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# Cultivating the Self-Awareness of Global Students: The Role of Communities of Practice

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## Abstract

Research on the impact of leadership education programs on undergraduate students has demonstrated that cultivating self-awareness is foundational to developing other leadership capacities. Yet, scant research has been undertaken to understand the impact of leadership education on global students. For the sake of this research, global students include any undergraduate student who had spent a significant portion of their development years outside the country of higher education. As such, global students include international students as well as other globally mobile students such as children of international military personnel, businesspeople, and religious workers. This qualitative research sought to understand how global students cultivated self-awareness. Findings indicated that global students negotiated their sense of self through processing interpersonal messaging provided by others in multiple spheres of influence. The experiences of these global students demonstrate the importance of providing an intercultural community of practice in cultivating the self-awareness of global students.

## Background and Literature

Higher education professionals have long been concerned with holistically cultivating young adults who have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to engage as ethical leaders in a globalized world. Moreover, Christian higher education faculty and staff have a missional mandate to cultivate global leaders who will be change agents in their future vocations. Thus, intentional leadership education programs need to be embedded in both the curriculum and co-curricular aspects of Christian higher education institutions in order to provide opportunities for emerging adults to garner the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a future change agent.

Extensive research in leadership education has indicated that cultivating consciousness of self in undergraduate students is foundational for other areas of leadership development (Baxter Magolda, 2008; Chickerling & Reisner, 1993; Komives et al., 2006). Consciousness of self includes awareness of personal beliefs, values, emotions, and attitudes (Dugan & Komives, 2010). Cultivating a strong sense of self is foundational to becoming an ethical leader because it “contributes to one’s ability to understand others and work with others toward change, which requires more complex developmental capacity” (Haber & Komives, 2009, p. 133).

Extant research has indicated that interaction with faculty plays a role in increasing students’ abilities to engage in leadership (Dugan & Komives, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Quantitative research has also indicated that involvement in student organizations and having formal leadership roles enhances undergraduate students’ self-awareness (Haber & Komives, 2009). Both the curriculum and constituency in leadership programs are shown to impact participants’ cultivation of self-awareness (Dugan et al., 2011; Komives et al., 2006). High impact curriculum includes experiential learning and critical reflection with diverse others, which provide opportunities for self-differentiation (Dugan & Komives, 2010). Engagement in a diverse community of practice provides participants with a “platform for the development of listening skills, clarification of personal values and perspectives, and social perspective taking” (Dugan & Komives, 2010, p. 539). The concept of communities of practice was derived from a social theory of learning, which emphasizes the impact of meaning, practice, community, and identity working together synergistically (Wenger, 1998). According to social learning theory, the actual embodied practice within specific contexts is crucial

for interpersonal meaning making. Thus, in this view, meaning making cannot be separated from the communities in which an individual is engaged in an agreed upon practice.

Yet, firsthand exposure to diverse others does not always determine openness to the process of garnering self-awareness. In a community of practice with diverse others, certain conditions assist participants in cultivating consciousness of self: a sense of group purpose and a commitment to critical self-reflection (Illeris, 2014, Killick, 2015). Schapiro et al. (2012) also clarified that dialogue undertaken in intercultural groups provides a synergistic space for both self-awareness and others-awareness.

While multiple studies have been undertaken to understand the impact of leadership programs on domestic students, global students have not been delineated in the research. In this study, I define global students to be any undergraduate student who had spent a significant portion of their developmental years outside the country of their higher education institution. As such, global students include international students as well as other globally mobile students such as children of international military personnel, businesspeople, and religious workers. There are many differences between those who would traditionally be labeled an international student and U.S. passport holders who grew up internationally. Yet, in our age of globalization there are many similarities among these students such as the multiple identities they must negotiate having been socialized in pluralistic environments like international secondary schools. Characteristics of an international secondary school may include the following: ethnic and linguistic diversity in constituency, use of an internationally approved curriculum, English as the medium of instruction for the majority of subjects, and a pipeline for attending university outside the country, such as the United States (Hayden et al., 2002) Therefore, prior to coming to the United States for higher education, the majority of the participants in this research engaged with diverse others from multiple cultural backgrounds and value systems (see Table 1). I recognize that such a label of global students could be unwelcome by some, but I seek to have an inclusive stance towards all students who have spent a portion of their developmental years outside the country of their higher education. Also, it should be noted that although I employ the terminology of “global students” for participants of this research, previous empirical research has been conducted mainly on international students.

Extant research has indicated that international students experience greater levels of learning in leadership development programs and courses where professors actively sought to engage students in intergroup dialogue (Glass, 2012). Also, participation in co-curricular activities, such as leadership programs, increased the sense of belonging international students experience on campus (Glass & Westmont, 2014). Intentional leadership development of international students also assisted them in achieving higher levels of self-efficacy and confidence (Calley, 2021; Collier et al., 2017). Additionally, personal mentorship from faculty and staff has been shown to assist international students in their leadership development skills (Shalka, 2017).

While the data on international students' experiences in leadership programs has been increasing in the past decade, U.S. citizens who have grown up internationally have not been taken into account (La Brack, 2011, Van Reken, 2011). Thus, this research sought to not only illuminate the experiences of international students, but also to account for the experiences of other globally mobile students such as children of international military personnel, businesspeople, and religious workers. While it has been documented that leadership programs can provide opportunities for students to cultivate consciousness of self, understanding this phenomenon qualitatively from the perspective of global students can provide nuance to the previous empirical research as well as implications for Christian higher education institutions. Thus, this research focused on understanding how global students described cultivating self-awareness through participating in a leadership development program. The guiding research question was: How do global students describe the impact of participation in an intercultural leadership development program on cultivating their sense of self?

## Methodology and Participants

In order to understand and explain how global students described cultivating self-awareness in a leadership program, I utilized a constructivist, qualitative approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Constructivist, qualitative inquiry is an inductive process where researchers seek to understand meanings that participants ascribe to their experiences (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach was appropriate for the study as I sought to understand the personal perspectives of participants in their own words regarding this phenomenon. I wanted the voices of the students themselves to be

prominent, demonstrating their agency, especially since the perspectives of global students are often not highlighted in the academy.

This instrumental case study was undertaken at a private, Christian university in Southern California which provided an intercultural leadership development program specifically for global students. This program was designed and implemented by staff at the university with the goal of providing developmental opportunities for global students. Between 40 and 50 global students participated in this program yearly. The program consisted of leadership trainings in an experiential learning cycle within diverse teams. Participants not only learned about leadership through trainings but also by providing cultural awareness activities to the greater student body.

In order to understand the experiences of the participants from their own perspectives, I conducted intensive, semi-structured interviews with 26 undergraduate global students who participated in the year-long leadership development program. The interviews were conducted in their post-baccalaureate life, either in their passport country or in the United States. Of these 26 global students, 16 would be considered international students who attended the university on a student visa, while 10 of them were United States citizens who spent their developmental years in a country outside of the United States before coming to the university to pursue undergraduate studies (see Table 1).

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**Table 1**  
*Snapshot of participants*

Name	Passport Country	Global Mobility	Languages Other than English
Samantha	Indonesia	China	Indonesian Mandarin
Elena	United States	Mexico	Spanish
Joy	Singapore	Vietnam Myanmar	
Cyndi	China		Mandarin
Sage	United States	Slovakia Hungary	Slovakian
James	South Korea	South Korea Fiji Australia Indonesia Singapore	Korean Indonesian Mandarin

MJ	Indonesia	China	Indonesian Mandarin
Ivy	Taiwan	China	Mandarin
Aspen	Cameroon		French Cameroonian
Eno	Indonesia		Indonesian
Jennifer	United States	China	Mandarin
Angie	South Africa		
Alice	United States	France Sweden	French Swedish
Stephen	Singapore	Canada Australia	
Hannah	United States	Korea	Korean
Jamie	Canada	South Korea United Arab Emirates	Korean
Grace	South Korea	Kenya	Korean
Lisa	United States	Singapore	Mandarin
Jeremy	United States	Pakistan	Urdu
Tony	Malaysia	Singapore	Mandarin
Ann	South Korea	Algeria France Saipan	Korean French
Sandra	United States	Jordan	Arabic
Rose	Hong Kong	China	Mandarin
Bruce	United States	Hong Kong	Mandarin
Mary	United States	Indonesia	Indonesian
Sarah	Indonesia		Indonesian Mandarin

Adhering to research standards, I obtained ethical clearance from the university prior to beginning interviews. Also, participants were provided with consent forms making them aware of both the risks of benefits of participation in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After receiving consent, interviews were conducted in two phases due to accessibility during the COVID-19 pandemic: 15 interviews were conducted in person, while 11 were conducted via Zoom.

The majority of the participants were multilingual with high proficiencies in English; thus, interviews were conducted in English. Interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed using an online transcription service. After all the interviews were transcribed, participants were given

an opportunity to do member checks to demonstrate trustworthiness in the data collection process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After receiving permission from participants regarding the final copies of their interview transcriptions, I coded the 26 interviews using first and second cycle coding as well as constant comparative analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldaña, 2009; Saldaña & Omasta, 2022). In first cycle coding, I utilized both descriptive and process coding, looking for routines, rituals, roles, and relationships in participants' experiences (Saldaña & Omasta, 2022). Once all data was accounted for and labeled in first cycle coding, I utilized second cycle coding and constant comparative analysis to develop saturated categories from the first cycle codes. These findings are delineated using thick description to again demonstrate trustworthiness (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

While there are many models that could be utilized to organize the findings of this research for discussion, this research focused on emerging adults who engaged in co-curricular leadership development during their undergraduate years, so an ecological model provided a helpful interpretative framework as it shed light on the interaction between people and environment (Patton et al., 2016). Patton et al. (2016) asserted, "Educators can use ecological models to understand how student development occurs and to consider how to shape campus environments to promote optimal growth and development for diverse student populations" (p. 41). Thus, in order to make sense of the findings, I employed Bronfenbrenner's (1993) developmental ecology as a theoretical framework. According to Bronfenbrenner (1993), there are inherent attributes of a person which may "induce or inhibit dynamic dispositions toward the immediate environment" (p. 11). Thus, a student's reaction to the university environment may either promote or deter self-negotiation. Moreover, there are layers of environments which may influence students in cultivating self-awareness. Within each of these systems, there are influences and structures that students must navigate, informing their sense of self. Bronfenbrenner delineated these environments as microsystems, mesosystems, and exosystems. According to the model, microsystems are those which have the most direct influence on an individual, mesosystems have less of a direct influence, and exosystems have the least influence.

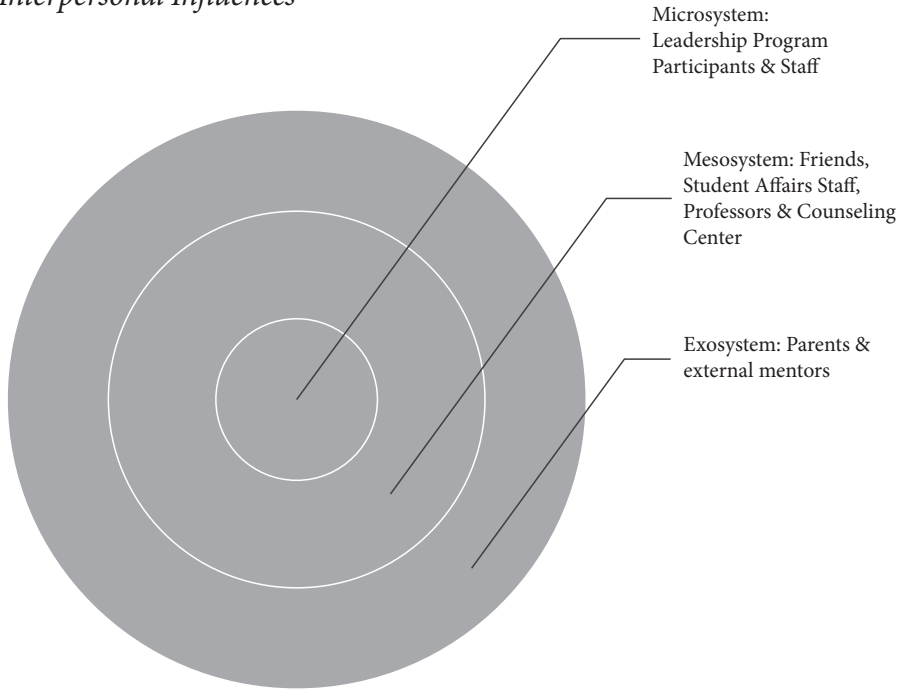


## Findings

The goal of this research was to understand how global students described cultivating self-awareness through participation in an intercultural leadership development program. Findings from this research indicated that global students accessed multiple sources of interpersonal input to make sense of themselves, their skills, and their role in leadership. Of the 26 participants in the study, 24 indicated accessing personalized feedback from interpersonal connections. Utilizing the messaging from their interpersonal connections served to assist participants in engaging in an intrapersonal meaning-making process. In this meaning-making process, global student leaders were able to sort through messaging and clarify their sense of self.

As noted previously, microsystems are those which have the most direct influence on an individual, mesosystems have less of a direct influence, and exosystems have the least influence. For the sake of this research, microsystems are the direct influence of the other participants in the leadership program as well as the student development staff connected to the leadership program. The mesosystem is considered the undergraduate institution in which the participants were enrolled, including friend groups, faculty members, counseling center professionals, and other student affairs staff outside the leadership program. The exosystem consisted of any interpersonal input received from those external to the university system, such as parental influence and influence of external mentors. Participants in this study shared that they engaged with these multiple feedback channels during their year in the leadership program, with the most salient being the microsystem (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
*Interpersonal Influences*



Microsystem

Data indicated that participants in the leadership development program experienced the most interpersonal impact from those in their immediate circle of influence within the microsystem. These included both other participants in the leadership development program and the student development staff running the program. First, data were saturated with the experiences of participants who specified that the interpersonal feedback from other global student leaders in the program was significant in developing their consciousness of self. Sixteen out of the 26 participants in this research indicated that the other global students in the program provided salient opportunities for them to develop self-awareness. In the following sections I will share how the participants themselves described the ways in which their interpersonal meaning making experiences impacted their self-awareness.

***Engaging with Peers***

Jamie, ethnically Korean, who spent her development years in both Canada and Abu Dhabi, shared that another participant in the leadership program impacted her by asking clarifying questions regarding her experience working with culturally diverse others. As a self-declared

verbal processor, she stated that her co-participant, “helped me talk through a lot of my emotions . . . help me to kind of dig into myself . . . and what I was going through and being a leader.” Grace also described her experience on the leadership team as one that helped her process her multiple identities. Ethnically and in terms of nationality, Grace is South Korean. Yet she grew up in Kenya, attending an American international school. Grace recalled processing how she associated with Kenyan culture, and how she dealt with disliking Korean culture and values. Yet, through externally processing with another leadership program participant from South Africa, she began to get more clarity on her multiple identities. She shared, “Just talking made me realize I could never be Kenyan. But I can also have a different social role.” Through these conversations, she began to appreciate her Korean identity, describing it as, “like being glad I’m Korean or being okay that I’m Korean. And that I do have Korean values, even if I don’t want to.” Another participant, Lisa, a U.S. citizen who grew up in Singapore, shared that making friends in the leadership program assisted her in making sense of herself and others. She described her experience in the following passage:

I think having been a part of the [leadership] team, I really made solid friendships through that. I was very thankful for the fact that I could make those friendships and have that sense of belonging. So different people on the team were definitely very helpful, either just listening to my frustrations or letting me know that you’re going a little too far with this opinion, you may come back a little bit, or kind of presenting me another view. So that was really helpful.

Thus, the other participants in the leadership program provided salient feedback for her to make sense of herself.

Jennifer, a United States citizen who grew up in China, shared that talking with another leader in the program helped her to clarify her role and needs as a leader. She stated, “It helped me identify how I function in a group, what my role is being a leader, and also needing affirmation and being vulnerable.” Finally, Alice, also a United States citizen, who was raised in France and Sweden understood how participating on a team of diverse individuals developed her consciousness of her abilities. She stated,

I learned that I was more capable than I thought. And initially I was very nervous to work with eight people, because that was a lot of people . . . But I learned that I was able to kind of build

relationships with them and establish trust, to different degrees. A few of my teammates never completely warmed to me. But most they were still able to work with me. So I thought it gave me insight into my ability to meet people where they are and welcome them and create a safe spaces for them to talk about their experiences.

In this excerpt, Alice demonstrated how she became more cognizant of her intercultural skills through engaging with other members of the leadership development program. These four excerpts are representative of the data which demonstrate that global students were able to cultivate self-awareness through interpersonal engagement with other their peers in the leadership development program.

### ***Engaging with Leadership Program Staff***

While the majority of the participants looked to their peers in the program for interpersonal feedback, 13 participants also connected with the leadership program staff to process their sense of self. Elena, a U.S. citizen who grew up in Southern Mexico, shared that a member of the leadership development program staff was able to “pick out things and potential” that she didn’t see in herself. She stated, “My mentor was able to guide me in learning specific things that were very socially concentrated . . . and that gave me a lot of confidence.” Thus, Elena’s engagement with her mentor in the leadership program provided salient messages helping her cultivate self-awareness.

James was a participant in the leadership program who experienced a highly mobile childhood. He is ethnically and nationally South Korean, but spent his developmental years in Australia, Fiji, and Indonesia. Through one-on-one meetings with the leadership program staff, James was able to “take a step back and look at my life.” This provided him an opportunity to cultivate self-awareness. Regarding that self-awareness, he shared,

One thing I can think of is that I learned that even though I’m an introvert I really like people and to hear their stories. They say college is the time where you figure out yourself your identity, I think, that was a major, major experience where I realized that about myself. So, I am more quiet, shy, sometimes. Not extroverted and energetic, but since I really enjoy spending time with people and hearing their stories, showing care and concern, able to empathize, I think I realized that this is really part of my DNA and my values.

Through this excerpt, James demonstrated how engaging with the leadership program staff assisted him in intrapersonal meaning making.

Angie, a South Africa citizen of East Indian ancestry, shared that meeting with her staff mentor one-on-one helped her to understand why she was so insecure with decision making in leadership. She explained, “I was constantly insecure about, am I making the right decision? Am I making the right choice? Is there a better choice that I’m not choosing? Because it’s hard, am I not choosing it? Also, what is going on there?” Angie stated that talking with the staff member gave her insight into her insecurities as well as provided her with confidence to continue to grow. Finally, Joy, a Singaporean national who grew up in Myanmar, shared how experiencing mentorship from women was impactful in cultivating her sense of self and her leadership skills. Joy stated, “that was also very inspiring to be around . . . I felt empowered.” Noting this empowerment, she shared that she saw herself as a valid leader for the first time.

These examples are just a handful of excerpts from participants delineating the role of staff in cultivating their self-awareness. Together with the data regarding engagement with peers, these excerpts demonstrate the most salient finding of this research: Global student participants indicated that they were able to cultivate their sense of self through feedback from their microsystem—leadership program peers and staff.

#### Mesosystem

Outside of that immediate circle of influence lies the mesosystem which includes friends, other student affairs staff, faculty, and community resources such as the university counseling center. While not as salient for participants as the microsystem, this layer of input is present in the data in that five out of the 26 participants indicated that friends outside of the leadership program provided feedback to them which helped them develop their self-awareness. One participant, Eno, an Indonesian with Chinese heritage, shared the following about the impact of her friends on her self-awareness:

I think because of the close friendships I made, I become more compassionate, I become more patient actually because of their relationships I made. I think that that was the first time that I realized there are values. And there are ways to value people other than career or academic achievement. There are certain values that you can ascribe to in their relationship and in the way that you can treat people.

Thus, engaging with her friend group gave her input on her val-

ues, broadened her perspective, and impacted her understanding of compassion.

MJ, also an Indonesian with Chinese heritage, indicated that his friends provided feedback on his great listening skills. He stated, “A lot of people have been telling me that, and I noticed in myself that I’m a pretty good listener.” Gaining this self-awareness provided a desire to provide more personal mentorship to others through listening. Aspen, a Cameroonian who grew up among multiple cultural influences, thought more deeply about her multiple identities as she watched her global friends navigate theirs. She explained,

One of my best friends, Melody [(not a participant)], she’s Korean. She grew up in Kenya for pretty much her whole life. So she doesn’t identify with Korean culture in a lot of ways. But then she does. She identifies with Kenyan culture in some ways. So it’s been a process of engaging in intentional conversations with these people around me, who are going through a similar journey.

Thus, engaging with her friends assisted Aspen in garnering self-awareness.

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Similarly, Jeremy also shared that his community of friends helped him to “process his cultural background” providing a “close and very accepting community.” These excerpts demonstrate that some participants experienced the influence of their friends as salient in their interpersonal meaning making process.

Not only did friends external to the leadership program provide participants with an opportunity to cultivate self-awareness, but five participants also indicated accessing faculty perspectives for interpersonal input. As a poignant example, Elena shared that one of her professors intentionally took her under her wing and helped her process her value system. According to Elena, her professor stated, “All of us have values that we think that we have that we hold unconsciously. But identifying them helps us not only relate to others better, but also understand ourselves better.” Following up on that process, Elena identified her top three values of love, justice, and freedom, which helped give her perspective on the mental conflict she was having. Other participants indicated utilizing faculty members for cultivation of their sense of self, but without many specifics.

Four participants also indicated that student affairs professionals assisted them in helping them garner self-awareness. The participants

discussed having outside sources just a “text away” to provide support and encouragement. They valued the voices outside of the program to be sounding boarding for the interpersonal meaning-making process. Student affairs practitioners included resident assistants and spiritual development staff. Also, within the mesosystem, two participants indicated that accessing feedback from counselors in the university’s counseling center was helpful in making sense of themselves. Thus, within the mesosystem participants indicated cultivating their self-awareness through engagement with friends, faculty, student affairs staff, and the counseling center.

#### Exosystem

Moving beyond the mesosystem is the exosystem, which is external to university and of least influence on participants. Of the 26 participants, only three participants indicated cultivating self-awareness through conversations with parents and external mentors. In this layer, there were only two participants who shared that talking with their parents helped them to negotiate their sense of self, and those two instances were connected to their skills as intercultural leaders. Another participant indicated connecting to his mentor in his home country at times, but also shared that the mentor did not always understand his context or how to guide him. Thus, the data demonstrate that the role of parents and external mentors was not as salient for participants who experienced cultivating self-awareness in a leadership development program. This disparity between the salience of interpersonal input for participants is significant and will be explored in the discussion section.

#### Discussion

Global students in this research indicated that interpersonal messaging assisted them in developing their self-awareness. The most salient input was provided by the microsystem, or other leadership program participants and staff. Next, participants indicated that input from the mesosystem, individuals outside the leadership program but within the university system, was somewhat salient. Finally, the least prominent input was received from their exosystem, which was anyone outside of the university system. In comparison to previous research on the impact of leadership development programs on undergraduate students, this study substantiates general research on the impact of leadership education. For example, it corroborates Haber and Komives’s (2009) study on the impact of formal leadership roles in cultivating self-awareness. This

study also validates Dugan and Komives's (2010) research on how socio-cultural conversations with peers provide opportunities for self-differentiation. It also substantiates Glass's (2012) research on the leadership development of international students which indicated intergroup dialogue was a prominent factor.

Yet, these findings on global students' cultivation of self-awareness provide more nuance to those previous studies as it delineates the importance of the community of practice. This research indicates that global student leaders cultivated self-awareness through receiving feedback mainly from other participants in the leadership program and leadership program staff. While participants did indicate that others outside of the program such as friends and faculty members did help to clarify some participants' consciousness of self, the findings also indicated that parents and external mentors were not as utilized for the cultivation of self-awareness. Looking at this data in light of previous research on international students in leadership programs, it stands in opposition to previous research by Nguyen (2016) as global student leaders did not report accessing feedback from their parents. Also, this research does not fully substantiate Shalka's (2017) research regarding the impact of being mentored by external campus staff and faculty. In contrast, the majority of leadership program participants shared that the interpersonal feedback that assisted them in making sense of themselves was garnered from their immediate circle: the microsystem of the leadership program. With a desire to understand these findings more fully, I will look at them in light of the concept of cultivating self-awareness in a community of practice.

#### Communities of Practice

As the majority of the participants indicated that they were able to develop consciousness of self through engaging with other members of the leadership program, this section will discuss a possible reason for this phenomenon—experiencing belonging in a community of practice.

The literature points to three distinctives of communities of practice: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Jenkins & Ednersby, 2019, Lave & Wenger, 1991). Seen in this light, the leadership program in which the global students engaged was a community of practice. Even though the global student leaders had different personalities, socio-economic backgrounds, and identities, findings demonstrate that their group process contained some level of mutuality—their identification as global students. In essence, data indicated there



was a sense of belonging to one another through their involvement in the program. Moreover, they had a common purpose and shared repertoire, making the sense of belonging even stronger. Their stories indicate that their multiple, individual identities were not minimized; instead, they were able to negotiate their identities in a place where they experienced belonging.

In this specific context, the participants negotiated their diverse ways of being, mindsets, and values with one another, creating a microcosm of diversity for participants to explore. While communities of practice are not inherently diverse, if they are, they can provide participants robust opportunities for self-reflection and intercultural understanding. Jackson (2019) noted, “Firsthand exposure to new communities of practice can compel individuals to reflect on and even question their behaviors, self-identities, values and beliefs” (p. 193). This observation holds true for participants in this research as they were compelled to reflect in their community of practice resulting in clarifying their sense of self. Thus, as the participants in this research engaged in an intercultural community of practice with mutuality, shared repertoire, and joint enterprise, they experienced identity negotiation through dialogue with trusted others in the program, both other student leaders and staff members. Those outside the program played less of a prominent role in participants’ cultivation of self-awareness as the community of practice was demonstrated to be a place of belonging and mutuality.

#### Limitations

The potential limitation of this study is researcher bias. Due to the fact that I had extensive contact with the research participants prior to conducting the study, I had to take multiple steps at ensuring trustworthiness during data collection and analysis. As such, I employed member checks, as well as the use of thick description and bracketing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

#### Implications and Conclusion

This research has multiple implications. First, while providing opportunities for global students to integrate into the larger university system is essential for their flourishing, providing communities of practice where they belong as global students could also be considered a best practice at Christian higher education institutions. Similar to other programs designed for niche groups of students such as first generation student programs and cultural affinity groups, programs designed specifically for global students may provide the belonging necessary for them to begin

cultivating consciousness of self. Yet, unlike other diversity programming on university campuses where specific cultural and/or identity groups facilitate brave spaces to negotiate their sense of self, this diverse group of students from a variety of nationalities, ethnicities, and language backgrounds was able to develop self-awareness through engaging with one another. This research demonstrates that belonging could be cultivated within very diverse groups if there is a common thread amongst the students.

The common thread for the participants of this research was being included as a global student. Thus, this inclusive posture towards all global students could be a high-impact practice for Christian higher education institutions to consider. Many universities provide transition services for international students and may provide opportunities for cultural celebration. Yet, United States citizens who grew up internationally are often not considered by either international student services offices, or diversity and inclusion efforts. They typically are marginalized, having to assimilate to a more monolithic group, rather being able to engage with their multiple identities, some of which may be hidden. Thus, this study demonstrates that their inclusion will not only help them to experience a sense of belonging, but also an opportunity to negotiate their multi-faceted sense of selves. In essence, providing such leadership development opportunities for all global students honors the *imago Dei* in all of them.

An intentional leadership development program for all global students provides an opportunity for those involved to engage in intercultural learning, breaking down barriers between diverse students. Thus, designing opportunities such as leadership programs geared specifically for global students may not only provide a place of belonging but also communities of practice where students can engage interculturally. Ultimately such intentional programming for all global students would demonstrate that they matter to the larger campus community. Finally, providing intentional leadership development for global students connects to the heart of the mission of Christian higher education institutions. Cultivating global leaders who are change agents in the world does not happen automatically. It must be intentionally connected to curricular and co-curricular programming, where all students—even global students—can have the opportunity to be transformed for their future vocational assignments.

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