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**GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND INTERNATIONALIZATION:
PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS IN OMAN ON THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD AND HOW
TO GET THERE**

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization in higher education needs to be rooted in the realities of those it aims to affect – the students. This research therefore explored the perspectives of students in Oman on global citizenship and internationalization. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to gain an understanding of students’ perceived place in a globalized world and how they believe the university can help them prepare for this role. The final survey of 592 undergraduate students at one institution in Oman measured students’ awareness of and attitude towards globalization, their identification with global citizenship, and their preferences for internationalization initiatives. The responses showed that students overall view globalization favourably, identify as global citizens, and believe the university should prepare them to enter a globalized world and work environment. While all internationalization initiatives were considered valuable, students rated outbound mobility opportunities and English language instruction as most important.

Keywords: internationalization, global citizenship, student perspective, Oman

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization in higher education needs to be rooted in the realities of those it aims to affect – the students. This research therefore explored the perspectives of students in Oman on global citizenship and internationalization. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to gain an understanding of students' perceived place in a globalized world and how they believe the university can help them prepare for this role. The final survey of 592 undergraduate students at one institution in Oman measured students' awareness of and attitude towards globalization, their identification with global citizenship, and their preferences for internationalization initiatives. The responses showed that students overall view globalization favourably, identify as global citizens, and believe the university should prepare them to enter a globalized world and work environment. While all internationalization initiatives were considered valuable, students rated outbound mobility opportunities and English language instruction as most important.

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1. GROUNDING INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Internationalization is inescapable in higher education today, and rightfully so. It is an inevitable response to globalization. In a world where problems are not confined by national boundaries, neither should be the attempts at solutions. Like other GCC countries (Witte 2010), Oman tries to integrate the foreign influences of globalization into its local context, driven both by a “need to preserve and maintain cultural identity while moving towards a globalized world” (Al Shanfari 2016: 47) and a concern for employability of graduates and the requirements of a changing national economy. As reflected in our institutions' mission statements, our charge is to enable students to be successful in that globalized world. Yet in the pursuit of providing the best and most international education to the students entrusted to us we rarely stop to listen to their understanding of concepts like globalization, global citizenship, and internationalization. Little research has examined the student perspective in internationalization (Bourn 2010, Chui & Leung 2014), and none in the Sultanate of Oman in English. However, in order to allow our graduates to become conscious citizens, their voices need to be considered in shaping that path. In short, in order to prepare them to play their role in a globalized society, we first need to understand what they envision as their place in the world. The next question then is what students need to thrive there. Apart from the content knowledge in their disciplines, what knowledge and skill sets do students need for these positions? The question then is twofold: What do students see as their role in society and in the world, and what should a university do to prepare them for it? One part of that question does not make sense without the other – if we do not know how students position themselves in the world, we cannot ask them how we can help them get there. It makes little sense to ask students how they want to get to a destination we do not

¹ This paper is a summary of research conducted to fulfil the thesis requirement for the Master in Intercultural Communication and Education at the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Cologne, Germany.

understand. Involving students at the strategic level also makes sense from a pedagogical perspective – it gives students a sense of agency and ownership of their institutional strategy and hopefully makes them more receptive to the initiatives implemented based on their feedback.

As many critics have noted (e.g. Altbach & de Wit 2018, Altbach & Knight 2007, Caruana 2012), internationalization in higher education can easily be a means of reproducing hegemonies and heterogeneity. Anchoring institutional internationalization policy in students' goals and their local context can become a force countering top-down globalization and instead providing students and graduates with the knowledge and skills to shape their world. It provides an opportunity for what anthropologist and South Asia scholar Arjun Appadurai calls “vernacular globalization” (2010: 10): a way to mediate the top-down effect of globalization through local agency. Lingard (2000) defines vernacular globalization as something that always multi-directionally shapes and is shaped by local influences. In the context of higher education, focused investments in human capital reflect national interests in light of global competition. Even in their international orientation in times of increasing focus on internationalization, HEIs are also uniquely equipped to theoretically and practically contextualize these pressures in a local context and therefore can be powerful agents in the cultural vernacularization of globalization. Going one step further, I argue that this multi-directionality is embodied in the students who are influenced by the education they receive and the globalized world they inhabit but also—and especially upon graduation—shape the world themselves and influence the trajectory of globalization as it is adapted in their local context and as it develops worldwide. Higher education is therefore a crucial arena in the fight for the influence of and on globalization. The representation of voices from the GCC, and specifically Oman, is particularly relevant in a discourse that is deeply rooted in colonial histories and has predominantly been recorded by the Global North. Higher education internationalization practices need to be grounded in local values to ensure that they do not perpetuate old hegemonies, commodifying knowledge and homogenizing cultures, but allow for productive and self-determined outcomes. This is especially important when, as in my case, the person charged with developing the internationalization strategy does not share the cultural background of the majority of students.

This research therefore aimed to gain an understanding of perceptions of students in Oman, specifically at the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech), of global citizenship, i.e. their place in the world, and internationalization, i.e. how their institution can prepare them to be effective there. I examined students' awareness of and attitude towards globalization, as well as their own normative, existential, and aspirational identification with the concept of global citizenship. These concepts are set in relation to the students' own international backgrounds and experiences. Their predispositions are then correlated to students' preferences for higher education internationalization initiatives to understand which initiatives appeal to students with the goal of developing the foundation for a comprehensive internationalization strategy that takes into account the backgrounds of those we hope to affect.

2. METHODOLOGY

With little research on the student voice in internationalization in general and none in the region in particular, the study could not draw on pre-validated measures. Therefore, the study was designed in two phases: first a focus interview with a small sample and, based on those findings, a survey to the entire student population.

2.1 Phase I: Focus Interview

The focus interview served a dual purpose: For one, a preliminary interview of a focus group of peers ensured that wording and concepts in the survey were appropriate and understandable for the target group. This was especially important as the language of the interview and survey (English) is not the native language of most participants. The focus group interview also provided an opportunity to explore the target groups' understanding of the key concepts globalization, global citizenship, and

internationalization, and their familiarity with internationalization efforts. A group of nine students diverse in terms of gender, age, program of study, and previous international exposure was selected from self-nominated volunteers to attend the semi-structured interview. Definitions derived from the group's discussion served as the basis of developing the questions for the survey. The group interview also provided an opportunity to receive a first understanding of possible tendencies of their awareness of and attitudes towards global citizenship and internationalization efforts and potentially reveal other aspects that should be included in the survey to gain a fuller picture of the student perspective. Students' responses highlighted that their understandings of the key terminology were not necessarily aligned with common definitions and that survey questions therefore should ask for concrete application or effects of these concepts instead of relying on the definition. This required more small-scale questions.

2.2 Phase II: Survey

Based on the findings of the focus interview, the initial broad questions of what role in the world students envision for themselves and how they feel the university can prepare them for it was distilled into a survey measuring specific constructs that could then be analyzed to understand trends and correlations. While the research aimed to be exploratory and descriptive, seeking to describe the backgrounds, attitudes, and preferences of a specific student population and discover patterns in the observations, one central hypothesis could be deduced after the focus interview to guide the exploration: students' awareness of and attitude towards globalization and global citizenship, summarized in a global citizenship score (GCS), correlate positively to their preferences for internationalization initiatives at the university, captured as internationalization initiative preference (IIP). The test then aimed to assess specific constructs and sub-constructs which would be measured through individual item clusters.

International Background (IBG) captures a multidimensional survey of participants' international background and experiences. **Global Citizenship Score (GCS)** is a composite construct comprised of a participant's **awareness of globalization (GAW)**, their **attitude towards globalization (GAT)**, and their **identification with global citizenship (GCI)**. The inventory of **internationalization initiatives preferences (IIP)** is based on common categories of internationalization initiatives.

Since so far, no standardized, validated comprehensive scales for measuring global citizenship and internationalization initiative preferences existed both measures had to be described based on definitions and components of both, using mixed test construction, mostly intuitive test construction strategy, based on the literature review and responses from the focus group responses, applying a descending ladder of abstraction framework process to develop comprehensive measures of IBG, GCS, and IIP. The intuitive grouping of items into those sub-tests testing those constructs based on the focus group findings was verified through item analysis of the results of the pilot.

For GCS, the categories from Oxfam's (2015) fundamental understanding of globalization—Culture, trade, environment, politics—served as basis of constructing items to measure awareness about globalization and global citizenship. The guiding definitions of global citizenship (Dower 2003, Oxfam 2018, Schattle 2007) provided categorizations for items in regard to awareness and sense of responsibility. Some GAW and CGI items derived from the focus interview were found to be similar to items developed by Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) and adapted by Assis et al (2018) for a North American context and those employed by Chui & Leung (2014) with students in Hong Kong. The attitudes towards globalization and internationalization were based on Maringe's (2012) findings on HEI administrators' attitudes towards the concepts. The resulting long survey of 89 questions for Omani students and 90 for students of other nationalities was reduced to 56 questions for Omani and 57 for non-Omani students through item analysis after pilot testing. The self-administered, anonymous survey was sent to all currently enrolled students.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Phase I: Focus Interview

While the focus interview was primarily used to construct the survey, it also provided an opportunity for spotlight insight into some students' experiences and perceptions. The students described GUtech as a very international environment with multicultural instructors. They also highlighted the importance of languages in interaction, questioning how important English abilities are in the education process and whether more Arabic should be taught. Students expressed desire for a course to learn about global issues and inclusion of examples from other countries in relation to their career and field. Participants recounted some examples of international content in their classes, with many examples coming from the US and international research being the norm. Asked about their graduation readiness, students cited awareness of entering a diverse workforce, English abilities, and open-minded attitude as important. Students prioritized three aspects of internationalization as most important at any university: the need for a diverse student body, study abroad opportunities, and internationalization. They highlighted the international faculty and teaching assistants and the coeducational environmental as successful initiatives while criticizing the lack of international students, opportunities for exchange and outward mobility, and inclusivity on campus.

3.2 Phase II: Survey

Of the 2186 invited students, 592 responded to all statistically relevant questions, achieving a 27% completion rate. Participants' distribution as compared to known distribution among the student population at the time of research showed that the sample is overall representative with a slight over-representation of non-Omani students and an expected self-selection bias.

3.2.1 International Background (IBG)

The population is overall multilingual, with most students (83%) evaluated their English abilities as intermediate or high-intermediate and a slight majority (52%) speaking three or more languages fluently. Previous travel experience was balanced, between those who never travelled outside of the GCC region (19%) similar to those who travelled outside more than 10 times (17%) and the largest fraction having travelled 2-4 times (30%). While most participants have never lived outside Oman, over 40% have. Of those who have, the majority lived abroad for less than one year, but still a sizable number of students lived in other countries for several years and thus had the opportunity for prolonged international experience. Most students (67%) have at least some close family members living outside Oman.

In the educational setting, the majority of students also report international exposure, with 67% of Omani students and 83% of non-Omani students reporting having courses with non-Omani students. 56% of Omani students and 95% of non-Omani students report being friends with members of the other group, showing that almost half of Omani students do not have any non-Omani friends. Students also report that instructors use international examples in the classroom (75%) but only 16% of students have participated in a university organized excursion outside the country, indicating an imbalance in exposure to internationalization "at home" and "abroad". The average IBG score was 10.5. Non-Omani respondents displayed a much higher IBG score average of 15 compared to Omani respondents with an average of 10.

3.2.2 Globalization Awareness (GAW)

Student awareness of globalization was measured by addressing issues around environment, global trade, media consumption, migration, politics, and economy. While the vast majority of students (85%) recognize the global scope of environmental issues, much fewer (44%) recognize that global trade means that individual consumer behavior has consequences in other countries involved in production and distribution of goods. Consumer behavior consequences are the most controversial aspect of globalization awareness to these students. While an overwhelming majority of students surveyed (92%) recognize that their media consumption is global, a less overwhelming majority (77%) believes that this affects their world view. This suggests that while global media consumption is widely recognized and accepted, there

is less consensus on the effect of international media. The vast majority of respondents (87%) expect that they will likely enter a diverse workforce upon graduation. Students are also overwhelmingly (67%) aware of the global nature of politics, though the high rate of abstention on this question (15%) indicated that many respondents could not answer or were not comfortable answering this question. With the example of the Omani economy, students were divided on the topic of economic interdependence. The highest rate of abstention to any question in this sub-construct also indicated that the question was not easily answerable or uncomfortable to some respondents. The average and most common GAW score for this sample was 14. Non-Omani respondents again averaged higher at a GAW score of 16 while Omani students averaged 14.

3.2.3 Globalization Attitude (GAT)

Attitude towards globalization was measured in seven questions spanning their perceived effects of globalization, importance given to political and cultural awareness, the value of multilingualism, and preparedness for working in a diverse environment. In contrast to the first sub-construct GAW, GAT only measured opinions. Students overwhelmingly believed that globalization helps their country (83%) while 16% simultaneously acknowledge harmful effects. Although they had the option to recognize both benefits and negative consequences of globalization, most students see globalization as mostly beneficial to their country and to people around the world (83%) regardless of how the question was phrased. The vast majority of students value political (91%) and cultural (96%) awareness and multilingualism (93%). Respondents even more enthusiastically evaluated preparedness for entering a diverse workforce upon graduation (96%). Overall, with 16 as average and most common GAT score, the measure suggests that respondents' attitudes towards globalization surpass their awareness of it.

3.2.4 Global Citizenship Identification (GCI)

Global Citizenship Identification captures to what extent students identify with global citizenship, i.e. would choose an international environment in the future, are curious about global issues, and are comfortable with linguistic diversity. Over half of students consider themselves a global citizen (71%) and the vast majority (92%) would prefer to work in an international environment. Respondents noted their curiosity for global issues even more enthusiastically (96%). However, a slight majority (54%) also feels uncomfortable with linguistic diversity. The next item set examines students' awareness of their personal effect on, their sense of agency about affecting, and their sense of responsibility to affect the environment—not only in an ecological but in a general sense.

Most students recognized that their actions affect their country (32%) and fewest limited their perceived effect on their neighborhood (14%). Almost a quarter of students responded that their actions at most affect “nothing”, painting an either careless or nihilistic picture of their effect on the environment. Students' sense of active agency was slightly more pronounced, with only 11% of respondents stating that they can change “nothing” and the largest fraction (37%) believing that they can change their country. The difference between the students' perceived passive effect and ability to actively change could indicate that some students are less aware of their effect on the environment than they feel able to control it. Interestingly, students feel more of a sense of responsibility for their environment than agency over it. Considering the high percentage of self-identified global citizens, the comparatively low percentage of students who feel they affect, can change, or feel responsible for the world is surprising. With “my country” as the most common response in all three questions, a national rather than local or global focus emerges.

Overall, the average GCI score was 14, lower than both awareness of (GAW mean 14) and attitude towards (GAT mean 16) globalization. This could indicate that students feel generally positive about globalization but do not identify as global citizens with a sense of agency in and responsibility for the world to the same extent. Merging the sub-constructs Globalization Awareness (GAW), Globalization Attitude (GAT) and Global Citizen Identification (GCI) creates the overall Global Citizenship Score

(GCS) with a maximum score of 63 and an average GCS is 44. Non-Omani students have a higher average GCS of 47 compared to Omani students GCS of 44.

3.2.5 Internationalization Initiative Preference (IIP)

Overall, participants value internationalization strongly. Out of a possible IIP score of 45, the average is 34. Non-Omani respondents score significantly higher in this category, with an average of 37 in comparison to the Omani average of 34. The vast majority (93%) agree that “making the university more international is necessary to help students prepare for a globalized world” and have an overall very positive attitude towards internationalization initiatives. While this comparison was not completely balanced due to different numbers of times and the exclusion of negative framed items, clustering individual items by aspect provides a rating of students’ preferences of internationalization initiatives:

Table 5. Internationalization Preferences by Aspect

		IIP_A Intl. Faculty	IIP_B English language Instruction	IIP_C Intl. & exchange students on campus	IIP_D Outbound mobility opportunities	IIP_E Intl. collaboration	IIP_F Curriculum internationalization
N	Valid	571	581	542	572	529	562
	Missing	21	11	50	20	63	30
Mean		2,4588	2,6093	2,2362	2,6958	2,5167	2,4279
Mode		3,00	3,00	2,00	3,00	3,00	2,50

It indicates that students especially value opportunities for outbound mobility and feel most ambivalent—although still overwhelmingly positive—about cultural diversity of the student body. Overall, the majority of students (70%) feel confident about their knowledge and skills required to be successful in an international environment. However, students were more hesitant to answer on the extreme ends of the scales indicating a relative insecurity about their readiness is in contrast to their strong conviction that they need it, indicating that the university needs to do more to make its students confident about their preparedness to enter an international environment upon graduation.

3.2.6 Relationships Between Constructs

The students’ international background was related to the overall concept global citizenship, measured in the GCS, and to their internationalization preferences, IIP, showing significant positive correlation between all three concepts, with an r correlation of over 300 and a p value of 0,000 in each correlation and the strongest correlation between GCS and IIE ($r = .581$), thereby proving the underlying hypothesis.

Multiple regression could only prove moderately relevant as a model to explain and predict which factors most affect students’ internationalization preferences. Students’ international background (IBG) and perception of global citizenship statistically significantly predicted their preference for internationalization. Students’ perception of global citizenship was found to be a stronger predictor of their internationalization preferences than their international background. Further multiple regression analysis then statistically significantly predicted students internationalization preferences based on their awareness of and attitude towards globalization and self-identification as global citizens IIP, with students’ attitude towards globalization as the strongest predictor for their preference for internationalization (GAT $\beta = .444$) compared to their awareness of globalization (GAW $\beta = .194$) and their identification with global citizenship (GCI $\beta = .151$). The data therefore overall suggests that students’

attitude towards global citizenship is the strongest predictor for how important they find internationalization initiatives at their institution.

3.2.7 Differences Between Subgroups

Gender: There was a significant difference between male and female students in regard to their IBG and their GAW but not in their GAT, their GCI, their overall GCS or their IIP. Male students had more international experiences (IBG) (11.94 ± 3.20) than female students (10.17 ± 3.44). Male students also overall were more aware of globalization (GAW) (14.14 ± 2.38) than female students (13.87 ± 2.39).

Nationality: Except in their attitude towards globalization, Omani and non-Omani students differed significantly. Not surprisingly, Omani students (10.20 ± 3.36), had less international experiences (IBG) than non-Omani students (15.07 ± 3.04). Many of the non-Omani students travelled extensively (54,8% more than 4 times) and most lived in another country for at least a year (66,6%). Non-Omani students (15.63 ± 2.77) also tend to be more aware of globalization (GAW) than their Omani colleagues (13.88 ± 2.4). This difference, however, does not extend to their attitude towards globalization (GAT) in a statistically significant way. The difference in identification with global citizenship (GCI) between the two populations is minute. Overall, however, Omani students (43.51 ± 5.62) reach a lower global citizenship score (GCS) than students from other nationalities (46.88 ± 6.25). Lastly, international and expatriate students (37.37 ± 4.64) had stronger preferences for internationalization (IIP) than their Omani classmates (34.07 ± 5.26).

Level and program of study: A One-Way ANOVA analysis showed that there is statistically significant difference between different levels of study for IBG, GAW, and GCS but not for GAT, GCI, and IIP, most considerably between foundation and academic students. This difference can partially be explained by age and partially by the make-up of the student body, as students enter the foundation program typically directly after local secondary schools, while those entering directly into the Bachelor program often studied at international and bilingual schools and could be expected to have had more international experience during their school time than those from Omani public schools. Foundation students also are not eligible for GUtech excursions, eliminating another opportunity for international experience. Overall, there is very little significant difference between students in different programs of study.

Travel outside GCC Area and living outside Oman: ANOVA showed significant difference for all constructs except GAT between those who had travelled outside the GCC and those who did not. ANOVA also showed significant difference between students with experience living abroad in regard to all constructs except GAT.

3.2.8 Open answer analysis

Responses to the two open-ended questions at the end were inductively coded and revealed that students cite certain influences on their perception of globalization and internationalization: almost a third of respondents (n=55) referenced experiences related to education or the university, underscoring the role of the university in providing international experiences as part of the education. Only a few students (n=13) cited educational experiences abroad as influential, highlighting that internationalization initiatives that take students abroad do not reach as many students. Other rather obvious factors influencing students' opinions of internationalization and globalization are travel experiences (n=20) and meeting or making friends with people from other countries (n=39). A significant number of students (n=23) cited living abroad as influencing their opinion, while only a few (n=3) referenced their own or their family's international background. Cultural events (n=29) also were significant. Some students (n=7) also mentioned social media as important influence. The last emerging topic was politics. Several respondents (n=4) cited terrorist attacks in general and two explicitly mentioned the attack on Muslim worshippers in New Zealand in March 2019. Others referred to the Arab Spring movement and Donald Trump's

presidency as events that affected their opinions on globalization. Some (n=22) introduced other influences such as family employment, personal health problems, religion, media consumption, life in a multicultural society, learning languages, own migration plans, and Omanization and nationalization tendencies. All responses were also coded for the overall tendency, with the vast majority (n=293) being neutral in tone, 61 were overall positive, only 3 completely negative, and 21 writing more nuanced opinions and shifting attitudes of globalization and internationalization, often referencing both negative and positive consequences.

Few students (n=29) used the final open answer question to comment on how important globalization and internationalization are for them. 15 students seized the opportunity to explicitly request more internationalization initiatives at the university, especially opportunity for travel abroad and increasing student diversity. Others used the last question to comment on the negative consequences of globalization (n=10) and highlighted a preference for a more national focus (n=5).

4. DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

4.1 Discussion

When examining what the students need and want, it is important to be aware that despite the homogeneity of the population—the vast majority of students being Omani and female—the student body is highly diverse in some relevant respects. It is a multilingual group of students with a majority having familial ties to other countries. This diversity could serve as a good avenue of engagement, for example by connecting students' family background and traditions with discussions about global migration and trade. The students' multilingual backgrounds also could be leveraged to motivate further language learning in the academic context.

The survey also yielded valuable insights into the students' awareness of, attitude towards, and identification with globalization and global citizenship. While some aspects of globalization like environmental issues, international media consumption, future employment in an international environment, and general politics were mostly agreed upon, consumer behavior consequences and the economic dependence of Oman were quite controversial. Any programming to raise awareness of the effects of globalization will need to take these sensitivities into account. Most striking was the students' overall very favorable view of globalization, both for Oman and the world. In stark contrast to Maringe's (2012) survey of HEI administrators in the MENA region, students were mostly much less critical and more enthusiastic about globalization. In contrast to trends in other parts of the world, as summarized by Altbach and de Wit (2018), students explicitly value multilingualism, political awareness, and cultural understanding. They also expressed a strong desire for preparation for entering a diverse workforce. This contrasts Chui and Leung's (2014) observation of students' strong preference for working with people from a similar cultural background. Most students consider themselves global citizens, are curious about international issues, and want to work in an international environment. This is fertile ground for any internationalization initiative. There were, however, some discrepancies that may challenge or at least need to be addressed in these initiatives. For one, students scored lower in GCI than in GAW and GAT, hinting at a dissonance between awareness, attitude, and self-identification. Also, students' discomfort with linguistic diversity runs counter to some of their other beliefs. Comparisons of students' awareness of their effect on, sense of agency over, and sense of responsibility for their environment revealed a discrepancy. Despite considering themselves global citizens, most students here showed a distinctly national rather than local or global focus. This could be an indication that students' self-identified normative, existential, and aspirational attitudes towards global citizenship (Bourne 2010) may not align with their actual attitudes.

The study also confirms and deepens the mandate for international education: Students explicitly recognize the university's role in preparing them for a globalized world. They are overall in favor of all internationalization initiatives discussed, but some preferences emerge. Students place special importance on outbound mobility opportunities and are least enthusiastic about a diverse student body. The students' emphasis on outward mobility opportunities contrasts with that of MENA HEI administrators, who placed most importance on curriculum inter-nationalization and collaborative partnerships (Maringe 2012). However, both seemed to value international student recruitment and a resulting diverse student body least, although this contrasts with individual voices in the focus interview and the open-ended questions. Most students also strongly value international affiliation and collaboration of the institution, though what this means for students in practice requires further investigation. Internationalizing the curriculum and culturally appropriate teaching is also important to most students. Responses also revealed some counter-currents: Students mostly highly appreciate international faculty but many also would like to have more Omani instructors. Most students believe that studying in English helps them prepare for life after graduation, though many simultaneously think that their learning would improve if they could study in their native language. Overall, most students are strongly in favor of internationalization. Students overall feel they have both the knowledge and skills to be successful in an international environment, though with less confidence than they have demonstrated in other questions. This tentatively supports my expectation that the university should increase its internationalization initiatives to more actively prepare students for a globalized world.

The study showed that there was a significant positive correlation between students' IBG, their GCS, and their IIP, though the correlation was strongest between GCS and IIP. Among the different aspects of GCS, the students' attitude towards globalization (GAT) was a stronger predictor for IIP than their awareness (GAW) or identification (GCI). This is relevant for two reasons: for one, it confirms that internationalization initiatives are most appealing to students who already have a positive attitude towards globalization. As Jones & Caruana (2010) posit, the prerequisites for successful and meaningful impact of internationalization strategies in higher education seem to be the very mindset and skills international educators seek to impart. This confirms that developing internationalization initiatives without considering the needs and opinions of those we want to reach and educate is less likely to be effective. However, this finding also provides an avenue for potentially reaching more students with internationalization initiatives as attitudes can more easily be isolated, examined, and potentially influenced than awareness or identification.

4.2 Recommendations for Praxis

Some lessons can be drawn from these findings for the development of an actual internationalization strategy at the university. Most importantly, the findings fortify the mandate for providing an international education to the students. Most students consider themselves global citizens, are curious about international issues, and want to work in an international environment after graduation, so all internationalization initiatives should be expanded, but especially outward mobility opportunities. While funding for such initiatives is a real concern, the study's findings provide an argument for investing more resources into the provision of more short- and long-term opportunities for students to study abroad. Currently outward mobility opportunities are limited, especially for certain programs of study. However, the study has shown that students in all programs are equally enthusiastic about international education experience. A new study abroad policy should include an aspect of self-reflection, to increase the effect of international education. Two short surveys before and after students participate in excursions could provide ongoing insight into the effects of study abroad opportunities.

However, it is important to also listen closely to students' priorities and caveats. As became evident, students root their sense of agency and responsibility more in the national than in the local or global, so the internationalization strategy should not prioritize international experience at the expense of a concern for national issues. While students appreciate their international faculty, the majority also wished for more

Omani instructors. Several students also raised concerns about the negative effects of globalization in the open-ended questions. The discrepancy between GAW and GAT should be addressed through continuous opportunities to discuss globalization and other global issues. This could take place in regular discussion rounds on certain topics, which could also serve as opportunities for integration between Omani and non-Omani students.

4.3 Topics for further examination

This study can only offer a fraction of insight in a complex understanding of how students envision their place in the world and how HEIs can help them get there. For this population, a more in-depth examination could provide an understanding of students' perception of globalization and its effects, from the everyday like hearing more foreign languages to complex issues like global supply chains and international diplomacy. A closer investigation of students' interactions with and opinions of international and exchange students could also provide insight into the kind of engagement and its effects on participants on both sides. It would be worth examining whether participants in certain internationalization initiatives score in similar ways, thus demonstrating that the preferences translate into behavior. A more in-depth examination of students' sense of preparedness to enter a globalized world might provide more insight into what kinds of knowledge and skills students believe they need. Apart from the questions left unanswered and new ones raised in the course of the study for this population, surveying students at other institutions in Oman, in the GCC, and other regions would be valuable for comparison. Surveying graduates shortly after and a few years after they leave the university might also reveal important shifts of opinions as they transition from a more theoretical to a literal positioning in the world.

4.4 Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the study have confirmed my conviction for listening to the students' we aim to educate when developing strategies that affect them. A central mandate of the university is to prepare students to be successful graduates, and the majority of these students see themselves as global citizens entering an international environment upon graduation. The preparation thus must include international education. Students with a more international background, with higher awareness of globalization, higher identification with the concept of global citizenship, but especially more positive attitude towards globalization proved to also value internationalization initiatives more. Students' interest in global issues drives their interest in internationalization initiatives. Listening to these students' plans for the future, their understanding of the world, and their priorities in educational experiences ensures that internationalization is not understood as a top-down process dictating a globalization agenda but an opportunity for students to shape how globalization affects their local and national environment and in the long term for them to affect the course of globalization.

5. REFERENCES

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