

**Traveling, intercultural experiences, and managerial leadership:  
Are international travelers better leaders?**

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### **Abstract**

This manuscript describes both an International Business and International Management research project by the Children's University (Universidad de los Niños) at Universidad EAFIT aiming to determine the impacts of personal internationally travelling on successful local business leaders. The purpose in this project is to advance a framework for future research aimed at enhancing our understanding of why people who has regularly travelled abroad for any reasons, either personal or professional, makes them better leaders than others who have not.

Children within age 14 and 17 year old participating in this project were motivated to study the relationship between travelling experiences and business leadership, with the proposition that travelling implies a leap of faith to new experiences and opening horizons, which could be capitalized at the workplace and at the business environment.

The research was exploratory and qualitative in nature. Data was collected through interviews and the sample was convenience, focusing on high ranked academics and university managers using an open-ended interview format. Interviewees were asked about their travelling experiences and their interaction with different cultures and if they perceived that a person who travels can become better leader. This research paper concentrates on two main variables as the cornerstones, which are leadership and culture. In the findings and discussion sections, this research paper illustrates that people that has more interaction with culture is a better leader.

## Introduction

This paper describes an International Business project by the Children's University (*Universidad de los Niños*) at Universidad EAFIT. This specific project aims to determine the impacts and the relationship between travelling experiences, cultural interaction, and professional success.

Worldwide Children's Universities are relatively new programs. They were officially founded in Europe on 2003, with the purpose of having Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) engaging to audiences, such as children, enabling motivation and communication of science from an early age and reducing the gap between school and higher education (Gary, 2014). Until now, there have been identified 356 children's universities in 40 different countries with similar objectives by the European Children's Universities Network (EUCU) (Gary, 2014). In Latin America, only Universidad EAFIT (Colombia) has a program of this type registered to EUCU (Gary, 2014).

These Children's Universities have several characteristics when inserted in the academic world. They are not part of the formal education system and therefore, do not require evaluation of the teaching-learning process. Also, they are established within HEIs but have different core audiences. Their objectives are not enclosed in formal training; however, their purposes are aligned with the core issues of any educational process. In other words, they are part of much larger outreach systems in which the university holds different roles and creates a bridge between the children, their families, and their schools with the university and vice versa.

Children's University at EAFIT was created within a private university located in Medellin, one of the major cities of Colombia. This program began in 2005 under the leadership of the University President (Mr. Juan Luis Mejia Arango) and the Director of Communications (Ms.

Ana Cristina Abad) and it was created to involve children and youth with scientific knowledge that is produced at EAFIT University. This program is a forerunner in Latin America. The methodology implemented has allowed children between 7 and 16 year old, from different socio-economic levels of the city, to participate meaningfully in the university's life, inviting them to interact with teachers and students to approach investigation that occurs within the campus (Universidad EAFIT, 2014).

Children's University at EAFIT consists of three stages, and each is developed annually. The first stage is called "*encuentros con la pregunta*" (encounters with the question) and it is aimed at children with ages between 8 and 13 year old in order to bring them closer to science and investigation through the questions they ask themselves about various topics of interest. The second stage, is called "*expediciones al conocimiento*" (expeditions to knowledge) and invites children between 9 and 16 year old, to interact with various investigative perspectives based on a central subject. Finally, "*Proyectos de Ciencia*" (Science Projects) is aimed at high school students (9th to 11th grade) that apply qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, to develop projects that arise from their interests in different areas of knowledge. It is important to note that one participant can attend three consecutive stages in annual cycles, as follows: First stage (one year), second stage (four years) and third stage (just before leaving high school) (Universidad EAFIT, 2014).

### **Objective – Research Question**

For the purposes of this research paper, leadership is defined as the perceptual grade of success a person has to drive others to achieve their vision goal. As we go through this research, the several factors, characteristics, qualities, among many others definitions that described a person with attributes of a leader will be found. With this context in mind, the main objective of

this research paper is to explore and identify if people that has have broader cultural interactions has more chances to become a better leader.

### **Literature Review**

With the aim of exploring if managers that has been involved in international contexts and has more cultural interactions perceive themselves as better leaders, this research paper concentrates on two main variables as the cornerstones, which are leadership and culture.

Regarding leadership, there is broad diversity of definitions of this concept (Sims, Faraj & Yun, 2008). According to Sims et al. (2008), each of us has a personal subjective version of what leadership is or at least the relevant understanding to classify a task-oriented type of leadership versus a people-oriented type of leadership.

Sims et al. (2008) explored the different kinds of leadership and how these differ based on their specific situation, referring to the “contingency” theory of leadership, which was proposed by many other authors. In other words, the definition of leadership could be interpreted conditioned upon the factors within the particular circumstances. This perspective is also supported by Muller and Turner (2006) that suggested that over the past century, several leadership schools have evolved the understanding that different leadership styles are appropriate in different circumstances or contexts (Muller & Turner, 2006).

Regarding Alon and Higgins (2005), these authors explained that leadership is the ability to turn a vision into reality. Additionally, in 1999, Robert House and his colleagues defined leadership as “the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization” (House, 1999 as quoted by Alon & Higgins, 2005:

502). For example, managers must have skills and the ability to drive people to achieve a common goal while keeping them motivated at the same time.

Furthermore, for a better leadership, managers must understand different cultures in terms of expressions and values, which in turn would help them to build better interactions and more effective results in the work place (Omran, Mahmood & Hussin, 2009).

On the other hand, Omran et al. (2009) discussed that there are similarities that goes hand-to-hand when managers and leaders are described. Nevertheless, being a good manager does not necessarily make a person an effective leader, as it is sometimes mistakenly thought in the business environment. This is further explained when a project manager might have the ability to bring out the employee's interest to achieve a certain task done, but the employee might not follow systematically the instructions as the project manager planned.

There are some types of leadership that might not promote employee satisfaction as it is explained with leaders that misbehave and act in a capricious way. This kind of leaders are less likely to be followed by team members and have a negative affective response such as complaining and withdrawal by the employees (Yun, Cox & Sims, 2007).

Generally, the global understanding of a leader is the person able to manage any situation and lead a group of people. In addition, the scholars Butler, Zander, Mockaitis, and Sutton (2012) argued that the definition of a global leader refers to a person that is able to leverage the skills, resources, and values of others in multiple locations in order to earn trust of subordinates and effectively lead them to achieve a set of goals (Butler, Zander, Mockaitis, & Sutton, 2012). There are several characteristics and factors an individual has to have in order to become a great leader and be able to find the team collaboration. Additionally, effective leaders encourage a great number of multiple social relationships.

Lisak and Erez (2014)'s study identified the global characteristics of emergent leaders in the global work context by examining the combined pattern of three global characteristics, which gave a clear understanding of leadership and their independent effects in multicultural teams.

Regarding the faster growth of globalization and the demanding interconnectivity between cultures, a new trend of self-managing multicultural team format has been standing out.

However, team effectiveness in self-managing multicultural teams might not be as effective compared to multicultural teams with clear formal leadership that have the skills and shared cultural norms behaviors to guide its members (Chen, Chua, Morris & Lee, 2012).

Chen et al. (2012) argued that the lack of formal leadership in a self-managing multicultural team, in addition to the uncertainty and conflict derived from cultural diversity, would have a negative impact in team effectiveness compared with teams that are directed by a leader (Chen et al., 2012).

In terms of culture, Hofstede explained this notion as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. The core element in culture are values which by definition is the broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (Hofstede, 1999:35). This means that people identifies what is considered good or bad, right or wrong, immoral and moral based on their set of values that distinguish that specific culture from another. For instance, people in Pakistan could consider that women are not allowed to show uncovered parts of their body in public and that they should be covered all the time, with the exception of the eyes. This behavior could be also be related to religion, which is an important part of people's culture. On the other hand, many developed countries such as the United States of America have a much-laid back social enforcement on the women choice of dressing.

In addition to explain culture and values, Hofstede (1999) purported that cultural differences reside at the country level, mostly in values and less in practice. Therefore, two cultures cannot be identical phenomena. This means that people with different but similar cultures would interact with not too much conflict in society, but the set of values are never universal. However, at the business level, organizational culture consists mostly of different practices, rather than different values (Hofstede, 1999).

On the other hand, Edward T. Hall (1979) described culture as man's primary way to coding information and deal with it. In addition, Hall (1979) also explained culture as a "set of solution to past problems and challenges and is therefore past oriented, and as a consequence, short in its inventory of solutions to future problems" (Hall, 1979: xi). Therefore, culture is explained as earned experiences of the human being that shape him to structure society.

Hall (1979) also argued that there are many debates in order to understand communication, which is a key element linked to culture and its development. This author also defined communication as a transaction that is always constant and that involves information, which becomes the DNA-RNA that organizes the "stuff of life", as he called it (Hall, 1979).

## **Methodology**

This exploratory research was based on a qualitative methodological approach. Data was collected through interviews that were conducted to Universidad EAFIT's academic and managerial leaders.

As it was stated before, this project seeks to address the following objectives:

- Identify the factors that make a person to perceive himself/herself as more successful at his/her work place based on his/her travel experiences and cultural interactions.
- Differentiate the diverse factors that influence a person to become a better leader and be more assertive in the decision making process.

The research was exploratory. Furthermore, the sample was convenience by nature. In fact, interviews were performed to ten high ranked academic and university managers. Particularly, the interviews were specifically exploratory where the information was categorized in a table and data was later analyzed.

### **The research design and data collection**

Interviews were conducted with high ranked academics and university managers using an open-ended interview format. Interviewees were asked about their travelling experiences and their interactions with different cultures. The interviews were conducted as follows:

- The interviewees were randomly selected based on availability in their schedules to perform the interview within two-week time.
- Each interviewee was asked open-ended questions about their travelling experiences and how they perceive those experiences had influenced their professional lives.

### **Data Analysis**

The conducted interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Each answer was organized and classified into different categories, using content analysis, which made possible to examine data using descriptive statistics that identify categories in which travelling experiences and exposition to different cultures positively influence the professional success.

**Findings**

In this study, it was deduced from the interviewees, that managers that understand different cultures in the work place have more chances to drive their team members to better and more effective results.

The summary data that is presented below was the result of content analysis techniques, in which the information obtained was splatted into emerging categories that allow quantifying the most repeated categories studied.

In order to reach a consistent and accurate conclusion, it was numerically necessary to know which the most recurring factors were. These factors based on the considerations of high ranked academics and university managers (convenience sample), who determined the significance of the categories through their personal perceptions of how they have achieved career success.

Each of the respondents was identified with a number in order to preserve the interviewees’ anonymity. The results of the data analysis are presented in detail in the diagram below:

	Interviewees										
More relevant factors	ID 1	ID 2	ID 3	ID 4	ID 5	ID 6	ID 7	ID 8	ID 9	ID 10	Total
Open minded/ General knowledge	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Languages	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	9
Understanding of cultures	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	7
Recognition/ Comparison between cultures/ policies	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		7
Broaden network of culture connections/ Intercultural Relation	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	7

<b>Import values and practices</b>	X		X	X	X				X	X	6
<b>Escape tradition</b>	X			X	X	X	X		X		6
<b>Savvy decision making</b>	X		X			X	X		X		5
<b>Be more competent/ Qualified</b>	X		X			X	X			X	5
<b>Work and personal educational background</b>		X		X	X		X	X			5
<b>Wiser viewpoints/ Troubleshooting</b>	X		X	X	X						4
<b>Better leader/ Improved performance when traveling</b>			X	X	X					X	4
<b>Teamwork/ Linking to new projects</b>		X		X	X				X		4
<b>Take on big challenges/ competitor attitude</b>		X						X	X		3
<b>Assuming independence/ culture protocol</b>			X					X		X	3

According to the answers given by the respondents, it was inferred that knowledge can be acquired in different ways, but its development is not as quick as it is normally thought.

Likewise, although through the Internet, a book, music, and even astral travelling the experiences are totally different, lessons can be learned without traveling, although with some limitations, as mentioned by the University President.

"The Internet allows anyone to gain experience without the need of traveling, but the Internet has a defect, no smells, nor emotions, tasteless. The trip gives you much more experience compared to what the Internet provides. It offers the opportunity to experience

the tangible [...] there is a difference between readings and experiencing what is therein mentioned. When we read that the first expression that was included in the list and material heritage of UNESCO was the buzz of the Marrakech market is really different than approaching this place at six in the evening and listen to the murmur and the smell of fried goat that flows" (University President).

In this case, 100 % of the sample believed that an important aspect of travelling is the mind expansion through the acquisition of knowledge and experience that can be influenced or be determined by other factors. The interviewee ID 6 states that the language can be one of the essential factors to manifest that a person is and what he/she wants:

"The language can convey what we are, what we want, and what we can become in the future, so if I do not know the language that others are using, or at least there is a common language such as the idiom, simply I cannot express who I am or I cannot create boundaries, meet new cultures, or expand possibilities" (Interviewed ID 6).

Regarding the point of view of interviewees and their position about the relationship with others, 90% of the sample believed that language is an important factor in communication for obtaining knowledge in a more feasible manner and therefore, the ability to establish relations in various fields.

Based on the answers given by the interviewees, it is clear that intercultural relationships are essential to gain knowledge and to understand other cultures, since 70% of the sample of this research agreed with this premise, including the Rector.

Simply, communicating with someone from another culture, either verbally or nonverbally, facilitates different types of learning as illustrated below by one of the interviewees:

"I share the perception that travel enriches [...] Particularly, I have always believed that the experiences acquired have undoubtedly much academic value, primarily, from the point of view of cultural formation. For instance, you can strengthen other languages learning, learn from other cultures, meet local people of the host cultures, understand different ways of thinking, and respect their points of view, the way they see the world, and how this contributes to the overall picture of perception. Travelling has opened my mind to different intercultural issues"(Interviewed ID 2).

The academic formation at the personal and working levels are factors that were not specifically mentioned by all interviewees. Actually, only 50% of the sample interviewed mentioned this aspect. Nevertheless, it can be deducted that this factor was one of the aspects that received the strongest reviews when considering that through this issue it could be increased the opportunity to achieve career success. For some interviewees, it is essential to pursue academic training, as it contributes to greater cultural interactions. There are bigger possibilities to create working groups in which predominates cultural diversity, as it was evidenced by the specific experience of one of the interviewees:

"[...] I lived several years overseas finishing my postgraduate studies and I think I have always said that those experiences have been undoubtedly much academic value, but especially high value as cultural formation, such as the building of a second or many other languages [...]" (Interviewed ID 2).

Resembling the above factors, personal formation, academic and professional training are areas where interaction and cultural diversity can also be crucial to the formation and creation of partnerships. In addition, contribute to the spread of values and practices that lead to submission of new challenges and competition between organizations for the same purpose.

Import values and practices is now a widely used method that organizations implement in different areas of business development when you want to reach a new territory. Taking into consideration, all these factors are relevant in a global scale. Since 60 % of interviewees including the rector agree with this factor.

"I believe in a key phrase proposed by strategic thinking is "think globally and act locally" [...] Gonzalo Restrepo Lopez, who was the president of the chain store success in Colombia, is one of the most interesting examples of internationalization, since at the time when Makro (chain stores wholesalers) decided to open stores in Medellin, Mr. Gonzalo Restrepo decided to establish a strategic alliance with a foreign company that would help them guide the organization he was leading at the time. Through the learning obtained for that alliance, which later made him the confidant of the foreign company in all Latin America " (Interviewed ID 1).

In this specific case it can be assumed that the virtual disappearance of "Exito" stores was prevented by rapid international action and implementing strategic business alliances learned. The culture protocols as the commitment of independence are items to consider when having a formal relationship with another culture and even more in areas where social intercourse has a significant influence on important activities for individuals such as a job entails.

" [...] I lived in America and I had the opportunity to know the American culture, but also with the chance of living in a college environment I was able to meet people from other countries. It was very common the presence of foreign students in the campus. I personally had a lot to do with people from India, which I learned a lot about their food, their way of thinking, relating to each other, and their perception of life [...]" (Interviewed ID 2).

The previous experience that shares the interviewee ID 2 shows a deductively manner that work with people from India mainly depended on the respect that he had about the behavior, lifestyle, and ways of relating to people who culturally were not related to him. Protocol was essential for coupling to a group of people from other countries as appropriate key element for successful interaction. In other words:

"In your first encounter you are missing the guidelines of courtesy to the person with whom you interacting, then, you create a barrier. For example, you cannot talk business with Japanese while having dinner because in their culture it is very disrespectful. Thus, if you do not prepare by learning about the host culture... if you do not carried yourself with open mind... if you have lack of the ability to recognize other in their difference and their own cultural expressions, then you are doomed for failure [...] I thought protocol was a caprice of some cultures and individuals but it turns out that the protocol is the civilized way to understand different cultures and the easy way of entry and interaction" (University President).

Associating to other projects is another proposed factors that promote interpersonal relationships that could arise from travelling. Communication is a medium that facilitates interpersonal relationships by playing an important role as well as responsibility and respect for others. In this case the cross-cultural marriage for the creation and promotion of working groups and innovative projects. In additions, provides not only a suitable coupling to different lifestyles but also rules of protocol and better perform because a team composed of cultural diversity helps to solve problems through different perspectives and point of view based on the past experiences.

Although connection to projects with individuals of differences cultures bring lots of benefits as mentioned above, only 40 % of managers think that could be an essential factor. Teamwork is

considered a more viable aspect to reach the desired success through the variety of opinions that may arise within it the execution of the project. Teamwork leads to decision-making skills by learning from others. Considered by 50 % of respondents as a valuable factor in finding a job progress through travel experiences. These aspects are demonstrated by the review of

Respondent ID 9:

"It's important to work with people from other cultures, because it constantly interaction and to sharing points of different views as they can form their own opinion based on the experiences of others and their own experiences, which may contribute to making a good decision " (Interviewed ID 9).

Travels offer the opportunity to exchange experiences, where new cultures are observed interacting with new people and possibilities of sensitivity knowledge behavior and personal thought are opened. Escape of tradition is a factor that is considered by 60 % of managers as important because being open to new opinions and perceives the passage of life from a different view.

"Traveling is just like expanding your spirit, opens the possibilities of knowledge and even leaves a mark on the body, because you're going to see the world differently, what makes you change your way of seeing, of being and being [...] traveling allows you to learn the difference of things, the many possibilities to understand how are we as a humans, a wider range of colors" (Interviewed ID 6).

Traveling allows new positions with respect to issues of knowledge, contributing to the formation of a more integrated and capable person to face their own obstacles in life. Through the experience of travel, people become new role models to lead and carry out new projects. Further education is seen in 50% of the surveyed sample as an important factor for their life

success, for as the interviewed ID 7 "The culture mindset of a traveler changes, because it opens the horizons of thought and opens sensitivity about cultural aesthetic fully different from theirs. More knowledge about the relationship of others to oneself as cultural issues, one is able to use the knowledge gained to judge properly and make a good decision".

Regarding the perception discussed above Interviewee ID 7, it refers that mind expansion and wider points of view are related to travel experience and the interaction with other cultures, which as a result contributes to better decision making process. In this case 40 % of sample, believe that having a better decision-making skills allows you to go further in your job career. On the other hand, another important factor by the interviewee is the national and regional recognition generated by performing a comparison between cultures when traveling. In this case the comparison is divided into several factors such as: political, economy, religion, language, among others. Comparison and cultural recognition are elements that travelers promote to experiment next time someone travels to a new country.

"Traveling makes better citizens, because having just a minimal contact with another culture regionalisms and nationalisms are cured. This contributes to the recognition of itself, our identity, values, and appreciate what others build" (Interviewed ID 7).

Another factor to consider and analyzed is leadership, which includes factors like those above that are elements to become a better leader and therefore better manager as well. Leadership is an essential factor in our research because its believe that travel experience and interacting with other cultures helps to become better leaders. Leadership results showed that only 40% of the sample data mentioned as a factor but it was always view as a goal of all the factors mentioned. Below is illustrated by the opinion of one of the interviewees:

"I believe that traveling makes better managers because fields of action open up, in addition, other cultures are discovered with interaction and hopefully these cultures provide new opportunities to negotiate. An international business environment provides more opportunities to understand your work team. Better understanding of your team members, the more accurate responses to situations and problems. The simple fact that travel opens space to communicate with others in a way that allows networking with other business from different regions and countries" (Interviewed ID 3).

## **Discussions**

By comparing the literature review with the responses of the interviewees, it was found that the factor of expanding the mind through travel is highly valued. Particularly, the knowledge acquired in other cultures generated important awareness and perceptions to all the interviewees of our sample. In fact, knowledge contributes to the personal and professional development of the individual, which is reflected in various areas of everyday life. For instance, the acquired skills are deployed within an educational and work environment.

As an illustration, the Institute for International Education of Students (IES) conducted a study in 2004 that found through a survey that a lot of learning abroad has been used in environments in which people stills operates, even after a long time of having acquired the skill or knowledge (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005:9).

The findings of this inquiry are consistent with those found by the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (2005), where more than eight out of ten respondents in the 1990s reported that study abroad enabled them to acquire a set of important

skills for their careers, while 70 percent agreed that their overseas experience influenced them to study about other cultures. This study also produced an extraordinary finding: The entirely 95 percent of respondents in the study from 1950 to 2000 agreed that their experiences abroad continued to influence their perspectives on world events (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005: 9).

In relation to the understanding of different cultures, according to the results found, interviewees suggested that this skill stimulates the recognition of individuals, promotes the analysis of cultural identity, and generates new thoughts and feelings in the workplace. Furthermore, for a better leadership, managers must understand different cultures in terms of expressions and values, which in turn would help them to build better interactions and more effective results in the workplace (Omran, Mahmood & Hussin, 2009).

Generally, the global understanding of a leader constitutes the ability of a person to manage any situation and be capable of leading a group of people (Butler et al., 2012). There are several characteristics and factors an individual has to have in order to become a great leader and be able to find the team collaboration such as clear communication, people-orientation, and open-mindedness. In regards to the point of view of interviewees and their positions regarding the relationship with others, 90% of the sample believes that language is an important factor in communication in order to obtain knowledge in a more feasible manner and improve the ability to establish relations in various fields. Based on the answers given by the interviewees, it is clear that intercultural relationships are essential to gain knowledge and to understand the cultures that manifest within it since 70% of the sample of this research agreed, including the Rector's point of view, according to which effective leaders foster a great number of multiple social relationships in order to lead a group of people.

Consequently, Chen et al. (2012) argued that the lack of formal leadership in a self-managing multicultural team, in addition to the uncertainty and conflict derived by cultural diversity, would have a negative impact in team effectiveness compared with teams that are directed by a leader (Chen et al., 2012). Although connections to projects with individuals from different cultures bring lots of benefits as mentioned above, only 40% of managers think that could be an essential factor. Particularly, teamwork is considered a more viable aspect in order to reach the desired success through the variety of opinions that may arise within the execution of the project. In fact, leadership in teamwork drives to better decision-making skills by learning from others. Likewise, leadership in teamwork was considered by 50% of respondents as a valuable factor that contributes to job progress through travel experiences.

On the other hand, Butler, Zander, Mockaitis, and Sutton (2012) defined a global leader as a person that is able to leverage the skills, resources, and values of others in multiple locations in order to earn trust of subordinates and effectively lead them to achieve a set of goals (Butler et al., 2012).

Like other factors, culture and values are important aspects to keep in mind when traveling or working abroad. As Interviewee ID2 expressed when interacting with people that exhibited other cultural values, it is important to remember that culture is defined through expressions, clothes, food, rules, and accents. In addition to explain culture and values, Hofstede (1999) purported that cultural differences reside at the country level, mostly in values and less in practice (Hofstede, 1999). Therefore, two cultures cannot be identical phenomena (Hofstede, 1999).

## Conclusions

This paper concludes that people with more cultural interaction tend to perceive themselves as better leaders. Leadership perception in this article was taken of the combination of goals achieved by each individual in their career field. In accordance with this idea, John Pepper, former CEO and current Chairman of the Board of Procter and Gamble stated in one interview performed by Bingham, Felin, and Black (2000), and published on Human Resource Management Journal, Summer/Fall 2000. Mr. Pepper stated that “What it takes to be a global leader” referring to one particular international assignments experience. That experience was in Italy and was one of the most powerful experiences that shaped him as an effective global leader among many international assignments. Then he stated, “Of all the career changes that I have had, the international assignment was the most important and developmental. “It changed me as a person,” (Bingham, Felin, & Black, 2000:287). On the other hand, Mr. Pepper stated that sometimes global-local challenges spark creativity and the ability to implement the experimental learning more than the intellectual knowledge. The experimental learning based on their past experience help them to understand new solutions to resolve those challenges (Bingham et al, 2010). In addition, Mr. Pepper believed that international assignments are very important for effective global leader skill. The appreciation for diversity was stressed in several occasions in the interview as a key point. Understanding diversity enable Mr. Pepper to understand new viewpoints, experience new cultures, and perceived a paradigm shift for doing business (Bingham et al, 2010).

As a result, there are a positive understanding that all the factors found in the literature review and in the interview go hand to hand with each other to form a successful leader. This last

statement does not suggest that the lack of any of the factors mentioned in this research will give a negative or unsuccessful result.

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