WHAT STICKS?

THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM GLOBAL COURSES IN AN MBA

PROGRAM

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by

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Executive Summary

Some scholars and academic leaders have expressed concern that business schools and their graduates are not meeting their full potential to help solve pressing challenges, such as climate change and economic inequality. Business schools expend significant resources designing and running global courses for MBA students as one avenue to help MBA students develop into responsible leaders with a global mindset and perspective. Yet, few researchers have explored the long-term impact of these short-term global course experiences on the participants.

This qualitative research study explored the long-term impact of short-term, faculty-led global courses on the leadership development journeys of MBA alumni years after graduation. The study, conducted at any anonymous, highly ranked business school, referred to as Pioneer Business School (PBS), focused on alumni who participated in global courses between 2015 and 2017. This timeframe allowed ample time for reflection and application of learning following graduation. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with ten alumni. The study was framed using three theoretical models: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (2015), Gavriel's Self-directed Learning Model (2005), and Hacker and Roberts' Transformational Leadership Model (2003), together which comprised the conceptual framework.

Findings revealed that, despite their short duration, global courses can catalyze personal and professional growth, shaping worldviews and influencing leadership approaches. These courses' intense, immersive nature fostered experiential learning, prompting "ah hah" moments, mindset shifts, and a deeper understanding of global connectedness. They also prompted reflection and a better understanding of the self in several participants. The study also underscores the relevance of self-directed learning in maximizing the long-term benefits of global courses. During interviews, participants often struggled to pinpoint exactly which skills

they developed during the global course. Still, they were able to provide extensive detail about moments of learning or insights that they continue to utilize. The findings also suggest that the global courses can cultivate transformational leadership qualities, encouraging a focus on relationships, valuing diverse perspectives, and understanding the broader impact of business decisions. Participants shared anecdotes about approaching leadership challenges through empathy, collaboration, and a willingness to listen to varied viewpoints.

Based on the findings, several actionable recommendations emerged for enhancing the impact of global courses and strengthening leadership development within MBA programs to achieve long-term impact. Examples include creating space for intentional reflection in course design, encouraging intention-setting, bringing alumni into pre-departure programming, and offering more opportunities to reconnect with classmates on the course a year or two after finishing to encourage additional reflection and deepen relationships. Finally, to extend this research and continually assess program effectiveness, gathering more and broader data on alumni experiences is recommended. By incorporating these findings into practice, business schools can enhance the value of global courses and better prepare graduates to lead responsibly in a world with many competing demands.

Keywords: MBA, short-term global course, experiential learning, self-directed learning, transformational leadership

Dedication

The inclination to learn from life itself and to make the conditions of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling. – Dewey, 1922, p. 60

The true test of any educational experience is the extent to which students integrate their new knowledge and understanding into their lives. – Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011, p.223

I dedicate this doctoral capstone to my parents with profound gratitude, respect, and love. Their unwavering commitment to the principles of learning, growth, and education guides me in my pursuit of knowledge. The steadfast values of integrity, justice, openness, and kindness they instilled in me spur my life's work and purpose.

Acknowledgments

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I am also profoundly grateful to the individuals who chose to participate in my research, my professional colleagues, and my peers within the Ed.D. program. Abbey Self, Jeff Horner, Shawn Anderson, and Adam Seid have given me such a robust community, particularly during the, at times, lonely capstone phase. My professional colleagues- you know who you are- have provided additional validation that this work matters and encouraged me to find the time and space to get it done. And, to my participants who said "yes" to my outreach and chose to share their stories with me, your openness and willingness to share your experiences and reflections made it possible for me to explore this topic.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the unwavering support of my family and friends throughout my doctoral education journey. I appreciate your patience when I was engrossed in my coursework or research and for providing moments of laughter and relaxation that kept me grounded and able to move forward. To my parents, who witnessed my progress through passing the comprehensive exam, thank you for celebrating with me through the toughest times. Your belief in my abilities, and my ability to return and finish, has been my greatest motivation.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Learning organizations are continually developing practices and procedures designed to develop leadership capacity in their students during the education process. Universities writ large, and schools of business more specifically, have, as part of their mission, the goal of providing experiences in education, in the moment, to create a cadre of the most highly prepared professionals at graduation. At the same time, business schools are also trying to imbue skills, networks, and appreciation of culture and diversity that lead their graduates to continuous improvement and learning throughout their professional service and lifespan (Pereira, 2023). In 2020, when Erika James took on her new role as Dean of the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, she remarked:

> Wharton has a profound responsibility to prepare our students not only to meet today's challenges, but to prepare them for anticipating and leading the world for tomorrow's opportunities. That means our scholarship has to foresee what will be needed by business leaders to advance industries and societies, and our curricula has to prepare students for that future. (Yuen, 2020)

Schools of business across the U.S. and globally employ various practices and strategies to achieve immediate learning objectives and cultivate the ability of individuals to be continuous, self-driven learners. Research conducted in business schools straddles the theoretical and practical realms, with faculty seeking prestige and respect from academic circles and aiming to deliver thought leadership that is both relevant and useful to students and practicing managers in their classrooms. Some business schools teach using a traditional lecture model, while others often integrate or fully utilize the Socratic method through case studies. Experiential learning

courses also provide one avenue through which business schools aim to help students bridge the gap between learning about abstract concepts and applying them to real-world situations. Some have argued (Mintzberg, 2005) that leadership is more of an art than a science, with science providing data, but the art lies in one's ability to make decisions in ambiguous situations with complex human elements, drawing more from subjective judgment, intuition, and experience. Top business schools often follow ambitious missions to improve the world by inspiring their learners to create value responsibly after completing a particular degree or program. Producing graduates with a strong foundation of, and the ability to further develop, transformational leadership skills is at the core of business school education. Hacker and Roberts (2003, p. 3) define transformational leadership as "the comprehensive and integrated leadership capacities required of individuals, groups, or organizations to produce transformation as evidenced by step-functional improvement." Their transformational leadership model positions consciousness as the central element, encompassing self-mastery, interpersonal mastery, and enterprise mastery, which are the key components of transformational leadership (Hacker & Roberts, 2004). Global academic experiences offer the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of oneself and others, as well as to navigate cross-cultural interactions and collaborations with sensitivity (Iskhakova & Bradly, 2022). Short-term, faculty-led global courses expose students to different perspectives, ways of conducting business, and, perhaps, dive deep into a topic of particular relevance in an international location, offering students a unique learning experience to better understand themselves within the context of the new culture and environment (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Chiocca, 2021; Levine, 2009; Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011) These course opportunities and

learning outcomes directly and positively correlate with business schools' missions, to develop

responsible and transformational leaders.

In the spirit of developing good organizational literature and good organizational

practice, courses, and programs, including global offerings, require continuous monitoring,

awareness, and data collection to improve the student experience and provide the maximum

benefit from such resource-intensive opportunities. Course evaluations conducted immediately

following a global experience provide immediate feedback to faculty and program designers

regarding how these experiences impact student learning and development in the moment. One

recent example of a quote from a short-term global course at the business school serving as the

subject of this study indicates that students are finding immediate value and impact in these

learning opportunities. In response to an open-ended survey question, a student who participated

in a short-term course in Australia shared:

> This trip MADE my second year. It opened my eyes to how businesses operate in a
>
> different country with entirely different cultural norms, mindsets, and leadership styles. It
>
> made us students dig deeper - we all thought the culture would feel similar to that of the
>
> U.S. given we share the same language and history - yet it could not have been more
>
> different.

Another student in the same class year who traveled on a different short-term global course

during the same period shared:

> I chose Bahrain because I wanted to go to a country I'd never visit if it wasn't for the
>
> [short-term global course]. My idea of the Middle East and the actual Middle East were

complete opposites. This was 100% the best week of my life and completely changed my

perspectives and I am now one huge step closer to becoming a global citizen.

These two students enjoyed their global courses and came away as satisfied participants, but

there is no known research to suggest how they carry those learnings and memories forward into

their careers and lives. Other students participating in courses during the same travel period

suggested what might have helped them derive even more benefit from their global courses. One

explained, "With so many activities, it was hard to digest the experiences with the limited time

we had between the events." Another, on a different course, recommended, "Need to have more

hands-on opportunities such as visiting plants and offices, and interactive as well." While

students sharing constructive feedback immediately has validity and usefulness, given more time

to process and engage in their new careers, they may later be thankful for the fast pace preparing

them for future difficult experiences or some of the takeaways from speakers that would not have

been in the course, had there been more plant tours.

Anecdotal stories from alumni suggest that global courses are often regarded as

highlights of the business education experience. However, much less is known about the impact

of designed short-term global experiences on individual continuous development and

applicability to transformational leadership practice following graduation. The purpose of this

study is to uncover if, how, and what resonates with short-term global course participants from

their experience as they practice transformational leadership following graduation. Capturing and

analyzing these elements provides a new foundation to maximize the benefits of global courses

in the future and better meet the academic, professional, cultural, and networking missions of

business schools and their graduates.

The remainder of this introduction provides a brief overview of the remarkable growth of business schools in recent decades, their purpose, the objectives they strive to achieve, and how global courses contribute to these broader goals. It concludes with a re-statement of the problem, research questions, and how the findings provide value to future business school short-term global course development.

Business School Growth

Scholars recognize that over the past 100 years, business schools have developed as substantial actors within the field of higher education around the globe, either as part of a university or as a stand-alone institution (Hay, 2008; Thomas et al., 2013). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, four countries of economic strength and ambition, France, Germany, the U.K., and the U.S., all started to develop formalized education in practical aspects of management, and "the term 'business school' became the socially constructed and accepted term for an institution of commerce, management training or management education" (Thomas et al., 2013, p. 3). Business schools have flourished on U.S. campuses, finding a foothold in 20th-century changes to higher education at large, related to funding and governance relying more on private donations and capitalistic practices and less on public good or religious foundations (Conn, 2019). Scholars debate the legitimacy of business schools, their place in the university, and whether they adequately serve their stakeholders (Conn, 2019; Mintzberg, 2005; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002) and yet, enrollments have grown steadily, and business schools are often seen as a "cash cow" for the university (Hay, 2008; Starkey et al., 2008).

Purpose and Mission of Business Schools

Despite the broad recognition of the growth of business schools, their purpose is clear and multifaceted in ways that critics and proponents alike continue to explore. Their initial purpose was to "upgrade management, building its own body of knowledge, rules and values" (Thomas et al., 2013, p. 45). Hay (2008) states that business schools exist to create value, which he then narrows into three primary categories of value: creation of academic value through research and dissemination, personal value for students through teaching, and public value by developing knowledgeable and skilled graduates, which, ideally, then go on to create more value for society. Mission statements across elite business schools largely align in encompassing these three value types. A survey conducted in 2021-2022 administered by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and capturing data from 798 business schools based in 62 countries indicated that 94% of schools highly prioritize teaching, 63% highly prioritize intellectual contribution, and 20% highly emphasize service. Within the area of research, 59% of schools highly emphasize discovery scholarship and 55% highly emphasize applied scholarship (DeBevoise et al., 2022).

Mayer (2024) recently argued that while the driving force behind business has and will continue to be profit and value creation, there is greater pressure, both internally and externally, for companies to maximize their value not only through stakeholder capitalism, but also by contributing to, not weakening, the well-being of others; therefore, business schools should, and many do, incorporate ethics, responsibility, and sustainability into programs. Mayer suggests business school success should be assessed based on how well they help organizations prosper financially and promote the prosperity of humans and the environment (Mayer, 2024). Under this

line of thought, the value that business schools produce broadens with the goal of producing leaders to creating *responsible* leaders.

Business School Learning Objectives

Business school mission statements and priorities often emphasize a primary commitment to preparing individuals to serve in leadership roles, with the business school providing those future leaders with the education, tools, and skills needed to succeed (Starkey et al., 2008). Personal value is created through the teaching business schools deliver to their students, executive clients, and alumni (Hay, 2008). Those individuals seek the knowledge and skills needed to build impactful careers, spring-boarding from what they glean by participating in a business school program.

Business schools often have learning objectives associated with their degree programs or executive offerings that provide a roadmap to meet their mission of preparing eager learners for leadership. Accrediting agencies, such as the well-regarded Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), provide standards and review processes through which MBA learning goals are often captured and measured. Despite these standards, critics (Fisher, 2007; Mintzberg, 2005; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002) argue that MBA programs graduate individuals who lack skills critical to their success. Valera, et al. (2011, p. 447) offer an alternative explanation:

> Based on the notion that managerial skill development in many skill domains is a continuous life-long process, our position is that a primary role of MBA education is to set in motion a learning process for advancing managerial skills into intermediate stages while equipping graduates with learning tools that support development beyond graduation (e.g. self-reflective skills).

Valera et al. go on to articulate that while some skills may be developed to an advanced stage during the MBA program, many of the more complex managerial skills (they use both leading others and negotiating in intercultural contexts as examples) would require more time, experience, and practice to hone at an advanced level than would be achievable within the confines of the MBA program (Varela et al., 2013). This serves as a subtle but significant contribution to the dialogue on what kind of value business schools should be providing and, in terms of individuals, it represents a shift towards teaching students not only knowledge and skills, but also how to continue learning and developing so that they can hone their managerial craft as they get more experience beyond graduation. Pereira (2023) argues that because students will be entering an ever and quickly evolving workplace, they are best served by being taught how to keep learning, not just finance or management business fundamentals.

Global Academic Learning Experiences

One example of the learning that many business schools, and accrediting bodies, view as critical to the development of well-rounded, responsible leaders is global awareness and the skills associated with conducting business or leading across cultures. The 2020 AACSB Business Accreditation Standards list a set of guiding principles that accredited schools are expected to stand by, support, and deliver; one of these principles is a global mindset (p. 18):

> The curriculum imbues the understanding of other cultures and values, and learners are educated on the global nature of business and the importance of understanding global trends. The school fosters sensitivity toward a greater understanding and acceptance of cultural differences and global perspectives. Graduates should be prepared to pursue

business careers in a diverse global context. Learners should be exposed to cultural

practices different than their own.

Many business schools offer short-term global courses to allow students to develop a global

mindset and hone their skills and knowledge related to conducting business internationally.

These short-term courses typically involve visiting companies, hearing from business leaders,

engaging in cultural visits or activities, and student assignments designed to provide

opportunities to prepare for the learning experience on the ground and reflect upon their

learnings. One example of how a top business school articulates short-term global course

learning outcomes is as follows:

>Students will develop their ability to enter into an unfamiliar global context, understand
>
>such contexts to be successful as leaders, and, through exposure to this kind of
>
>global/national/cultural difference, broaden their thinking about new environments.
>
>Students will also learn more about the particular business context and culture of the
>
>country, and begin to identify the important cultural, historical, linguistic, and other
>
>boundaries that successful global business leaders must navigate and how to situate
>
>themselves in this context. Students will learn more about how businesses succeed in this
>
>particular context and how this might be different from other cultures or environments, as
>
>well as how companies leverage these cultural and other differences to be successful.
>
>Students will come away from the immersion with some deeper understanding of a
>
>particular new global business context. They will also have new ways of thinking about
>
>the particular course theme based on on-site context and interactions that they could not
>
>have had otherwise and broaden their thinking about certain business issues.

As with any course, best practice also involves students completing a course evaluation

following the global experience so that the faculty and program managers receive prompt

feedback on student key takeaways, satisfaction with the course, and any barriers to their

learning that might be mitigated in future offerings.

Statement of the Problem

However, there is a gap in scholarly understanding of the long-term effects of these short-

term, intense global courses. To build on Valera et al.'s (2013) point, developing a global mind

and skillset is likely something a business school education might spark and foster, but graduates

may need to practice beyond graduation to develop mastery. Very little scholarly research exists

exploring how short-term global courses provide a foundation for future application and/or

successful development of impactful leadership across countries or cultures. More broadly, if a

key purpose of business school education is to prepare students to lead responsibly and globally,

a greater understanding of how global learning experiences do or do not meet that mission would

allow for better design choices in developing global learning experiences with long-term impact.

Many top business schools, including the school that serves as the subject of this study, have a

global public goods goal stated explicitly in their mission, such as "improves the world by

inspiring responsible leaders." One way to examine how or if the school meets the global public

goods part of its mission is by asking alumni how they utilize and apply what they learned.

Purpose of this Study

Short-term, faculty-led global courses in MBA programs are intended to provide the

opportunity for students to develop or adopt a global mindset, awareness of how business works

differently in different places and prepare students to lead anywhere in the world their career or

life might take them. The purpose of this study was to discover how MBA graduates, when given

more time to process, reflect, and apply learnings, utilize their takeaways from global courses.

This research will ultimately lead to a more targeted design of global courses, which considers

student feedback immediately following their global experience, and what is likely to stick with

them and be most impactful as they apply their learnings to their careers and lives. Maximizing

the benefits of global courses will allow business schools to better meet their missions of

preparing students to lead responsibly. Stepping back even further, asking MBA alumni how

their educational experiences resonate years later, how they apply their learnings, and how what

they learned influences the way they approach different challenges or decision-making will aid in

the understanding of whether and how the program succeeds in accomplishing its mission of

inspiring responsible leadership.

Research Questions

The specific research questions I answered through this study are:

1. Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe their experiences with short-term, faculty-led global courses?
2. Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe the impact that their short-term, faculty-led global course experience had on their personal and/or professional life?
3. In what ways have global courses shaped the leadership approaches of MBA graduates?
4. How do MBA alumni engage in self-directed learning following a structured global course experience?

Significance of this Study

The significance of this study is twofold and exists at the micro and macro levels. The

immediate use case involves programmatic design changes and adjustments to global courses

that consider the long-term impact on students. The findings of this study also allow faculty and

professional staff who design short-term global courses in MBA programs to modify courses based on longer-term impacts.

At a macro level, this study opens the door to understanding if and how elite MBA graduates utilize their learnings, commit to future learning, and make the world a better place through responsible leadership. The scope of this study focuses on global courses and their longer-term impact on MBA students, but the results could serve as a launchpad for future discovery, and subsequent re-design, related to other parts of the MBA curriculum. In a higher education world that competes fiercely for the best students, the best faculty, the most resources, and in a rapidly evolving global context, business schools are under pressure to remain relevant and prove their legitimacy through the impact of those they serve. Without a finger on the pulse of both that impact and an understanding of missed opportunities for more significant impact, these institutions risk falling behind in the competitive space. And the world risks the next generation of leaders who do not have the tools to reach their full potential to create *responsible* value for all.

Scope and Setting of this Study

This research took place at an anonymous, highly acclaimed business school located in the United States, referred to as "Pioneer Business School" or "PBS". PBS is part of a mid-sized, well-regarded public research university, and offers several business degrees, the most prominent of which is the master's in business administration, or MBA, degree. Most students enroll in PBS's MBA program to advance their careers following graduation. Student experience and teaching methods are commonly cited by students regarding why they chose PBS over other schools. The MBA degree at PBS is delivered in various formats, including full-time, part-time,

and executive. This research focused on the full-time MBA format, which enrolls the greatest number of students, and the associated short-term global course offerings. At PBS, full-time MBA students are not required to participate in a global academic experience during their degree program, however, they are expected and highly encouraged to do so.

Short-term, Faculty-led Global Courses

While full-time MBA students at PBS have several different kinds of global academic opportunities, this research focuses specifically on PBS's short-term global courses. This global offering is by far the most popular, and these courses also offer the most standardized experience and the greatest opportunity for design innovation.

Short-term, faculty-led global courses consist of several pre-departure sessions, no more than two weeks on the ground in-country, and academic assignments. A PBS faculty member leads the pre-departure sessions and facilitates learning on the ground in-country, as the group visits various companies, hears from local business leaders, and visits cultural sites. Some courses have a tight theme, such as innovation or sustainability, whereas others act more broadly as surveys of doing business in and with a particular location.

Global academic course participation by PBS students has steadily climbed since 2011, except for two minor dips and a major dip during the covid-19 pandemic. Over 50% of each graduating class has participated since 2015 and participation rates for the class of 2022 and 2023 sit at 88%. From 2011 to 2023 broadly, women participated at higher rates than men and international students participated at higher rates than domestic students. In each class, between 20 and 40% participate in two or more global academic offerings.

PBS asks students to complete a course evaluation immediately upon returning from their short-term global course. Course evaluation completion is both optional and anonymous. Comments in the course evaluations broadly suggest students are satisfied with their experiences and gain valuable knowledge by participating. One student reported:

> Japan was my first experience in Asia, and what a wonderful way to start my travels in the region. I was exposed to a very different way of thinking than the West and I look forward to learning more from those differences as I plan future travel in the region.

This type of comment is not uncommon in that the student articulates learning broadly and plans for future application. However, before this research, PBS had nothing beyond anecdotal stories about how these learnings shape leadership development as students enter the workplace.

Definitions of Key Terms and List of Acronyms

The following terms, phrases, and acronyms are used throughout this study, and a common understanding may prove useful for reference. Scholars sometimes provide differently nuanced definitions, so my usage is captured here.

- *AACSB*- AACSB International (referred to as AACSB in this study) is, by their own definition on their website, "a global nonprofit association that connects educators, students, and businesses to achieve a common goal: to create the next generation of great leaders." AACSB also serves as a highly respected accrediting body for business schools.

- *Business school*- "an institution of commerce, management training or management education" (Thomas et al., 2013, p. 3). Within this study, "business schools" refer to institutions serving at the higher education level, granting graduate-level degrees, most commonly the MBA.

- *EDFM*- a membership-driven global non-profit organization that fosters management development. The organization was founded in 1972 and serves as an accreditation body for business schools and corporate universities. It also serves as a network for business schools and companies to connect, with an eye towards socially responsible leadership.

- *Experiential learning*- "Learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with the learner who only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities but never comes into contact with them as part of the learning process" (Keeton & Tate, 1978, p. 2). Examples of experiential learning include internships, field projects, study abroad, or simulations.

- *MBA*- Master of Business Administration; a degree commonly awarded at business schools.

- *Pioneer Business School (PBS)*- the anonymous business school that provides the setting for this study. It is situated within a mid-sized, public research university within the U.S. and primarily grants MBA degrees.

- *PRME*- Principles for Responsible Management Education initiative started in 2007 as part of the United Nations Global Compact and has over 800 signatory institutions worldwide. The Seven Principles are focused on social impact and environmental responsibility, guiding institutions that seek "to develop people who will help their organizations create inclusive prosperity while promoting freedom, justice, and peace within regenerative and resilient natural ecosystems." as described on their website.

- *Self-directedness*- "describes a learner who is able and willing to seek out learning opportunities and who holds the necessary belief in their own abilities to take control of their learning in formal and informal settings" (Gavriel, 2005, p. 217).

- *Short-term global course*- an academic course outside of the United States, taught by a faculty member from the home business school and involves visits to companies, hearing from local speakers, and cultural activities. These courses are two weeks long or shorter, typically one week.

- *Transformational leadership*- Hacker and Roberts (2003, p. 3) define transformational leadership as "the comprehensive and integrated leadership capacities required of individuals, groups, or organizations to produce transformation as evidenced by step-functional improvement."

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

To borrow a well-known metaphor, my research stands on the shoulders of giants. This literature review introduces those giants, explores their significant contributions to my topic area, and how those contributions have informed my thinking and approach to this research. The literature review contains four primary sections: 1) the conceptual framework 2) a high-level exploration of the purpose and impact of business schools 3) a review of what students learn from global academic courses and a deep dive into the small number of studies that have explored the longer-term impacts and 4) a brief look at what it takes to develop responsible leaders. The three models explored in my conceptual framework purport that learning is a continuous process and that individuals with a solid understanding of and mindset towards growth re-invent their approaches as they reflect on and apply learnings from different experiences to present challenges. The literature suggests that one of the primary purposes of business school is to prepare students to lead responsibly through new challenges: in essence, giving students the skills and mindset to re-invent themselves to meet the rapidly changing needs of their organization and, one might argue, society at large. Consciousness of growth is at the heart of the learning process. The research suggests that global academic courses are one avenue through which individuals can develop a deeper sense of self, a greater appreciation for diversity, and an understanding of how valuable that diversity is in addressing challenges. These realizations help individuals develop into responsible leaders, particularly when they apply these learnings to navigate future challenges more effectively. And, when business school alumni demonstrate behaviors that positively impact their organizations and society, it suggests that the

business school is fulfilling its mission. My research pulls the thread between what business schools aim to do, one example of how they attempt to facilitate leadership development, and if and how students (later alumni) apply learnings from intense global experiences to demonstrate responsible leadership years later. The literature in these separate but connected arenas suggests that there are likely examples of this happening, which would help validate the legitimacy of business schools, support the argument that students should be engaging in global academic courses as part of their leadership development journey, and would hint that graduates of business schools are continuing to learn far past graduation. As Dewey wrote in 1922, "Growth is not something done to them; it is something they do" (p. 50). Ultimately, my research is about understanding if and how MBA alumni continue to learn from and apply an intense global academic experience during their MBA program to their leadership development far beyond graduation. The following literature review provides context and evidence that it would be reasonable to hypothesize that the above is occurring and that it is worthwhile to better understand if and how it is happening.

Conceptual Framework

My research combines an intense global student experience and how individuals continue to develop and utilize what they have learned from that experience in the long term. This research concentrates primarily on short-term global courses as a development opportunity for global skills and a potential launchpad for self and other awareness development critical for leadership. In short, this research focuses on the application of what students learned during their global courses, but also if they were able to keep exploring, learning, and developing in a self-directed manner towards greater leadership development following the global course. Therefore,

this research is grounded not in theories related to global skillsets, but in theories related to

experiential learning, self-directed learning, and transformational leadership. Kolb's model of

experiential learning (2015), Gavriel's self-directed learning theory (2005), and Hacker and

Robert's transformational leadership model (2003) all provide important structures through

which exploring the longer-term impact of short-term global courses becomes possible. These

three theories, working together, form my conceptual framework.

Overlap exists between these three models, and they directly and indirectly build on each

other; for example, one aspect of Gavriel's model is derived from Kolb's model. All three,

though, perhaps most explicitly the transformational leadership model, rely on students having at

least a base level of self-awareness and objectivity in their ability to self-reflect for continued

learning. Consciousness, therefore, must already exist in students at some level for them to fully

participate in the stages of these various learning models. Hacker and Roberts (2003) suggest:

> For many people, going through the daily motions becomes a substitute for exploration.
>
> Excitement of discovery and self-discovery has been replaced by tedious routines and
>
> reinforced views of life established deep in the hard drives of the mind. The
>
> transformation nucleus is a questioning of the self and an awareness of the self. (p. 6)

A global experience allows a student to depart from those tedious routines and provides a

ripe environment for a new understanding of the self and the greater world. Accessing the

potential learning of these intense experiences requires some degree of experiential learning and

self-directed learning and could, as this research explored, help students practice the learning

necessary for them in the long term to achieve truly transformational leadership. Figure 1

visually represents how I see Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Gavriel's Self-directed

Learning Model, and Hacker and Robert's Transformational Leadership Model working together for this research project.

Figure 1

Overarching Conceptual Framework for this Research Project
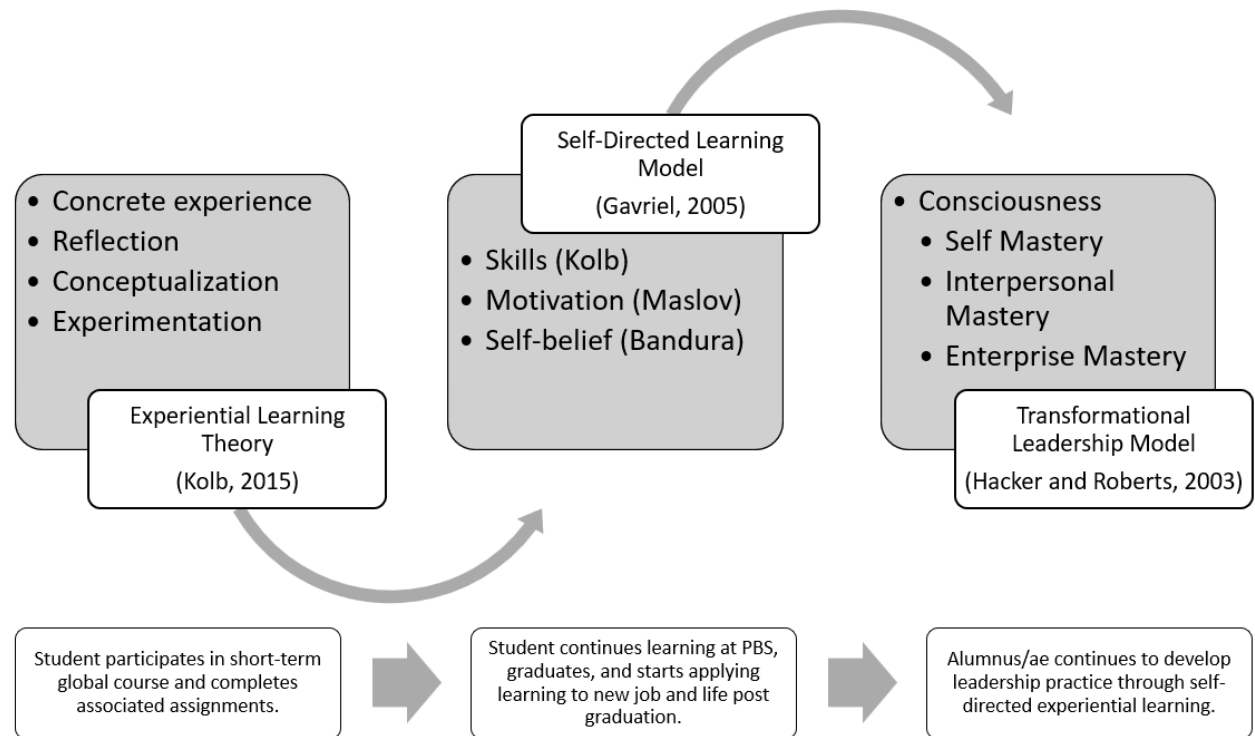
Experiential Learning Theory

David A. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, first introduced in the early 1970s, is a model that explains how individuals acquire knowledge and develop through experience (Kolb, 2015). Experiential Learning Theory, see Figure 2, is widely used in study abroad literature and provides insight into how experiences, such as study abroad, can provoke learning (Strange & Gibson, 2017). Iskhakova and Bradly systematically reviewed the short-term study abroad literature from 2000 to 2019. One of their findings was that researchers commonly rely on Kolb's

Experiential Learning Theory and Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory. They conclude that short-term study abroad learning is both experiential and transformational, and "the high use of learning theories suggests the intuitive assumption that STSA [short-term study abroad] programs are used as a very effective and fruitful format for intercultural learning and development, as well as for professional and personal development" (Iskhakova & Bradly, 2022, p. 403). Kolb's experiential learning theory is also the most prominent and widely accepted model of learning processes within business education (Forray et al., 2016; Kayes, 2002). Kayes suggests that Experiential Learning Theory is unique within the study of management learning because it encompasses and integrates all four of the common management processes (action, cognition, reflection and experience) into one model. He also points to its utility in management education because it spans all of human development, from childhood to adulthood, and is relevant to all activities and decisions across formal education, career choice, life problem solving, and interpersonal relationships (Kayes, 2002). Faculty teaching graduate business students use active experimentation methods and a wider variety of teaching methods far more frequently than those teaching at the undergraduate level. This suggests that faculty use teaching methods that speak to every stage of Kolb's learning cycle in advanced management education (Forray et al., 2016).

Figure 2

Illustration of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle
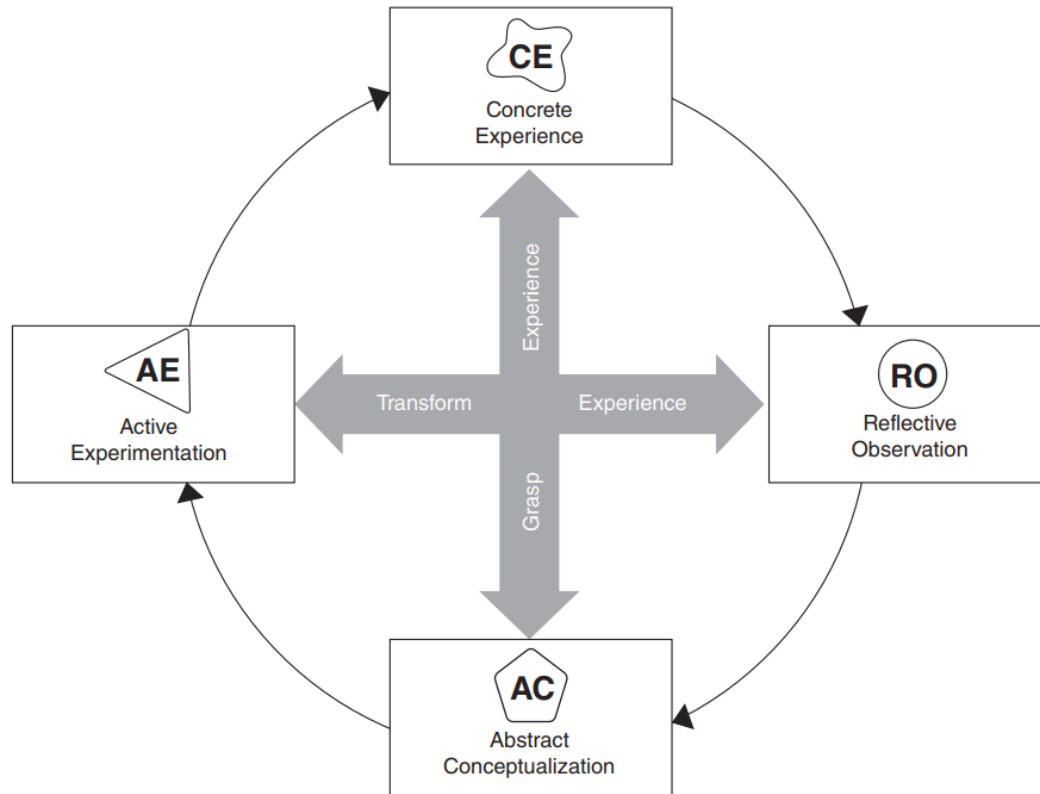
Note: The above illustration is from Kolb's 2015 book titled *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, page 51.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory proposes that learning is a lifelong process and that the learner can draw upon many different kinds of formal or informal education and work or life experiences to foster continued development. Within the experiential learning model, "learning is described as a process whereby concepts are derived from and continuously modified by experience . . . put simply, it implies that all learning is relearning" (Kolb, 2015, p.37, 39). To optimize learning, the model suggests that learners need to engage in four stages: 1) Engage in a direct and tangible experience 2) Reflect on and observe their experience 3) Conceptualize their experience by attempting to make sense of patterns, draw connections, and integrate what they

experienced into broader frameworks or generalizations and 4) Apply the insights gained through

reflection and conceptualization by actively experimenting with their new ideas, trying out new

approaches and applying their new knowledge in practical situations. Kolb's theory suggests that

effective learning occurs when all four stages are engaged in a continuous, cyclical process and

that to be effective, learners must have the skills and abilities to:

> involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences . . . must be able to
>
> reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives . . . must be able to
>
> create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories . . . and
>
> must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems . . . yet this ideal
>
> is difficult to achieve." (Kolb, 2015, p.42)

So, Kolb's model suggests that a learner must work to develop the skills they need to be able to

maximize their learning from a given experience. Thus, practicing these skills would not only

help a student get the most from, for example, a short-term global course, but also help the

student become a lifelong learner.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory is widely used in research on study abroad. Strange

and Gibson (2017) drew upon models of transformational learning, experiential learning, and

length of study abroad in their research to uncover the influence of international program type

and length on transformational learning outcomes. Varela (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of

study abroad investigations and compared them with a meta-analysis of instruction at home

institutions to uncover that cognitive learning outcomes in study abroad surpass at-home

learning. She also found that the type of study abroad experience and program content influenced

the degree of effective learning. In this research, she utilized Kolb's experiential learning theory

as a starting point for her hypothesis that experiences abroad triggered reflection and new interpretations at home after returning, leading to learning more so than the experience itself (Varela, 2017).

Within Experiential Learning Theory are four primary stages: engaging with an experience, reflecting, conceptualizing, and applying learnings. Short-term global courses provide the initial concrete engagement. The assignments associated with the course help students move through reflective observation and, perhaps, also the abstract conceptualization stages. However, these courses end before they can truly enable students to go through the conceptualization and the active experimentation stages on their own if they choose. To summarize Peterson, et al. in their 2017 book, without engaging in new experiences, learning is not possible. However, going through those new experiences openly and experiencing them with full awareness is critical to actually experiencing growth and development. Therefore, someone with a closed mind could participate in a global course and not develop or grow from the experience if they approached the experience with a closed mind and/or minimal awareness. Without active openness and awareness, habits and preconceived beliefs may reinforce what students already know rather than allowing the new experience to change their thoughts or beliefs. "Ironically, what we think we know can be the greatest barrier to our learning" (Peterson et al., 2017, Experiencing as the Gateway to Learning section in Chapter 1). Put another way, students have to engage in the process of growth and learning, not simply let their experience wash over them.

The aim of this research project was to uncover if and how students completed the active experimentation phase on their own through subsequent applications of their newly acquired

knowledge in their workplaces and lives. This research also explored how their experience may have shaped subsequent leadership development. Formal education related to global courses concludes before students complete their conceptualization and active experimentation stages; thus, students need to engage in self-directed learning to fully reap the benefits of their concrete global course experience.

Self-directed Learner Model

A self-directed learning approach in formal education requires the faculty member to create an environment where students have the opportunity and obligation to take responsibility for their learning. In short, students have more freedom, and faculty trust that they will choose to engage in activities and processes to advance their learning (Bosch et al., 2019). The AACSB encourages its accredited schools to "Describe how the school encourages learners to take responsibility for their learning and promotes characteristics of a lifelong learning mindset" (Business Accreditation Task Force, 2023, p. 44). Several different self-directed learning models have been developed over the years (Candy, 1991; Knowles, 1975; Long, 1995; Spear et al., 1981). For this research, I have chosen to rely on Gavriel's model, which utilizes Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, providing a smooth tie together of these different frameworks. See Figure 3 for a visualization of the model.

Figure 3

Gavriel's Self-directed Learner Model

Self-directedness

Skills	Motivation	Self-belief
Active experimentation	Self-transcendence	Performance accomplishments
Concrete experience	Self-actualisation	Vicarious experiences
Reflective observations	Self-esteem	Verbal persuasion
	Belonging	
Abstract conceptualisation	Safety	Emotional arousal
	Physiological	
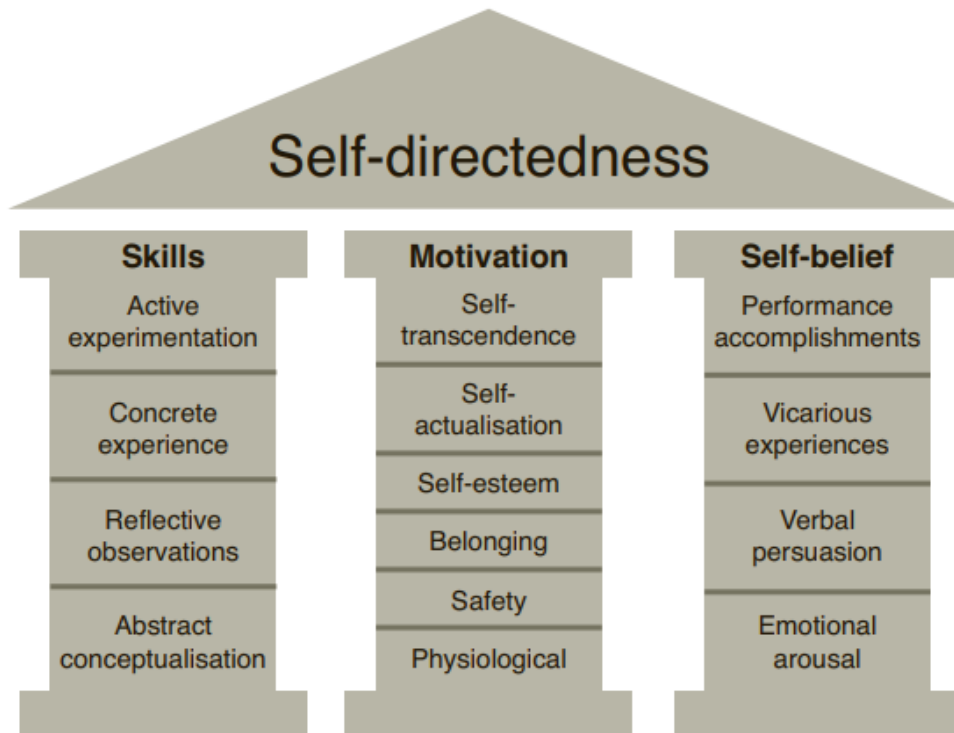
Note. The above illustration is from Gavriel's 2005 book *Self-directed Learner- the Three Pillar Model of Self-directedness*, page 32.

The model of self-directed learning (Gavriel, 2005) includes three pillars: skills, motivation, and self-belief. Gavriel acknowledges that self-directed learning has been used in education for many decades and has received increasing interest in learning organizations, life-long education, and career development spheres. Her background and framing for the model lie within medical education, but the concepts and model she developed are more broadly applicable under the umbrella that "the community we are educating in is not the one in which our learners will be working" (Gavriel, 2005. p.1). Indeed the business world also evolves so quickly that it necessitates leaders who are continually learning and adapting far beyond their formal education (Sunley & Coleman, 2016; O. Varela et al., 2013).

According to Gavriel's model, to develop self-directed learning capacity, students must have learning skills, the motivation to learn, and the belief that they can progress to completion despite potential obstacles. Each of Gavriel's three pillars draws upon other models or theories. The skills pillar is based on the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 2015), the motivation pillar is based on the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1971), and the self-belief pillar draws from self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977). If formal education, such as participating in a short-term global course, takes students through the first two or three stages of Kolb's experiential learning theory, to reap the full benefits, students must apply self-directed learning to close the process through application long after the course has concluded. Gavriel suggests that self-directed learning is perhaps the most important type of adult education and instilling a high level of self-directedness during formal education allows students to habitually learn throughout their lives. This model is relevant to research on the long-term effects of studying abroad because it illustrates the complex factors that are important ingredients in developing self-directness in students that allow them to continue along Kolb's experiential learning stages beyond the short-term global course and graduation.

In a rapidly changing world, learning how to learn, including beyond formal education systems, is the only armor against slipping behind. When MBA graduates move from their graduate program out into their careers, they are, one might argue, stepping primarily into a phase of active experimentation, as articulated by Kolb's model, but they are navigating it primarily on their own, utilizing a self-directed approach, as explained by Gavriel's model. Gavriel also draws a strong connection between leadership and learning, suggesting:

Developing leadership skills in your learner will help them develop the ability to lead

their own learning. Learners should be looking to take responsibility for their learning, to

take risks and persist in striving for their goals. They need to be driven, resilient and

focused while also being patient and tolerant of change or delay to give them maximum

chance of successfully putting their plans into action. (Gavriel, 2005, p. 201)

Indeed, as graduates start to experiment with the knowledge gained in their MBA program and

simultaneously have new experiences that have the potential also to allow them to gain new

knowledge, their ability to be self-directed in continuing to learn as they go provides the

foundation for transformational leadership development.

Gavriel's model is not currently cited in study abroad literature, though it is utilized in

medical education studies (Badyal et al., 2020; Charokar & Dulloo, 2022). This research, which

looks at the longer-term effects of short-term experiences, is the first known to draw upon the

idea of self-directed learning required of students to continue conceptualizing and applying their

learning following a global course.

Transformational Leadership Model

James MacGregor Burns' seminal book *Leadership* introduced the idea of

transformational leadership as one of three kinds of leadership. He identifies transactional and

transforming leadership as the two basic types, suggesting that "the result of transforming

leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into

leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents" (Burns, 1978, p. 4). He goes on to discuss

moral leadership as the third type, which "always returns to, the fundamental wants and needs,

aspirations, and values of the followers . . . that can produce social change that will satisfy

followers' authentic needs." (p. 4). This definition of leadership sounds like what top business schools strive to imbue into their graduates.

In 2003, Hacker and Roberts offered a slightly different definition of transformational leadership and a model that they argue serves as a framework for leaders to anchor their ideas, experiments, and development. See Figure 4 for a visualization of their model. Their definition of transformational leadership is "the comprehensive and integrated leadership capacities required of individuals, groups, or organizations to produce transformation as evidenced by step-functional improvement," (p.3), but a later sentiment suggests that their definition of transformational leadership also has a moral component: "At the heart of transformational leadership is a consciousness within the self and the ability to raise consciousness in others" (p.3). The transformational leadership model includes three primary components rooted in consciousness: self-mastery, interpersonal mastery, and enterprise mastery. Hacker and Roberts opine that the awakening of consciousness is often sparked by a moment of crisis or when old behavior patterns fail to produce desired results. They suggest that instead of shifting blame, a transformative leader would find the greatest benefit by examining and developing their own consciousness in three areas: 1) consciousness of purpose (their own life purpose, the purpose of the relationship, and if the people who make up the enterprise hold a collective consciousness), 2) consciousness in the moment (ability to objectively observe one's own mind-set and behaviors with others) and 3) consciousness of the greater (how one's life and relationships and purpose serve the greater good). Therefore, developing consciousness is critical to the transformational process and to, one might argue, responsible leadership itself. Scharmer and Kaufer suggest that transformations in management are rooted in consciousness development. They argue, "The

quality of results produced by any system depends on the quality of awareness from which

people in the system operate. The formula for a successful change process is not "form follows

function," but "form follows consciousness." The structure of awareness and attention

determines the pathway along which a situation unfolds" (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013, p. 18).

Figure 4

Transformational Leadership Model
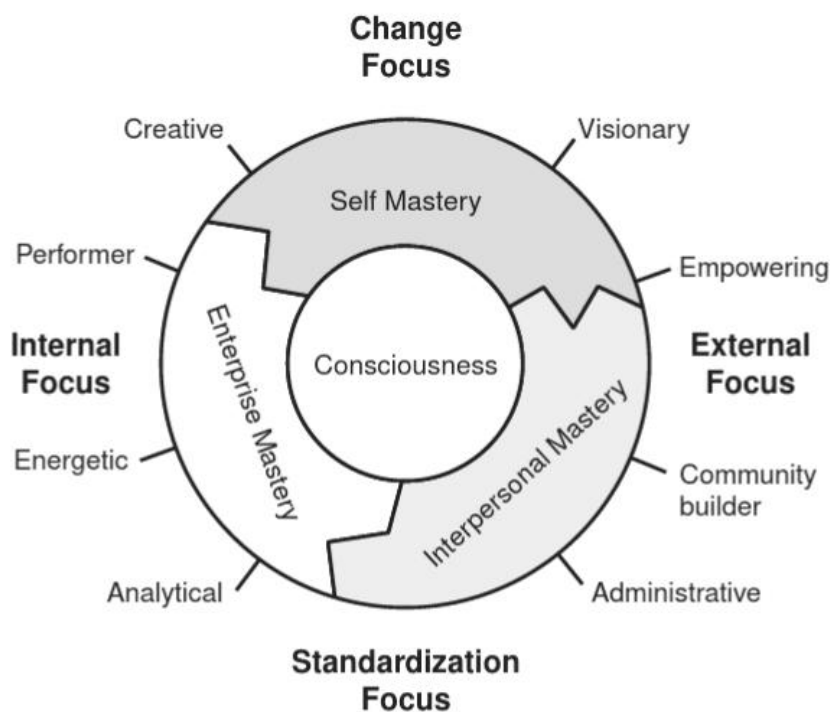
Note. The visualization above is from Hacker and Robert's 2003 book *Transformational*

Leadership: Creating Organizations of Meaning, page 3.

Several scholars argue that developing consciousness is key to developing

transformational leaders. Managers at different phases of their development have different styles

of making decisions and leading. As leaders progress to higher states of consciousness, they will

be inclined, naturally, to demonstrate responsible management because they understand how they and their actions are connected to others and the world (Heaton et al., 2016). Leaders' ability to take in complex information and use it to engage various interests and stakeholders depends on where those leaders are in their own personal development process (Rooke & Torbert, 2005).

A study conducted in 1987, including 49 MBA alumni and students, found that it is difficult for individuals to learn a new management style because adopting a new style requires learning and new ways of acting, driven by new ways of thinking. Despite the difficult journey, the researchers found that managers who have achieved higher levels of development are more likely to redefine problems and act collaboratively, moving the organization towards more proactive, participative, systemic, and transformative solutions. The authors of this study conclude by suggesting that management education should work towards "the cultivation of not just new knowledge and skills, but also of development- an increased capacity for learning new knowledge and skills" (Merron et al., 1987, p. 284). As managers move through development stages, their thinking becomes more complex and nuanced, they have a higher degree of empathy for those who have different views and for their subordinates, they better understand interpersonal relationships, and they can tolerate stress and ambiguity (Bartunek et al., 1983). More developed leaders also develop ethical judgment, self-awareness, and their own view of society and social issues. The development stages are cumulative but also involve a re-ordering of an individual's worldview that results in increased understanding as well as the ability to act (Kegan, 1982).

A much more recent case study (Boiral et al., 2014) showed that organizations with the most environmentally friendly practices were run by managers at the highest levels of conscious

development. The researchers conducted 63 interviews at 15 small and medium-sized enterprises and found that leaders at the upper stages of consciousness development are more committed to moving their organizations towards practices that support environmental sustainability. Higher levels of consciousness development signs include broader and systemic perspective, long-range focus, integration of conflicting goals, collaboration with stakeholders, manager complexity, and collaborative learning.

The transformational leadership model (Hacker & Roberts, 2004), rooted in consciousness development, is relevant to this particular research because, at their core, MBA programs are all about developing humans who can transform their organizations. Short-term global courses, which take students beyond what is familiar to them, may, in some, provide the spark needed to develop a sense of consciousness or to awaken a need for consciousness later in career or life progression when a standard approach no longer works. Scharmer and Kaufer suggest that an individual's journey from leadership or management focused on their gain to a mindset focused on gains for all includes being able to relate to other people, relating to the whole system, and understanding themselves. They suggest that better understanding oneself requires a mindset shift to openness and willingness to look beyond prior beliefs and judgments and utilize empathy. They also suggest that better understanding the whole system might entail spending time in a remote village in Africa to learn about different perspectives and see the implications of decisions on others that might not immediately come to mind (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013).

My research addresses what students learned about doing business in or with another country during their short-term global course, but it is also about uncovering what, if any,

experiences sparked a greater sense of self and consciousness in themselves and their relation to the greater good, hopefully, eventually, leading to transformational leadership.

Business Schools: Purpose and Outcomes

Many scholars have provided critiques of business schools (Conn, 2019; Crainer & Dearlove, 1999; Mintzberg, 2005; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002) and it would be reasonable to conclude that their legitimacy within academia and/or the corporate world is not universally accepted. That said, business schools have a long history of claiming their place and operating in alignment with other professional schools, such as law or medicine (Üsdiken et al., 2021). Several scholars have suggested that the root of the business school legitimacy struggle lies in the balance, or lack thereof, between academic and practical pursuits, both in research and student learning (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Conn, 2019; Mintzberg, 2005). In essence, to be relevant and legitimate within academia, business schools should utilize research models and teach theories. In contrast, Bennis & O'Toole (2005) argue that the relevance of that research can be questionable because leadership often relies on making decisions with incomplete data in scenarios involving unpredictable humans, meaning that "statistical and methodological wizardry can blind rather than illuminate." Business schools are somewhat caught between a rock and a hard place in balancing academia's structure of publishing, research, and tenure, with helping to prepare students to navigate situations in which research might provide only one data point among many that must be considered in decision processes. That said, a 2022 AACSB survey of top business schools around the world found that within the area of intellectual contribution or research, 59% of schools emphasize traditional academic scholarship, while 55% emphasize practical application scholarship that might digress from traditional academic models (DeBevoise et al.,

2022). Therefore, it would appear that business schools are seeking to find a balance between traditional research and research that is perhaps more relevant to helping leaders work through complex, multifaceted challenges without a clear, data-driven answer. That same AACSB survey, of which 789 schools in 62 countries participated, found that 94% of business schools highly emphasize teaching, 63% highly emphasize intellectual contribution and 20% highly emphasize service. These categories that the AACSB asked schools to rate map neatly onto the three areas that Hay (2008) says business schools exist to create value in: academic, personal, and social.

Hay's (2008) articulated purpose of business schools, to create academic, personal, and social value, also aligns neatly with the broader university objectives of teaching, research, and service (Weisbrod et al., 2008). More recently, Üsdiken et al., 2021 argued " . . . rather than discussing business schools with respect to profession, we should discuss them with respect to purpose (why do they exist?) and power (whose interests do they serve?)" (p.455). Given the long history of business schools, it is noteworthy that scholars continue to wrestle with these kinds of questions.

Varela et al. (2015) analyzed the literature on various learning theories to provide an alternative viewpoint regarding why business schools are, in the estimation of some scholars, failing to develop their graduate's managerial skill sets effectively. In reviewing these various learning theories, Varela, et al. found that mastery of complex leadership skills may be an overly ambitious mile marker for individuals to reach following an MBA program. They conclude:

> Based on the notion that managerial skill development in many skill domains is a
> continuous life-long process, our position is that a primary role of MBA education is to
> set in motion a learning process for advancing managerial skills into intermediate stages

while equipping graduates with learning tools that support development beyond

graduation (e.g. self-reflective skills). (p. 447)

In other words, graduates of MBA programs have not fully reaped the benefits of their programs

at the time of graduation. They must apply what they have learned, reflect on it, and practice

effective learning to reach their full potential as a leader. Given this reframing, Varela et al. call

for pedagogical approaches that help students learn to guide their own learning. They note that

due to the short timeframe of an MBA program, opportunities for reflection and feedback on

action taken may be limited and that students likely need additional time and space post-

graduation to test possible solutions in their work contexts. This means, as Varela et al. assert,

that an MBA should "trigger a sustainable learning process by equipping learners with

transferable knowledge structures and learning mechanisms that promote life-long skill

development." Therefore, the success or failure of a business school should not be measured

based on starting salaries or how many job offers graduates receive but on whether graduates

continue learning and adapting throughout their careers.

A further critical layer of successful teaching and learning in business schools involves

whether graduates apply their continuous learning and development for the greater good. In an

article published by the AACSB, Mayer (2024) argues that a driving force for business has been

and will continue to be profit, and yet "given the challenges society now faces, we all must

recognize that companies should maximize their value by promoting, not diminishing, the well-

being of others." Mayer suggests that business school rankings should judge schools based on

how much they help humans and the natural world flourish rather than on how well they help

organizations increase their profit margin. He suggests that these two goals do not have to be

mutually exclusive and that business schools have a responsibility to teach their graduates practices that allow them to achieve financial success while also supporting broader environmental and societal wellness.

Accrediting bodies also promote the idea that business schools should inspire their learners to act in ways that help solve, rather than contribute, to the world's challenges. A recent report from EFMD, a non-profit, global, membership-driven organization that works to promote management development and is a business school accrediting body, states that various stakeholders, including governments, faculty, and students, are questioning the purpose of business schools and what they contribute to society and that businesses themselves are increasingly interested in longer-term strategies that are more aware of social and environmental impact, rather than traditional shareholder value-driven models. The EFMD report came out of a task force comprised of academics and non-academics who utilized a literature review, questionnaire, and case studies to find out how and how much public good is coming out of the UK's 120+ business schools. Their report indicates that practicing managers largely do not review research coming out of business schools like other professionals might (for example, physicians staying up to date on the latest research). They found that delivering public good is an increasingly important part of business school strategic agendas and that some business school leaders prioritize what the school does, why, and how, in contrast to relying upon traditional measures such as publications, rankings, and revenue. The report's primary suggestion is that business schools should prioritize generating public good in all that they do, that they need to clearly articulate how they will deliver public good and then report their progress against that public good purpose (Kitchener et al., 2022).

The EFMD is not alone by any means in its call for business schools to provide social value. In 2016, Sunley & Leigh wrote, "It is clear that now, more than ever, the global community is looking towards business and education to play their role in creating a just and fair economy, which in turn increases the urgency and relevance of management education reform" (p.3). Their book is a collection of essays written jointly by academics and practitioners showcasing teaching and learning approaches in alignment with the Principles of Responsible Management Education. Taken as a collective, the essays showcase a theme that teaching responsible management in terms of classroom content is not enough but that management education needs to both inspire and enrich student development cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. Sunley and Leigh advise educators to start with a focus on responsibility and build pedagogical approaches from there rather than trying to fit concepts of responsible management into what they are already teaching.

While the purpose of business schools includes both personal development and a larger mission and effort to help solve the world's pressing challenges, these two areas are perhaps not as distinct as one might first think. Within one of the essays in the volume edited by Sunley and Leigh focused on teaching responsible management, Sunley and Coleman state:

> We argue the complexities of relevance, rigour and life preparation mean there is a need for business leaders with a more multidisciplinary mind-set, who understand themselves as life-long learners, creative problem solvers and good citizens, who can make a difference in the world. (2016, p. 29)

This essay notes that critics of management education indicate that one of its current failings is helping students to focus on values, integrative thinking, and dealing successfully with

ambiguous and uncertain situations. Despite some strategic focus on personal responsibility and engagement, business schools, even with the best intentions, are challenged by the troublesome reality that some students take on significant debt to pay for their degrees. Those students often want the shortest route to credentials and a more lucrative position upon graduation. This may be the case even if they are not fully prepared to be successful in more advanced roles. The antidote to this, Sunley and Coleman argue, is pedagogy which allows and empowers students to take responsibility for their own learning. Basically, they suggest that the role of business schools should not be to teach students everything they need to know before graduation but to help the students develop a learning mindset. Therefore, ideally, students graduate well-prepared to continue learning and developing relevant skills to re-invent themselves as they work through the complexities that they will face in their professional and personal spheres. This concept is not new and was stated most elegantly by Dewey in 1922 (p. 60), "The inclination to learn from life itself and to make the conditions of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling." While Dewey made his statement broadly and not specifically about management education, it foreshadows the current literature dialogue about the ideal outcomes of graduate business education.

The AACSB is another accrediting body, not unlike EFMD in its position and expectations that each accredited school should be guided by a set of principles. The 10 Guiding Principles from the AACSB (Business Accreditation Task Force, 2023) consist of three sections: 1) strategic management and innovation concerning the operations of the business school, 2) learner success and thought leadership, which encompasses teaching, and 3) research and engagement and society, covering the broader impact of the school. The AACSB purports that

when a school meets its standards, it is well-positioned to make a positive impact. Two of the principles, societal impact and global mindset, are particularly relevant to the purpose of business schools in relation to this research project. The AACSB's societal impact principle "reflects AACSB's vision that business education is a force for good in society and makes a positive contribution to society, as identified in the school's mission and strategic plan" (p.17). A couple of ways the AACSB suggests a school might document that it has an impact on society is by describing how the school encourages students to take responsibility for their learning, with the goal of promoting a lifelong learning mindset, and describing how the curriculum prepares students to have a positive impact on society. They also suggest documenting alumni success, including examples of activities alumni engage in that positively impact society. The global mindset principle is perhaps a bit more self-explanatory in that the AACSB says that member school curricula should help students understand and appreciate other cultures and global trends as they prepare for success working across different global contexts. However, the most recent version of the Guiding Principles and Standards does not suggest how a school might capture or document success in the global mindset area.

While many scholars have opined about what business schools should be doing (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Conn, 2019; Kitchener et al., 2022; Mayer, 2024; Mintzberg, 2005; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002), a large study in 2015 looked at the learning goals of AACSB-accredited MBA programs and compared those learning goals with managerial competencies. The study included data from more than 250 AACSB-accredited business schools in the United States and found that there is substantial alignment between competencies that are known to lead to managerial success and the goals of MBA programs (Costigan & Brink, 2015). In reviewing the goals of

MBA programs, the researchers found that decision-making and managing human capital are the most emphasized areas articulated in learning outcome goals. However, they note that teaching intrapersonal and interpersonal leadership skills are a lot harder to develop in students taking more time, resources, and creativity to develop, whereas technical skills are far easier to teach and demonstrate that learning has occurred.

In summary, business schools have received critical reviews concerning their purpose and if and how they achieve their stated outcomes. Across multiple stakeholders (corporations, scholars, accrediting bodies), there are calls for business schools to increase their accountability with positive societal impact. Business schools have historically emphasized their teaching and research work, with more of a nod to broader societal impact. There is a shift taking place to better bring to the forefront how business schools serve the greater world and produce knowledge and leaders with the ability and interest to help solve complex challenges, rather than contributing to them. As was discussed in the conceptual framework section, certain skills and characteristics help develop transformational leadership. One type of learning opportunity that has the potential to act as a catalyst for responsible leadership development is short-term faculty-led global courses. The next section of this literature review explores relevant scholarly work that suggests one might conclude that global courses serve as a useful avenue through which students might reshape and grow their worldviews.

Global Academic Courses

Studying abroad has been the subject of much research within higher education. There is, however, less literature regarding graduate student study abroad and far less about the longer-term impact of global academic experiences on students. In this literature review, I explore what

we know about learning and development outcomes from study abroad experiences generally

and then narrow in on the few studies that have looked at the longer-term impact of overseas

academic experiences and, finally, studies that have specifically explored study abroad within the

business school student population.

Learning and Development Outcomes from Global Academic Experiences

Several large-scale studies contribute significantly to the literature regarding study abroad

and learning outcomes. Students who demonstrate a higher degree of connectedness to the global

context, who are more open, reflective, inclusive, and able to think beyond their own immediate

needs, as well as recognize their responsibility to act in a way that helps others and the

environment, as a result of their study abroad experience demonstrates the success of the

programs (Tarrant, 2010). Perhaps not surprisingly, these learning outcomes parallel those

described by business schools, given that global academic experiences are an instrumental part of

the curriculum in many top MBA programs. In 2017, Strange and Gibson investigated the

influence of study abroad program length and type on a student's transformational learning.

Their research consisted of an online survey of undergraduate college students who participated

in either faculty-led or exchange programs overseas in 2012. Based on the results of the 200+

respondents and drawing upon Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and Mezirow's Theory of

Transformational Learning, Strange and Gibson found that almost all the students achieved some

level of transformational learning because of their global program. They also found that

programs three to six weeks in length allowed students to achieve the same transformational

learning as programs a semester or year in length, whereas if a student participated in a program

that was less than 18 days in length, they had a significantly lower chance of achieving

transformational learning. This finding does contradict other findings that short-term faculty-led

programs can have similar impacts on students as longer programs (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004;

Varela, 2017). While Strange and Gibson's quantitative survey responses did not indicate that

program type impacted student transformational learning directly, the open-ended question

responses indicated that several program components such as field trips, self-reflection activities,

interactions with the local community and written assignments were the most influential

activities students experienced on the ground. Strange and Gibson note that these activities map

neatly against Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory elements, such as having experiences and

doing reflection work (Strange & Gibson, 2017).

Varela's 2017 meta-analysis of 72 study abroad research studies provides a useful point

of comparison with Strange and Gibson's work. Varela's meta-analysis aimed to uncover the

learning outcomes of study abroad programs as related to cognitive development, affective

attitudes and motivations, and behavioral or skills adaptation and to contrast that growth against

student learning taking place entirely on the home campus. In short, Varela found that exposing

students to international settings does advance learning at higher rates and that of those who

went abroad, the most important factors in their learning were the type of immersion and

program design. Interacting with locals emerged as a particularly important element in helping

facilitate student growth. Varela also relies on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory,

hypothesizing, "I expect the mismatch between the experiences abroad and the routines at home

to trigger the reflections that lead to learning" (p. 533). Overall, Varela's meta-analysis indicates

that study abroad is a valuable learning practice and also specifically calls out that when business

majors were isolated within the study, the student gains in both the affective and behavioral areas increased, ultimately concluding that "studying abroad is an ally of business education" (p. 556).

The literature about study abroad outcomes contains a consistent thread about program duration. Short-term programs have come under some scrutiny in the past, as scholars have wondered whether students can really make substantial growth gains from short stays overseas. There is an assumption that limited program duration might be tantamount to shallowness (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Dwyer, 2004) and yet, recent conclusions indicate that the kind of study abroad experience might make a greater difference than duration, at least in learning related to intercultural competency and sensitivity development (Chiocca, 2021). A recent systematic review indicates that short-term faculty-led programs for undergraduate and graduate students do result in student participants making significant gains in the area of global competence (Fisher et al., 2023). However, this work defined "short-term" programs as eight weeks or less, a duration much longer than the global academic courses explored in my research project, which are typically just barely longer than one week. Regardless, Fisher et al. found that short-term study abroad programs enhanced student understandings of globalization and the interrelation of people across various domains such as economics, politics, culture, society, and the environment. The review indicated that students acquired knowledge of other cultures during their programs but not that students improved their understanding of their own culture.

A large-scale study conducted between 2012 and 2015, including data from 2,000 students before and after short-term study abroad programs at the same higher education institution, also explored linkages between program design features and changes in student global perspectives (Whatley et al., 2021). The short-term programs in this study were between

two and seven weeks in length. This study utilized the Global Perspective Inventory at the

beginning and end of the study abroad experience to discover changes in student's global

perspectives. Traveling with a faculty member from the student's home institution was found to

be positively associated with cognitive development, and including opportunities for reflection in

the program design positively related to development on the intrapersonal affect scale,

suggesting that reflection opportunities helped increase student respect for and acceptance of

cultural differences. If the English language was spoken in the host country, both cognitive

knowledge and interpersonal social development were negatively affected, suggesting that

students develop further when they complete a short-term program in a location where English is

not the primary language. Results also indicated that students who chose to study in a non-

English speaking location started the course with more openness and a more positive

predisposition for global perspective development than students who chose programs in locations

where English was the primary language spoken.

Two recent qualitative studies also provide insight into student transformations due to

their time overseas. The first qualitative study included a small number of students (primarily

undergraduate, but also graduate level) who participated in a four-week summer course in

Jerusalem to examine if the students had a transformational experience and what led to that

transformation (Chiocca, 2021). In short, all students reported transformational experiences, and

findings indicate that interactions with locals were a key component, as well as engaging with

controversial issues and providing time for students to think, share, and process what they

learned intellectually and emotionally. Chiocca concludes, "if we want students to change while

abroad, or as a later result of having been abroad, we need to teach them how to engage in

experiences that might trigger change by teaching them strategies abroad for fostering

transformation" (p. 53). He goes on to suggest that this transformation takes time, and the

literature would advance if studies assessed student development immediately after an

experience abroad, then 6-12 months out, and finally, several years later to provide insights into

the overall value of a short-term program and the kind of transformation it catalyzed.

Researchers who conducted a somewhat similar case study (Reuter & Moak, 2022) also

identified a limitation in their work in that they did not know if or how the global experience

impacted students longer-term. This case study focused on a small number of undergraduate

students who participated in a semester-long women's rights and health course, including 10

days on the ground in Kenya. Through pre- and post-course qualitative methods, findings

indicated that students were more aware of themselves and their role as global citizens because

of the course. The students also expressed greater self-confidence in handling unfamiliar

situations, communicating with others from different backgrounds, and greater comfort with the

unknown, even though their time in the country was just a little over a week (Reuter & Moak,

2022). Again, the researchers noted that these learnings' lasting effects are unknown and worth

considering in future research.

Longer-term Impact of Study Abroad

Most studies focused on the impact of short-term global courses assess what the students

learned, took away, or student satisfaction immediately following the course conclusion.

However, a few examples of studies attempt to capture the longer-term effects of short-term

study abroad programs. This literature review did not uncover any studies on this topic related to

graduate students or students studying business and leadership, so it appears that my research

project contributes to filling those gaps in the literature. The following section touches on the longer-term impact of studying abroad at the undergraduate level in the fields of nursing and teaching. I also reviewed a study that focuses not on the study abroad experience but on what students did with what they learned during study abroad between the time the program concluded and when the longer-term impact of that experience was studied.

Levine conducted a qualitative research study, published in 2009, to better understand how students in an undergraduate nursing program transformed because of international immersion programs during which they provided hands-on nursing care. Levine collected data through interviews between three and thirteen years after the participants completed their international program. Multiple themes emerged in the data, and Levine categorized the themes into three primary areas: 1) having blind trust, 2) valuing others, and 3) transforming experiences. The participants indicated that they learned to accept trust based on the status quo with hospital or clinic personnel, in social situations, and with patients and that they learned to have or establish blind trust in people across cultures through openness, being accepting, understanding, and showing concern. Valuing others emerged as a significant theme as well, and, as Levine notes, it "went beyond culture, country, and language" (p. 161) and emerged in close human-to-human interactions, where all parties involved were curious and open to learning from and helping one another. The last major theme, transforming experiences, came across as participants told stories about taking risks or recognizing prejudices in themselves or others, leading to changed behaviors based on better understanding. Levine summarizes what she learned by stating:

      In all of the interviews, participants talked about the ongoing, persistent life-changing

      effects of the immersion program in both their professional practice and personal lives.

      They talked about their subsequent flexibility and ability to be creative and innovative

      with each client. Participants talked about knowing who they were and how it centered

      them in their provision of care to patients in the United States. They talked about

      perceiving each client as an individual with his or her unique set of needs, each of whom

      deserved absolute respect and understanding. (p. 166)

While all these takeaways clearly relate to the field of nursing, one might hypothesize that the

same kind of learning might be possible within other fields as well and that similar kinds of

learning related to creativity, innovation, understanding, and respect would be important to

develop in a responsible leader in any industry.

      In 2015, Shiveley and Misco published a study that utilized qualitative data from a

questionnaire sent to undergraduate education majors who participated in a semester-long course

comparing U.S. and European schools. The course included students traveling to Europe to

observe classrooms and engage with students and teachers in several different countries for a

short period. The researchers sent a survey to all students who had taken the course over the past

13 years and then analyzed responses from 148 respondents who indicated that they were

teaching or had served in a teaching capacity since taking the comparative education course. The

analysis revealed several strong themes, suggesting that the short-term study abroad experience

provided multiple benefits to the students who later became teachers. Fifty respondents noted

that participating in the course gave them an advantage during the job interview process. Over

seventy respondents emphasized that, because of the global course, they experienced heightened

sensitivity to cross-cultural issues, identifying open-mindedness as an important component of reflective thinking and problem-solving in the classroom. Over one-third of respondents indicated that the course improved their cultural awareness and ability to appreciate and respect other views, undermine biases of American exceptionalism, and encourage a greater interest in fostering global citizenship and using student-centered approaches in the classroom. Forty respondents also identified that the global course contributed to increased confidence in their personal lives, such as interacting with others, traveling independently, and exploring new interests. Ultimately, most respondents articulated some form of benefit from the global course experience years after they completed it, which suggests that short-term global courses can have long-term impacts on individuals. That said, this study was limited in that it relied solely on self-reporting, and, as the researchers point out, there is no way to know for sure whether the benefits the respondents articulated were solely a result of their global course experience or additional experiences along the way (Shiveley & Misco, 2015).

One particularly unique study focused not on the global experience itself but on post-trip experiences and their influence on the long-term effects of the study abroad. Utilizing a case study approach and collecting data through participant observation, document analysis, and multiple interviews, Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus found that learnings from the study abroad experience quickly faded for students who did not integrate what they had learned into their lives upon return; conversely, for students who did utilize or experiment with what they learned during their study abroad experience into their life upon returning continued to find meaning from the study abroad experience. The researchers concluded, "the difference was not in the students or their experiences on the trip, but rather what they had done with those experiences in the

intervening year" (Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011, p.223). This small study focused on 8 of 10 undergraduates who participated in the research during and a year after their short-term course to the Czech Republic focused on global leadership. Ultimately, the researchers found that the global course was life-changing for some students, whereas the impact was minimal beyond creating a happy memory for others. The researchers conclude that:

> The true test of any educational experience is the extent to which students integrate their new knowledge and understanding into their lives. As the results of this study show, the extent to which students learn from a short-term study abroad experience may depend more on what those students do *after* they have returned home than on anything they did while abroad. (p. 223)

This conclusion raises many more questions about how to prepare students to continue learning and integrating and experimenting with what they learned or were exposed to overseas into their lives upon return. Students would appear to complete a couple of the tenets of Kolb's experiential learning model, having a concrete experience and perhaps reflecting while they are overseas. Still, they would then need to complete the rest of the learning cycle, conceptualizing and experimentation, on their own upon returning home to receive maximum learning from the experience. Such integration of study abroad into other elements of life would require self-directed learning, given the conclusion of the formal course.

Global Academic Experiences and Business School Students

Several studies on business school students and global academic courses reinforce what researchers have found within other disciplines or, more generally, about student learning related to study abroad, duration, and outcomes. A qualitative analysis of the effects of a 12-day short-

term, undergraduate-level, faculty-led course at an open-access business school used a series of

open-ended questions to uncover what students perceived to be the advantages and disadvantages

of their global course as related to their business education and impact on education goals,

career, and personal growth (Peppas et al., 2020). The authors posit that semester or year-long

programs abroad are often not viable for business students due to cost, family obligations, or job

commitments, and, therefore, business schools need to understand and direct resources towards

making sure that short-term courses provide students with the intended benefits. The researchers

received anonymous data from 123 students who participated in the global course between 2008

and 2017, with a response rate of 84.2%. The findings suggest that short-term global courses can,

and often did, produce desired learning outcomes and, students noted, very few disadvantages to

participating, primarily citing time, cost, and culture shock. The researchers did not categorize

the data according to how long ago the participant took the global course, and the respondents

were skewed toward younger and more recent participants. The researchers conclude:

> With increasing globalization and cultural diversity in the workplace, it is noteworthy that
>
> the respondents felt that the course had a direct and positive impact on their ability to
>
> function effectively in the business world. Respondents also indicated that the study tour
>
> led to an appreciation of knowledge and learning and had a positive impact in terms of
>
> their goals, ideas, skills, and educational direction. Furthermore, the study tour also had
>
> an impact in terms of self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-direction. (Peppas et al.,
>
> 2020, p. 16)

This study relied on student self-assessment, so measuring learning gains and application from

the study abroad experience directly is difficult and, as the authors note, all participants were

from the same institution, so there is some risk of bias related to this course and student

population, which may or may not carry over to other programs or students.

Two other, slightly earlier studies also suggest, through different methodological

approaches, that short-term study abroad programs can produce desired learning outcomes in

business students. In 2015, Sroufe et al. used content analysis of 77 post-trip MBA student

reflective essays over three years to explore whether the students displayed responsible

leadership characteristics following the one- to three-week-long global experience. Instructions

for the post-trip reflective essay did not ask students to demonstrate responsible leadership; the

assignment asked students to compare sustainability initiatives and challenges in the country they

visited with the United States. The researchers coded the reflective essays based on five

responsible leadership roles (steward, global citizen, meaning maker/storyteller, social

architect/change agent, and visionary adapted from D'Amato et al., 2010; Pless et al., 2011) and

behaviors or mindsets that students demonstrated in their work. They found that almost all the

student essays demonstrated stewardship and global citizen dimensions. They also found that

student essays contained more leadership dimensions when the global course they participated in

included interactions with host country students and/or some field project. Faculty member

connection to and understanding of the country visited also increased student learning outcomes.

The researchers also observed that not all the student essays demonstrated that the students had

learned responsible leadership and that the courses were designed to help them develop.

Ultimately, they suggest that:

> Developing effective ways to encourage faculty and students to reflect on what they have
>
> experienced, reexamine choices through a different lens, and apply that learning to their

academic, career, and lifestyle decisions is perhaps the best way to nurture multiple

characteristics of a responsible leader mindset. (Sroufe et al., 2015, p. 268)

This conclusion aligns closely with several other scholars (Chiocca, 2021; Randolph, 2011;

Varela, 2017) and models (Burns, 1978; Kolb, 2015). It also reinforces the importance of what

students do with their global takeaways after returning from their time overseas (Rowan-Kenyon

& Niehaus, 2011).

In 2004, Orahood et al. conducted a study focused on undergraduate business students to

understand the correlation between study abroad and career goals. Junior and senior

undergraduate students at one public university were asked to respond to a survey regarding their

plans after graduation if they included international experiences or courses on their resumes, and

whether they spoke about their international academic experiences during job interviews.

Approximately 230 students responded to the survey; most were in their last year as

undergraduates, and approximately 42% studied abroad. The researchers excluded international

student responses, considering only U.S. citizens who studied abroad. Findings indicated that

students who participated in study abroad were more open to gaining additional overseas

experience as part of their careers. Many students who studied abroad also articulated that they

gained marketable skills and grew personally because of their time overseas. This study suggests

that time overseas helped business students in their career journey, whether it gave them an

additional talking point or allowed them to think more broadly about their career choices

(Orahood et al., 2004). The study was limited in that it primarily captured students' mindsets,

rather than actions or behaviors that changed because of time overseas.

Responsible Leadership Development

When developing responsible leadership, several scholars observed or found that transformational learning experiences should be the goal, rather than just cognitive development (Lange, 2004; Sipos et al., 2008). It has long been suggested that developmental change in adults is more likely to occur in concentrated and intensive periods because learners are more likely to be fully immersed, and these opportunities allow learning from multiple perspectives (Lasker et al., 1975). Global courses during an MBA program provide that environment, as do other formalized programs and learning opportunities, such as executive education or company retreats. However, as Bartunek, Gordon, and Weathersby suggested in 1983, it is unrealistic to expect that even the very best seminar, global course, or educational program would, on its own, allow adult learners to achieve higher levels of development rapidly.

> Fortuitously, the conditions that promote greater understanding of particularly "messy" organizational concerns also have the potential for fostering more fundamental individual change. Taken cumulatively, then, experiences that foster the differentiation and integration of multiple perspectives around organizational issues also should trigger changes in cognitive and personal structures that eventually make substantial difference in a manager's mode of response. (Bartunek et al., 1983, p. 277)

This statement suggests that exposure to and experiencing different situations and environments is an important aspect of development. Yet, the experience itself is not enough to truly help individuals achieve meaningful growth. Having the experience is the beginning, yet the learning and development crystalize as individuals later conceptualize and experiment with the new concepts or skills they took in as part of the experience (Kolb, 2015). Bartunek et al. explain that

developing higher levels of understanding and the ability to lead through complexity is not easy, but that certain elements are critical in programs that can help learners start to move in that direction. For example, they suggest that for leaders to make good decisions, they must be open to hearing multiple conflicting viewpoints, even if those perspectives are threatening. They also suggest that higher-level leaders should display the ability to perceive multiple causes of their manager or employee behavior rather than immediately attributing behavior to personality. These examples of higher-level development, looking for multiple causes of events or actions and utilizing conflicting opinions or data productively, can be accessed to determine a manager's level of development and potential effectiveness (Bartunek et al., 1983).

A recent case study assessed the effectiveness of a corporate service-learning program, which involved sending teams of participants to developing countries to work on cross-sector partnerships to help participants further develop their own global business leadership capabilities (Pless et al., 2011). The results of the case study survey sent two years after the program conclusion indicate that programs like the one being studied can provide an experience or learning space that facilitates participant reflection on the responsibilities of business leaders to act as global citizens, promoting global good both within and beyond their organization. The researchers noted that the service-learning model for leadership development was likely successful because it allowed knowledge creation and skill development through exposure to difficult situations, confronting cultural or ethical ambiguity, greater self-awareness, and motivation for individuals to reconsider their own biases and actions in life and business. They also found that the learning process was likely influenced by participants' emotions, such as guilt, compassion, or empathy, which prompted deeper reflection and action. The researchers

explained, "exposure to adverse and sometimes painful situations required participants to develop effective coping mechanisms, to engage in self-reflection, and helped them build emotional resilience to deal with situations that were outside their personal comfort zones" (p. 248). These learnings speak to elements of the transformational leadership model, which is rooted in the consciousness of the self, others, and organizations (Burns, 1978; Hacker & Roberts, 2004). It also supports calls for business education to develop individuals holistically, beyond simple knowledge transfer and moving into emotional and behavioral development too (Sunley & Leigh, 2016).

"It is clear that now, more than ever, the global community is looking towards business and education to play their role in creating a just and fair economy, which in turn increases the urgency and relevance of management education reform" state Sunley and Leigh (2016) in their introduction of a volume of works by academics, and including commentary from practicing managers, concerning teaching responsible leadership. Across the various chapters, several themes emerge that appear to be important to developing individuals to lead responsibly: 1) students need to be moved out of their comfort zone and pushed into a learning zone, which might be uncomfortable for students or faculty, as it requires risk taking 2) the introduction of risk taking brings emotion into learning, therefore faculty need high levels of emotional intelligence to manage their own and students' needs and reactions during this growth process 3) students have to be willing to embrace ambiguity as part of the learning as it can provide richer experiences; similarly faculty have to give up the need for certainty as a subject matter expert and serve more as a facilitator of student learning 4) all parties- the institution, faculty and students- must engage in a holistic learning approach, that incorporates cognitive, emotional and

behavioral dimensions 5) faculty must be open to learning alongside students and bring

interdisciplinary content and approaches to their teaching and 6) faculty must embrace a different

kind of teaching and learning mindset that recognizes that knowledge comes from many sources,

including intuition, sensory experiences, expert or individual reason. This different kind of

teaching must keep an eye towards the goal of preparing students for responsibilities that are

somewhat unknown with incomplete information, changing parameters, time pressure, no one (or

entity) responsible for the issue, and situations in which those attempting to fix the issue also

contribute to it (examples include global warming or economic inclusion) (Sunley & Leigh,

2016). Across these themes, it becomes clear why global course offerings check many boxes

required for teaching responsible leadership. Students are physically taken outside of their

comfort zone and often encounter different and difficult situations that require them and their

faculty to revisit assumptions. Faculty are also taken outside of the physical classroom and must

be open to the adventure of what learning opportunities will present themselves for the students,

trusting that they will happen and trusting that their ability as facilitators will help the students

make sense of the strong emotions or differences encountered.

Literature Review Concluding Summary

Relevant literature on my research topic is relatively easy to find, but very little speaks

directly to what I studied. Top business schools aim to teach responsible leadership, and many

scholars have called for a focus in the curriculum on teaching MBA students how to learn so that

they can adapt to meet the challenges that they will face following graduation. Experiential

learning models indicate that to complete the learning cycle and maximize learning, students

must apply what they learned to new situations. Traditional, residential two-year MBA programs

allow students to do some experimenting through club leadership activities and/or during summer internships between their first and second year of the MBA program. That said, the bulk of the experimenting takes place after graduation, and the learning cycles for students who are open will continue as they have new experiences, reflect on them, conceptualize that knowledge, and continue to integrate it into their actions and mindsets on a growth trajectory. Global academic courses serve as one type of learning experience that business schools use to help their students develop. They provide a unique opportunity by taking students physically outside of their comfort zones and allowing students to experience differences firsthand. It would be reasonable to assume that an open, willing learner would develop deeper levels of consciousness following an impactful global course experience but that the full benefits might not be reaped until the student experiments with their learning further. However, these short-term global academic experiences are assessed immediately following students' return from the course and before students have fully completed the experiential learning cycle. The literature indicates that it will likely take longer for students to wrestle with and then apply what they learned during the global course on their journey to become the transformational business leaders their education institutions aim to produce. Very little data and very few studies exist related to how MBA students, or really alumni, utilize what they learned, keep experimenting with it, and what parts of the global courses resonate in their memory in helpful ways as they continue down the leadership path.

My research fills a gap that other researchers have hinted at. Strange and Gibson suggest that given the trend of more students participating in short-term study abroad, it would be useful to understand the learning elements that best encourage student transformation (2017). Iskhakova

and Bradly conclude their review of short-term study abroad literature by indicating that the research has been overly focused on the results of immediate experiences, learning outcomes, and the value of the program. They suggest a need for more advanced work on short-term study abroad courses from a wider variety of perspectives (2022).

This work matters for several reasons. The world is faced with increasingly complex and interconnected challenges that require transformational leaders across industries to create solutions (Mayer, 2024; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Sunley & Leigh, 2016). Business schools are anxious to demonstrate legitimacy and high levels of impact for all of their stakeholders (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Conn, 2019; Hay, 2008; Mintzberg, 2005; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Global courses are resource-intense and maximizing the learning opportunity is in the best interest of both students and business schools (Peppas et al., 2020; Randolph, 2011; Sroufe et al., 2015).

The literature presented suggests that students may continue their learning far beyond returning from a global course and that those learnings help develop responsible leaders. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Gavriel's Self-directed Learning Theory, and Hacker and Robert's Theory of Transformational Leadership also provide a foundation from which to explore this topic.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This third chapter describes the methodology I used to conduct my research. I start by revisiting the study's purpose and research questions; then, I proceed to describe the study's design, setting, participants, sampling strategy, instrumentation, procedures, analysis techniques, and limitations.

Re-Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to uncover what resonates with short-term global course participants from their experience as they moved into practicing transformational leadership following graduation. This study also explored if and how participants continue their learning cycle following the conclusion of a global course, continue to make meaning out of their experiences, and apply those learnings. To fulfill the purpose of this study, I crafted the following research questions:

1. Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe their experiences with short-term, faculty-led global courses?
2. Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe the impact that their short-term, faculty-led global course experience had on their personal and/or professional life?
3. In what ways have global courses shaped the leadership approaches of MBA graduates?
4. How do MBA alumni engage in self-directed learning following a structured global course experience?

Study Design

To answer my research questions, I used a qualitative strategy of inquiry, specifically a phenomenological approach. In phenomenological research, the researcher "identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants" (Creswell,

2008, p.13). To answer my research questions, I needed to understand the lived experiences of participants in short-term, faculty-led global courses and their lived experiences in the years following their participation in the global course. Phenomenology allows a researcher to hone in on what and how several individuals experience a phenomenon and provides data that leads to an in-depth understanding and shared meaning (McMillan, 2016). The phenomena that I explored included student participation in the global course and what those participants did with the learning from that global course experience in their subsequent years. In phenomenology, participants share primary data (their stories and perspectives), and my role as a researcher was to draw out the commonalities in their real-life experiences (McMillan, 2016). Given that research exists surrounding my topic area, but I did not find any studies that directly address the long-term impact of short-term global courses as related to leadership development, a phenomenological approach was appropriate to start this exploration.

Other scholars (Chiocca, 2021; Glassburn & Reza, 2022; Reuter & Moak, 2022) have taken a case study approach when exploring the longer-term or transformative nature of global courses. However, those studies included participants from one particular course, not multiple courses over a larger window of time. One study, focused on nursing students, used an approach similar to what I am proposing. Levine (2009) explored the impact of a global immersion program on nursing students' personal and professional lives three to thirteen years following that experience. She used a semi-structured protocol to interview 10 participants. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, member-checked, and then the researcher identified themes and patterns.

Positionality

Before I describe my study's setting, participants, and methodological procedures, I would like to make my position known. My goal in doing so is to be transparent about any possible biases and explain my professional interest and ability to access the data required to answer my research questions. Methodological experts have stated that when the researcher honestly and authentically details their own stance, background, and associations, the credibility of the qualitative research is strengthened (Lincoln, 1995; Patton, 2015; Shenton, 2004).

Professional Background

I have worked in the field of international higher education for 12 years, 10 of which have been spent working within a business school office that manages global courses and broader global engagements. I am familiar with the workings of business school global academic offerings and the goals of business schools writ large. I am also a regular participant in peer group meetings, so I also have insider knowledge regarding how other top business schools in the United States approach their global programming and associated processes. Within the last 10 years, I served as the staff lead for five global courses for MBA students. I have personally seen how these courses run, and both watched and experienced "ah hah" learning moments on the ground. I have access to all of the course evaluations that students complete immediately following their time on the ground. I have led many post-course debrief meetings with faculty members, staff leads, and vendors to go over what worked well and what should be changed next time. My professional background and personal passion for international higher education have undoubtedly shaped my interest in and the design of this research study. I made a conscious effort to be aware of those beliefs and experiences as I collected and interpreted data. Given that

qualitative analysis is ultimately personal and requires researcher judgment, I monitored and documented my thought processes throughout to increase my self-awareness and provide a stronger foundation for the rigor and trustworthiness of my work (Patton, 2015).

Research Goals

Beyond my professional background, as a practitioner stepping into the realm of study design and execution, my goal was to produce pragmatic research. Evans et al. (2021) suggest that high-quality higher education research solves a problem, is theoretically and methodologically robust, and includes collaboration between the researcher and practitioner at all stages, or the practitioner is the researcher. My goal was to produce research that is as rigorous and robust as "pure" academic research but that is also practical, applicable, and accessible so that it has the ability to result in positive changes in practice (Evans et al., 2021).

Research Philosophy

In qualitative research, there are many paths to creating knowledge and many points at which researcher interpretation may have some bearing on the process or results (Creswell, 2008). Therefore, by disclosing my own ontological and epistemological leanings, I am providing both transparency and aiding consumers of this research in achieving their own interpretations too.

Two methodologists write, "Ontology is synonymous with our personal beliefs, views, and values, and epistemology is about the procedures we use to come to know something" (Daniel & Harland, 2018, p. 20). As a researcher, my ontological stance aligns with the phenomenological tradition, asserting that reality is constructed through the subjective experiences of individuals. I acknowledge the importance of understanding the phenomena as

perceived by individuals within their unique contexts. I recognize that reality is complex, multifaceted, and shaped by the interactions between individuals and their environments; perception, interpretation, and intersubjectivity all shape my understanding of reality. As such, my epistemological approach emphasizes the subjective nature of knowledge, valuing the importance of understanding individuals' lived experiences to gain insights into phenomena. As an interpretivist researcher, I recognize that knowledge is not only discovered but rather interpreted and constructed through social interactions and experiences (Daniel & Harland, 2018). In the context of phenomenological inquiry, this entails acknowledging that individuals' interpretations of their experiences are influenced by their cultural, social, and historical contexts. Therefore, my epistemological stance also emphasizes the importance of reflexivity and awareness of my role in shaping knowledge. By engaging with participants' narratives and interpretations, I uncovered the underlying meanings of their global course experiences and their engagement with their learning stemming from the course in the following years. To analyze and present stories authentically, I needed to be aware of and set aside my own experiences in order to fully understand those of the study participants (Jones et al., 2006).

Description of the Setting

This research took place at an anonymous, highly ranked business school that primarily offered the MBA degree, referred to as "Pioneer Business School" or "PBS." The scope of this research focused on the full-time MBA format and the associated short-term, faculty-led global course offerings. While highly encouraged by PBS, global course participation was not a degree requirement in the full-time MBA program when participants in this study took their global courses.

Short-term Global Course Details

This research focused specifically on PBS's short-term global courses in the full-time MBA degree format because this was the most popular global academic opportunity. These courses also offered the most standardized experience and the greatest opportunity for design innovation. PBS has sent over 400+ full-time MBA students on short-term faculty-led global courses each year since 2017-2018, apart from the period in which Covid-19 halted global travel.

Theme. Short-term global courses at PBS have evolved over the years, based on student feedback, programmatic adjustments, and increased participation rates from students. That said, throughout their existence through the present day, they have always been under two weeks in length and taught by a PBS faculty member. The PBS faculty member chooses a course theme that allows the students to gain insight into a particular business area or concept while overseas. The combination of the course theme and a given global location provides a unique learning opportunity not available to students had they chosen to stay home or travel to the location on their own as a tourist. Some examples of the kinds of theme and location combinations include learning about artificial intelligence and technology in Israel, sustainability in Sweden, and entrepreneurship in Uganda.

Itinerary. Each global course itinerary is developed through a partnership between the faculty member and professional staff, with varying degrees of support from a third-party logistics vendor. On the ground, students visit a variety of companies, hear from guest speakers, participate in experiential learning activities, visit a local university, and engage in cultural activities. Typically, between three-quarters and two-thirds of the course content on the ground is spent visiting companies or hearing from guest speakers, while a quarter to a third of the time,

students engage in cultural activities during the remaining third to a quarter of the official course programming. Students also explore on their own during structured free time or as a group learning more about the place and practices that influence business and life in the location. Some faculty are natives of the location where they take students, whereas other faculty experience the country for the first time alongside the students. Some faculty arrange the visits and speakers through their global networks; others rely on professional staff and vendors to develop an itinerary that matches their vision for the learning experience.

Assignments. Prior to arriving in-country, each short-term global course requires students to attend several "pre-departure sessions" during which the faculty member introduces the course, students start to get to know one another and receive logistical information. Faculty often ask students to go around the room and share what they are hoping to take away from the global course and introduce the syllabus and assignments associated with the course grade. Many faculty require students to collaborate in groups to produce a "briefing book" or presentation to provide the whole class with a base understanding of key elements of the place, such as history, religion, political environment, economic drivers, etc. Others require readings and reflective papers related to the country or the course theme as part of preparation prior to departure. One student who participated in a short-term course in Germany in 2023 wrote in his or her post-course survey that "the pre-departure work was intense but very interesting and did a great job setting a tone for the course. I thought the book chapters were exceptionally interesting and well-chosen."

While faculty can customize individual course assignments, many choose to utilize standard assignment templates for global courses that are generally considered to work well and

help students achieve their learning outcomes. Beyond assignments prior to departure, faculty sometimes ask individual students to sign up to prepare a briefing prior to arrival at individual sites. For example, a student may sign up to research a company that the class will visit on the ground and then, on the morning of the visit or on the bus, present an informal briefing to their peers so that everyone is prepared to get the most out of time spent with the company and its representatives. Another common assignment is asking students to submit a 'last thought of the day' each day that they are on the ground. This typically entails a couple of sentences about what is on their mind as they finish up the day, whether it be a question or two, a realization, something they want to learn more about, something that surprised them, something that they noticed and want to watch to see if it is a pattern. One student who participated in a course to Spain in 2023 shared in the post-course survey that "journaling in real time helped me process my thoughts. Small group and 1:1 conversations were extremely valuable." These submissions also allow the faculty member to receive real-time feedback on what the students are thinking about and also give them the opportunity to address concerns or provide space for a broader discussion on a particular topic that students want to understand better. Additionally, these short-term global courses require a final, cumulative, individual assignment. Again, faculty members adjust for their own goals, but often the final assignment is some kind of reflection paper, presentation, video, infographic, photo essay, journal, or something that allows the student to demonstrate what they learned, how they grew, and how they might apply their takeaways.

Overview of Participants

The full-time MBA student class profile at PBS has shifted over the years; more recent classes have higher percentages of women and international students. The Class of 2025 is 37%

women and 41% international students. Classes that graduated longer ago had higher percentages of male students and domestic students. All students enter PBS after earning their bachelor's degree and working for several years. Most students in the full-time format are between their mid-twenties and early thirties in age. They commonly participate in a full-time internship between the first and second year of their MBA degree program. Those internships often result in full-time job offers following graduation.

After Graduation

Upon earning their MBA degree, PBS alumni commonly enter the fields of consulting, financial services, general management, and technology. Most, even those who entered PBS as international students, work in the United States, and the vast majority, typically over 95% of the class, receive at least one job offer within 90 days of graduation. Median starting salaries have increased for the last five consecutive years, with the Class of 2023 earning an average base salary of over $167,000 to start.

Global Academic Offerings and Participation Rates

Full-time MBA students at PBS may choose between three different kinds of global academic offerings during their degree program: short-term, faculty-led global courses, exchange, and global client projects. The short-term global courses are by far the most popular with PBS students.

Global academic course participation by graduation has steadily climbed, except for a few dips, at PBS, since 2011. In 2011, 48% of the graduating class completed at least one global academic course during their MBA degree program. In 2012 and 2013, participation dipped to 41% and 37%, respectively, but then steadily climbed. 85% of the class of 2019 participated in a

global course, and then there was another small dip with the class of 2020, which saw a 83%

participation rate. The covid-19 pandemic halted travel globally, so the class of 2021 had a 28%

participation rate, but rapid recovery was achieved with the class of 2022 participating at a rate

of 88%. That high of 88% was matched by the class of 2023 and was also achieved by the class

of 2024.

There are several trends in global academic participation rates. More recently,

international students participate at higher rates than domestic students and women participate at

higher rates than men. Both trends are interesting because approximately 35% of the student

body population hails from outside of the U.S., and approximately 35% identifies as female. For

example, in the Class of 2023, 98% of international students participated in a global academic

experience, whereas only 81% of domestic students participated in a global course prior to

graduation. This demonstrates a reversal of the outcomes from the Class of 2018, which saw a

69% participation rate by international students and an 83% participation rate by domestic

students. One possible explanation for this change is the availability of scholarships to cover

global course fees, which were first made available to the class of 2020. In the class of 2023,

92% of women students participated, whereas only 83% of men chose to do so. The trend of

higher rates of women participating holds true at PBS across historical data, though degrees of

difference vary across classes.

In recent years, approximately 20-40% of each graduating class participated in more than

one global academic offering. 33% of students in the class of 2023 participated in more than one

global academic offering; 67 individual students participated in two short-term global courses, 19

students chose to do a short-term course and an exchange program, 6 students completed both a

short-term course and a global client project, and 9 students did two short-term global courses and either exchange or a global client project, for a total of three global courses.

Sampling Strategy

I employed criterion sampling and maximum variation to select participants for this study. Criterion sampling allowed me to select participants because they meet the criteria needed for me to explore my research questions; they are illustrative of the issue being studied. Maximum variation sampling allowed me to select participants in a way that they represent the widest range of characteristics. In some ways, criterion and maximum variation are opposite approaches, but the fact that I had a relatively large pool of participants from which to draw allowed me to utilize both approaches. I narrowed the pool first with criterion sampling and then utilized maximum variation within that narrowed pool. I employed several basic criteria to obtain the initial narrowed pool.

First, selected potential participants who graduated from PBS between 2015 and 2017, meaning that they graduated between 10 and 8 years ago, *and* participated in a short-term faculty-led global course as part of the MBA degree. The reason I chose this timeframe is twofold. First, the course evaluation data available to me from PBS was not as strong prior to this timeframe, and second, I wanted the participants to have had enough time to develop their leadership capacities and apply their learnings from the global course and MBA at large. 805 alumni graduated between 2015 and 2017 and participated in a short-term global course offering during their MBA degree.

Second, given the large pool to draw from, I limited this study to participants who were domestic students at PBS. International students studying at PBS opted into a global degree by

choosing to study outside their home country; therefore, their perspectives may be materially

different. Data from the PBS alumni directory for this period is spotty regarding citizenship.

However, the records indicated that 673 alumni graduated between 2015 and 2017, participated

in a short-term faculty-led course, and were either marked as U.S. citizens or unknown. In my

outreach message to potential participants, I specified that I was looking to interview individuals

who were domestic students during their time at PBS, and all respondents met those criteria.

To select my participants, and to utilize maximum variation sampling, I used a random

number generator to order the entire list of potential participants. I then reached out to the

potential participants via email in the order specified on the random list. In early outreach, I had

more male participants respond than females, so towards the end of my outreach, I continued

down the list but only invited women. This ultimately yielded five male participants and five

female participants. In total, I invited 140 potential participants, received 17 responses, and

ultimately interviewed 10 participants.

The following points showcase additional characteristics of my final sample of 10

participants. I am choosing to disclose the characteristics of the whole sample rather than

individual participants to provide them with another layer of privacy protection.

- Five participants identified as male, and five participants identified as female.

- Two participants graduated in 2015, six graduated in 2016, and two graduated in 2017.

- Eight participants completed one global academic course during their degree program at

  PBS, one completed three global courses, and one completed one short-term global

  course while at PBS and also went on an exchange program.

- Six students participated in a global course during their first year of the MBA degree program, and six students participated in a global course during their second year.

- The short-term faculty-led global courses took participants to nine countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.

- Seven of the participants had never been to the country where their global course took place, whereas three of them went to a location on their global course that they had previously visited.

Instrumentation

Individual semi-structured interviews served as the primary data source in this research study. As such, an interview protocol was the primary instrument, as Appendix C shows. The interview questions were designed to elicit responses to address the research questions through the lens of the relevant theories I discussed in my conceptual framework. Interviews are particularly useful when participants cannot be directly observed (Creswell, 2008), which is true in the case of this study. I cannot go back in time to observe how these individuals participated in their global courses, nor do I have the resources to travel to observe them in their personal or professional lives. Two advantages to using interviews for this study are that 1) the participants provided historical information, and 2) I had control over the questions to help focus their stories on the most relevant details (Creswell, 2008). The potential limitations of interviewing include that the data was filtered through the views of the participants and individuals vary in their ability to articulate and perceive (Creswell, 2008).

The interview protocol started with several easy questions, designed as warm-ups and to confirm data on record matched the participant's experience. The core questions were all

designed to be open-ended and neutral. At the beginning of each interview, I reiterated to

participants that there were no right or wrong answers; any information from their perspectives

and experiences was valuable to the study (Hatch, 2002).

Procedures

The following sections outline in greater detail the steps I took to both collect and

analyze data for this research.

Data Collection Procedures

Once I identified potential participants, I invited them to participate in the study via

email. A copy of the recruitment email is included in Appendix A, and a copy of the Study

Information Sheet is included in Appendix B. Those who did not respond within one week were

sent a short follow-up email. If they did not respond to the second email within another week, I

continued outreach down my randomly ordered list of potential participants.

When a potential participant confirmed their interest in participating in the study, I

scheduled a Zoom call with them at their convenience. In the confirmation email, I reminded the

participant that I would record the call and attached the study information sheet, see Appendix B,

again. All interviews were conducted from late September through early November 2024.

The data was collected utilizing a semi-structured interview protocol, see Appendix C.

Conducting the interview via Zoom eased the recording and transcription process. Once I

finished an interview, I saved the recording and Zoom-generated transcription in a secure,

backup-safe location. I then utilized the recording to clean up the transcription generated by

Zoom to ensure accuracy. Once the transcription was clean, I sent it back to the participant with

an invitation for them to review or add any additional thoughts since the interview took place. I

typically returned transcripts within a week of conducting an interview. One participant wrote

back that she read and agreed with the transcription and another participant added significant

additional comments. Once the participant confirmed the transcription or a week or more had

passed since I sent it to them, I considered it ready for data analysis. My outreach, interviewing,

transcription clean-up, and data analysis overlapped significantly, allowing me to begin to see

themes and patterns emerging early on. This also helped me determine that I was able to reach

saturation with 10 participants.

Throughout both the data collection and data analysis work, I kept a research log of

analytic memos to capture my process, thinking, reactions, and what I learned along the way

(Hatch, 2002). Within the data collection phases, the records helped me capture my thoughts on

how the interview went, my impressions about how the participant reacted, whether certain

questions worked well or were problematic, and whether I should have done something different

during the interview. This journaling allowed me to actively reflect on the research process and

keep track of my impressions, potential biases, and ways I might need to adjust the process as I

continued collecting data. During the data collection process, I saved time immediately following

each interview to write an analytic memo in this research log.

Data Analysis Procedures

While I have split the data collection and data analysis procedures into two separate

sections here for clarity of explanation, these activities overlapped substantially. In qualitative

research, the preferred method of doing data analysis is to do it in tandem with data collection

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I identified the questions I sought to answer, but given the

exploratory nature of this research, I did not know exactly what I would discover, which themes

would emerge with the greatest strength, or exactly what the final analysis would yield. Without simultaneous analysis, I risked arriving at the end of data collection with potentially unfocused, overwhelming, and repetitious material (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

My process entailed outreach to potential participants, conducting an interview, writing an analytic memo immediately following the interview, cleaning up the data within the next few days, providing the opportunity for the participant to review the data, edit or add more thoughts, and then reading and coding the text using several different approaches (Check & Schutt, 2012). Allowing the participants to double-check and contribute any additional thoughts to the clean interview transcripts within a few days after the interview allowed me to know that the participants agreed with the information captured during the interview before I started analyzing it and it allowed them to add any new thoughts following our conversation while it was still fresh (Patton, 2015; Shenton, 2004).

I utilized Dedoose to increase the efficiency of the coding process. My first pass at coding utilized the a priori codes I identified in advance in connection with my conceptual framework. The draft codebook was developed based on the models used in my conceptual framework (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), but I recognized that I would need to amend my list of a priori codes and descriptions during the analysis process as new ideas and ways of categorizing emerged (Gibbs, 2018). I also understood that having codes in the codebook that do not map to any of my data is, in fact, data too (Bazeley, 2013).

After I coded a couple of interviews, I started to notice some other patterns worth capturing, so I added some additional codes to my initial codebook to help me keep track of the patterns that were starting to emerge. I continued to code using the a priori and emerging codes.

Once I finished coding all interviews, I returned to the first several that I had not coded with the emerging codes and added those as well. I used my researcher log and analytic memos to begin conceptualizing themes and how the emerging themes might relate to one another. These memos helped me both record and recognize how I related to the participants and the phenomena as themes emerged, as well as helped me keep track of whether the data that I was collecting would ultimately help me answer my research question (Saldaña, 2013). Therefore, as this process unfolded, I could identify if I needed to take a different approach. Before the end of the data collection, I had a clear record of my reactions and any potential biases that I may have inadvertently brought to bear on the data.

The timing of the analysis process and data collection process overlap depended on the availability of participants and how quickly they were available to schedule an interview. Most interviews took place from mid-September to early October 2024, but a few more trickled out in the weeks following. My primary goal was to accommodate participant schedules, and several of them rescheduled at the last minute. Working on the data analysis as I continued to collect data helped me start to see emerging patterns and allowed me to identify that I had reached saturation with 10 interviews. I knew that I had reached saturation when the data collection and analysis process was no longer yielding significant new insights about the phenomenon that I was studying (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Through the data analysis process and keeping my researcher log, I had derived emerging themes by the time I finished the data collection process. I could then name these themes using the participants' exact words, sources outside of my study, such as the literature or relevant models, or my interpretations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I went back through the data to pick

out examples and evidence of each theme and look for any counterexamples. Each theme described multiple perspectives from several participants who provided specific evidence and quotations of the theme's existence (Creswell, 2008). The themes are exhaustive, encompassing all relevant information from the data, and mutually exclusive, meaning that there are clear distinctions as to what pieces of data fit into which theme (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Ultimately, the data analysis process allowed me to answer my research questions, and my goal in going through the data analysis process was to make meaning from the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Given this study's position as a phenomenological undertaking, I focused on how my participants constructed knowledge and made meaning of their experiences. The data analysis process allowed me to identify patterns between the participant stories, generating the themes that cut across the data.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Throughout the data collection and analysis procedures, I employed several strategies to help bolster the credibility and trustworthiness of my study. Credible qualitative research implies that the researcher checks the findings for accuracy using certain tactics (Creswell, 2008). I described a few of these tactics in the above sections, such as making sure that participants understood their contributions were entirely voluntary and encouraging them to speak frankly with the understanding that there were no wrong answers (Shenton, 2004), cleaning up the transcripts to ensure accuracy, as well as defining my codes to make sure that I applied them consistently during the coding process (Creswell, 2008). As I coded, I utilized both the a priori codes, which I had defined in advance, and utilized open codes, which I defined as I went along, as I started to notice patterns in the data (Creswell, 2008). Appendix D shows the full codebook,

with both my a priori codes and the open codes I added and used as I went along. As already described, I utilized a researcher log with analytic memos to make sure that I documented my process, thoughts, and any biases that arose as I worked with the data to transparently report the study findings.

Additionally, I utilized member-checking to increase the trustworthiness of the data collected (Creswell, 2008; Shenton, 2004). After conducting an interview and cleaning up the transcription, I sent it back to the participants and provided them with an opportunity to review what they shared in the interview and to edit, add, or clarify anything that they stated before I moved into coding. This member-checking (Patton, 2015) allowed me to verify the findings with each participant. Two participants responded to the opportunity to check the transcript, one confirming that everything looked good and the other adding extensive additional comments. I also created a one-pager of the emerging themes and shared that with all participants after the data analysis. During interviews, it became clear that participants were interested in learning the results of the study and so I prepared this one-pager as a kind of executive summary of the emerging results to share with them. This provided another opportunity for them to react to the findings, both to verify and/or add any additional comments. This one-pager was provided to all participants as another form of member-checking in December 2024, before I wrote the two final chapters of this research so that I could incorporate any additional reactions. Two participants responded to my sharing the one-pager results; one indicated which recommendations she would have appreciated, and the other simply validated the results described within.

While the course evaluations that students had the opportunity to complete immediately following their global course participation did not serve as a primary data source in this research

study, I coded and used those course evaluations to add a layer of complexity to the data and derive more meaning from it. The course evaluations provided a useful basis for comparison in that they gave me a sense of what students took away from a particular global course immediately after it happened. Reviewing the course evaluations compared to the interview transcripts allowed me to identify growth areas in the years between when the global course finished and the present day.

In Chapter Four, I reported my findings by utilizing rich, thick descriptions (Creswell, 2008) to add to the credibility of the themes that I identified and also allow the reader to draw their own conclusions about what the participants shared. Detailed quotations support my interpretations and show how I arrived at my conclusions. I also presented counterexamples that run against the themes I identified. Given the complexity of life and different perspectives, it would be unusual for there to be perfect alignment across all themes, and presenting the contrary information adds credibility to my conclusions (Creswell, 2008).

Limitations

This study investigated a relatively niche area within higher education that has not been extensively researched. It explored uncharted territory in many ways, and because of that, the study was small but deep. I designed a relatively narrow focus to come to a base understanding. However, many factors may influence experiences that were not explored here, such as race/ethnicity and international background. My sampling strategy drew from several different years, global courses, and locations to understand themes across the program, but in a more manageable way as a starting point. Given more time and capacity, the findings of this study

could be used to create a survey to send to a wider population to better understand the

phenomena and potential patterns, which is beyond the current scope.

Another limitation is that students completed their course evaluations anonymously

following the short-term global courses, so there was no way to directly compare a participant's

takeaways from right after the course to their current understanding years later. In this study, the

course evaluations were used for triangulation and comparison; again, in the future, a more

extensive study might compare course evaluations or final reflection papers to data collected

years later to better understand the foundation from which individuals grew.

A limitation of collecting information through interviews is that the participants self-

reported their own experiences (Creswell, 2008). Despite efforts to help participants feel safe to

disclose honestly, it is possible that they did not accurately report, either intentionally or

accidentally, which would, especially in a study of this size, also influence the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative data analysis procedures described in the preceding chapter. The findings are organized in relation to my conceptual framework, as Chapter Two describes. For quick reference, the following visual, as represented in Figure 1 in Chapter Two, summarizes the three theories I included in my conceptual framework and how I connected them to the global course experience and leadership development in this study. It is important to recognize that some participant quotations could be categorized within several of these theories. I have chosen to present them in closest alignment with the participant's meaning. I also recognize that because there is overlap between the concepts within the models from which I have drawn my conceptual framework, there is also overlap in participant data categorization. For example, some quotations could easily fall within Kolb's reflection stage in the Experiential Learning Theory or within the skills pillar of Gavriel's Self-directed Learning Model. Similarly, some participant data could be categorized as either self-belief in Gavriel's Self-directed Learning Model or self-mastery in the Transformational Leadership Model. Given that an individual would likely experience aspects of any of these models in a non-linear fashion, and there is overlap between them, it makes sense that some participant quotations fall across multiple categories. For efficiency's sake, I share individual quotations where I think there is the strongest fit, based on the participant's intended meaning from the context of the full interview conversation.

- Concrete experience
- Reflection
- Conceptualization
- Experimentation

Experiential Learning Theory
(Kolb, 2015)

Self-Directed Learning Model
(Gavriel, 2005)

- Skills (Kolb)
- Motivation (Maslov)
- Self-belief (Bandura)

- Consciousness
  - Self Mastery
  - Interpersonal Mastery
  - Enterprise Mastery

Transformational Leadership Model
(Hacker and Roberts, 2003)

Student participates in short-term global course and completes associated assignments.

Student continues learning at PBS, graduates, and starts applying learning to new job and life post graduation.

Alumnus/ae continues to develop leadership practice through self-directed experiential learning.

In this chapter, I show examples from the interviews of each stage or pillar contained within these three theories: Experiential Learning Theory, Self-directed Learning Model, and Transformational Leadership Model. I provide a brief reminder of each theory and the substages or pillars before presenting the data and, then, an explanation of patterns or outliers that I found in the data related to the given topic. I also include a section that compares major themes from the course evaluation of a given global course to the major themes in a participant's transcript about the same course 7-10 years later.

Experiential Learning Theory Related Findings

Kolb (2015, p.49) defines experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." He describes the four stages of Experiential Learning Theory: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and

Active Experimentation. These four stages are not linear but instead interdependent and cyclical,

forming a continuous learning spiral where individuals move between the stages in response to

learning situations. The following subsections provide examples from my study's participants

that map onto these four stages of experiential learning. I provide a deeper explanation of each

stage of experiential learning and interpretations of the related data. Appendix E provides

examples of direct quotations from participants illustrating each of the four stages of experiential

learning too.

Concrete Experience

In the Concrete Experience stage of experiential learning, Kolb (2015) suggests that a

learner actively engages in and experiences either a new situation or a concept, forming the

foundation of the learning cycle. The entire global course might be considered a concrete

experience. When speaking about the entire global course experience, participant comments were

generally positive. Lacey said, "I loved it. I would do another one." Similarly, Eric shared, "I just

really appreciated that it was a good experience." Bruce said, "I value these experiences, and I

enjoyed all of them" related to all his global travel, not just the Pioneer Business School course.

Hugo explained in a bit more detail that the social aspect was particularly impactful for him: "I

think the whole point of the global thing is to get you outside of that comfort zone . . . And then

all of a sudden you have these shared experiences . . . you're going through something together.

And that bonding experience, I think, is really powerful." Selene, who participated in three short-

term global courses during her time at Pioneer Business School, valued the unique access that the

courses provided: "It felt like a unique opportunity to be able to take advantage of the global

course in the MBA setting. I know in particular, some of them give you access to people or

experiences that you would not have access to if you had chosen to travel on your own." She

went on to describe her Israel short-term global course as the best of the three that she

participated in because she felt "it offered the most diversity of experience. Like we had the

cultural elements between the consulting project, and the company visits gave us a lot of

exposure to the business environment there and then also seeing the political components of the

country, such as the military base."

Beyond high-level comments about the entire course as a concrete experience,

participants had no trouble recalling more specific examples of experiences that they had during

their global course that stood out in their memories. All ten participants recollected and shared

specific concrete experiences from their global courses and many chose to share related

memories, such as independent travel correlated with their global course or other concrete

experiences from their time at Pioneer Business School. Bruce participated in the same global

course to Israel as Selene and one of the resonant moments for him was also the military base

visit. He went into greater detail, sharing:

> One thing that was really cool about this trip . . . We were actually able to go into an
>
> Israeli Air Force base and actually see, like nonpublic footage of them having previously,
>
> I mean, we weren't watching it live, but they were bombing a terrorist stronghold of some
>
> sort. Obviously, this was not live, but, you know, one thing that they showed us was
>
> really fascinating to see was how much effort they made to make sure it was civilian-free
>
> when they bombed it.

For Selene, a concrete and helpful experience in both her Brazil and Israel global courses

was the consulting project that she did on the ground during each course:

I think one element was preparation for consulting, which is what like all my post-PBS

experience has been. With the Brazil course and the Israel course, we did a consulting

project with a company that was based in the country, so had a client with objectives that

we had to deliver against and needed to do that with a team of Pioneer Business School

students. So, I think that was, yeah, good practice for so many dimensions of consulting.

Bruce also described the consulting project that he participated in during the Israel course in

significant detail, but his comments suggested that the project itself was not approached with

sufficient rigor, saying "I felt like we totally BS'd it." He also shared memories of the

presentation and challenges being able to focus the client's attention away from his part and to

his teammates, indicating "they ended up wanting to spend the whole time talking about the legal

components. . . and I was supposed to have the least important part of the presentation . . . and it

was uncomfortable because they were asking very specific legal questions."

It was not uncommon for participants to indicate that some of the details of their concrete

experiences faded with time, but when asked about the first thing that came to mind for them

when they thought about their global course, all participants easily answered and could

remember places visited, both academic and cultural, and the people they traveled with. Frank

provided an example of this kind of faded memory by saying:

I remember a lot of the places that we went to, and how cool that was to see, you know, a

place that I'd heard a lot about over my life up to that point. But, like going to the

beaches and going to the historical sites and, I can't remember if it was a Parliament or

what their political structure set up is, but we went in there and met with some leaders,

and, you know, so I have like memories of those specific things.

Only a few participants mentioned the global course faculty member. Those who did mentioned the faculty largely because that faculty member was native to the country (Selene mentioned this about the faculty member for Israel) being visited or had some kind of exceptional knowledge that attracted the student to the student to enroll in the course (Lacey mentioned that the professor for her Normandy course had special expertise in military history).

Reflective Observation

In the reflective observation stage, Kolb (2015) suggests that learners step back from the concrete experience and contemplate its meaning through observation or reflection. Reflective observation involves intention on the learner's part. Like concrete experience, all participants in the study articulated examples of engaging in reflective observation as part of or after their global course experience.

Course Experience Reflections

Across all the interviews, reflective observations tended to fall into two categories 1) about the course experience itself or 2) about doing business or leadership. For example, the reflections from both Acacia and Monica show that they both considered their course experience in relation to their expectations going into it. Their experiences and reflections were near inverses of one another, with Acacia indicating pleasant surprise that she "had expected, to some degree, that our interactions would be "sanitized" and highly curated, but that was not at all the case. I was appreciative of the immersive experience that we were able to have during our time in-country." Monica, on the other hand, compared her global course experience to independent travel in the same country immediately prior and felt nearly the opposite, sharing:

The dichotomy of the experience we had traveling the week before the course . . . I was

in India maybe over two weeks. My husband was there for only a week. But then, I got

onto the Pioneer Business School part, and we're staying in like fancy hotels. We're on

these buses, like real, fancy buses, and you're like, for the last week, I have only been in

a tuk tuk, like I was in a car once, and it was like, Who, who's that in the car? And now,

we're business school students. It was very weird. Oh, man, I didn't remember that, but

like I remember the switch from I'm traveling with my husband and Tom to I'm traveling

as a business school student felt like weirdly ritzy. It was not how we were traveling

before and then, all of a sudden, we're in these like fancy ass hotels, like 5-star hotels and

you still see poverty all around you, and, you know, we're on these huge buses that don't

even look like they can go down the streets we were going down, you know. And, it was

just very disjointed. It was like a switch, you know. It was like we went from really

experiencing the culture to being like Oh, here, India, tell us about you.

Acacia and Monica's experiences show examples of reflective observation on the same topic, but

also show their different reactions to the global courses they experienced. Acacia participated in

a global course to Uganda and Monica participated in a global course to India, both developing

countries. Selene also participated in a global course to India and made a few comments similar

to Monica's, comparing her global course experience to a prior visit to India in which she

volunteered in Calcutta following completing her undergraduate degree. She described Calcutta

as "a lot more impoverished than the places that we visited as part of the course" and said that

she "might have appreciated [the global course] more than others, because it's like I had already

seen it. I had seen a very different side of India where there was no business. There was no

significant economic activity in the area that I was in." She contrasted her volunteer experience with the Pioneer Business School global course in India and recognized that the global course provided only a partial view of the country, suggesting "it was like seeing two very different places within the same country. So, other people might have only gone on that trip [the global course] would think that this is reflective of the whole of India."

Project Reflections

Eric, Nadia, and Acacia reflected on projects they worked on as part of their global course, and they all ultimately realized something about their clients in the process that they might not have initially concluded. Eric reflected that the goal his team of students set out to accomplish with the company on the ground was nearly impossible, but he wondered if the company would take any of the ideas they generated and carry them forward to make a dent in accomplishing their massive goal. He also recognized that "if it was easier, obviously, it would have already been done. And so, then you really kind of run up against some real challenges." indicating that the experience he had was a real one, in which, he and his classmates were working on real-world challenges that were hard because those within the company had not yet figured them out. Nadia's observation related to the experience her client provided to the group of visiting students and the contrast between a big, flashy, high-profile client like the Olympics and a small, unknown company. While students were attracted to the high-profile projects, the smaller, unknown companies provided a better learning experience because the suggestions students brought to them helped and mattered. She shared:

> I think a big learning for me was like, Okay, you know, the bigger the company, and the
>
> higher the stakes, the bigger initiatives they have to do, the less likely they are to engage

and come in with students which like, to me now, is so obvious. But, back then, that was

like such an Aha! to me. Like, the big sexy project that everyone's attracted to

[Olympics] is not necessarily going to be as good of an experience as the unknown one,

where, in the case of my company, they're just like so grateful to have the help, and they

do take it seriously, and you can have so much more of an impact. So that was probably a

mind shift for me.

Acacia shared that her project was to help set up an alumni association for a university in

Uganda to drive donations and a system of support and ongoing engagement. Her observation

was related to the project itself, but also her own experience with well-established alumni

networks:

I remember being struck by how difficult it is to reach the point that Pioneer Business

School and Umbrella University have where there's such a loyal base of alumni . . . But

then, how do you create those good memories and students who have that connection and

affiliation? So, we're supported by this cyclical thing. And I realized how hard and

challenging it really is to accomplish what I have experienced, and in both my

educational experiences.

Participants also shared reflective observations about themselves, which could easily fit

into this stage of Kolb's learning cycle but which I have chosen to present as part of the self-

belief subsection associated with the Self-directed Learning Model. This is one example of data

potentially fitting easily into stages or pillars across several of the theories in my conceptual

framework.

Abstract Conceptualization

Kolb (2015) suggests that in the abstract conceptualization stage, learners analyze and synthesize their reflections into abstract concepts and generalizations. Learners rely on conceptual interpretation or symbolic representation to make sense of their experiences, often connecting their new knowledge to existing knowledge or developing new theories.

The interviews yielded fewer examples of participants engaging in abstract conceptualization than examples of concrete experiences or reflective observation. All of the quotations in Appendix E under the abstract conceptualization stage showcase a participant's comments where they noticed something and then tied what they noticed to a broader concept or observation. The global course catalyzed noticing something that led the participant to abstract conceptualization, which aligns with Kolb's experiential learning theory. Even 8 to 10 years after traveling on a global course, participants tied something they noticed to a broader concept.

The common theme that comes across in all of these examples of abstract conceptualization is that they all relate to people. Hugo's conceptualization stems from noticing that individuals are shaped by their environments and that past experiences shape how people behave in the present:

> Besides our classroom experience, you see how people react and that really just puts you in a different place of like, everyone really is very much shaped by, you know, their experience and what they've had, and people have had very different experiences that are inputs into who they are.

Frank was surprised by how much the local company valued the work that he and his team of

visiting students completed in the week on the ground, and he conceptualized that leaders are

figuring things out as they go too:

> Even people who are running businesses don't have all the answers, and don't really
>
> know always what to do. So, like the authority that we had after spending only a week
>
> with their materials and stuff. And, you know, interacting with them- it wasn't like they
>
> delegated a ton to us, but like, there was the authority our opinions carried and it was real.
>
> That was really interesting to me because we were a business school team doing this as a
>
> part-time thing on a trip abroad.

Frank also realized that even as an outsider, there for a short period, the company's leaders

valued their perspectives. He experienced humility and openness from the company's leaders

because they knew they didn't have all of the answers but were willing to hear the student's

ideas. Eric also expressed similar realizations related to his experience working on the Kaizen

project for process improvement with a company on his global course. Eric's story is included in

more detail in the sections on Skills and Self-belief.

In a similar vein of conceptualization around leadership approaches, Monica's experience

with one of the company visits in India prompted her to consider the impact that leaders can

make with their decisions, stretching much further than the company, and how capitalism might

not incentivize decisions that take into consideration all the tradeoffs. She stated:

> I guess the thing that it makes me think of most is the downstream impacts, and whether
>
> that's in India or that's in the U.S. Frankly, food subsidies in the U.S. and obesity and the
>
> downstream impacts and capitalism are not aligned. I think it's a great goal to create

conscious leaders, but there's so much about the capitalistic system that is, that you are

making money or you are taking from the system. You are making money where there's

arbitrage opportunities and, like, I mean, I know the leader that I am and want to be, and

grew into, and I just don't know that our system is set up so that it rewards that.

Monica's conceptualization has an air of uncertainty to it, suggesting that she is still working

through this, but has a hypothesis that the capitalist system does not provide incentives for

individuals to lead in a way that prioritizes the best for everyone rather than individual self-

interest, such as making more money. She hints that developing individuals into conscious

leaders will not solve the full problem if the system in which they operate continues to reward

those who make more money at a higher level.

Bruce experienced a difficult exchange with a classmate during the global course that

brought up an emotional reaction for him even years after it happened. As a result of that

exchange, he started to conceptualize how different people think about or compare difficult

periods of history. He shared:

I am half Jewish. I remember being offended by an African American girl on the trip

who, after the visit to Yad Vashem, said something like she didn't understand why

Americans are so upset about the holocaust after what happened with slavery, and I just

thought that was like . . . I'm still pissed off when I think about that, I mean, I think we

have this sort of stupid wokeness in America that, just . . . it's not the same conversation,

and it's not a competition, you know. Like, it's really not a competition, and they can both

be bad in different ways without it being the same conversation.

Bruce used his classmate's comment as an example of a broader systemic problem that he noticed in American culture, where there is greater awareness of social injustices and inequalities but a problematic overall understanding of political correctness. Whether correct or not, Bruce's reflection on the exchange with his classmate led him to think more broadly about a pattern in society and what he perceives would be a better approach.

These examples show participants taking a concrete global course experience and, through some kind of reflective process, arriving at a realization beyond the course itself. Monica and Bruce's examples show that they are still working through their conceptualizations to this day, which aligns with the idea that experiential learning is a cyclical process that develops as individuals experience and learn new things along the way that may influence how they think about their past experiences.

Active Experimentation

Kolb (2015) suggests that learners apply their newly formed concepts to current situations and actively experiment with different approaches in the active experimentation stage. This stage might involve taking risks, undertaking new behaviors, and evaluating results to refine their understanding and knowledge further. Data from the participants revealed many examples where participants engaged in active experimentation due to their global course learning.

Empowerment on the Ground

Participants spoke about a broad range of concepts or approaches that they learned during their global courses that have influenced their behavior in their lives to this day. Nadia shared an example of active experimentation that happened during the global course itself when she was one of only a couple of second-year students on the ground. She already had taken other project

management courses before the global course with that same theme and so she was able to take a

leadership role with the consulting project team on the ground. She shared the following

anecdote:

> I was paired with all first years, and they hadn't had the [project management] course yet,
>
> so I was almost like teaching them what I learned in [professor's] class on the ground,
>
> and so all of that just reinforced the project management principles, which I found to be
>
> very valuable.

The global course provided a space for Nadia to actively experiment with learnings from

previous Pioneer Business School courses and to take the theory she learned there and apply it in

a new, real-world context as she worked on the project with the Brazilian company for a week.

She describes, as quoted in the Self-belief subsection, how empowering it was for her to feel like

the expert, particularly after struggling with imposter syndrome and feelings of not being good

enough earlier in her time at Pioneer Business School. This active experimentation was key to

building up Nadia's sense of self-belief, as I describe further in the Self-Directed Learner Model

Related Findings section.

Leadership Experimentation

Acacia, who works in a multi-national company and with teams based all over the world,

shared that the global course reinforced her previous understanding of how important cultural

considerations are to working successfully with people from many different backgrounds.

> So, in the nature of a global course, you're going to come across many, many challenges,
>
> as it relates to cultural backgrounds. I work for a Danish company where most of the
>
> developers are India, but the leaders are American, and I am based on the Germany team.

> Like you just have so many conflicting perspectives based on culture. And that is the root
>
> cause of what I have to solve for almost daily and what I have to manage for almost daily,
>
> because managing my India team requires step by step instructions and constant
>
> assurance verses like European teams who it is just night and day, right? It is night and
>
> day differences between what they want and the approach I have to take, truly.

In her job, on a regular basis, she is working across cultures and having to adapt her own

leadership style to what is needed in order to move work forward across different teams, time

zones and approaches. She actively experiments when she is solving for the best approach.

Travel Preparation Experimentation

Outside of the workplace and on a more personal level, Lacey shared that her global

course taught her a new way to prepare for travel in advance. She recognized that the readings

and pre-departure sessions before arriving on the ground for her global course at Pioneer

Business School greatly improved her understanding and experience when she was onsite, and

so, as a result, when she travels personally, she likes to take a similar approach. She described

her process and an example of a recent application:

> But now when I do travel to new places, I do a little bit of learning about the history
>
> ahead of time, which was a theme from the Normandy course, great, because it was a
>
> much more meaningful experience to go somewhere when you kind of understand what
>
> to look for, so to speak. And, so now, if I'm going to a place I've never been to before, I
>
> try to read about it, not just the greatest tourist attractions that you want to see, restaurants
>
> you want to go to, but are there any interesting things, historically, that could bring the
>
> trip to life a little bit. I went to Spain recently and the part of Spain I was in was actually

> Gaelic. And they had all of these ruins of these very ancient cultures. It was very interesting to learn a little bit about the culture before I went and actually saw some of the ruins. This is actually a cool way to travel.

One of the ways that Lacey applied her learnings from the global course was not actually related to the content of the course itself but how the course was structured, which helped her get the most out of it while on the ground. That said, Lacey also described how the assignments on the ground encouraged active experimentation not only related to the content but also in the practice of leadership. She said:

> I had an internal journey. I mean, it was definitely reflective in nature, right? And, I think on a couple of different levels because of how the course was structured. Once we got on the ground, every person in the class led one of the lessons. So, you visited 20 sites or whatever, and you or one of your classmates was leading the discussion at that particular site. And, so it was, you know, in the moment, leadership. How are you going to represent this site and make sure you're prepared, and bring your peers along for the journey and make sure you're leading an effective discussion? But, then, also you would zoom out and think about the entire history of what you're focused on. And, there was a ton of reflection there in terms of what type of leader you want to be, why these leaders we were learning about were successful, etc.

Lacey's example illustrates that active experimentation can happen during the course experience itself, not only after it has finished and beyond graduation. Again, this helps to reinforce the idea that the experiential learning theory stages occur cyclically.

Like Lacey, the process through which learning occurred resonated for Eric too, and led him to active experimentation. Eric spoke broadly about how students learn at Pioneer Business School- through the Socratic method- and how it was so impactful for him that he uses the same method to teach others. He said:

> I'm a huge fan of the Socratic teaching method now. And, I mean, even like, you know, if I'm doing something as simple as, you know, showing others how to do something or teaching a class- teaching a Sunday school class at my church- I'm going to use that method because I think it is so beneficial, right? And not get up there and lecture, as an example.

While these examples are not exhaustive of all that arose in the interviews, they do illustrate that participants are engaging in active experimentation to this day with experiences that they had on their global courses. That said, *how* participants utilized their course learnings to influence their approaches varied substantially.

Self-directed Learner Model Related Findings

Gavriel's (2005) self-directed learner model emphasizes the interdependence of three key elements: skills, motivation, and self-belief. These three elements serve as pillars that support the development and continuance of self-directed learning in her model. Each of the three pillars draws from another model. The skills pillar represents Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (2015), the motivation pillar relies on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (A. H. Maslow, 1943), and the self-belief pillar draws on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977) to explain how self-efficacy, a key component of self-belief, is developed. Gavriel suggests that educators can help learners develop the skills, motivation, and self-belief necessary to manage

their learning effectively. She advocates for learner-centered approaches to education where

educators act as facilitators and students take ownership of their learning and develop the

capacity for continuous, self-directed growth. The following three subsections present quotations

from the interviews that connect back to each of Gavriel's three pillars of self-directed learning.

Given that students likely do not fully complete the experiential learning cycle by the time their

global course experience ends, self-directed learning is an important element in maximizing the

impact of the learning opportunity. In the following three subsections, I provide a deeper

explanation of each pillar and interpretations of the related data from the participants in my

study. Appendix F lists participant data according to each pillar as well.

Skills

The skills pillar in Gavriel's self-directed learner model relies on Kolb's experiential

learning cycle, which I have described both in my conceptual framework in Chapter 2 and briefly

in the preceding findings section. Gavriel suggests that self-directed learners need to develop the

skills to be able to move through each stage of the experiential learning cycle. For example,

learners need to develop introspection, critical thinking, and perspective-taking skills to hone

their reflective practices. Analysis requires learners to identify patterns, connect disparate ideas,

and form abstract concepts that they can then apply to new situations. In active experimentation,

learners should be able to take considered risks to try new approaches and then adjust based on

feedback and results. Gavriel suggests that educators can help students learn these kinds of skills

by incorporating reflective activities, designing activities that include problem-solving or

decision-making, and applying concepts in real-world settings, offering feedback as learners

incorporate their new approaches. The examples I present from the participant interviews include quotes related to skills during the global course and afterward.

Given that the skills pillar in Gavriel's model draws from Kolb's theory of experiential learning, many of the quotations presented in this section might have easily found a home in previous subsections related to Kolb's theory and the associated stages of experiential learning. That said, I have chosen the categorization because these quotations show examples, or in a few cases counterexamples, of the participant's awareness of or engagement in skills that are, according to Gavriel, critical to being able to self-direct their learning.

Participants did not articulate new skills they learned on the ground while participating in their short-term global courses. However, there were a couple of examples where participants described using or practicing a skill that they had already learned during their global course. For example, Hugo spoke about utilizing his Spanish skills in working on a project during the short-term global course:

> I had to write everything because our stakeholders only spoke Spanish. I was the only one on the team who spoke or wrote Spanish- my classmates did not. We talked through as a team what we wanted to present to the stakeholders, and then I translated and ultimately presented to them in Spanish.

Hugo shared the story about being the only member of his project team who spoke Spanish and how he realized that his prior global exposure, skills, and experiences set him apart from his peers. He also realized on the ground that his past skill development and experiences gave him an advantage over his peers after he had also answered that he did not learn, practice or observe skills on the global course, stating, "If I'm being honest, no, it doesn't. Nothing sticks out. I think

we pretty much made fancy decks." This shows an interesting contrast because Hugo stated that he did not learn or practice skills during the global course, but he actually did and just did not think about Spanish or his valuable contributions to the group work in that way.

Frank also provided a similarly conflicting statement regarding skills development on the ground during the global course:

I feel like we probably did some rapid brainstorming which, you know, you get some exposure to at Pioneer Business School in your classes, and everything like that in your teams and I had some experience from before business school, but it was definitely probably a skill that we got to practice on the ground like with those companies we were supporting over there. But that was about it. I can't think of anything else specific. I mean there's some deck building and stuff like that, right? Like some core business competencies, you know that you would expect.

He seems to be indicating that while he practiced some skills on the ground, the development was not particularly extraordinary or all that different from other regular Pioneer Business School classes. He also stated that "the way business was done over there wasn't any different than business done over here, so that part, you could get that in Pioneer Business School, in [city where PBS is located] . . . so, for me, definitely the cultural aspect was the most important part and the part that had the most lasting impact on me." This statement is also interesting because it suggests that the course did not help Frank understand the ways in which business was conducted differently in the country where Frank's global course took place or that, if at one point, those differences were clear to Frank that they faded with time, while the cultural learning remained.

Nadia indicated that she used her reflection skills in real-time as we conducted the interview and made some realizations during our conversation. She shared:

> This conversation has kind of gotten me reflecting like, Oh, you know, I was like, Oh, I don't think I remember that much and now, I'm like, no, I do remember a lot. And I guess it [the global course] kind of did have an impact on me. And even being a reflective person like you don't always realize that until someone asks you the reflective questions, and then you kind of piece it together.

Nadia's comment, especially in connection with the comments from Hugo and Frank indicates that the participants may have developed or practiced skills, but were not consciously aware of the process or did not necessarily view what they did as skill practice or development.

Both Eric and Monica were able to draw more direct connections between their global course learning and skill development or application. Eric indicated that being on a team and working on a project later helped him in his career:

> Having the depth of being on a team working on a project for one week, and that's all we were doing, was really beneficial professionally. You know that goes a lot deeper than going to look at something- a different location, a different company, a different topic, a different business every day. So, not as cool, right? But, it certainly was beneficial and helpful and I would recommend it to anybody.

The short-term global course that Eric participated in had more of a project focus than the other global course options. While he got immense value from it, he indicated that the option was likely less popular with his peers because it was more work with fewer cultural elements included. That said, Eric made it very clear multiple times during the interview that he was very

grateful he chose the global course that he did and that he actively applied learnings from the experience directly to his career.

Monica also found that her global course helped her develop and apply frameworks, which she sees as crucial to her professional work now, sharing:

> I think having good frameworks with which to think about problems is really important because leaders are problem solvers and being able to draw on a framework, whether it's case or experience, or like being able to have a good framework to think about things and think critically and be able to really challenge your assumptions and other's assumptions is probably one of the most important things.

Monica's global course experience provided her with a new frame of reference and allowed her to think about frameworks she had learned in other contexts in new ways. She articulated how the global course helped her make connections; practicing skills of critical reasoning and re-examining existing knowledge or biases.

The participants' experiences, as discussed, reveal a nuanced understanding of skill development, sometimes recognizing the value of their prior knowledge and the reflective process, even if not explicitly acknowledging new skills gained or practiced during the global courses. This underscores the complexity of self-directed learning and the critical role of educators in facilitating practical learning opportunities.

Motivation

During the interviews, participants commented on their motivations, primarily about their overall motivation for leadership or their reason for enrolling in their global course. Gavriel's (2005) motivation pillar uses Maslow's hierarchy of needs as its structural foundation (Maslow,

1943; Maslow, 1971), emphasizing the diverse internal and external factors that drive an

individual's learning journey. The motivation pillar underscores the importance of recognizing

and addressing needs to set a base for learning to flourish, particularly growth needs at the top

level of Maslow's hierarchy to cultivate self-directed learning. The self-actualization need

represents the desire to fulfill one's potential, pursue personal interests, and achieve goals. Nadia

stated she feels this need directly by stating, "I just love the feeling that I'm growing. That in and

of itself is motivating to me." At the very top, the self-transcendence need involves connecting

to something beyond oneself, a sense of larger purpose, and a broader contribution. The

motivation pillar suggests that helping learners tap into this top level can inspire the application

of knowledge and skills to positively impact the world. Acacia directly referenced Maslow's

hierarchy in one of her comments, illustrating her awareness of where she is operating from and

what she hopes to achieve. She shared:

> I'm at the top of that pyramid of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and places like Uganda
>
> couldn't but help reinforce that. That humanity and passion that we are actually all the
>
> same. And, how do you create those opportunities and acknowledge that the struggle is
>
> just more difficult for them, period, than it is for me and that has nothing to do with am I
>
> as valuable? Or if I am as important? It's an acknowledgment that the world is an
>
> inherently structured place, regardless of what system you look into. And, so, what role
>
> can I play to help people unlock their potential and create those paths forward?

Acacia is speaking about a motivation, or need, beyond her self-interest and a goal to use her

advantages to help others. She reinforces this concept in her everyday approach to her staff,

indicating that "My goal as a leader is to ensure that they [my staff] leave with the toolset and the

skills that they wanted to build to be successful in the next place." This is another area where there is some overlap between the theories related to my conceptual model. Acacia's comments speak to her motivation, but also to concepts within the model of transformational leadership with consciousness at its root. Nadia's comments also stretch across the models, but she also elaborated on her own motivation by sharing, "I think ultimately what drives me is consciousness . . . my awareness of what consciousness is and my question, and my desire to expand it and just become a better and more authentic version of myself."

Participants spoke less about what motivated their continued learning or conceptualizing their learning following being on the ground on their global course, but a few made comments that hinted that might have happened for them, though largely unconsciously. Clarence was the one participant who spoke directly about what motivated his continued learning in the global arena. He said:

> I just really enjoyed the travel. That [the global course] was probably the kickoff of
> traveling not as a tourist to these places, and meeting with people who live and work
> there, and seeing a very different side of these different countries' cultures than you do
> when you're a tourist seeing through the very carefully curated Michelin guide lens. So, I
> think I found that fascinating and found it fascinating to work for [American multi-
> national company] where I traveled to India three times, Saudia Arabia, UAE, a few
> times to China, and Switzerland and Belgium. I've just found it very stimulating to work
> in that kind of international environment.

Other participants described a similar motivation for enrolling in the short-term global course experience. There was a sense that they did not want to miss out on the opportunity for this kind

of unique learning and that going overseas with Pioneer Business School would offer them advantages that would be harder or impossible for them to arrange on their own. Selene, who chose to participate in three short-term global courses during her MBA degree stated:

> It felt like a unique opportunity to take advantage of the global course in the MBA setting. I know, in particular, some of them give you access to people or experiences that you would not have access to if you had chosen to travel on your own, or even if you had traveled through some type of facilitated trip. And I think, also, at least one or maybe two of the courses, the professor was native to the country, so it felt like they could give a lot of good context and insight into what we were experiencing and then, also, just seemed like it'd be fun.

Hugo was more motivated by the social elements related to the short-term global course, indicating that his friends' interest was key to his joining. He shared, "I think it maybe was the most sought-after global course at the time, and then, a good group of friends all got together. And, we're like "Yes" let's go do this." This motivation maps onto a lower need, belongingness, in Maslow's hierarchy, than some of the others discussed.

Bruce, in response to a question asking about how he uses what he learned on the ground, indicated that he is not applying his learnings and he attributed that somewhat to the fact that the global course he participated in was not his first pick. Bruce said, "That didn't happen to me [using what he learned on the ground later]. I think part of it is that I did not really choose it. It was my third choice, but it was a choice I was happy with. I chose it mostly because I liked Israel, and I liked the idea of being back there, and gaining that further exposure." He also shared that he had previously participated in the birthright program to Israel and that experience was

more transformative for him than the short-term course through Pioneer Business School. He was happy to return to Israel and was able to articulate some new learnings, but found the program less impactful than his first time in the country. Again, Bruce's motivations, more like Hugo's, appear to meet needs lower on the hierarchy than some described by other participants.

Of all the participants, Eric had one of the most direct through-lines between his motivation for participating in the global course, what he took away from it, and how he applied it directly in his career following graduation. He attributes his motivation to several different factors, stating:

> I was one of those Pioneer Business School students that was already married and had kids. So, I was not going to be doing a fun spring break trip. But, no, I say that you know, half tongue-in-cheek. But, more importantly, I thought it was an incredible opportunity to have a funded real-world experience. I was very much interested in operations and continuous improvement. And, to go do that, hands-on, on a funded trip was just a huge opportunity to me.

This motivation fits most closely into Maslow's self-actualization need, given that Eric joined for his own growth as related to his personal goals. This statement does not really show it, but other quotations from the interview show that Eric's leadership style ultimately developed into one that approaches self-transcendence and cares for a broader purpose beyond his own goals.

The interviews revealed diverse motivations among participants, ranging from personal growth and self-actualization to a desire for broader impact and social connection. Overall, these insights underscore the multifaceted nature of motivation in education settings (and beyond them).

Self-belief

The third pillar in Gavriel's (2005) model of self-directed learning is self-belief. This pillar emphasizes the importance of an individual's belief in their capacity to be successful in their learning goals. The self-belief pillar draws heavily on Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) and identifies sources that contribute to learners' self-efficacy or confidence in their ability to learn. Important elements from Bandura's theory include the impact of past successes and failures, vicarious learning through others, verbal encouragement, and supportive language to build learners' belief in their abilities and emotional arousal during learning tasks. In short, Bandura suggests that high levels of stress and anxiety during a task can lead a learner's performance to suffer and decrease self-efficacy; and learning to manage stress and anxiety can help learners both strengthen their performance and their belief in themselves.

To carry on Eric's story from the previous section about his motivation, he later shared that he took some risks post-graduation to utilize what he learned during the global course in his workplace. Eric acknowledges that he was not an expert, but that he saw an opportunity to make a difference by using some of the approaches he learned. His self-belief that he could start where he was allowed him to carry forward, hone his skills, and continue utilizing what he had learned. He described his integration:

> So, within a year from graduating, I had started my job with this company and then was able to move into more of an operations role and then, a year beyond that, I had really started integrating . . . I brought some of these principles, and ultimately, kind of a Kaizen event and lean manufacturing principles to the company, and was able to kind of spearhead that initiative from within. And so just started off by getting a group together to

focus on this for half a day in the warehouse. And, I felt unqualified to do that. But, at the

same time, because I had already participated in one that was like a real world, not just in

the classroom for another business, I'm like, well, you know. Fake it till you make it kind

of thing. We're going to figure it out as we go and that's okay. You don't have to have all

of the answers in the spirit of continuous improvement. So, yeah, I was able to do these

things and lead some of those initiatives. And, having that experience was certainly

helpful to recognize that nobody goes into those with answers. And that's okay and I was

able to tell everybody that say, oh we're just going to figure it out. We're going to learn

something no matter what, whether we're able to fix the problem or just see what it turns

into.

This quote shows that Eric was not completely confident in his abilities to utilize what he had

learned, but he did not let that stop him from trying. His approach suggests that his self-belief

overrode his uncertainty.

Several participants also made comments that the global course allowed them to break

through feelings of imposter syndrome and that the different settings and environments allowed

their strengths to shine through in new ways within their peer group. Nadia's story was

particularly compelling:

I think the global course was empowering for me because I was one of the more subject

matter experts, and I needed that at Pioneer Business School. I needed to feel like one of

the more informed people in a moment like for once, you know, I always felt like the

stupidest person. That's what I told myself at the time. I am the stupidest person in the

room. I don't get this. That's how I felt a lot of the time. I was like, I don't belong here. I

squeaked in . . . So, being in a position [on the global course] where I know the subject

matter, it was more like, I can teach it to people. I am smart and I do have a future.

Feeling that was incredibly powerful for me and feeling as if, towards the end of my

Pioneer Business School experience, I could finally feel that way. I finally had a grasp on

something and could actually teach other people, so that in and of itself was very

empowering for me and did my self-esteem good. We had a lot of first years on the global

course and I was one of the few second years and was able to feel like I actually know

what's going on and can help. So, I think that in and of itself was evidence of my

transformation, which just became self-reinforcing for me and encouraging for me to

keep going.

The global course environment where Nadia felt like she belonged and was not behind was a

pivotal moment for her. She spent a lot of her first year feeling like she was not good enough or

did not belong so being able to attend the global course and use skills that she had developed in

previous classes as well as understand that in the new environment, she had a leg up because of

previous time overseas, provided her with a confidence boost and increased her sense of self-

belief.

Lacey shared a parallel story of starting business school from a non-traditional

background. However, she did not experience the same imposter syndrome feelings as Nadia and

used her existing self-belief to figure out the new environment as she went. She said:

I came to business school with a massive sense of like- I have no idea what I'm doing

here, right? I was a musician before I decided to go to business school. I knew absolutely

nothing. And, so, I had this feeling of like, all right. Well, if I was smart enough to get

into this school, I'm smart enough to figure this out and I'm out of Nope already.

Everybody around me in school already knew that I didn't know what I was doing

because they all knew that I was from a music background. So, I never had to like prove

anything to anybody. It was like, Oh wow! You're actually doing a decent job in school.

That's pretty impressive because you were a musician before and you don't know what

you're doing. And, I was like, that's right. I don't, but here we go.

Lacey brought a sense of perspective and resilience with to her with business school which

helped her navigate through even though she was not as traditionally prepared as some of her

peers. She used those same skills to engage with learning on her global course.

Like Nadia, Hugo also found that the global course helped him see his own strengths in

new ways. Prior to attending Pioneer Business School, Hugo worked for an airline and while he

said he had relatively limited international exposure, he also shared, "I actually put together a

trip around the world with the airline on non-revenue tickets . . . that was my first big

international exposure." However, he also indicated that he had taken a couple of trips to South

America because his parents were from Chile originally, and the airline that he worked for was

Chilean. When asked about if he had any eye-opening moments during this global course, Hugo

stated:

I realized actually how well positioned I was relative to a super competitive set of my

peers because I had worked in Latin America and in international cultures and, for the

most part, everyone else had really only like worked in the U.S. unless they were an

international student. So, I think that for me was probably the biggest Aha moment of like

everyone is super smart at Pioneer Business School. Everyone's super impressive, super

smart. And, you're like a little bit intimidated. And then, yeah, through the global class, I

kind of realized, okay, I am as smart as these other people who went to an Ivy League

school and worked at Goldman Sachs and all that. My background is not bad at all. And

then you kind of see, I'm at least as smart in the classroom setting as these people. And,

then, with that part, understanding the language and culture, you're like, oh, I have a very

big edge on international culture, especially Hispanic culture and just dealing with

understanding language barriers to be getting clearly different cultural norms. Like a lot

of my peers, they had a hard time wrapping their heads around, oh, people just drink wine

at lunch . . . international was just always a very intrinsic part of my upbringing, and that

wasn't necessarily the case for everyone.

Hugo went on to say that the biggest realization for him from the global course really was that

"most people really don't have this understanding of difference . . . like the fact that there's

different cultures and they value different things." So, for him, the global course learning was

more about seeing how his peers operated in a new environment as compared to how he did.

That realization allowed him to feel like he had an edge that they did not and that, therefore, he

felt more like he belonged in the competitive environment. He summarized this takeaway by

stating "It is a weird thing, it is not even an observation from being there. It is seeing how my

classmates reacted to being there. And, then seeing myself in a new way. It provided a helpful

understanding in terms of leadership and how you see other people and interact with them."

Both Clarence and Acacia shared direct examples of self-belief. Clarence spoke about

feeling more confident at business meetings later in his career after visiting senior leaders during

his global course experience. He said, "I think I felt a little bit of comfort, you know, having been

put in a room with some very senior, very well-connected people. At least, you know, in that environment, I already felt sort of comfortable being the American in the room." For him, being in the room with senior individuals while on the global course gave him more confidence when he needed to do so again after graduation. He was not doing it for the first time after graduation, which made it easier when the opportunity arose related to his job. Acacia spoke about her thoughtful confidence in choosing how she spent her time during the global course. She chose to give her assigned consulting project work less time so that she had more time and energy to engage in other opportunities, "Even with the global course, was my time going to be prioritized into getting the best consulting project done? No. I focused more on the experience and learning something. I'm quite happy about that, frankly." Acacia's comment demonstrates self-awareness, and self-confidence in her decision-making and an active choice about how to get the most out of the global course opportunity for herself. It also indicates that she did not perceive more time spent on the project work to be a value-add for her learning. She also spoke about her skill and confidence in communicating under pressure during meetings, stating "I mean, I'm really good at this in meetings, and it's certainly a learned skill. It's not something that I think comes naturally to most people, but being forced into these uncomfortable situations helped develop it." This skill is less related to the global course experience and more related to skill development through the Socratic learning method employed by Pioneer Business School, but it still speaks to her self-belief.

The global courses provided several participants, Nadia and Hugo, with the opportunity to apply skills or strengths that they did not use as regularly in the standard Pioneer Business School classroom, which allowed them to better see their ability to succeed. Witnessing their

classmates' struggles and triumphs also provided these participants with a sense of validation and self-assurance that might not have come through aside from the global course experience. The global course also provided opportunities for participants to participate in settings or projects that allowed them to gain confidence when they later engaged in similar settings in their workplace following graduating, in the case of Eric and Clarence. Acacia and Lacey likely already arrived with a strong sense of self-belief and the global course, as well as Pioneer Business School, provided opportunities to refine their skills and bolster their sense of self-efficacy. The participants' data, while somewhat varied in range, indicates that global courses can help students cultivate a sense of self-belief by providing opportunities for performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, and emotional growth.

Transformational Leadership Model Related Findings

Hacker and Roberts' (2004) transformational leadership model centers around the concept of consciousness as a driving force for personal, relational, and organizational change, leading to graduated improvement and, ultimately, better results. Like the other two I used in my conceptual framework, this model emphasizes a holistic approach and encompasses interconnected elements that interact in overlapping, non-linear ways. Consciousness underpins each perspective of the transformational leadership model, suggesting that leaders who cultivate self-awareness, foster conscious relationships, and promote conscious enterprise understanding create a powerful synergy that spurs organizational transformation. The model has three interconnected aspects: self-mastery, interpersonal mastery, and enterprise mastery. This section organizes participant data related to these three aspects of the transformational leadership model. In the coming subsections, I provide a brief review of each aspect and discuss the corresponding

data in relation to the transformational leadership model. Appendix G provides direct quotation

examples from the participants where they made comments that map onto the structure of this

model.

Self-mastery Findings

Hacker and Roberts (2004) indicate that one root aspect of transformational leadership is

being conscious within the self and having the ability to also heighten consciousness in others.

They say that "an individual transformation often becomes a prerequisite for the transformation

of the organization. A personal rebirth into a perspective of possibilities, not a step-by-step

managerial formula, is required" (p. 4). Nadia, unprompted, made a very similar statement

during her interview as she shared part of her own story around growth, not related to her global

course, but to her experience at Pioneer Business School more generally:

> I think that in order to be a transformational leader, you have to transform yourself in
>
> some way. And I definitely did that. I came to business school with that intention. And, I
>
> think the ways in which I did transform were different than I expected. As I reflect back
>
> on the experience, how I've transformed both during my time and since Pioneer Business
>
> School, I can reflect back from a different context now, and, if I were to go through the
>
> same thing, I'd be like, I'm just so grateful for this experience and how it is expanding
>
> me, and not worry so much about, do I understand everything? And, worrying this is a
>
> test of my intelligence or my value as a person. It's more just like this exposure is so
>
> magnificent and so beautiful and being able to absorb as much as I can from other
>
> people- their learnings and their life experience in and of itself is transformation. I think
>
> the transforming process in and of itself and then your reflections on it during and after

can help prepare you to be a transformational leader. And I definitely feel as if I got a lot of that.

This self-mastery is an ongoing process requiring a deep and evolving understanding of one's life purpose and being both self-aware and open to possibilities for significant change, according to both Nadia and Hacker and Roberts (2004). In other words, transformational leaders must adapt depending on the situation to be most effective. They must understand themselves, first, to be able to adapt from where they are to where they think they need to be. Hacker and Roberts suggest that failures, crises, significant life events, or opening experiences can catalyze an individual to recognize that they may need to re-examine their pre-existing assumptions or break free from reactive thought patterns, moving more towards proactive, aware behaviors.

Participants shared stories during their interviews that indicated that they had engaged in deep reflection work and the deep work of knowing themselves to move towards self-mastery. Several participants indicated that some of the opening experiences for them happened before entry to Pioneer Business School, but that their global course served as a reminder or helped to reinforce what they had previously learned. Acacia said,

Coming into the global course and even coming into Pioneer Business School, I've always had a very strong sense of a global perspective and that part didn't change. And, clearly, I've been an expat for many years. So, it is a core to my identity and who I am, So, the course didn't change that, it just fed into a passion and way of thing that was already embedded in me.

Frank also shared a similar sentiment, noting that for him, the opening global experience took place in high school, and he built on those learnings during the global course at Pioneer Business School:

> I lived in Paris in high school and made a bunch of international friends when I was there and that helped open my eyes to different ways of viewing the world, and the U.S. The importance of certain things or the unimportance of other things and also the similarities across people of every nation, race, gender, you know, irrespective of any of that. More often than not we're a lot more similar than we are dissimilar. But there's some very specific areas where there's really strong opinions on either side. And so, that's where I first learned that and then experienced it. The global course at Pioneer Business School was a good reminder because I hadn't spent as much time abroad since, other than college, but in college you're also in your little bubble. So, this was just a good reminder.

Several participants spoke about how they perceived one of the main goals of the global course to be exposure to difference, which then acts as a perspective-broadening mechanism and causes a re-examination internally. Hugo said:

> I think the whole point of the global course is it's very real how to get your head around like, yeah, things are different here. Things that you value in your little bubble of being a New York City banker or a consultant or in Atlanta or Chicago or whatever major U.S. city. There's a very narrow sliver of personality, I hate to say it. But, yeah, people are different. But then there's like this little sliver of the world you've been exposed to and then, suddenly, this global course just rips that off.

Selene shared a similar attitude and took her thoughts even further by suggesting that through

more exposure, individuals do get to know themselves better, which leads to better approaches in

the workplace. Her statement significantly aligns with Hacker and Roberts' model of

transformational leadership because she identifies that new experiences can provide the impetus

for re-examining what a person believes, which can then help them see with new eyes in the

workplace too, regardless of level. She postulated:

> I think, with respect to yourself, the broader diversity of experiences you have, the more
>
> you can understand and refine what your value system is, or how you're going to become
>
> yourself in relation to work. What type of individual contributor or manager you're going
>
> to be depends on what phase of your career you're in. So, that would be the most strong
>
> link that I would say is having experiences that add to your overall set and then influence
>
> how you're going to work and approach different situations.

Eric, who came to Pioneer Business School from the military, suggested that the MBA program

was pivotal for him in transitioning from military service and mindset to new ways of thinking

that helped him succeed in a civilian career. He came into the MBA program with a strategic

objective around that transformation and, in reflection, indicated that the degree program made a

significant difference for him. He shared:

> I came in with, really, a learning goal. I didn't feel like I had a lot of great real-world
>
> leadership experiences and dealing with people. But, you know, everybody jokes around
>
> and nobody likes taking LO [leading organizations class] but it's the one, the most
>
> important class you're going to take. And, I mean, there are a number of things that I go
>
> back to. Really, the Pioneer Business School experience helped me go ahead and break

me from my looking at everything through the lens of my military experience and being

prepared to look at it through the lens of a more real-world experience that I was going to

face. So, I think, thank goodness, I had those two years to transition from that.

As echoed in the stories and thoughts of Nadia, Acacia, Frank, Hugo, Selene, and Eric,

the process of self-transformation, a continuous process that is never finished, matters to

transformation within organizations. Opening experiences, such as a global course, or an MBA

degree, can provide an environment ripe for individuals to do deep reflective work to better

understand themselves as one important part of leadership development. Hacker and Roberts

(2004) suggest that there are two more important elements to transformational leadership and the

participants in this study provided data that also suggest their model has real-world utility.

Interpersonal Mastery Findings

Hacker and Roberts (2004) explain that just like self-transformation, relational

transformation is rooted in consciousness. The beginning point is for the individuals in the

relationship to be self-aware, but Hacker and Roberts suggest that the relationship itself should

be viewed as an entity requiring a separate level of awareness. They define conscious

relationships as those with a clearly defined purpose and a direction, where the individuals

involved are cognizant of the relationship's past, present, and future direction. Within an

organization, Hacker and Roberts stipulate that conscious relationships yield many benefits

including a more resilient environment that can more easily adapt to challenges and that being

involved in conscious relationships yields more value for all involved. Conscious relationships,

achieved through relational transformation, require individuals to shift from self-serving attitudes

and beliefs to a mindset that serves the relationship. This means actively working towards shared

goals and the clearly defined purpose of the relationships, fostering open communication, and prioritizing the relationship as a whole.

The participants shared many examples of their own beliefs around the importance of managing relationships as a key element to their success in the workplace. Open communication, strategic messaging, building trust, and helping colleagues or direct reports along their development journeys were all discussed by the participants. They provided many examples of their efforts to engage in relational transformation or stated directly that doing so has been imperative to their growth and advancement in their careers. When asked about what skills had been most valuable in his leadership journey, Hugo stated:

> It has been that ability to understand and connect with people and build those relationships. Obviously, like the analytical stuff, it is relatively easy to replicate. Yes, I'm very good at it. I went to Pioneer Business School being pretty good at it. But, it's the ability to get trust, get people's trust, and then put together a message that resonates. You have to understand where they are coming from and position things in a more palatable way. Good news and bad news, you know. Ideas, proposals, all of it.

Selene expressed a similar comment, and also tied this learning back to her time at Pioneer Business School and the global course:

> You need to adjust how you interact with others. Or you need to be purposeful about how you understand what motivates other people. That's been an important part of my experience working post Pioneer Business School. I think something that the global courses aided me in.

Frank also highlighted the importance of being open and checking one's own assumptions in interacting with others. He shared:

> You know, despite your going in with an impression of the people you're meeting or interacting with, you might think you understand what their thoughts would be, but you really have to listen and engage with them to better understand because you just can't know. There are so many complexities and nuances about how they could be feeling about a certain situation.

Eric spoke about the importance of a leader being thoughtful and proactive about building a team, especially when people work in different locations. He said:

> You really have to work to build a team, you know. That's not automatic. It's not there just because you all work for the same company. You know, if you're in different locations, you know those you're still working with on different teams, but you just have to be intentional about, getting the group to work together. It's not automatic.

The importance of team building came up for several other participants as well. Several spoke about how they went from zero or just a couple of direct reports to significantly more and how that change meant they needed to adjust their leadership approach. Lacey shared her thoughts on the leadership challenge she has faced with regards to managing a growing team:

> I went from having no direct reports to one to two and now, like 40-something. So, it's like, okay, great, all of these resources and all of these talented people. How do I effectively coach and mentor and work through that team to get the desired output? It's no longer enough that I am talented and smart. How do I get all these people to be talented and smart and rowing in the same direction? And there is a talent development

kind of component of how do you coach and really hone-in on providing effective

feedback that is going to be actionable and move the needle for a particular person? How

do I really get to the root if somebody is underperforming? How do I really crisply

understand why that is and help them either get better or realize that they need to make a

change? Being able to quickly diagnose what's going on with people on my team from a

talent perspective is something that I think takes a lot of practice.

By stating that learning how to see what is happening with people on her team and coaching

them through that barrier, skills gap, or inefficiency is something that Lacey said takes a lot of

practice. She has likely engaged in the stages described in the experiential learning model over

the years of working with people on her team to be able to more quickly identify where someone

is struggling and help them through it. This is one example where the overlap in my conceptual

framework models seems to shine through. Lacey is learning by doing in her workplace because

she has the skills to engage in self-directed learning, and she has articulated that relationships

matter in moving work outputs forward. Lacey attributed some of her broader leadership

approach to her global course experience learnings. She said:

I mean, honestly, my biggest takeaway from the global course itself in terms of leadership

was just trying to embody that sort of servant leader mindset and leading from a place of

looking out for and taking care of your team, and that is how you get true followership . .

. Transparently, I was never in a real position of leadership prior to Pioneer Business

School. I was a career switcher and so, it's definitely something that as I have grown in

my career and taken on more and more leadership responsibilities, bigger teams, more

people, etc. That's always been in the back of my mind that was reinforced in that trip

and at Pioneer Business School as well.

Frank also spoke about the importance of relationships in getting people to work together to achieve a goal. Like Lacey, he described being able to provide feedback as a significant part of helping people do their best work. Frank said:

I think teaming, leading, and working with teams, is crucial in consulting, maybe more or

less so in some other disciplines. But, I lead teams now of between two and twenty

people that are reporting into me and if you don't know how to engage with their hearts

and minds, it's going to be really hard to get anything done. I kind of embrace the saying

that, if you want to go fast, go alone, and if you want to go far, go together. Yeah, I can

sometimes do something faster than someone on my team could do it, but if I teach them

how to do it, then we're developing a skill set and we're becoming a better team that can

go a step further than we otherwise would have been able to. So, I think that's really

important and it comes with being open-minded and conscious about how others on your

team might be feeling. Or, you know, giving and receiving feedback that is actionable and

direct . . . the direct and actionable feedback is part of what helps people become better at

what they're doing and, for me, learning how to give and help people take action on

feedback is truly something I have found very valuable.

Acacia also manages a team and her description echoed Hacker and Roberts' suggestion that the relationship has to be more critical than self-interest for interpersonal mastery. Acacia's approach to leadership and management is about helping her team members learn and grow in ways that

will help them achieve their goals beyond their immediate roles and positions. She shared her approach:

> I manage teams. Now, today, I am never hurt whenever someone chooses to leave to go pursue another thing. My goal as a leader is to ensure that they leave with the tool set and skills that they wanted to build to be successful in the next place. Period. It takes nothing away from me. It is no blow to my ego. I'm not hurt, of course. It is sad to see team members leave, and it's an important part of the way I think about why humans are meant to migrate and move towards greater opportunity. It happens in business and it happens in life.

Acacia's statement demonstrates putting the relationship first and her desire to help individuals learn and grow when they are part of her team, in a similar way that both Frank and Lacey also indicated a willingness to provide feedback as part of the process of helping team members develop. Frank and Lacey value the nearer-term effects of more efficient workers. Acacia likely sees the same benefit from her team members but articulated a longer-term goal for them beyond her and her team.

Participants in my study clearly emphasized the importance of managing relationships for workplace success. They shared personal experiences of how relational transformation has been crucial to their career growth and how they view it as an essential element of their leadership approaches. Some participants could make a slight connection between their understanding and approach and their global course learnings, but most were not that specific in how or where they learned that this relational approach is key.

Enterprise Mastery Findings

Hacker and Roberts (2004) indicate that enterprise mastery in their transformational leadership model means a collective understanding and conscious evolution of the organization's purpose and methods. They distinguish between "organization" and "enterprise," suggesting that an organization refers to the people, processes, assets, and systems that comprise the entity. In contrast, the enterprise encompasses more abstract concepts, such as the overall approach, purpose, goals, and values. Therefore, Hacker and Roberts stipulate that consciousness of the enterprise refers to how aware people are of the enterprise's endeavors and the collective understanding of that endeavor's scope, complexities, and risks. So, achieving enterprise mastery points to a heightened awareness and understanding of the system itself, beyond day-to-day operations and corresponding primarily to the organization's existence. For individuals in leadership roles, Hacker and Roberts suggest that cultivating a shared understanding of the organization's purpose, scope, risks, and complexities of the work and environment in which it operates leads to higher levels of enterprise consciousness. Enterprise transformation could include shifting from a hierarchical, top-down structure to a more collaborative and decentralized model or expanding the organization's mission to address broader societal needs. Enterprise transformation requires transformational leaders who can articulate and inspire others to believe in the organization's vision, create an empowering culture where individuals collaborate to work on shared goals, encourage continuous learning and adaptation, and rely on values to drive decision-making and behavior.

The participants provided few direct examples of enterprise mastery during their interviews. This might have been because the interview conversations focused primarily on their

global course experience, learnings, applications, and leadership approaches, and less on their careers generally. Or, it is possible that there were fewer examples of enterprise mastery during the interviews because, at this stage in their careers, this is still a developmental opportunity for the participants.

Frank's comments related to his current work in consulting showed the clearest example of enterprise mastery, but, as a consultant, Frank sees the process as a bit of an outsider. He is talking about seeing transformations in companies where he is brought in to help for a specific period, not necessarily about transformation within the company that he works for. Frank describes his observations of successful enterprise transformation but does not necessarily provide an example of his role in facilitating that process. He shared:

The more aware you can be of how others you're interacting with, whether it's within your organization or your customer base or other competitors, right? You need to understand all of those things, to make the best decision with the information that you have. And, so you have more information, if you're more open to the inputs coming from all of those sources. So, you're going to make a better decision, or at least a better-informed decision. True transformation is very hard. If you're closed off from others and you're just single-minded in your approach to it, it can be very effective in terms of getting the transformation completed. But in terms of the actual success of the transformation, you need to also win the hearts and minds of the people that are on the journey with you . . . I work in consulting and, now, I do a lot of transformation work. The successful ones are ones where leaders are driving it, but they're getting change leaders or sort of change ambassadors involved as well throughout. And so it is a very

conscious process. They're getting buy-in, but they can only get that because they're

aware of how what they're proposing is going to be received from that leader and that

leaders' organization underneath them. And so it's trying to be really thoughtful about,

okay, what does this mean for the company? What does this mean for this department

within the company and the people way down in that department? How does this change

all of those things? Keeping an open mind to all of that is crucial. Otherwise, you know,

it's hard to be successful.

Frank's comments also show an overlap between interpersonal mastery and enterprise mastery.

He suggests that enterprise transformation, to some extent, takes place through key individuals

who, through their relationships, help others get on board with the new state or approach. That

said, he also emphasizes the importance of leaders getting information from all available sources

and thinking carefully about what their decisions will mean for all levels and areas of the

enterprise as they move forward.

Both Lacey and Clarence spoke about takeaways from their global courses that likely

helped them conceptualize enterprise mastery or transformation in new ways. Clarence talked

about an enterprise transformation that occurred when a large, multi-national company purchased

a small brewery and how hearing from the individual who negotiated the acquisition during his

global course gave him a new perspective on the takeover. He shared:

Actually, I do recall, we met with some folks at [large, multi-national beverage

company], including the person who had negotiated the acquisition of [local brewery].

So, you know, global local intersects. It was interesting to hear their perspective on the

acquisition. These kinds of acquisitions often get painted by independent breweries as

we've lost another one to the big giants and it's always a bad thing, but, at least the way

they put it- and they weren't making a sales pitch to is, so I don't have any reason to not

believe it- they were able to ramp up production of the few sort of stalwarts of the brand

and expand distribution, but they still want the master brewers to keep doing what they

were doing that made them interesting in the first place. So, it was a great sort of other

side of the story, how a large multinational could get interested in a regionally successful

small business.

Clarence articulated his learning about how the standard story of a large company taking over the

small business might have been handled in such a way that the large company maintained the

integrity of the original small business but provided the resources to help scale in ways that

would not have been possible for the small business on its own.

Lacey spoke about enterprise transformation from a different angle, articulating that all

underpinnings must also work well for outstanding leadership to have the intended impact. She

shared:

One of the most significant takeaways from the course was just the level of orchestration

that had to happen to make that day successful and the understanding of the battlefield

and all of the various fronts and the components that were important on that day, both

what came before and what came after. So, there's definitely a systems level of thinking

on like ridiculously massive scale. Obviously, that had to happen for D-day. And, so that

sort of understanding that leadership is, yes, getting followership. And, you know, getting

people to follow you. That was a huge component of it, but also it would not have

worked if all you had were a bunch of marines following their leaders. If the great

orchestration of it wasn't right. So, the plan and this is what you're trying to execute has

to work within the confines of your environment in order for those great leadership

moments to happen.

Again, this is not an example of Lacey demonstrating her enterprise mastery. Still, it does

suggest that she learned on her global course that a key part of being a successful leader is

having all of the incredibly complex pieces lined up before execution takes place.

Both Selene and Acacia shared global course learnings where they articulated

connections between the broader environment and business or people adaptation to that

environment. Again, these do not match examples of enterprise mastery or transformation but

indicate that for both Selene and Acacia, their global courses provided insight into the

importance of understanding the broader setting to be successful in business. Selene said:

I think it [the global course] was beneficial in terms of having experienced more systems

and understanding where different norms and ways of doing things appear in the business

setting or in a broader cultural setting. And seeing how different people adapt to them, or

maybe try and influence them to change. Especially, I'd say, in the context of India,

because it is like more of a developing country. And, like, you know, big tech companies

were not there. If you go far enough back in time, they were more breaking the molds in

terms of what these different professional settings would look like and what role

companies would play in their economy and broader society and how does the

government facilitate that development.

Acacia also spoke about development, but more about how the people in another developing country behaved, given their circumstances and opportunities. She described what she observed on the ground in Uganda:

> Something that was also really memorable was how much entrepreneurship mattered in Uganda, and simply as a result of the demographics of the country where something like 70 to 80% of the population was under the age of 30. And, there's just not enough jobs in big corporations like ones I work in to sustain that. So, people have to look to create their own opportunities in, say, banana wine and other things. And, what is striking in that is it's innovation and entrepreneurship out of necessity in order to avoid what could be, you know, a lot of imbalance and insecurity and challenges in a country when there's high unemployment.

The observations made by Frank, Clarence, Lacey, Acacia, and Selene reflect expanded perspectives and identification of essential elements that are characteristic of enterprise mastery. Beyond the immediate examples included in this section, Selene also spoke about advocating for sustainability in business. Acacia noted that solving people challenges often leads to solving business challenges, which, again, does not map perfectly into how Hacker and Roberts describe enterprise mastery, but does showcase a conscious awareness that extends far beyond immediate tasks and encompasses a broader view of the organization, workplace, and business' role in helping to resolve societal challenges.

Interview Compared to Course Evaluation Findings

This section provides the findings of my comparison between each interview transcript and the course evaluation from the course the interviewee participated in. This comparison was

conducted to uncover similarities and differences between the interviewee's comments and the

primary themes from the course evaluation. The course evaluations were completed by students

in each course immediately after returning from their global course. They showcase the students'

immediate reactions and feedback regarding the experience. I coded all course evaluations with

the same codes I used to code the interview transcripts. I then looked through each interview

transcript and picked out the main themes, primarily related to the academic or learning aspects

of the course rather than the course logistics. The comparison between the main themes in each

interview transcript and each course evaluation is presented in Table 1. Selene participated in

three global courses, so her comments are compared to three different course evaluations. Selene

and Monica participated in a global course together, so I compared themes from their interviews

with themes from that particular course evaluation. Unfortunately, the course evaluation from

Eric's course was not available.

Table 1

Comparison of Primary Interview Themes and Primary Course Evaluation Themes

Participant	Interview Themes	Course Evaluation Themes
Acacia	•Significant impact of immersive experience and transformative power of being on the ground in Uganda •Shift in perspective and understanding of privilege, opportunities and resources •Emphasis on personal growth, becoming the best version of herself and desire to provide opportunities for others •Appreciation of real-world challenges and practical application and opportunities to practice leadership skills	•Overwhelmingly positive comments about course logistics and immersive experience •Desire for more cultural sensitivity training in advance and a list of what to pack •"life-changing", "eye-opening" and appreciation for exposure to a location students unlikely to visit on their own •Many recommendations to separate MBA and EMBA students on future global courses- the two populations did not mesh well.

Bruce	•Value of unique access on the global course •Value of developing new/deep friendships during the global course experience •Contrast with the previous trip to the same location; an acknowledgement that purpose was different, but first trip was more meaningful •Course theme not relevant to career path, notes Argentina course, top pick, not available at the time, would have been better	•Praise for faculty member, native of country visited, and his connections which helped students access visits and speakers that were deemed "exceptional" •Many students said that the balance between cultural, historical, political, and business engagements and meetings exceeded expectations •Mixed and conflicting comments related to the project- some really valued it, and others said it should be cut from the course
Clarence	•Broad exposure to different countries and industries appreciated during the course; practical benefits to firsthand experience •Many good takeaways about cross-business and cross-cultural practices; recognition of the importance of cultural sensitivity •Turning point between traveling as a tourist vs traveling as a business person and that both are personally enriching •Noted value in being in the room with high-power executives and a more nuanced perspective between global and local dynamics	•Strong desire for more free time during the course •Course was too "jam-packed" •Desire for more cultural activities and small business visits •Too many brewery speakers/tours •Wanted more visits with younger, less senior businesspeople •Did not like the Port of Antwerp visit or AmCham speaker
Eric	•Strong emphasis on the practical value of the global course and direct application of learnings in his career afterward •Emphasis on embracing uncertainty and the iterative nature of continuous improvement •Experience reinforced value of fresh eyes, collaborative problem-solving, and the importance of different perspectives	data not available

Frank	•Course challenged pre-conceived notions and fostered greater appreciation of diverse viewpoints as well as the importance of understanding the nuance of both people and broader global issues •Value of openness and listening to different perspectives to make the best leadership decisions •Resilience and adaptability as important traits •Cultural components were most meaningful and where the most significant growth took place for Frank	• The course was too "crowded" with activities •Students commented that their peers were challenging to work with or project teams functioned poorly • The Air Force visit was excellent; mixed reviews on other company visits; some were too long or not interactive enough
Hugo	•Self-awareness through comparison to peers •Impact of upbringing and culture on perspectives •Prioritizing relationships in leadership •Power of storytelling in building connections and relationships	•Comments that consulting project work was meaningful, but disappointment in peers there to party/drink •Desire for broader content related to Argentina and more specific presentations/lectures on the wine industry; less emphasis on projects •Desire for projects that were more data-oriented and had narrower scopes, but very positive comments about working with project hosts
Lacey	•Power of servant leadership and importance of comprehensive strategic planning •Self-reflection as an essential component of leadership approach development •Practical experience practicing leadership on the global course •Value of pre-departure preparation for the most impactful learning experience on the ground	•Overall, very positive comments about the course, specifically around seeing the landscape to understand the history and leadership lessons •Praise for both faculty and student peers, indicating high-quality presentations and discussions •Pre-departure sessions were generally well received, but some felt like the amount of reading was unrealistic

Nadia	•Empowerment and self-belief through expertise sharing •Drawing on frameworks and structures to solve leadership challenges •Value of organic moments for learning and personal growth •Resilience, confidence, and choosing meaningful work, both personally fulfilling and positive contribution	•Professor expectations are too high and unclear, and clients are not involved enough in student projects •Too much classwork •Logistics were great; disappointing turnout from alums at reception •Students would have preferred to present projects back at home and have another day for cultural activities or free time on the ground
Selene	•Of her three global courses, Selene shared that Israel was the most impactful, citing the professor's background and expertise as well as a diverse range of activities during the course •Excellent and dedicated guide for the whole course was a value-add •Military base visit was a highlight of the course; access would not have been possible as an individual •Greater awareness and understanding of current events having been on the ground and increased knowledge of the global political landscape	•Students were impressed with the professor's local connections and access to unique places they had during the course •Variety and quality of company visits and speakers were praised • The number of points of view students heard during the course exceeded expectations •Students felt like the course gave them a better understanding of the social and political challenges within Israel
Selene	•Project was helpful in the development of consulting skills and post-graduation career •Brazil seemed unprepared for the Olympics and question of whether hosting was a good decision •Intertwining business and cultural elements were critical to understanding how business is conducted	•Overwhelming sense that coursework was too robust/dense; students recommend assigning fewer shorter assignments/readings •Desire for more time in the Amazon rainforest •Desire to meet more local alumni •Desire for more free time and to visit Olympic venues, not just hear from the Olympic Committee

Selene and Monica	•Focus on learning about technology and innovation were primary takeaways •Course felt "sterile" compared with personal travels in India •Hotels too ritzy and too far removed from the norm •Emphasis on the value of personal exploration outside of the structured course activities •Company visits were also valuable on this course	•Several comments of both "well-organized" and "worthwhile" •Bangalore hotel had bad wifi but was praised for "good value," "not too luxurious," and "perfect for the crowd" •Delhi hotel comments mixed between "amazing," "best ever," and "too good," "too luxurious." •Breadth and quality of company visits exceeded expectations • The key takeaway was understanding the uniqueness of local variation •Desire for more free time and more non-profit or social impact type visits

The comparison between the comments participants made during the interviews and the course evaluation reveals some similarities in themes. It also clarifies that individuals 7 to 10 years past the initial global course experience have considered it, and their associated learnings, in more mature and nuanced ways. Course evaluation comments focused mainly on satisfaction, whether a particular visit was interesting, or whether the course logistics went smoothly. Part of the reason may be that the course evaluation's primary purpose was to collect information from the students about their experience on a particular global course to improve the course for the following year. Students broadly commented in the course evaluations about what went well or how they would recommend improving something in the future.

Across the global courses, some general themes in the course evaluations included students wanting more time for individual exploration, feeling like the structured components were too "jam-packed," mixed reviews of project work, comments that the course assignments were too time intensive or dense, praise of faculty native to the country visited or if the faculty had relevant expertise. Some course evaluations included comments where students described

the experience as "life-changing" or articulated that what they saw or experienced opened or changed their mindset. These comments tended to be broad and not particularly specific, likely, mainly because students wrote them right after the course. They had not yet had time to apply or integrate those learnings into their lives or approaches.

The themes that developed across the interviews were more illustrative of the additional time, processing, and application that the participants had between the global course experience and the present day. Overall, participants articulated, to varying degrees, the impact of the global course experience on them and how they used that learning, directly or indirectly. Interviewees spent very little time discussing course logistics. No one commented that the coursework was too much, nor that the daily schedule was too packed. That said, there was a lingering sense that some project work was more valuable than other project work. Eric and Nadia found transformational learning within their global course projects, whereas Acacia and Bruce did not find the projects particularly valuable. Years later, participants continued to praise the cultural elements of the courses, but that sentiment was also balanced with a sense that the company visits and speakers provided significant value as well. Comments in the course evaluations and interviews indicated that having unique access to opportunities not available to the public made the course more meaningful and memorable. One example is that visiting the military or air force base in Israel came up in both Frank and Bruce's interviews and was also mentioned by several students in the course evaluations as being significantly impactful and memorable across the two different iterations of the course.

While some course evaluations included an open-ended question about how the global course changed the student's approach to leadership, response rates tended to be fairly low. The

responses focused more on what the students would do or how they might think about something differently. Again, this is likely because they had not had enough time yet to integrate their global course learnings. While not every interview participant shared a story or thought connecting their global course to their leadership approach, many did, and with concrete examples of what they had done or how they showed up as a leader for their teams. Across the interviewees, many (Acacia, Eric, Frank, Hugo, Lacey, Nadia, Selene, and Monica) spoke about the importance of relationships, understanding and valuing diverse perspectives or approaches, helping individuals learn and grow, and putting the team first. Many also cited their experience on the ground with their global course, particularly cultural takeaways, as either perspective-shifting learning moments or potent reminders of what they learned in previous travel about how individuals are so similar in many ways, but to be careful not to assume, as each person has a unique identity and varying degree of privilege within their culture.

Beyond the importance of relationships in leadership, several interviewees (Acacia, Eric, Frank, Hugo, Lacey, Nadia, Monica) also described high levels of self-awareness and awareness of their journey from the global course and broader MBA degree experience to the present day. Their comments in this arena varied from person to person, but the depth of what they described likely would not have been accessible to them immediately upon finishing their global course or MBA program because they had learned so much more since graduation and applied their learnings in the workplace. Several (Acacia, Eric, Frank, Lacey, Selene, Nadia, and Monica) spoke about increased self-confidence and awareness of how their abilities had grown over the years of practice as employees and managers. They had to adapt their approaches as their careers demanded, and some were able to tie elements of their leadership approaches back to global

course learnings. Others either did not articulate that directly, and perhaps their growth happened unconsciously or in tandem with other experiential learning cycles, so it was harder to connect back to the global course.

Findings Concluding Summary

Chapter Four presented findings related to the long-term impact of short-term global courses in an MBA program through the lens of three theories, which comprise my conceptual framework: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Gavriel's Self-Directed Learning Model, and Hacker and Roberts' Transformational Leadership Model. Analysis of the interview data, when compared with insights from the course evaluations, also provided another layer of understanding global course participants' growth and learning trajectory over a more extended period.

The data suggests that global courses provide a foundation for ongoing learning and development. Participants frequently described the global course experience as a catalyst for personal and professional growth that extended far beyond the immediate timeframe of the course. They explained how specific moments, interactions, or observations from their global course experiences continued to inform their thinking and decision-making years later, highlighting the lasting impact of immersive learning environments. This aligns with the cyclical nature of Kolb's Experiential Learning theory, where participants continuously engage in reflection, conceptualization, experimentation, and apply their learnings to new situations to refine their understanding. Notably, the participants consistently expressed the importance of cultural immersion as a critical component of the global course. A well-rounded global course experience that included opportunities to engage in local communities, explore cultural

landmarks, and better understand the host country's history emerged as a desired component of the course design in most interviews.

The data also suggests that self-directed learning is important for maximizing global course impact. The data consistently demonstrates that while the global course provides a structured learning environment, the participant's ability to engage in self-directed learning post-course is crucial for maximizing the impact of these experiences. As Gavriel suggests, this self-directed learning requires developing the skills, motivation, and self-belief necessary to effectively manage learning and translating the concrete experience and reflective observations gained during the global course into actionable insights and behavioral changes.

The data suggests that global courses can contribute to the development of transformational leadership qualities. By exposing participants to diverse perspectives, challenging their assumptions, and fostering a deeper understanding of global contexts, global courses can help individuals develop the qualities of transformational leaders, as outlined in Hacker and Roberts' model. Participants' reflections on self-mastery, interpersonal mastery, and, to a lesser direct degree, enterprise mastery indicate a growing awareness of their values, capacity for empathy and collaboration, and, to some extent, a more holistic perspective on organizational purpose.

By embracing the principles of experiential learning, promoting self-directed learning practices, and fostering a deeper understanding of global contexts, the data suggests that short-term global courses shape perspectives, inspire action, and contribute to individual leadership development. The data also suggests, not surprisingly, that different course elements resonated as most impactful or pivotal for different participants. However, most would agree that a balanced

global course design, with exposure to diverse experiences, including business-oriented and

cultural aspects, is the ideal approach.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction to Research Question Discussion

In this study, I examined the impact of participation in short-term, faculty-led global courses during an MBA program on alumni years after graduation. The study was designed to uncover the elements of global courses that facilitated impactful learning and how alumni continued to apply their learnings as they progressed in their lives and careers. Findings suggest that alumni primarily view global courses as impactful experiences that contributed to their personal growth, expanded their worldviews, and shaped their approaches to leadership. In this chapter, I utilize the findings from my study to answer my four research questions:

1. Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe their experiences with short-term, faculty-led global courses?
2. Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe the impact that their short-term, faculty-led global course experience had on their personal and/or professional life?
3. In what ways have global courses shaped the leadership approaches of MBA graduates?
4. How do MBA alumni engage in self-directed learning following a structured global course experience?

This study is vital to MBA students, later alumni, and business schools because it examines the long-term value of short-term, faculty-led global courses in an MBA program. These courses are resource-intensive, but they can spur learning in ways that might not be possible in a home environment. The findings can be used to make these courses more impactful for future students and help business schools better achieve their goals of developing globally-minded and transformational leaders who seek to improve the world, rather than just the bottom line. To conclude the chapter, I also provide recommendations for practice and considerations for further research.

Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe their experiences with short-term, faculty-led global courses?

Participants in my study broadly described their short-term, faculty-led global course experiences as positive and impactful, using terms like "empowering" or "mind-expanding," in the case of Nadia, while all participants implied, to varying degrees, that the course was valuable. They appreciated the chance to immerse themselves in new cultures, gain a global perspective, and connect with classmates in a unique, and, in some cases, challenging environment. Many also highlighted the reflective nature of the global course experience. They noted that they continued to process and apply what they had learned after returning home. However, some were more aware of this process, and others noticed it during the interview. Some acknowledged the challenges and intensity of a packed global course schedule, and the overall sentiment from the participants reflected an appreciation for the opportunity to learn and grow through these short-term global opportunities. Fewer, with the most concrete examples being Eric and Lacey, spoke about proactively integrating what they learned during the global course into their life afterward. However, others, through the reflective process of interview conversations, described how their experiences shaped their approaches to leadership or working with others as they advanced in their careers. I will dive more deeply into this in the following sections, in which I answer my second and third research questions.

Overall, the MBA alumni participants in this study valued their short-term global course experiences as opportunities for cultural immersion and personal growth that created lasting memories and connections. While some participants provided concrete examples related to

specific skills or knowledge, those examples were less common than more impressionistic recollections, highlighting aha moments, or simply a particularly enjoyable experience.

All of the short-term, faculty-led global academic courses that participants in my study undertook were under two weeks in length. However, some of the participants traveled independently before or after the course, which may have extended their learning informally. The participants expressed varying degrees of transformation related to their global course experience, but again, overall, all participants shared stories or memories that illustrated learning and growth. This finding contrasts somewhat with Strange and Gibson's (2017) finding that transformative experiences are possible if the program is more than 18 days long. The undergraduate students who participated in Strange and Gibson's research shortly after their study abroad experiences indicated that the most impactful parts of their global programs were "the field trips, self-reflection, community interaction, and writing aspects" (p. 97). Active learning opportunities, alongside reflective exercises, in both Strange and Gibson's study and my own, seemed to resonate most strongly for participants. My findings and Strange and Gibson's findings suggest that transformative learning occurs during global courses. However, my findings indicate that very short-term programs can provide transformation, while Strange and Gibson's do not.

My findings aligned more closely with those from Glassburn and Reza (2022), who conducted two focus groups with Master of Social Work students one to two years after they completed a short-term global course two weeks in length on sex trafficking in India. The three themes that Glassburn and Reza identified in their study were self-awareness and a better understanding of their privilege, personal transformation related to resilience, growth and

purpose, and translating their learnings into taking action in their career. They conclude, "Our findings suggest that short-term study abroad may provide students with an experience that can be transformative internally and externally, as shown by their thoughts about the world, their own place in it, and can prompt them to take some action in their lives or validate their earlier inclinations toward continuing engagement" (p. 884). My findings provide additional evidence, further supporting Glassburn and Reza's conclusions. They also stated, "For intensive short-term study abroad, the transformational nature cannot be measured immediately as students need time to assimilate the learning and the experience into their lives" (p. 884). My review of the course evaluations in connection with my participants' comments during their interviews also suggests the truth of Glassburn and Reza's statement. While the course evaluations included some comments from students that their global course experience was transformational or allowed them to grow rapidly in new ways, those comments were largely speculated at that point, as the students had not had time to integrate their learnings from their global course experience in their lives. The interview content provided concrete examples of how the courses were meaningful to the participants, whether they proactively took steps to integrate their learning or it happened more unconsciously for them over the years.

Several alumni also described that the global course fostered an appreciation for cultural differences. Eric, Bruce, Clarence, Selene, Monica, and Frank all credited the global course with helping them better appreciate cultural differences and even highly specific nuances within cultures that move far beyond sweeping generalizations or broad observations about a particular place. In his literature review framing his study on transformational learning and a four-week study abroad program, Chiocca (2021) concludes that the type of study abroad and the

experiences students have on the ground might make more of a difference to student intercultural competency and sensitivity development than the actual length of time spent abroad. My findings also support this conclusion because participants in my study provided examples of experiences they had during their short-term global courses that changed their thinking or mindset. Several of the participants in my study, Frank, Clarence, Hugo, Bruce, Acacia, Selene and Monica, cited cultural elements of their global course as most or very important to their learning.

Selene, Frank, Lacey, Clarence, and Acacia also mentioned that faculty expertise or connections provided them with unique opportunities for learning or understanding what they experienced. This aligns with Whatley et al.'s (2021) finding that studying with home-institution faculty positively correlates with the development of a global perspective. They suggest that when home institution faculty are subject-matter experts in areas related to the host country, it helps students expand their global perspectives during the course. For some participants, such as Acacia and Frank, the global course served more as a reminder or to reinforce learnings that the participants received at a younger age on other international programs or experiences. Glassburn and Reza (2022) also found that short-term global courses validated earlier inclinations amongst their Master of Social Work students a couple of years after their global course experience.

The course evaluations included extensive comments from students about the logistical elements of each course, such as the hotel, schedule, and meals. An interesting point of comparison emerged in that my participants made relatively few comments in the interviews about these elements, the exception being Monica and Selene who both spoke about the overly opulent accommodations provided during the India global courses. However, besides that exception, the other participants did not comment on logistical elements that made up the bulk of

the feedback in the course evaluations. This indicates that while immediately following the course, those logistical pieces might have been particularly resonant for them, in the long-term, they mattered much less. Levine (2009) presented a similar finding from her study, stating "The physiological discomforts and inconvenience experienced by the participants were not issues they focused upon in the interviews. Their foci were relationships, communication, openness, creativity, and understanding people's modus operandi in relationship to their psychological-social-physical environment" (p. 166).

Finally, alumni noted that the personal connections and memories forged during their global courses had remained with them throughout the years. Only one participant, Acacia, shared that she is not in touch with classmates from the global course. All other participants indicated that they are, at least passively, in touch with classmates that they traveled with. Bruce indicated that one of the best outcomes from the course for him was getting to know his roommate, who is still one of his best friends from his time at Pioneer Business School.

MBA alumni participants in my study spoke in large part about their personal growth and cultural immersion as the most impactful and endearing takeaways from their global course experience years after it took place. While some alumni found practical applications for skills they practiced in these short courses (such as working on a project or interacting with business leaders from another culture), most alumni spoke more broadly about the global course experience itself as an opportunity or reminder to pay attention to nuance even within different cultures and to seek to understand individuals to work successfully with them. For those participants who had traveled extensively before embarking on their MBA degree and the short-term, faculty-led global course at Pioneer Business School, the global course served as more of a

reminder and reinforcer of what they learned previously about valuing diversity, understanding

cultural nuance, and how connected the world really is. Likely because most of the participants

in my study traveled extensively prior to their MBA degree, they were, overall, able to achieve

some multi-layered takeaways from the experience beyond being overwhelmed with being

immersed in a new place. For example, Hugo and Nadia could consider their classmates in the

new environment and learn extensively from their observations and interactions with their peers,

perhaps as much as they did from the local population. Some, such as Bruce and Clarence, also

compared their global course experience with past international travel experiences and, through

that comparison, generated conceptualizations that likely would not have been accessible for

them had they not previously traveled.

Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe the impact

that their short-term, faculty-led global course experience had on their personal and/or

professional life?

MBA alumni participants in my study widely reported that the short-term global courses

had a lasting impact on their personal and professional lives, primarily through increased self-

awareness and belief and/or purpose and leadership perspectives. These findings parallel those of

Shiveley and Misco's 2015 survey of teachers who participated in a global course between one

and thirteen years before being surveyed. They found that the long-term impacts of their

participants' global course experience included aiding their hiring process, influencing their

teaching in reflective practices and cultural awareness, and increasing their confidence in

themselves. The participants in my study did not indicate that the global course aided in their

hiring; however, their stories suggest that the global course, in some cases, did aid personal

development and leadership practices, as well as simply working with others. Some participants in my study identified primary takeaways related to self-awareness and belief, while others found lasting insights into leadership. A few participants shared stories and reflections indicating that the course inspired personal and leadership growth.

Perhaps due to the unique global course environment, for some participants, the global course experience helped them increase their awareness of their strengths and skills, gaining more confidence by stepping out of their comfort zones and providing space for reflective opportunities in new contexts. For example, Hugo realized his unique skills and strengths related to working in international environments after observing his classmate's reactions on the global course. This realization boosted his self-confidence, helped him see his background before business school as a valuable asset, and helped him understand that he belonged in the MBA classmate peer group. It raised his self-confidence through improved self-awareness, illuminating a comparison that was previously hidden in the home campus environment.

Nadia, who shared that she felt "fear and anxiety-driven" during a lot of her first year of the MBA program, found empowerment through the Brazil global course by embracing her subject matter expertise and teaching her first-year classmates. Similar to Hugo, in some ways, the global course experience allowed her to better understand her strengths and build confidence in her abilities. She also shared that overcoming the challenges she faced in the MBA program and finding herself as she transformed through it ultimately led her to pursue a career in the healthcare industry, where she finds significant meaning in her work and solely supports her family. Levine (2009) found in her study that "empowerment was brought about by the students' individual strengths in their abilities" (p. 166). She goes on to describe how students freed

themselves through their self-knowledge and confidence. Nadia's story exemplifies the kind of freedom that emerges through self-belief, resilience, and growth through a challenging period.

The reflective nature of the global courses also encouraged participants to examine their leadership styles and personal values. Lacey specifically noted that the intentional pairing of the on-the-ground experiences with pre-departure preparation and reflection time helped guide her internal journey of self-discovery and leadership development. She described an experience of being pushed outside of her comfort zone during the France course, where she led a discussion at a historical site. The assignment helped her develop confidence in her preparation and public speaking skills and challenged her to think about how to best lead her peers through a learning experience. In her interview, Lacey also spoke about her current servant-leader approach to managing her team and the importance of "followership," citing global course moments that helped her reflect on and conceptualize how she shows up as a leader of her 40+ person team today.

Frank's experience in Israel, where he engaged in political discussions that challenged his preconceived notions, provided him with valuable insights into his own beliefs and biases, which he then translated into a leadership approach. He realized that his initial understanding of Israel was based primarily on news reports, and the firsthand exposure prompted him to re-evaluate his perspective. This process of challenging assumptions and embracing new perspectives contributed to personal growth through self-awareness and a more nuanced understanding of complex issues. For Frank, the global course reminded him that "there's many different viewpoints, even among people who are more similar than dissimilar," and that perspective led to his leadership approach that honors individual perspectives and resists stereotyping: "despite

going in with an impression of what the people you're meeting or interacting with might think, you've really got to listen and engage with them to better understand that because you just can't know. There are so many complexities and nuances about how they could be feeling about a certain situation."

Acacia, who participated in the entrepreneurship and innovation course in Uganda, shared that she was already globally oriented and interested before the global course during her MBA degree. However, the global course helped her better focus her own personal and professional goals in life to help people, particularly those with access to fewer resources, unlock their potential and create paths forward for their own growth. Acacia described witnessing the power of entrepreneurship out of necessity on the ground in Uganda, stating that she was impressed by the Ugandan's resourcefulness and ambition to create opportunities for themselves, especially given the limited job market. This observation fueled her desire to become an angel investor and support those who lack access to traditional resources. Acacia also spoke about recognizing her privilege and her desire to give back. She realized the stark contrast in opportunities between her upbringing and those she met in Uganda and in other developing countries. She acknowledged that her privilege played a role in her success, and this realization led her, like Lacey, to adopt a servant leadership style in managing her team and coaching others. The answer to my third research question in the following section focuses specifically on the leadership approaches of the participants in my study.

There are similarities between how participants in my study described the impact their short-term global course experience had on their personal and professional lives and the findings from Levine (2009). As discussed in the literature review, Levine interviewed 10 nurses three to

thirteen years after they participated in a bachelor's level global program to understand how their program impacted their personal and professional lives. While the themes Levine identified (having blind trust, valuing others, and transforming experiences) do not map perfectly into the themes that came through in my study, there are some parallels. Levine's theme of "valuing others" speaks to a human connection and respect that arose during the course for nursing students. While the business students in my study did not experience such intense experiences as caring for individuals during their courses, many spoke to an increased appreciation of different perspectives, diversity, and the importance of really listening to whoever you are working with to understand to make the best business decision. In Levine's description of her "transforming experiences" theme, she describes students who were more willing to take risks and increased self-awareness during growth activities. Eric's story of participating in a Kaizen event while on his global course and then, a few years later in his career, leading a Kaizen in his workplace demonstrates the same themes of self-awareness and willingness to take risks.

In what ways have global courses shaped the leadership approaches of MBA graduates?

Several alumni mentioned that the global courses offered them opportunities to reflect on their leadership approaches, particularly compared to individuals they met during the global course, either their peers or course speakers. Lacey, Nadia, Acacia, Frank, and Hugo all expressed that the course experience directly impacted their understanding of how they want to approach leadership and also allowed them to see better the unique advantages their backgrounds and experience provided that they had not yet seen during other parts of the MBA degree program. This suggests that the global course environment can offer a unique setting for personal leadership development realizations or greater self-awareness and self-belief. My finding

supports a similar conclusion from Pless et al. (2011), who observed learning gains in their

participants in the areas of global leadership and found that their corporate service-learning

program helped foster individual self-development skills and community building. They found

that their short-term global service-learning program for budding corporate leaders, non-degree

seeking, enhanced self-awareness, a desire for a deeper purpose in life, and changed mindsets

regarding work-life balance. Pless et al.'s observations came while the program was taking place

and immediately following; however, a survey that their participants completed approximately

two years after their return from their field assignments found a consistent theme that the

service-learning program activated a profound reflection process and greater consciousness of

the self and awareness of the role of leaders as part of the broader global community. Pless et al.

concluded from the survey results that the program effectively enhanced the capabilities of

individuals targeting roles as responsible global leaders. My study also suggests that short-term,

faculty-led global courses have, in some cases, and do have the potential in others, to spur

learning which has been identified as crucial to transformational leadership.

Bennis & O'Toole (2005) suggested that leaders are often required to make decisions

with insufficient data in situations involving unpredictable human behavior. The participants in

my study described various leadership challenges they encountered post-graduation, most in

working with other people or managing their teams. Several participants, including Acacia, Eric,

Hugo, and Monica, mentioned that they would have liked more practice during their MBA

degree navigating difficult interpersonal or professional situations, such as firing someone,

providing difficult feedback, or being able to more quickly identify why someone is

underperforming and how to help them succeed. While the case study method of teaching was

lauded by several participants who felt that it was the most effective learning method to practice

speaking under pressure, thinking on your feet, and contributing even when not fully prepared,

there was still a sense that the case method style of teaching and learning simplified the

complexity of real-world situations that they experienced post-graduation. For example, Monica

and Eric spoke about how it might be easy to say in a classroom that the answer to a case is to

fire an employee, but making that decision in the real world with real people is significantly

more complex. While the global courses did not provide the kind of practice that participants

articulated would have helped them with complex leadership challenges related to their teams

once they started their careers, participants did speak about elements of the global courses that

did help shape their leadership approaches. Monica, Frank, and Acacia talked about how the

global course experience helped them embrace or remember the power of diversity and the

importance of trying to understand how people from different cultures operate. Nadia and Bruce

spoke about the projects they worked on during the global courses and how, while the projects

were not seamless, they provided real-world scenarios to wrestle with and apply their case-study-

developed skills to live situations.

Varela et al. (2013) conclude that the development of advanced managerial skills is not

reachable by the end of an MBA degree program, and that does not mean that the MBA degree

program failed. They suggest that "managerial skill development in MBA education is

challenged by time restrictions, contextualized learning, constraints to testing new knowledge,

and limitations in feedback opportunities, all of which are factors known to restrict progress

toward skill mastery" (p. 441). The short-term global course is not a magic solution to solving

these challenges. However, the courses can provide real-life application of what is learned in the

home classroom and catalyze self-reflection and leadership development in new ways to move the process forward more quickly as students encounter differences and re-consider their own beliefs, perspectives, or approaches accordingly. My comparison between the course evaluations and participant comments during interviews illustrates the significant development that MBA graduates make between the time they participate in global courses and 8-10 years into their careers. The MBA graduate is not finished with their education but must continue to engage in self-directed learning to continue to grow by thoughtfully applying their knowledge to their workplace challenges. Global course objectives related to increased global consciousness, increased self-awareness, some practical application of business skills, and exposure to and appreciation of difference all help propel future leaders down a path of success, but, as Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus (2011) found, reflective integration of learnings into practice following impacts the course' ultimate utility.

How do MBA alumni engage in self-directed learning following a structured global course experience?

My findings suggest that MBA alumni engage in self-directed learning after their global course through reflection, continued exploration of interests sparked during the course, and application of their broadened perspective to new personal and professional challenges. As the models included in my conceptual framework suggest, this engagement in self-directed learning activities was cyclical and non-linear. For most participants, it was also a largely unconscious process that they undertook, perhaps in connection with other learning reflections or behaviors beyond the global course, or that came to light for them through the interview process. Eric's example of participating in a Kaizen exercise during the global course and then directly

spearheading a similar process in his workplace and continuing to refine his leadership of that process as he repeated it provides the most concrete example of a skill learned during a global course and then direct application of continued learning and improving that skill following the global course.

All participants in my study shared examples of reflection, a crucial component of self-directed learning, during the interview process. The global course experience served as a stimulus for introspection and continued learning; however, most participants did not actively create a plan to engage in continued learning after earning their grade. However, during interviews, they shared stories of using the time between the course and the interview to process their experience, re-evaluate their goals, and integrate new perspectives into their lives. For example, Lacey, who participated in a global course focused on World War II history and leadership, said she developed a more profound interest in the subject and continued to learn by reading more about it. Nadia's experience in Brazil gave her confidence that helped her in her job search, confront her anxieties, and make more conscious decisions for herself and her team in the workplace in the following years.

Participants also described pursuing new interests as one way they continued to learn following the global course. The global courses exposed students to new industries, cultures, and ways of thinking and sparked interests they continued to explore independently. Acacia, for instance, was inspired by the entrepreneurs she met during her global course in Uganda, and this experience informed her decision to pursue a life goal of supporting entrepreneurship and innovation goals of individuals in developing countries lacking resources. Similarly, Clarence, who had traveled extensively before his MBA but almost entirely as a tourist, identified the

global course as the first experience he had with traveling for business, and after graduation, he traveled extensively in a business capacity. In that way, the global course was a turning point for him and opened up new opportunities to work and travel, and the global course gave him a higher degree of confidence being in a room with high-level leaders from another culture. As Gavriel's model suggested (2005), self-belief is a key component of the ability to engage in self-directed learning.

Continuing to learn from peers also emerged as an example of how MBA alumni engaged in learning following the global course or MBA experience. Both Monica and Eric spoke about the value of calling upon former classmates to talk through a challenging situation in the workplace and get help navigating it. Monica emphasized that the network has proven invaluable, especially when faced with complicated human resource challenges, such as firing an employee or parting ways with a co-founder. She sought guidance from her classmates, who she knew had previously navigated similar situations. Eric mentioned reconnecting with a classmate for career advice, reaching out to discuss options for transitioning out of his company, and hearing about his classmate's experience working with a different firm. These anecdotes reveal how the relationships forged during the global course experience translate into a valuable support system and resource for continued learning for alumni as they work through the challenges of their careers. The shared experiences and trust built during the course created a safe space for seeking advice and feedback long after graduation.

By understanding how alumni engage in self-directed learning and identifying potential areas to help students increase their abilities to engage in self-directed learning more pro-actively, business schools could create more robust support systems that foster lifelong learning

and enhance the longer-term value of their global course offerings, as well as, likely, many of their other courses.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Practice**</div>

The participants' stories indicate that while their experiences with their global courses were positive overall, there is also likely room for some adjustments to help students continue to make the most out of their learning experience past graduation. In this section, I present five recommendations to improve the student and alumni experience that align with broader business school goals of developing successful, responsible leaders. Some of these recommendations are specifically related to the global course experience, while others are potentially more broadly applicable.

Create Awareness of How to Learn

Experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2015) shapes management education (Kayes, 2002). Very little management education literature, if any, points to the self-directed learning model (Gavriel, 2005) as a foundation to build during an MBA program to help students continue learning independently after graduation to adapt to challenges in their careers. However, scholars have suggested that complex managerial skills, such as leading others or negotiating in an intercultural context, require more time, experience, and practice to hone at an advanced level than achievable within an MBA program's confines (Varela et al., 2013). The mastery levels of the transformational leadership model (Hacker & Roberts, 2004) combined with the spiral cyclical nature of the experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2015) also suggests that awareness, paying attention, and acting strategically to practice new behaviors rather than simply acting out of habit or using what has worked before matters to an individual's leadership development

process. Though rarely directly, the participants indicated through their stories and comments

that learning how to learn is essential for long-term success. Monica highlighted the value of

"good frameworks with which to think about problems" because "leaders are problem solvers,"

and she stressed that the ability to "think critically and be able to really challenge your

assumptions and others' assumptions" is crucial for leadership. Lacey echoed this sentiment,

emphasizing the importance of "disciplined and organized thinking" when "thrown into the deep

end of a problem," indicating that adaptability and a structured approach to problem-solving

were more essential than specific technical knowledge gained during the MBA degree. Eric

acknowledged not having all the answers but embraced the opportunity to "figure it out" and

"learn something no matter what," a mindset he traced back to his global course experience.

These stories came out during the interviews, but the participants had a harder time describing

how they continued to learn or develop their skills post-graduation. Their stories clearly showed

that they had continued learning, but also that some of that learning was unconscious or, even in

a few cases, that some connection points came to light during the interview conversations.

Given that the participants highlighted the value of adaptable frameworks, the importance

of continuous improvement, and self-awareness in navigating their ever-changing professional

landscapes, I recommend Pioneer Business School consider making more evident to the students

how they can develop their capacity to learn and suggesting that they use the global course as a

pilot to practice these skills. For example, part of one of the pre-departure sessions before a

global course could include walking students through the three models I utilized in my

conceptual framework for this research and then using those theories as the jumping-off point to

explain the course design and associated assignments. In essence, the faculty would provide the

students with the framework to understand how to get the most out of their global course experience in advance, before it happens, so that the students are consciously aware of the various elements included in the course and why they are being asked to complete specific assignments. In advance of travel, students could be encouraged to think about where they are in the experiential learning cycle as it relates to various top-of-mind topics and what they can do to continue to move through the multiple stages and spiral up. They could be encouraged to use the new environment and exposure to help them identify gaps in their skills or assumptions as related to the self-directed learning models so that they can practice and improve while in the MBA program. Ideally, the skills critical to self-directed learning would become habits and standard practices for the students so that as they embark on their careers, it is easier for them to make continued learning a practice as well. Creating awareness of the transformational leadership model in advance would also give them a new lens through which to consider their interactions with the leaders they meet during the global courses and provide another way for students to look for examples of mastery or failure, in both themselves and others, as they embark on the intense global course experience.

Encourage More Reflection

The literature indicates that reflection is a key element of experiential learning (Chiocca, 2021; Kolb, 2015; Sroufe et al., 2015). The importance of reflection is also echoed in the interview data. Nadia, for instance, highlighted the significance of pre-, during, and post-course reflection. Her reflection during the interview led her to realize the global course's impact on her, suggesting that reflection can uncover unconscious learning. Lacey also emphasized that international pre-visit preparation, including reflection, enables students to be in the right

headspace for maximizing learning on the ground. These findings support the idea that reflection is not merely a passive activity but an active process that can facilitate deeper understanding and leadership development.

My recommendation that global courses should encourage more reflection is borrowed from Frank, who suggested it during his interview. Frank recommended incorporating a structured reflection activity on the last day of the global course to encourage students to internalize their experiences and consider how they will apply their learning in the future. He suggested having students write a note to themselves with key takeaways or skills they want to develop, which could then be sealed and sent to them later. Frank shared that in other continuous learning or professional development programs he had engaged in post-graduation had offered the opportunity for this kind of reflection and follow-up and that he found it immensely valuable to keep himself accountable and to help ensure that he did not lose track of his valuable learning from an intense experience. Frank believes a dedicated reflection activity could serve as a "forcing function" to help students bridge the gap between the global course and real-life leadership experiences. He acknowledged that not all students may take the exercise seriously. Still, he emphasized that giving students time and space to reflect is valuable, as they are ultimately responsible for their learning. This recommendation aligns with the broader research on the importance of reflection for learning and leadership development. It would act as an extension of the final reflection assignments already in place. At the time participants in this study undertook their global courses and currently at Pioneer Business School, the final reflection assignment asks students to consider their expectations compared to what they found on the ground, what surprised them, and what they are still curious about.

I see a couple of ways global course design could encourage more reflection. First, students could be encouraged to set an intention or goals for the course before departure. These intentions or goals would provide a more personalized structure for individual students beyond the course learning objectives. They would give each student an additional element to reflect upon once they return. Second, on the final day of the course in-country, the faculty member could gather the group and give them a period to write notes to their future selves, summarizing what they want to take forward as they move into their careers and lives post-graduation. The students could then be encouraged to email their notes to themselves with an auto-send date a year later. Students would be accountable only to themselves, but this recommendation is one easy-to-implement way to help encourage them to continue to reflect and make the course takeaways personal to each student and their own goals and leadership journey.

Global Course Reunion

The participants described various experiences with their peers during and after their global courses. Some found the relationships forged during the global courses incredibly valuable, leading to lasting friendships and professional connections. For example, Bruce, Hugo, and Selene highlighted the power of shared experiences in creating a strong sense of connection with their classmates. Bruce described the experience as "binding you to certain people in a deeper way," and Hugo emphasized the intensity of being "outside of that comfort zone together" and how going through challenges collectively led to a "really powerful bonding experience." Most participants mentioned staying in touch with global course classmates passively through social media or the occasional phone call. However, more value may be

gained from the relationships established by the global course experience than is currently being extracted by the participants on their own.

Given that the MBA network is often cited as a significant and enduring benefit of the business school experience, providing value to alumni through professional advancement, personal support, and ongoing learning, I recommend that Pioneer Business School consider an optional but more structured way for alumni to reconnect with one another following their global courses. Faculty at Pioneer Business School sometimes organically organize reunions following global classes, especially if the course took place during the first year, and the group can gather again to reconnect in the second year. However, these efforts are not currently supported by the school and are the exception more than the norm. That said, when a faculty member agrees to teach a global course, it might be worth considering adding, as part of that agreement, an expectation that they host an hour-long online reunion approximately a year or two after the course took place. With support from the international office or alumni office, the faculty member would invite individuals in their global course to join them online to reconnect for an hour of sharing memories and updates and offering an opportunity to support one another as they navigate the early stages of their careers. While alumni offices commonly provide many kinds of career programming and networking opportunities, the global course reunion would be unique because it is highly targeted to a specific course and hosted by the faculty member the group traveled with. The session would inspire reflection, allow the faculty member to hear how their students are doing, perhaps how they are continuing to think about the global course further out, and allow the group to re-connect in a different way to gain benefits from the business school network that are less likely to happen through casual social media interactions. It is important to

note that the specific benefits and value derived from the network may vary depending on the

individual efforts to cultivate and leverage these connections. Participation would be optional,

but even if attendance is low, those who chose to join would benefit from maintaining

relationships with their classmates and faculty members and reviving their bond with their alma

mater.

Bring Alumni Experiences to Global Course Preparation

My fourth recommendation also builds on an idea shared by two participants in my

research study. Nadia suggested that alumni could participate in pre-course work, perhaps even

virtually, to share their experiences and recommendations with the students. Lacey also

recommended that alumni be involved in the pre-departure sessions to share their experiences

and help students make connections between the course content and the on-the-ground

experience. Both Nadia and Lacey wondered if alumni who participated in the same version of

the global course that current students are embarking on could be invited to speak in a session

before departure, perhaps joining online or in person, to offer tips and ideas on how to prepare

for the cultural and academic challenges of the experience, and how to get the most out of the

opportunity. Hearing from alumni several years after taking the global course would help

students understand the entire realm of possibility that the global course might open them to

before it happened so that they would be more conscious, aware, and open to being transformed.

While some of the takeaways that the participants in my study spoke about as being most

relevant or transformational for them were related to the global course learning objectives, many

of the most impactful takeaways were largely unrelated, such as Hugo's observation of his peers

and realization of his own strengths, Nadia's transition from feeling imposter syndrome to

feeling like she had learned and could teach her peers, and Acacia's realization about her own goals of wanting to be an angel investor to give those without resources a leg up on their dreams. These are all significant, transformational takeaways from the global course experience that the participants did not realize were even on the table before the global course. Suppose they, or other alumni, had an opportunity to share long-term impacts with students before students embarked on their global courses. In that case, it might help students reframe the global course from a fun opportunity to travel and learn in business school to something that has the potential to change perspectives about not only the country, but themselves. Hearing from alumni, either live or via recorded videos, would likely help the students think longer-term and more expansively about the kind of experience they want and set goals accordingly. Nadia and Lacey also suggested that alumni involvement in global courses could be mutually beneficial. This would allow alumni to stay connected to their alma mater and hear from current students. Nadia also suggested that this could be a unique way to showcase alumni who are doing good work for their families and communities but might not make headlines through flashy acquisitions or mergers, impressive titles, or huge donations. This would be a way for current students to hear from alumni in the early-ish trenches of their careers, continuing in a significant growth period and having big realizations and humbling moments in their workplace as they learn and adapt to ever-changing challenges. Those alumni could speak to current students from a different perspective than faculty or staff about global course learning and being prepared to always keep learning after graduation.

Collect Data from Alumni About MBA Experience Years Later

My research on the long-term impact of global courses provides data and insights to inform the practices related to global course design and help students learn how to learn. My research was unique in that it asked individuals about their experiences years after the experiences took place and how individuals used what they learned in the intervening years. Pioneer Business School asks students to complete extensive surveys at the end of their first and second years during the degree program about their experiences. However, there is no such survey that alumni are asked to complete years after they have completed their degree and after using what they have learned in the workplace. Collecting this data would allow Pioneer Business School to hear from alumni about what resonated most from their learning experience and what they wished they had gotten from the degree they missed or were unavailable. Pioneer Business School could offer a survey or even host focus groups on this topic during the Reunion, which takes place every five years after graduation. Alumni already receive a lot of email communication about Reunion. Including a link to a survey in association with the Reunion, invitation would be a relatively easy add-on to the messaging and a demonstration of the school's goal of continuous improvement and continued care and concern for the impact of the degree far beyond graduation. It would also demonstrate that the school is accountable for helping individuals achieve their greatest potential and, depending on the results, could provide insights into what alumni want to continue learning about that the school could then offer as alumni webinars or even executive education classes. Global course experience could be one part of the broader survey or focus groups, but the primary purpose would be to understand what elements of the MBA experience have long-lasting impact and utility, the gaps alumni have identified in

their own skill or knowledge base, and if and how they continue learning and adapting to meet the needs of their professional demands, and, ideally, improve the world.

Considerations for Future Research

This study has only begun to uncover how short-term global course experiences impact MBA alumni leadership development journeys. Given the exploratory nature of this work, it sheds light and depth on the experiences of ten participants and reveals themes among them; however, there is still a knowledge gap in understanding the implications of short-term global courses on leadership in a broader capacity. It also revealed some tangential themes worth future study.

This study was restricted to participants who were citizens of the United States during their time as MBA students. I chose to include only domestic students because I believe that international students who opted to complete an entire degree outside of their home country would have a different experience on a short-term global course than domestic students. A future study that included the whole student body population with enough participants to look at trends within the population across different identities would potentially further validate my findings and reveal additional layers of complexity of the global course experience and its impact across different subpopulations.

Another interesting factor to examine would be the amount of travel a student had done before embarking on their MBA. Almost all the participants who opted to participate in my study had significant international travel experience before starting their MBA degree. Their global course experience was not their first time immersed in a different culture. They could compare their global course experience with other previous travel, which deepened their understanding or

reflection in ways not available to someone with no or limited previous travel. A future study examining the different experiences, needs, and expectations of students with varying degrees of prior travel experience might provide helpful context to staff and faculty designing global courses and preparing students for travel to help each student grow regardless of their experience level with travel.

One theme that emerged in my findings was not directly related to my research questions but would be worth further exploration. Several participants discussed feelings of inadequacy or self-doubt while at Pioneer Business School. More female participants made these kinds of comments, but one male participant did as well, and all the participants who expressed that they felt this way came from non-business backgrounds before entering Pioneer Business School. Within the context of my study, some participants described how the global course provided a different environment, allowing non-business-related strengths to shine in new ways and providing them with greater self-awareness or confidence. That said, a future study could examine the experience of students with non-traditional backgrounds coming into the MBA program and their journeys to, hopefully, eventually feeling like they belong. The global course experience may be one unique part of that journey, but a better understanding of the student experience with self-doubt and imposter syndrome could lead to better support mechanisms for students more likely to struggle in these areas.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on a critical area of MBA education, exploring the long-term impact of short-term, faculty-led global courses on alumni leadership development. The findings suggest that these global courses, despite their short duration, are not merely passing travel

experiences. Rather, they can serve as catalysts for personal growth, expanded worldviews, and the development of responsible leadership practices.

In my introduction and literature review, I highlighted the growth and evolution of business schools over recent decades, exploring their purpose, desired outcomes, and how global courses fit into their larger missions. Business schools strive to create value for their stakeholders, encompassing research contributions, individual development, and societal betterment through well-prepared, thoughtful, and responsible leaders. Global courses, by immersing students in diverse cultural and business contexts, hold the potential to advance these goals, nurturing both individual development and a broader sense of perspective and responsibility, key components of transformational leadership (Hacker & Roberts, 2004).

This study provides evidence that the impact of global courses extends far beyond the immediate post-course period and that students, later alumni, continue to re-think their takeaways as they consider them in new contexts, such as their workplace. While participants acknowledged the inherent limitations of short-term programs, they consistently articulated the lasting impact of these experiences years after graduation. The global courses provided opportunities for concrete experiences, and reflective observation, and then the participants, to varying degrees, also engaged in abstract conceptualization and active experimentation, as outlined by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. Participants frequently cited the value of cultural immersion, company visits, interactions with local business leaders, and projects in sparking "ah hah" moments and shifting their mindsets about business, leadership, or themselves. As Hugo shared, "suddenly, this global course just rips that off," referring to the removal of a "narrow sliver of the world you've been exposed to."

However, this research also underscores the importance of self-directed learning in maximizing the impact of global courses. While the structured class environment provides a foundation for growth, the participants can reflect, integrate, and apply their knowledge in the years following the course, extending the value they derive from the initial experience. This finding aligns with Gavriel's Self-directed Learner Model, which emphasizes the crucial role of skills, motivation, and self-belief in fostering continuous learning. It also aligns with the findings from Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus (2011). That said, the participants, overall, did not consistently and consciously engage in self-directed learning. Their continued learning happened more organically as they drew connections between current situations or exchanges and memories from their time in business school. Providing MBA graduates with a framework for continuous learning, what it entails, and how to foster it in their own lives to accelerate growth and adaptation in their careers seems to be an opportunity.

Furthermore, the findings support the notion that global courses can foster the development of transformational leadership qualities. Through exposure to diverse viewpoints, challenging assumptions, and fostering a sense of global consciousness, these global courses nurtured self-awareness and interpersonal mastery, as well as relational mastery and, in a looser way, enterprise or systems-level mastery, central to Hacker and Roberts' Transformational Leadership model. Participants frequently highlighted the impact of their global experience on their leadership styles, emphasizing the importance of relationships, valuing diverse perspectives, and understanding the interconnectedness of global challenges.

Overall, this study contributes to the ongoing conversation about the purpose and value of business schools in a world grappling with increasingly complex and interconnected challenges.

By illuminating the long-term impact of global courses, this research suggests that these learning experiences can help equip graduates with the skills, knowledge, and perspectives necessary to navigate a fast-changing world and lead responsibly. It also underscores the need for continuous learning and reflection, recognizing that leadership development is an ongoing journey, extending far beyond the confines of formal education. Formal education, then, has a unique opportunity to teach students technical skills or frameworks and to help them learn how to keep learning independently to adapt to unforeseen, fast-developing challenges. Global courses are a unique offering within the broader curriculum, a resource and time-intensive undertaking that also provides inimitable opportunities to grow in ways that would be harder to facilitate at home. Awareness of the full potential of learning from global courses and designing them not just for short-term satisfaction but also for long-term applicability benefits students and business schools alike. Through greater awareness, perspective, and desire to work in a way that improves flourishing for all people, business school graduates are best positioned to help solve global challenges and increase well-being, not just the bottom line.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Email

Subject Line: UVA Research Study Seeking MBA Alumni

Dear [First Name],

Greetings from Charlottesville! My name is Katherine Beach, and I am conducting a research study focused on the long-term effects of short-term global courses as part of the capstone requirement for my Ed.D. in Higher Education at the University of Virgina. My objective is to better understand how MBA alumni utilize learnings from their global course(s) in their professional and personal lives after graduation, with the goal of helping to improve global course design within MBA programs. The Dean's Office has granted me permission to access contact information for alumni for the purposes of this research.

For this research study, I'm looking to speak with alumni who
- Matriculated from within the United States (not international students)
- Graduated between 2015 and 2017
- Participated in at least one short-term faculty-led global course during their MBA program

Based on records, it looks like you might qualify and, if you are willing to participate, I would love to schedule an interview over Zoom (no more than 45 minutes) to discuss your experiences.

- Any information you provide will be assigned a code number. Your interview transcript will only be associated with your code number, and the list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a separate secured file.

- Recordings will be destroyed after interviews have been transcribed along with the code list and any other identifying information.

- The final report of the study will include aggregated themes as well as direct quotations from interviews to illustrate the themes. Your name will not be used in any report or presentation, nor will the names of any individuals or companies you mention during the interview.

Please see the attached information sheet for details about the study.

Thank you so much for your consideration. If you have any questions or would like to participate, please email me at beachk@darden.virginia.edu or call me at 503-551-1292.

Sincerely,
Kate

Katherine Beach
Ed.D. Candidate
UVA School of Education and Human Development
Ridley Hall
405 Emmet Street South
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
503-551-1292

IRB-SBS 6766

Appendix B: Study Information Sheet

Please read this study information sheet carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study

The purpose of this study is to discover how MBA graduates, when given more time to process, reflect, apply learnings and utilize their takeaways from global courses.

This research will ultimately lead to more targeted design of global courses, which takes into consideration, not only student feedback immediately following their global experience, but what is likely to stay with them and be most impactful as they apply their learnings to their careers and lives.

The findings from this study will be used to inform future short-term global course design.

What you will do in the study

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview. The interview will be conducted via zoom and will be audio/visual recorded to ensure accuracy in capturing your responses. At any point during the interview you can skip a question and you can stop the interview at any point in time if you are uncomfortable. Following the conclusion of the interview, you will have the opportunity to review the transcript to check for accuracy before the data included in the transcript is analyzed.

Time required

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes of your time.

Risks

There are no known risks associated with this research.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help us improve global course design for long-term impact.

Confidentiality

The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a locked file separate from the raw data. Your identity will not be disclosed in any publication, presentation or report that might result from this study.

Recordings will be transcribed, anonymized, and associated only with your code number, not your name. The final report will include pseudonyms. All data will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to it. Recordings associated with your interview and the code list will be destroyed upon completion of this study; all other data will be kept in a secure server.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, you may do so by simply notifying the researcher, Katherine Beach, and, at that time, any recordings or transcriptions will immediately be destroyed.

Payment

You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

Data use beyond this study

Data provided for this study will not be used for any additional research purpose. Recordings and code list will be destroyed at the completion of the study and all other information will be destroyed approximately five years after the study's completion.

Contact Information

Please contact the researchers on the study team listed below to:
- Obtain more information or ask a question about the study.
- Report an illness, injury, or other problem.
- Leave the study before it is finished.

Principal Investigator: Katherine Beach
Ed.D. Candidate
UVA School of Education and Human Development
Ridley Hall
405 Emmet Street South
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
503-551-1292
Beachk@darden.virginia.edu

Faculty Advisor: Brian Pusser Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Leadership, Foundations and Policy
School of Education and Human Development
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904

434-924-7731
bp6n@virginia.edu

You may also report a concern about a study or ask questions about your rights as a research subject by contacting the Institutional Review Board listed below.

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences
One Morton Dr Suite 400
University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: https://research.virginia.edu/irb-sbs
Website for Research Participants: https://research.virginia.edu/research-participants

University of Virgina IRB-SBS #6766

You may keep this copy for your records.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

What Sticks? The Longer-Term Impact of Short-Term Global Courses in an MBA Program

The following talking points and questions are designed to guide a semi-structured interview.

Additional probing questions may be asked following any of these prompts to elicit more details, especially if the participant responses are especially rich, unique, or unclear.

For quick reference, my research questions are:

1. Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe their experiences with short-term, faculty-led global courses?
2. Given more time for reflection and application, how do MBA alumni describe the impact that their short-term, faculty-led global course experience had on their personal and/or professional life?
3. In what ways have global courses shaped the leadership approaches of MBA graduates?
4. How do MBA alumni engage in self-directed learning following a structured global course experience?

Opening reminders:
- Thank you so much for participating.
- Please confirm that you are comfortable with the interview being recorded.
- Let's spend a few minutes reviewing the information sheet together and talk through the key points.
- Do you have any questions about the interview sheet?
- Do you agree to participate in the study? Please confirm concurrence with informed consent agreement shared via email.
- There are no right or wrong answers to any question. Please do your best to provide honest and complete information.
- Your identity, responses and participation in this research will remain anonymous, unless you choose to disclose to someone else.
- In the final report, data will be presented in aggregate or under a pseudonym.

I'm going to start with a few easy questions to get us started and just make sure that the info that I have from the school records is correct and that I have a little bit about your background too.

1. What year did you participate in your global short-term faculty-led course?

(Confirming both calendar year and whether participant was a first year or second year MBA student at the time.)

2. Where did your global short-term faculty-lead course take place?

3. Did the course you attended have any specific topic or theme?

4. Are you still in touch with any of your classmates or the faculty member you travelled with on the global course?

5. How much international travel had you done prior to participating in the global course?

6. Why did you choose to participate in a short-term faculty-led global course during your MBA?

Now, I'd like to delve into some more specific questions about both your course experience and how you may have integrated what you learned into your life or approach to business.

7. When you think about your global course, what moment or experience first comes to mind?
   a. Why do you think that memory sticks out for you?

8. Please describe any "ah hah" moments you had during the course.

9. What did you experience during the course that led to a shift in your mindset either related to business or personally?

10. What skills did you learn, practice, or observe during the global course?

    a. How did you integrate that learning/skill into your life?

    b. Can you think of an example of something that you did (or do) differently now as a result of the course?

Thank you. Now, I'm going to ask a few questions that focus more on your reflection process and how you continued to make meaning from your time in-country after the course wrapped up.

11. What experience(s) did you have during the global course that did not make sense at the time, but has become clearer for you since then?

12. What motivated your continued meaning making or application of what you learned?

13. Some of the common global course components are meeting and hearing from local business leaders, visiting operations, such as a factory or farm, and visiting cultural sites. Of these different elements, which do you think was most impactful in relation to your leadership journey and why?

14. Consciousness is considered to be at the core of transformational leadership. What parts of the course helped you develop deeper consciousness of yourself, your relationships or systems at large?

Now, we're going to zoom out a bit. The purpose of these global courses, and really the MBA degree, is to help individuals develop into responsible leaders. I'm going to ask a couple of questions to hopefully get at how we can continue to improve the design, not just for immediate student satisfaction, but long-term impact.

15. Given how rapidly the world is changing, upon graduation and today, what skills do you feel have been imperative to your success and what skills do you find yourself needing to continue learning/refining as you adapt to new challenges?

16. If you were going to lead a global course for MBA students today with the goal of helping the students develop into responsible leaders, what would you make sure to include in the design?

17. Your alma mater strives to prepare individuals for responsible leadership. What do you know now that you wished you had learned during the MBA degree or had more of a chance to practice in a safe environment before entering the workplace?

Last question:

18. Is there anything I didn't ask that I should have? OR Is there anything else about this topic that you feel would be important for me to know?

Thank you again for participating in this study. If there is anyone else you think that I should consider including in this study, please let me know.

Your responses will help us continue to improve global courses going forward. I'm going to turn off the recorder at this point and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have off the record.

Appendix D: List of Codes

Code	Description	Example	Source
Concrete Experience (CE)	Direct personal experience	Description of something that participant directly experienced	Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle
Reflective Observation (RO)	Shows thoughtful understanding or description of a concrete experience	Description of thoughtful engagement with experience after it happened	Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle
Abstract Conceptualization (AC)	Shows development of logic, ideas, theories or generalizations; systematic understanding related to concrete experience	Description of meaning making out of direct experience, perhaps by comparison or contrast with other experiences, models, theories or ideas	Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle
Active Experimentation (AE)	Shows active influence of people or changing a situation. Testing conceptualization for credibility through action.	Description of trying something as a result of new conceptualization.	Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle
Motivation	Reason for wanting to do something	Self-interest, desire to influence change	Gavriel's Self-Directed Learning Theory
Self-belief	Belief that something is achievable	Confidence, apathy	Gavriel's Self-directed Learning Theory
Learning skills	Example of ability to continue learning	Example of failing at something and ability to take ownership and try something else instead	Gavriel's Self-directed Learning Theory
Consciousness-Individual	Self-awareness of thoughts, memories, feelings, sensations, environments	Understanding of privilege, understanding of self in the world	Hacker & Robert's Transformational Leadership Model

Consciousness-relationships	Awareness of impact on others and awareness of relationship dynamics; clear, known purpose of relationship. Relationship have direction.	Examples of demonstrated awareness of how individual shows up for others and helps individuals show up for themselves	Hacker & Robert's Transformational Leadership Model
Consciousness-organization or system	Awareness of role and impact within organizations and systems	Examples of awareness of a particular endeavor associated with the organization or system and understanding of the complexities	Hacker & Robert's Transformational Leadership Model
Transformational leadership	Creating the world around you, rather than being created by it	Shifting the purpose of an enterprise towards sustainable business growth	Hacker & Robert's Transformational Leadership Model
Responsible leadership	Help organizations prosper financially *and* promote the prosperity of humans and the environment	Examples of making choices that are good for people and/or the environment, beyond the bottom line	Mayer (2024)
Opening experience	Experiencing something- a moment, a work of art, a connection with another human, etc.- that leads to a shift in mindset	A concrete experience that someone articulates directly led to some kind of shift in mindset	Fred Philips *The Conscious Manager: Zen for Decision Makers* in Hacker and Roberts
Global course impact	Concrete description of a way that the global course impacted the participant	Example of something that participant experienced following the course as a result of it	
Self-doubt	Participant describes feeling less than or incapable	Example- imposter syndrome	

Knowledge or skill gap identification	Participant indicates self-awareness that they did not know or have skill in a particular area	Often part of a reflection comment something the participant lacked	
Global course suggestion	Participant shares an idea related to global course improvement	A recommendation that participant thinks may improve course design or impact	
Peers	Comment related to classmates on the global course	Might be a comment in which participant compares themselves to their classmates	
Independent Travel	May refer to independent travel before or after global course or another trip that they took entirely	Participant describes something that they did traveling independently	

Appendix E: Example Findings Related to Each Stage of the Experiential Learning Theory

Concrete Experience	
Frank	I remember a lot of the places that we went to, and how cool that was to see, you know, a place that I'd heard a lot about over my life up to that point. But, like going to the beaches and going to the historical sites and, I can't remember if it was a Parliament or what their political structure set up is, but we went in there and met with some leaders, and, you know, so I have like memories of those specific things.
Bruce	One thing that was really cool about this trip . . . We were actually able to go into an Israeli Air Force base and actually see, like nonpublic footage of them having previously, I mean, we weren't watching it live, but they were bombing a terrorist stronghold of some sort. Obviously, this was not live, but, you know, one thing that they showed us was really fascinating to see was how much effort they made to make sure it was civilian-free when they bombed it.
Selene	I think one element was preparation for consulting, which is what like all my post-PBS experience has been. With the Brazil course and the Israel course, we did a consulting project with a company that was based in the country, so had a client with objectives that we had to deliver against and needed to do that with a team of Pioneer Business School students. So, I think that was, yeah, good practice for so many dimensions of consulting.
Reflective Observation	
Eric	I think my team, we had a certain goal, and it was to take apart and reduce the cost by, I don't know, 50% or something. And so, I don't think we were going to be able to achieve that kind of realization in any organization, but particularly not a bigger organization. We identified some things that certainly were opportunities. But we weren't going to change everything in our week and I was like, is this company going to be organized enough to capture some of these takeaways and then stay on them? Or is it going to get lost in the shuffle of all of the other priorities? You know, because there's only so much you can do from going back and negotiating with suppliers, or find, you know, to either decrease the unit cost, or to, get a secondary or tertiary source, you know, and from another country or something, and there are no easy and obvious answers. If it was easier, obviously, it would have already been done. And so, then you really kind of run up against some real challenges.
Acacia	I was very impressed with the level of exposure and insight with which we were provided through the experiences on the ground in Uganda. I

	had expected, to some degree, that our interactions would be "sanitized" and highly curated, but that was not at all the case. I was appreciative of the immersive experience that we were able to have during our time in-country.
Monica	The dichotomy of the experience we had traveling the week before the course . . . I was in India maybe over two weeks. My husband was there for only a week. But then, I got onto the Pioneer Business School part, and we're staying in like fancy hotels. We're on these buses, like real, fancy buses, and you're like, for the last week, I have only been in a tuk tuk, like I was in a car once, and it was like, who's that in the car? And now, we're business school students. It was very weird. Oh, man, I didn't remember that, but the switch from I'm traveling with my husband and Tom to I'm traveling as a business school student felt weirdly ritzy. It was not how we were traveling before and then, all of a sudden, we're in these like fancy ass hotels, like 5 star hotels and you still see poverty all around you, and, you know, we're on these huge buses that don't even look like they can go down the streets we were going down, you know. And, it was just very disjointed. It was like a switch, you know. It was like we went from really experiencing the culture to being like Oh, here, India, tell us about you.
Abstract Conceptualization	
Hugo	Besides our classroom experience, you see how people react and that really just puts you in a different place of like, everyone really is very much shaped by, you know, their experience and what they've had, and people have had very different experiences that are inputs into who they are.
Monica	I guess the thing that it makes me think of most is the downstream impacts, and whether that's in India or that's in the U.S. Frankly food subsidies in the U.S. and obesity and the downstream impacts and capitalism are not aligned. I think it's a great goal to create conscious leaders, but there's so much about the capitalistic system that is, that you are making money or you are taking from the system. You are making money where there's arbitrage opportunities and, like, I mean, I know the leader that I am and want to be, and grew into, and I just don't know that our system is set up so that it rewards that.
Bruce	I am half Jewish. I remember being offended by an African American girl on the trip who, after the visit to Yad Vashem, said something like she didn't understand why Americans are so upset about the holocaust after what happened with slavery, and I just thought that was like . . . I'm still pissed off when I think about that, I mean, I think we have this sort of stupid wokeness in America that, just . . . it's not the same conversation, and it's not a competition, you know. Like, it's really not

	a competition, and they can both be bad in different ways without it being the same conversation.
Active Experimentation	
Eric	I'm a huge fan of the Socratic teaching method now. And, I mean, even like, you know, if I'm doing something as simple as, you know, showing others how to do something or teaching a class- teaching a Sunday school class at my church- I'm going to use that method because I think it is so beneficial, right? And not get up there and lecture, as an example.
Nadia	I was paired with all first years, and they hadn't had the [project management] course yet, so I was almost like teaching them what I learned in [teacher's]'s class on the ground, and so all of that just became very reinforcing the principles which I found to be very valuable.
Lacey	But now when I do travel to new places, I do a little bit of learning about the history ahead of time, which was a theme from the Normandy course, great, because it was a much more meaningful experience to go somewhere when you kind of understand what to look for, so to speak. And, so now, if I'm going to a place I've never been to before, I try to read about it, not just the greatest tourist attractions that you want to see, restaurants you want to go to, but are there any interesting things, historically, that could bring the trip to life a little bit. I went to Spain recently and the part of Spain I was in was actually Gaelic. And they had all of these ruins of these very ancient cultures. It was very interesting to learn a little bit about the culture before I went and actually saw some of the ruins. This is actually a cool way to travel.
Acacia	So, in the nature of a global course, you're going to come across many, many challenges, as it relates to cultural backgrounds. I work for a Danish company where most of the developers are Indian, but the leaders are American, and I am based on the Germany team. Like you just have so many conflicting perspectives based on culture. And that is the root cause of what I have to solve for almost daily and what I have to manage for almost daily, because managing my India team requires step by step instructions and constant assurance verses like European teams who it is just night and day, right? It is night and day differences between what they want and the approach I have to take, truly.

Appendix F: Example Findings Related to Each Pillar of the Self-directed Learning Model

Skills	
Nadia	This conversation has kind of gotten me reflecting like, Oh, you know, I was like, Oh, I don't think I remember that much and now, I'm like, no, I do remember a lot. And I guess it [the global course] kind of did have an impact on me. And even being a reflective person like you don't always realize that until someone asks you the reflective questions, and then you kind of piece it together.
Monica	I think having good frameworks with which to think about problems is really important because leaders are problem solvers and being able to draw on a framework, whether it's case or experience, or like being able to have a good framework to think about things and think critically and be able to really challenge your assumptions and other's assumptions is probably one of the most important things.
Hugo (1)	[In response to a question about learning, practicing or observing skills during the global course] If I'm being honest, no, it doesn't. Nothing like sticks out. I think we made, we pretty much made like fancy decks.
Hugo (2)	I had to write everything because our stakeholders only spoke Spanish. I was the only one on the team who spoke or wrote Spanish- my classmates did not. We talked through as a team what we wanted to present to the stakeholders, and then I translated and ultimately presented to them in Spanish.
Frank	I feel like we probably did some rapid brainstorming which, you know, you get some exposure to in at Pioneer Business School in your classes, and everything like that in your teams and I had some experience from before business school, but it was definitely probably a skill that we got to practice on the ground like with those companies we were supporting over there. But that was about it. I can't think of anything else specific. I mean there's some deck building and stuff like that, right? Like some core business competencies you know that you would expect.
Eric	Having the depth of being on a team working on a project for one week, and that's all we were doing, was really beneficial professionally. You know that goes a lot deeper than going to look at something- a different location, a different company, a different topic, a different business every day. So, not as cool, right? But, it certainly was beneficial and helpful and I would recommend it to anybody.
Motivation	
Nadia	I just love the feeling that I'm growing. That in and of itself is motivating to me.

Nadia	I think ultimately what drives me is consciousness . . . my awareness of what consciousness is and my question, and my desire to expand it and just become a better and more authentic version of myself.
Nadia	I think it's helpful to know that I was a big career switcher coming to Pioneer Business School. I was an opera singer . . . definitely a nontraditional student. So, courses like project management were, well, I got a lot of value out of them, even though for some other students, maybe, who had direct experience or weren't interested in project management- they probably thought it was basic, or they didn't get as much value as I did. For me, it was extremely useful . . . it like blew my mind and was one of my favorite classes. I loved the principles behind it, but like from that class, I think of those principles very often, even though I'm not in a project management kind of career track. So, I was very attracted to the subject matter and I was extremely interested in going to Brazil. You know I'd lived in South America . . . but it is still a place that I feel more comfortable traveling to in a group, or with people who know what they're doing, rather than just going by myself, even though I lived in one of those countries. So, all of that was very appealing to me, and then the projects we were going to be doing sounded exceptionally interesting.
Acacia	My goal as a leader is to ensure that they [my staff] leave with the tool set and the skills that they wanted to build to be successful in the next place.
Acacia	I'm at the top of that pyramid of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and places like Uganda couldn't but help reinforce that. That humanity and passion that we are actually all the same. And, how do you create those opportunities and acknowledge that the struggle is just more difficult for them, period, than it is for me and that has nothing to do with am I as valuable? Or if I am as important, it's an acknowledgement that the world is an inherently structured place, regardless of what system you look into. And, so, what role can I play to help people unlock their potential and create those paths forward?
Selene	It felt like a unique opportunity to be able to take advantage of the global course in the MBA setting. I know, in particular, some of them give you access to people or experiences that you would not have access to if you had chosen to travel on your own, or even if you had traveled through some type of facilitated trip. And I think, also, at least one or maybe two of the courses, the professor was native to the country, so it felt like they could give a lot of good context and insight into what we were experiencing and then, also, just seemed like it'd be fun.
Eric	I was one of those Pioneer Business School students that was already married and had kids So, I was not going to be doing a fun spring break

	trip. But, no, I say that you know, half tongue in cheek. But, more importantly, I thought it was an incredible opportunity to have a funded real-world experience. I was very much interested in operations and continuous improvement. And, to go do that, hands-on, on a funded trip was just a huge opportunity to me.
Hugo	I think it maybe was the most sought-after global course at the time, and then, a good group of friends all got together. And, we're like "Yes" let's go do this.
Bruce	[In response to a question about using what he learned on the ground] That didn't happen to me. I think part of it is that I did not really choose it. It was my 3rd choice, but it was a choice I was happy with. I chose it mostly because I liked Israel, and I liked the idea of being back there, and gaining that further exposure.
Clarence	[In response to a question asking about what motivated continued learning] I just really enjoyed the travel. That was probably the kickoff of traveling not as a tourist to these places, and meeting with people who live and work there, and seeing a very different side of these different countries' cultures than you do when you're a tourist seeing through the very carefully curated Michelin guide lens. So, I think I found that fascinating and found it fascinating to work for [American multi-national company] where I traveled to India three times, Saudia Arabia, UAE, a few times to China, and Switzerland and Belgium. I've just found it very stimulating to work in that kind of international environment.
Self-Belief	
Nadia	I think the global course was empowering for me because I was one of the more subject matter experts, and I needed that at Pioneer Business School. I needed to feel like one of the more informed people in a moment like for once, you know, I always felt like the stupidest person. That's what I told myself at the time. I am the stupidest person in the room. I don't get this. That's how I felt a lot of the time. I was like, I don't belong here. I squeaked in . . . So, being in a position [on the global course] where I know the subject matter, it was more like, I can teach it to people. I am smart and I do have a future. Feeling that was incredibly powerful for me and feeling as if, towards the end of my Pioneer Business School experience, I could finally feel that way. I finally had a grasp on something and could actually teach other people, so that in and of itself was very empowering for me and did my self-esteem good. We had a lot of first years on the global course and I was one of the few second years and was able to feel like I actually know what's going on and can help. So, I think that in and of itself was evidence of my transformation, which just became self-reinforcing for me and encouraging for me to keep going.

Eric	So, within a year from graduating, I had started my job with this company and then was able to move into more of an operations role and then, a year beyond that, I had really started integrating . . . I brought some of these principles, and ultimately, kind of a Kaizen event and lean manufacturing principles to the company, and was able to kind of spearhead that initiative from within. And so just started off by getting a group together to focus on this for half a day in the warehouse. And, I felt unqualified to do that. But, at the same time, because I had already participated in one that was like a real world, not just in the classroom, for another business, I'm like, well, you know. Fake it till you make it kind of thing. We're going to figure it out as we go and that's okay. You don't have to have all of the answers in the spirit of continuous improvement. So, yeah, I was able to do these things and lead some of those initiatives. And, having that experiences was certainly helpful to recognize that nobody goes into those with answers. And that's okay and I was able to tell everybody that say, oh we're just going to figure it out. We're going to learn something no matter what, whether we're able to fix the problem or just see what it turns into.
Hugo	Through the global class I kind of realized that, okay, like I am as smart as these other people who like went to an Ivy League school and worked at Goldman Sachs and all that. My background is not bad at all.
Hugo	I kind of saw that, okay, I'm at least as smart in a classroom setting as these people. And, then with that part, understanding the language and culture, you're like, oh, I have a very big edge on international culture, especially like Hispanic culture and just dealing with understanding language barriers to be getting clearly the different cultural norms.
Clarence	I think I felt a little bit of comfort, you know, having been put in a room with some very senior, very well-connected people. At least, you know, in that environment, I already felt sort of comfortable being the American in the room.
Acacia	A big one was the presentation communication, because we had to so often participate, communicate and think out loud. I mean, I'm really good at this in meetings, and it's certainly a learned skill. It's not something that I think comes naturally to most people, but being forced into these uncomfortable situations helped develop it.
Acacia	I'm just good at doing that without provoking, you know, hostility or defensiveness. There's a way to be direct and cut to the point, but also be respectful and mindful. So, that's, I think, a very learned skill over time.
Acacia	Even with the global course, was my time going to be prioritized into getting the best consulting project done? No. I focused more on the experience and learning something. I'm quite happy about that, frankly.

Frank	Not every project is going to be great. Every team you work with isn't going to be fantastic and every activity that you're part of doesn't always turn out positive. And, I don't mean to say that to suggest that I've had a lot of hardship in my career, but more, when you have little things that knock you down or knock the wind out of you, you need to be able to get back up and keep going and, if you don't, then if you have like thick skin and resilience to be able to do that, it makes for a long, hard, time of whatever you're doing.
Lacey	I came to business school with a massive sense of like- I have no idea what I'm doing here, right? I was a musician before I decided to go to business school. I knew absolutely nothing. And, so, I had this feeling of like, all right. Well, if I was smart enough to get into this school, I'm smart enough to figure this out and I'm out of Nope already. Everybody around me in school already knew that I didn't know what I was doing because they all knew that I was from a music background. So I never had to like prove anything to anybody. It was like, Oh wow! You're actually doing a decent job in school. That's pretty impressive because you were a musician before and you don't know what you're doing. And, I was like, that's right. I don't, but here we go.

Appendix G: Example Findings Related to Each Element of the Transformational

Leadership Model

Self-mastery	
Hugo	I think the whole point of the global course is it's very real how to get your head around like, yeah, things are different here. Things that you value in your little bubble of being a New York City banker or a consultant or in Atlanta or Chicago or whatever major U.S. city. There's a very narrow sliver of personality, I hate to say it. But, yeah, people are different. But then there's like this little sliver of the world you've been exposed to and then, all of a sudden, this global course just rips that off.
Frank	I lived in Paris in high school and made a bunch of international friends when I was there and that helped open my eyes to different ways of viewing the world, and the U.S. The importance of certain things or the unimportance of other things and also the similarities across people of every nation, race, gender, you know, irrespective of any of that. More often than not we're a lot more similar than we are dissimilar. But there's some very specific areas where there's really strong opinions on either side. And so, that's where I first learned that and then experienced it. The global course at Pioneer Business School was a good reminder because I hadn't spent as much time abroad since, other than college, but in college you're also in your little bubble. So, this was just a good reminder.
Acacia	Coming into the global course and even coming into Pioneer Business School, I've always had a very strong sense of a global perspective and that part didn't change. And, clearly, I've been an expat for many years. So, it is a core to my identity and who I am, So, the course didn't change that, it just fed into a passion and way of thing that was already embedded in me.
Selene	I think, with respect to yourself, the broader diversity of experiences you have, the more you can understand and refine what your value system is, or how you're going to become yourself in relation to work. What type of individual contributor or manager you're going to be depends on what phase of your career you're in. So, that would be the most strong link that I would say is having experiences that add to your overall set and then influence how you're going to work and approach different situations.
Eric	I came in with, really, a learning goal. I didn't feel like I had a lot of great real world leadership experiences and dealing with people. But, you know, everybody jokes around and nobody likes taking LO [leading organizations class] but it's the one, the most important class

	you're going to take. And, I mean, there are a number of things that I go back to. Really, the Pioneer Business School experience helped me go ahead and break me from my looking at everything through the lens of my military experience and being prepared to look at it through the lens of a more real-world experience that I was going to face. So, I think, thank goodness, I had those two years to transition from that.
Nadia	I think that in order to be a transformational leader, you have to transform yourself in some way. And I definitely did that. I came to business school with that intention. And, I think the ways in which I did transform were different than I expected. As I reflect back on the experience, how I've transformed both during my time and since Pioneer Business School, I can reflect back from a different context now, and, if I were to go through the same thing, I'd be like, I'm just so grateful for this experience and how it is expanding me, and not worry so much about, do I understand everything? And, worrying this is a test of my intelligence or my value as a person. It's more just like this exposure is so magnificent and so beautiful and being able to absorb as much as I can from other people- their learnings and their life experience in and of itself is transformation. I think the transforming process in and of itself and then your reflections on it during and after can help prepare you to be a transformational leader. And I definitely feel as if I got a lot of that.
Interpersonal Mastery	
Hugo	[when asked about what skills have been important to his success] It has been that ability to understand and connect with people and build those relationships. Obviously, like the analytical stuff, is relatively easy to replicate. Yes, I'm very good at it. I went to Pioneer Business School being pretty good at it. But, it's the ability to get trust, get people's trust, and then put together a message that resonates. You have to understand where they are coming from and position things in a more palatable way. Good news and bad news, you know. Ideas, proposal, all of it.
Lacey	I mean, honestly, my biggest takeaway from the global course itself in terms of leadership was just trying to embody that sort of servant leader mindset and leading from a place of looking out for and taking care of your team, and that is how you get true followership . . . Transparently, I was never in a real position of leadership prior to Pioneer Business School. I was a career switcher and so, it's definitely something that as I have grown in my career and taken on more and more leadership responsibilities, bigger teams, more people, etc. That's always been in the back of my mind that was reinforced in that trip and at Pioneer Business School as well.

Frank	You know, despite your going in with an impression of the people you're meeting or interacting with, you might think you understand what their thoughts would be, but you really have to listen and engage with them to better understand because you just can't know. There are so many complexities and nuances about how they could be feeling about a certain situation.
Selene	You need to adjust how you interact with others. Or you need to be purposeful about how you understand what motivates other people. That's been an important part of my experience working post Pioneer Business School. I think this is something that the global courses aided me in.
Acacia	I manage teams. Now, today, I am never hurt whenever someone chooses to leave to go pursue another thing. My goal as a leader is to ensure that they leave with the tool set and skills that they wanted to build to be successful in the next place. Period. It takes nothing away from me. It is no blow to my ego. I'm not hurt, of course. It is sad to see team members leave, and it's an important part of the way I think about why humans are meant to migrate and move towards greater opportunity. It happens in business and it happens in life.
Frank	I think teaming, leading and working with teams, is crucial in consulting, maybe more or less so in some other disciplines. But, I lead teams now of between like two and twenty people that are reporting into me and if you don't know how to engage with their hearts and minds, it's going to be really hard to get anything done. I kind of embrace the saying that, if you want to go fast, go alone and if you want to go far, go together. Yeah, I can sometimes do something faster than someone on my team could do it, but if I teach them how to do it, then we're developing a skill set and we're becoming a better team that can go a step further than we otherwise would have been able to. So, I think that's really important and it comes with being open minded and conscious about how others on your team might be feeling. Or, you know, giving and receiving feedback that is actionable and direct . . . the direct and actionable feedback is part of what helps people become better at what they're doing and, for me, learning how to give and help people take action on feedback is truly something I have found very valuable.
Lacey	I went from having no direct reports to one to two and now, like 40 something. So, it's like, okay, great, all of these resources and all of these talented people. How do I effectively coach and mentor and work through that team to get the desired output. It's no longer enough that I am talented and smart. How do I get all these people to be talented and smart and rowing in the same direction. And there is a talent development kind of component of how do you coach and really hone

	in on providing effective feedback that is going to be actionable and move the needle for a particular person? How do I really get to the root if somebody is underperforming? How do I really crisply understand why that is and help them either get better or realize that they need to make a change? Being able to quickly diagnose what's going on with people on my team from a talent perspective is something that I think takes a lot of practice.
Eric	You really have to work to build a team, you know. That's not automatic. It's not there just because you all work for the same company. You know, if you're in different locations, you know those you're still working with on different teams, but you just have to be intentional about, getting the group to work together. It's not automatic.
Enterprise mastery	
Acacia	So, one of the main takeaways, and it doesn't really impact my career now, but it impacts what I want to do in the future is a lot of people I met on the course- I was really amazed and impressed by their ambition, their creativity and thinking, and a lot of what they lacked was access to capital and funding to make it happen. So, the importance of money, right, in order to move forward. You could have the best idea, but because of the nature of where you live, where you're born, and who you know that doesn't come to light. So, that has contributed to what do I want to do, in the later parts of whenever I can save enough capital to do it is, I actually want to become an angel investor because I do want to invest in those kinds of people. That is my next time. It's making enough capital to become an investor and make investment into people, into ideas, into companies, especially those areas that don't have the opportunities that we do in the Western world. So, that is a fundamental impact, and probably the main one, I would draw from the global course.
Acacia	Something that was also really memorable was how much entrepreneurship mattered in Uganda, and simply as a result of the demographics of the country where something like 70 to 80% of the population was under the age of 30. And, there's just not enough jobs in big corporations like ones I work in to sustain that. So, people have to look to create their own opportunities in, say, banana wine and other things. And, what is striking in that is it's innovation and entrepreneurship out of necessity in order to avoid what could be, you know, a lot of imbalance and insecurity and challenges in a country when there's high unemployment.
Selene	I would say one thing that I found surprising that related to Brazil was the Olympics. I hadn't studied the Olympics very much, but they actually seemed very unprepared. They didn't seem like they were thinking about it in a very sophisticated way. And, I would say that

	then it feels like aligned with in retrospect with what happened. Things in the country kind of went into disarray and had a lot of turmoil following the Olympics. And, I think, yeah, ultimately, that was not a good thing for their country or the economy that they had chosen to host the Olympics.
Selene	Yes, I think it [the global courses] were beneficial in terms of having experienced more systems and understanding like where different norms and ways of doing things appear in the business setting or in a broader cultural setting. And seeing how different people adapt to them, or maybe try and influence them to change. Especially, I'd say, in the context of India, because it is like more of a developing country. And, like, you know, big tech companies were not there. If you go far enough back in time, they were more breaking the molds in terms of what these different professional settings would look like, and how companies- what role companies would play in their economy and broader society and how does the government facilitate that development.
Frank	It's a good reminder of the myriad views that present when there's ever a discussion about Israel. It's not a nation of one voice. It's a nation of, you know, millions of voices that have each their own nuanced leaning. So, what do you do with that? It's just a good reminder that everybody has a different kind of approach to things and there's always going to be some conflict, not necessarily serious, but there's going to be conflicting opinions that there's no easy solution. It's kind of a reminder of how you're never going to get all these people there in, you know, in any situation. It's going to be really, really difficult to get everybody to agree on any one thing, right? So, even in a country where the religion is tied intrinsically to the government . . . there's a lot of things that are like, this is very much a state with a state religion, and all these things that in the U.S. we don't have. And so the conflict resolution that they have internally is very significant and on things that you would think might be more agreeable to a country that's, like I said earlier, more similar than dissimilar.
Monica	I think in the end, your goal is empathy- to understand where people are coming from and how the money is made and being honest about it. I mean, when we were in India, there were two ads that I was surprised by. When we were there, I think there was a new Coke CEO, was it Pepsi or Coke? One of them. One of the big challenges at the time was that Indians don't have enough clean water. And yet, there's a new soda plant that's taking all clean water and making it into Pepsi products or Coke products, or whatever it was, and it's like, Oh great! Now we can get a whole other country hooked on sugary drinks. Cool. And then the other one was that there were so many products being advertised that

	were to lighten your skin. And, I was like, why? But then I was like the caste system. And then you just realize it's not just India, right? Like you see that in the U.S. And African Americans and on other lighter skinned African Americans tend to have statistically better net income over the years and things like that. And, you're just like, Wow, that fucking sucks, you know. But, I'm not sure I'm going to be able to impact the change on that.
Frank	The more aware you can be of how others you're interacting with, whether it's within your organization or your customer base or other competitors, right? You need to understand all of those things, to make the best decision with the information that you have. And, so you have more information, if you're more open to the inputs coming from all of those sources. So, you're going to make a better decision, or at least a better informed decision. And true transformation is very hard. If you're closed off from others and you're just single minded in your approach to it, it can be very effective in terms of getting the transformation completed. But in terms of the actual success of the transformation, you need to also win the hearts and minds of the people that are on the journey with you. Sometimes, if it's like a dire situation, they can be led by someone who's more like a dictator whose like we're going this way. I don't care. Got on board or get off. Like the kind of way that Musk has done it at Twitter or that, historically, you hear about Steve Jobs doing it. For some visionary people, that really works, but, like at Twitter, it hasn't really gone that well. Apple, it went great, because he was the visionary behind a lot of the products. I work in consulting and, now, I do a lot of transformation work. The successful ones are ones where leaders are driving it, but they're getting change leaders or sort of change ambassadors involved as well throughout. And so it is a very conscious process. They're getting buy-in, but they can only get that because they're aware of how what they're proposing is going to be received from that leader and that leaders' organization underneath them. And so it's trying to be really thoughtful about, okay, what does this mean for the company? What does this mean for this department within the company and the people way down in that department? How does this change all of those things? Keeping an open mind to all of that is crucial. Otherwise, you know, it's hard to be successful.
Lacey	One of the greatest takeaways from the course was just the level of orchestration that had to happen to make that day successful and understanding of the battlefield and all of the various fronts and the components that were important on that day, both what came before and what came after. So, there's definitely a systems level of thinking on like ridiculously massive scale. Obviously, that had to happen for D-

	day. And, so that sort of understanding that leadership is, yes, getting followership. And, you know, getting people to follow you. That was a huge component of it, but also it would not have worked if all you had were a bunch of marines following their leaders. If the great orchestration of it wasn't right. So, the plan and this is what you're trying to execute has to work within the confines of your environment in order for those great leadership moments to happen.
Clarence	Actually, I do recall, we met with some folks at [large, multi-national beverage company], including the person who had negotiated the acquisition of [local brewery]. So, you know, global local intersects. It was interesting to hear their perspective on the acquisition. These kinds of acquisitions often get painted by independent breweries as we've lost another one to the big giants and it's always a bad thing and whatnot, but, at least the way they put it, and they weren't making a sales pitch to is, so I don't have any reason to not believe it. They were able to ramp up production of the few sort of stalwarts of the brand and expand distribution, but they still want the master brewers to keep doing what they were doing that made them interesting in the first place. So, it was a great sort of other side of the story, how a large multinational could get interested in a regionally successful small businesses.