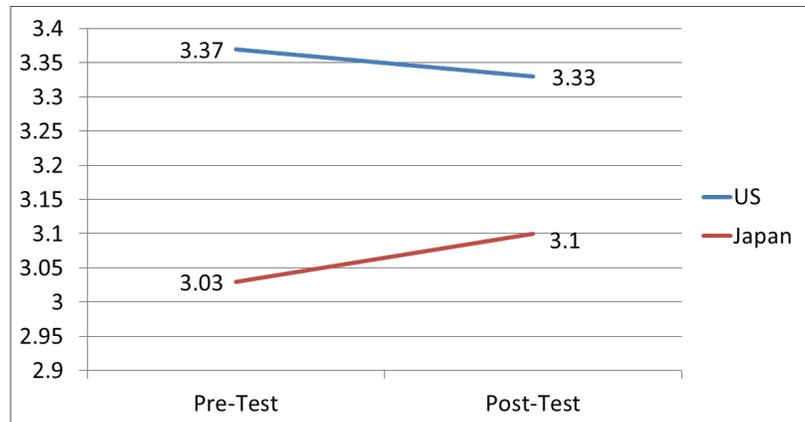
OPERATIONALIZING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP:

English and Japanese-language versions of the *Global Citizenship Scale* were utilized as a pre- and post-test measure. According to Morais and Ogden (2010), global citizenship is understood as a multi-dimensional construct that entails: *social responsibility*, *global competence* and *global civic engagement*. Within each dimension of global citizenship are sub-dimensions that add further refinement of the construct. These interrelated dimensions align well with the prominent theoretical and philosophical perspectives described in the literature, reflect how governmental entities, associations and educators have framed global citizenship, and articulate ideas that resonate with the goals of undergraduate education abroad.

- Morais, D. & Ogden, A. (2010). Initial development and validation of the global citizenship scale. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 20, 10, 1-22.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS:

- Students showed non-significant change over time in global citizenship. Students were self-selected and thus, may have started at a very high level of global citizenship.
- At the sub-dimension level, the US students showed (non-significant) gains in global competence only.
- There were significant differences in global citizenship between Japanese and US students.
- Definitions of intercultural competence and expectations differed between the two groups.
- Learning contracts differed between the two samples on language-learning vs. lifestyle oriented goals.
- Both student groups were concerned with maintaining smooth social interaction.
- Differences between students' global citizenship may be largely based on cultural norms and expectations.



FUTURE RESEARCH:

Future research in this area should consider a larger sample and the utilization of control groups that would allow comparison with those not participating in the housing program. Future research could also examine program duration (e.g., long-term vs. short-term), the utilization of other measures (e.g., IDI), and/or comparisons across similar program types in other countries/languages.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- The goals of the program were more aligned with intercultural communication than with global citizenship. So, is this example of using the wrong assessment tool?
- What do these results mean for program development and implementation?
- Simply living together may not be enough. How must we further intervene in the learning throughout the experience?
- Is global citizenship an elite, western concept?