



**THE EFFECTS OF STUDYING ABROAD ON BOTH PERSONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

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Abstract

In the era of globalization, which is becoming increasingly widespread, education abroad has become significant aspect of higher education, offering students to gain not only academic knowledge, but also valuable personal and professional experience. In this article, we will see how much studying abroad affects on their personal and professional development, and see research as an example, and their challenges as well.

Key words

Studying abroad, professional development, personal growth, education abroad, challenges

Introduction

As we approach a world of changing educational values and standards, the interest among students to study abroad has gained considerable attention as seeking not only knowledge, but also personal and professional development. The concept of education is remained, but the approach to the same thing has been changing over the years, the most obvious example for this is to study abroad. Globalization has become increasingly popular among higher institution students to pursue their career in abroad. Although study abroad programs consider formal academic settings to be a crucial part of the program, participants mostly report learning from social and cultural situations, personal challenges, and field experiences as a reason for sojourning (Heublein et al., 2011). It is recognised that major life events bear the potential for personality changes, developing through environmental factors (Specht, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2011). I also really interested in to study abroad and that is why I choose this topic to research. This research paper shows the impact of studying abroad on personal (responsibility, adaptability, language development, and critical thinking) and professional development (employability, improved career prospects, and development of professional skills)

Personal development

The effect of studying abroad on personal development is enormous, for instance, international education help students to enhance their abilities, such as self-efficiency, critical thinking, responsibility, cultural- awareness, adaptability, language development, and communication skills. When the student is far away from his family, the responsibility is already on his shoulder, he should manage time on his own, he makes decisions on his own, and he learns financial planning. The concept of self-efficacy was first introduced as a unidimensional construct by Albert Bandura and refers to people's perceptions of their own capabilities to manage a task successfully (Bandura, 1977). It is also labeled as the subjective expectation of competency and represents a basic ability to confront challenges with innovative ideas as well as with mental and physical endurance (Luszczynska et al., 2005, Schwarzer et al., 1997). When



they come to the new country, the first thing they encounter is cultural shock. They do not understand what is going on their environment if they know nothing about the country, about the people, about the culture. Many scientists recommend after moving one country for education or for job opportunities, people should research on this country, then students do not face on such challenges, such as cultural shock and social isolation and adaptation difficulties. Education abroad is not so easy, however, if student can solve the problems he encounters, he can be successful. International student enrollments continue to increase at U.S. institutions of higher education, reaching a record high of 886,052 in the 2013/14 academic year, which constituted 8.1 percent increase over the previous year and reflecting a global trend of students in higher education wishing to pursue studies outside their homeland. In one research which is conducted by American institution said that they compare student social abilities between international students and the students who study in their native country. When the experiment results are out, the scientists are shocked, because the percentage of the confidence of students are definitely different. (Milian, M., Birnbaum, M., Cardona, B., & Nicholson, B. (2015). Personal and professional challenges and benefits of studying abroad. *Journal of International Education and Leadership*, 5(1), n1.)

Professional development

Education overseas has a significant impact on personal growth by enhanced employability, development of professional skills, and improved career prospects. Firstly, they are developed academically, because the thing which they study abroad gives more chances to gain reputation, and it helps them to find high-paid job easily. For example, there is two people who are seeking job and one of them studied in his own country, and another one studied abroad and highly qualified, think the employer employ which of them? – the answer is ready, of course, they recruit the one who is highly experienced and more qualified. In general, why people are seeking the institutions which has reputation, the reason is who had the diploma of reputational high institution, he has more opportunities to be hired by high-paid jobs. They have the opportunity to compare their international experience with their own country's education. Often they can share the benefits of the new education system they have met abroad with their students, and they can increase the quality of the education by applying new teaching strategies which they have seen abroad (Serin, H. (2017).

Besides that they can improve their soft skills by studying abroad. Soft skills are core professional skills. Organization skills, leadership skills, time management are included into the soft skills which are highly valued in the global labor market. These skills enable graduates to perform effectively in international and multicultural workplace.

According to the research which is held by Milian, Birnbaum, Cardona, Nicholson in RMU, 74 percent of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed that they were receiving a quality education at RMU, 20 percent had neutral feeling about their academic program, and 6 percent of the participants were not satisfied with the educational program that they were receiving. Some of comments validating the benefits of studying abroad, particularly at RMU included:

- *Program is not available in my country.*

- *I feel that I'm improving a lot here, and it has been a great experience for me. I also felt very proud for being part of RMU*



• *Small but great campus. Understanding professors. Great advisor. I love the activities offered by CIE. Everyone is understanding and sensitive to the needs of international students.*

• *Small school, good contact with professors, activities and trips for international student.*

The following comments illustrate some of the social and cultural comments contributed by the students:

• *Meeting friends from all around the world, visiting new places, having a valuable experience, learning practically, being independent.*

• *It gave me a new network of friends and contacts. It taught me a new way of learning and a new method to study, different from the Italian one.*

• *New friends, new experiences to a new school, new system and learning more about the world and myself.*

• *Getting my degree, and learning a new thing, and making friends from other culture.*

Conclusion

In conclusion, studying abroad has significant impact on both personal and professional development. International students learn how to solve problems on their own, such as language barriers, cultural shock, financial difficulties, and social isolation. By encountering these challenges, they become the owner of personal soft skills, and they are really helpful for their future career. In addition, for professional development, for their reputation, education abroad is really essential. Studying abroad enhances employability by equipping students with valuable academic knowledge, practical experience, and essential professional skills. Graduates with international education backgrounds are often more competitive in the job market, due to their global competencies, adaptability, and ability to work in multicultural environment.

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