How Cultural Differences Influence the Business

BUS 495 Final Research Report

Presented to Edward Gamble

Presented by Yao Ma & Xi Ran

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The objective of this research paper was to determine how cultural differences influence the business. First, a literature review was conducted based on the previous academic findings and ideas about culture and international business, and how they interact with each other on a business subject. Next, a survey followed up with adjustments acquired from consultation with the advisor and distributed to 72 business students (including international and domestic students). The analysis of the survey results revealed that most students are lacking knowledge about different cultures. At the same time, interviews with three faculty members from the business department of UPEI on the issues of international education and abroad working experiences provided more information and deepen the reviews on the research topic. All these findings have led to the conclusion that the education about international business needs to be strengthened and access to different culture learning for business students need to be provided. Four of our hypotheses are approved upon the observations and analysis. The recommendations for this report are listed below:

- Create more exchange opportunities for students;
- Provide cultural information to students through new media since it is the main way for them to know other cultures;
- Add more courses about culture and international business to curricula.

This research report is useful to help improve international education in UPEI, increase the students’ awareness about different cultures and encourage them to explore other cultures.
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INTRODUCTION

The trend of globalization has made the different culture walk onto a worldwide stage (Marcelo and Deslree 2004). In the business world, culture is treated as an important contribution to success. Based on the literature review and personal experiences as international students, my partner and I consider the cultural trend in business to be unquestionably a research priority. Through the focuses on how culture influences business, we make efforts to unveil the students’ ignorance of cultural backgrounds and to come up with some proper solutions. Most importantly, calling awareness of the actions to embrace different cultures outweighs all the rest.

The trend of globalization accelerates the occurrence of international trades. More business opportunities and profits are waiting to be discovered in other countries. Better understanding and acceptance of different cultures can lead to more effective communication and, ultimately, more success.

The researchers have noticed the passive acceptance of international students in universities and limited education about other cultures. As international students from China, my partner and I have noticed plenty of facts that block native people to understand people from different backgrounds. We want to find out why it is happening and preferably a way to end the unpleasant situation.

In order to keep pace with globalization, the researchers hope to explore it more deeply based on personal interests and study fields.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) in their *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* provide a definition of culture: Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action. This definition is specific, but too long.

In the textbook for International Business Course in UPEI, John, Kenneth, and Jerry (2007) defined culture as set of values, beliefs, rules, and institutions held by a specific group of people.

Robert Serpell talked about cultural psychology in his book “*Culture’s influence on behaviour*” in 1976. He addressed that culture has been conceived as affecting motivation at the level of the total personality, of attitudes and of specific motives; it has been conceived as affecting cognition at the level of the broad structure of intellect and of specific processes such as reasoning, communication and perception. That is why culture diversity existing.

Globalization

The trend of globalization put individual cultures into a worldwide perspective. Marcelo and deslree (2004) defined the concept of globalization as “what happens when the movement of
people, goods or ideas among countries and religions accelerates” in *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*. The contribution of Ardalan’s “Globalization and culture: four paradigmatic views” (2009) is the advice that in the era of globalization it is better for people to become open-minded because different people from different parts of the world have different perspectives and the best way to be able to live together is to learn about how others think.

**Culture’s Effect on Business**

In the business world, culture is always treated an important factor of success. There are two widely accepted ways to classify cultures based on differences in characteristics such as values, attitudes, social culture structure and so on. The two tools are: the Kluckhohn- Strodtbeck and Hofstede frameworks. Kluckhohn- Strodtbeck framework is for studying cultural differences along six dimensions, such as focus on past of future events and belief in individual or group responsibility for personal well-being. Hofstede framework is for studying cultural differences along four dimensions, such as individualism versus collectivism and equity versus inequality. (John, Kenneth & Jerry, 2007) However, the research process proved that Hofstede framework has five dimensions now.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) addressed in their book *Variations in value orientations* that a value-orientation theory was presented and tested in 5 communities in the southwestern part of the United States known as the Rimrock area. The 5 basic value orientations studied were: human nature, man-nature, time, activity, and relational orientations. Results of the tests were sufficiently conclusive to warrant according the value-orientation theory an independent status in studies of human behavior. They studied a given culture by asking the following questions: Do people believe that their environment controls them, that they control
the environment, or that they are part of nature? Do people focus on past events, on the present, or on the future implications of their actions? Are people easily controlled and not to be trusted, or can they be trusted to act freely and responsibly? Do people desire accomplishments in life, carefree lives, or spiritual and contemplative lives? Do people believe that individuals or groups are responsible for each person’s welfare? Do people prefer to conduct most activities in private or public?

Geert Hofstede (1980) in *Culture's consequences: International Difference in work-related values* proposed four dimensions on which the differences among national cultures can be understood: Individualism, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity. This volume comprises the first in-depth discussion of the masculinity dimension and how it can help us to understand differences among cultures. The book begins with a general explanation of the masculinity dimension, and discusses how it illuminates broad features of different cultures. The following parts apply the dimension more specifically to gender (and gender identity), sexuality (and sexual behavior) and religion, probably the most influential variable of all. Hofstede closes the book with a synthesizing statement about cultural values as they are linked to sexuality, gender and religion. The data used for the empirical part of the research were extracted from an existing bank of paper-and-pencil survey results collected within subsidiaries of on large multinational business organization in 40 counties, and covering among others many questions about values. The survey was held twice, around 1968 and around 1972, producing a total of over 116,000 questionnaires; respondents can be matched by occupation, age, and sex. Additional data were collected among managers participating in international management development courses and unrelated to the first multinational business organization. The four main dimensions on which country cultures differ were revealed by theoretical reasoning and
statistical analysis. However, one should consider that this study was conducted more than 30 years ago and that the country index scores are based on the mean average and not representative of divergent cultural beliefs within a society.

The second edition of Hofstede's book (2001) about culture dimensions, Culture's Consequences, covers a tremendous amount of new literature and adds a modest amount of new data to the first edition of 1980. It updates literature about the now ubiquitous dimensions of individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity that he adapted from Inkeles and Levinson's (1969) review of the national character literature in the first edition. The book includes data on these dimensions for 13 nations or regions not included in the first edition that previously only had been available in separate articles. It also adds data for a long-term/short-term orientation measure, provides scores for linguistic regions of several multi-language nations, and offers "index score estimates" for 16 nations not covered in the original study. The second edition makes several contributions to issues the field continues to face: it defends the validity of the original measures against recent critiques, evaluates the evidence for global changes in culture that affect the original data set's utility, and provides a thorough review of cross-cultural research.

From other aspects to view culture in business, Stephen and Martin (1997) examined the issues of the relationship of national cultural differences to ethical behaviors. They used an eclectic approach that combines several sources of data, which include surveys, actual published cases on unethical decisions by managers in many countries, and published descriptive information on the many characteristics of nations around the world that they wish to compare. It
helped students and managers understand multiple national cultures and their implications for business ethics in these countries.

How should people behave in an international business when facing culture shocks? Richard (1999) answered this question in his book. Moving from one country to another almost inevitably causes culture shock, and the severity of the shock is directly proportional to the cultural distance between the two countries concerned. Repeated shocks and adjustments tend to make you sensitive to cultural differences - initially of course mostly to the differences which divide cultures. But they found that those repeated adjustments also made them aware of the myriad similarities that bind them all together.

Penny and Chris (2008) provided practical suggestions for communication in international business. Anticipating and understanding cultural differences and being able to adapt the way you communicate accordingly is the foundation of any successful international business. It raises awareness of cross-culture differences, and serves as a reference for those who are seeking to adapt their communication skills to the international arena. The cultural preference scales were developed by Canning and have been refined, over the past 10 years, with the help of their international course participation. Some of the terminology they used was originally inspired by the research and theories of Edward T Hall - high versus low context communication styles, polychronic versus monochronic time system; Geert Hofstede - individualist versus collectivist (i.e. group oriented) societies; and Fons Trompenaars - achievement versus ascription (i.e. fixed versus relative truth).

McLean (2010) talks about the cross-culture management, the impact of culture diversity, cross-culture awareness training, cross cultural communication, and the Lewis Cultural Types
Model. Cross-cultural awareness is an opportunity for firms and associated stakeholders to adapt to life in the twenty-first century global village and integrate and communicate effectively with other cultures. Managers must know how best to communicate with individuals, and global business partners, on a cross-cultural basis.

Selmer (2006) reported that the traditional assumption in the literature on expatriate management is that the greater the cultural novelty of the host country, the more difficult it would be for the expatriate to adjust. To be able to test this proposition, a mail survey was directed towards Western business expatriates in China. Three sociocultural adjustment variables were examined: general, interaction and work adjustment. Although a negative relationship was hypothesized between cultural novelty and the three adjustment variables, results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that there was no significant association between them. Although highly tentative, the suggestion that it is as difficult for business expatriates to adjust to a very similar culture as to a very dissimilar culture is fundamental.

Culture in Business Education

Since the understanding of culture is so important in the business world, some previous academic research focused on how to apply culture theories to educational practices. Blasco (2009) explores students' perceptions of the way that culture is taught in an international business degree. Students' uncertainty about how to tackle cultural analysis in their study tasks is discussed in the light of their confusion over the concept of culture itself, the theoretical models they are taught, and the lack of conceptual integration on the IB programs. The findings indicate that even a strong emphasis on culture taught within the framework of a highly integrated, interdisciplinary international business program, with a student population that ought in theory to
be particularly receptive to cultural matters, is not enough in itself to guarantee that students engage with culture seriously during their studies. He recommends strengthening conceptual integration in IB programs by providing students with readings that explicitly address business activities from a cultural perspective to avoid a situation where they opt for cultural "short-cuts" in their assignments in the form of overly general, values-based descriptive approaches to culture.

In Tomasulo’s *Action Methods for Teaching Cultural Diversity Awareness* (1999), it is devoted to the description of action methods that can be used to provide a practical understanding and awareness of culturally diverse material. It draws from such varied disciplines as cross-cultural psychology, international business, and sociodrama, with the goal of suggesting a methodology for using role playing to teach ethnic, social, racial, religious, and cultural differences across the curriculum. In business and politics, the understanding of culturally sensitive issues has become a necessary means for survival. The study sought to find material on how diversity could be taught rather than what would be taught, using business contacts involved in diversity training for managers in various countries and asking to view their training materials. The aim was to amplify the principles outlined by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner in "Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business" (Second Edition) through the specific use of selected action methods. The purpose of doing this is to make the learning process more experiential by extracting greater understanding and increased competence in settling culturally sensitive dilemmas. The paper extensively examines the use of the "cultural double" as an action method that is typically used for three main purposes: providing emotional support, giving emotional expression, and reorganizing perceptions.
Bruce Kogut and Harbir Singh, authors of *The effect of national culture on the choice of entry mode* published in 1988, expressed that as Japan and other Asian countries continue to increase their overseas investments in the West, cultural distance may be increasingly offset by growing experience at the firm level, while United States and Europe have cultural differences and experience confounded because of the similarities in culture. This article mainly looks at three different types of entry models: acquisitions, joint ventures, and Greenfield investments. Results of the article offer the first large-sample multiple regression test of the prevailing view that entry mode selection is influenced by cultural factors. Furthermore they also suggest that further investigation into the cultural determinants of managerial decision making is soundly warranted.

Kwok Leung, Rabi S. Bhagat, Nancy R. Buchan, Miriam Erez and Cristina B. Gibson, in their 2005 research study, *Culture and International Business: Recent Advances and Their Implications for Future Research*, held the same opinion about the further study of culture diversity. They agreed on the fact that experimentations could be used as a tool to understand the limits of culture’s limits. Also it is an undeniable fact that research and study on international business is a “growth” area. Even though they fully support the Hofstede’s dimension theory to kick start the field, they do see the needs to move into more complex conceptualizations of culture. The several new perspectives on culture reviewed in this paper all point to multi-layer, multi-facet, contextual, and systems views of culture. These views converge to suggest that culture entails much more than cultural dimensions, and culture manifests itself in many levels and domains. Moreover, they also enabled viewers to see that cultural change is intertwined with socio-economic-political variables, and that these contextual variables may also add to, moderate, and/or mediate the effects of culture.
Therefore the participants in the cross-culture business take on significant roles. In those case, business students, who will become the next mainstream in world’s business, are stepping on the spot attracts attentions. In the study that published in 1991, named “A cross-cultural comparison of the ethics of business students”, Steven Lysonski and William Gaidis did the analysing on the ethical tendencies of university business students from the U.S.A., Denmark, and New Zealand by observing the reactions to ethical dilemmas presented in a set of ethical problem situations. These dilemmas dealt with coercion and control, conflict of interest, physical environment, paternalism and personal integrity. In the article, it pointed out that in the last decade, the enrolment in business school has grown in popularity as undergraduates have shunned education in the arts and sciences to study in business program. The study is mainly focused on two hypotheses: 1. business students and practicing manages will exhibit the same degree of sensitivity to the ethical dimensions of business decisions; 2. business students in varying countries will respond differently to ethical dilemmas. However, the results showed that despite a few differences among the three countries, students seem to share a common sensitivity to the dilemmas presented in each vignette. Similar to the findings of Ferrell and Weaver (1978) on marketing managers, this study found evidence that business students regarded their personal decisions as more ethical than the decisions they would expect from top management and their peers. At times, students believed top management had lower ethical standards than their own (e.g., providing proprietary information). Generally students show an inclination to engage in some types of unethical behaviour. They will pay bribes and will yield to pressure to award a contract to a particular supplier. They will compromise their ethics in conflict of interest situations for personal benefit. They will not restrict the publication of a book which could be used to create an atomic bomb. Students will introduce a more dangerous version of a product to
be more price competitive. Some will lie about a price discount in a promotional campaign. Yet, in some instances, students will also engage in ethical behaviour.

Besides, here is another similar study. Mohamed M. Ahmed, Kun Young Chung and John W. Eichenseher published the study in year 2003 on perceptions of business ethics also from business students’ perspective. The background rationale of conducting this report was based on good reasoning. Business relations rely on shared perceptions of what are acceptable/expected norms of behaviour. Immense expansion in transnational business made rudimentary consensus on acceptable business practices across cultural boundaries particularly important. Nonetheless, as more and more nations with different cultural and historical experiences interact in the global economy, the potential for misunderstandings based on different expectations is magnified. Such misunderstandings emerge in a growing literature on “improper” business practices – articulated from a narrow cultural perspective. The objective is to investigate how the perception/attitudes of business students towards the ethical dimension of doing business varies in different countries; Whether there are socio-cultural factors that influence the perception of ethicality in business practices. The authors also made the point that with the growing interest and debate surrounding

Valerie Priscilla Goby in 1999 published the article All Business Students Need to Know the Same Things! The Non–Culture-Specific Nature of Communication Needs. This article challenges the conventional approach to cross-cultural communication teaching that instructs students to adapt their communication styles to different cultures by providing them with details about the particular practices of these cultures. It argues for an approach that focuses on common principles of effective communication by pointing out some limitations of the current culture-
specific approach and presenting a pilot study that indicates the commonality of communication needs. It suggests some ways to find a different approach for studying international communication and shows that some current research is, in fact, moving in that direction. The author used the Pilot Study, which helps generate the idea that suggests quite strongly that what students feel they need in the workplace are good interpersonal skills. This sentiment echoes the thrust of the findings from these US studies.

Monika Chavez, in her article *We Say "Culture" and Students Ask "What?" University Students' Definitions of Foreign Language Culture* published in 2002, reported on how students define culture and follow with a brief overview of how students wish to see culture embedded in their (college) German classrooms. She holds the opinion that the definition of culture raises the more fundamental question of why we should teach culture at all. In her conclusion of the results, she generated a few practical issues related with students and culture. First of all, despite the variety of definitions for culture professionals use, many students do not share our consensus view that culture—however understood has a firm legitimate place in the language classroom. Although this article is focused on the language education in Germany, it still can still be used as a common representative when dealing with student and their perceptions of cultural differences.

Beverly Kracher, Abha Chatterjee and Arlene R. Lundquist in *Factors Related to the Cognitive Moral Development of Business Students and Business Professionals in India and the United States: Nationality, Education, Sex and Gender*, which was published in 2002, did the research focuses on the similarities and differences in the cognitive moral development of business professionals and graduate business students in two countries, India and the United States. Factors that potentially influence cognitive moral development, namely, culture,
education, sex and gender are analyzed and discussed. Moreover, the study also has implications for ethics education of business professionals and graduate business students. Since formal education positively impacts cognitive moral development, it is recommended that United States graduate business schools and professional financial advisor associations continue to provide formal ethics education experiences for their constituencies. Since ethics education is not typical in Indian graduate business schools or in their professional associations, and they recommend that formal ethics education programs be implemented. As mentioned by former studies and journals, education, business, students and culture are somewhat interrelated and mutually-enhancing.

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

1. Business students are lacking sensitivity towards the role that cultural differences play in the business world;

2. Business students’ knowledge about different cultures is somehow limited unconsciously;

3. University education has a large impact on the way students react when confronted with cross-cultural situations;

4. The adaptability, flexibility and capability of coping with cross-cultural business scenarios are necessities in business.

**RESEARCH METHOD**
Questionnaire surveys involve the gathering of information from individuals using a formally designed schedule of questions with research purpose. Survey questions have been developed through consultation with research advisor, Professor Edward Gamble. The survey was distributed on March 8th, 2011 to two sections (section A: 10:00am-11:15am section B: 11:30am-12:45am) of Strategic Management (BUS 391). It was given to the respondents at the beginning of each class and the length of time provided was approximately 10 minutes. They provided a representative sample of their attitude and knowledge about internationalization and how important they think culture is in business.

**Type of Survey**

The type of survey was a captive group survey (A J Veal, 2005). The students in the classes provided a number of respondent-completed questionnaires very quickly. Respondent-completion is less problematic in “captive” situation than in less controlled situations because the professor distributed the questionnaire to everyone before the class and explained the purpose of the survey and this ensured good standards of completion.

**Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire included 7 pro-coded questions which the researchers offered the respondent a range of answers to choose from. The respondents were asked to circle their responses.

The last question (Q 14) was open-ended without any prompting because the range of answers about “How to improve cultural understanding on campus” to be expected. Two lines were left for the respondent to write their own answers. The advantage of the open-ended
question is that the respondent’s answer is not influenced by the interviewer or the questionnaire, and the verbatim replies from respondents can provide a rich source of varied material which might have been untapped by categories on a pre-coded list. Open-ended questions’ major disadvantage is that response rates to open-ended questions can be very low- people are often too lazy or too busy to write out full length answers (A J Veal, 2005). That is why the researchers put it at the end of the questionnaire.

The other 6 questions were a combination of the two approaches mentioned above. The question was asked in an open-ended manner, but the interviewer’s questionnaire schedule includes a pre-coded list where the answer was recorded. If respondents answer “other”, there is a line for them to specify what the “other” is (A J Veal, 2005).

The questionnaire also used filters for respondents on “Have you considered working or studying abroad”. If their answer was “yes”, they were suggested to go to choose “the most attractive part about working or studying abroad”; vice versa. However, most respondents ignored the instructions and answered both questions. So the final data collection process abandoned filter.

Population and Sample

The population of this survey was the 2 sections’ students of Strategic Management, winter 2011 on March 8th (section A: 10:00am-11:15am section B: 11:30am-12:45am). Most of them are 3rd year business administration students. The reason for researchers to choose 3rd year students is that they are more knowledgeable and experienced than 1st and 2nd year students and less realistic about future career geographically than 4th year students.
Sample: 72 students in total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
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</table>

The respondents were required to complete their own survey without discussion with other people. They are also asked to put “Domestic” or “International” at the top of the survey according to their status in Canada.

VALIDITY

The use of student survey as a measurement tool proved to provide valid information with respect to the research question of how business students are aware of international business. The questions were posed to identify students’ willingness about working or studying overseas, attitude toward different cultures and knowledge of international business. The questions allowed for a precise answer together with freedom for students to add their opinions and ideas. The different groups (for example, male vs. female; domestic vs. international students) represented different characteristics in some aspects which will be fully discussed in the data analysis section.

LIMITATIONS

Even in a captive group survey, the respondents have the freedom to choose the questions they want to answer. A lot of questions were left blank without any reason. The coverage of the
survey was also a limitation. The 72 students constitute only 15% of all the students in Business Administration of UPEI. For the filter questions, a lot of respondents did not follow the instructions. Another issue is that some students provided two answers for one single-answer question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response rate for each question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>98.61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>79.17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>97.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>98.61%</td>
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<td>Q11</td>
<td>97.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ETHICS

This research involves participators through both interviews and surveys to provide primary information. They were informed in advance that this is a student research paper. Their participation in this study was strictly voluntary. No negative consequences would be incurred if they chose not to participate. All the answers would be kept strictly confidential and anonymous; there were no identification questions. Individual responses would not be reported. The survey was being used to help the researchers learn about the process of completing research. A report would be written based on an analysis of the overall data, and recommendations would be
developed based on this work. Once the professor has marked the report, all copies of the surveys and interviews will be destroyed.

DATA ANALYSIS

Overview (See appendix 1&2)

Of the 72 respondents, 18.06% of them are international students, the others are domestic students; 55.56% of them are female students, the others are male students. After the overview analysis, the researchers had to compare between: Section A vs. Section B; Female students vs. male students; and domestic students vs. international students.

Most respondents put “knowledge of culture” as the factor that contributes most to the success of doing business on an international scale. This is the research focus and objective of this report. However, their attitude about international business is not clear.

The source where they got information about a foreign business is mainly from new media, then personal contact and textbooks. This result gave the researchers a clue about how to increase their awareness about international business.

From the respondents’ own experience, more than half of them have never taken “International Business” (Bus 287) which is the only international business related course in Business Department of UPEI. This response illustrated their willingness to learn international business.
However, it is not surprising that 73.61% of the respondents showed that they have considered working or studying abroad. Here the survey came across some misunderstandings from the respondents while using filter question pattern. Even though the researchers addressed clearly on the survey about the instructions, there are 57 answers in Question 5 (what do you think is the most attractive part about working or studying abroad?) while only 53 respondents choose “Yes” in Question 4 (Have you considered working or studying abroad?). Under the similar circumstance, there are 63 answers in Question 6 (what is the main reason that holds you back from working or studying overseas?) while only 19 respondents choose “No” in Question 5 (Have you considered working or studying abroad?) After the interviews with respondents and discussion between the two researchers, the following 3 reasons resulting in this error were identified:

1. The design of survey: The Question 5 and Question 6 are on different pages. It is easy for respondents to forget the instruction after they turned to the 2nd page.

2. The design of question: After the researchers got the results of all the surveys and rereading the two questions, the Question 5 and Question 6 are simultaneous instead of mutually exclusive.

3. The respondents’ ignorance: It may happen when some of the respondents doing the survey, they ignored the instructions.

Regardless of the error, let us come back to the answers of the questions. For Question 5, most respondents put “life experience” as the first reason which encourages them working or studying abroad. For Question 6, almost 50% students were held back from working or studying overseas by “family and friends” reason.
The most popular foreign destination for the respondents is Europe, then Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) and North America. Only 4.16% respondents are interested in Asia and Africa. Nobody chose to go to Middle East.

There are some barriers between domestic and international students to build friendships. The biggest obstacle is the language barrier which means more efficient communication methods besides oral communication should be created. The cultural backgrounds and lifestyle both performed important roles as secondary obstacles between domestic and international students.

The Question 9 is a self-identification one to see their knowledge level about different cultures. The answers concentrate on moderate level. There are an equal amount of responses on good and poor level. Only 4.17% respondents have the confidence to identify their familiarity with different cultures as “very good”.

The following Question 10 and 11 were designed to prove the self-identification Question 9’s reliability. The results of the current political issue question and cultural question are optimistic (81.94% correct rate in Question 10; 59.72% correct rate in Question 11)

Even though most respondents think that language is the biggest barrier to communicate with international students, 90.28% of respondents showed their interests to learn another language.

For the last open-ended question, regardless of the low response rate (50%), there are valuable answers for “How to improve cultural understanding on campus” which are listed below:
• School should offer more language, international business or culture courses. Some of them should be required courses in the degree audit. And suggest language courses as electives.

• Create chances for international students to have their voice heard and encourage them to share their cultures.

• Promote the current diversity week more.

• Forced group work with international students.

• International students inform class about their culture through presentations and handouts.

• Guest speakers and workshops about international business.

• School should offer more exchange programs.

Females Respondents vs. Males Respondents

The biggest difference between females and males’ response is in Question 6 (What is the main reason that holds you back from working or studying overseas?). Only 3.7% (1 out of 36 male respondents) chose “Family and friend”.

However, for the 36 female respondents in Question 6, 66.67% (24 out of 36 female respondents) chose “Family and friends”.

The bias between female and male respondents is the result of psychological differences between genders. Some argue that women are family-centralized while it is not easy to hold men back by these reasons.

Domestic Respondents vs. International Respondents
For international students, the most attractive destination to study or work abroad is North America (53.85% response rate for C. North America). However, the domestic students prefer Europe to other places (62.71% response rate for D. Europe).

Another difference noticed in the survey results is that more international students (84.62%) have considered working or studying abroad than domestic students (71.19%). It can be the result because the international students are already in a foreign environment (Canada).

Section A vs. Section B

Even though the international students percentage in Section A and Section B is different (11.11% in Section A; 25% in Section B), there are no obvious differences in their answers.

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

In order to gain clearer and more complete view of the cultural differences that have an impact on business, my partner and I conducted three interviews with three business professors at U.P.E.I. Based on the theme of culture exchange and personal experiences, six questions were carefully designed (See Appendix 3). Nevertheless, due to the fact that these three professors have different personal experiences and different cultural background, the responses to each question varied in terms of depth and breadth. In order to generate an organized view of the results from the interviews, my partner and I summarised the conversations as following.

Interview with Professor Gary Evans

The first interviewee was conducted with Professor Gary Evans. Evans has held such positions in the past as Vice President International, Division Head, and Principal and Partner
from various firms, and his most recent assignment was as CEO with KPMG Consulting for Central Eastern Europe. Fulfilling this position required Evans’ role to include such tasks as creating a client-focused sales culture within the region, and implementing a key account program as well as new reporting procedures for the tracking of opportunities and projects. Besides, Evans has research interest in *International Business Development and Culture.* (upei.ca)

Speaking of the question about how culture differences have been playing the role in the business world. Evans used his working experience in Middle Europe to give the idea of how corporations in the world, especially the large world-class companies have been seeing the increasing diversification in the workforce. Evans had once worked for KPMG as Chief Executive Officer that had to cooperate with team members from 15 countries. Some of them could not communicate with each other or even held biases against one another. What Evans found most effective in dealing with a pool of talents that has communication and cooperation issues were assigning the ones that could communicate with each other together first and let them come up with as many ideas as possible. Afterwards, he would combine the small groups together to articulate the proposals that had been generated. Among all these business conduction, Gary mentioned a few things that he thinks matter in international business situations, including culture awareness, appreciation towards different culture, willingness and ability to understand and lastly, capability of being bilingual. Moreover, Gary used his own life experience with his best friend in Bahamas writing a book together to demonstrate how people from different cultural backgrounds would share plenty in common and benefit each other both mentally and practically. He feels sorry for the existence in establishing networking, either on or off campus. From his observation, business students in U.P.E.I are being local in mind and in
action. Part of this might be due to the “centric attitude”, which prevents them from seeing the world in a global view.

Evans has showed his agreement on our hypothesis of international networking could have a long-lasting influence on our business students either in life or in career path. Unfortunately, many of the business students here on campus could not see the significance of this point. Evans has offered his suggestions also on how to improve the current situation:

1. Faculty addresses the issue more often and help international students in class;
2. More exchange program on world basis.

Furthermore, Evans talked about an MBA program that has been proceeding among China, Canada and England for the school of business in U.P.E.I. Except for himself; the other two directors of this joint program are his friends in different countries. This again, is using the fact to call upon the awareness of diversification in culture and by all means to help students to adjust to the changes.

Interview with Professor Alan Duncan

Alan Duncan was a senior executive with over 25 years experience in the international financial services and pensions industries. Duncan graduated with B.Comm degree from Otago University, NZ, with a double major in accounting and management. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant with Coopers & Lybrand, where he worked in their New Zealand, London and Bermuda offices specialising in computer and financial services audits. (upei.ca)
Duncan has been associating with international exchange programs on campus for several years and he thinks it is of large importance to promote and keep organizing this program. Learning about another cultures is more than necessary in the business world. Furthermore, Gamble thinks that exchange programs or culture related business courses should became mandatory in the curriculum. Forcing students to accept the fact the globalization is evolving at the pace that they can no longer ignore. In order to cope with the culture shock that may arise, Duncan suggests business students should practice their adaptability and capability on purpose.

Interview with Professor Edward Gamble

Gamble is a new faculty member at the UPEI School of Business. He taught various courses at the University of Saskatchewan for several years. (upei.ca) Edward has lived and worked in Europe, Australia and Asia. Indeed, Gamble has worked in 12 countries, and he thinks these experiences benefit him either in real life or his career path to a large extent.

When asked about the important things that he has gained from these experiences, Gamble mentioned two things that he has learned from these, one is that he knows very little, and the other on is he wants to learn. During all these adjustments that he went through in order to fit into the different societies, Gamble thinks “informal communication” is the biggest barrier. Furthermore, on the subject of the business students’ interactions with peers form different cultural backgrounds on U.P.E.I. campus, Gamble showed his lack of understanding. Gamble considers international students would bring about plenty of benefits to local students, and the same for international students too as they can share Canadian culture, although that is not always the case. Also, Gamble talked about the efforts that faulty members should make to help international students to join the local community. This interaction needs three parties to try,
including faculty, local students and international students. Talking about the approaches that can be adopted to improve the cultural awareness on campus, Gamble suggested exchange program and international case competition that send students overseas to actually experience another culture in person hence students know another culture from all aspects. At last, Gamble did express his understanding towards local students being inactive in the interactions with internationals students, they might be afraid of huge gap and differences.

**FINDINGS AND COMPARISONS**

After collecting and analysing the results from interviews with professors, my partner and I notice numerous shared opinions. The similarities include the followings:

1. Reinforcing the support from faculty to international students both in and out of class;
2. Promote culture related classes amongst students;
3. Start better organized exchange program, which could implement in several approaches;
4. Agreement on the importance of culture learning and culture’s role in terms of business skills development.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on our former analysis, culture is gaining more and more attention in the business world. Everyone might have noticed it, but they might not have taken measures to cope with the different cultural issues that take place in business related affairs. Especially as business students in universities, they do have the awareness that culture has been a significant participant in the
business world; however, they do not make efforts to prepare for the changes. In this particular case, due to the time and financial limit, my partner and I can only provide associated evidence from the majority of third year students from Business School of U.P.E.I.

In the former section of the research, as researchers, we established basic research hypotheses that need to be analysed in the following. After conducting the survey and interview, and combine what have observed from the researches, my partner and I come to conclusions in respond to the four assumptions:

1. Business students are lacking the sensitivity towards the role that cultural differences play in business world;

   Most respondents for the surveys put “knowledge of culture” as the factor that contributes most to the success of doing business on an international scale. However, their attitude about international business is not clear. The source where they got information about a foreign business is mainly from new media, then personal contact and textbook (more detailed data see Appendices 1&2). They have learned related knowledge from a theoretical level, but interactions with international students, especially international students from developing countries, are far below acceptance in terms of networking in business.

5. Business students’ knowledge about different cultures is somehow limited unconsciously;

   In the developed survey questionnaire (Appendix 4), two basic questions were set from current different cultural backgrounds. Some business students think they are good in terms of knowledge of culture did not get the right answers. They have been immersed in the knowledge pool of business; nonetheless, they have not paid enough attention to the evolution as time flies.
6. University’s education has large impact on the way students react when confronted with cross-cultural situations;

These practices have been mentioned either in the open question on the survey or in the interviews by the faulty members. There is definitely much to do as management for business school. Prepare students for the businesses practices include preparing them for the culture shocks.

7. The adaptability, flexibility and capability of coping with cross-cultural business scenarios are necessities in business;

The ever varying business world calls for the professionals with abilities to adapt to the new situations and capabilities of solving the problems when they arise.

Based on the analysis, my partner and I generated three main possible approaches toward the culture issue in business regarding students:

1. Organize and develop more exchange program and call for participation among students;
2. Start more culture-based courses to improve the awareness and knowledge of cultural practices;
3. Adopt the new communication channel, like Twitter, Facebook and the like. To establish platform for local and international students to network.

FURTHER RESEARCH
The objective of this research report was to find how cultures influence business. However, the research process narrowly focused on a limited number of business students and business faculty members which means the research was done on a small scale. Since the topic is about doing business in the international perspective, it is better to go out to business people. It is also necessary to distribute the surveys to more business students. There are some areas which should be focused on in the further research:

- How to get more students involved and be aware of culture’s role in doing business;
- How to encourage students to go out and explore other cultures;
- How to find the most efficient communication method between the international and domestic students;
- If it is possible to make International Business course (BUS 278) mandatory;
- What kind of new media that should be provided by school to improve the international cultural education at business department.
### Appendix 1: Survey Results

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- More events where all students get together and do co-curricular activities
- Get international students more involved into the local community

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- More activities about international business; more international exchange program
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•Have different cultural nights • On campus activities that put students of different backgrounds together •Create chances for students with int. Background to have their voice heard and encourage them to share their culture
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**Section B/ Domestic/ Male: 13**

- Talk about it in class, so people will hear and learn about culture
- Emphasizing the importance of other languages and promoting the diversity week more
- A well target mandatory Int. Business course
- Encourage group work
- Int. Business course mandatory, many other schools do this
- Note share
- By putting an end to hyphenated Canadians (Native American, etc), and treating everyone as regular Canadians
- Have more courses offered in that field
- Mandatory courses in Int. relation

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**Section B/ Domestic/ Female: 14**

- Projects (Environmental Research outside Canada)
- Lack of time
- Fair of unknown
- Content where I am (also)
- Clique up
- Expand on the Int. Business course or offer new courses
- Hold meetings/gathers to hold people together
- Required courses in Int. Studies; forced group work with Int. students
- Courses on different cultures, events
- More events that put Canadian & Int. Students together (Int. potluck)
- Organize events where students can interact and have time to discuss culture without pressure in the class
- More int. Courses offering
- Required Int. Cultural courses
- Make another language required course
- Advertising more social events; create groups or clubs.
Appendix 2: Pie Chart Analysis of Survey results

Q1: Most important factor in doing international business successfully

- Knowledge of culture
- Personal ability and capability
- Government regulation

Q2: Sources about international business

- Textbook
- New Media
- Personal Contact
- Other
Q3: Ever took International Business (BUS 287)

Q4: Ever considering working or study abroad
Q5: Reason to go abroad

- Life experience
- Salary
- Promotion opportunities
- Others

Q6: Reasons for not going abroad

- Family and friends
- Lifestyle
- Environment
- Lack of knowledge of another culture
- Other
Q7: Choices of foreign countries

- Asia
- Africa
- North America
- Europe
- Middle East
- Australia and New Zealand

Q8: Biggest barrier with international students

- Language
- Religion or belief
- Cultural background
- Lifestyle
- Others
Q13: Gender

- Female
- Male
Appendix 3: Interview Questions Template

Interview for Business 495 Research Project

Interviewee:

Interviewers: Ma Yao & Xi Ran (4th Business Administration Students)

1. What is your experience in International Business?  
   What is the influence of multi-culture backgrounds on your career path?
2. How do you evaluate the performance of international students?
3. What do you think of the globalization?
4. How important do you think the culture is in International Business?  
   What is the culture influence on business?
5. What do you think is the most attractive part about working aboard?
6. What do you recommend to improve the awareness of international business on campus?
Appendix 4: Survey Template

The following survey is designed to collect information for a research report on the subject of How cultural differences influence the business. This survey is being used to complete a report that is required for the senior-level Business Research course offered by the School of Business at the University of PEI. Questions included in this survey concern cultural knowledge as well as some demographic details. Please note, there are no right or wrong answers; answers merely reflect your personal experiences.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You can opt-out at any time you choose and no negative consequences will be incurred if you choose not to participate. Please be assured that all answers will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous; there are no identifying questions. Individual responses will not be reported. The survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete. The survey is being used to help the students learn about the process of completing research.

A report will be written based on an analysis of the overall data, and recommendations will be developed based on this work. All responses to the survey will be anonymous, and no one individual set of responses will be reported. Once the professor has marked the report, all copies of the surveys will be destroyed.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or your experience as a participant, please contact the Professor supervising this project using the contact details provided below. By starting the survey you agree to participate in this study and consent to the use of your responses in the research previously outlined.

Thank you for your participation in the survey.

Please circle your response ☑️.

1. Which factor do you think contributes most to the success of doing business on an international scale?
   A. Knowledge of Culture
   B. Personal Ability and Capability
   C. Government Regulations
   D. Others (please specify) ________________________________
2. Where do you usually get information about a foreign business?
   A. Textbooks                            B. News Media                          C. Personal Contact
   D. Others (please specify) ____________________________

3. Have you ever taken BUS 287 (International Business)?
   A. Yes                                    B. No

4. Have you considered working or studying abroad?
   A. Yes (go to Q5)                          B. No (go to Q6)

5. What do you think is the most attractive part about working or studying abroad?
   A. Life experiences                   B. Salary                              C. Promotion opportunities
   D. Others (please specify) ____________________________

6. What is the main reason that holds you back from working or studying overseas?
   A. Family and Friends                      B. Lifestyle                       C. Environment
   D. Lack of Knowledge of another Culture
   E. Others (please specify) ____________________________

7. If given a chance to study or work abroad, where would be your first choice?
   A. Asia            B. Africa         C. North America         D. Europe         E. Middle East
   F. Australia and New Zealand.

8. What do you think is the biggest barrier to building friendship with international students?
   A. Language Barrier       B. Religion or Belief     C. Cultural Background     D. Lifestyle
   E. Others (please specify) ____________________________

9. To what extent would you evaluate yourself in terms of familiarity with different cultures?
   A. Very good               B. Good                        C. Moderate               D. Poor
10. Which two countries recently have rebel protests? (Please circle two.)
A. Egypt  B. Russia  C. Bangladesh  D. Libya  E. The United Arab Emirates

11. Do you know which country is home to panda bear?
A. Thailand  B. Korea  C. China  D. Japan  E. Other (please specify) _______________

12. Would you like to learn another language?
A. Yes  B. No

13. Are you a _____?
A. Male  B. Female

14. How do you think we could improve cultural understanding on campus?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Thanks for your time.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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