

Preparing International Business Students for
Success by Improving Cross Cultural Adaptability:

An Empirical Study of the IBI Program

by

Kevin Eric Hughes Ph.D.

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Abstract

Cross-cultural adaptability (CCA) has been found to be an integral part of cross-cultural success. A study was conducted in the summer of 2002 to determine the effects of the International Business Institute (IBI) study abroad program in Europe on the CCA of US university students. The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) was administered as a pre- and post-test to both a study-abroad and a stay-at-home group. The CCAI is designed to measure cross-cultural adaptability, by examining four skill areas that have been found to be critical to successful cross-cultural adaptation: emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. No significant change in CCAI was found among the study-abroad group members as a whole but significant improvement was indicated for students with less experience abroad. The research and results led to recommendations for enhancing the effect of a study abroad program on the CCA of students preparing for a career in the global workplace.

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Introduction

Cross-cultural preparation is a critical element for preparing North American employees to function in the global marketplace. If an employee operates from the US office or an international post, it is vital that the employee know more than how to perform technical functions. He must also be able to interact with employees, customers, and clients from other countries and cultures (Black, Gregerson, Mendenhall, & Stroh, 1999; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991; Nauman, 1992; Phatak, 1995; Tung, 1998a). When selecting employees to send overseas, research shows that American companies tend to have a technical bias in selection and tend to ignore cross-cultural adaptability, though such adaptability is critical to the success of the employee in the assignment (Caligiuri, 1998; Frazee, 1998; Kozloff, 1996). US expatriates have a substantially high expatriate failure rate in relation to other industrialized nations, because of cross-cultural adaptability difficulties (Chowanec & Newstrom, 1991; Forster, 1997; Tung, 1998b). US corporate executives and expatriates believe that US universities are not doing an effective job of preparing US students to work in international settings (Cavusgil, 1993; Fugate & Jefferson, 2001; Kobrin, 1984).

The 2002 International Business Institute was a ten week summer semester in Europe comprised of four international business courses and extensive travel across Europe. The eight colleges and universities represented by the students in this program relied primarily on the IBI program to provide most if not all of the international business component of these students' college education. Since CCA is essential for expatriate success, and the IBI program was the primary source of international business training for these potential future expatriates, it was important that the program positively impact the CCA among the participants.

CCA and Expatriate Success or Failure

Cross-cultural adaptability (CCA) has been found to be an integral part of cross-cultural success (Detweiler, 1978; Dinges & Baldwin, 1983; Kealey, 1989; Oberg, 1960; Ruben, 1989). The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) is designed to assist in the assessment of expatriates, study-abroad students, immigrants, and diversity program participants (Kelley & Meyers, 1995). The test is

designed to measure cross-cultural adaptability, by examining four skill areas that have been found to be critical to successful cross-cultural adaptation: emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy.

Hisam (1997) stated that culture shock is a leading cause of expatriate failure. Eschbach (1997) demonstrated that integrated cross-cultural training could reduce the severity of culture shock, reduce the adjustment period, speed up the process of reaching cultural proficiency, and reduce the time needed to become effective and productive in the foreign assignment. In a survey of international selection practices, 98 percent of the respondents indicated that expatriate candidates were selected using the primary criteria of technical skills and willingness to relocate. Yet when asked the key factors contributing to failed international assignments, these same respondents reported that personality factors and interpersonal style were the primary culprits (Kozloff, 1996). According to Black et al. (1999) most poor performance or premature return cases among expatriates and their families result from cross-cultural problems, not from lack of technical or professional skills.

The successful candidate for an extended overseas assignment should possess a high level of cross-cultural adaptability. The following traits reported by Phatak (1995) are the component parts of CCA as tested in the CCAI (Kelley & Meyers, 1995). Phatak stated that successful candidates possess cultural empathy. A successful manager must understand the differences and similarities between the home and host culture, and be tolerant of other cultures while avoiding making judgments based on his or her own cultural values and criteria. It is very important that the candidate be emotionally stable. The candidate should demonstrate an emotional equilibrium that is needed to deal constructively with adversity and various foreign circumstances. The successful manager also must be adaptable and flexible, with the ability to integrate with other people, cultures, and business operations. The person must be able to change as circumstances require, and be able to problem solve from different frameworks and perspectives, in adverse situations, and with a lack of support and information from headquarters.

Study Abroad as Cross-Cultural Training

Black and Mendenhall (1990) determined that cross-cultural training has been generally effective in reducing cross-cultural conflict. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that cross-cultural training programs can improve expatriate managers' job performance. Eschbach, Parker, and Stoeberl (2001) found that cross-cultural training could aid in making cultural adjustment faster and smoother. These researchers conducted a study of former expatriates and concluded that integrated cross-cultural training has a positive impact on expatriate adjustment.

Eschbach (1997) demonstrated that integrated cross-cultural training for managers reduced the severity of culture shock, reduced adjustment time, and reduced the time necessary to become effective and productive in the foreign assignment, as compared with managers who did not receive such training. Eschbach's et al. (2001) findings suggested that cross-cultural training is most effective when it has a high degree of rigor regarding the expatriate's cultural adjustment. Such training helped expatriates to be more effective and productive in their assignments earlier than expatriates who had no such training. Respondents in this study expressed the need for Americans to have proper mental preparation to prepare for cross-cultural encounters because Americans typically live in a cultural vacuum. Respondents furthermore indicated that a proper attitude of respect for others was imperative to success because nothing can overcome a bad attitude. So cross-cultural training was found to reduce culture shock, adjustment time, and the length of time needed to become proficient in the new culture and at the new job.

Kobrin (1984) found that among Fortune 500 executives, 95 percent of the respondents who worked abroad felt that experience abroad involving substantial interpersonal interaction was most important in developing international expertise. The repeated themes were that the most valuable experiences were living and working abroad through significant situations that counted for something, were important, and were even difficult at times. Few respondents felt that formal education was a critical contributor to their expertise. However, education did seem to motivate interest in international affairs

and a better use of international experience when the opportunity occurred. Education was also reported to shape the respondents' approaches to understanding other cultures and countries.

IBI Study

This study was conducted to determine the effect of the IBI program on the cross-cultural adaptability of international business students from 8 schools in the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities. In this study a Solomon design was used incorporating the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) as a pre- and post-test administered to both a treatment (study-abroad) and a control (stay-at-home) group.

Research Question

This study was conducted to answer the following question. What effect does the IBI study abroad program have on the cross-cultural adaptability of participating students?

Instrument

The CCAI is a self-scoring test, intended for use in evaluating college students, expatriates, immigrants, study abroad programs, multi-national corporations, pre-departure training programs, diversity programs, and classes on cross-cultural issues. The results depict scores for each of the four cross-cultural dimensions. The Emotional Resilience (ER) scale measures the degree to which a person can rebound and react positively to new experiences. The Flexibility/Openness (FO) scale measures the extent to which a person enjoys the different ways of thinking and behaving that are typically encountered in the cross-cultural experience. The Perceptual Acuity (PAC) scale measures the extent to which a person pays attention to and accurately perceives various aspects of the environment. The Personal Autonomy (PA) scale measures the extent to which a person has evolved a system of values and beliefs and at the same time respects others and their value systems (Kelley & Meyers, 1992).

Reliability

Internal consistency statistics were calculated for the four scales and the total score of the CCAI using Cronbach's Alpha. These calculations indicate that items within each scale are strongly correlated to one another. The CCAI scales demonstrate high internal consistency. Correlation between scales

ranged from .27 to .59 (Kelley & Meyers, 1995). For more on the use of the CCAI in similar research see Goldstein and Smith (1999) who analyzed the effects of experiential training on student sojourners' cross-cultural adaptability. This study demonstrated that the CCAI instrument could reliably detect significant differences in students' CCA levels.

Validity

The CCAI was designed to assist in cross-cultural training. Its purpose is to help people understand what factors are important for working and living effectively in another culture, and to help individuals learn useful information about themselves that can help in the development of cross-cultural skills and abilities. The CCAI has been found to have face validity. The questions make it obvious to people that they address adaptation to other cultures. The content appears to the average respondent to be appropriate and relevant for measuring cross-cultural adaptability (Kelley & Meyers, 1995). The CCAI has demonstrated content validity. The CCAI is based on thorough research and expert opinion in the CCA field. All questions in the current version of the CCAI can be clearly conceptually linked to CCA (Kelley & Meyers, 1995). It is not possible to definitively say any instrument has construct validity, but in the case of the CCAI there are indirect claims that the inventory measures cross-cultural adaptability. The items in the CCAI were rigorously analyzed statistically to "clarify the construct of cross-cultural adaptability and its dimensions" (Kelley & Meyers, 1995, p. 29). Out of this analysis four factors were discovered. These four factors were then factor loaded and developed into the four scales in the CCAI. George (1991), in a study of school principals, found that principals with higher CCAI scores were more heterogeneous regarding ethnicity, spoke more languages, and reported having more cross-cultural training and education. This demonstrates that the four attributes measured in the CCAI are associated with external indicators of higher levels of CCA.

Group Demographics

Demographic information was collected from all stay-at-home group and study-abroad group students using a questionnaire that accompanied the CCAI pre-test. This was done so the two groups could be compared, and so subgroups with certain characteristics within the study-abroad group could be

analyzed to determine if these characteristics were predictors of significant differences in mean test scores. Table 1 is a summary of the demographic information obtained from the students.

Table 1. Stay-at-Home Group and Study-Abroad Group Demographic Comparisons

Group	N	Schools	Men	Women	of age			Bilingual
					≤ 19yrs	20-29yrs	>29yrs	
Stay-at-Home (%)	18	1	9	9	1	17	0	2 (11)
Study-Abroad (%)	29	8	15	14	2	27	0	7 (24)

Group	Bilingual Home	Non-citizen	No Travel	<1mo travel	1-12 mo travel	13-36 mo travel	>36 mo travel	Lived abroad
Stay-at-Home (%)	2 (11)	1	10 (55)	5 (28)	2 (11)	0 (00)	1 (06)	1 (06)
Study-Abroad (%)	4 (14)	0	2 (07)	11 (38)	13 (45)	0 (00)	3 (10)	7 (24)

Inter-Group Comparisons

The study-abroad group had more international experience than the stay-at-home group. Sixteen (55%) study-abroad group students had previously traveled abroad for more than a month (see Table 1). In the stay-at-home group, 10 (56%) students had never left North America. Seven (24%) study-abroad group students had lived abroad, while one (6%) stay-at-home group student had done so. Four (14%) study-abroad group students grew up in multiple language households while two (11%) stay-at-home group students did so. Seven (24%) study-abroad group students spoke multiple languages while two (11%) stay-at-home group students were bilingual. Though specific address information was not collected, the study-abroad group consisted of students from schools across the US. With one exception, the stay-at-home group students all came from Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Though the study-abroad and stay-at-home groups were similar in many regards, such as age, type of college attended, field of study, and citizenship, there were noticeable differences in the cross-cultural exposure of the two groups. The study-abroad group possessed more experience traveling and living abroad. This group also had a substantially higher percentage of bilingual students. Such cross-cultural experiences can contribute to CCA development.

Tests of Hypotheses

The study-abroad students took the CCAI in Europe at the beginning and end of the IBI program. The stay-at-home group took the pre-test on campus before leaving college for the summer and the post-test via US mail ten weeks later. Demographic data was collected from both groups at the time of the pre-test. The study-abroad group completed a follow-up evaluation of the IBI program at the time of the post-test.

Five hypotheses were tested using two-way ANOVA. The first null hypothesis states: The study-abroad group pre-test scores are not significantly different from the stay-at-home group pre-test scores. The first null hypothesis is rejected. The study-abroad group scored significantly higher than the stay-at-home group regarding the overall level of cross-cultural adaptability and specifically regarding emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, and perceptual acuity (see Table 2). There was no significant difference between the groups regarding their levels of personal autonomy. Comparing these two groups on the pre-test established a reference point for comparing the groups on the post-test.

Table 2. Summary of Primary Findings

Test	Source 1	ER	FO	PAC	PA	Total	Source 2
H ₀ 1: Rejected	SA pre-test	S > **	S > **	S > *	NS >	S > **	SAH pre-test
H ₀ 2: Rejected	SA post-test	S > **	S > **	S > **	S > **	S > **	SAH post-test
H ₀ 3: Not Rejected	SAH pre-test	NS >	NS >	NS >	NS >	NS >	SAH post-test
H ₀ 4: Not Rejected	SA pre-test	NS <	NS <	NS <	NS <	NS <	SA post-test
H ₀ 5: Rejected	SAH group	S **	NS	S **	S *	S **	SA group

Note. For each test, source 1 is compared to source 2. The result for each scale and total score comparison is reported between the two sources. Results for each test are reported as either significant (S) or not significant (NS). For the four hypotheses, the direction of the arrow indicates the source on the left is either greater than (>) or less than (<) the source on the right. SAH = Stay-at-home group; SA = Study-abroad group
 * = $p \leq .05$. ** = $p \leq .01$

The second null hypothesis states: The study-abroad group post-test scores are not significantly different from the stay-at-home group post-test scores. The second null hypothesis is rejected. On the post-test, the study-abroad group scored significantly higher than the stay-at-home group regarding the

overall level of cross-cultural adaptability and regarding all four traits (see Table 2). Comparing these findings to the results from testing the first null hypothesis, the significant gap between the mean scores of the two groups was wider on the post-test than on the pre-test.

The third null hypothesis states: The stay-at-home group post-test scores are not significantly different from the stay-at-home group pre-test scores. The third null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The stay-at-home group did not report significant pre- to post-test changes regarding its level of cross-cultural adaptability or regarding any of the four traits (see Table 2). This result was anticipated because this group did not receive cross-cultural training or participate in a study-abroad program in the ten weeks between the pre- and post-tests.

The fourth null hypothesis states: The study-abroad group post-test scores are not significantly different from the study-abroad group pre-test scores. The fourth null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The study-abroad group did not report significant pre- to post-test changes regarding its overall level of cross-cultural adaptability or any of the four traits (see Table 2). This test addresses the primary question in this study, testing the effect of the IBI program on the cross-cultural adaptability of participants. According to the results from testing the fourth null hypothesis no significant change occurred for the study-abroad group as a whole.

Based on the results from testing the four null hypotheses, further investigation was warranted regarding the widened gap between the scores of the two groups. Though neither group reported significant pre- to post-test changes regarding cross-cultural adaptability, the distance between the two groups' self-reported levels of cross-cultural adaptability was greater on the post-test than on the pre-test. The stay-at-home group reported pre- to post-test decreases regarding its overall level of cross-cultural adaptability and all four traits, while the study-abroad group reported pre- to post-test increases regarding its overall level of cross-cultural adaptability and all four traits. Therefore a fifth hypothesis was created and tested.

The fifth null hypothesis states: The changes in the stay-at-home group's mean scores from the pre- to the post-test were not significantly different from the changes in the study-abroad group's mean

scores, where change is defined as either: stay-at-home (mean post-test scores – mean pre-test scores) or study-abroad (mean post-test scores – mean pre-test scores). The differences in the pre- to post-test score changes of the students in these two groups were compared using ANOVA, and the differences between the pre- to post-test score changes of the two groups are significant concerning the overall level of cross-cultural adaptability and regarding emotional resilience, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy, but not regarding flexibility/openness (see Table 2).

Further Testing of Areas of Interest

Further testing using ANOVA and correlation analysis was conducted on the study-abroad group data to examine the impact of prior cross-cultural experience on pre- to post-test changes in cross-cultural adaptability levels. IBI program participants were segregated according to the following four criteria related to prior cross-cultural experience: had not lived abroad/had lived abroad, non-bilingual/bilingual, non-bilingual home/bilingual home, and had traveled abroad less than one month/between one month and one year/more than three years. The resulting nine subgroups were tested using ANOVA to determine if these subgroups perceived significant increases in their levels of cross-cultural adaptability after participating in the IBI program. Only the subgroup of students who had not lived abroad reported significant pre- to post-test changes, scoring significantly higher on the post-test regarding perceptual acuity and personal autonomy (see Table 3).

Correlation analysis was used to find three significant correlations within the study-abroad group (see Table 4). First, time spent abroad is positively correlated with pre-test total scores and perceptual acuity scores. The more time students spent abroad prior to the IBI program the higher the students rated themselves regarding overall cross-cultural adaptability and perceptual acuity. Second, pre-test scores are negatively correlated with pre- to post-test score improvement, regarding overall cross-cultural adaptability, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. The lower students rated themselves regarding their overall level of cross-cultural adaptability, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy before the program, the more improvement they tended to report regarding those same factors after the IBI program. Third, time abroad is negatively correlated with pre- to post-test improvement concerning perceptual

Table 3. Summary of ANOVA Findings of Interest Within the Study-Abroad Group

IBI Subgroups by							
Cross-Cultural Experience	Source 1	ER	FO	PAC	PA	Total	Source 2
Live Abroad Experience							
Had not lived abroad	Pre-test	NS <	NS <	S <*	S <*	NS <	Post-test
Had lived abroad:	Pre-test	NS <	NS >	NS <	NS <	NS <	Post-test
Language Training							
Non-Bilingual	Pre-test	NS <	NS <	NS <	NS <	NS <	Post-test
Bilingual	Pre-test	NS <	NS >	NS <	NS <	NS <	Post-test
Home Environment							
Non-Bilingual Home	Pre-test	NS <	NS <	NS <	NS <	NS <	Post-test
Bilingual Home	Pre-test	NS <	NS >	NS <	NS <	NS <	Post-test
Travel Abroad							
< 1 Month	Pre-test	NS <	NS <	NS <	NS <	NS <	Post-test
1 Month to 1 Year	Pre-test	NS <	NS >	NS <	NS <	NS <	Post-test
> 3 Years	Pre-test	NS <	NS >	NS >	NS <	NS <	Post-test

Note. For each IBI subgroup, the pre-test scores (Source 1) are compared to the post-test score (Source 2). The result for each scale and total score comparison is reported between the two sources. Results are reported as either significant (S) or not significant (NS), and the direction of the arrows indicate the pre-test scores are either greater than (>) or less than (<) the post-test scores.

* = $p \leq .05$

Table 4. Correlations Between Time Spent Abroad, Pre-Test Scores, and Pre- to Post-Test Score Improvement of IBI Program Participants

Sources	Total	ER	FO	PAC	PA
Time Abroad / Pre-Test Scores	*0.41	0.29	0.32	*0.56	0.24
Pre-Test Scores / Post-Test Improvement	*-0.43	-0.36	-0.36	*-0.53	*-0.57
Time Abroad / Post-Test Improvement	-0.26	-0.06	-0.30	*-0.38	-0.03

* $p \leq .05$ level (critical value = +/- 0.38)

acuity. The less time students reported spending abroad before the IBI program, the more improvement they reported regarding perceptual acuity after participating in the program. (More statistical data available upon request)

Interpretation of Findings

Though the stay-at-home group was selected from a pool of students similar to the study-abroad group in terms of type of college attended, age, field of study, and citizenship, there were some unexpected differences regarding prior cross-cultural experiences between the two groups (see Table 1). The study-abroad students had spent more time living abroad, traveling abroad, and learning other languages than had stay-at-home students. This appears to have contributed to significantly higher levels of cross-cultural adaptability among the study-abroad students, specifically regarding emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, and perceptual acuity (see Table 2).

Other factors most likely contributed to the significant pre-test mean score differences between the two groups. First, study-abroad students probably had taken more international courses than had stay-at-home students because of personal interests or because of requirements in their international business concentrations or majors. Second, students who participated in the IBI program may have done so partly because of a propensity toward cross-cultural experiences. It may be that students with higher levels of cross-cultural adaptability tend to migrate toward such study-abroad opportunities, and students with lower levels of cross-cultural adaptability tend to shy away from such experiences.

The stay-at-home group self-evaluations were lower on the post-test than on the pre-test concerning all four traits. The study-abroad students rated themselves higher on the post-test than on the pre-test regarding all four traits. On the post-test, the study-abroad group scored significantly higher than the stay-at-home group as anticipated. The primary purpose for this study was to determine if participating in the IBI program had a significant effect on participants. The results of testing the fourth null hypothesis is that no significant pre- to post-test improvement was made by the IBI students.

Though not extremely strong, statistically significant correlations help explain the IBI student data. First, the more time students had spent abroad prior to the IBI program the higher their pre-test

scores. This indicates that time abroad is positively related to cross-cultural adaptability (CCA). This however only explains a part of the pre-test score levels. The second and the strongest correlation is between pre-test scores and pre- to post-test score improvement. This indicates that the higher the level of CCA reported on the pre-test, the less CCA improvement resulted from participating in the program. The third correlation indicates that there is a significant and negative relationship between the pre- to post-test improvement experienced by the IBI program participants and the amount of time they spent abroad prior to the program. Time abroad however is only one of the explanatory factors and other cross-cultural experiential factors are most likely involved in determining the level of CCA reported on the pre-test. Whatever the reason for the pre-test level of CCA, the lower the initial test score, the greater the CCA improvement reported after participating in the program.

Program Survey

All IBI program participants answered a program follow-up evaluation (see Table 5). The survey asked students to rate facets of the IBI program on a scale from five to one; a rating of five indicating complete satisfaction and a one representing complete dissatisfaction. The overall program received an average score of 4.8 on a 5.0 scale (see Table 5). Most factors were given average scores between moderately satisfied (4) and completely satisfied (5). The lowest average score (3.6) was for item 8, the “Opportunity to interact with local people and cultures”. The second lowest average score (4.3) was for items 2 and 7. Item 7 regarded the “Balance between structured time and free time”. Seven students made comments on the survey. Two students’ comments addressed items 7 and 8. These two students wanted more opportunity to interact with local people by having more free time and less structured time. These comments came from two students who had spent less than one month abroad prior to this program. One of these two students was bilingual. The raw survey data and comments are in Appendix K.

The low score on the opportunity for local interaction would be consistent with the study-abroad group CCAI results. Because the students spent the majority of their time in the classroom, studying, touring, or traveling, some students felt that there was too little time for prolonged and substantial interpersonal interaction with local people and culture. This interpersonal interaction serves as cross-

Table 5. IBI Program Participant Satisfaction Survey Mean Scores

Number	Item	Mean Score
1	Travel arrangements in Europe	4.7
2	Living accommodations	4.3
3	Food	4.6
4	Course content	4.4
5	Faculty instruction	4.5
6	Interaction with faculty	4.7
7	Balance between structured time and free time	4.3
8	Opportunity to interact with local people and cultures	3.6
9	Organization of the IBI program	4.5
10	Overall satisfaction with the IBI program	4.8

cultural practice, and is an important component of CCA development. This lack of interpersonal interaction may be the reason that the study-abroad group did not experience significant CCA improvement. Staying within a large group of people from the US might have insulated students from experiencing the cultures they encountered.

Two of the seven students who had previously lived abroad made comments for future program improvements. One student commented that communication regarding items such as the schedule could have been improved. The other student commented that the marketing course was repetitive and that the comparative economic systems course should focus just on European countries. This student also wanted to discuss the issues faced by people in these countries, especially issues faced by Christians.

All three general praises of the program came from students with little or no previous experience abroad, and who also were not bilingual. The following two comments came from students who had spent less than one month abroad prior to this program. “This has been the most amazing experience of my life!” “Great job...I appreciate all you’ve (program coordinators) done for us.” This third and final praise came from a student who had never traveled abroad prior to the program. “I would advise people to do the program. I have grown spiritually and socially because of it.”

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations inherent in this study. The research design presented limitations related to the use of volunteer participants, small sample sizes, different testing environments, and lack of control over students or student experiences during the summer. The CCAI instrument presented limitations pertaining to self-evaluation due to subjectivity in self-scoring, differing interpretations of test items, and different uses of the rating scale. Also, the ability to generalize the study's findings is limited because of the unique nature of the IBI study abroad program and the CCAI instrument.

Research Design

Volunteers. Though all students had to fit certain demographic profiles, students in both groups were volunteers. Students in the study-abroad group had to meet specific business course requirements in their universities to be eligible to participate in the IBI program. Of the 39 eligible students who chose to participate in the IBI program, 29 volunteered to participate in this study. The factors contributing to whether or not students chose to participate in this study are not known.

The students in the stay-at-home group had to meet requirements similar to those of the study-abroad group, but all stay-at-home students came from Mount Vernon Nazarene University, while the study-abroad group represented eight schools. The stay-at-home students also voluntarily chose to participate in the study. Twenty five students volunteered to take the pre-test and eighteen students completed both the pre- and post-test. It is not known why seven initial volunteers did not return the post-test.

Sample Size. The sample sizes were small, with 29 study-abroad students and eighteen stay-at-home students completing both the pre- and post-test. This limited the statistical power of the results and limited what could be appropriately done statistically with the results. Larger sample sizes would have increased the statistical power of the results and may have made it possible to find significant differences or interactions that were either not found or could not be properly analyzed in these small samples.

Differing test setting. Stay-at-home students took the pre-test and post-test in different settings. This researcher administered the pre-tests on a college campus at the end of spring semester. The tests

were taken in a foyer of a classroom building, just before summer break. The post-tests were sent to stay-at-home students via US mail, so the setting for the post-test was different than for the pre-test. The post-test occurred about one month before the end of summer break, at which point students may have also been in a different frame of mind than they were in during the pre-test.

The pre- and post-test was administered to the study-abroad group by the IBI coordinator in Europe, in settings that were likely very different from those of the stay-at-home group. The pre-test was administered in Stockholm, Sweden just after the students arrived in Europe for the summer. The post-test was taken in London, England just before returning to the US. Besides the physical and geographical differences, the psychological setting may have differed as well. During the pre-test in Stockholm, students were likely excited and somewhat scared as they anticipated ten weeks in Europe. During the post-test in London, the students were likely emotionally and physically tired, homesick, and anxious to return home.

Lack of control. This researcher had no control over the activities that transpired for either group during the ten weeks between the pre- and post-tests. The stay-at-home group left campus within a week after the pre-test. All stay-at-home students indicated at the time of the pre-test that they were not planning to leave the country during the ten week period between the pre- and post-tests. This researcher could not verify if students indeed stayed in the US, or if they participated in some other activity that may have contributed to their cross-cultural adaptability. This researcher also had no control over the national and international events that occurred during the summer that may have helped or hindered students' perceptions of their level of cross-cultural adaptability. Finally, this researcher could not supervise the post-test that was sent to students in the mail. So it was not possible to verify that students actually completed the post-test by themselves and without distractions.

This researcher had little or no control over the study-abroad group pre- and post-testing. This researcher gave the IBI coordinator verbal and written instructions for administering the CCAI before the program began, but this researcher was not present to oversee either the pre- or post-test. This researcher could not control the activities in which the study-abroad students participated during the IBI program.

Finally, this researcher could not control the national and international events experienced by the students, and the follow-up evaluation was not designed to address these experiences.

The Nature of Self-Evaluation

Subjectivity. The CCAI is a self-evaluative instrument. The test takers must make subjective decisions based on their interpretations of the 50 items on the inventory and make a self-evaluation using a six-point scale. The subjective conclusions of the students can be influenced by past experiences, or how they wish to be perceived. While prior cross-cultural experience could be helpful in making students more objective in self-evaluation, the lack of prior experience can lead to skewed responses. Individuals differ as to how they interpret the 50 questions on the CCAI. Students interpret the items on the inventory according to their understanding of the items and their perspectives and experiences relative to each item.

Different uses of the ratings scale. Students differ as to how they score themselves on each item of the CCAI. Some students tend to use the extremes of the six-point range (i.e., using 1 and 6 more often) while others tend to score more toward the center of the range (i.e., using 3 and 4 more often). This limitation must be considered when making comparisons between test results of different individuals or groups.

Ability to generalize the results. This study was designed to evaluate the IBI program and to make recommendations for enhancement of that program only. Study abroad programs vary in length, content, location, and itinerary, so the results of this study cannot be generalized to other programs. Also, each type of self-evaluative cross-cultural test is unique. The results of this study pertain to the CCAI and cannot be generalized to other tests.

Recommendations

These findings suggest that program participants might experience more significant improvement regarding cross-cultural adaptability if a cross-cultural training program were incorporated into a study abroad program. Three recommended components of a training program include pre-departure training, ongoing interaction in the cultures, and regular group sessions during the summer.

Pre-departure Training

Pre-departure training should address two primary areas. First, such training should address the students' attitudes toward other cultures, and willingness to learn about and adapt to other cultures. Second, pre-departure training should assist students in developing self-efficacy, proper attitudes toward new situations, and appropriate skills for coping with stress and change.

Since the students attend universities across the US, it is not feasible to gather students together periodically before the summer to participate in a course or workshop. A more practical way to address pre-departure training may be to develop a web-based workshop and require students to participate in this online program prior to the summer. Such a workshop should inform students of cultural differences that will be encountered while in Europe, and encourage students to examine their own attitudes toward other people, ideas, and cultures. This workshop should be designed to help students become aware of the stress and psychological discomfort that will likely occur while spending ten weeks in Europe and help students to develop appropriate coping strategies and skills.

Such training could take the form of lectures about the influence of culture on behavior, cultural awareness training, orientation briefings, case studies, and cultural sensitivity training. Though the students and the facilitator would interact via the Internet, the workshop could be augmented with audio or videotapes and other appropriate media, such as suggested or required readings. The students might be encouraged to participate in local cross-cultural activities or keep a personal journal regarding what they are learning about themselves and other cultures in the weeks leading up to the summer semester.

In this workshop, students would work independently and then share their cross-cultural learning experiences with each other. This would help the students get to know one another before the summer. This preparatory workshop would also help students become accustomed to the cross-cultural training model that would be used during the summer. In this training model, the students would be guided and encouraged first, to learn independently about themselves, other cultures, and cross-cultural adjustment, and second, to share and discuss these lessons learned with fellow students.

Interaction With Other Cultures

The lack of more significant improvement in the study-abroad group may also be partly due to insufficient personal interaction with the local people and cultures. Program participants had little need to face unknown cultures on their own or make adaptations to fit into new cultures. Students were part of a mobile culture bubble consisting of the other American students traveling from place to place together. The dynamic of traveling for ten weeks in a group may not have been conducive to significant cross-cultural adaptability development. There are perfectly appropriate security and logistical reasons for traveling in this way, but if more significant cross-cultural adaptability improvement is to occur in future summer semesters, some changes might need to be made to enhance the interaction with the people and cultures encountered.

It is important for students to have personal interaction with the people in other cultures. Though true cultural immersion may not be possible for an IBI group, there are ways to divide the group and temporarily immerse the students into a culture. For example, occasionally having individuals or small groups of students visit with local families for dinner or to participate in other social activities would provide an opportunity for students to experience other cultures. Such interaction would give students a chance to attain the hands-on experience necessary to enhance cross-cultural adaptability. These personal experiences would then be shared and discussed in the regular group sessions.

Regular Group Sessions

During the summer periodic sessions should be convened so students can share and discuss their thoughts and attitudes with one another and so students can receive counseling and training designed to help them to become more emotionally resilient, flexible/open, perceptually acute, and personally autonomous. Sessions should include ongoing culture awareness training that complements the pre-departure training program. The training should help students recognize and change cultural paradigms, prejudices, and negative attitudes regarding cultural differences.

These sessions should be convened regularly throughout the program immediately after significant cross-cultural interaction. In these sessions students should be encouraged to share and discuss

their feelings, attitudes, and questions related to these experiences while they are fresh. A facilitator should be prepared to provide specific ideas, advice, and activities designed to assist students at working on the traits associated with cross-cultural adaptability.

Guest speakers or facilitators from the host countries should be incorporated into these sessions periodically to allow students the opportunity to ask specific culture related questions and to learn about the cultures first hand. One of the objectives of these sessions should be to help students properly understand and respect other cultures. Another objective could be to help students become more effective at recognizing verbal and nonverbal communication cues present in other cultures.

Trained Facilitator

These recommendations require that a person or persons facilitate this cross-cultural adaptability training program. A facilitator would need to possess the proper training regarding cross-cultural adaptability and a practical knowledge of European cultures. This person would be responsible for developing and conducting the online workshop in the months leading up to the IBI program. A facilitator would be responsible for developing a plan for student interaction with other cultures and the group sessions during the summer. A facilitator would need to possess the necessary skills to conduct these group sessions and counsel students as a group and individually as the situations warrant.

Recommendations for Further Research

A potentially valuable study would compare multiple study abroad programs to determine if one type of program is more effective than another at enhancing cross-cultural adaptability. It may be useful to compare study abroad programs that allow for individuals to be immersed in a local culture to programs such as the IBI program, which involves more group travel and less opportunity for immersion. The CCAI could be used in a pre- and post-test design to compare student score improvement associated with participating in the different types of programs. Such a study could be designed to compare programs of different durations, in different regions of the world, or in different academic disciplines. The results might provide information considered useful to the IBI program and other study abroad programs for making improvements to help students experience more significant improvement regarding cross-

cultural adaptability. One final potentially valuable and intriguing study would be to compare the CCA of professing Christian students and the CCA of students with no profession of faith who study abroad in similar programs and cultures. The objective would be to determine if there is a significant difference in CCA or CCA development relative to having or lacking a personal profession of faith, or a general sense of calling because of the great commission command to “go into all the world...” or because of a personal calling from God to serve in another culture.

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