Steadfastly White, Female, Hetero and Able-Bodied:

An International Survey on the Motivations and Experiences of Arts Management Graduates

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Introduction

Where practice once held a monopoly on the professional development of arts managers (DiMaggio 1987), academic arts management programs have now "become mainstream" (Figueira and Fullman 2016, 154). Since the 1980s, the number of programs in higher education institutions has risen across Asia, Australia, North America and parts of Europe at undergraduate and graduate levels (Dragićević Šešić 2015; Durrer 2018; O'Connor et al. 2019; Paquette and Redaelli 2015; Şuteu 2006). However, countries in South America, the Middle East and Africa (MENA), as well as parts of Central and Eastern Europe, have seen less growth (Costa 2017; Mandel and Allmanritter 2016).

In analyzing this growth, scholars have recognized and questioned the de facto standardization of practices that privilege Western European cultural perspectives while disregarding local cultural practices. Scholars have also interrogated the transferability of U.S.- and U.K.-based approaches to arts management practice through education and training initiatives in Russia, across Europe and in the MENA (Dragićević Šešić and Mihaljinac 2019; Şuteu 2006; Tchouikina 2010). Despite some research, arts management does not fully understand the potential and the impact of this standardization, as the discipline knows little about the demographic profiles of the individuals who have earned degrees in arts management, their motivation for choosing this discipline, and their experience during and after study.

While DiMaggio's (1987) study of U.S.-based arts administrators remains seminal, recent work by Dubois (2016) addresses this deficit. In the French context, Dubois analyzed individuals' social and economic backgrounds alongside motivations for studying cultural management. Like DiMaggio (1987), Dubois demonstrates that a large majority of students identify as female, well-educated and economically privileged. Dubois reports that arts managers tend to have substantial cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1984) due to having engaged in cultural activities since childhood and being introduced to the arts by relatives and acquaintances. Furthermore, while they engage in a wide range of cultural activities, their tastes constitute "elite" forms of culture. Dubois finds that this personal disposition towards the arts often correlates with internship or study that motivates arts management graduates.

Motivation can also relate to a perception of the higher social standing associated with working in the arts and the notion that one should contribute to society as well as to collective social or cultural activities. Understanding the demographics and educational experiences of graduates remains a gap in the literature, warranting further study, particularly as the international reach of arts management education has broad implications for the voices and viewpoints that dominate the global cultural sector.

While studies have explored the types of curriculum offered in arts management programs globally (e.g., Boylan 2000; Dragićević Šešić 2003; Fisher and Karpodini-Dimitriadi 2007),

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these are now out of date in a discipline that must respond to shifting global, national, and local socioeconomic and political circumstances. Recent research in the creative and cultural industries more broadly (e.g., Ashton and Noonan 2013; Comunian and Gilmore 2016; O'Connor et al. 2019) provides welcome additions to our understanding of the implications of curriculum and student experience for the development of these industries in specific national contexts. For example, Durrer (2018) considers how curriculum in the United Kingdom connects arts management to cultural policy; Fang (2018) undertakes a comparative study of arts management education in China, the United Kingdom and the United States; and Costa (2017) studies curricula in the Mexican and Colombian contexts. Still, English as the de facto language of arts management education and practice limits the ability to engage with parts of the world (Durrer and Henze 2018). This supports our observation that arts management discourses in non-English-speaking parts of the world do not appear in current English-language scholarship.

In the United States, Bienvenu (2004) considers the applicability of one's degree to one's career choices in order to assess graduates' perception of the value of studying arts management. Though we consider Şuteu's (2006) work the most critical, comprehensive and international review of arts management curricula, its Eurocentric lens limits its utility. Only the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) (2017a, 2017b) considers students' satisfaction levels, but this study focuses on the United States and ignores curricular questions.

These nation-specific studies provide fertile ground on which to build a picture of the state of education and career development in arts management, yet they lack connections between student demographics, the curriculum they choose, their motivations for doing so and their resultant employment outcomes.

Both DiMaggio (1987) and Dubois (2016) advocate for further research to explore whether and how educators meet the expectations of arts management students and how these expectations relate to work experience, job prospects and salary. Yet a gap persists in our knowledge of the programs, resources, curricula, and teaching and learning activities encompassing arts management education as well as who engages in these programs, why, how, and to what end exactly. Therefore, this study is aimed at understanding students' motivation for choosing arts management, their demographic profiles, and their experiences during and after study. We investigated four research questions: (1) What motivates students to choose arts management? (2) What is the demographic profile of arts management graduates? (3) What experiences did arts management graduates have during their studies? (4) What is the current employment status of arts management graduates? In this study, "arts management" connotes arts administration, cultural administration and cultural management programs. Also, we focus on graduates of management programs in the fine arts, heritage and performing arts, rather than the commercial sector or the creative industries.

ABSTRACT

This study found that 86% of survey respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their arts management degree. However, educators should refrain from celebrating. When it comes to demographic profiles across the globe, the study also found that arts management graduates self-identified primarily as white, female, able-bodied, heterosexual millennials. If graduates remain steadfastly privileged across multiple social identities, then the discipline and the field must collaborate proactively to ensure that students become critically engaged cultural brokers who can manage the arts in a diverse world. But by what means? First, with more curricular content on access, diversity, equity, inclusion and intercultural relations. Second, with strategic recruitment of diverse students. The discipline's ability to provide culturally responsive offerings for all people depends on these measures. The consequences of ignoring the lack of demographic diversity among graduates will diminish arts management's ability to effectively serve the most culturally vulnerable populations in our societies.

KEYWORDS

Access, arts management, diversity, equity, inclusion, higher education, graduates, internationalization, survey methodology

Methodology

To conduct the study, we developed an anonymous cross-sectional online descriptive survey using Qualtrics, a computer program for collecting and analyzing survey data. In devising our survey, we used three studies (Bienvenu 2004; SNAAP 2017a, 2017b) to conceptualize 30 questions. While most academic programs offer graduate degrees in arts management (Durrer 2018), our sample comprised those who held diplomas and bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. To gain a sense of the demographics, we included questions about respondents' age, (dis)ability, gender, race and sexual orientation. To assess motivations and attitudes related to study, we used a combination of closed, open-ended and Likert-type questions in order to understand what drew respondents to a program. A large proportion of the survey focused on attitudes regarding experiences during study, with questions taking into account the growing international make-up of classrooms. We also asked respondents about their overall satisfaction with their degree; what they particularly liked and disliked about their program; how they felt about participating in class; what opportunities they had for internships and studying abroad; how they interacted with their classmates; and what they found most challenging about their studies. To ascertain a sense of their current employment status, we asked respondents to state their current position title and the name of the cultural organization in which they worked.

To recruit respondents, we distributed the survey to graduates of three institutions. We then sent invitations to personal contacts, often in program directorship roles, via e-mail, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, through our international professional networks. Additionally, we asked the Arterial Network, the Association of Arts Administration Educators, the Asia Pacific Network for Cultural Education and Research, and the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres to distribute the survey to their members.

The survey remained opened for three weeks and yielded 560 responses across five continents: Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and North America. We analyzed the data iteratively, which allowed for the discovery of previously unexpected connections (Rowley 2014). Because the survey included both closed and open-ended questions, we employed a thematic approach to the analysis of open-ended responses, to ascertain any common attitudes and experiences across respondents (Braun and Clarke 2006). However, the study has its limitations.

Scholars argue that surveys invite the bias of respondents who have a strong desire to share either positive or negative experiences (Fink 2003; Fraenkel et al. 2012). In addition, despite our efforts to achieve diversity, our recruitment strategy relied heavily on program directors distributing the survey to their graduates, which assumed that these colleagues had access to and/or maintained accurate alumni records. Also, English is the dominant language in arts management literature and practice, and while we checked for clarity of questions across international contexts by consulting with the Brokering Intercultural Exchange network, our survey and distribution strategy excluded non-English-speaking

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude a révélé que 86 % des répondants au sondage étaient soit très satisfaits, soit satisfaits de leur diplôme en gestion des arts. Cependant, les éducateurs ne devraient pas célébrer pour autant. En matière de profils démographiques à travers le monde, l'étude a également révélé que les diplômés en gestion des arts s'identifiaient principalement comme millénaires blancs, femmes, valides et hétérosexuelles. Si les diplômés demeurent résolument privilégiés à travers de multiples identités sociales, la discipline et le domaine doivent collaborer de manière proactive pour s'assurer que les étudiants deviennent des courtiers culturels engagés et critiques qui sont en mesure de gérer les arts dans un monde diversifié. Mais par quels moyens ? Premièrement, en ajoutant aux curriculums davantage de contenus qui abordent l'accès, la diversité, l'équité, l'inclusion et les relations interculturelles. Deuxièmement, en assurant le recrutement stratégique d'une population étudiante plus diversifiée. La capacité de la discipline à proposer des offres adaptées à la culture de tous dépend de ces mesures. Les conséquences de faire abstraction du manque de diversité démographique chez les diplômés diminueront la capacité du domaine de la gestion des arts à servir de manière efficace les populations les plus culturellement vulnérables de nos sociétés.

MOTS CLÉS

Accès, gestion des arts, diversité, équité, inclusion, éducation supérieure, diplômés, internationalisation, méthodologie de sondage

graduates and may have unintentionally discouraged the participation of those whose primary language is not English. Due to the geographical distribution of programs, and our contacts being located in particular countries, some regions of the world are significantly underrepresented, while respondents in the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany dominate the sample.

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Results

Demographics

Table 1 displays the demographic profile of respondents. According to our data, the typical arts management graduate identifies as an able-bodied, heterosexual, female millennial of European descent. Due to a lack of statistically significant demographic diversity among the respondents, we did not conduct cross-analyses, which may have revealed differences in responses across (dis)ability, age, gender, race and/or sexual orientation.

Motivations and Experience

As shown in Table 2, respondents primarily selected greater career opportun ities and passion for the arts as their motivations for studying arts management. Table 3 shows that during their studies, respondents completed coursework in arts marketing, audience development, financial management, fundraising, cultural policy, arts law, leadership, operations management, interpersonal communications and non-profit governance. Table 4 shows that respondents wished

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE	
Age (year of birth)	**%**
1946–64	4
1965–80	23
1981–2000	73
Total	100
Differently abled	**%**
No	88
Yes	12
Total	100
Gender	**%**
Female	82
Male	17
Gender-non-conforming	1
Transgender female	0
Transgender male	0.2
Total	100
Racial descent	**%**
European/White	77
Asian	10
African/Black	4
Latinx	4
American Native	0
Multi-ethnic/racial	4
Middle Eastern	1
Total	100
Sexual identity	**%**
Heterosexual	86
Bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, same-gender-loving+	12
Asexual	2
Total	100

RESUMEN

En este estudio se señala que el 86% de los encuestados estaban muy satisfechos o satisfechos con su título de gestión de las artes. Sin embargo, se recomienda a los docentes que se abstengan de celebrarlo. Cuando se trata de perfiles demográficos en todo el mundo, el estudio también encontró que los graduados en gestión artística se identifican principalmente como milenios blancos, mujeres, sin discapacidades y heterosexuales. Aunque los diplomados siguen siendo claramente privilegiados en sus múltiples identidades sociales, la especialidad y el sector deben colaborar activamente para garantizar que los estudiantes se conviertan en agentes culturales críticamente comprometidos que puedan gestionar las artes en un mundo diverso. ¿Pero por qué medios? En primer lugar, con un mayor contenido programático sobre el acceso, la diversidad, la equidad, la inclusión y las relaciones interculturales. En segundo lugar, con el reclutamiento estratégico de estudiantes de la diversidad. La capacidad de la especialidad en proporcionar ofertas culturalmente adecuadas a todas las personas depende de estas medidas. Ignorar la falta de diversidad demográfica entre los graduados disminuirá la capacidad de la gestión artística para atender eficazmente a las poblaciones culturalmente más vulnerables de nuestras sociedades.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Acceso, gestión artística, diversidad, equidad, inclusión, educación superior, diplomados, internacionalización, metodología de encuesta

they had had courses in advocacy and lobbying, cultural diplomacy, intercultural relations and venue management.

Table 5 reveals that 55% of respondents felt *very comfortable* actively participating in class discussions. In addition, 53% felt *comfortable* asking about the opinions of their teachers and 50% felt *comfortable* asking about the opinions of their classmates. Most felt *very comfortable* (52%) or *comfortable* (44%) interacting in class with students from different countries, including the country in which they studied. Nearly half

(42%) reported *frequently* interacting outside of class with students from countries other than their home country. Nevertheless, Table 6 shows that 49% considered group work the most challenging aspect of their studies. The 31% who selected *other* listed a plethora of issues, such as "lack of face-to-face interaction due to the online culture" and "lack of consideration for other cultures by staff and rarely considering their own White privilege or the overwhelming White supremacist underpinnings of our field."

Approximately 84% of respondents stated that their program required them to complete an internship/placement. Table 7 shows that more respondents chose one or two unpaid internships more than any other option. When asked about their internships, most were *satisfied* (50%) or *very satisfied* (38%). The 12% of respondents who were dissatisfied took issue primarily with their internship tasks. For the 25% who selected *other,* they reported dissatisfaction due to issues around capacity, purpose and access to placements. Respondents noted capacity issues relative to having to complete their internship/placement without receiving credit and/or alongside other employment. Other capacity issues included not being informed in

TABLE 2

MOTIVATION	
	%
I thought the degree would provide me with greater career opportunities	56
I am passionate about the arts	33
Other (please describe)	8
Someone recommended that I do it	2
I wanted a chance to meet people with similar interests	1
Total	100

TABLE 3

TOPICS STUDIED	
	Count
Arts marketing	480
Fundraising	392
Audience development	388
Financial management	384
Marketing	380
Research methods	363
Business planning	363
Strategic planning	352
Internship or work placement	337
Cultural policy	288
Management theory	284
Community engagement	279
Events management	263
Arts education	241
Human resources	196
Advocacy and lobbying	179
Cultural theory	149
Venue management	130
Other	96
Cultural diplomacy	80
Intercultural communications	76
International relations	46

TABLE 4

DESIRABLE STUDY TOPICS	
	Count
Venue management	138
Intercultural relations	133
Cultural diplomacy	128
Advocacy and lobbying	124
International relations	122
Human resources	90
Events management	87
Cultural theory	87
Strategic planning	86
Other	80
Cultural policy	76
Community engagement	75
Business planning	73
Fundraising	59
Arts education	58
Financial management	54
Management theory	54
Audience development	45
Internship or work placement	30
Research methods	26
Arts marketing	24
Marketing	18

COURSE ACTIVITIES					
Activity	*Very comfortable* (%)	*Comfortable* (%)	*Uncomfortable* (%)	*Very uncomfortable* (%)	Count
Actively participating in class discussions	55	39	5	1	553
Questioning [asking about] the opinions of my Arts Management teachers	24	53	20	2	552
Questioning [asking about] the opinions of my Arts Management classmates	40	50	9	1	553
Interacting with students from different countries, including the country in which I studied	52	44	3	1	553

MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF ARTS MANAGEMENT STUDIES		
	%	Count
Group work	49	263
Other	31	170
Participating in class discussions	12	66
Some teachers' lack of understanding of my culture	4	24
Studying in a language that was not my native language	3	17
Total	100	540

INTERNSHIPS/PLACEMENTS		
	%	Count
Two or more unpaid	30	139
One unpaid	26	120
One paid	17	78
Two or more paid	14	64
Other	13	62
None	1	6
Total	100	469

FREQUENCY OF ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES		
	%	Count
Frequently	42	227
Occasionally	30	165
Rarely	22	121
Never	6	32
Total	100	545

advance that the program required a placement/internship and lack of program learning outcomes or goals in relation to work placements/internships. Regarding access, respondents reported dissatisfaction with the limited options for accepting a placement due to personal finances. Conversely, respondents selected internship tasks (47%), internship location (16%) and internship supervisor (14%) as reasons for their satisfaction (Cuyler and Hodges 2015).

Overall, 53% of respondents selected *satisfied* or *very satisfied* (34%) when asked about their overall satisfaction with their degree. When asked the reason for their satisfaction, 32% reported that their degree provided them with career opportunities. More than a quarter (26%) reported that their degree made them a more competitive candidate for managerial positions in the cultural sector. For the 13% who reported dissatisfaction, their reasons were as follows: limited career opportunities in the cultural sector

(26%), their degree did not make them a more competitive candidate for managerial positions (20%), their degree did not offer career opportunities beyond those that they initially imagined (14), and salary (7%).

International Study Experience

Seventeen percent of respondents reported that they pursued a degree in a country other than the country they considered their home. Sixty percent reported studying in a language other than their native language. Those who studied

abroad did so primarily in the United Kingdom (50%), followed by the United States (23%). Among the 26% who selected *other,* the countries given were Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands and Singapore. Approximately 43% of respondents indicated that they studied in the chosen country due to its reputation as a place to study arts management. Less than a fifth, 18%, chose the country because of their interest in learning about the culture, and 8% chose the country because someone recommended it to them. For the 26% who selected *other,* their reasons included "it accepted me without requiring me to waste money on obtaining an International English Language Testing System" and "financially cheaper than U.S. masters."

Employment Status

Regarding their current employment status, respondents appeared to have thriving careers. Among the titles they reported were Assistant Director, Associate Manager, Co-Founder, Communications Manager, Director of Grants Management, Executive, Owner, Research Manager, Senior Director of Development, and Vice President for Development and External Affairs. They held these positions at such organizations as the American Museum of Natural History, Art Basel, Arts Council England, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Business and Arts South Africa NPC, Disney, Gate Theatre, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Metropolitan Opera, National Gallery of Canada Foundation, National Gallery of Ireland, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Singapore Art Museum, Theatre Development Fund and Utah Opera. Only 11% reported working in a country other than the country that they considered their home country.

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Discussion

Who Studies Arts Management?

The data show a lack of diversity in racial and sexual identity. As shown in Table 1, most respondents identified as white, abled-bodied, millennial, heterosexual and female. Although the figures reflect only those who responded to the survey, this demographic profile matches that evidenced by DiMaggio (1987), Dubois (2016) and SNAAP (2017a, 2017b).

Taken together, the data should raise concerns among educators that the demographic profile for arts management graduates is steadfastly static. The lack of diversity is particularly important as access to academic degrees shapes the practices, structure and composition of the global cultural sector (Şuteu 2006). A growing body of evidence gathered in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States shows that the lack of diversity in cultural industry-related education is continued in the sector as a whole (Azmat and Rentschler 2017; Cuyler 2013, 2015; O'Brien et al. 2018; Rentschler 2015; Saha 2018). Furthermore, although the majority of arts managers in our survey identified as female, previous research has found a correlation between gender and managerial level (Cuyler 2017a). Also, in the United States, female arts managers have been found to hold 75% of middle-management positions and male arts managers to hold 67% of upper-level positions (Herron et al. 1998). Future studies should investigate this phenomenon to ascertain why some women pursue executive-level positions and others do not. In addition, research should explore the barriers women face while pursuing executive careers in arts management and how they navigate these barriers. Scholars should investigate similar questions relative to arts managers who identify as differently abled, as people of colour and/or as members of sexual minorities.

Just 17% of respondents studied arts management in a country other than their country of birth, yet 60% studied in a language other than their primary language. Future surveys and qualitative studies should explore whether arts management students are in fact globally mobile in pursuit of their careers, as indicated in the literature on the creative and cultural industries more broadly (Luckman 2013). Unfortunately, our survey did not ask which country respondents recognized as their "home country." Thus, we could not cross-check their home country with the country where they studied arts management. Our data take us no further than existing studies do in a critical investigation regarding questions of standardization and transferability of practice between nations. Nevertheless, open-ended responses indicate some discrepancy between the knowledge and values that predominate in particular arts management programs and the realities of practice, particularly for those who engage in work outside the nation in which they studied. One respondent remarked: "My degree in the UK was very UK-centric and now, working in Asia, it becomes even more apparent how removed some teaching is from working realities in other parts of the world."

Open-ended responses also indicate that international students find it difficult to stay

on to find work after completion of study abroad: "The choice of country to study in has turned out to be more important than I had initially considered. In hindsight, I should have attempted to establish myself professionally in the country, so that I would at least have the option of and confidence to stay on to work. I also have felt slightly disadvantaged not to have received the equivalent of the content knowledge of my home country."

However, in light of the ways in which "immigration laws restrict [international] students' future opportunities for residence and work," depending on the national and supra-national context (e.g., the European Union) (Luthra and Platt 2016, 3), international students are challenged if they want to stay on and work. Furthermore, research on international student migration (Luthra and Platt 2016) has recently complicated international students' associations with a growing transnational and Bourdieusian cultural elite (Friedman 2000; Savage and Williams 2008), argued to have influenced the global spread of cultural ideas, trends and values by the nature of their study abroad. This signals the need for deeper understanding of the demographics of who studies arts management (e.g., class and income, national background), why and where, with an investigation of the career trajectories of graduates, as well as the ideas, practices and values they carry with them after graduation.

What Are Students Looking for and What Are They Receiving?

In examining survey responses regarding curriculum, approach and duration, we find that programs vary widely, not just between continents and countries but also in terms of what they offer nationally (Boylan 2000; Dragićević Šešić 2003; Șuteu 2006). This finding supports Fang's (2018) finding after examining arts management education in China, the United Kingdom and the United States: that major curricular differences exist even within the same country. This variety likely makes it difficult for applicants to compare courses and decide on a program in which to enrol. One of our respondents remarked: "In deciding which programs to apply to (all in the US), it was very inconsistent across the country and felt like comparing apples to oranges: some were MA, some MBA; some you had to choose a focus on visual vs. performing arts management; some were very practical, some more theoretical; some had internship requirements, others didn't; some were 1-year, others 2+ years."

Some programs foreground theory over practice, emphasizing that students can learn "on the job." Others prioritize practice at the expense of theory, which means that some programs equip graduates well with practical skills and others lack essential criticality and reflexivity (Ebewo and Sirayi 2009; Șuteu 2006). Some courses concentrate on the foundations of arts management, while some enable students to specialize (e.g., in cultural leadership, economics or business) or pursue particular pathways (e.g., heritage or museums). Other courses emphasize the commercial over the public or subsidized sector. While our respondents appreciated the need for foundational content, they wanted more options for specializing in areas such as arts marketing, audience development and arts education, as well as art-form-specific pathways – for example, dance, museum, opera, orchestra or theatre.

The desire to specialize is somewhat contradictory given that graduates also expressed an interest in receiving a more well-rounded, if not global, understanding of arts management. Yet research indicates that practices are specific to the cultural logics of particular places and finding commonality requires a deep understanding of particular societal, political and professional cultures (Dragićević Šešić and Mihaljinac 2019). However, respondents felt that their programs were lacking in certain areas. They expressed a desire for study in cultural diplomacy, international relations and intercultural relations, which shows progress in terms of building a better understanding of place-based approaches to arts management practices. In fact, this interest in and need for what some have termed "international competencies and skills" and perspectives in arts management is not new (Dewey and Wyszomirski 2004; Figueira and Fullman 2016; Șuteu 2006). Even practitioners who do not work abroad agree that the cultural landscape has become increasingly globalized and interconnected (Henze 2017).

Taken together, the results described above challenge existing data that suggest a need for generalist courses that provide a broad grounding, to address the constantly shifting landscape of arts management (Fisher and Karpodini-Dimitriadi 2007; Șuteu 2006). Our results also go against the more recent neo-liberal thrust within higher education towards appealing to as wide a student demographic as possible (Durrer 2018). In reality, the specialisms of arts management educators dictate the foci of programs. As a result, there are limitations to educators' ability to provide specialisms, due to their prior knowledge and professional experiences.

Simply expanding one's knowledge base through the presentation of international case studies or guest speakers may be a starting point. But addressing the complexity of the issues intrinsic to cultural diplomacy and international and intercultural relations, for example, requires deep and critical consideration of the inherent assumptions, frameworks, traditions and values of "cultural differences and knowledge hierarchies" (Joseph 2008, 31), not only within aspects of "diplomacy" and "relations," but also underlying case studies. As a result, striking a balance between generalist and specialist curricula remains difficult.

Why Do Students Choose Arts Management and What Is Their Experience of Their Programs?

While 33% of respondents identified a passion for the arts as an important motivation for study, 56% pursued their degree to improve their career prospects. Of the 85% who were satisfied with their program, their satisfaction correlated with career and salary post-study, specifically their standing in the job market and their perceptions about their own competitiveness. These individuals indicated that they held high-level management positions within cultural organizations.

Respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with their program signalled the opposite. They discussed their difficulties with the job market and their inability to compete against other candidates. For dissatisfied respondents, the data suggest that their faculty advisors may not have managed their expectations around employment well, as respondents complained of receiving insufficient career assistance during their studies. Many expressed surprise that their degree gave them access to entry-level jobs only, and even then many felt that they did not possess the skills, knowledge or contacts necessary to compete in the job market. Despite the growing employability agenda across universities, our experiences have taught us that making changes with regard to post-study support would prove difficult for some academics to administer due to a lack of institutional support.

Furthermore, respondents spoke at length about their financial concerns. They felt that their tuition had been too high, especially considering the low salaries in the arts. Some respondents indicated that their fees did not represent value for money. Several respondents saw an MBA as providing more value for money and as representing a more credible qualification, recognized by employers. Many expressed unhappiness about the large debts that they had accrued, and some felt "misled" about the cost of study and the availability of scholarships.

Respondents' practical considerations were often grounded in their financial concerns. For example, some said that their fees and debts had shaped their life trajectory, in particular their decision whether to start a family or buy property. Some had struggled (and were still struggling) to find a job, and some had left the sector altogether due to the low salaries. While there has been research on the correlation between these issues and careers in cultural work in the United Kingdom (O'Brien et al. 2018), scholars should explore the roles played by ethical responsibility, complicity and higher education in this complex issue.

Our results indicate that arts management graduates value engagement in professional practice, particularly in relation to professional development. This finding echoes those of earlier research (DiMaggio 1987; Fang 2018; Şuteu 2006). Many respondents reflected on having enjoyed the practical aspects of their course or expressed a desire for the inclusion of more practice-based elements in the curriculum. As students, they had assumed that their programs would expand their professional networks and that they would learn practical skills, ideally from practitioners themselves. Some respondents expressed a need for more practitioners teaching in the programs, more practice-based content and more opportunities for practice.

The idea of "too much theory" came through, with some respondents suggesting that academics are "out of touch," "not working in the sector" (now or ever) and "not in the real world." This speaks to the difficulty in recruiting faculty with both industry experience and academic expertise. Respondents found internships to be important. Some had wanted more practical experience, yet they also noted the sector's over-reliance on unremunerated opportunities. Considering the anxiety around the financial implications of study, as well as the narrow demographic in the field and the related issues of access, diversity, equity and inclusion, one is compelled to ask: What role does education play in perpetuating inequity?

Finally, we asked respondents about the most challenging aspects of their program. Forty-eight percent reported that they had found "group work" the most difficult. We reflected on whether they related this to the nature of interactions between students and classroom dynamics. While respondents favoured more coursework on intercultural relations, 28% of those surveyed said that they *rarely* or *never* communicated outside of class with people from other countries, and 30% said that they did so *occasionally*. Although

41% said that they did so *frequently,* we were concerned about the combined figure of just 58% for *occasionally* and *frequently.* Additionally, when respondents were asked why they had applied to their chosen institution, only 18% reported an interest in learning about a different culture. The United Kingdom's Higher Education Policy Institute recently found that only 36% of domestic students felt that they benefited from studying with international students; a further 32% selected *neutral,* and 32% did not see any benefit whatsoever (Neves and Hillman 2017). Meanwhile, Nisbett (2014) found that, although one London university considered multiculturalism a major selling point, when students embarked on its cultural industries program, it found diversity within the student cohort to be a major challenge, often resulting in feelings of confusion, misunderstanding and resentment. While Luckman (2013) stresses the opportunities brought about by internationally diverse classrooms for developing intercultural skills, Nisbett (2019) argues that this requires more effort and that both staff and students need to work collectively to develop a shared intercultural competency. Such activity requires a deep and critically reflexive consideration of which educators teach in arts management, and how they teach (DeVereaux 2009; Durrer 2019).

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Implications for Management

As the first of its kind, this international survey has generated useful baseline data that affirm the significance of assessing the experiences of arts management alumni. The data can be used to help educators better plan, manage and evaluate their programs. Our results indicate the need for arts management educators to address the lack of diversity among graduates by actively recruiting a more diverse student body, and to explicitly address access, diversity, equity and inclusion through their teaching and learning methods.

Although most respondents expressed satisfaction with their degree, the findings highlight areas for improvement. The data should compel educators to strategically address curricular deficits in order to better serve students. Educators could easily address some of the concerns around incorporating more practice. However, they may have difficulty meeting students' expectations regarding broad-ranging and transferable skills and competencies for work across a number of areas within arts management. Educators might address the lack of specialisms by offering professional development programs for graduates.

Similarly, the costs of study are firmly outside of educators' remit. Though they have little power to reduce fees, educators could provide more support during study, and could work towards better preparing students for life after graduation. Faculty can do very little to change the low salaries across the cultural sector, but could commit, for example, to not promoting unpaid internships. Many respondents felt strongly about this issue, which clearly relates to access, diversity, equity and inclusion. The high cost of study, the pervasiveness of unpaid internships and low salaries mean that arts management remains a viable career only for the affluent, which may partially explain the lack of diversity regarding disability, gender, racial and sexual identity across the respondent cohort, and across the field.

These issues not only bring us full circle to crucial questions about diversity but also prompt ethical concerns. Arts management educators hold responsibility for shaping the global cultural landscape. Therefore, we must help students become critically engaged and thoughtful cultural brokers, but we also need to ensure that we educate a diverse global workforce. Alongside these learning points, we remain aware that responsibility for any changes and improvements will fall to a highly conscientious yet precarious and overworked academic labour force (Bothwell 2018), and not to the institutions themselves.

Lastly, this study has presented results that invite further study. For example, future research should investigate why some women pursue executive-level positions and others do not. In addition, research should explore the barriers that socially marginalized and oppressed arts managers face while pursuing executive-level careers, and how they navigate those barriers. We cannot overstate how the lack of demographic diversity among graduates, and across the global cultural sector, limits the ability to serve people culturally. In particular, the negligible diversity in disability, gender, racial and sexual identity negatively impacted our ability to conduct demographic cross-analyses in order to gain much-needed insight into the experiences of diverse arts management graduates. The discipline also needs a better understanding of whether and how arts management programs perpetuate Western dominance of the cultural sector (Cuyler 2013, 2017b; Durrer 2020). Furthermore, surveys and qualitative studies should investigate whether or not students studying arts management are in fact globally mobile in pursuit of their careers, as the literature on the creative and cultural industries more broadly indicates.

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