Interpersona | An International Journal on Personal Relationships
interpersona.psychopen.eu | 1981-6472

Articles

Learning How to Work in Multicultural Teams: Students' Insights on Internationalization-at-Home Activities

Belem Barbosa*[a], Stephanie Swartz[b], Susan Luck[c], Claudia Prado-Meza[d], Izzy Crawford[e]

[a] Higher Institute of Accounting and Administration, Research Unit on Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal. **[b]** School of Business, Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Mainz, Germany. **[c]** MBA School, Pfeiffer University, Charlotte, NC, USA. **[d]** School of Economics, University of Colima, Colima, Mexico. **[e]** School of Creative & Cultural Business, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Abstract

Internationalization-at-home activities present relevant opportunities for innovation in the teaching-learning process. These activities provide a very broad set of advantages, including the development of soft skills and increased motivation of students. This article aims to contribute to the debate on internationalization of higher education institutions by exploring students' perceptions and experiences after participating in an international collaboration project involving 153 students in 5 universities in Germany, Mexico, Portugal, Scotland and the United States of America during the Fall/Winter semester 2017. The focus of this study is students' satisfaction and perceptions. Results demonstrate that although students found the idea of collaborating with peers from other universities very appealing, high levels of satisfaction depended on commitment, both their own and that of their peers. The feelings during the project were predominantly positive, although students recognized that they should have communicated more with their partners and put more effort in the collaboration. This article provides useful evidence for instructors that are considering an international collaboration activity for their students. It demonstrates the deliverables of such initiatives as well as the clear advantage gained by receiving students' feedback. Hopefully it will inspire other instructors and contribute to the diffusion of international collaboration as a teaching-learning practice.

Keywords: international collaboration, globalization, international activity, higher education, intercultural skills, international teams, virtual teams, student experience, student commitment, student satisfaction, students' emotions

Interpersona, 2019, Vol. 13(2), 205–219, https://doi.org/10.5964/ijpr.v13i2.378

Received: 2019-07-17. Accepted: 2019-11-05. Published (VoR): 2019-12-20.

*Corresponding author at: Higher Institute of Accounting and Administration, Rua Associação Humanitária dos Bombeiros Voluntários de Aveiro, 3810-902 Aveiro, Portugal. E-mail: belem.barbosa@ua.pt

Globalization is having a growing impact on economies and societies. These impacts present a set of opportunities and challenges that must be recognized by managers and workers as well as instructors and students. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2017) called for universities to respond to the urgent need to equip workers with the right skills to take advantage of globalization, converting it into gains in terms of jobs and productivity. These skills include cognitive, social and emotional skills, as well as competencies in managing, communicating, and readiness to learn (OECD, 2017). Moreover, Gray (2016) explained that more than one third of the most relevant skills for workers will change between 2015 and 2020, giving rise to the importance of creativity, critical thinking, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, and cognitive flexibility. Obviously, Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and instructors must continuously keep up

with the new developments and demands of the labour market. This initiative mandates that HEI find ways to help students develop the fundamental competencies and knowledge that are becoming a prerequisite for employment for graduates in the 21st century. It is clear that curricula have to be designed in order to teach multiple skills at the same time (World Economic Forum, 2015).

Traditionally, global awareness and intercultural communication skills have been developed by programs such as study abroad. However, study abroad is often cost-prohibitive for many students. Additionally, as Kitcharoen (2011) noted:

> When considering international programs aboard as a means to internationalization, it does not affect enough students to make much of an impact. The second problem is that study abroad programs do not typically encourage students to engage meaningfully with members of their host communities. Finally, the majority of students in international programs avoid challenging themselves to cross multiple boundaries of difference (p. 303).

One answer to help students gain these internationalization competencies, therefore, is to incorporate activities within the curriculum that will necessitate students to challenge themselves to interact with members of other cultures. The Internationalization at Home (IaH) movement is one initiative aimed at developing these types of activities.

This article analyses an IaH project that aimed at developing a diversified set of skills, including communication and collaboration competencies, and character qualities such as persistence, adaptability, and especially social and cultural awareness. This article argues that IaH is particularly relevant to the current demanding context with which graduates will be dealing when they enter the labour market. As emphasised by the World Economic Forum (2016), long-term careers and professional success are dependent on a wider set of skills, among which developing global citizenship values plays an important role. As demonstrated in the following sections, IaH offers a favourable setting to develop communication, intercultural, and collaboration skills of students. Recognizing the importance of student satisfaction to leverage the outcomes of these initiatives, this article explores a set of factors that are expected to be associated with it.

Background

Internationalization of HEI has been a recurrent discussion topic in the past decades. Aiming at preparing students for a globalized world, HEI have been adopting several strategies including international mobility of students, instructors, and staff, international projects, intercultural curricula, double degrees, just to name a few. In general, HEI internationalization encompasses the integration of international and intercultural dimensions in the teaching process (Knight, 1997; 2004) by developing culture, attitudes and practices that foster the adoption of cross-cultural approaches into their various intervention areas (Jones, 2013a). As highlighted by several authors (e.g., Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011; De Wit, 2011; Jones; 2013a), internationalization should not be seen as a goal in itself. In fact, internationalization should be seen as a process, the goal being the improvement of the quality of education and research (De Wit, 2011) and thus a vehicle for achieving wider goals (Jones, 2013a).

Knight (2012) suggests that HEI internationalization is organized into two interdependent types of strategies: at home and abroad initiatives. Students' and instructors' mobility is quite well known and has been the object of continuous investment by national and international organizations, such as the Erasmus+ European Pro-

gramme, which is expected to finance the mobility of 5 million individuals in the period 2014-2020. By contrast, IaH is less visible, and apparently less utilized in HEI. Still, there is a clear recognition of the positive impacts that strategies such as internationalization at home may achieve, and they have an unbeatable advantage in the unlimited number of students they can reach. Beelen and Jones (2015) explain that IaH aims to develop international and intercultural competences in all students, not only in the ones able to do mobility, and does not require the presence of international students. They define internationalization at home as "the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments" (Beelen & Jones, 2015, p. 76). According to Knight (2012), internationalization at home is done by "including intercultural and international dimensions in the teaching/learning process, research, extracurricular activities, relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups, and integration of foreign students and scholars into the campus life and activities" (p. 34). Hence, Knight (2012) organizes IaH into six strategies:

- Curriculum and programs, which include for instance joint degrees, foreign language studies and including intercultural dimensions in existing courses;
- Teaching/learning process, namely by exploring the cultural diversity within the classroom, and virtual mobility for joint courses and research projects, international case studies;
- Research and scholarly activities, such as international research projects, participation in international conferences and seminars, and international co-authorship of scientific articles;
- Co-curricular activities, like seminars and international leadership development programs;
- Extracurricular activities, including student associations, intercultural events, or peer support programs;
- Liaison with local community based cultural/ethnic groups, comprising both the involvement of students in local organizations (e.g., internships) and the participation of local cultural and ethnic representatives in campus activities.

Soria and Troisi (2014) have suggested that students' development of international, intercultural and global competencies in IaH yields greater perceived benefits than studying abroad. Moreover, Jones (2013b) argued that soft skills developed through IaH are compatible to the skills sought by employers. Therefore, IaH involves a strategy that should be widely adopted by instructors in order to benefit as many students as possible.

Using the findings of these studies, along with the statement from Vincenti (2001) that the greatest way to affect a change in student attitudes toward and awareness of those in other countries and cultures was "direct intergroup contact" (p.42), the authors of this article argue that an assignment wherein students from classrooms in several countries were forced to work together for an extended period of time leads to student satisfaction. As such, this article proposes one research question: what factors impact students' satisfaction with such a project?

Students' satisfaction is one of the topics that deserves particular attention by extant literature on virtual teams. One of the reasons is that there is evidence that face-to-face group assignments have higher satisfaction levels than virtual team assignments even in the case of similar perceived performance (Ayoko, Konrad & Boyle, 2012; Whitman et al., 2005). Johnson, Aragon, Shaik, and Palma-Rivas (2000) stress that approaching student satisfaction in online and face-to-face learning environments should consider multiple explaining variables,

stressing the diversity of factors that affect satisfaction. This article focus particularly on two of such factors: commitment and emotions.

Emotions in general, either positive (e.g., happiness, pride) and negative (e.g., shame, guilt) have been shown to affect team performance (Peslak & Stanton, 2007). In students' narratives shared by Ku, Tseng, and Akarasriworn (2013) after participating in an online collaborative learning project, several emotions were associated with satisfaction, including enjoyment, surprise, and not feeling lonely. Moreover, Ayoko, Konrad, and Boyle (2012) found humor as the most common emotion shared in the virtual teams they studied. As such, positive emotions seem more associated to satisfaction. Still, negative emotions such as frustration, are common in the initial stages of team assignments (Ayoko, Konrad, & Boyle, 2012), and expected to be overcome during the project. Indeed, in another study Peslak (2005) found that even at the start of the project dominant emotions are positive, noting that initial emotions did not have much effect on the project outcomes. The importance of emotions in online team success is therefore stressed by several authors. One point made clear by extant literature is that there are insufficient studies considering students' emotions during team assignments (Ayoko, Konrad, & Boyle, 2012; Peslak, 2005), particularly in the case of virtual teams.

Moreover, Whitman et al. (2005) found that one of the difficulties faced by students participating in virtual teams was perceived poor commitment from team partners. Similarly, Koh, and Hill (2009) found that one of the factors relevant to the students participating in virtual team projects was the perceived motivation of group members, being the perceived sense of community the greatest difference between satisfied and unsatisfied participants in online team projects. Werner and Lester (2001) also found evidence on the positive association between commitment and satisfaction. So, and as explained by Pineda and Lerner (2006) the literature points to a positive relationship between teamwork satisfaction and commitment, as well as with skill enhancement. One aspect overlooked by extant literature is the comparison between perceived self-commitment and others' commitment, which will be further explored in the next sections.

In line with these contributions, the following research hypotheses (RH) were defined:

RH1. Student satisfaction with a multicultural team project is positively associated with positive emotions.

RH2. Student satisfaction with a multicultural team project is positively associated with team members' perceived commitment.

Method

Sensitive to the specific requirements on business graduates that result from globalization, instructors in five countries (Germany, Mexico, Portugal, Scotland, and the USA) designed a set of activities for an internationalization at home project for their students in the fall semester of 2017. The courses had different topics, different areas of knowledge, and different assessment criteria. To provide diversity to the experience and to simulate what students will find in their future professional activities, the instructors ensured that each team contained members with varying levels of abilities as well as expertise in different areas.

The Participants

Fifty German students had the opportunity to collaborate with their Portuguese, Scottish and American peers. The German teams were made up of seated undergraduate students of Business Administration (sophomores) taking part in an elective "Working in Multicultural Teams" and Applied Computer Sciences (freshmen) taking part in a compulsory Business Communication course. The German students possessed upper-intermediate English language skills, and included a large number from Northern Africa or those raised in families of non-German ethnic origins. The collaboration with their foreign counterparts was the subject of a written report in the form of a memorandum as well as a presentation and encompassed 50% of their grades.

In Portugal, this project involved a total of thirty-four students enrolled in the module Digital Marketing as part of their final undergraduate studies in Marketing. Each student participated in two IaH activities, one in collaboration with Germany, and another with Mexico. Each assignment accounted for 20% of the final grade.

The Mexican students (twelve in total) were in their very first semester of undergraduate studies in International Business in the English modality. They were part of a larger group, but they were invited to participate in the project, explaining that full-commitment was expected from them. The collaboration was an essential part of their course grade.

The Scottish teams involved twenty both seated and online students of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs and Fashion Management. They represented a range of cultural, ethnic, academic and professional backgrounds, and were undertaking a postgraduate module in public relations theory and practice as part of a wider MSc course of study. The collaboration was an add-on and thus not reflected in their course grade.

Students from the USA, forty in total, were enrolled in graduate programs in two areas, Masters of Health Administration and Masters of Business Administration; they were professionals seeking to further their careers and were taking part in either seated or online courses in Organizational Communication. Many of them had families. They were diverse in terms of ethnic as well as regional backgrounds. Participation in the project was reflected in a final memorandum, which counted towards their final grades with varying percentages.

The Assignments

German, Scottish and American students investigated potential difficulties that companies experienced on the foreign market, such as ALDI or LIDL in the United States, HUGO BOSS in the UK or Walkers Shortbread in Germany. These difficulties could encompass brand recognition, human resource policies or competitors. Students were expected to analyze these difficulties with the help of modals such PESTLE or SWOT and agree on possible solutions. Their analyses as well as suggestions for changes were presented to the classroom; the other students functioning as a board of directors and ideally subjecting the presenters to critical questioning.

In the case of the Portuguese and Mexican classes, the assignment was adapted to better fit the syllabus and learning objectives. Portuguese students worked together with German students to create marketing campaigns designed to attract retired Germans to Portugal as well as draw Portuguese graduates to Germany for employment. Their project had a creative nature (designing a video ad), and German partners helped define the target market and the strategy.

The Mexican-Portuguese assignment was to develop a business plan for a printed magazine locally distributed in Colima, México. The students worked in teams of three and the data collected by each team along with the plan was shared online with two Portuguese teams, which in turn used that information to develop an e-mail marketing campaign for the relaunch of the magazine. The outputs were presented to the CEO of the magazine.

Data Collection Procedures

At the end of the activities, students were invited to share their opinions, comments, and suggestions by answering an online survey. The questions included information on the respondents' profile (age, gender, and nationality), their English language skills (from 1 – bad to 5 – very good and 6 – native speaker), their level of commitment as well as their perceived level of team members and international partners' commitment (from 1 – very low to 5 – very high), their evaluation of the activity in terms of overall satisfaction and other particular aspects (interesting, relevant, fun, difficult, time consuming, boring, valuable) measured in a 5-point Likert-type scale (from 1 – very low to 5 very high), and the frequency they felt positive (e.g., calm, joyful, proud) and negative (e.g., guilty, anxious, lonely), with answers ranging from 1 – never to 5 – all the time. The survey also featured a set of open questions on what they liked the most, the most challenging aspects of the collaboration, and suggestions for future activities.

Ethical principles for doing scientific research were applied, including guaranteeing that the survey was anonymous, confidential, and voluntary. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved specifications and policies were strictly followed. Quantitative data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 24. Content analysis of qualitative data was also performed.

Sample

Ninety-seven students agreed to provide feedback on the IaH activities they had participated in. Their ages ranged from 19 to 55 years (M = 24.93; Mdn = 22). Regarding their origin, 28 studied at Aveiro University in Portugal, 10 in Universidad de Colima in Mexico, 28 at Mainz University of Applied Sciences in Germany, 26 at Pfeiffer University in Charlotte, North Carolina and 5 at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, Scotland. The respondents from Colima were all Mexicans, while the students from Aveiro included 6 from other European nationalities (21.4%), the group from Mainz had 2 students from other European nationalities (7.1%) and 4 non-Europeans (14.3%), Pfeiffer University included 1 non-American (3.8%), and the group from Robert Gordon University was the most diverse, with one student from another European nationality (20%) and two non-Europeans (40%). On average, the students from Colima were the youngest (M = 19.33 years; SD = 2.958), followed by the ones from Aveiro (M = 21.37; SD = 1.925) and Mainz (M = 22.63; SD = 2.544). The oldest were from Robert Gordon (M = 28.2; SD = 9.445) and Pfeiffer University (M = 34.10; SD = 10.564). The majority of respondents were female (n = 59).

Results

Quantitative data analysis

Globally, the level of satisfaction was high (*M* = 3.55; *Mdn* = 4), attesting to the success of the activity. Considering the scores for the different universities (see Table 1), Colima's students stand out as being the most satisfied with the activity (*M* = 4.5). Aveiro (*M* = *3.68*) and Pfeiffer (*M* = 3.62) had medium levels of satisfaction, while Mainz (*M* = 3.07) and Robert Gordon (*M* = 3.20) scored the lowest. ANOVA test indicated that there are significant differences in the level of satisfaction across participant universities, $F(4.92) = 4.814$, $p = .001$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that satisfaction amongst Mexicans was significantly higher than the Mainz students, being the only statistically significant difference with a 95% confidence level.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	Aveiro		Colima		Mainz		Pfeiffer		Robert Gordon		Total	
Variable	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***
Satisfaction	3.68	0.905	4.50	0.527	3.07	1.016	3.62	0.983	3.20	0.837	3.55	1.000
Opinion about the activity												
Interesting	3.89	0.832	4.50	0.850	3.61	1.066	4.04	0.720	3.80	0.837	3.91	0.902
Relevant	4.00	1.018	4.60	0.516	3.18	1.335	3.54	1.140	4.40	0.894	3.72	1.188
Fun	3.46	1.138	4.00	1.054	3.25	1.206	3.38	1.098	3.40	1.140	3.43	1.136
Difficult	3.11	0.832	3.60	1.075	2.96	0.922	3.12	1.033	2.80	1.095	3.10	0.952
Time consuming	3.46	0.793	3.60	0.966	3.86	1.113	3.35	1.129	2.60	1.140	3.52	1.042
Boring	1.86	0.848	1.60	0.699	2.00	1.018	2.00	0.894	1.60	0.548	1.90	0.884
Valuable	3.75	0.887	4.40	0.843	3.46	0.999	3.81	1.059	4.40	0.548	3.78	0.981
Perceived commitment												
Self-commitment	3.79	0.686	4.40	0.516	3.64	0.731	4.12	0.653	4.20	0.837	3.92	0.717
Team members'	3.75	0.645	4.40	0.516	3.14	1.044	3.73	0.827	3.40	1.517	3.62	0.929
Partners'	3.61	0.956	4.20	0.632	3.04	1.170	3.23	1.032	3.00	1.414	3.37	1.083
Emotions												
Frustated	2.39	1.133	2.80	0.919	2.46	1.201	2.38	1.061	2.40	1.140	2.45	1.099
Unfulfilled	2.32	0.905	2.30	1.059	2.29	1.243	2.12	0.952	2.80	1.304	2.28	1.048
Nervous	2.57	1.136	3.00	0.943	2.36	1.254	1.96	0.916	2.40	0.548	2.38	1.103
Affraid	1.64	0.731	1.70	0.823	1.64	1.026	1.50	0.812	1.80	0.447	1.62	0.835
Embarrassed	1.57	0.836	1.40	0.516	1.43	1.069	1.27	0.533	1.60	0.894	1.43	0.815
Envious	1.29	0.535	1.00	0.000	1.21	0.787	1.12	0.326	2.00	1.000	1.23	0.604
Lonely	1.50	0.962	1.10	0.316	1.50	1.036	1.19	0.491	2.60	0.894	1.43	0.877
Calm	3.39	0.916	3.00	0.816	3.50	1.000	3.42	1.065	3.20	0.837	3.38	0.962
Optimist	3.50	0.923	4.40	0.699	3.46	1.170	3.65	0.977	3.60	0.548	3.63	1.003
Happy	3.36	0.951	4.20	1.033	3.29	1.150	3.73	0.919	3.20	0.837	3.52	1.032
Excited	3.21	1.031	4.50	0.850	3.29	0.976	3.50	1.105	3.20	0.837	3.44	1.060
Surprised	2.64	1.026	3.80	0.919	3.14	0.932	3.12	1.071	3.00	1.000	3.05	1.035
Guilty	1.43	0.690	1.50	1.269	1.68	1.020	1.23	0.652	1.20	0.447	1.44	0.854
Proud	3.25	1.005	4.50	0.850	3.00	1.186	3.42	1.137	3.20	1.483	3.35	1.164

Note. Responses ranged from 1 (lowest / not at all) to 5 (highest / very much).

One of the factors expected to impact satisfaction was the level of English language proficiency, considering that the communication amongst teams was an essential factor for everyone's performance. As mentioned by

Whitman et al., (2005), the fact that not all students are English native speakers poses additional challenges to communication, which ultimately may affect the success of the projects and satisfaction of participants. The activity had native and non-native English speakers, and only one class was not taught in English (Aveiro). Results did not corroborate that the level of satisfaction was contingent on students' English language proficiency. Although native English speakers scored higher satisfaction (M = 3.62, SD = 0.898), participants with a very good level of English (M= 3.48; SD = 0.962) were less satisfied with the IaH activity as compared to the participants with good (M = 3.55, SD = 1.150) and basic English language skills (M = 3.56; SD = 1.014). ANOVA did not indicate significant differences on satisfaction depending on the level of language proficiency, F(3.93) = 0,80, p = .971.

Looking more closely at these factors (Table 1), the students that found the collaboration activity more interesting were the ones from Colima (M = 4.5), while students from Mainz were the ones who found the activity less interesting (M = 3.61). Regarding relevance, Colima's students were the ones crediting it higher (M = 4.60) and Pfeiffer´s lower (M = 3.54). Students from Colima were the least bored (M = 1.60). Moreover, Mexicans had more fun (M = 4.00), despite being the ones that considered the activity more difficult (M = 3.60). The activity was considered more time consuming by Mainz students (M = 3.86), and the least by Robert Gordon's (M = 2.60). Finally, students from Colima and Robert Gordon found the activity more valuable (M = 4.40) especially compared to students from Mainz (M = 3.46). It is important to stress, however, that ANOVA tests indicated that these differences are not statistically significant except for relevance to the students' learning process, F(4, 92) = 4.294, p = .003. In this particular case, post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test confirms that responses by Colima students were significantly higher than Mainz students.

Once again, English language proficiency did not seem to be an important factor for these ratings. The activity was considered more relevant for the learning process by the respondents that reported having basic English language skills (M = 4.11). They were also the ones who considered the activity more time consuming (M = 3.78), more boring (M = 2.56), but also the least difficult (M = 2.89). Still, the data collected did not show statistically significant differences in most cases. ANOVA test enabled identifying statistically significant differences only regarding boredom, F(3, 93) = 2.165, p = .037, and Tukey HDS test indicated that good English language speakers were significantly the least bored than basic English speakers.

Another factor that one would expect to be associated to satisfaction is the commitment to the activity. Considering the Spearman's correlation indicators (Table 2), satisfaction is particularly associated to international partners' perceived commitment, r(97) = .578, p < .001 and team members' perceived commitment, r(97) = .518, p < .001, while the correlation with self-commitment is weaker, r(97) = .352, p < .001.

Interestingly, as shown in Table 1, respondents considered their own commitment (M = 3.92) higher than the other members of their team (M = 3.62), and rated their international partners' commitment even lower (M = 3.37). This trend is still evident if we look at each university separately. The only exception was the students from Colima, who considered their own commitment equal to their team members (M = 4.40), but higher than their international partners (M = 4.20). Aveiro's students evaluated their own commitment (M = 3.79), their team members (M = 3.75) and their international partners' more similarly (M = 3.61). Students from Colima considered themselves the most committed to the activity, and the ones from Mainz considered themselves the least committed (M = 3.64). Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HDS Test indicated that the differences in the commitment responses of students from Colima and Mainz are statistically significant. Moreover, students from

Table 2

Correlations

Spearman's Correlations	1	2	3	4
1 Satisfaction	1			
Perceived commitment				
2 Self-commitment	.352**	1		
3 Team members'	.518**	.548**	1	
4 Partners'	.578**	.453**	.447**	1
Opinion about the activity				
Interesting	.680**	.402**	.510**	.357**
Relevant	.632**	.403**	.469**	.455**
Fun	.668**	.272**	.407**	.408**
Difficult	-.101	.033	-.006	.005
Time consuming	-.073	.081	.088	-.039
Boring	-.411**	-.071	-.201*	-.155
Valuable	.470**	.416**	.379**	.389**
Emotions				
Frustated	-.410**	-.015	-318**	-.122
Unfulfilled	-.427**	-.027	-.185	-.118
Nervous	-.165	.064	-.013	.107
Affraid	.017	.189	.112	.260*
Embarrassed	-.070	.005	.133	.134
Envious	-.088	.115	.157	.107
Lonely	-.274**	-.158	-.167	-.193
Calm	.218*	.089	.128	.164
Optimist	.546**	.242*	.404**	.277**
Happy	.673**	.175	.378**	.336**
Excited	.601**	.232*	.418**	.322**
Surprised	.376**	.113	.285**	.149
Guilty	-.097	-.019	.056	.035
Proud	.655**	.250*	.470**	.412**

Note. Responses ranged from 1 (lowest / not at all) to 5 (highest / very much).
*p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.

Robert Gordon University were the ones that perceived the greatest differences in commitment of their team members (M = 3.40) and their international partners (M = 3.00) as compared to their own (M = 4.20).

Moreover, and as shown in Table 2, considering the activity interesting was strongly associated with team members' commitment, $r(97) = .510$, $p < .001$) and had a weak correlation with international partners' perceived commitment, $r(97) = .357$, $p < .001$. Considering the activity valuable showed a moderate correlation with self-commitment, $r(97) = .416$, $p < .001$. Team members' perceived commitment was associated with finding the activity interesting, $r(97) = .510$, $p < .001$, relevant, $r(97) = .469$, $p < .001$, and fun, $r(97) = .408$, $p < .001$. Considering the activity difficult or time consuming had no relation to commitment (self or others). Considering the activity boring had a weak negative correlation with team members' commitment, $r(97) = -.201$, $p < .001$.

Lastly, students were asked to indicate how frequently they felt positive and negative emotions during the IaH activity. The most frequent emotions were positive ones, as the students felt more often optimistic (M = 3.63), happy (M = 3.52), excited (M = 3.44), calm (M = 3.38), and proud (M = 3.35). The least frequent emotions were

the negative, as participants did not feel or very rarely felt envious (M = 1.23), lonely (M = 1.43) embarrassed (M = 1.43), and guilty (M = 1.44).

Comparing responses from different universities, we found that there are statistically significant differences in some of the feelings analysed. Feeling proud was more frequent amongst students from Colima (M = 4.50) than from Aveiro (M = 3.25) and Mainz (M = 3.00), $F(4, 92) = 3.501$, $p = .010$. Students from Colima (M = 4.50) were also more excited than students from Aveiro (M = 3.29) and Mainz (M = 3.21), $F(4, 9\ 92) = 3.346$, $p = .013$. Most students from Aveiro (M = 2.64) had previous experience with similar IaH activities and were significantly less surprised, $F(4, 92) = 2.655$, $p = .038$, than the students from Colima (M = 3.80). Robert Gordon students (M = 2.60) felt significantly more lonely than the students from Colima (M = 1.10) and Pfeiffer (M = 1.19), $F(4,92) = 3,470$, $p = .011$.

These quantitative results provide very interesting insights into the impact of the project on students, with clear signals of the project being perceived as valuable and relevant, and marked by positive feelings. Overall, these findings provide empirical support to both research hypotheses formulated for this study (RH1 and RH2), although demonstrating that the associations of satisfaction with emotions and commitment are rich, as evidenced by the interesting differences found (e.g, differences amongst emotions, and between commitment of the respondent, national and international partners. Comparing responses from different universities also provides interesting cues on the outcomes of the project, and offers indications for more favourable settings for IaH activities. Colima's first semester students stood out as the ones evaluating the activity more favourably and being more committed.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Overall, there was a dominant sense of approval towards IaH. As one of the participants summarized: "the idea itself is very appealing" (Male, Mainz). Even in cases where they were disappointed with the results, some students made proactive comments, as for instance one of the moderately satisfied students stated: "I liked the learning aspect of international project. Although things did not go as smoothly as I would have liked them to, this was a great learning exercise" (Male, Robert Gordon). One aspect that they liked the most was the innovativeness and novelty of the activity; they considered it to be a "unique opportunity" (Female, Pfeiffer) in their academic course. Technology made it possible for them to work with "people from a different part of the world" (Female, Pfeiffer), and they actually felt "the world being smaller" (Female, Pfeiffer) because of the international teams that were created. Students noticed the wider range of skills that were being developed during this activity. As one of the respondents pointed out, she was able to "learn what you can't from books" (Female, Mainz).

In terms of the characteristics of the project, students pointed out the differences in expertise between partners that enabled better outputs for the assignment proposed by the instructors. Therefore, they recognized the added value of working with students from very different courses. Another aspect related to the assignment was working with a "real scenario" (Female, Colima), as they started with a real-life problem and had to present solutions to the company's manager.

Interaction with partners was one of the aspects that students liked the most. They mentioned the opportunity to interact with what they considered a culturally different group, and learning about their culture. Interaction made them more confident when communicating with people from other cultures. Students also enjoyed being able to discuss cultural differences openly, and this resulted in "getting a view of things from several different

perspectives" (Female, Pfeiffer), finding "different meanings" (Female, Mainz) within multicultural groups, and going through the "different ideas each person presented" (Female, Pfeiffer). They were able to verify cultural identities, mentioning that "others are different from myself" (Female, Pfeiffer). The empathy created with partners was also a positive aspect that was highlighted by the students. They mentioned the atmosphere between the members of the intercultural group as friendly and inviting, resulting in a more positive experience. This gave rise to stronger collaboration and to team spirit. Participants mentioned that they had "a good time together" (Male, Mainz) with their international partners, resulting not only in "creating new contacts" (Male, Mainz) but also in "creating bonds" (Female, Portugal).

Differences in time zones were a noticeable difficulty. Students provided examples thereof, including finding the right time to communicate and getting everyone online for a videoconference. They had to negotiate, make compromises, and sometimes just accept being disappointed and unable to meet everyone on the team. In fact, several students were upset that not all collaborators participated in the meetings. Team management was also challenging, namely because students had to define intermediate deadlines together with their international partners. Problems in team management were not confined to dealing with international partners and also occurred within each team. Some students mentioned that the main difficulty involved their team members at their university, while others recognized that there was a lack of participation from members on both sides. In some cases, they just waited "for who to communicate first" (Female, Robert Gordon), denoting a clear lack of motivation, despite the fact that the videoconferences were mandatory and in most cases had to be video-recorded. Communication difficulties were also quite common, related both to technology and the language barriers. Students found it harder to work only remotely, as well as to communicate with people with different levels of English language proficiency. Moreover, the communication process itself was difficult at times, because of delayed responses, unanswered messages – resulting from time differences, lack of planning, and failing to meet schedules previously agreed. For instance, one of the students wrote that "the other team was unresponsive" (Female, Pfeiffer) and "the counterparts weren't interested" (Male, Mainz).

Students also included among the main difficulties some characteristics of the project, namely international teams having different tasks and different deadlines for their final assignment, and the "level of education" (Female, Aveiro) of the partners being very different – for instance in the cases of final year students that were working with others that had just entered university. Students also recognized it was difficult to put in practice what they have learned. Another obvious difficulty was not being able to meet – although inherent to the project, students frequently felt that things would be much easier if they could just meet personally once or twice. Another difficulty related to the design of the project was the (lack of) assessment for some participants. As explained by one of the students: "As there was not a mark, the effort of most of the team members was minimum. That was also because the group did not feel close. I felt really discouraged because I had to work alone, also if I've tried to involve them" (Female, Robert Gordon).

Not surprisingly, when asked what they would do differently, students often agreed that they would improve their communication strategies: participating in more meetings with their international partners, using alternative means of communication such as texting and exchanging phone numbers, or simply being more interactive with the foreign partners. Students also recognized that they could have improved negotiation of and adaptation to others' ideas, been more creative with the solutions found, and planned better in order to make sure that all members participated actively. Students also suggested that putting more time and effort in the activity and preparing themselves more would have helped overcome the difficulties. Some agreed that they needed leader-

ship in the teams from the start, suggesting that in a future activity they would take on that task themselves, or just assign one that could move the team forward. As one of the students wrote “I wouldn't do anything different, just everything better” (Female, Aveiro). Thus, the common topic was more interaction and taking more from this collaboration opportunity. One students summarized: “Enjoy more the opportunity of working with foreign students” (Female, Aveiro). Another student added: “I will put more effort to try and speak more with them about everything not just for the work” (Male, Colima), realizing that the outcomes of the experience are far greater than the assignment.

Still, there were also signs of resentment, with students affirming that they would not work with the foreign partners they had, or that they would just work on their own with the classmates, ignore the international partners, or simply avoid these kind of activities. One of the respondents suggested that instructors should “ask the students if they wanted to do the collaboration” (Male, Mainz).

Discussion

The development of intercultural communication, confidence, and project management skills in a global context are vital knowledge, skills, and abilities for employers now and in the future. IaH initiatives such as the one analysed in this article provide affordable and more democratic means to develop intercultural competencies, innovate, and develop a wider set of skills besides the ones directly related to the syllabus. This study demonstrates that the collaboration created synergies between the competences and knowledge of the different classes, and teamwork was developed on the basis of excelling the outputs as a result of the complementary hard skills developed in each class. However, it also included some specific demands and needed skills that the students were not used to complying with and had to develop, such as dealing with different time zones and communication constraints, being unable to do face-to-face meetings, collaborating entirely online, and asynchronously most of the time, dealing with people from various cultures, academic backgrounds and even levels of motivation, just to name a few. IaH initiatives require students to leave their comfort zones, to be more flexible, and to interact with other people.

Considering the additional amount of time it takes to prepare and to manage, one would expect clearer deliverables in terms of student satisfaction. Nevertheless, adapting to a new context with very specific demands takes time, and many students recognized that they did not make the most out of the activities – many were disappointed with themselves and willing to commit more in future opportunities. These remarks demonstrate that students learned far more than what might be expressed by their performance during the activities and are quite important for assessing the activity, leading us to advise detailed student scrutiny of IaH initiatives or any other innovative teaching and learning strategies. This article argues that subjecting the project to students’ scrutiny after it ends elicits particularly valuable feedback for instructors and students alike. Instructors may better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the project, assess whether goals were accomplished, and gain important insights for future endeavours. Instructors need information to help prevent roadblocks and understand why one project worked and another did not. Discussing this was a vital part of the learning process which made the project worthwhile. More importantly, going through students’ perspectives is essential to completing their learning process, as students’ disclosure, analyses and discussion help them reflect on what they have learned and understand other strategies that they could have taken to deal with the difficulties they had faced. Even the consistent theme of "I wish I'd taken the project more seriously" indicates that the project was a

success; it remains in their minds that intercultural communication requires work - but that it offers opportunity if one is willing to embrace it.

Interestingly, the students that seem more open to IaH are the ones with some intercultural background, namely the ones that are used to travelling to different environments. During IaH projects it became apparent that students without this kind of experience embraced the project with fear and trepidation. This suggests that these students were firmly locked into not only their national culture but also their local culture, and that they may not have felt comfortable asking for advice from instructors and colleagues. Yet both student profiles seemed to experience personal growth as a result of the project.

Recommendations for instructors considering designing their first IaH initiative include starting with a small project that relates to a fundamental part of the syllabus defined for the class. This will have the additional advantage of making students understand the close connections between theory and practice. Including business partners in the project (e.g., a company, a sectorial organization) is more demanding but increases the commitment of students and their motivation throughout the project. Moreover, coordination is essential to success. This means careful planning, but also attention to detail, such as very precise and common intermediate deadlines, a mandatory number of interactions, and providing a very clear framework for the project which is understood consistently across the different student groups involved. Nevertheless, projects usually take on a life of their own, and results depend on students' profiles and levels of motivation. It is advisable that benefits from both an academic and employment perspective are emphasized to the class. The percentage of the grade attributed to the project is also an important motivator, even for students particularly interested in developing transversal skills.

De Wit (2011) emphasized that there is a clear need to test intercultural and international competences, instead of assuming that they are acquired in internationalization activities. In fact, their success should be carefully assessed, demonstrating the actual outcomes and providing a better understanding of the factors that explain the initiatives' efficacy. Therefore, our suggestions are twofold: not only do we strongly recommend the proliferation of IaH activities, but we also urge instructors to fully document the outcomes of those activities, in order to contribute to collective learning and the development of best practices. Suggestions for future research include considering additional explaining variables such as intercultural background and international traveling experience, which were beyond the scope of this study. It is important to note that the results of this study demand further replication in order to be generalized. It would be interesting that future research included participants from other countries and continents (e.g., Asia).

Funding

The authors have no funding to report.

Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Acknowledgments

The authors have no support to report.

References

Ayoko, O. B., Konrad, A. M., & Boyle, M. V. (2012). Online work: Managing conflict and emotions for performance in virtual teams. *European Management Journal, 30*(2), 156-174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2011.10.001

Beelen, J., & Jones, E. (2015). Redefining internationalization at home. In A. Curaj, L. Matei, R. Pricopie, J. Salmi, & P. Scott (Eds.), *The European Higher Education Area*, 59-72. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Brandenburg, U., & De Wit, H. (2011). The end of internationalization. *International Higher Education, 62*, 15-17.

De Wit, H. (2011). Internationalization misconceptions. *International Higher Education, 64*, 6-7.

Gray, A. (2016). The 10 skills you need to thrive in the fourth industrial revolution. Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-10-skills-you-need-to-thrive-inthe-fourth-industrial-revolution

Johnson, S. D., Aragon, S. R., Shaik, N., & Palma-Rivas, N. (2000). Comparative analysis of learner satisfaction and learning outcomes in online and face-to-face learning environment. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research, 11*(1), 29-49.

Jones, E. (2013a). The global reach of universities: Leading and engaging academic and support staff in the internationalization of higher education. In R. Sugden, M. Valania, & J. R. Wilson (Eds.), *Leadership and cooperation in academia: Reflecting on the roles and responsibilities of university faculty and management*, 161-182. Cheltenham, United Kingdom: Edward Elgar.

Jones, E. (2013b). Internationalization and employability: The role of intercultural experiences in the development of transferable skills. *Public Money & Management, 33*, 95-104. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2013.763416

Kitcharoen, P. (2011). Promoting diversity through transformative learning experiences of internationalization of higher education in Thailand. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences, 4*, 301-309.

Knight, J. (1997). A shared vision? Stakeholders' perspectives on the internationalization of higher education in Canada. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 1*, 27-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/102831539700100105

Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 8*, 5-31. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315303260832

Knight, J. (2012). Concepts, rationales, and interpretive frameworks in the internationalization of higher education. In D. K. Deardorff, H. De Wit, J. D. Heyl, & T. Adams (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of international higher education*, 27-42. London, United Kingdom: Sage Publications.

Koh, M. H., & Hill, J. R. (2009). Student perceptions of groupwork in an online course: Benefits and challenges. *International Journal of E-Learning & Distance Education, 23*(2), 69-92.

Ku, H. Y., Tseng, H. W., & Akarasriworn, C. (2013). Collaboration factors, teamwork satisfaction, and student attitudes toward online collaborative learning. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29*(3), 922-929. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.019

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2017). *OECD skills outlook 2017: Skills and global value chains*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264273351-en

Peslak, A. R. (2005). Emotions and team projects and processes. *Team Performance Management, 11*(7/8), 251-262. https://doi.org/10.1108/13527590510635143

Peslak, A. R., & Stanton, M. (2007). Information technology team achievement: An analysis of success factors and development of a team success model (TSM). *Team Performance Management, 13*(1/2), 21-33. https://doi.org/10.1108/13527590710736707

Pineda, R. C., & Lerner, L. D. (2006). Goal attainment, satisfaction and learning from teamwork. *Team Performance Management, 12*(5/6), 182-191. https://doi.org/10.1108/13527590610687938

Soria, K. M., & Troisi, J. (2014). Internationalization at home alternatives to study abroad: Implications for students' development of global, international, and intercultural competencies. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 18*, 261-280. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315313496572

Vincenti, V. (2001). Exploration of the relationship between international experiences and the interdisciplinary work of university faculty. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 5*, 42-63. https://doi.org/10.1177/102831530151004

Werner, J. M., & Lester, S. W. (2001). Applying a team effectiveness framework to the performance of student case teams. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 12*(4), 385-402. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.1004

Whitman, L. E., Malzahn, D. E., Chaparro, B. S., Russell, M., Langrall, R., & Mohler, B. A. (2005). A Comparison of group processes, performance, and satisfaction in face-to-face versus computer-mediated engineering student design teams. *Journal of Engineering Education, 94*(3), 327-337. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2168-9830.2005.tb00857.x

World Economic Forum. (2015). *New vision for education: Unlocking the potential of technology*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/ WEFUSA_NewVisionforEducation_Report2015.pdf

World Economic Forum. (2016). *White paper: Realizing human potential in the fourth industrial revolution: An agenda for leaders to shape the future of education, gender and work.* Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/ WEF_EGW_Whitepaper.pdf