Developing A Global Experiential Learning Model for Business Students: The Relevancy of The Experiential Learning Process & Assessment

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Global experiences are increasingly becoming a popular learning opportunity for undergraduate business students (Desmond, Stahl, & Graham, 2011; Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2011). Global experience may involve study abroad, global service learning, global internships, and also access to global experiences within the home country of students. While access to global experience is on the rise, limited data-driven models exist to assist educators in the development of effective learning models and opportunities specific to the needs of business students. (Pless & Borecká, 2014). There is narrow discussion on the ways global experience impacts business students' knowledge of the business discipline, global competency, career-integration, and ethics. This paper describes the creation of the Pitt Business Global Competency Education Model based on a longitudinal mixed methods research study. The model emphasizes the importance of business-centered global competency, experience based learning, career integration, and ethics in providing effective global experience to business students relevant to the demands of the workforce. This paper also presents recommendations for future program development and research.

BACKGROUND

Our interconnected world demands globally competent workers. Careers increasingly require cross-cultural skills, international travel and placement, and the development of ethical and sustainable global partnerships. Over the past two decades, global experiences for undergraduate business students have emerged (Pless et al., 2011). While some literature documents global learning program models, few studies report empirical findings relating to the specific needs of undergraduate business students (Alonso Garci-a & Longo, 2017; Hasbún et al., 2016; Pless et al., 2011).
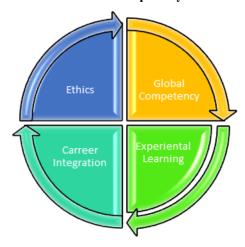
Research on global experience confronts additional limitations as the field suffers from a one dimensional quantitative focus with methodologies limited in scope and static in nature (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015; Griffith, Wolfeld, Armon, Rios, & Liu, 2016). Different tools, assessments, and metrics may exist, but few studies report strong internal validity, utilize longitudinal designs, and demonstrate replication (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015; Griffith et al., 2016; Heinzmann, Kunzle, Schallhart, & Muller, 2015). A number of researchers suggest developing robust methods when assessing global experience (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015; Bucker, Furrer, & Weem, 2016; Griffith et al., 2016). Some scholars advocate for mixed methods within global competency research (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015; Griffith et al., 2016; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013). This research project attempts to answer both these calls as well as address gaps in existing research and practice. By incorporating longitudinal mixed methods, this research aims to develop a more complete picture of how to enhance and measure the impact of global experience on the development of global competency, career-relevant knowledge, and ethical awareness for undergraduates.

Current studies pay limited attention to the ways global competency encompasses ethical decision-making and career integration (Anderson et al., 2015; Clarke et al., 2009; Holtbruegge & Engelhard, 2015). With the exception of Hunter et al. (2006) and UNESCO (2018), the ethical dimension is marginalized in global competency literature. Orahood, Kruze, and Pearson (2004) document study abroad improves business students' transferable skills, yet the authors do not relate career skills to global competency. Additional literature limits discussion concerning the relationship between global competency and undergraduate career development (Braskamp et al., 2009; DeGraaf, Slagter, Larsen, & Ditta, 2013; Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Heinzmann et al., 2015). Our Global Citizenship Education Model fills these gaps by including career integration and ethical decision making in our global competency assessment model.

PRESENTATION OF DATA-DRIVEN MODEL

Our Pitt Business Global Competency Education Model explains that global learning is comprised of an educational process emphasizing the integration of global competency, experiential learning, career integration, and ethics. Through high impact experiential learning the global and ethical skills, attitudes, and behaviors learned through study abroad are made transferable and relevant to students' future careers.

FIGURE 1
The Pitt Business Global Competency Education Model

The Pitt Business Global Competency Education Model empowers students to be social impact change agents in their future careers. Our model provides students with career-integrated internal and external skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are required for ethical intercultural interaction. These skills, attitudes, and behaviors include self-awareness, risk-taking, open-mindedness, attentiveness to diversity, global awareness, collaboration across cultures, intercultural capability, and historical perspective. Our model is grounded in cutting-edge global competency research conducted at the University of Pittsburgh's College of Business Administration and David Berg Center for Ethics and Leadership.

Pitt Business and the Berg Center's large-scale mixed methods longitudinal study examining ethical global competency has deepened our theoretical and practical knowledge of global citizenship education. Research on 1500 student Global Competency Aptitude Assessment responses, over 500 student study abroad blogs, and 50 qualitative student interviews has identified factual, conceptual, procedural, metacognitive, and social knowledge dimensions of global learning in undergraduate students. Our research also examines the global experience of women and minority students, which has been limited in previous research (Engel, 2017; Vande Berg et al., 2009).

The authors used concurrent transformative design involving quantitative and qualitative content analysis of undergraduate business students' global service learning blogs (Creswell & Clark, 2017). We used ProSuite Software, a mixed methods text-analytics software package, to clean, organize and analyze the student blogs (Provalis Research, 2016). Secondary data containing student demographic characteristics was assigned to each blog including gender, race, nationality, academic achievement, student involvement, international travel experience, and study abroad program type. Initial findings of the research indicate the inclusion of the integrated Pitt Business Global Education Model strengthens students' global competency, career integration, ethics, and understanding of business acumen. This conference session further describes the outcomes of the model on students.

Our Pitt Business Global Competency Educational Model positions ethics as a core competency essential in today's global workforce. Without ethical social engagement, global competencies could permit self-interest and conflict over the development of mutually respectful partnerships. Workers in the 21st century need ethical global competencies enabling them to problem solve reciprocally and develop sustainable solutions with people across the world.

The Pitt Business Global Competency Education Model is also adaptable to students from diverse disciplines. Rather the student aims to be an engineer, computer scientist, educator, historian, or business entrepreneur, the model emphasizes global learning that is relevant to all future careers. Ethical and global competencies are constructed as both disciplinary specific and cross-disciplinary to prepare students for agile careers in the 21st century.

THE POWER OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN TEACHING GLOBAL EDUCATION

Global education is taught effectively through the high-impact pedagogy of experiential learning. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model , Bandura's (1977) social learning model, and Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning model

emphasize the value of social experiences enabling transformative learning and self-efficacy development (Bandura, 1977; Kolb, 1984; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Experiential learning emphasizes the value of reflective learning throughout the learning process. In the case of study abroad, reflection is embedded into the pre-departure, global, and post-arrival experience.

Research indicates study abroad as a for improves academic and global competencies (Philip H Anderson & Lawton, 2011; Braskamp et al., 2009; Heinzmann et al., 2015; Rexeisen & Al-Khatib, 2009; Stebleton, Soria, & Cherney, 2013; Stemler et al., 2014; Vande Berg et al., 2009; Williams, 2005) Moreover multiple studies indicate global competency outcomes are more prominent in study abroad programs that include structured learning experiences, cultural immersion, mentorship, and reflection exercises (Hammer, 2012; C. Olson & Kroeger, 2001; Pedersen, 2010; Stebleton et al., 2013; Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014). Structured study abroad also improves students interpersonal skills and civic engagement in the long term (DeGraaf et al., 2013). While the research indicates structured experiential learning improves global learning outcomes, few standards exist to guide educators towards the development of high impact global learning rooted in experiential learning.

The goal of this paper is to have participants consider the importance of using global experience as an effective experiential learning model to teach business students ethical and transferable skills necessary for a global workforce. Participant learning objectives include: (1) understanding the value of global experience for business students; (2) understanding the importance of a data-driven learning model to facilitate global learning ; (3) learn strategies to understand and strengthen global experiential learning; and (4) envision future research projects and making the Pitt Business Global Competency Education Model applicable to your own school and context.

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