

# **Immersion Versus Exposure: Preparing Future Business Leaders for Global Organizations**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In today's global corporations, managers expect new recruits to be fluent as intercultural leaders able to influence their peers toward the accomplishment of common organizational goals. As more corporations become multinational organizations, today's business leaders require knowledge of the numerous cultures that are reflected in their organizational workforce. This requires today's business recruits to develop knowledge and skills that transcend national boundaries and stereotypes.*

*The purpose of this paper is to compare two popular active learning approaches to gaining global exposure or cultural sensitivity for business students as they prepare to enter the global workforce: cultural immersion and cultural exposure.*

*In this paper, the authors collected data from expatriate employees of multinational companies regarding means for developing cultural sensitivity through undergraduate/graduate programming and corporate training programs. This is the first in a set of studies proposed to assess the value of study abroad in preparing future business leaders.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

“Tomorrow’s educated person will have to be prepared for life in a global world. It will be a ‘Westernized’ world, but also increasingly a tribalized world. He or she must become a ‘citizen of the world’ – in vision, horizon, and information. But he or she will also have to draw nourishment from their local roots and in turn, enrich and nourish their own local culture” (Drucker, 2007, p. 221). The *tomorrow* that Peter Drucker referred to is now today. We are living in the globalized knowledge society where business leadership requires a breadth of cultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity.

In today’s global corporations, managers expect new recruits to be fluent as intercultural leaders able to influence their peers toward the accomplishment of common organizational goals. “U.S.-based multinational corporations employ 22.9 million Americans—more than twice as many people as they employ in China, Mexico, and all other countries combined. Foreign-owned multinational corporations employ another 5.5 million people in the United States” (Riley, 2011, para. 5). As more companies become multinational organizations<sup>1</sup>, today’s business leaders

require knowledge of the numerous cultures that are reflected in their organizational workforce. This requires today's business recruits to develop knowledge and skills that transcend national boundaries and stereotypes. Mathews and Zander (2007) contend that an opportunity is growing at the intersection between international business and entrepreneurial opportunities. International business opportunities abound for small firms and individuals as well as large multinational enterprises, if the individuals involved have the cultural sensitivity and business savvy to pursue these opportunities in a globalized environment.

Globalization and the growing number of multinational companies means colleges and universities must increase their efforts to help graduates develop a global perspective. For the past several decades, institutions of higher learning have experimented with different approaches to helping develop students' cross-cultural competence or cultural sensitivity, first by adding courses to the curriculum with an international orientation, then by developing more direct methods where students experience foreign cultures first-hand by spending time abroad. The goal of either approach is to graduate more cross-culturally competent future employees. Douglas and Jones-Rikkens (2001) use the term "worldmindedness" to describe "the extent to which individuals value global perspectives on various issues" (p.55). Cross-cultural competence, intercultural competence, cultural sensitivity – regardless of the terminology, global organizations expect it of the employees they hire.

Business education scholars (Lang and Dittrich, 1982; Sherry, 1988; Wilkinson, Fogarty, & Melville, 1996; Behrman, 2006)<sup>ii</sup> have validated the need for business leaders to develop cultural sensitivity through participation in study abroad programming during undergraduate and/or graduate studies. But one question remains for discussion: is there one best way for students/recruits to develop cultural sensitivity before embarking on a career in a multinational organization? Or are multiple and varied experiences with numerous cultures necessary for international business success? The purpose of this study is to compare two popular active, direct learning approaches to gaining global exposure or cultural sensitivity for students as they prepare to enter the global workforce: cultural immersion and cultural exposure. Additionally, the outcome of this study will be beneficial to employers considering methods for developing cultural sensitivity in new employees.

## **RELEVANT LITERATURE**

To provide a foundation for this project, the following concepts will be reviewed: study abroad, cultural sensitivity, cultural immersion and cultural exposure programs.

### ***Study Abroad Programs***

Study abroad programming includes a variety of experiences from a semester or a year of study and living in another country to short-term exposure programs designed to engage participants to foreign language skills, cross-cultural understanding, and international understanding (NAFSA, 2008). A 2008 NAFSA report stated that study abroad programs contribute to core business competencies of leading, collaborating and competing in a global environment. Advantages of study abroad programs include development of cultural competencies and professional competencies through "understanding the role of culture and its impact on a profession" (Ghose, 2010, p. 2). Participants can develop business competency through "real-time learning from highly successful and influential professional leaders ... [through] real-time exposure to the challenges and opportunities of transnational cooperation ...

observing and studying major global and local organizations in operation ... [and] establishing personal contacts in the professional world” (Ghose, 2010, p. 2).

Studies of student motivation to study abroad have found that business students exhibited different motivations for studying abroad compared to non-business students, the former being more interested in study abroad as a way to enhance their future job prospects (Toncar, et al., 2005). Cardon and colleagues (2011) found that business students were motivated to pursue study abroad programs when they perceived that these activities would help them in future career pursuits.

Participation in study abroad programs has a variety of lasting effects on graduates. Douglas and Jones-Rikkens (2001) found that students who participated in study abroad programs have a stronger sense of cultural sensitivity than students with no foreign travel experience. Additionally, students who participated in study abroad programs reported improvements in personal development, academic commitment, intercultural development, career development, and environmental attitudes (Dwyer and Peters, 2004; Black and Duhon, 2007; Rexeisen and Al-Khatib, 2009). Studies (Relyea, et al., 2008, Paige, et al., 2009) also have concluded that participation in study abroad programming enhanced students’ professional marketability, influenced students’ decisions to pursue graduate studies and career paths in global studies and international business, and influenced students’ interest in global engagement issues. Additionally, “the traditional [international organization] recruiter perceives that a student that has studied abroad is more well rounded, more open minded, and less ethnocentric. A student who studies abroad is more likely to be hired than a student who has not” (Albers-Miller, et al., 2000, p. 76). Albers-Miller and colleagues contend that recruiters are interested in seeing more cultural exposures and in-depth cultural exposures when reviewing candidate applications.

As important and beneficial as study abroad programming appears, it is important to note the barriers that students face that may impede them from participation: cost, previous obligations, time commitment, fear, choices of destinations, and curricular issues (Garver and Divine, 2007; Naffziger, et al., 2008).

In today’s business curriculum, study abroad programs are expected to expose students to cultural and business practices necessary to be successful in a particular country and culture either through short-term study tours or long-term study abroad programs (Brokaw, 1996; Ghose, 2010). A key to developing this competency is increasing cultural sensitivity – also known as cross-cultural competence, intercultural literacy, worldview (Fugate and Lassk, 2003) or worldmindedness (Douglas and Jones-Rikkens, 2001) – in graduates.

### ***Cultural Sensitivity***

It is anticipated that participation in study abroad programming will help participants develop cultural sensitivity. Cultural sensitivity is defined as “being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior” (Stafford, Bowman, Eking, Hanna and Lopes-DeFede, 1997). Fugate and Lassk’s (2003) research indicates that American business students lack cultural sensitivity or a worldview, which they define as “an inclusive approach to cultural appreciation; one that does not embrace one’s native culture at the expense of others” (p. 53). When compared with students from six different cultures, Fugate and Lassk found that American students were lacking in worldview; the resulting implication being that U.S. students are at risk of being less competitive for international business positions due to ethnocentricity. Shapiro, Ozanne, and Saatcioglu (2008) suggest that cultural sensitivity emerges through a four-stage model in which participants move through the stages of romantic

sojourner, foreign worker, skilled worker, and partner. “Romantic sojourners are engaged in business activities, yet they lack the necessary skills and knowledge to plumb the cultural depths ... they rely heavily on their own home country’s cultural categories” (p. 75). In the stage of “foreign worker,” the participant “develops a more realistic and cognitive understanding of the local culture” (p. 77), thus developing a deeper understanding of the culture and business practices. “The foreign workers who persevere become skilled workers who develop a deeper understanding of the local culture and engage in deeper contact with business associates” (p. 80). Finally, in the partner stage, “workers possess the highest cultural sensitivity and a negotiated business culture based on relational trust” (p. 81).

Cultural sensitivity improves an individual’s ability to develop social networks and relationships that lead to entry points in the local economy, to identify business trends at the local cultural level, which together lead to improved understanding of competition, and improved organizational trust and relationship building within the organization (Mathews & Zander, 2007, Shapiro, et al., 2008). To improve cultural sensitivity, Fugate and Lassk (2003) suggest more foreign travel, more foreign language requirements, more domestic exposure to foreign nationals, and more instruction on cross-cultural understanding.

Approaches to satisfying this need for cultural sensitivity include emphasized globalization in curricula, both inside (indirect) and outside (direct) the classroom. Business education scholars and practitioners (Lang and Dittich, 1982; Sherry, 1988; Wilkinson, Fogarty, & Melville, 1996; Behrman, 2006; Dyer & Tarimcilar, 2011) agree that additional emphasis should be placed on the direct approach through concentrated foreign exposure outside the classroom. Dyer and Tarimcilar (2011) define direct global exposures as global tours, study abroad offerings, exchange programs, foreign consulting projects, and internships; indirect global exposures focus on curriculum (such as including international topics in core courses and case studies), faculty (hiring professors with global experience), and students (attracting a multicultural student body). Paige and colleagues (2009) concluded that a key consideration of the efficacy of study abroad experiences is the intensity of the program.

Cultural sensitivity is gained by students and new employees<sup>iii</sup> through study abroad programs that fall into one of two direct approach categories: cultural immersion programs or cultural exposure programs.

### ***Cultural Immersion Programs***

Cultural immersion is “a sojourner’s engagement with and interaction in a host culture, with the goal of extensive involvement with host culture members” (Forum on Education Abroad, 2010). Cultural immersion programs are characterized by intensive language study, living with local families or in local universities, and interactions with local community members through daily transactions, internships, field research and service projects. Additionally, undergraduate and/or graduate students usually study at a local institution and interact directly with foreign students (Rexiesen, et al., 2009).

Slembrouck (2010) suggests that immersion is the preferred method for developing skills; internships or apprenticeships address socio-cultural concerns in an active learning model, while allowing participants to develop connections between classroom learning and professional applications and to develop a network of professional contacts.

Many students cannot devote a full semester to an immersion program. Creative short-term exposure techniques may be a solution to developing cultural sensitivity (Dole, Helms, and Westrup, 2004).

### ***Cultural Exposure Programs***

In contrast, cultural exposure describes a program in which participants are exposed to a culture different than their own by short-term experiences in the new culture (Brokaw, 1996; Doyle, Helms and Westrup, 2004; Smith, 2006, Ghose, 2010). These may include one- to two-week travel programs to one or multiple destinations that include structured learning activities as well as visits to cultural sites of interest and business environments.

This method is predicated on the belief that such a program can serve to 1) increase students' experiential learning, so that a greater depth of culture specific knowledge will result from the emphasis placed on that culture; 2) help students to better develop their own learning skills; 3) reduce the amount of faculty and administrative time required to offer such a program. The program is based not on geographic coverage or in-country contact time. Rather, it is based on helping students to develop, through research, a process for learning about new cultures and places, and an opportunity to apply the learning (Brokaw, 1996, p. 88).

Short-term cultural exposure programs couple in-country exposure with traditional learning activities such as pre-program orientation seminars, library research projects, research papers, consulting projects, email or pen-pal partnerships, interviews with local business leaders, practice activities and public presentations (Brokaw, 1996, Doyle, Helms & Westrup, 2004, Ghose, 2010).

Some advantages to short-term exposure programs include the financial expense, number of students who can participate, intensive exposure to one culture, and the time commitment. Short-term exposure programs are criticized for the limited number of locations included and reduced ability to become comfortable with the international situations (Brokaw, 1996; Doyle, Helms and Westrup, 2004; Smith, 2006).

Most study abroad programs – immersion and exposure – are defined by exposure to one culture and not exposure to numerous cultures. Study abroad programs such as the Institute for Shipboard Education's Semester at Sea (2011) provide a semester-long experience with exposure to 10 or more countries – different from the exposure programs described above that focus on one culture or destination. In addition, participants in the Semester at Sea program attend courses provided through the sponsoring institution, the University of Virginia, and attend cultural orientation programs to prepare for each new country on the agenda. This program allows participants to compare cultural experiences from destination to destination, thus allowing students to develop a greater sense of cultural identity. In a longitudinal study of program benefits, Dukes and colleagues (1994) describe Semester at Sea as “a program that combines an interpretive framework of full-time college coursework with travel-observation experiences in a dozen different countries” (p. 489).

Johnson, Lenartowicz, and Apud (2006) contend that many international business endeavors have failed due to the lack of cultural sensitivity or cross-cultural competence of the staff. To that end, corporations are also engaging in cultural sensitivity programming for employees prior to positioning them in multinational enterprises.

In today's economic environment is not unlikely for a candidate's career to include work for a number of multinational companies that embody a number of ethnic cultures. Additionally, recruits who choose to work for an agency or firm may be expected to juggle a portfolio of

clients that reflects a number of diverse ethnic cultures. Both of these scenarios will require cultural sensitivity for success.

## **METHODOLOGIES**

This project included a combination of methodologies: a literature review and expert interviews with expatriate workers in multinational companies. First, the review of relevant literature provided a foundation of existing understanding of study abroad opportunities for the preparation of potential international workers.

Second, expert or elite interviews were conducted with a group of workers currently working for multinational organizations as expatriate workers. Participants were queried regarding experiences with study abroad during their undergraduate and/or graduate education and other cultural immersion or cultural exposure activities utilized to increase cultural sensitivity, possibly during employment orientation. In-depth or qualitative interviews are designed to enter the perspective of the other person (Patton, 1987, p. 109). The quantity of interviews conducted is less important than the depth and the insights that the experts provide.

Many of the studies reviewed as foundational literature for this study queried students or graduates of study abroad programs regarding their perceptions of best practices and advantages of study abroad opportunities. While these studies provide insights into the motivations of students, students are not experts in cultural sensitivity. Additionally, students often have less-than-altruistic reasons for participating in educational programming like study abroad opportunities. Just as an institution would not ask students to design a curriculum, since they do not have real world expertise in the discipline, suggesting that study abroad programming or curriculum requirements should be designed by student opinions is a flawed approach. Instead, to gain insights into best practices in the development of cultural sensitivity, expatriate workers employed by multinational organizations are in a position to provide insights into past practices and to suggest possible solutions for improving cultural sensitivity for future business leaders.

All interviews were conducted by email to allow participants to reply at their leisure and in as much depth as they were willing to provide. This allowed participants to provide more information than would have been explored in a timed face-to-face encounter. Participants were asked the following primary questions (below); additional questions were posed in secondary review emails to gain clarification and allow participants to explain details of their experiences or suggestions. To ensure consistency of understanding of terminology, participants were provided with definitions of the following terms based on the literature review herein: cultural sensitivity, expatriate worker, multinational organization, and study abroad programming/experiences.

The initial questions posed to the participants included demographic items and open-ended items. Demographic items included: gender, age (by cohort), highest level of education, major areas of formal education, educational institution(s) attended, information regarding any additional certifications earned, and the nature of the multinational organization for which they work (i.e., banking, pharmaceutical, etc.). Open-ended items included the following:

1. During your formal university studies (undergraduate and/or graduate level) did you participate in a study abroad program?
2. In what countries did you participate in study abroad programming?
3. Please describe the nature of your study abroad experience, i.e., the length of time you spent in each country, whether you attended university classes in the country you were visiting, whether your study abroad was coupled with a preparatory course, the

- types of cultural experiences you participated in while studying abroad and whether these were planned by a coordinating agency or by you as an independent traveler.
4. If you did not participate in a formal study abroad program during your university studies (undergraduate or graduate level), what type of cross-cultural experience did you participate in (perhaps paid for by an employer) to prepare you for work as an expatriate employee for a multinational organization?
  5. In your experience as an expatriate employee of a multinational organization, what has been the best method you have used or participated in for preparing yourself to work with members of the new culture (country/ethnic culture) with which you were required to work in your new assignment? Please describe in as much detail as possible.
  6. In the best of all possible worlds, what would you suggest is the best way for students and/or new employees to prepare for work as an expatriate employee for a multinational organization?
  7. Would you like to provide any other information regarding cultural sensitivity or cross-cultural competence?

Interpretation of the interview data occurred through an iterative process of moving between the interview commentary and the themes from the relevant scholarly and practitioner literature. The findings of this project are qualitative in nature and are meant to provide insights to educators and corporate leaders regarding future cultural sensitivity development activities.

## **DISCUSSION**

The expatriate professionals queried for this study represented the following countries: Australia, Canada, Romania, and United States. Industries represented by the employers of the participants included manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, financial services/banking, insurance, oil and gas, and chemicals. All participants hold high-ranking positions in corporate communication or marketing for multinational companies located outside of the United States. Fifteen invitations were extended; ten invitations were accepted. The highest level of education completed by the participants varied: one doctorate; five master's degrees; and four bachelor's degrees. The majority (six) of the participants indicated that they did not participate in formal study abroad programming during their university studies; the remaining four did participate in formal study abroad programming during university studies.

In response to these questions, respondents provided the following general insights. The participants who participated in formal study abroad programming during their university education, described traditional immersion experiences, i.e. "prep course and multiple cultural experiences, with planned guided tours" as well as taking courses at a university in another country with opportunities for formal field trips and independent travel during the semester. One participant explained that her company sent her to attend courses at a university in the country where she would be relocated. These courses provided her with a foundation in language and culture before she began her work experience.

Another participant described an experience that has become a trend among multinational companies – having employees participate in international volunteer programs to increase their exposure to other cultures.

For those expatriate workers who did not have university study abroad programming, becoming successful as an expatriate employee included much on-the-job or on-the-ground

training – sometimes provided formally by their employer and at times stitched together in an impromptu fashion by the workers themselves.

As a result of this lack of cultural sensitivity training, one participant said: “When I was in a global role managing operational issues for 2,200 staff in 86 countries, I created a program to provide group and one-on-one cross cultural, business, and personal security training to employees prior to and, after their long-term overseas assignment.”

A number of participants explained that they received no training from their employer before being assigned to a position outside of their home countries. One commented: “My employer did not pay for or organize any cross cultural experience to prepare me for this opportunity. They did screen me in the interview process. They did ask for my experiences working with various cultures because the role is a regional role and there are nine countries with linguistic challenges and cultural differences. The countries include China, India, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia to name a few. They also asked if I had visited any of the countries and I had travelled to eight of the nine countries. Exposure to other cultures through travel is highly valuable to help prepare for multinational work outside your home country.” Being an experienced traveler from personal vacations and being willing to travel were mentioned by many participants as being the only preparation for international work travel.

Expatriate workers interviewed for this study have the following suggestions for improving cultural sensitivity training for students and employees embarking on an expatriate work assignment: “Training should include everything from local business practices to how to handle house staff, guests, and social life.”

Read everything from the local country’s newspaper to its best fiction writers, history and political books, Internet blogs, travelogues, and especially books and articles about business etiquette and business terminology. “This is especially important to make sure that you don’t accidentally adopt obscene gestures and that body language is culturally appropriate.” Many participants commented on the need to understand the history and political environment of the country so as to better understand stereotypes and racism that may exist within the culture and to avoid political blunders.

Network with fellow employees (before leaving for the assignment) who have recently returned from an overseas assignment, host-country nationals who now live in your home country, business people who work with companies and businesspersons in the host country. “They usually have tremendous experience and can be highly effective cultural decoders.” Additionally, any family members how will be traveling with the employee should also have some cultural sensitivity training.

Socialize in the new country with locals, neighbors and co-workers to learn from observing and doing. Socialization is important for developing an understanding of cultural expectations and language practices that may be very different from the formal language training. “When dealing with other cultures I was respectful and made an effort to understand the differences (and similarities) between my culture and the cultures I was interacting with.” One participant commented that she bought a bike and started riding to work, because that was the cultural norm. Another turned the cultural sensitivity conundrum around: “While it is important to recognize cultural norms, it is equally important to see each person as an individual. This works both ways: I also worked with my colleagues to stop seeing me as *the American* and to start seeing me as an individual.”

Participants commented that real experiences with other cultures are the most revealing when it comes to preparing ourselves to live in an environment that is vastly different than our



home. Aside from formal university study abroad programs, participation in international volunteer projects, the Peace Corp, and international internships during college are just a few ways to develop these international exposures.

All participants commented on learning language skills, whether you expect to communicate in the local language or not. One participant described using children's programming like *Sesame Street* as a means for learning and perfecting language. Another participant explained how culture and language intersect and the need to develop an understanding of sports to improve socialization: "Common American sports analogies, for example (hit a homerun, go for the long pass) do not resonate with cricket fans. ... I had to learn enough about it to be able to weave cricket themes into my writing."

Expatriate workers had mixed opinions about participating in expatriate groups and "hangouts" while working overseas. One participant explained that these groups create more division than understanding. Another explained that the American Network was located close to her house and was helpful in easing her transition to the new culture.

One participant summed up the need for cultural sensitivity programming: "The key to a successful experience for the visitor is cultural sensitivity. It is not possible to learn everything you would like to know before you go, but by exploring your own assumptions, understanding the validity of cultural norms and customs, and examining how your own behavior can be interpreted differently than you might expect, you can reach a point where you can take a step back, learn and appreciate."

## CONCLUSIONS

The expatriate professionals interviewed for this study suggest that to best prepare graduates for multinational organizational work assignments, business programs need to provide both immersion and exposure opportunities for students to experience political issues, business practices, language exposure, and routines of daily life in a number of cultures. Since many companies today have numerous facilities in countries with distinctly different cultures, exposure to numerous cultures is beneficial in preparing international business graduates. If a student has a decided interest in working in one specific culture, i.e., China, then multiple exposures or immersion in that one culture may be suggested.

### *Implications for Curriculum Design*

The question, then, for developers of Business school curricula designed to increase intercultural competence is "what level of knowledge and skills are desired in this area, and what particular types of competencies are expected by employers of our graduates?" Generally, curriculum designers seek to provide students with a basic level of competency in working with other cultures, whether as co-workers, customers, suppliers, or other stakeholders of an organization. This is often accomplished with "indirect" exposure as discussed in the review of literature, where such exposure is obtained via a student's in-classroom experience. Increasingly, however, employers of Business graduates give preference in the hiring process to those that have also obtained "direct" exposure by experiencing a culture firsthand. For schools focused on meeting outcomes favored by employers, as professional schools often are, this may mean doing a better job in the future of determining the particular types of direct approaches that best achieve these outcomes.

One logical approach is to seek input from all stakeholders of the Business program to discover:

- 1) What particular geographic areas, if any, should be emphasized in the school's international curricular programs? For example, regional schools often prepare students for jobs in area firms that do most of their foreign sales in a particular country or global region. Moreover, an inspection of foreign trade patterns for the state where the school is located would help suggest areas for concentration. If it appears that a particular constituency is readily identifiable for area employers, then developing more focused, immersion-type programs may be warranted for a school serving these employers. On the other hand, schools with a more national focus where employers of their graduates are more economically diverse may be better served with exposure-type programs where study abroad courses offered as part of the school's curriculum represent a larger variety of foreign destinations.
- 2) What particular cross-cultural knowledge and skills should the programs be devised to teach participating students? For example, for a local employer that hires graduates with a goal of having them work in an expatriate capacity in the future in a particular country would likely prefer the new hire to have a more in-depth knowledge of the country's cultural practices and business environment that an immersion-type program would better provide. Of course, often an employer merely seeks to hire open-minded students that have had a variety of cultural experiences so that are likely open to working in a different culture, although they have not yet had the opportunity to explore a particular country or regional culture in-depth. In this case, such employers may prefer to hire those students that have participated in the broader based curricular approach taken in exposure-oriented study abroad programs.

Since the results of our study found that employers often accept the responsibility to train new hires for particular cultures in which they are to work, perhaps Business schools should seek to provide the broader global knowledge associated with indirect curricular approaches (on campus courses) combined with direct (exposure-type) study abroad programs. That way, employers can accept responsibility for targeted intercultural training for geographic regions and particular knowledge that new employees will need when working in foreign environments where their firm operates.

### ***Implications for Corporate Training***

Across the board, the expatriate workers interviewed for this study agreed that regardless of the travel experiences or other expatriate experiences a worker has, companies need to invest in cultural sensitivity programming before an employee (and their family members) leave for an assignment and re-entry training to help employees return to their home corporate environment. This experience needs to include diversity training as well as country-specific cultural expectations. As one participant commented: "Reverse culture shock is as bad, if not worse, than *regular* culture shock. ... Those companies who provide post-assignment training of this type retain employees longer, and those employees are more likely to request/accept another overseas assignment later on."

The purpose of this study was to identify whether one of two direct learning approaches to gaining cultural sensitivity for students/recruits was preferred: cultural immersion and cultural exposure. The expatriate professionals interviewed for this study leave us divided on the research question we originally posited: is there one best way for students/recruits to develop cultural sensitivity before embarking on a career in a multinational organization? Even after graduation,

additional experiences may be necessary to prepare a recruit for a position outside of his/her home culture. The expatriate professionals' commentary suggests that a combination of approaches is best to satisfy the changing needs of multinational organizations.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> For this project, the following terms will be used synonymously, multinational organizations, multinational enterprises, and multinational companies/corporations. These terms are understood to mean "an enterprise operating in several countries but managed from one (home) country. Generally, any company or group that derives a quarter of its revenue from operations outside of its home country is considered a multinational corporation" (Business Dictionary, para. 1, 2011).

<sup>ii</sup> This review of literature represents a sampling of research to situate and inform the research question and is not an exhaustive review. The literature here provides a foundation for the discussion to follow.

<sup>iii</sup> Some employees that are new to a multinational organization may not have experienced study abroad during their higher education plan of study. Or they may be taking a position in a country with which they have no previous experience.

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