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Employability of Study Abroad Students, a Literature Review

Jamie Weaver

Introduction

Study abroad experiences are becoming an increasingly important aspect of a student's undergraduate career. Once achieved, these experiences will not only be a benefit financially, but they will also challenge and enhance the students' experiences with future employers. Additionally, by studying abroad, students gain competency that allows them to be a global citizen in an ever-shrinking world (Friedman, 2007).

Currently, less than 2% of the national student population has studied abroad on either a short term (less than a semester) or long term (semester or longer) experience while at a university in the United States. (Picard, Bernardino, & Ehigiator, 2018). The locations of these study abroad programs vary greatly and can generally be divided into traditional or non-traditional. The categorization of locations into traditional or non-traditional is most commonly based on the number of American students who study there. Using this method traditional locations are identified as Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand. While non-traditional locations are those in Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Middle East (Wells, 2006).

No matter the length or the location of a study abroad experience, students return from them saying, "It has changed my life." The research on this phenomenon is extensive, since the 1920's and 30's researchers have tried to understand why students have such a powerful response to their experience and what aspect of the student changed as a result (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009). This body of research, which is widely dispersed, is detailed in two separate publications by The Forum on Education Abroad. Within these publications the research on study abroad is organized by decade and common topic (Mukherjee, 2012).

One common topic that arises is based around the soft skills that

students gain through study abroad. These studies have found a number of common skills that are increased as a result of a study abroad experience. These are most commonly categorized by a) foreign language skills, b) understanding and tolerance of other cultures, c) ability to adapt to changing situations and d) overall communication and interpersonal skills (Crossman & Clarke 2009; Di Pietro, 2014; Di Pietro 2015; Jones, 2016; Kostelijk & Regouin, 2016; Williams, 2005).

Many researchers have supported the development of these skills during study abroad; however, as the number of students participating in study abroad increased rapidly in the early 2000's, practitioners and administrators began to wonder if study abroad was having the intended influence on students. Are the learning outcomes and objectives being attained? Are those skills that students developed benefiting them as they finish their academic careers and look to join the workforce?

This literature review will seek to gather and organize studies that explore how soft skills from study abroad are transferred into the workforce. It will also examine if the employability has increased for those students who participated in a study abroad experience during the undergraduate academic careers.

The organization of this paper is as follows: The introduction serves to give a short historical perspective and base line knowledge on study abroad; the methodology section describes how the research process was conducted and its results; the literature review section provides an in-depth view of the articles found during the research process (these articles are organized by common topic and compared); and the concluding section discusses the results and implications for future research.

Methodology

The initial search for studies related to study abroad and employability occurred in February 2018. Using Google Scholar the terms "study abroad" and "employability" were searched. This first search yielded 6,120 results. These results were sorted by relevance, the first 60 article titles were skimmed and set aside for further review as needed. Further

searching was conducted using the advance search function of Google Scholar. "Study abroad and employability" was entered in to the "exact phrase" field in the advanced search. This yielded 11 results, all of the abstracts were scanned for relevance.

The Penn State University Libraries online search engine was also used. Initially a search was conducted with the terms "study abroad and employability". The search was selected to only include peer-reviewed publications and yielded 460 results, sorted by relevance. The titles of the first 30 articles were scanned and set aside for further review as needed. To narrow the search of these articles, the advanced search function was used. Within the fields of the advance search the terms "study abroad" AND "employability" were used, searching only peer-reviewed publications. This search yield 11 results. The abstracts of all 11 articles were scanned for relevance.

The articles that were selected for further review were skim-read and divided into folder labeled either "YES", "MAYBE", or "NO" depending on their relevance to the literature review. The articles within the "YES" category met the criteria of being specifically about the employability of students who studied abroad during their undergraduate academic careers.

The references of these articles were also reviewed to find articles that may have been missed during the online searches. During the review of articles in the "YES" category, it became evident that within Europe the term "student mobility" is used rather than "study abroad". Therefore, the advanced searches within Google Scholar and the Penn State University Libraries were repeated, using the term "student mobility." These searches yielded 136 and 10 results, respectively. The titles of these articles were then scanned for relevance, reviewed later and added to the categories previously listed. After all of the searches and review of articles was concluded, 20 articles were found to be relevant for review with regards to the employability of study abroad students. Within the next section these articles will described and categorized thematically.

Literature Review

Current research has served to link the skills gained from study abroad to the employability of the students who participated in these programs. For the purposes of this literature review the term study abroad will be used to refer to any time that a student spends on an undergraduate academic or internship program outside of their country of citizenship. The base of knowledge on employability of students as it relates to skills gained during study abroad is fairly new and still developing. Much of the research is based outside of the United States and is not specific to one type or location of study abroad program. Therefore, this review will use the same broad and all-encompassing terms to reflect the terminology used in the current literature.

According to OECD (2017), the number of students enrolled in tertiary education (i.e. postsecondary education) outside of their country of citizenship has more than quadrupled between 1975 and 2015, from 0.8 million to 4.6 million. The largest increase was seen between 2000 and 2015 when the numbers doubled from 2.0 million to 4.6 million (OECD, 2017). Government incentives and policy changes have had a direct influence on this growth. In the United States, the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program claimed that 1 million Americans had participated in study abroad program by 2017 (Brooks, Waters & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). Similarly, the European ERASMUS Programme, funded by the European Union, has recorded over 3 million students who participated in study abroad programs from its inception in 1987 until 2012-13 (Brandenburg, Taboadela, & Vancea, 2016).

This large increase in students who study abroad can be attributed to globalization and the internationalization of curricula in higher education. According to *The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman (2007) we are currently in Globalization 3.0, which is best described as the world shrinking from its small state, achieved during Globalization 2.0 (1800 to 2000), to “tiny” and “flat” (Friedman, 2007). In this new tiny and flat state, individuals have the power to collaborate and compete with each other on a global scale. For an individual to reach a successful level glob-

ally, it will take a specific set of skills that should be developed early and strengthened over time. Historically, study abroad experiences are a way to gain those skills.

Skill Development and Employability

When discussing employability skills, it is important to think of them both in a domestic and a global context. Globalization has required those entering the workforce to be able to function on a global scale. To encourage students to go on a study abroad experience, it is not uncommon for advisers, practitioners, and study abroad alumni to tell these prospective students that studying abroad will increase their chances of getting a job within the global market. Often the opportunity is advertised as a way to “set yourself apart” or “move your resume to the top of the pile.” This communicates to the students that by studying abroad they will build a set of skills that will make them more employable. Yorke (2008) defines employable skills as a “set of achievements, skills, understanding and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations” (as cited in Jones, 2013). These skills can further be identified as transferable or soft skills such as intercultural communication, self-awareness, and flexibility (Jones, 2013).

Jones (2013) offers a broad description of what employability skills are, while Eaton and Kleshinski (2014), Kosteljik and Regouin (2016), and Williams (2005) examined how certain populations of the students grow in certain skills during a study abroad experience. These studies are summarized in Table 1.

Eaton and Kleshinski (2014) conducted an overall study on the top 50 undergraduate business programs in the United States. From this study they identified the three top competencies that led to employability for business students. These skills include the ability to operate globally, intercultural understanding, and fluency in a foreign language (Eaton & Kleshinski, 2014). Even though Eaton and Kleshinski (2014) were specifically studying American students, their findings can be applied throughout the world. For example, they found that the ability to speak a foreign

Table 1: Studies on employability skills developed.

Studies	Country or Region of study	Results
Eaton and Kleshinski (2014)	United States	Important competencies include: ability to operate globally; intercultural understanding; fluency in a foreign language.
Jones (2016)	United Kingdom	Transferable or soft skills are key to increasing employability.
Kosteljik and Regouin (2016)	The Netherlands	Study abroad influences: significant growth in the personal lives of students & moderate growth in both professional and English proficiency. No influence on multicultural personality was evident.
Williams (2005)	United States	Study abroad students have a larger growth in intercultural communication. They also start at a higher level than students who do not study abroad.

language increased the employability of business students. For an American student, a foreign language, such as Spanish, German or Chinese, was beneficial. But for a student in Europe the foreign language could be English. In addition to other soft skill areas, Kosteljik and Regouin (2016) focused on the English fluency of Dutch students who studied abroad and those who did not during the 2007 spring semester.

This qualitative study evaluated these soft skill areas, a) English language proficiency, b) personal growth, c) professional growth, and d) development of multicultural personality. Overall, it was found that students who participate in a study abroad program experience significant growth within their personal lives. Meanwhile, there was only moderate change in the categories of professional growth and English language proficiency. The development of a student's multicultural personality was not found to be affected by the study abroad experience.

While the study conducted by Kosteljik and Regouin (2016) focuses on Dutch students, Williams (2005) is specific to the intercultural

communication and global competence of American students studying at Texas Christian University. By using the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) and the Global Competency and Intercultural Sensitivity Index (ISI), Williams (2005) compares the growth of study abroad students to those who stayed on the home campus. Through this analysis William (2005) identified that students who study abroad not only have a larger growth in intercultural communication skills, but also start at a higher level of intercultural communication than those who do not study abroad.

Student Motivations

Kosteljik and Regouin (2016) examine the outcomes of intercultural communication, as previously described, but they also study the motivation of students when choosing to go abroad. A pre-test survey was distributed to 714 study abroad students prior to starting their experience. They found that 84.7% were motivated to go abroad for personal growth, while 62.8 % were motivated by professional growth. Once the students returned from their study abroad experience, they received a second survey that asked how their professional and personal growth was affected: 56.3% of students who went on a study abroad experience felt that it prepared them for their professional careers. In addition, 79.6 % of students who did an internship abroad felt that it affected their professional careers. This compares to the 81.8% of students who had a domestic internship. On the personal level, 84% of students who went abroad or who stayed on the home campus, felt that they grew their personal networks. Even though the findings of Kosteljik and Regouin (2016) were based solely on the responses of Dutch students, they are similar to that of Di Pietro (2014). Through literature from studies around the world, Di Pietro (2014) found that often times students go abroad “not because they want to gain competence in academic and professional domains but because they are looking for adventure and excitement.” He also highlights the fact that students who choose to study abroad in the first place may have higher or different skill levels than those who do not, especially as it relates to

Table 2. Studies on student motivations for going abroad

Studies	Country or Region of study	Results
Di Pietro (2014)	Italy	Students choose to go abroad for personal reasons, looking for adventure and excitement.
Kosteljik and Regouin (2016)	The Netherlands	84.7% of students were motivated for personal growth, 64.8% for professional growth. 56.3% felt they had grown professionally after the experience.
Nilsson and Ripmeester (2016)	Europe and Global	69% went abroad to improve their career prospects. Employability ranked first for motivation from 2010 – 2014.

intercultural skills (Di Pietro, 2014). This description is highly anecdotal but is similar to the findings of Williams (2005).

Similar to Kosteljik and Regouin (2016), Nilsson and Ripmeester (2016) also conducted a study on European study abroad students. However, it was more encompassing of the entire region, rather than focused on one country. Their sample consisted of 164,000 currently students studying abroad around the world, as well as 2,366 prospective study abroad students (Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016). For 69% of the prospective study abroad students, improving their career prospects was the main reason for participating (Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016). Current study abroad students from the study rated employability as the top factor in their satisfaction with the study abroad program. They rated these factors on value of importance; consistently, employability ranked first from 2010 until 2014 (Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016).

From these studies focused on student motivations and employability, which are summarized in Table 2, we can see that students commonly select to go abroad for personal reasons. There is a smaller population who do it for professional growth. The difference could be aligned with cultural differences between to the populations, but it is most likely a result of personality and characteristics of the individual student. However,

no matter the motivation going on the study abroad, students experience professional growth.

Effects on Employability

Even though there has been research to establish both the skills gained by students on study abroad and their motivations for doing so, the gap between those skills, motivations and employability needs to be bridged. Much of the research on the employability of study abroad students are based out of Europe. This is due to the ERASMUS Programme that gathered large amounts of data from 1987 to 2013. Studies from the United States and other regions of the world tend to be smaller scale and more qualitative in nature. To further organize the studies on the effects of study abroad on employability, I have separated the studies by positive and negative sub-categories.

Positive Effects

To be considered to have a positive effect on a student's employability, a characteristic or factor must have made a positive impact on the student's job prospects. Throughout the studies examined, this positive impact manifests itself in a variety of ways. Brandenburg, Taboadela and Vancea (2016), Di Pietro (2014), Di Pietro (2015), Lianos, Asteriou and Agiomirgianakis (2004) and Rodrigues (2013) all measure the earning potential and employment rate of study abroad students as compared to non-study abroad students. Their studies focus on different countries and populations of students throughout Europe.

Both Brandenburg, Taboadela and Vancea (2016) and Rodrigues (2016) conducted data analysis across Europe. Di Pietro had two separate studies, one in 2014 on the students in the ERASMUS and the second, in 2015, on a large population of Italian students. Due to the size and length of the ERASMUS Programme, all of these studies were conducted on very large populations of students. In contrast to these large studies, Lianos, Asteriou and Agiomirgianakis (2004) focused on a comparatively smaller population, around 800 students in Greece.

Brandenburg, Taboadela and Vancea (2016) summarize the findings of the ERASMUS Impact Study which gathered data on students in 34 different countries. The three main points from the study that focuses on career development of students, are a) study abroad students are 50% less likely to be unemployed longer term b) ten years after graduation, study abroad students are more likely to hold managerial positions and c) the students are more inclined to take a job abroad (Brandenburg, Taboadela & Vancea, 2016).

Similarly, Di Pietro (2014) uses data from the ERASMUS Programme to form conclusions about the employability of study abroad students. Of the surveyed students, 87% stated that they felt the experience help them have a more successful interview, while 54% said it helped them secure their first job (Di Pietro, 2014). There was a small sample of US college students represented in the study, and they stated their study abroad experience helped them become fluent in a second language which helped them earn 2-3% more than those who did not know a second language (Di Pietro, 2014). In a study of 16 European countries, Rodrigues (2013) found that study abroad students earn 3-5% more in general, no matter their fluency in a second language. The percentage increases the longer a student is abroad – for example, students who spend 3-12 months abroad earn on average 5% more than non-study abroad students (Rodrigues, 2013).

The same author, Di Pietro, conducted an in-depth quantitative study specifically with Italian students in the ERASMUS Programme. For this population of students, it was found that 10 years after graduation, the employment probability increased by 22.9% for those students who studied abroad (Di Pietro, 2015). The positive effects of study abroad on the employability rate was also seen by Lianos, Asteriou and Agiomirgianakis (2004). They showed that 86% of study abroad students in Italy found employment with in the first year of graduating (Lianos, Asteriou & Agiomirgianakis, 2004).

The positive effects of study abroad on employability expand past the rate described and the higher earning potential. Additional positive effects, which often times are more vague, were found by Brooks and Simpson (2014), Crossman and Clarke (2009), Farrugia and Sanger (2017),

Norris and Gillespie (2009), Orahood, Kruze and Pearson (2004), Petzold (2017) and Wiers-Jenssen (2008). Similar to the previous studies discussed, these also occur in a variety of regions.

Both Norris and Gillespie (2009) and Farrugia and Sanger (2017) conducted larger scaled studies on study abroad students with in the United States. Norris and Gillespie (2009) used data from a 50-year alumni survey administrated through the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), a non –profit organization that coordinates study abroad programs for United States students (Study Abroad with IES Abroad, 2018). The survey was distributed to 14,800 study abroad alumni with IES between 1950 and 1999, with a response rate of 25% (Norris & Gillespie 2009). Seventy-seven percent of the respondents stated that the study abroad experience allowed them to acquire skills that made a significant impact on their career (Norris & Gillespie 2009).

The number of responses, 4500, for the study conducted by Farrugia and Sanger (2017), is similar to the response rate for Norris and Gillespie (2009). Farrugia and Sanger (2017), used data gathered through the Institute of International Education (IIE) Generation Study Abroad initiative. Seventy-eight percent of respondents in this survey have talked about their study abroad experience in a job interview, while 50% felt that their experience led to a job offer (Farrugia & Sanger 2017).

Smaller scaled studies were conducted on specific fields or regions by Brooks & Simpson (2014), Crossman and Clarke (2009), Orahood, Kruze and Pearson (2004), Petzold (2017) and Wiers-Jenssen (2008). The studies conducted by Brooks and Simpson (2014), and Orahood, Kruze and Pearson (2004) were based in the United States. Brooks and Simpson (2014) conducted a small-scale study on family and consumer science (FCS) majors at Midwestern universities. The study abroad experience of the FCS majors was directly linked to a positive impact on the student's personal and professional growth (Brooks & Simpson 2014). By using the skills gained during that experience the respondents felt it made a significant impact on their ability to gain employment (Brooks & Simpson, 2014).

Orahood, Kruze and Pearson (2004) also conducted a study in the Midwest, specifically focused on business students at Indiana University. There were 198 responses to a survey that was distributed to all junior and senior business majors at the university (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004). Of that 198, 83 (42%) of them had studied abroad (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004). Ninety-six percent of those students responded that the study abroad experience had an impact on their career path: some (30%) had job offers prior to their date of graduation (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004).

When comparing studies conducted around the world, it is not uncommon to compare the United States to other first-world countries with English as the primary language. In fact, in terms of study abroad and employability, a study conducted by Crossman and Clarke (2009) in Australia is frequently cited on similar topics in the United States. Crossman and Clarke (2009) conducted stakeholder research at one Australian University that included students, academics and employers. This provided a strong connection between those who are affected by a study abroad experience. From the qualitative interviews Crossman and Clarke (2009) conducted, they were able to draw the conclusion that all three stakeholder groups saw the connection between a study abroad experience and the development of key skills within the students. Employers felt strongly that students with a study abroad experience were “ahead of the pack” when it came to interpersonal skills (Crossman & Clarke 2009).

While other studies like Brooks and Simpson (2014), Crossman and Clarke (2009), Orahood, Kruze and Pearson (2004) examine specific populations of students in the United States and Australian, two studies in the European region, Wiers-Jenssen (2008) and Petzold (2017), focus on similar, yet, more specific topics. Wiers – Jenssen (2008) conducted a study with Norwegian students with some small comparisons to ERASMUS students. They not only look at the fact that study abroad students have higher employment rates, but also examine where those positions were held. It was found that students who study abroad are more likely to work abroad or have more frequent international work assignments, no matter the field of study (Wiers-Jenssen 2008).

Petzold (2017) conducted a very unique study that is unlike any other that has been examined. To track the effect of study abroad on a student's employment prospects, they created a variety of resumes to submit to job postings. The resumes were strategically designed to either include or not include a study abroad experience. If included, the experience was described in the cover letter and detailed in the resume (Petzold, 2017). The resumes were submitted to 231 job postings, and the time it took to receive a reply and the type of reply were tracked (Petzold, 2017). The study finds that a study abroad experience significantly decreases response time from those employers with a foreign branch, it also increases the likelihood of an invitation for an interview (Petzold, 2017). However, for employers with no foreign branch, the study abroad information did not make a significant difference (Petzold, 2017). This study was unique in its design, and it offered great insight into the effects of study abroad experience on the job application process.

All of the studies examined are summarized in Table 3. From this summary it can be seen that study abroad has a significant positive effect on a student's employability. These positive effects include a) decrease the time of response to a job application, increase the likelihood of an invitation to interview, b) increases the chances of a successful job interview, c) increase in employment rate from 1-10 years after graduation, and d) increase the earning potential by 3-5%.

Table 3 summary of positive effects of study abroad on employability.

Studies	Country or region of study	Results
Brandenburg, Taboadela and Vancea (2016)	ERASMUS	Ten years after graduation, study abroad students are more likely to hold management positions and earn higher wages.
Brooks and Simpson (2014)	United States	Study abroad has a statistically significant impact on the participants' professional growth and ability to gain employment.
Crossman and Clarke (2009)	Australia	Students who study abroad are more employable according to potential employers.

Di Pietro (2014)	Italy and ERASMUS	Students feel it was a positive addition to their resume. Employers felt it makes a job interview more successful.
Di Pietro (2015)	Italy and ERASMUS	Study abroad students are 22.9% more likely to be employed 3 years after graduation.
Farrugia and Sanger (2017)	United States	78% of study abroad students discussed their experience in a job interview. Those more advanced in their career feel it led to a promotion.
Lianos, Asteriou and Agiomirgianakis (2004)	Greece	87% of study abroad students gain employment in 12 months after graduation. Study abroad students consistently earn higher wages.
Norris and Gillespie (2009)	United States	77% of participants feel that the study abroad experience had a significant impact on their career.
Orahood, Kruze and Pearson (2004)	United States	96% of study abroad students feel the experience had a significant impact on their career path; 33% of study abroad students had a job offer prior to graduation, compared to 25% of non-study abroad students.
Petzold (2017)	Germany	Applications with a study abroad experience received a quicker response time than those without it. It also increased the chances of a job interview.
Rodrigues (2013)	Western and Eastern European Countries	Having a study abroad experience increases the chances of having an international career. Students who studied abroad from 3-12 months earn 5% more per hour compared to non-study abroad students.
Wiers – Jenssen (2008)	Norway	Study abroad students are more likely to have international careers than non-study abroad students.

Negative Effects

The positive effects of study abroad on employability were previously described. These effects are significant; however, there have been a few negative effects that need to be examined. Some of the studies that described these negative effects are the same studies that found positive

effects, specifically, Di Pietro (2014), Rodrigues (2013), and Wiers-Jenssen (2008). Brooks, Waters and Pimlott-Wilson (2012) is the only study that found negative effects and no positive effects. All of the studies, were conducted in Europe (east and west).

Brooks, Waters and Pimlott-Wilson (2012) conducted a small qualitative study with 85 students who had studied abroad during their undergraduate career. To gather data, in depth, individual students were interviewed in depth. The results found that student motivations are for personal growth, which aligns with what was found previously in Kosteljk and Regouin (2016), Di Pietro (2014) and, Nilsson and Ripmeester (2016). They then drew the conclusion that these motivations provided no advantage to students when it came to gaining employment (Brooks, Waters & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012).

Both Di Pietro (2014) and Wiers-Jenssen (2008) found overall that students who study abroad take longer to find a job. Specifically, Wiers-Jenssen (2008), whose study was conducted in Norway, found that the longer a student studies abroad, the longer it takes them to find a job. These results were supported by Rodrigues (2013) who found that study abroad students took an average of 0.4 months to find a job. When trying to find a job, they also use more job-search strategies and apply for more jobs than those who did not study abroad (Wiers-Jenssen, 2008).

The studies with findings on the negative effects of study abroad on employability are summarized in Table 4. Overall, even though the negative effects were found, it is not clear if they outweigh the positive effects of study abroad.

View of Employers

A majority of studies on the employability of study abroad students depend on the students' impressions to collect data and form conclusions. A few studies previously discussed collect information from both the students and their potential employers. Di Pietro (2014) and Crossman and Clarke (2009) are two such studies. Both studies give the employers view on a job candidate who has studied abroad. Overall, Crossman and Clarke (2009)

Table 4. Summary of negative effects of study abroad on employability

Studies	Country or region of study	Results
Brooks, Waters and Pimlott-Wilson (2012)	United Kingdom	Study abroad does not lead to a labor market advantage in the United Kingdom.
Di Pietro (2014)	Greece	Not all study abroad students are able to communicate their experience into something an employer would value. Difficulty developing an employment network. Takes longer to find a job.
Rodrigues (2013)	Western and Eastern European Countries	On average, study abroad students take 0.4 months longer to find a job.
Wiers – Janssen (2008)	Norway	Study abroad students have higher unemployment rates 3 to 5 years after graduation. They spend a longer amount of time on the job search.

found that study abroad students are more employable and more attractive to potential employers. Their experience abroad “stands out to employers” on their resumes and tells the employers that the candidate has been “exposed to global thinking” (Crossman & Clarke, 2009).

Similarly, Di Pietro (2014) stated that the experience is a positive addition to a resume and often leads to a more successful job interview. However, a successful interview can be determined by how the students discuss their past study abroad experience and relate it back to the job position (Di Pietro, 2014; Ripmeester, 2016). Oftentimes, when asked about a study abroad experience in a job interview, students use the term “fun” or “nice” with no ability to discuss it deeper (Ripmeester, 2016). They don’t realize how the experience has affected them. They have had no training on how to reflect and articulate their experience so that it leads to an increased chance in getting a job offer (Harder et al, 2015).

One other factor that may impact the employability of study abroad students is based on the view of that experience from those in charge of hiring new employees. According to Trooboff and Berg (2008), human resource or hiring managers value a study abroad experience more than

senior management. The value of the study abroad experience seems to increase the longer the it lasted (Trooboff & Berg, 2008). Additionally, if the person conducting the job search or interview studied abroad during their academic career, they place a higher value on that experience when evaluating potential employees (Trooboff & Berg, 2008).

Information from these studies is summarized in Table 5. From this it can be concluded that, overall, employers value a study abroad experience. However, how much value depends on two factors: first, on the student's ability to discuss the experience in a meaningful way, and second, on the position and past experience of the employers.

Table 5. Employer's view on the value of study abroad.

Studies	Country or region of study	Results
Crossman and Clarke (2009)	Australia	Students who study abroad are more employable according to potential employers.
Di Pietro (2014)	Italy and ERASMUS	Students feel it was a positive addition to their resume. Employers feel it makes a job interview more successful.
Harder et al (2015)	United States	The value of the study abroad program is based on the students' ability to express themselves.
Ripmeester (2016)	UK and ERASMUS	Study abroad students are highly attractive to employers. However, students need to be educated on how to talk about their experience.
Trooboff and Berg (2008)	United States	All employers valued a study abroad experience in employees. However, to what degree depended on their position and previous study abroad experience.

Discussion

It is apparent from the research described in this literature review that students who go abroad do gain employability skills. However, to what extent is still being investigated. The literature in this area is relatively new but growing due to the need to justify the outcomes of study abroad experiences. Since this body of literature is so new to the field, when examining it, it seems slightly disorganized and contradictory. A majority of the

studies are currently coming from Europe, with a limited number from the United States and almost none from other parts of the world.

Despite slight disorganization among the findings of the studies available and the lack of literature from a large section of the world, a majority of the literature supports the theory that study abroad leads to higher employability of students. It is widely accepted that students gain intercultural communication and problem-solving skills, as well as global awareness through study abroad. These skills are valued by employers in many fields, as long as students can apply the skills gained to their work environment. Once study abroad students have gained employment, they earn 3-5% more than students who did not study abroad. They are also more inclined to gain managerial positions later in their careers. (Brandenburg, Taboadela, & Vancea, 2016).

Between the positive and negative impacts found regarding the employability of study abroad students there were some contradicting findings. For example, Di Pietro (2015) stated that study abroad students have higher employability rates three years after graduation than non-study abroad students. This is in contrast to Brooks, Waters and Pimlott-Wilson (2012) who stated that they actually have lower employability rate. Additionally, Lianos, Asteriou and Agiomirgianakis (2004) state that 87% of study abroad students gain employment within a year of graduation, while Wiers-Jennsen (2008) states that study abroad students take longer to gain employment than non-study abroad students.

I believe that this confusion and contrast between studies can be attributed to the large variety in populations that are being studied around the world. Study abroad as a field is global in context; therefore, different cultures value study abroad differently. As the body of literature grows on the subject of the employability of study abroad students, themes and commonalities will become more apparent.

Conclusion and Implications

As a result of globalization the need for individuals in the workplace who have the skills to be successful on a global scale continues to

grow. Developing employees before entering the workforce increases the likelihood that an individual will easily and quickly become successful. Employers have a need for employees who can navigate the global marketplace, and they invest substantial financial resources into developing those employees internally. If an employee enters the company with higher global skills, the company can use those resources for other purposes.

During post-secondary education is the ideal time to take advantage of the opportunities available at the educational institution that help build these skills. In an ideal situation, all students attending post-secondary institutions will have the opportunity to be culturally immersed through a study abroad program. Through this experience, they gain skills that will provide them with advantages as they enter the workforce.

To be competitive on a global scale it is imperative that a higher number of individuals in the United States have more international experiences. In some viewpoints, the U.S. may be lacking in this area due to its size and economic stability. The earlier one has this experience and gains valuable skills, the more of an expert they can become. As individuals enter the workforce, this study abroad experience will provide them with distinct advantages within the global marketplace while delivering a cost savings to their employer.

The need for global skills is not restricted to a particular industry. Skills gained through study abroad can lead to an over increase in productivity at every level. This result directly affects the trainings that are provided by workforce education professionals (individuals with a responsibility to provide global skills guidance and training to all individuals within a company). Trainings that are provided to employees with less development international experience must begin with an awareness of themselves and may have difficulty moving past this level. By entering the workforce with more well in-depth experience and more developed skills, trainings can extend into higher level practical applications. As a result, the company as a whole will have higher productivity and be more competitive in the global marketplace.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

This literature review only examined research on study abroad as it relates to the employability skills gained by students. The research on the impact of study abroad is extensive and has many different applications. It could be possible to form a different conclusion if the review contained articles on the broad impacts and skills gained by study abroad. With that said, due to the global context of study abroad, the research comes from many different countries with cultural differences. These differences add to the complexity of analyzing the research, since different cultures value different things. For future research, studies should focus on the value of employability skills across different cultures, linking these to the study abroad experiences of students. This research can be focused on the potential employers of former study abroad students. They are the ones that drive the value of the skills gained from the experiences.

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