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Contributions of Organizational Culture to University Internationalization

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ABSTRACT

Responding to an increasingly globalized world, universities are training students to function in a multicultural environment through internationalization. Institutional culture can influence policies and practices for internationalization. Research in internationalization indicate that majority of the studies on the contributions of organizational cultures to internationalization across universities focused on the perspectives of faculty and university senior level administrative personnel and neglected the views of students. This qualitative case study explored students' understanding of how organizational culture contributes to promote internationalization using international events that occur at two U.S universities. Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. Purposeful and snowball sampling were employed to select domestic and international undergraduate and graduate students for the study. Findings indicate that integration into university family, community relationship, buffering, communication, symbols, and shared values and beliefs cultures are critical to promote higher education internationalization.

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of globalization and internationalization among nations suggests that institutions of higher education modify educational practices to incorporate international dimensions into teaching, research, and service functions through internationalization (Knight, 2008).^[27] Qiang (2003)^[41] posits that globalization requires that institutions of higher education provide students with increased international knowledge and intercultural skills needed to succeed in a world which is increasingly becoming interconnected. Deardorff (2006)^[17] argued that students today need to develop skills to interact in inter-

cultural settings effectively and appropriately, "increase their cultural awareness and demonstrate an understanding of the worldviews of others" (p. 247). Institutions of higher education ability to train students to develop such intercultural knowledge and competency is the result of internationalization (Deardorff, 2006).^[17] Knight (2003)^[29] maintains that internationalization is a process of integrating international, intercultural, or global dimensions into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 6). As part of internationalization process, some institutions have developed a campus culture and climate that values and supports intercultural perspectives and initiatives (Qiang, 2003).^[41] Institutions' culture is

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critical to how institutions respond to external and internal influences to internationalize (Green, 2012).^[20] Tierney (1988)^[50] suggests that an organization's culture reflect what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it. An organization's culture is concerned with decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and symbolic level" (p. 3). Therefore, decisions, actions, and communication on instrumental and symbolic levels have the potential to foster or impede the processes of internationalization throughout an institution. Consequently, Knight (1994)^[30] maintains that how far an institution moves in the process of internationalization depends on the institutional culture. Therefore, "developing a culture in the university that values and supports internationalization initiative is key to successful internationalization" (Knight, 1994, p. 4).^[30] For institutions to offer international and intercultural knowledge training to students, there must be a driving force that can help carry out internationalization initiatives (Green, 2012).^[20] One of such driving forces is the institutions' culture (Braskamp, Trautvetter, & Ward, 2006).^[9] Consequently, there is the need for a culture that creates enabling conditions on campus for students to learn and interact with people from diverse cultural background (Alanko, Dalton & Sullivan, 2009;^[15] Chickering & Braskamp, 2009).^[13] Experiences of students in relation to their engagement with university strategies, the nature of their learning experience, and their perceived value of intercultural or international immersion experiences could contribute to perspectives on culture and internationalization (Agnew, 2012),^[1] however, the perspectives of students have been ignored in studies relating to university culture and internationalization (Nussbaumer, 2013).^[39] Given the need to create a culture that foster internationalization on campus to enhance students' international and intercultural knowledge, awareness, this study seeks to explore students' understanding of how institutions' culture contributes to promote internationalization. Whilst there are some studies on organizational culture and internationalization (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009;^[2] Agnew, 2012;^[1] Bartell, 2003;^[5] Green, 2012;^[20] Nussbaumer, 2013;^[39] Xuan, 2018),^[53] these studies did not explore students' view on internationalization, specifically students' understanding of how institutions' culture contributes to promote internationalization. Thus, there is currently no study that explored students' understanding of how institutions' culture contributes to promote internationalization in the U.S. context. Hence, this study seeks to answer the following research question: what are students' understanding of how organizational culture contributes to promote higher education internationalization? Findings from this study will help senior management at

institutions of higher education to consolidate actions and decisions that foster internationalization to enrich students' international knowledge and awareness.

2. Literature Review

Bartell (2003)^[5] views university culture as values and beliefs held by individuals such as: administrators, faculty, students, board members, and support staff working at the institution. These values and beliefs develop overtime and are transmitted orally, in writings, or through symbols (Bartell, 2003;^[5] Becher & Towler, 2001;^[6] Schein, 2010).^[44] Researchers agree that institutions' staff have certain values that inform their decisions about how to carry out their duties (Agnew, 2012;^[1] Silver, 2003).^[46] These values and beliefs are very powerful and can positively or negatively impact institutions' internationalization processes (Bartell, 2003).^[5] Thus, Qiang (2003)^[41] observed that some institutions have created a campus culture that appreciates international dimensions and initiatives. Green (2012)^[20] opines that institutions' culture help shape their response to external and internal influences to internationalize. According to Tierney (1988)^[50] institution's culture is seen in decisions taken, how the decisions are implemented, as well as the people involved in implementation. Therefore, several researchers concur that university culture can promote or impede internationalization (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009;^[2] Agnew, 2012;^[1] Bartell, 2003;^[5] Green, 2012;^[20] Nussbaumer, 2013).^[39] Bartell (2003)^[5] posits that for university internationalization to thrive, universities need "strong and outward oriented culture" (p. 65). Agnew and VanBalkom (2009)^[2] examined the cultural readiness for internationalization at the micro, meso, and macro levels at two U.S. institutions using the Cultural Readiness for Internationalization (CRI) from the perspective of 54 university staff made up of chancellors, vice chancellors, provosts, deans, and executive directors of centers for internationalization. The authors reported that weak and internally oriented culture evident from "a lack of financial disposition for students to fund international experiences outside the U.S. and mismatch between cultural values, structural arrangement, and strategic plans" (p. 459) impeded internationalization, whereas strong and externally oriented culture promoted internationalization. Also, Burnett and Huisman (2009)^[10] assessed how organizational culture influenced four Canadian universities' response to internationalization and found that collegial and enterprising cultures promoted internationalization. Similarly, Agnew (2012)^[1] explored "how the interplay between university culture and ideologies support or impede internationalization" (p. 477) using Stier's (2004)^[48] ideology framework—idealism,

instrumentalism, and educationalism” (pp. 3-5). Agnew (2012)^[1] reported that strategic planning cultural practice is pivotal to institutions’ readiness for internationalization. Xuan (2018)^[53] adopted Davies’ (2001)^[16] model of means and styles of development of entrepreneurial cultures to explore the influence of institutional culture on internationalization at MUIC using international events that happen at MUIC. Xuan (2018)^[53] found that international events that occur at MUIC are teaching and learning in English, foreign exchange program, engagement in MOUs with educational institutions within and outside Thailand, international accreditations, presence of foreign faculty, value for international academic ranking, maintains administrative and curricular policies consistent with international standards, provides financial support for faculty to participate in international conferences and research, and recruitment of international students. However, the study revealed that whilst all classes are taught in English, some of the after-school student activities are still communicated in Thai which discouraged smooth interaction between international students and domestic students. Moreover, the study revealed that some operations and implementations are not systematic-driven but rather ad hoc-driven. Consequently Xuan (2018)^[53] concluded that MUIC is dominated by a pre-entrepreneurial culture, considering that MUIC internationalization processes fall within quadrant C in Davies’ (2001)^[16] means and style of development of entrepreneurial culture. Indeed, whilst there is substantial studies on institutional culture and internationalization, much of the studies have focused on the views and perspectives of institutions’ senior level administrators in Canada, U.S, and Southeast Asia (Agnew, 2012,^[1] Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009;^[2] Bartell, 2003,^[5] Nussbaumer, 2013,^[39] Xuan, 2018),^[53] however, no studies have explored students understanding of how organizational culture contributes to internationalization using international events that take place on campuses of higher education. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap in literature by exploring students’ understanding of how organizational culture contributes to internationalization using international events that occur at two U.S institutions of higher education.

3. Theoretical Framework

Schein’s (2010)^[44] organizational culture and leadership framework was adopted to explore students’ understanding of how organizational culture contributes to promote internationalization using international events that occur at two U.S institutions of higher education. According to Schein (2010)^[44] culture is “a set of basic tacit assumptions about how the world is, and ought to be, that

a group of people share and that determines their perceptions, thoughts, feelings and to some degree their overt behavior” (p. 11). Schein (2010)^[44] posits that to understand the culture of a group of people or an organization, it is important to distinguish three fundamental levels at which culture manifests itself: “(a) observable artifacts, (b) espoused beliefs and values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions” (p. 24).

Schein (2010)^[44] argued that artifacts are made up of concrete and tangible components within an organization. To understand the culture of an organization, the observable and concrete elements of an organization such as—“physical and social environment, technological output, written and spoken language, artistic production, overt behaviors, and rites” (Schein, 2010, p. 24)^[44] need to be explored. However, Schein (2010)^[44] argues that, solely focusing on artifacts of the organization to interpret the culture might be inadequate. Consequently, Schein (2010)^[44] posits that researchers should use open-ended interviews and documents to understand the meanings organizations attach to artifacts. The second level of organizational culture is espoused values and beliefs (Schein, 2010).^[44] Espoused values are the strategies, goals, and philosophies that organizations hold in high esteem. Schein (2010)^[44] suggests that to understand the espoused beliefs and values of organizations, researchers must: distinguish between assumptions that guide performance, philosophy of the organization, and aspirations for future. Espoused beliefs and values often leave large areas of behavior unexplained, taking for granted that members of an organization understand the culture within an organization.

However, organizations’ espoused values and beliefs appear to be theoretical, and they can contradict practice, posing a challenge for outsiders to understand the culture of an organization (Schein, 2010).^[44] Consequently, for outsiders to understand, interpret patterns, and predict future behavior of organizations, Schein (2010)^[44] posits that researchers should explore deeper levels of culture which are the actions taken by a group of people to produce a desired outcome (Schein, 2010).^[44] Repeated actions carried out and taken for granted by members of an organization become the “basic underlying assumptions” (Schein, 2010, p. 24).^[44] According to Schein (2010)^[44] seven basic assumptions underpin organizational culture:

- (1) the organization’s relationship with the environment;
- (2) the nature of human activity;
- (3) the nature of reality and truth—how is truth defined in the organization and how truth is physically and socially determined;
- (4) The nature of time—what is the organization’s basic orientation in terms of the past, present, and the future and

what kinds of time units are most relevant for work? (5) Human nature; (6) The nature of human relationship—what is the correct way for people to relate to each other? (7) Homogeneity versus diversity (p. 86). In summary, Schein (2010)^[44] categorized organizational culture into three different levels namely: artifacts, espoused values, and beliefs as well as shared basic underlying assumptions. Schein (2010)^[44] maintains that first, artifacts are the visible elements of an organization. Second, espoused values are the organization's declared set of values and norms that make the organization unique from other organizations. Third, shared basic assumptions are the bedrock of the organizational culture.

3.1 Methodology

The following methodology was followed to answer the research question: what are students' understanding of how organizational culture contributes to promote internationalization of institutions of higher education? Qualitative case study design was adopted to explore students' understanding of how organizational culture contributes to promote internationalization at two U.S. universities. Qualitative methodology is holistic and context sensitive (Patton, 2002),^[40] allowing in-depth study and comparison within and across three specific areas (Glesne, 2011;^[19] Patton, 2002;^[40] Yin, 2014).^[54]

3.2 Site of Study

The study was conducted at two U.S. institutions. Both institutions shared certain similarities namely: mid-sized, accredited public research institutions, enrolled international and domestic students, and faculty, and had international students and faculty offices. However, there were differences. The overall student population at MWU was 38, 857, with international students' population of 1, 859, whilst, ECU had a total student population of 29,114, with international student population of 1300.

ECU won the Senator Paul Simon and Andrew Heiskell awards for comprehensive campus internationalization and innovation (Childress, 2010).^[12] ECU is a predominantly black campus, whereas MWU is mainly a white university.

3.3 Sampling and Sampling Technique

Purposeful and snowball sampling strategies were employed to identify eight students from each of the institutions. Students were sampled based on the following criteria— (1) domestic junior and senior undergraduates and graduate students, and international junior and senior undergraduate and graduate students. To identify inter-

national students at MWU for the study, the researchers attended international students' events. We introduced ourselves, explained the purpose and nature of the research and asked students for voluntary participation. Students who were interested exchanged their email addresses with us. The first author contacted interested students to find a convenient time, day, and venue for interview. Also, the first author requested a mailing list of domestic students from the registrar's office. Upon receiving the mailing list, an Excel spread sheet was used to sort through the email addresses based on the sampling criteria. Emails were sent to recruit participants. Purposeful sampling and snowball sampling strategies were adopted to recruit domestic and international students at ECU. The first author was granted permission to go to the Global Village and talk to students about the research and seek for voluntary participation. After purposefully identifying one student who agreed to participate in the study, the first author asked the students who first volunteered to participate in the study to help identify other students who might be interested in the study (Creswell, 2014;^[14] Johnson & Christensen, 2008).^[25]

3.4 Data Collection

The researchers received ethics approval from the Institutional Review Boards of both institutions before commencing data collection. Students' consent was sought for the interviews to be recorded with an audio recorder. Participants were assured that their confidentiality will not be compromised because, pseudonyms will be assigned to each of them. Also, the information provided will be used for academic purposes only. Consequently, data were collected via face-to-face semi-structured interviews, guided with an interview protocol which elicited data ranging from demographics, educational background, and international events and decisions that took place at both research sites. In addition, documents on internationalization events such study abroad flyers, *Year of* flyers, International Students events, and institutional website searches were explored to gather data.

3.5 Credibility Measures

Interviews, documents, and website searches were triangulated to ensure credibility as well as provide objectivity to the study. In addition, copies of transcripts were emailed to respondents for member checking (Creswell, 2014).^[14] The purpose for adopting member checking was to allow respondents to clarify some of the views shared during the interview and ask follow-up questions for more insight into students' understanding of how institutional culture contributed to internationalization (Creswell,

2014,^[14] Merriam, 2009;^[37] Patton, 2002).^[40]

3.6 Data Analysis

Constant comparative method was used to analyze all sixteen transcribed interviews (Johnson & Christensen, 2008,^[25] Kvale, 2009;^[31] Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).^[36] Audio recorded interviews were transcribed. Data were reviewed several times and a master coding list was developed, a process known as “initial coding” (Saldana, 2012, pp.100-101).^[43] Interview transcripts were further read, internationalization related documents and institutions’ websites were reviewed several times and more descriptions were added to initial codes. Next, relevant quotes were extracted from transcripts to support the codes. Afterwards, responses were categorized into themes, a process known as “axial coding” (Saldana, 2012, p. 209).^[43] Next, conceptually clustered matrix (Miles et al, 2014) was adopted for cross-case analysis. Six cell entries were identified— “themes, quotes, names, differences, similarities, and short narratives” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 175).^[36] Results that emanated from the cross-case analysis were compared to the theoretical framework and relevant previous literature to highlight consistent and contradictory views.

3.7 Positionality

The first author conducted all the interviews and as an international student, she was considered an insider and the insider perspective enhanced a better understanding of the perspective of the participants (Sprague, 2005).^[47] Also, as an international student, she easily struck rapport with the participants that made participants comfortable to share their understanding on how institutional culture contributes to promote internationalization (Mann & Stewart, 2000).^[34]

3.8 Findings

The study explored students’ understanding of how organizational culture contributes to promote higher education internationalization through events that occurred at two U.S higher education institutions. Research question that guided this case study was: what are students’ understanding of how organizational culture contribute to promote internationalization? Findings showed that organizational cultural practices such as integration into university family which included support provided to students. Both universities provided health, financial, academic, immigration, housing support to international students as a way of integrating international students into the university family. Additionally, presence of institutions’ leadership

personnel made appearances at international student gatherings as a way of supporting international students. Also, both institutions had a culture of communication where information about internationalization were communicated through emails, newsletters, flyers, banners, word of mouth, institutions’ homepages, electronic bulletins, and social media such as Facebook and twitter. In addition, community relationship culture was evident in the existence of partnership between both institution and other institutions across the world. Further, buffering culture described both institutions, as internal resources were harnessed for internationalization.

4. Integration into University Family

Integration into university family culture characterized MWU and ECU. Both universities provided international students with pre-arrival and post-arrival support. Pre-arrival support consisted of processing the applications of prospective international students and informing students about admissions outcomes. I-20 is a— “document issued by a school [to be used to assist a [student] in the attainment of a student visa and maintain nonimmigrant student status while in the U.S.” (Farnam, 2005, p. 63)^[18] are issued to successful applicants. Post-arrival support included orientation, academic, financial, housing, and health. At orientation, international students at both institutions were informed of U.S. immigration rules to help them stay legal in the U.S. Immigration support was offered to international students throughout their studies until graduation. International students from both universities constantly received emails to keep track of I-20 expiration dates for appropriate action to be taken. Travel signatures were given to international students travelling to their respective country to avoid being denied reentry into the U.S. Appropriate guidelines to follow to get a legal work permit in the U.S after graduation were available to international students. International students who wanted to bring their spouses to the U.S received immigration support. “[providing] letters so the [international students] can issue I-20 for their [dependents]”, Laura said. Similarly, Melody said that, “a lot of [international students] come [to the International office] to ask questions about immigration, we try to help them as much as we can ...”. Equally, Jerome said, “staff at the international office advise us and provide us with information on how to maintain immigration status”. International students at MWU and ECU received formal and informal forms of academic support. International students with low English proficiency had the opportunity to improve their English through formal courses and informal activities such as access to conversation hours with native speakers of U.S American English. To corroborate

orate this perspective, Roland, said, “when I first came to [MWU] I knew zero English but through the academic [writing] class I [took] and I started interacting with [Americans,] through the conversation partner sessions, I improved my English.” Similarly, Angela of MWU indicated that,

I took a lot of classes with ELIP for graduate students who want to write dissertation. I took that class, which was helpful, the tutors ... are helpful ... so that is the services that I used. About the research in Engineering and Biomedical I have seen a lot of international students especially from India and from China, so I feel they have been helpful to international graduate students.

Another academic support that international students received was how to register for courses, how to use the library resources to search for information as well as how to avoid plagiarism. A unique academic support that described ECU was the policy that required international students to introduce themselves to their professors the first day after class. To enforce student-faculty compliance, both parties, were required to sign a compliance form and submit same to the office responsible for student retention. Additionally, comparable to both universities, international students received, financial assistance. Financial support included Graduate or Teaching Assistantships for international graduate students. Unlike MWU, ECU provided out of state tuition waivers for international undergraduate students. Also, synonymous to ECU and MWU, international students had free access to counseling services throughout their studies. Guidelines on how to get health insurance to be able to access health centers at both campuses were synonymous to both universities. MWU—health center provides international students with information in “Arabic, Japanese, and Chinese. So, they have their different brochures in different languages. So, they have improved a lot. When they do orientation with [ISFS] [the health center] will have their brochure in different languages”, Laura said. Housing support to international students was apparent at ECU and MWU that indicated a family-oriented culture. During Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and spring holidays, international students lived in the dormitories. However, female Muslim international students at ECU revealed they felt uncomfortable residing in the dormitory because American women received male visitors at the dormitory, when there were times that their hair was not covered. This was evident in a statement from Emily,

we had a case where there was a Muslim students who was living with an American student and she was uncomfortable with her [American roommate] bringing men into the apartment because she takes off here hijab and in her

culture men are not supposed to see her hair and so she will be walking to the kitchen and viola there is a dude, and to a lot of Americans, it is not a big deal but to her it was a big deal. It is hard when in housing it is just Americans working there and they do not get it, yeah, a guy came in but did not harm you.

To address the cultural differences between the Muslim and American roommate ECU paired students with the same culture and faith as was evident in a statement from Emily,

They have set aside building for international students. Mostly international students who are going to live there and try to make sure ... a lot of international people especially if they are from the same area or the same type of culture, they fit better with each other because they understand. Muslims from Tunisia and Muslims from Saudi Arabia are going to understand that we cannot have a guy here when we have taken off our hijab as opposed to her living with an American.

Also, some form of cultural sensitivity is provided to Americans and international students as was crystallized in a comment from Emily,

we have a program in the housing ... so they try to create that sensitivity in the housing area and they also try to create events so that the students get to mingle and know each other so that we break down those walls between Americans and some international students.

Parallel to both universities, to address the needs of international students, international offices were staffed with adequate and competent personnel. Converse to MWU, the director at the retention office, can metaphorically be described as a mother to students which reflects the family culture. Because her services to students went beyond her official duties as was evident in a statement from Emily, “[the director for retention] when I came to ECU at first. I sat in her office and talked for hours [till] 9pm or 10pm. She will just help you, ask you about your classes”.

Presence of Institutions’ Personnel

Presence of institutions’ personnel at international gatherings at MWU and ECU demonstrates a family-oriented culture. Evidence of institution personnel at international students’ gatherings were clear in a statement from Michael of ECU,

I remember we had an event where [the president] ... and his cabinet visited the global village to speak with us. He asked us about our challenges. ... [some] people said the money and the classroom issues. He listened and responded.

Also, Angela of MWU reported that “... every year the International Street Fair has its own community that will

go there no matter what like faculty, the [President] and his wife. ... They know what they want to see.”

Communication

Synonymous to MWU and ECU, emails, newsletters, flyers, banners, posters, institution homepages, electronic bulletins, word of mouth, and social media—Facebook, and twitter were the media adopted to communicate internationalization activities to students. Edward from MWU mentioned that, “students see so many bulletins, posters, and flyers on study abroad, international student dinner, and Holi Divali”. Similarly, Hammond from ECU said that “there is a communication structure where people can know that events are happening. ... A major event that happens on campus that gets published in *ECU Inform* was the *Year of program*.” Additionally, Kelsey from ECU said,

I mean ECU promotes events very well. They send emails to our students email all the time hey this is what is coming up this week or next week so enjoy. ... It is very useful. At least the communication lines are good. Flyers, brochures, banners, and social media that is Facebook. The international students’ association at ECU, the global village and the international students and retention services office promote international events.

Similarly, Melody commented that, like the ISA events it is the people who sign up to be in ISA that get these emails or the people who are on the Facebook pages so the people who are on the global village home page they are the people who will mostly get the emails. ... so anytime someone walks in we tell them about ISA and tell them to sign up One thing that I know of is the posters. If you walk around campus, you will posters on different offices, that, say year of Japan and these are the programs, that will go on for the whole month and I know they work with some professors. Those professors are also instrumental in announcing it to their classes.

Community Relationship

Community relationship underpinned ECU and MWU internationalization. Evidence of community relationships include existence of partnerships between both schools and institutions worldwide. Partnership between both universities and institutions abroad were highlighted in a comment from Courtney of ECU, “as a student working at [the] study abroad [office,] when they were signing agreements with universities in Kenya, Ghana ... and Turkey, I worked on some of our agreements.” Also, Angela of MWU reported that “I got involved in a committee called University International Council. ... We gather once a

month to review the MOU with universities [abroad] so I saw some from Malaysia ...” Also, both institutions depended on destinations of study abroad programs as resources within the environment to expose students to the world. Unlike MWU, ECU organized “*Year of*—an annual campus-wide immersion and interdisciplinary program that involved selecting and learning in-depth about a country for an academic year. Community relationship culture is evident in the way citizens of the country of focus are invited to come and interact with students through guest lectures, panel discussions, and cultural activities such as music, art, and food. Considering that *Year of* is meant to educate students and broaden students’ international perspectives, it is mandatory for all freshmen to attend *Year of* programs and write one to two-page reflection paper and relate it to their major for a grade. Strategy to ensure full participation in *Year of* program was apparent in a statement from Michael,

I got involved in the *Year of* Romania events, because, we had a class assignment to [attend an] event. [My professor had it on the] curriculum and students had to write a page or two-page papers about [their] experiences, thought, feelings. It is subjective ... [professors] made sure that [students] are writing something meaningful ... so it is graded mainly [on the] content.

Similarly, Agnes of ECU said, “faculty require students to be at the lecture as part of their course work to make sure they are there”. Equally, Courtney of ECU said,

[During] undergraduate, [students] had to attend the swirling dervishes’ performance and relate it to [the] TPS 1000 theater class. ... [Students] must write a paper about the performance and how that connects to their class. The activities line up for the *Year of* program were tailored [towards] the needs of students.

Also, Melody said, Once I went to the *Year of Korea* program, [because] I [heard] Hangeul. I have never heard a word like this and that is the Korean writing system, and they were talking about how it was invented, and they were talking about why ... most Koreans are not able to differentiate between pronunciation of the r and l and the p and b and I was like this is like people in Kenya, to them it is the same sound. I reflected on some tribes in Kenya, and I made some connection so there is something for everyone ...

A review of the *Year of* program online and flyers confirmed that—Japanese Culinary Services, Political Structure of Japan, Japanese technology as well as History of Ghana were designed for students during the *Year of Japan and Ghana*, respectively.

Buffering

According to Lynn (2005)^[33] buffering is the regulation and /or insulation of organizational processes, functions, entities, or individuals from the effects of environmental uncertainty or scarcity. Buffering culture described both institutions, as internal resources were harnessed for internationalization. International students recruited to both campuses were given the opportunity to form clubs and associations. These clubs and associations organized cross-cultural events making the buffering culture obvious. Intercultural events common to both institutions were international dinner and international food bazaar where students got the opportunity to sample food. Additionally, international students were engaged as Teaching and Graduate Assistants to assist in instruction and research. This buffer culture was evident in a comment from Melody, “teaching assistantship are usually given to grad students, PhD students by the various departments. Also, like I noticed there is geography teachers who always request people to come to talk about their countries or their regions”. Similarly, Lois commented that,

My Geography classes, the professor was so excited to have international students in his class. He asked us to do presentations about our countries for the class ... because it was a Geography class it was appropriate Other professors did that ... I have been [invited] and I have told them about the head gesture and everybody [was] just amazed. ... Consumer class have also asked international students to come and speak about marketing and consumer practices in their home countries. Also, they asked international students to come and tell the class about who makes the purchases in their home countries? Who is the main person that goes to the stores and makes the purchase? Who gets the money? What is the main product that is purchased by men and women? Is there a difference?

Buffering culture, distinct to ECU, was the Global Learning fee of US\$14.00 that was charged to students’ account every semester. This fee constituted the Global Learning Fund. Study abroad participants received US\$600-US\$2100 from the Fund. Buffer culture through global learning fee was illuminated in a comment from Melody,

Every student as part of our student fee we pay global learning fee which is \$14 that goes into a big pool of funds and any student that goes on a study abroad program if they are eligible, they can receive a study abroad scholarship that is given from this global learning fund. Eligible student receives \$600.

Symbols

Flags of different countries hoisted at strategic locations at both campuses suggested symbol culture. Engraving of a globe at the students’ center at MWU and a monument of a globe at ECU demonstrates a symbol culture. Presence of international offices clearly suggests symbol culture at both universities. Comparatively, ECU had an office solely responsible for international student retention. Situated at the retention office, was the Global Village. The Global Village served as a hangout location for international and domestic students. However, the study revealed that not much domestic students socialized at the Global Village because they felt it was reserved for international students. International students referred to the American flag at the global village to encourage domestic students to understand that “the Global Village is for everyone, it is not because you see different flags then it is for international people, [American] flag is there, it is your place too,” Lois said.

Students from both institutions reported that they received certificates for global learning, knowledge, and skills. Students of MWU took global engagement courses and interned abroad to qualify for Global Learning Certificate, whereas students of ECU took Global Engagement Courses, studied abroad, and submitted essays about their reflections abroad.

Additionally, while students at ECU were awarded medallions at graduation ceremony for global learning experience, global coursework, education abroad, and cross-cultural experiences, this was not the case at MWU.

Shared Values and Beliefs

Shared values and beliefs underpinned the culture of both universities. International offices at MWU and ECU collaborated with health services, residential services, transportation services, immigration lawyers, and banks to provide support to international students. Similarly, the practice of permitting announcement of international programs in classrooms by faculty suggests a common belief and value for internationalization. Unlike MWU, at ECU, shared values and beliefs was evident in the collaboration among the various international offices and other academic units during *Year of Program*. For instance, the Education Abroad Office and the departments of History and Modern Languages collaborated to design courses on history of Ghana, Japanese culinary services, political structure of Japan, Japanese technology for Year[s] of Ghana and Japan, respectively. Evidence of collaboration among offices was highlighted by Patrese,

During orientation, [International office] invites every department to participate so [newly admitted international

students] will know what departments are [on campus] what organizations are on campus. Usually, the transportation services, legal services, women center, the bank as well so I can tell that the involvement of this departments shows their interest in serving the international student population

Also, Melody commented that, “international office collaborated with History Department to develop courses such as History of Ghana, Japanese culinary services, political structure of Japan, Japanese technology to help students develop interest in Year of.

Steering

Creation of leadership and administrative positions in the structure of both institutions suggests that steering culture underpinned the internationalization processes. The researchers discovered that there were positions of the Provost for global affairs at MWU and Vice Provost for Strategic Engagement and Global Initiatives at ECU. Position for internationalization officers at both institutions was highlighted in a comment from Angela, “I feel ... they have ... great commitment especially having a position for Vice Provost for global affairs”. However, administrator turnover at key internationalization positions was evident in Angela’s comment:

There is too much [administrative] turnover position ... and I am ... sad. They could not afford to have great people because the great people were here. But [MWU] could not offer more to make them stay ... maybe it is political or money issues. I am sad because it happened to different administrative positions.... [for instance] at the Center for International Studies. ... I know some ... good professors [who], are [no more] here ... Great people came, [with] great ideas [and] implementation.

5. Discussion

Pre-arrival and post-arrival support provided to international students from both universities is consistent with previous studies that shows that host universities identify and address the needs of international students (Farnam, 2005;^[18] Sehin, 2015;^[45] Rodenberg, 2010).^[42] Formal and informal support services offered to international students with low English proficiency is consistent with Tsang (2002)^[51] assertion that institutions should be sensitive to international students’ communication challenges and provide support. Post-arrival support like the policy that required international students to introduce themselves to their professors on the first day of class suggests that the academic needs of students were incorporated into the curriculum to ensure international students succeed. Interna-

tional students’ success is critical to transition, adjustment, retention, curriculum enrichment, improved cross-cultural knowledge, skills, and understanding among students as international students carry with them their cultures and experiential learning to their host nations (Bond, 2003;^[8] Ukomadu, 2010).^[52] Value for international students’ success is critical to achieving institutions’ internationalization goals.

Several researchers agree that international students often face financial challenges in their pursuit for higher education outside their home countries (Astin, Oseguera, Sax, & Korn, 2002;^[4] Goyol, 2006;^[21] Mori, 2000).^[38] Consequently, scholarship offered to international graduate and undergraduate students supports Ukomadu’s (2010)^[52] findings on financial assistance given to graduate and undergraduate students in U.S universities. Furthermore, health insurance support available to students of ECU and MWU to enable them access health centers at both campuses is consistent with Ukomadu (2010).^[52] Also, consistent with Schein (2010)^[44] artifacts framework, international students were provided with housing support. However, the solution proposed to resolve non-Muslim and Muslim roommate incompatibilities is likely to perpetuate clumping—a condition that can hinder dialogue for cross-cultural and interfaith understanding. Global Gateways: A Learning Community for International Students initiative, designed to help international students manage homesickness is consistent with previous studies that recommends that intervention programs such as social gatherings are critical to relieving international students of depression, boredom, hopelessness, lack of self-worth, anxiety, and alienation (Ukomadu, 2010).^[52]

Presence of institutions’ senior level administrative personnel at international gatherings highlights family culture and suggests support for internationalization at both campuses (Lunenburg, 2011;^[32] Rodenberg, 2010).^[42] In addition, leadership presence, gives international students a sense of belonging and acknowledgement which might positively impact international students’ enrollment, because international students might serve as recruitment agents in their respective countries (Arthur & Flynn, 2011).^[3] Additionally, international offices staffed with adequate and competent personnel to attend to the needs of faculty, students, and staff confirms Rodenberg (2010)^[42] and Knight (2004)^[28] recommendations. Attitude of some university personnel to support students beyond official business hours mirrors a family-oriented culture (Lunenburg, 2011)^[32] that prioritizes the welfare of international students. The revelation that students complained of hearing about international events after they had occurred at MWU suggests poor participation in international activi-

ties, hence, mode of communicating internationalization events need to be improved.

Collaboration with the external community to expose students to intercultural and international perspectives through Year of supports previous studies that found that collaboration with the environment is critical to students' intercultural and international competencies (Bartell, 2003;^[5] Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005;^[11] Guo & Acar, 2005)^[22] making community relation culture critical for internationalization (Bartell, 2003).^[5] Requirement for students to write a reflection paper on Year of program attended will motivate students to participate in international events to broaden their international perspectives. Also, buffering culture evident at both institutions confirms Hoy and Miskel (2008)^[24] assertion that institutions continually face disturbances from the environment. Therefore, both institutions harness the skills of international students as a buffer (Thompson, 1967,^[49] Lynn, 2005)^[33] to support faculty in teaching, administrative duties as well as fostering cross-cultural knowledge and competencies. These internal arrangements confirm Bartell's (2003)^[5] suggestion that looking inward is pivotal to successful and sustainable internationalization. Consistent with Siaya and Hayward (2003),^[23] all the observable evidence of internationalization such as global learning certificates, medallions, flags, engraving of a globe, monument of a globe (Schein, 2010),^[44] and international offices at both universities, suggests commitment to internationalization. Provision of a space for Global Village confirms Schein's (2010)^[44] claim that space has a "social meaning" (p. 96) because the Global Village served as a venue of support and networking among international and domestic students (Kezar & Eckel, 2005).^[26] Additionally, flags appear to be powerful tools that both institutions use for internationalization. Provision of funds depicted senior level administrators' support for internationalization (Knight, 2004,^[28] Rodenberg, 2010).^[45] Inspiring and motivating students' engagement in internationalization through awarding certificates and medallions confirms earlier research that rewards can inspire people to engage in internationalization (Bolman & Deal, 2003;^[7] Schein, 2010,^[44] Rodenberg, 2010).^[42]

Integration of international students into the university, permissions granted to students to announce international events in classrooms, collaboration among the various international offices and other academic units during *Year of Program* suggests a shared value and belief to imbue international perspective into students. Thus, successful internationalization thrives on shared values and believes among faculty, administrators, and students (Bartell, 2003,^[5] Schein, 2010).^[44] Existence of positions for global affairs officers at both institutions highlights "division of

labor" (Schein, 2010, p. 56)^[44] for the internationalization of both research sites, however, senior level administrators' turnover is likely to impede internationalization.

In conclusion, results of this study showed that visibility of senior level administrators at international students' gatherings reflects, appreciation of students' efforts as well as leadership commitment to internationalization. Also, communication culture is vital to campus internationalization at both campuses. Community relationship culture characterized both schools because both institutions depend on external resources to execute their core functions. Examples of such resources include partnership with local and international communities through MOUs, study abroad programs, and *Year of program* study African languages through Foreign Languages and Area Studies Fellowship. Also, considering that the functions of institutions can be influenced by disturbances in the environment, buffering culture based on cross-cultural events, offer of assistantships to international students to teach African languages and the institutionalization of a global learning fee charged to students' account every semester to support study abroad is critical for internationalization. Tangible elements of culture that indicated internationalization in both schools were international offices, flags, globes, presence of ISRS, global village, and the award of medallions to acknowledge students' global learning achievements contributed to internationalization. Family culture exhibited through support for international students is critical to successful internationalization. Finally, shared values and beliefs underpinned the culture of both schools. Collaborations among international offices and other departments and units on campus as well as external entities to bring international students to campus and integrate them into the U.S educational system substantiate shared values and beliefs, thus, makes ECU and MWU alike. In terms of how this study is useful for practice, institutions seeking to internationalize through international students' recruitment should be sensitive to international students' needs through family culture. To curb roommate conflicts, personnel at the residential halls should not adopt same background pairing, instead, they should be trained in cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity to be able to train students at the residential halls for peaceful co-existence. To increase students' engagement in internationalization activities, faculty should be informed to encourage students to participate in international events (McCormack, 2013).^[35] Institutions seeking to prepare graduates who can effectively function in a multi-cultural setting, community relationship practice through partnerships with institutions abroad, engagement with local and international communities are highly recommended.

Therefore, institutions should recruit international students and tap into their cultural and experiential knowledge. Higher education institutions can incorporate the Global Learning Fund into internationalization practices to support students' international travel. Flags of different countries should be hoisted at strategic places on campus to create a sense of belonging, and awareness of internationalization. Finally, because administrative turnover is likely to hamper internationalization, institutions should incentivize administrators to ensure staff retention. For future studies, research that explore students' understanding of how organizational culture contributes to university internationalization should be done in Africa, Asia, Australia, and South America using mixed method approach to provide better understanding. This study has some limitations because findings emerged from sixteen participants from two U.S universities. Consequently, findings cannot be generalized to all universities in the U.S considering the small sample size (Creswell, 2014).^[14] Therefore, future studies on students' understanding of how organizational culture contributes to university internationalization should draw on a larger sample size which can be generalized to all universities in the U.S.

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