

The Role of Faculty in the Comprehensive Internationalization of Higher Education : Perspectives from Japan and the US

— The Role of Faculty in the Internationalization of US Higher Education —

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1. Introduction

The internationalization of higher education is a prominent feature in nations and institutions around the globe. Higher education strategies, programs, curricula, and research activities include international and intercultural focus (Altbach, 2004; Huang, 2003; Kim & Choi, 2010; Knight, 2004; Mok, 2007). The most widely accepted definition—“Internationalization at the national/sector/institutional levels is the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels”—was proposed by Knight (2004, p. 21). According to Knight, internationalization of higher education occurs at home and abroad. Faculty members participate in the abroad internationalization through faculty mobility across national borders while in at-home internationalization, faculty members are central actors in the governance of the institution, teaching and learning processes, and research activities. The intersection of the abroad and at-home internationalization of higher education is often overlooked in scholarly literature. While faculty members are key actors in the institution-level internationalization process, there is limited research from the perspective of the faculty who engage in such efforts (Friesen, 2013).

This paper examines the long-term effects of faculty mobility between the US and Japan from the 1980s to the 2010s and its potential to foster knowledge and connectivity between the two nations. As universities seek to internationalize their institutions, faculty members are often at the center due to their roles in governing institutional and classroom policies. By focusing on mobility of US faculty to Japan on a select program, this study aims to examine the personal outcomes of the mobility on subsequent professional development. This study also examines such impacts through a transnational lens to explore how they are related to the host country, host region, and world. A case study approach with eight qualitative in-depth interviews was employed and found that the interview participants integrated intercultural and international

dimensions into their teaching, research, and service in their subsequent professional development at their home institutions in the US.

2. Background

The internationalization of higher education (IHE) provides a platform for formal and informal teaching, learning, research, and innovation across nations, societies, and cultures. Internationalization seeks to integrate international, intercultural, and global dimensions into higher education through two streams namely at-home and abroad (Knight, 2004). Internationalization may concentrate on the learning outcomes and benefits for the society (De Wit & Hunter, 2015). The IHE can be inward- and outward-oriented based on the spread of innovations that involve knowledge, culture, higher education models, and norms (Wu & Zha, 2018). Comprehensive internationalization, first used by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, attempts to capture the full nature of the internationalization of higher education.

Comprehensive internationalization is a **commitment**, confirmed through **action**, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional **ethos and values** and touches the **entire higher education enterprise**. It is essential that it is embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an **institutional imperative**, not just a desirable possibility. Comprehensive internationalization not only impacts all of campus life but the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. The global reconfiguration of economies, systems of trade, research, and communication, and the impact of global forces on local life, dramatically expand the need for comprehensive internationalization and the motivations and purposes driving it. (Hudzik 2011, p. 6)

The faculty's role in IHE is situated at the crossroads of its abroad pillar (faculty mobility) and at-home pillar (teaching, research, and service) (Asada, 2019a). Faculty engagement is key for developing and sustaining internationalization among the opportunities and challenges posed by the 21st century (Stohl, 2007). Indeed, the mobility of faculty over transnational borders is crucial in the wider umbrella of internationalization and is an understudied phenomenon, with its scope and nature being relatively unknown to date (Rumbley & De Wit, 2017). International faculty mobility tends to be framed in research in terms of how these academic professionals contribute to institutional prestige and world-class universities (Rhoads & Hu, 2012), international migration patterns and experiences (Groves, López & Carvalho, 2018; Hoffman, 2009; Netz & Jaksztat, 2017;

Teichler, 2017), and in the debate on brain drain, brain gain, and brain circulation (Chen, 2017). By experiencing life and work outside their home countries, faculty may accumulate international social capital, enhance research productivity, and advance careers (Bauder, 2020).

Meanwhile, faculty mobility through international faculty development programs as a part of the internationalization of institutions of higher education is less explored. Bao (2009) found that faculty participants of the Chinese Cultural Exchange Program (CCEP) contributed to the internationalization of their home campuses through their teaching (by creating new courses, adjusting teaching styles), research (by tapping new data sources for research), and service (by leading international programs and activities). Although their individual interests may align with institutional interests, former mobile faculties seeking to internationalize and change their institutions face constraints at the institutional level because of cultural resistance and resource and organizational limitations (Patrício, M. et al., 2018).

While liberal arts colleges in the US often focus on international institutional partnerships for student exchange as part of their internationalization efforts, it is worthwhile to note how internationalized faculties influence the curriculum and accordingly may have long-lasting positive impacts on the teaching and learning process at their home colleges (Brewer, 2010). Faculty mobility across national borders raises important questions about culture and teaching in higher education (Ghazarian & Youhne, 2015). Indeed, the internationalization agenda often neglects the space where students and teachers primarily experience it: teaching and learning (Luxon & Peelo, 2009).

3. Methodology

The role of faculty mobility in subsequent institutional internationalization remains inadequately explored and examined, especially regarding how these international experiences may result in knowledge creation and connection building between the host and home countries. Moreover, this study recognizes the growing importance of faculty engagement in institutional internationalization. This empirical study uses a case study approach and seeks to understand how former participants of a one-year international faculty mobility program view their international experience in subsequent professional pathways and in their understanding of and connectedness with the host country and wider world. The study was guided by two overarching research questions: 1) What are the impacts of faculty mobility on participants' subsequent professional development, as perceived by the participants themselves? and 2) How does the international experience provided by the mobility impact these subsequent binational, regional, and global behaviors?

This study draws on semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted from April 2018 to March

2019. The case study presented in this paper is a prominent international faculty mobility program between Japan and the US. The program is one of the first US-Japan educational exchange programs and was established in the early 1960s. It promotes the exchange of students and faculty between US liberal arts colleges and a large private research university in Japan. Participants of this faculty mobility program are selected from applicants of participating US liberal arts colleges. Prior knowledge of Japanese is not required. They spend one academic year at the host institution with dual roles as visiting faculty members and resident directors of the study abroad program. Duties include teaching academic coursework at the host university, providing academic and intercultural guidance for study abroad students, administrative work for the program and host institution, and conducting research. One of the cornerstones of the program is to promote connections between the US and Japan by allowing faculty members to conduct research in Japan.

Participants were recruited by eliciting volunteers through email addresses provided by the program's administrative office. Eight participants, three females and five males, were interviewed for the study. Two were Japan specialists, one was an Asian specialist, and the remaining four were non-specialists with no research background related to Japan or Asia. These participants were part of the faculty mobility program conducted between the 1980s and the 2010s. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in English by following an interview guide. The interview guide consisted of questions directed toward understanding the participants' international experiences during the faculty mobility program and how it informed and influenced subsequent professional experiences at their home institution. In particular, the questions focused on how their practices and motivations may be related to institutional internationalization.

Interviews were audio-recorded for accuracy and lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. Recordings were transcribed. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used in the multi-step data analysis. First, development resulting from faculty mobility was identified. Then, semantic relations between Japan, Asia, and the world were identified. Finally, professional outcomes were analyzed, which provided in-depth understanding of the findings revealing new themes and eliminating unsupported ones.

4. Findings

The international experience provided by the faculty mobility program encompasses their role as a faculty member at the host institution and academic society at large as well as their personal experiences in the host society. Integration into the host society provides a holistic experience that influences subsequent life experiences. In other words, the personal outcomes of

life experiences in Japan manifest in their behaviors and attitudes at their home institution. At the core of their development is the deepening of intercultural and global competencies that encourages participants to seek more knowledge and connectivity with the world outside of the US and reflect upon their role globally. The study found that the international faculty mobility experience influences their professional development as participants integrate international, global, and intercultural dimensions into their teaching, research, and service.

This study elucidated how one-year academic mobility experiences in Japan influences the US faculty participants' contribution to internationalizing their home institution by integrating new dimensions into their teaching, research, and service. This research is among a growing number of studies on the role of faculty in internationalization but uniquely includes how faculty mobility abroad potentially contributes to at-home internationalization subsequently. The findings revealed that participants' experience working and living in Japan intensified their ability of providing international experiences to both their students "at-home" (through teaching practices and internationally-oriented activities on campus) and "abroad" (through leading and advocating for study abroad programs). Furthermore, the experience of living abroad changed participants' perspectives to include diverse global views in their research and expanded their academic networks to include research in Japan. The participants' collective experiences post-mobility at their home institutions showcase that their individual actions in the classroom, through research, and in service go beyond just simply contributing to internationalization at-home but rather are actors and catalysts for comprehensive internationalization.

By large, participants felt more engaged with internationalization in their home institutions due to their faculty mobility experience. For instance, although they were not requested to integrate international dimensions into their teaching, they took the initiative to create new courses and integrate content into existing courses in hopes of exposing students to diverse understandings of the subject matter through international comparison. Additionally, their institutions and colleagues often turned to participants to lead study abroad programs and to hold directorship roles in international education offices. Meanwhile, some non-specialist participants expanded their research agendas to include Japan-related trajectories and international collaboration with Japanese researchers. However, some participants felt that their institutions did not recognize the importance of their research and subsequent internationalization. This may be due to the nature of their home institutions. Liberal arts colleges tend to prioritize teaching and service in order to provide student-centered undergraduate education and hence their research might not have been recognized for its contribution to internationalization. While their efforts to internationalize their home campuses were often welcomed with open arms, some participants faced barriers due to institutional

resistance and power structures, particularly when engaging with systematic change to create new on-campus programs and study abroad programs.

The international faculty mobility program profiled for the case study presented here is a professional development program to provide academics firsthand experience about Japan for both specialists who had knowledge about Japan and non-specialists with the hope of cultivating future supporters of Japan in the US campuses. Moreover, the one-year program was aimed at providing opportunities to conduct research. Participants' narratives clearly showcase that the program's intended outcomes are fulfilled. Moreover, there is an explicit connection between their international experience and increased connection to Japan, Asia, and the wider world in their subsequent professional pathways. Certainly, their practices and actions inside and outside the classroom demonstrate this. In the classroom, students' awareness and knowledge of the world outside of the US, especially Japan and Asia increase. Moreover, participants encourage students to actively engage themselves in understanding their role in the world, how their perspectives influence their understanding of other countries and cultures, and to challenge their assumptions and biases. Additionally, participants look for opportunities to increase understanding of the world not only through advocating study abroad program access for all students but also through planning and delivering on-campus programs through which they share their experiences about Japan. Lastly, participants seek to promote knowledge about Japan with their colleagues at home and neighbor institutions. Sharing their experiences, advocating students to study abroad, and encouraging faculty to participate in the international mobility program has the potential to induce a multiplier effect (Asada, 2019b, 2020; SRI, 2005) by encouraging students, faculty, and staff to learn and engage with the world outside of the US.

It is important to note that the culture of the liberal arts colleges may have influenced the participants' experience of engaging in internationalization practices. The small nature of the campuses meant that participants often wore many hats. They worked closely with students in classes and through mentoring. They were involved in the promotion of study abroad programs and the development of new academic programs. They were able to hold on-campus events and visit nearby institutions to hold talks about their experience in Japan. In short, they had various opportunities at all levels to promote the integration of international dimensions into the different aspects of their home and nearby institutions.

The scope of this study is limited and hence these findings are not necessarily generalizable to other institutional settings. Thus, further research is needed to understand how international faculty mobility experience may contribute to internationalization in different institutional settings. In particular, when examining participants' engagement in internationalization practices post-mobility, there is a possibility that institutional culture influences the directions of

internationalization. For instance, the institutional culture of small liberal arts colleges, where faculty often plays active roles throughout the institution, may provide more opportunities to successfully promote internationalization. In other words, an institution's expectations of the role of the faculty in their organizational culture may enhance or hinder participants' desire to integrate international dimensions into their teaching, research, and service, leading to varying degrees of internationalization.

5. Conclusion

The participants' personal outcomes of faculty international mobility contribute to the comprehensive internationalization of their home institutions through their teaching, research, and service. Participants shared how they believe that their influence on the curriculum may have long-lasting positive effects on the teaching and learning process of the home college (Brewer, 2010). However, systematic internationalization—such as promoting study abroad opportunities for all students and creating an Asian studies program with focus on multiple Asian countries—was sometimes met with cultural resistance and resource and organizational limitations (Patrício et al., 2018). When understanding international faculty mobility as a form of creating knowledge and connections between the host country and home country, the program profiled in the study does indeed serve its intended purpose to facilitate deeper knowledge of the host country for specialists and non-specialists alike. Most importantly, former mobile faculty members' subsequent contributions to the internationalization of their home institutions promote the integration of international, global, and intercultural dimensions in the many aspects of their institutions. This provides opportunities for students in their undergraduate learning journey to move beyond an insular US-centric understanding of the world to having a greater interest in and desire to contribute and connect to the outside world. For liberal arts colleges that emphasize the student learning experience, the findings are particularly salient as the “abroad” movement of faculty clearly contributes to and prompts subsequent at-home and abroad internationalization.

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