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# International Educational Experience and Intercultural Competence

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**Abstract**

A large-scale research study on the impact of overseas experience for undergraduate professional school students showed significant change in several dimensions of intercultural competence, including open-mindedness and emotional resilience, as a result of international study. Attitude change differed by length of study abroad term. Measured dimensions of intercultural competence are valuable for future success regardless of setting, providing an added argument for the value of a study abroad experience while in school. An important implication of this research for both managers and professional school faculty is that a significant study abroad activity can develop many desirable skills beyond those typically ascribed to international study.

**Introduction**

In recent years there has been an increasing appeal for students to participate in meaningful international educational experiences during their university careers. Students who study abroad are expected to show improvement in attitudes related to international knowledge. Those attitudes and associated skills may also benefit them in other career-related ways, such as the development of broader multicultural awareness and respect for diversity. Unfortunately, the attainment of international study comes at a cost and these costs may be hard to overcome for the average student. The call for students in business-related fields to obtain international experience and cross-cultural sensitivity has been especially strident. At the same time, these students may have the most difficulty in attaining the requisite programs and consequently the number of such students has remained a tiny proportion of the total professional school student population.

Difficulties in advocating study abroad include the lack of specific validating information regarding the changes that students undergo and sparse recognition of the future benefits of those changes. There are few studies that attempt to measure the changes that students experience as a result of an international educational program. No studies have been both large-scale and based on the experience of professional school students, such as business students, whose programs do not often include language or foreign culture as specific educational requirements.

This paper will present the results of a two-year project on the impact of foreign study involving 660 students majoring in professional degree areas from a consortium of US universities (Appendix). The results demonstrate that students studying abroad show significant improvement in basic characteristics such as open-mindedness, flexibility, cross-cultural adaptability and appreciation of diversity in addition to increasing their understanding of the need for the study of foreign language and culture. This research provides an important indicator of the positive benefits of foreign study, both for its potential improvement in students' ability to participate in international affairs and its impact on desirable attitudes and behaviors in general. The results of this research are hoped to encourage support for international study from educational institutions, government agencies, and corporations by demonstrating the long-term value of such experiences.

**The Benefits of International Experience**

Business research has evaluated the importance of intercultural competence for managers in international settings. Cross-cultural adaptability was rated as the number one criterion for international managers, above job, technical and management skills (Flynn 1995). Foreign language competence, adaptability, and respect for cultural differences were rated as crucial skills for expatriate managers, along with intercultural communication skills and sensitivity (Graf 2004). Impression management, which is based on the motivation to be viewed favorably by others and results in favorable business outcomes, was positively correlated with cross-cultural adaptability (Montagliani & Giacalone 1998). Desirable characteristics of international managers varied depending on the necessary allegiance to the parent company and the local host, with open mindedness, orientation to action, extraversion and cultural empathy all rated highly. Flexibility, adventurousness, perseverance and commitment to the company were also regarded as valuable (Van Oudenhoven, Van der Zee, & Van Kooten 2001).

Jassawalla, Truglia, and Garvey (2004) reported that interpersonal conflict was a key factor in the early termination or failure of international assignments for managers. Interpersonal conflict occurred in three general categories related to differing perceptions of task urgency and time use, negative stereotypes of Americans (sometimes stemming from American ethnocentricity), and different value systems resulting from local laws and ethical practices. When these circumstances were successfully navigated, expatriate managers reported that they depended on abilities and attributes such as a sense of adventure, good listening skills, open-mindedness, flexibility, willingness to learn on the job, learning the host language, patience, and optimism.

In addition to contemporary recognition of the value of cross-cultural understanding comes the not surprising observation that many skills necessary to succeed in international business have value in any business environment. Traits enhanced by international experiences, such as emotional resilience, open mindedness, and flexibility (Kelley & Meyers 1992), are among those that have been cited as beneficial employee characteristics in general business situations (Barrick, Mount, & Judge 2001, Mount & Barrick 1995, Mount, Barrick, & Stewart 1998, Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein 1991).

One of the most important potential benefits of study abroad relates to the development of skills that enhance the capability for future cross-cultural learning. Chuprina (2001) found that cross-cultural competence was positively correlated with the willingness to engage in self-

directed learning, which is autonomous learning undertaken in response to new situations and environments. Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) presented a compelling argument for connecting expatriate experiences with experiential learning. Based upon an extensive review of the literature on intercultural competence with expatriates, the authors devised a list of essential competencies for successful international managers. Managing stress and adaptability/flexibility were proposed as higher-order adaptive skills that respond to a wide variety of circumstances. Competencies associated with specific learning-skill dimensions included coping with ambiguity in the information dimension, building relationships and valuing people of different cultures in the interpersonal dimension, and translating complex information in the analytic dimension. The authors speculated that putting an individual in an international setting leads to the development of skills necessary for cross-cultural management. In addition, these skills become important building blocks for future intercultural learning. The authors argued that current research focuses only on determining the skills necessary for success but not on how those skills are learned or developed. The research reported in this paper sheds light on whether study abroad programs for college students can contribute to the development of these valuable intercultural management skills.

**The Difficulty of Obtaining International Experience**

Several factors work against the widespread acceptance of international study as a part of academic training. Cost can be a major factor, especially for public university students who may not have the resources for additional higher education costs. Exacerbating this situation is the difficulty of transferring credit from foreign institutions to the home university. Students and their parents or sponsors must pay twice for an international study opportunity, first for the opportunity itself and later for the student to make up course work that was not accepted by the home institution or that was missed during the period of foreign study. This situation leads to reluctance on the part of personnel at academic institutions – administrators, advisors and faculty – to make a case for the indispensable value of study abroad (Open Doors 1998).

The reluctance to encourage foreign study seems to be especially true for professional schools. Even though continued expansion of business into global markets suggests that international training should be a key element of the educational programs offered to professional school students, international study opportunities frequently do not focus on these students. Business school programs have recognized the need for internationalization at all levels and especially the value of foreign experience (Kwok & Arpan 2002). This recognition, however, has yet to result in a large growth of international experiences while in school. Although professional schools have added a large number of international courses at home and have increased the number of available foreign locations, few students and faculty chose to participate in these experiences abroad. In fact, only a minority of business schools indicated that they were "very satisfied" with their own globalization efforts (Kwok & Arpan 2002). The accuracy of this conclusion was confirmed by Cant's (2004) study of US business school students, who lacked general knowledge of other countries' predominant ethnic groups, religions, political systems, and languages. This study included a review of contemporary business school programs' international offerings and concluded by recommending international coursework tailored to the needs of business students.

Professional school students who study abroad may find that their progress towards graduation is slowed by participation in international programs, since these programs rarely offer coursework acceptable to their professional studies. The lack of appropriate, transferable coursework, the necessity for language training prior to attending a foreign program, and the cost of taking extra semesters to graduate severely restrict the number of professional students selecting educational programs abroad.

**Purpose of this Study**

Students who take advantage of the opportunity for international study often report being profoundly affected by that experience. When students learn about and experience another culture, style of life, and language, they tend to become more open-minded, adaptable, and appreciative of diversity. These internal changes, along with the self-confidence and sense of mastery gained by navigating an unfamiliar environment, are invaluable for success in careers of all kinds and may be essential for living and working in international settings.

Cross-cultural competence has been defined in terms of knowledge or "cultural literacy;" skills and abilities, including foreign language competence and stress management; and attitudes, which encompass personal traits such as curiosity and tolerance for ambiguity (Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud 2006). Similarly, Matveev and Milter (2004) defined the intercultural competence necessary for multicultural teams as cultural knowledge, both general and specific; skills, such as interaction and communication skills; and personality orientation, including motivation, cultural empathy, tolerance of uncertainty, and flexibility. Johnson et al. (2006, p. 529) also deemed motivation essential to cultural competence as defined by "an individual's ability to step outside his/her cultural boundary, to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange, and to act on that change of perspective." Taking advantage of an opportunity to engage in international study is a particularly apt demonstration of the willingness to make this crucial step.

In addition to adaptability, a critical component of a successful international professional career is learning a foreign language (Andreason 2003, Graf 2004). Many professional programs do not require a foreign language and many students opt out of foreign language study when there is a choice. Students may not appreciate the importance of learning a foreign language without a reason to use it. When students choose to study in a foreign country, however, they often decide to obtain at least minimal instruction in the language either before or during their international study session. Students may continue to study the language after their return because of their interest in returning to that country or their desire to pursue an international career upon graduation. For professional school students, an international experience may be the only impetus for foreign language study.

Finally, choice of career and selection of career goals should be shaped and influenced by the quality of the educational opportunities afforded by the university course of study. The richer those opportunities, the greater the likelihood that students will respond to the educational experience with expanded career options and higher personal goals for success. However, students' future career expectations have not been assessed with respect to international study. This research was undertaken with the goal of quantifying attitudes and behavioral effects of international study in a large group of students from a multi-university consortium participating in professional school programs in Italy.

## Method

### Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory

For the purposes of assessing cross-cultural attitudes, the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI, Kelley & Meyers 1992) was selected. The CCAI consists of 50 items rated on a six-point scale, from "not at all like me" to "very much like me." The CCAI contains four subscales of cross-cultural adaptability: flexibility/openness, emotional resilience, personal autonomy, and perceptual acuity (Kelley & Meyers 1992). Flexibility/openness (FO) is described by the authors (CCAI survey form p. 1) as "tolerance, lack of rigidity, and a liking for and comfort with all kinds of people." Emotional resilience (ER) refers to the maintenance of a positive attitude while coping with ambiguity and stress. Personal autonomy (PA) is "a strong sense of identity. . . the ability to maintain one's own personal values and beliefs, to take responsibility for one's actions, and to respect oneself and others." Perceptual acuity (PAC) includes "attentiveness to interpersonal relations and to verbal and nonverbal behavior . . . the context of the communication . . . and communicating accurately."

The CCAI has been used for the exploration of personal characteristics relating to cross-cultural adaptability in a number of studies (Gelles 1996, Goldstein & Smith 1999, Hullett & Witte 2001, Ingulsrud, Kai, Kadowaki, Kurobane, & Shiobara 2002, Jacobson, Sleicher, & Maureen 1999, Jensma 1996, Mak & Tran 2001, Montagliani & Giacalone 1998). These studies focused on training of adults prior to an international posting or predicting the success of such a posting rather than the assessment of change resulting from an international experience itself. Chuprina (2001) showed that the CCAI was strongly correlated with readiness for self-directed learning in managers with prior international experience. Sizoo (2005, 2006) measured the effects of cross-cultural adaptability on service encounters with foreign guests and found that higher intercultural sensitivity was associated with improved service attentiveness, social and job satisfaction, and revenue contribution. Kitsantis and Meyers (2001) studied graduate students in psychology and found significant change in the overall CCAI score and each of the subscales with a three-week international experience. Hughes (2003) reported that the perceptual acuity and personal autonomy of students who had not lived abroad was significantly increased with a ten-week semester in Europe.

### Student Attitude Survey

This survey instrument was developed by the researchers to measure student-specific intercultural interests. Eleven activities were selected to span a continuum of international knowledge and involvement and represent increasing levels of intercultural awareness and participation. The items were stated as behaviors in order to assess both the cognitive (value) and affective (enjoyment) components of overall attitudes regarding intercultural interest. For the cognitive domain, students were asked to rate the importance of these activities on a five-point scale from *not important* to *very important*, using the prompt "How *important* or *worthwhile* do you think these activities would be for you?" For the affective domain, students were asked to rate how much they enjoyed these activities on a five-point scale from *not enjoyable* to *very enjoyable*, using the prompt "How *fun or enjoyable* do you think these activities would be for you?" The survey comprised these items:

1. learning about how people in other countries live and work
2. learning to appreciate cultures different from my own
3. getting to know people from other countries
4. traveling to other countries for vacations
5. assisting a student from another country
6. having a foreign student as a roommate
7. learning a foreign language
8. studying in another country for part of my college education
9. living in another country after college
10. working in a business that involves international travel
11. working in another country

### Sample

Data were collected on a total of 660 students in two groups: 1) undergraduate students from consortium universities in the US who traveled to Italy for either a four-week summer session (n = 352) or a fourteen-week semester term (n = 118) and 2) undergraduate control students from the consortium credit granting institution in both semester (n = 72) and summer sessions (n = 118). Data were collected for four consecutive terms: two summers sessions and the intervening fall and spring semesters. Ratings on both instruments were obtained at the beginning and end of the terms of international study and simultaneously on control students in the US.

Students included 617 Americans, 39 students who listed one of 19 other countries of origin and 5 who did not give a native country. Of the entire sample, all but 9% (55) had studied a foreign language for at least one year. Of the groups traveling to Italy, 76% had previously traveled internationally, the same as the control groups. However, 69% of the summer session students and 88% of the semester program students had previously traveled abroad. Of the summer travel group, only 41% had traveled abroad several times or often while 58% of the semester students had done so.

Control students' ratings were obtained during business classes in the US, and all but two control students who identified a major listed various business majors (188). The summer and semester Italy travel groups consisted of students majoring in the areas of business (408), journalism (34), communication studies (3) and other majors (19). The remaining students did not identify a major field of study.

Males outnumbered females in the control groups (112 to 77). However, females outnumbered males in the undergraduate Italy travel groups (275 to 185), a phenomenon that has been noted previously with respect to international opportunities. Earlier research

indicated the attraction of women to international study when a majority of study abroad participants during 1994-95 were female (Rubin 1996). A recent Catalyst survey reported a greater willingness on the part of female executives to relocate to international assignments in the future than for men, with fewer women than men reporting that they would never be willing to relocate (Schafer 2000).

## Results

### Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory

The CCAI coefficient alpha reliabilities were .90 at the first administration and .93 at the second. Item ratings on the CCAI were summed into a total score and the four subscale scores of flexibility and openness (FO), emotional resilience (ER), perceptual acuity (PAC), and personal autonomy (PA) as described by the authors (Kelley & Myers 1992). Multivariate analyses of variance were conducted on the total CCAI scores at both pre- and posttest to determine which demographic characteristics affected overall scores. (All results discussed in this section reached statistical significance unless otherwise noted.) Initial CCAI scores were higher for students who had previously traveled internationally, who had traveled internationally more frequently, and who had visited more countries, as well as for students who had traveled in Europe for longer periods immediately prior to beginning their study abroad sessions. Posttest CCAI scores were higher for students who had previously traveled more frequently and for female students. Demographic characteristics that had no effect on CCAI scores included prior foreign language study, native country, year in school, and major.

Exploration of changes that took place within and between student groups was investigated with t-tests. T-tests were conducted to compare pre- and posttest total scale and factor scores for each student group. Mean scores at pretest and posttest, $p$ value for change, group size, and standard deviations are shown in Tables 1 to 4. Independent samples t-tests were also conducted to compare pre- and posttest scores between groups (Table 5).

The groups of students who traveled internationally showed a number of significant effects over time. Summer Italy students evidenced substantial changes over the course of their term with significantly improved scores in all subscales and the total scale. The semester students showed fewer significant changes over the course of the study abroad experience, yet they increased significantly in emotional resilience and perceptual acuity as well as the total CCAI score. The semester control group showed no changes on the CCAI while the summer control group showed a small and just-significant drop in total CCAI score.

In terms of between-group comparisons, the travel groups did not differ from the control groups at pretest but showed significantly higher scores at posttest. Students who studied in Italy for a full semester had higher pretest and posttest CCAI scores than students who attended one-month summer terms; in fact, their pretest scores were higher than the summer session students' posttest scores. The summer control and travel students did not show significant differences at pretest or posttest, but further examination reveals that that this was due to the fact that the travel group started with lower pretest scores than the control group. Their significant improvement over time still resulted in non-significant difference from the control group's posttest CCAI scores. Semester travel and control groups differed significantly at both times.

### Student Attitude Survey

The student survey instrument had internal consistency (coefficient alpha) of .92 at the first administration and .93 at the second. Student survey ratings from all groups were subjected to a principal components analysis in order to determine major groups of critical items. Three groups of items were found in both the affective and cognitive pretest attitude ratings: 1) learning about other cultures, consisting of items 1 to 3; 2) interaction with other cultures, consisting of items 5 to7; and 3) future and career plans, consisting of items 9 to 11. Item 4, "traveling to other countries for vacations" and item 8, "studying in another country for part of my college education" did not fit well into any of the three cognitive groupings. In the affective domain item 8 joined the second item group while item 4 remained apart. The factors were significantly correlated. All data were subsequently interpreted in the framework of three factors without items 4 and 8 as well as the overall cognitive and affective scales including all 11 items. T-tests were then conducted on the total scales and factor scores for each student group. Mean scores at pretest and posttest, $p$ value of change, group size, and standard deviations are shown in Tables 6 to 9.

## Appendix

**Consortium of Universities for International Studies**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alabama, University of | Georgia, University of | Oregon, University of |
| Arizona, University of | Iowa State University | Purdue University |
| Arkansas, University of | Kansas State University | Rutgers University |
| Brigham Young University | *Kansas, University of | San Diego State University |
| Clemson University | Louisiana State University | South Carolina, University of |
| Connecticut, University of | Michigan, University of | Tennessee, University of |
| Delaware, University of | Missouri, University of | Texas Tech University |
| Florida State University | Nebraska, University of | Virginia, University of |
| Florida, University of | Oklahoma State University | Virginia Tech University |
| Georgia State University | Oklahoma, University of | West Virginia University |

* Consortium Degree and Credit Granting Institution

Similar to the results of the CCAI, semester students studying in Italy had high scores overall but showed little change over time except for a small but significant drop in their enjoyment for interacting with people from other cultures, which led to a significant decrease in the overall affective scale. Summer session students, in contrast, showed significant growth in all areas except for their ratings of enjoyment for

international careers. Interestingly, and again similar to the CCAI results, even the posttest scores for the summer travel group were not as high as the pretest scores for the semester group. The control groups showed dissimilar changes by term. For the summer control group most factors scores and both total scales went down significantly. In contrast, there were no changes in the scores of the semester control group.

As noted previously, item 7 on the student survey assessed foreign language attitudes and beliefs and made up part of the second factor, "interacting with other cultures." The semester travel group viewed foreign language as more valuable than the control group prior to attending the program and did not significantly change this belief during the course of the program. Summer students, who did not take language during their international term, significantly increased their beliefs that learning a foreign language would be both enjoyable and valuable.

Another individual question from the student attitude survey related to living and working abroad as a career choice. This result showed the pattern of higher pretest evaluation of both the value and enjoyment of an international career by those students who selected the longer study abroad program and then no significant change on these scales over the semester. In contrast, the summer group was more ambivalent about the value and enjoyment of an international career to begin with and then increased significantly on the perception of the value of an international career.

**Discussion**

Statistically significant positive changes on the CCAI total score were found for both travel groups, demonstrating the malleability of these attitudes in response to exposure to international experience. Some of the subscales also showed significant movement over the course of a study abroad session. Although values increased absolutely for both travel groups, the summer group showed the most marked growth in these values with statistically significant changes in all of the subscales of flexibility/openness, emotional resilience, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. These students began their international study with the lowest levels of the intercultural attitudes measured by the CCAI and therefore had the largest room for improvement. It appears, though that the first few weeks of an international experience may provide the most "consciousness raising" and hence the most change in awareness of cross-cultural values. This idea is corroborated by the increased CCAI scores at pretest for students who traveled for the most days prior to the beginning of the program. This pattern is quite similar to the one found by Kelley and Meyers in the normative data for the CCAI (1992) as well as by Kitsantis and Meyers (2001). After the first weeks, attitudes may plateau and even degrade somewhat as the day-to-day demands of living in a foreign environment sink in. This may be the reason for the improvement in emotional resilience demonstrated by the students in the longest term of international study, which may signal the emergence of stamina for sustained interaction with a different culture and people over an extended period. This pattern of adjustment is interesting in light of findings in longitudinal studies that imply that socio-cultural adaptation is followed by psychological adjustment (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima 1998).

Similar patterns were observed for the student attitude survey developed for this research. For the group spending a semester in Italy, their rated enjoyment of intercultural activities, specifically their enjoyment for interacting with persons of different cultures, dropped significantly. This may show that the challenges of adapting to a foreign culture became more burdensome as time went on. That this occurred hand-in-hand with their improvement in emotional resilience reveals the development of self-reliance during this long period away from the familiar comforts of home. This drop does not seem to be a result of dissatisfaction with the program itself since the semester students rated their satisfaction with the overall program of study as 8.0 on a nine-point scale. By means of comparison, the summer students rated their overall program experience as 7.7 on the same scale.

The summer Italy travel group showed the most positive change, with the total scales of value and enjoyment for international experiences increasing. The semester control group showed no changes in the student survey or its factors or in the CCAI total score and subscales. The significant drop shown by the summer control group in total CCAI score is unexplained in this sample. The reduction in the total score was the result of the sum of small, insignificant decreases in each of the subscales rather than larger changes in any subscale, as was the case for the travel groups. This may merely reflect fatigue at the end of the summer school session or it may be indicative of some other unknown influence on these students during their summer session in the US. The summer control group also dropped in both scales of affective and cognitive attitudes on the student survey instrument.

From this research, it appears that the first few weeks of international study, particularly when the participants have little prior international experience and hence relatively undeveloped attitudes about intercultural interactions and activities, have a huge impact on perceptions and values. This occurred in spite of the fact that 70% of these students did have prior international travel experience, typically for brief periods or vacations. Over the longer term, however, attitudes tend to level out or even decline slightly, which probably represents reality setting in with respect to living in an unfamiliar environment. The semester group had more previous international travel experience, which was reflected by their higher initial levels of intercultural attitudes. The good news is that students' capacity for tolerating the unfamiliar was apparently improved through this experience, and their overall cross-cultural adaptability increased.

One of the original motivations for the research described here was to uncover relationships between international study and beliefs about language study. Most professional schools have limited requirements for foreign language study and, even when these requirements are in place, US students are often not strongly motivated to study another language. Italian language enrollment at the consortium degree-granting university nearly doubled after the initiation of the study abroad program in Italy and the number of professional school students in communication studies, journalism and business attending language courses both prior to and following the program has grown substantially. In the Italy program, students are not required to take Italian but are encouraged to do so. Due to its short duration, only "survival" Italian is offered during the summer program. Rigorous five and three credit Italian courses are taught at several levels during the full semester programs and over half of the students enroll (70 out of 126 students during fall 2004).

Another topic of interest in this study was the impact on the desire to live and work abroad as part of a career strategy. Unlike foreign language enrollment, the outcomes of these choices could not be measured during the course of this research, but summer students increased their ratings of the value of international careers while semester students started with higher ratings of both cognitive and affective attitudes.

These results can be interpreted as evidence of the effects of experiencing the rigors of living and working internationally. The shorter-stay students increased their understanding of the value of an international career and that may ultimately lead to a choice in that direction. The students who stayed longer developed a healthy understanding of the difficulties and stresses of international life but also corroborated their already high beliefs about the value of this type of career. Longer-term follow-up of these students could tell us the ultimate impact of this experience on their career choices.

Several authors of previous research have focused on open-mindedness as one of the most likely characteristics associated with successful cross-cultural adjustment (Caligiuri, Jacobs, & Farr 2000, Van Oudenhoven, Van der Zee, & Van Kooten 2001, Yamazaki & Kayes 2004). The present study showed that the CCAI factor of flexibility/openness improved with statistical significance for the group of students studying in Italy for a four-week summer program. The current results may be corroboration of the previous research since the semester travel students already showed considerably higher levels of this attribute at pretest than the summer students, who rated themselves at the same level as the control students. Accordingly, a self-selection process may be in operation whereby students more capable of handling the longer, more rigorous international experience selected the longer term of study with some confidence of success. The summer students would then be a possible model of the impact of training on individuals without prior cross-cultural skills.

A result of particular interest to future researchers using any cross-cultural adaptability scales is the observation that the subjects in the semester travel group began the experience with considerably higher values on all factors than the control group or than the CCAI normative values for similar groups (Kelley & Meyers 1992). This is a confirmation of Hughes (2003) finding that the two groups in his study differed significantly on the CCAI at pretest. These initial differences between groups raise doubts about the results of studies using the CCAI or other measures applied only at the end of a program and comparing those results against a stay-at-home control group or the normative group with similar demographic characteristics. Clearly, students who chose to go abroad, or who choose longer terms, are different from those who do not, even at pretest. Consequently posttest-only comparisons may not be valid. This result also represents an interesting finding for employers since the implication of a certain level of cross-cultural skills may be ascribed to prospective employees simply as a consequence of participation in a study abroad opportunity. Anecdotally, the researchers have been informed by recruiters at more than one firm that study abroad participation is used as a first screen for selecting interviewees for corporate positions available to graduating college students. This paper provides some support for the efficacy of such an approach. Certain skills, such as flexibility and managing stress, that can be useful in an expatriate environment are both predicted for and developed in participants of study abroad. This circumstance then leads to the prospective employers' expectation not only of greater current capabilities but for the further development of these and other valuable skills (Yamazaki & Kayes 2004).

**Conclusions**

This research has provided evidence for four major conclusions. First, the impact of the international study opportunity depended on the length of the program, with four-week stays resulting in greater attitude change. Furthermore, the summer study abroad students' pretest scores were indistinguishable from those of the summer control students, suggesting that a relatively stable attitude baseline may have been measured initially for these undergraduates. Second, students who selected the longer study abroad experience were not the same at pretest as the students who stayed home. Equivalence between those two groups should not be assumed. Research that measures only posttest attitudes using stay-at-home controls cannot conclude that international study is responsible for outcome differences because these students are different to begin with. Third, students who selected semester programs demonstrated pretest attitudes that were better developed with respect to key factors than even the posttest attitudes of the shorter-stay students. In other words, students who chose a semester program had already attained the levels of attitudinal change that could be anticipated by the end of a one-month session. This differentiation suggests that offering programs of different lengths is most likely to provide appropriate opportunities for students at different levels of preparedness. Fourth, students who studied overseas showed significant development of future international career plans and plans to study a foreign language. While the future career choices of these students are not known, it is known that Italian language enrollment at the home university has increased markedly as a result of these Italy-based programs. The attitudes of these students have been borne out in actual behavior on this important dimension.

This research sheds light on several issues surrounding study abroad for professional schools. One of the issues in the model studied for this paper is the use of English for instruction in the foreign environment. This research demonstrates that such a model can increase intercultural competence and lead to thoughtful conclusions about the value and enjoyability of learning languages and experiencing other cultures. Students used the study abroad experience to identify future development opportunities and build the skills necessary to participate in those opportunities. As a by-product of such study, students gained in dimensions such as open-mindedness that have been shown to be generally valuable for future career success regardless of the choice of national or international venue.

This study leads to important implications for businesses on both the national and international level. A study abroad experience is more than a vehicle for learning about another culture and gaining international knowledge. In addition, it provides a valuable opportunity for individuals to experience first hand what it is like to live and work in a different country. This experience can profoundly affect their tolerance for individual differences, their ability to change, their understanding of different points of view, and their capacity to deal with ambiguous or stressful situations. Even without regard for the international nature of the experience, students with such skills will become valuable employees. Employers looking for the management skills of flexibility, understanding, emotional stamina, and respect for others may be well served by following the lead of companies who consider study abroad experience in their assessment of potential employees.

From the standpoint of the need for trained employees to work internationally or within international teams, this study demonstrates that students who have studied abroad complete that experience with greater aptitude to cope internationally and a greater propensity to grow in this dimension than their non-participating classmates. Given the high rates of expatriate failure and the enormous cost of that failure, employers looking for managers to post in overseas assignments would be wise to use such an experience and the individual's reaction to it as an important predictor of success.

A significant implication for business schools is that study abroad can greatly enhance student capabilities on a wide range of dimensions. As a result, faculty should not overlook the training benefits of, at minimum, four-week study abroad programs. To best serve their constituents, business school faculty should focus on international courses that are taken abroad or that are taken in concert with required overseas study.

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**Table 1: Semester Italy group CCAI total scale and factor scores**

| Scale or subscale | Time | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | *p* value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total CCAI score | Pretest | 239.8763 | 97 | 18.40531 | |
| | Posttest | 243.6082 | 97 | 18.41623 | .038 |
| CCAI Flexibility/Openness | Pretest | 69.8519 | 108 | 7.41912 | |
| | Posttest | 69.8148 | 108 | 7.96974 | .955 |
| CCAI Emotional Resilience | Pretest | 86.2336 | 107 | 7.50796 | |
| | Posttest | 89.6636 | 107 | 7.45293 | .000 |
| CCAI Personal Autonomy | Pretest | 35.0917 | 109 | 3.13150 | |
| | Posttest | 35.6422 | 109 | 2.92031 | .075 |
| CCAI Perceptual Acuity | Pretest | 47.9636 | 110 | 4.39543 | |
| | Posttest | 48.9000 | 110 | 4.46382 | .038 |

**Table 2: Summer Italy group CCAI total scale and factor scores**

| Scale or subscale | Time | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | *p* value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total CCAI score | Pretest | 228.8708 | 298 | 18.15647 | |
| | Posttest | 234.0940 | 298 | 21.67916 | .000 |
| CCAI Flexibility/Openness | Pretest | 66.0687 | 335 | 7.19675 | |
| | Posttest | 67.4134 | 335 | 8.15512 | .000 |
| CCAI Emotional Resilience | Pretest | 82.8704 | 328 | 7.53437 | |
| | Posttest | 84.9756 | 328 | 8.74534 | .000 |
| CCAI Personal Autonomy | Pretest | 34.3116 | 337 | 3.00312 | |
| | Posttest | 34.8501 | 337 | 3.41987 | .002 |
| CCAI Perceptual Acuity | Pretest | 46.3438 | 336 | 4.40032 | |
| | Posttest | 47.8065 | 336 | 4.92524 | .000 |

**Table 3: Semester control group CCAI total scale and factor scores**

| Scale or subscale | Time | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | *p* value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total CCAI score | Pretest | 228.7313 | 67 | 21.04366 | |
| | Posttest | 229.6119 | 67 | 23.04407 | .591 |
| CCAI Flexibility/Openness | Pretest | 66.4000 | 70 | 7.59557 | |
| | Posttest | 66.8143 | 70 | 8.22913 | .488 |
| CCAI Emotional Resilience | Pretest | 82.2464 | 69 | 8.95972 | |
| | Posttest | 82.4638 | 69 | 8.89081 | .729 |
| CCAI Personal Autonomy | Pretest | 33.8310 | 71 | 3.24251 | |
| | Posttest | 33.7606 | 71 | 3.80400 | .850 |
| CCAI Perceptual Acuity | Pretest | 46.0429 | 70 | 4.97657 | |
| | Posttest | 46.3143 | 70 | 5.33390 | .593 |

**Table 4: Summer control group CCAI total scale and factor scores**

| Scale or subscale | Time | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | *p* value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total CCAI score | Pretest | 233.4101 | 89 | 22.28796 | |
| | Posttest | 231.0506 | 89 | 24.00758 | .046 |
| CCAI Flexibility/Openness | Pretest | 67.7452 | 104 | 9.48351 | |
| | Posttest | 66.9135 | 104 | 8.75681 | .108 |
| CCAI Emotional Resilience | Pretest | 84.4343 | 99 | 9.19201 | |
| | Posttest | 83.5101 | 99 | 9.73029 | .058 |
| CCAI Personal Autonomy | Pretest | 34.1750 | 100 | 3.07677 | |
| | Posttest | 34.1400 | 100 | 3.69827 | .899 |
| CCAI Perceptual Acuity | Pretest | 46.4500 | 100 | 4.46168 | |
| | Posttest | 46.0000 | 100 | 4.48567 | .196 |

**Table 5: Between-group comparisons of pre- and posttest total CCAI scores**

| Comparison groups | Pretest score | Pretest N | *p* value of difference | Posttest score | Posttest N | *p* value of difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control groups | 229.9358 | 179 | | 229.9543 | 164 | |
| v. Travel groups | 231.5347 | 418 | .392 | 237.2123 | 438 | .001 |
| Summer travel | 229.1404 | 317 | | 234.6758 | 327 | |
| v. Semester travel | 239.0495 | 101 | .000 | 244.6847 | 111 | .000 |
| Summer control | 230.7844 | 109 | | 230.4263 | 95 | |
| v. Summer travel | 229.1404 | 317 | .490 | 234.6758 | 327 | .116 |
| Semester control | 228.6143 | 70 | | 229.3043 | 69 | |
| v. Semester travel | 239.0495 | 101 | .001 | 244.6847 | 111 | .000 |

Note: Equal variances not assumed

**Table 6: Semester Italy group student attitude survey total and factor scores**

| Scale or Subscale | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | *p* value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total value scale | Pretest | 41.2456 | 114 | 5.9266 | |
| | Posttest | 40.6930 | 114 | 5.9751 | .285 |
| Total enjoyment scale | Pretest | 42.0268 | 112 | 5.6909 | |
| | Posttest | 40.7768 | 112 | 6.0415 | .024 |
| Value of learning about other cultures | Pretest | 13.5130 | 115 | 1.7887 | |
| | Posttest | 13.3565 | 115 | 1.6712 | .392 |
| Value of interacting with other cultures | Pretest | 11.2632 | 114 | 2.1943 | |
| | Posttest | 11.1404 | 114 | 2.4742 | .601 |
| Value of future international plans | Pretest | 11.8174 | 115 | 2.9486 | |
| | Posttest | 11.4435 | 115 | 3.0354 | .119 |
| Enjoyment of learning about other cultures | Pretest | 13.3652 | 115 | 1.7488 | |
| | Posttest | 13.1217 | 115 | 1.8503 | .246 |
| Enjoyment of interacting with other cultures | Pretest | 11.3009 | 113 | 2.3675 | |
| | Posttest | 10.4248 | 113 | 2.7412 | .000 |
| Enjoyment of future international plans | Pretest | 12.6404 | 114 | 2.5904 | |
| | Posttest | 12.4561 | 114 | 2.7269 | .431 |

**Table 7: Summer Italy group student attitude survey total and factor scores**

| Scale or Subscale | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | *p* value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total value scale | Pretest | 37.8542 | 336 | 5.9138 | |
| | Posttest | 38.6935 | 336 | 5.9860 | .001 |
| Total enjoyment scale | Pretest | 38.3203 | 320 | 6.4213 | |
| | Posttest | 39.0297 | 320 | 6.2168 | .015 |
| Value of learning about other cultures | Pretest | 12.6765 | 340 | 1.8786 | |
| | Posttest | 12.8809 | 340 | 1.7753 | .034 |
| Value of interacting with other cultures | Pretest | 10.4159 | 339 | 2.2899 | |
| | Posttest | 10.6976 | 339 | 2.0463 | .012 |
| Value of future international plans | Pretest | 10.3666 | 341 | 2.8958 | |
| | Posttest | 10.6804 | 341 | 2.8749 | .013 |
| Enjoyment of learning about other cultures | Pretest | 12.4000 | 325 | 2.1574 | |
| | Posttest | 12.7385 | 325 | 1.9522 | .001 |
| Enjoyment of interacting with other cultures | Pretest | 9.7267 | 322 | 2.6298 | |
| | Posttest | 10.1382 | 322 | 2.3773 | .001 |
| Enjoyment of future international plans | Pretest | 11.6084 | 323 | 2.9132 | |
| | Posttest | 11.4954 | 323 | 2.9681 | .419 |

**Table 8: Semester control group student attitude survey total and factor scores**

| Scale or Subscale | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | *p* value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total value scale | Pretest | 35.8714 | 70 | 6.2460 | |
| | Posttest | 36.0857 | 70 | 6.8477 | .702 |
| Total enjoyment scale | Pretest | 37.5217 | 69 | 6.9781 | |
| | Posttest | 37.1739 | 69 | 7.3664 | .602 |
| Value of learning about other cultures | Pretest | 12.2143 | 70 | 1.8249 | |
| | Posttest | 12.2286 | 70 | 2.0300 | .951 |
| Value of interacting with other cultures | Pretest | 10.5000 | 70 | 2.2698 | |
| | Posttest | 10.0571 | 70 | 2.5417 | .104 |
| Value of future international plans | Pretest | 9.5000 | 70 | 3.1289 | |
| | Posttest | 10.0143 | 70 | 3.0240 | .068 |
| Enjoyment of learning about other cultures | Pretest | 12.0000 | 70 | 1.9486 | |
| | Posttest | 11.9286 | 70 | 2.3915 | .782 |
| Enjoyment of interacting with other cultures | Pretest | 9.9565 | 69 | 2.6593 | |
| | Posttest | 9.5797 | 69 | 2.6811 | .192 |
| Enjoyment of future international plans | Pretest | 11.1714 | 70 | 3.1804 | |
| | Posttest | 11.3571 | 70 | 3.2838 | .553 |

**Table 9: Summer control group student survey total and factor scores**

| Scale or Subscale | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | *p* value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total value scale | Pretest | 37.0583 | 103 | 6.88680 | |
| | Posttest | 36.1942 | 103 | 6.85860 | .041 |
| Total enjoyment scale | Pretest | 39.1100 | 100 | 6.36736 | |
| | Posttest | 37.6750 | 100 | 6.83403 | .001 |
| Value of learning about other cultures | Pretest | 12.5481 | 104 | 1.83747 | |
| | Posttest | 12.0865 | 104 | 2.05795 | .006 |
| Value of interacting with other cultures | Pretest | 10.6796 | 103 | 2.54456 | |
| | Posttest | 10.3883 | 103 | 2.36076 | .086 |
| Value of future international plans | Pretest | 10.1827 | 104 | 3.27321 | |
| | Posttest | 9.9423 | 104 | 3.20445 | .278 |
| Enjoyment of learning about other cultures | Pretest | 12.3762 | 101 | 2.09691 | |
| | Posttest | 12.0792 | 101 | 2.12924 | .028 |
| Enjoyment of interacting with other cultures | Pretest | 10.2079 | 101 | 2.81538 | |
| | Posttest | 9.8020 | 101 | 2.72404 | .027 |
| Enjoyment of future international plans | Pretest | 12.0600 | 100 | 2.79184 | |
| | Posttest | 11.5600 | 101 | 3.01283 | .016 |