A Global Perspective and FIU Undergraduates: The Interpersonal Domain

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Abstract: Graduates of higher education institutions should attain a global perspective. However, there is limited research on the demographics and global perspective among college students. This paper analyzes Global Perspective Inventory subscales and associations between Florida International University students' gender, class level, and ethnicity. Findings include significant differences between groups.

One goal of American education in today's globalized world is for students to gain a global perspective. Many prominent organizations believe that attaining a global perspective is an important outcome of higher education (e.g. American Council on Education, 2012; American Association of Colleges & Universities, n.d.; Hovland, 2006; Olson, Green, & Hill, 2006). A global perspective is education that cultivates cultural relativism, acceptance of multiple cultures, and acknowledging the world as an interconnected place in which human choices influence the state of the world (Hanvey, 1976/2004). Education should develop these concepts and attitudes in students to prepare them to participate in a global society and work with people from different cultural backgrounds. American employers are seeking "global graduates" who are able to work effectively with diverse teams (Rimmington, Gruba, Gordon, Gibson, & Gibson, 2004, p. 1) and effectively communicate with those from other cultures is important for employability (Busch, 2009). Additionally, education that fosters a global perspective is beneficial for students' cognitive capabilities. Experiences where students directly interact with individuals different from themselves, as opposed to just being exposed to a diverse student population, have been shown to improve students' critical thinking capabilities (Bowman, 2010; Pascarella et al., 2014) and creativity (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008).

Motivated by their concern with global learning, Florida International University (FIU) made it the focus of their quality enhancement plan, *Global Learning for Global Citizenship.* Global learning is "the process of diverse people collaboratively analyzing and addressing complex problems that transcend borders" (Landorf & Doscher, 2015, para. 2). Beginning in 2010, this initiative requires FIU students to take two approved global learning courses as part of their graduation requirements (FIU, 2010). FIU is one of few universities to have an initiative that integrates global learning as part of students' curriculum. FIU also has a majority minority demographic makeup consisting of 83% minority students (FIU, 2010). Since 2010, FIU's Office of Global Learning has collected data using the Global Perspective Inventory (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Engberg, 2014) to assess the global perspective of students and improve student learning (FIU, 2010).

Understanding the significance of variables on attaining a global perspective is important due to the emphasis placed on it as an outcome of university education. The Global Perspective Inventory (GPI) measures the global perspective of individuals through three domains. The cognitive domain measures what students know and what they believe to be true and important. It is made up of the subscales cognitive knowledge and cognitive knowing (Braskamp et al., 2014). The intrapersonal domain assesses student awareness of self and personal values and

integrating them into their personhood. It is made up of the subscales intrapersonal affect and intrapersonal identity (Braskamp et al., 2014). The interpersonal domain measures an individual's comfort and acceptance of people with backgrounds or cultures different from their own. It is made up of the subscales social responsibility and social interaction (Braskamp et al., 2014).

Results from FIU, unique in terms of the Global Learning Initiative and ethnic make-up, can be helpful when compared to the results from previous research. Previous research found significant differences in the GPI in class level, gender, and ethnicity. Braskamp et al. (2014) found differences between the genders in the means of each of the six GPI scales. They found that on average female students scored higher than male students in the cognitive knowing subscale in the cognitive domain, the intrapersonal affect subscale in the intrapersonal domain, and the interpersonal social responsibility subscale in the interpersonal domain. The cognitive knowing subscale measures how complex and individuals' views are regarding the importance of cultural context in considering information that is important and valuable; the intrapersonal affect subscale measures respect and acceptance of different cultural perspectives and emotional confidence for complex situations and encounters with other cultures; the social responsibility subscale measures the "level of interdependence and social concern for others" (Braskamp et al., 2014, p. 5). Generally, they found that all students gain a global perspective over their time in college, except in the case of interpersonal social interaction. Their results indicate that students make the greatest gains between freshman and sophomore years, which is consistent with earlier results for traditional aged students (Braskamp & Engberg, 2011). In 2011, they also found differences based on ethnicity, but the results were inconsistent. Generally, Hispanic and African American students had higher scores on the interpersonal and intrapersonal scales than White students, and students older than 25 also had higher scores.

Purpose and Research Questions

This study asks the following research question: Among FIU students, do global perspective scores vary by sex/gender, ethnicity, and/or grade level? The following hypotheses are based on the results presented above: the global perspective scores of men and women at FIU will be different; upper classmen will have higher a global perspective scores than freshmen; and there will be differences in a global perspective based on ethnicity.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

The importance of students to understand and relate to others from different cultures is well documented in articles about intercultural maturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), intercultural communication competence (Chen, 1990; 1991), intercultural sensitivity (Chen, 1997), intercultural competence as an outcome of university internationalization efforts (Deardorff, 2006; Olson et al., 2006; Olson, Evans, & Shoenberg, 2007), and the positive effect of diversity experiences on cognitive ability (Bowman, 2010; Pascarella et al., 2014).

What is a Global Perspective?

Robert Hanvey (1976/2004) was a strong advocate for teaching towards a global perspective in K-12 education. He believed that attaining a global perspective is essential due to new challenges of globalization, and that it is possible for students to acquire a global perspective over the course of their schooling. Hanvey (1976/2004) defines a global perspective through five dimensions: (a) perspective consciousness; (b) state of the planet awareness; (c) cross-cultural awareness; (d) knowledge of global dynamics; and (e) awareness of human choices, which involve acceptance of other cultures, reserving judgment on cultures different

from one's own, and seeing the world as interconnected. Education for a global perspective "is that learning which enhances the individual's ability to understand his or her condition in the community and the world and improves the ability to make effective judgments*"* (American Forum for Global Education, 2004, p. 1). This definition is the conceptual orientation for this paper.

University and a Global Perspective

Internationalization of higher education has become a central focus both in the United States and abroad (de Wit, 2011). The American Council of Education (ACE, 2012) and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, n.d.; Hovland, 2006; Olson, Green, & Hill, 2006) are focused on global learning and internationalization of higher education. For example, ACE (2012) believes that "high-quality undergraduate education must prepare students for a world in which they will be called upon to be effective workers and informed citizens who can think and act with global awareness and cross-cultural understanding" (p. x).

Courses and programs fostering diversity experiences and diverse college campuses have the potential to affect the cognitive abilities of all students. Bowman's (2010) meta-analysis to examine the effect of diversity experiences in university found that there is a positive relationship between diversity experiences and cognitive development, particularly in the case of interpersonal interactions with racial diversity. Structural diversity, or a substantial representation of diverse students, is a prerequisite for diversity interactions to occur; the presence of diversity provides conditions where development can occur (Gurin, 1999). Pascarella et al. (2014) also found statistical significance in their research on interactional diversity experiences on cognitive skills such as critical thinking, supporting the theoretical argument made by Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002). The results of these studies reinforce the idea that a diverse student population is beneficial for all students and provides a rationale for increasing student population diversity and opportunities for students to interact with diversity.

With the focus on how students should acquire a global perspective and what students should be able to do once they finish school, it is important to assess to what extent a global perspective is being acquired. FIU uses the GPI as a tool to wants to determine the extent to which FIU students are acquiring a global perspective.

Method

Participants and Data

The GPI data are cross-sectional, collected during the 2013-2014 school year. The Office of Global Learning administers the GPI to a minimum of 10% of incoming freshmen and transfer students and a minimum of 10%of graduating seniors annually. The test has been administered since 2010, starting when the Global Learning Initiative began. FIU requires that all undergraduates take a minimum of two global learning courses prior to graduation. Courses are approved as global learning courses based on whether they include FIU's three global learning outcomes: global perspective, global engagement, and global awareness. A Faculty Senate Global Learning Curriculum Committee approves syllabi for the global learning courses and the Office of Global Learning trains faculty in techniques to help teach in ways that foster a global perspective (GP). To limit the scope, this study is only looking at one annual cross-sectional sample from the 2013-2014 year.

The total sample size was 3210 students attending FIU during the 2013-2014 year. Broken down by gender, the sample includes 1198 male students, 2000 female students, and 12 students who identified their gender as other (excluded from analysis using gender due to the

small sample size). There were 1192 freshmen, 391 sophomores, 534 juniors, and 1093 seniors. Class status was determined by number of credit hours. In the sample, 70.9% identified as Hispanic, 11.7% identified as African American/Black, 10.7% identified as European/White, 4.5% as Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.7% as multiple ethnicities, .2% as prefer not to say, .2% as other, and .1% as Native American. These data were later consolidated into the ethnic groups of Hispanic, African American/Black, European/White, and Other due to the small sample sizes of the other groups.

Instrumentation

Data was collected using the Global Perspective Inventory. The GPI was developed to measure the ability of individuals to take a GP at different points in life (Braskamp et al., 2014). In developing the GPI, Braskamp et al. utilized King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) model of intercultural maturity. This model builds on Kegan's (1994) constructivist model of lifespan development in their multidimensional model of intercultural maturity, which describes maturity as "self-authorship" (p. 185), which is made up of individuals' ability to organize and understand their lives through three human development domains: cognitive (thinking), intrapersonal (self-awareness), and interpersonal (interacting with others). King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) model of intercultural maturity consists of attributes and skills from each of the three human development domains as well as developmental benchmarks leading to intercultural communication. Essentially, as students develop intercultural maturity in each domain, they gain awareness and acceptance of difference, ultimately gaining the ability to act in ways that are interculturally appropriate or aware. Braskamp et al. (2014) used the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains in the construction of the GPI domains. FIU uses the 2010 version of the GPI to assess whether FIU students are acquiring a GP by the time they graduate.

The three domains of the GPI are each broken down into two different subscales and those subscales are measured by multiple questions. The respondents answer each question using a five-point Likert scale that includes *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. Averaged together, the mean of the scores of all three domains represents an individual's overall GP, but each subscale provides a more nuanced look at the students' gains. For each scale, the higher the score, the more the students' capability in that domain. These scales indicate students' GP and correspond to FIU's global learning outcomes: global perspective, global engagement, and global awareness. This analysis focuses on the effect of variables on students' overall GP scores and on the two subscales from the interpersonal domain, social responsibility and social interaction. The interpersonal domain measures the individual's comfort and acceptance of people with backgrounds or cultures different from their own (Braskamp et al., 2014). The social responsibility subscale measures the "level of interdependence and social concern for others" and the social interactions subscale measures the "degree of engagement with others who are different from oneself and degree of cultural sensitivity in living in pluralistic settings" (Braskamp et al., 2014, p. 5).

This analysis focuses only on the overall mean score of all six subscales and the subscales of the interpersonal domain. Although all three domains are important for developing a global perspective, the scope of the project was limited by narrowing the analysis to only one. Relating with others is an important capability that people need to live in a society that is multicultural and racially diverse.

Reliability and Validity

Braskamp et al. (2014) examined the reliability and validity of the GPI instrument (see pp. 10-11); therefore, this research does not address it. Reliability is consistency in responses during an administration of the assessment and if participants respond the same or similarly to the same questions over time (Braskamp et al., 2014). They found that for test-retest reliability the participants' answers were consistent. They used coefficient alphas to test the internal consistency of each scale and found them to be consistent. They also addressed validity, using the standards of the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council for Measurement in Education (1999). According to these standards, validity is to what extent the interpretations of scores are supported by theory related to how the results of the test will be used. Braskamp et al. (2014) explain that the instrument is not recommended for assessing individual students, but rather should be used in aggregate to assess and evaluate program and institutional effectiveness. To test face validity, or the degree to which participants perceive the test as fair, Braskamp et al. (2014) sought feedback on each version of the survey from the pilot stage to the current version. They also address concurrent validity and construct validity (see pp. 11-12).

Data Analyses

This inquiry considered the research question: among FIU students, do global perspective scores vary by sex/gender, ethnicity, and grade level? This analysis used regression to answer the research question. Regression is appropriate for this analysis because it is used to estimate the effect of variables on the dependent variable. The variables considered for this analysis were class level, gender, and ethnicity. Class level is the year in school of the student: freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior. The number of credits determines year in school. Gender consists of male and female. Ethnicity is the self-reported response to the question "Which ethnic identity best describes you?" The choices are Multiple Ethnicities, African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, European/White, I prefer not to respond, and Other.

Results

The research addresses whether there are differences in means that are statistically significant and whether the following variables are significant predictors of students' global perspective outcomes. For all analyses N = 3198. To contextualize the research, it is helpful to look at Table 1 in the Appendix of the means for class level, gender, and ethnicity.

Results from Regression Analysis of Overall Mean

The overall model with the independent variables (gender, ethnicity, and class level) successfully predicted the dependent variable (GP overall mean), which is indicated by F-value of 16.712 ($p < 0.01$) and R-square of 0.026 ($p < 0.01$). Looking at the contribution of each independent variable, class level is the significant predictor in this model. The coefficient of class level ($\beta = 0.043$) is significant (t = 8.699, $p < 0.05$), and this is also verified by the significant Pearson's Coefficient between class level and mean (r = 0.156, $p < 0.05$). The other independent variables were insignificant in this model, although gender indicated a significant Pearson's correlation coefficient with the GP mean score (r = -0.044, $p < 0.05$). See Table 2 the Appendix or a detailed report on correlations.

Results from Regression Analysis of Interpersonal Domain: Social Responsibility

This analysis addresses the research questions for the Interpersonal Domain, social responsibility subscale, which answers the questions "How do I relate to others?" (Braskamp et al., 2014, p. 5). The overall model with the independent variables (gender, ethnicity, and class

level) successfully predicts the dependent variable (social responsibility), which is indicated by F-value of 12.323 (p < 0.01) and R-square of 0.019 (p < 0.01). When looking at the contribution of each independent variable, all variables were significant predictors in this model. The coefficient of class level ($\beta = 0.026$) is significant (t = 3.368, p < 0.05), verified by the significant Pearson's Coefficient between class level and social responsibility (r = 0.069, p < 0.05). The coefficient of gender ($\beta = -0.108$) is significant (t = -5.317, p < 0.05), which is confirmed by the significant Pearson's Coefficient (r = -0.100, p < 0.05). The coefficient of African American ethnicity ($\beta = 0.161$) is significant (t = 3.877, p < 0.05), verified by the significant Pearson's Coefficient (r = 0.034, p < 0.05). However, African American ethnicity also has a reasonably high correlation with other independent variables with a tolerance value of 0.541. The coefficient of Hispanic ethnicity ($\beta = 0.123$) is significant (t = 3.829, p < 0.05); however, the Pearson's Coefficient is not significant (r = 0.069, p > 0.05). Collinearity also indicates a high level of correlation with other variables with a value of 0.450. The coefficient of other ethnicity ($\beta = 0.136$) is significant (t = 2.819, p < 0.05); however, the Pearson's Coefficient is not significant (r = 0.008, p > 0.05) and collinearity also indicates a high level of correlation with other variables with a value of 0.656. See Table 3 in the Appendix for a detailed report on correlations.

Results from Regression Analysis of Interpersonal Domain: Social Interactions

This analysis addresses the research questions for the Interpersonal Domain category, social interactions subscale, measuring "How do I relate to others?" (Braskamp et al., , 2014, p. 5). The overall model with the independent variables (gender, ethnicity, and class level) successfully predicts the dependent variable (social interaction), which is indicated by F-value of 20.546 (p < 0.01) and R-square of 0.031 (p < 0.01). When looking at the contribution of each independent variable, class level, Hispanic ethnicity, and other ethnicity were significant predictors in this model. The coefficient of class level ($\beta = 0.059$) is significant (t = 8.247, p < 0.05), verified by the significant Pearson's Coefficient between class level and social responsibility (r = 0.145, p < 0.05). The coefficient of Hispanic ethnicity ($\beta = -0.062$) is significant (t = -2.066, p < 0.05), confirmed by the significant Pearson's Coefficient (r = -0.080, p < 0.05). However, collinearity indicates a high level of correlation with other variables with a tolerance of 0.450. The coefficient of other ethnicity ($\beta = 0.120$) is significant (t = 2.680, p < 0.05), confirmed by the significant Pearson's Coefficient (r = 0.074, p < 0.05), but collinearity also indicates a fairly high level of correlation with other variables with a tolerance of 0.656. The coefficient of African American ethnicity ($\beta = 0.006$) is not significant (t = 0.147, p > 0.05), though there is a weak, but significant Pearson's Coefficient (r = 0.031, p < 0.05). African American ethnicity also has reasonably high correlation with other independent variables with a tolerance of 0.541. The coefficient of gender ($\beta = -0.033$) is not significant (t = -1.741, p > 0.05), though there is a significant Pearson's Coefficient (r = -0.049, p < 0.05). See Table 4 in the Appendix for a detailed report on correlations.

Discussion and Implications

The results of the analyses indicate that class level is a significant factor in a student's global perspective for all analyses. This is consistent with the findings of Braskamp et al. (2011; 2014), that GP increased over the course of a student's university career and that seniors had greater GP than freshmen. Regression indicated that freshman and sophomores had different GP than juniors and seniors, which is consistent with Braskamp et al.'s (2011; 2014) results that GP

increased over the course of a student's university career. Analysis of the social responsibility scale indicates that class, gender, and African American ethnicity had significant covariance, though African American ethnicity had somewhat high correlation with other variables and may not add much to the model. The results for social interaction found that class, Hispanic ethnicity, and other ethnicity were significant predictors, though both ethnicity variables were highly correlated with other variables and may not add much to the model. The results of the social interaction scale also showed class, Hispanic ethnicity, and other ethnicity as significant predictors of the model. This is consistent with the findings of Braskamp et al. (2011) that ethnicity was a factor in global perspective; in the case of the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions, African American and Hispanic students tended to score higher than white students.

These results tell us that class level is the most important predictor of global perspective scores for FIU students for all three scales analyzed. This seems logical since seniors will have taken more courses and therefore by the end of university will have engaged more with other students through classwork such as group assignments. Results also indicate that gender and ethnicity may play a role in the acquisition of GP, though in limited and different ways. In general, the findings are consistent with the contention that FIU students may be gaining a GP in the interpersonal domain during their education at FIU.

Although some results were significant, further research is needed to examine the global perspective of FIU students. It is possible that gender and ethnicity are significant in scales other than the ones examined here. Although class level was the significant predictor in all models, further analysis of the rest of the subscales would determine if this continues to be true across all domains. Analyses of cohort data may determine if these findings are consistent with other FIU samples or specific to the 2013-2014 year. Analysis of data with pre-test and post-test scores for students would also provide valuable insight into the change of GP over time.

The strengths of this study are in the statistical significance of the results. However, the study has limitations to interpretation and generalization of the findings. Among the limitations is that only one year of cross-sectional data were used in the analysis. Additionally, there were many more freshmen than seniors in the sample used; a more representative sample would have been better. It should also be noted that non-traditional aged students were not excluded; results may have been different without those cases. Further analysis with students who are not traditionally aged should be conducted to see whether that has an impact on correlations between age and social responsibility and social interaction. Further research should also be conducted with full-time and part-time students to see whether there is a difference between groups.

Conclusion

The results for all tests were statistically significant in terms of class level, and in some cases, ethnicity and gender. However, gender and ethnicity played less of a role than expected. Based on the results, there is some evidence that seniors have an increased global perspective than freshmen. These conclusions are tentative since the analyses were not conducted on all GPI scales and were only done with cross-sectional data. Further analysis is needed for stronger interpretation and evaluation of the effects of college on students' global perspective including: analysis of cohorts at FIU; comparison between FIU students and non-college students, community college students, or those at other colleges; comparing traditional aged students and non-traditional aged students to see if the class level results are still consistent; and analysis of students with international experiences to see if they make greater GP gains.

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Appendix

Table 1

Means of Overall Global Perspective, Social Responsibility, and Social Interaction

	Overall Mean	Social Responsibility	Social Interaction
Freshmen	3.770	3.804	3.675
Sophomore	3.784	3.806	3.662
Junior	3.854	3.921	3.823
Senior	3.897	3.881	3.839
Male	3.809	3.777	3.720
Female	3.841	3.893	3.773
Hispanic	3.827	3.857	3.727
African American	3.852	3.902	3.798
White	3.821	3.738	3.791
Other	3.831	3.870	3.900

Table 2
Correlations of the Overall Global Perspective Mean

	Overall Mean	Hispanic	African American	Other	Class Level
Hispanic	-.011				
African American	.023	-.567*			
Other	.001	-.420*	-.098*		
Class Level	.156*	.010	.008	-.038	
Gender	-.044	.044	-.040	-.002	-.109*

*p < .001

Table 3
Correlations of Social Responsibility

	Social Responsibility	Hispanic	African American	Other	Class Level
Hispanic	.018				
African American	.034	-.567*			
Other	.008	-.420*	-.098*		
Class Level	.069*	.010	.008	-.038	
Gender	-.100*	.044	-.040	-.002	-.109*

*p < .001

Table 4
Correlations of Social Interaction

	Social Interaction	Hispanic	African American	Other	Class Level
Hispanic	-.080*				
African American	.031	-.567*			
Other	.074*	-.420*	-.098*		
Class Level	.145*	.010	.008	-.038	
Gender	-.049*	.044	-.040	-.002	-.109*

*p < .05