Chapter 5
Developing Future Global Business Leaders Through International Experiences:
An Assessment of Study-Abroad Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

The interconnected exchange between countries and continents requires a global perspective and awareness that includes international knowledge and competence. Educational programs abroad are designed to provide students with opportunities to develop these global competencies linked to numerous beneficial outcomes. Due to the large variety of outcomes and inconsistencies in their measurement and assessment, it is necessary to review the existing literature to systematically categorize these outcomes and their impact on students. This chapter discusses the main types of international learning programs and their characteristics. The literature on the outcomes of these programs is then reviewed by focusing primarily on the experiences of business schools. The factors which might improve the outcomes of the international experiences for the students are also discussed. Finally, implications for future research in international programs assessment and evaluation are suggested and practical advice is offered for faculty and administrators involved in program design and implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Our world continues to shrink at a rapid pace as the nations and companies become more interdependent and commonplace travel enables individuals to easily traverse the globe (Anderson et al., 2006). The interconnected exchange between countries and continents requires a global perspective and awareness that includes international knowledge and competence (Zhai & Scheer, 2004). Furthermore, it is essential that college graduates be equipped with first-hand global knowledge to be successful in a global work environment (Harder & Bruening, 2008; McGowan, 2007). Focusing on this international component is "essential, integral, and central to the education, research and outreach mission of the university" (Bruening & Frick, 2004, p. 90). Intercultural understanding is another important and necessary skill to work with people from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Anderson et al., 2006; Hofstede et al., 2010). Engaging first-hand with foreign countries is the best the way to understand a different culture (Bruening, 2007; Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001).

The rapidly changing economic landscape has led to increased need for companies of all sizes to learn how to deal with heterogeneity across cultures and markets by developing a global mindset of leaders, managers, and employees at all organizational levels (Clapp-Smith & Hughes, 2007; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002).Leaders like India-born, and U.S.-educated Indra Nyooyi of Pepsico, or Brazil-born, Lebanon-raised and Paris-educated Carlos Gosn of Renault-Nissan Alliance are considered the role models for the future generations of business people. In the quest to develop global mindset, companies are increasingly emphasizing cultivation of the knowledge regarding diverse cultures and markets through formal education (Gertsen, 1990; Mintzberg & Gosling, 2002) as well as immersion experiences in foreign cultures (Maertz et al., 2009) and cross-border projects (Kayworth & Leidner, 2000; Ubell, 2010). In fact, experiential learning was identified as the best way to learn cross-cultural management by the panel of most prominent international educators (Szkudlarek et al., 2013). Global mindset is essential for development of global leadership skills (Mendenhall, 2001).

According to some business reports the number of global leaders is insufficient, and a global leadership gap is predicted in for-profit, public, and non-profit sectors of the global economy (Osland, 2008). As a result, employers are increasingly expecting that the institutions of higher education should do more to prepare their students for globalization by internationalizing their academic programs and curriculum (Fugate & Jefferson, 2001; Gomaa & Raymond, 2016; Mangiero & Kraten, 2011; Migletti, 2015). For example, in 1993 Fortune 500 and Forbes 50 companies agreed that although their employees could learn the international aspects of business on the job, business school graduates should have expertise in foreign languages, international trade and investment, global business, and human and political relations (Ball & McCulloch, 1993). Consequently, company recruiters are increasingly emphasizing international experiences and knowledge by favoring candidates with international experiences (Turos, 2010). According to QS Global Employer Survey, 60% of surveyed companies indicated that they value international study experiences when recruiting college students (Molony et al., 2011).

The important role institutions of higher education are playing in globalizing future business leaders cannot be underestimated. In fact, more rigorous international training is necessary. Evan Ryan, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State has recently stated:

We need to empower more of America's future leaders to experience the world beyond our borders. International education helps people develop the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in today's global

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