CARLSON GLOBAL INSTITUTE

Shaping the Future of Global Business
Assessing the Long-Term Impact of Study Abroad on Business Students’ Cultural Intelligence

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Carlson Context

• Student population
• The International Experience
  – Faculty vote in 2007
  – 2008 Undergraduate Requirement
  – 2009 Full-Time MBA requirement*
  – 2010 Part-Time MBA requirement*
• Variety of ways to fulfill the International Experience
• Participation numbers
• Carlson Global Institute Advisory Council
Carlson Context

• All Carlson students study abroad
• Feedback from advisory council – hard to find the right people for global roles

• Survey purpose:
  – To understand the work context of Carlson alumni, especially as it relates to international & intercultural experiences and opportunities
  – To understand whether Carlson alumni who studied abroad during their time at Carlson differ from alumni who did not study abroad with respect to their post-Carlson experiences and international/intercultural motivations and abilities.
Results
Survey Overview

• Launched in July 2016
• Sent to Carlson alumni who graduated in 2006, 2011, and 2013
• 495 respondents (17% response rate)
Survey Focus

• Work environment
• Self-assessment
• International/intercultural motivation
• Impact of study abroad
Survey Respondents

• Cohort breakdown:
  – 22% - 2006 (10 years ago)
  – 39% - 2011 (5 years ago)
  – 39% - 2013 (3 years ago)

• 43% studied as undergraduate, 44% as graduate, and 12% as both

• Percentage of respondents who studied abroad as Carlson student:
  – 33% of 2006 cohort
  – 49% of 2011 cohort
  – 76% of 2013 cohort
• In at least 1 job since Carlson - % of respondents who have had opportunity to...
  – Work with people whose backgrounds are culturally different from their own: 92%
  – Work virtually with colleagues from other parts of the world: 76%
  – Work on projects with an international component: 71%
  – Learn to work with a new culture: 58%
  – Travel to another country: 40%
  – Relocate to another country: 5%
Current job – International/Intercultural Opportunities

• By industry:
  – The industries that represent the highest levels of opportunities for employees are technology, manufacturing, and consulting. The industries with the lowest levels of these opportunities are health care/pharmaceuticals, retail, and government/nonprofit.

• By function:
  – Differences in opportunities were not as pronounced when broken down by job function, although the consulting role is notable for its high levels of access to these types of opportunities.
Skills and Attributes Most Prioritized by Employers

- Adapting to change
- Switching gears when new priorities emerge
- Learning new processes quickly
- Making judgements about complex issues
- Finding creative ways to solve problems
- Relying on oneself to navigate unfamiliar contexts
- Tolerating ambiguous situations
- Understanding an issue from someone else’s perspective
- Interest in learning about new topics
- Working on diverse teams
- Communicating with people from diverse backgrounds
- Openness to diverse viewpoints
- Framing issues in a global context
- Awareness of other cultures
- Desire to work on multicultural teams
- Adapting behavior to fit cultural norms
- Understanding cultural differences in a business context
- Awareness of one’s own culture
- Identifying difference between one’s own culture and other cultures
A factor analysis of these individual items revealed that they could be grouped into 4 categories/scales: agility, critical thinking, cross-cultural collaboration, and understanding difference.
Self Assessment
Business Cultural Intelligence Quotient (BCIQ)

• Cultural Intelligence (CQ): A person’s capability to function effectively in a culturally diverse environment (Earley & Ang, 2003)

• 4 dimensions of CQ: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral

• Cultural intelligence is associated with positive work outcomes in individuals, including overall work performance, group effectiveness, interpersonal trust, and leader effectiveness with multicultural teams (McComas, 2014)

Self Assessment
Business Cultural Intelligence Quotient (BCIQ)

• BCIQ: Designed to measure cultural intelligence in business and workplace contexts
• 3 scales:
  • **Motivation** (sample item - *I have a desire to experience cultures that are different from my own*)
  • **Listening & communicative adaptation** (sample item - *I pay close attention to how my words affect the people with whom I interact*)
  • **Cognitive preparation and learning behavior** (sample item - *I read editorials on international business*)

Respondents who studied abroad while at Carlson scored higher on motivation and listening & communicative adaptation scales (difference is statistically significant, p<.05)

No significant differences for cognitive preparation
BCIQ Regressions

- Dependent variables: BCIQ sub-scales
- Independent variables:
  - Whether studied abroad while at Carlson
  - Demographics (gender, race, eligibility for financial aid while at Carlson)
  - International background (whether studied abroad in high school, longest time abroad before college)
  - Level of study at Carlson
  - Current family structure (whether married, whether has children)
BCIQ Regressions

• Study abroad: those who studied abroad while at Carlson were more likely to score higher on motivation
• Gender: women were more likely to score higher on motivation; men were more likely to score higher on cognitive preparation and learning behavior
• Level of study: those who studied at Carlson as a graduate student were more likely to score higher on cognitive preparation and learning behavior
Impact of Study Abroad

- 79% of respondents said that their study abroad experience had an impact on them professionally
  - 93% of respondents who did a semester- or year-long program said there was an impact, vs. 70% of those who did a short-term program
  - Respondents who were more satisfied with their abroad experience were more likely to say there was an impact
  - Respondents who studied abroad as undergrad or as both undergrad and grad were more likely to say there was an impact compared to those who studied as graduate student
  - No difference by whether they were required to study abroad
  - No difference by gender
Impact of Study Abroad

Greatest reported professional impact of studying abroad

- I was better prepared to work in intercultural contexts: 59.2%
- I was more likely to want to travel to other countries for work: 46.4%
- I was more likely to seek out a company with an international presence: 29.6%
- I was more likely to seek out a job with an international component: 26.3%
- I was more likely to be considered for a job: 24.6%
- I was more likely to want to relocate to another country for work: 19%
- I was more likely to be given international responsibilities in a job: 19.8%
Lessons Learned & Next Steps
Take aways

• Personalizes impact story for Carlson students
• Change the way we talk about impact (e.g. interview prep workshop)
• Opportunity for reciprocal engagement with local business community
Next steps

- Conduct focus groups to better understand results
- Consider a “deep-dive” with several local employers
- Share relevant findings with stakeholders (activity)
Discussion
Finding:
Carlson alumni who studied abroad demonstrate higher levels of motivation for intercultural experiences and interaction, but not the other two scales (listening/communicative adaptation and cognitive preparation/learning behavior).

Discuss:
• At your institution, how would you make sense of this finding?
• Is motivation enough?
• What additional questions would you want to ask?
Discussion: Telling the Story

• What stakeholders need to know the impact of study abroad (or another aspect of your work)?
• What messages/key points are most relevant for them to understand?
• What is the best method of communicating with each group?