

**AN ANALYSIS OF JOB PLACEMENT VARIABLES OF FOREIGN NATIONAL
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) STUDENTS**

A Dissertation

by

DARBY C. SCISM

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2005

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee, Christine Stanley
Committee Members, D. Stanley Carpenter, Jr.
Homer Tolson
Ben Welch
Head of Department, Jim Scheurich

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ABSTRACT

An Analysis of Job Placement Variables of Foreign National Master of Business

Administration (MBA) Students. (August 2005)

Darby C. Scism, B.A., Miami University; M.S., Indiana University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Christine Stanley

Foreign national (international) students studying business at universities in the United States gain a valuable education, but they have a very difficult time finding work in the U.S because of a variety of cultural, communication, and employment visa issues. Campus career centers need to address the unique needs and concerns of their international student population in order to most effectively assist this select group in their job search.

The purpose of this study was to examine the job placement variables of international students graduating from MBA programs across the United States in the 2001 class. A thorough review of the literature summarized the adjustment challenges facing international students, career services, and the job search challenges for international MBA students in particular.

Data from 2570 international MBA students were examined to see whether there were differences in post-graduation jobs based on the students' country of origin, years of work experience prior to the MBA program, and undergraduate major. The dependent variables examined were the base salary of the post-MBA job, the amount of signing bonus, the functional area of the student's employment, the industry of the employer, and the geographic location of the new job.

This study found that students from the North American region earned slightly higher salaries than students from Asia, and that European, North American and South American students received slightly higher signing bonuses than Asian students. The international students entered into similar functions and industries regardless of their country of origin. The majority of students, regardless of country of origin, stayed in the U.S. for employment. There was a direct correlation found between the number of years of prior work experience and the base salary of the student. Students with an undergraduate major in technology earned slightly higher salaries and signing bonuses.

The results of this study will assist MBA career services professionals in how they counsel their international students in the job search and salary negotiations. The results may also assist MBA admissions professionals in deciding who to admit to their programs, as placement results are important measures of an MBA program's success.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For United States companies, hiring foreign national students presents some of the greatest rewards as well as the greatest challenges and risks they will encounter (Somers & Ware, 1992). Foreign national students are viewed as hard working and extremely bright, and add to the diversity and global flavor of the workplace. But hiring these students involves in depth paperwork and legal ramifications that frustrate hiring managers and make them reluctant to invest the time and resources (Somers & Ware, 1992).

In 1992 there were 400,000 foreign national students studying in the United States, in 1995 there were over 450,000 and by 2000 there were more than 514,000 international students in American university classrooms (Spencer-Rodgers, 2000; Institute of International Education, 2000). Foreign national students represent more than 180 nations and they have distinct values and needs when it comes to adjustment issues and employment concerns. They face language and cultural barriers as well as the complex laws and policies surrounding temporary and permanent work visas for employment in the U.S. (Spencer-Rodgers, 2000).

Spencer-Rodgers (2000) indicated that in the past 20 years, there has been a drastic increase in the number of foreign national students wanting to stay in the U.S. for employment after an undergraduate or graduate program. She found that close to 70% of

The style and format for this study will follow *The Journal of Educational Research*.

international students indicated an intention to seek work and live permanently in the U.S. The author further stated that traditionally most career counseling programs for these students were designed around the search for jobs and re-entry to their country of origin, but now career services must be redesigned to educate foreign national students about the job search for American employment (Spencer-Rodgers, 2000).

Leong and Sedlacek (1989) compared survey results regarding the career needs of international students from South-Asia, East Asia, Middle East, Europe, Latin America and Africa with those from the United States and found that the vast majority of international students felt a greater need for counseling and education regarding their careers and job search than the American students. In a similar study, Spencer-Rodgers and Cortijo (1998) surveyed students from Asia, Europe, South America and Africa and also found these groups of international students were very concerned about the American-style resume and job search process.

Spencer-Rodgers and Cortijo (1998) explained that most other countries use a curriculum vitae-style resume, while in the U.S., a corporate resume looks quite different. The authors further stated that in the U.S., networking and making contacts within the company is a vital part of building company relationships, yet in other countries, networking is synonymous with nepotism. Foreign national students face cultural and language barriers that can affect their success in the job search. Spencer-Rodgers and Cortijo (1998) continued that foreign national students are worried about how their accents, English vocabulary and language skills might affect their chances in an interview. “In many foreign countries, assertiveness, direct eye contact, directness in

communication, self-disclosure, and self-promotion in general, are viewed negatively” (Spencer-Rodgers & Cortijo, 1998, p. 511). The authors indicated there are differences in dress, norms regarding time and punctuality, and competitiveness in every nation’s organizational culture.

In a transnational comparison, Lebo, Harrington and Tillman (1995) compared the work values of students from six countries – the United States, Norway, Finland, Canada, Australia and France. The authors reported that some of the significant differences among nationalities included the fact that Norwegian students valued physical activity in their work more highly than other cultures, Finnish students were seeking more variety in their jobs, and Spanish-speaking U.S. students were more likely to rank prestige higher than the other groups. It was also found that the women across all cultures had values more similar to each other than the men (Lebo et al., 1995).

When considering graduate business programs specifically, Brooks (2001) stated that foreign national students make up between 20-30 % of most MBA programs in the United States. MBA students are heavily recruited by many of the top companies in the U.S. as they are thought to be the future leaders of the business world. The MBA is an extremely marketable degree and in a strong economy, MBA students are aggressively recruited (Brooks, 2001).

In their *M.B.A. Recruiting & Hiring Survey* of employers, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) found the most important skill recruiters are seeking in MBA students is excellent communication (Nagle & Bohovich, 2001). The authors of the survey report also stated that 29.9% of U.S. companies hire

international MBA students for positions abroad and 44.6% of U.S. companies hire international MBA students for positions in the United States.

Statement of the Problem

Spencer-Rodgers (2000) found that foreign national students are most concerned about getting practical work experience in the U.S., overcoming interviewing barriers, and learning American-style interviewing techniques. Foreign nationals often have trouble gaining U.S. employment because they lack knowledge of the U.S. job market, they are not familiar with American etiquette and interviewing styles, and they often do not have a firm command of the English language (Spencer-Rodgers, 2000).

Shih and Brown (2000) explained that within the larger group of foreign national students in any academic program, there are differences in the needs of specific nationalities and sub-groups. For example, there are more than forty distinct nationality groups within the Asian student population alone and there are likely to be cultural variations on career-related constructs as well as differences in their languages, norms, values, customs and cultures. The authors stated that there is limited research on the career planning needs of Asian populations, as well as the career and placement needs of other international student populations (Shih & Brown, 2000).

The current literature adequately covers general career planning of college students and touches on the adjustment issues and career counseling needs of international students on college campuses. But there is very little written on the specific placement trends of international students and virtually nothing regarding international MBA students. There also exists no summary data on the job placement

variables of foreign national MBA students and no information that examines how demographic characteristics might be related to job placement success. This void of information and comparative data may prevent career services professionals from most effectively serving their international MBA student population.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between certain demographic characteristics of foreign national MBA students and their job placements post-graduation. Specifically, the study was designed to examine how country of origin, previous years of work experience, and undergraduate major are related to the students' job offers including the job function, the job industry, the geographic location of the job, the starting base salary, and the monetary bonus offered (job placement variables).

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is country of origin related to job placement variables for foreign national MBA students?
2. Is number of years of prior work experience related to job placement variables for foreign national MBA students?
3. Is undergraduate major related to job placement variables for foreign national MBA students?

Operational Definitions

Demographic Variables: The demographic variables for the foreign national MBA students in this study included their countries of origin, the number of years of work experience prior to beginning their MBA program, and their undergraduate majors.

Country of Origin: The country in which the student was born or lived the majority of his/her life prior to entering the MBA program in the United States. This is most likely the country in which the student holds permanent citizenship and work authorization.

Undergraduate Major: The academic major of the student during his/her Bachelor's degree program. Students chose from *business*, *technical*, or *other* (which included all arts and science degrees, etc.) when indicating their undergraduate major to their career center.

Prior Work Experience: The number of years of full-time work experience after earning a Bachelor's degree and before matriculating to the MBA program. This work experience did not include any part-time employment while the individual was in school or work experience prior to earning a Bachelor's degree.

Job Placement Variables: The outcome variables surrounding the formal offer of employment to the student, including the functional area of the job, the industry of the employing company, the starting base salary offered, the signing bonus offered, and the geographic location of the job.

Job Search: The process in which the student is involved in identifying potential employers and job opportunities including career education, networking, interviewing and negotiating the job offer.

Foreign National: A student who is a citizen of a country other than the United States of America who has traveled from the country of origin to attend a university in the U.S.

“International” was also used to describe the same type of student.

MBA Student: A student enrolled full-time in a Master of Business Administration program, who earned a graduate degree in general management.

Placement Director: Administrative Director of a career services and placement office that serves graduate students (specifically MBA students) on a university campus.

Responsibilities of career services and placement offices include conducting career education programs, performing career counseling and career assessment, hosting recruiting companies, and assisting students in their job search for internships and/or full-time employment.

Selected Institutions of Higher Education: One hundred and twenty-five public and private United States institutions of higher education that had a full-time MBA program and whose MBA Career Services Office held a membership in the professional organization, *MBA Career Services Council*.

MBA Career Services Council: Professional association of career services counselors and staff who serve MBA students at public and private universities. Universities belonging to MBA CSC represent the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia.

Standards for Reporting MBA Employment Statistics: Established standards that MBA CSC schools adhere to in collecting the job placement data from their MBA students. MBA CSC schools have agreed to all collect the same data in the same way from their MBA students and to represent the data in a statistically standardized manner.

Data collected from MBA students include the source of the job, the timing of the first job offer received, the salary and bonuses of the offers, the geographic location, company name, industry, functional area, and title of the employment offer.

Limitations

1. The study was limited to information acquired from a literature review and MBA student questionnaire data collected from foreign national students by Placement Directors.
2. Findings from this study may not be generalized to any group other than full-time foreign national MBA students who graduated in the academic year 2000-01 from universities in the United States that were members of the MBA CSC.

Significance Statement

In addition to making a career change and taking a heavy course load of advanced business courses, many foreign national students have chosen to search for jobs in the United States, which is an extremely stressful process (Brooks, 2001). Leong and Sedlacek (1989) believe there is a lack of coherent policy in how to manage the career counseling of international students at U.S. universities. In their study, international students expressed dissatisfaction with existing career services and noted a desire for individual assistance with their special career interests and needs (Leong & Sedlacek, 1989). As Shih and Brown (2000) explained in their study on Asian international students, each nationality from every geographical region of the world has different needs when it comes to career development and the job search.

This current study aims to examine the different placement profiles of foreign national students enrolled in MBA programs. The data gathered and analyzed will be useful to many professionals in career services as they counsel and educate their foreign national MBA students through the career search. This information will help counselors determine the differing job placement trends of students from various geographical regions, identify which regions produce students who receive high salaries, and which regions produce students for which the job search is less successful. The data will help the staff of career centers to design a more targeted career education and development program for foreign national MBA students, hopefully increasing their placement rates and salary offers. The data may also be beneficial to MBA admissions professionals who need to make admissions decisions regarding foreign national students based upon the potential for academic success and employability upon graduation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

International Students at U.S. Universities

“In 2000 there were 425,433 international students enrolled in bachelor’s or graduate programs at American universities and colleges, compared with 223,465 in Britain, the next largest competitor” (McMurtrie, 2001, p.1). In the 1970s and 80s, the United States was the number one choice for foreign students wanting to get an undergraduate or graduate education outside of their native countries. In the 1990s, Britain, Australia, and Canada aggressively marketed to foreign students and earned a larger percentage of international student market share every year. In 1982, the U.S. held 39% of the international student market, and by 1995 that share had dropped to 30% (McMurtrie, 2001). “Since 1994, the number of international students in Australia has risen 73 percent, while the number at American institutions has increased 21 percent” (McMurtrie, 2001, p.1). Because schools charge such high fees, international students and their sponsors have become more discriminating in their choice of school (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986). “[In 1998] more than half of all foreign students in the United States, 56 percent, came from Asia” (Desruisseaux, 1999, p. A57). Now, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan have all expanded their university systems and are working to keep Asian students in school regionally rather than have them study in Europe, Australia or North America.

Admissions offices throughout the U.S. have formalized marketing and recruiting programs designed to attract international students to their programs, and in recent years

have stepped up these intensive marketing efforts. It is beneficial to a U.S. institution to have a significant number of international students enrolled, as they bring a global worldview to the classroom, contribute to the diversity and multicultural experience on the campus, and often have high standardized test scores and grades, which help the profile of the enrolled classes and subsequent ranking numbers. Additionally, they bring universities large sums of tuition dollars, a fact that does not go unnoticed when admissions decisions are being made. Many international students are able to study in the U.S. because of private, government or employer sponsorship, something to which domestic students often do not have access. “Foreign students now account for 3 percent of the total enrollment in U.S. higher education, and they pump an estimated \$13 billion into the economy in payments for tuition, room and board, entertainment, and other expenses. About 75 percent of the funds to support foreign students come from outside the United States; 65 percent of the students cited personal and family resources as their primary sources of support” (Desruisseaux, 1999, p. A57). Other benefits to host universities and countries include the “enrichment of the learning environment and the establishment of long-term commercial, trade, and diplomatic links” (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986, p. 400).

With such a valuable segment present on all university campuses, one would think universities would do what is necessary to ensure these students are welcomed warmly and given an orientation and services that will make their tenure on campus comfortable and successful. But although universities actively market their educations to foreign students, and foreign students strengthen the American economy, by \$7 billion

in 1995, there are still strong anti-immigrant feelings from people throughout the country and a reluctance to firm up university policies that deal with the admission and education of international students. “The ‘coherence and forethought’ which should guide policy formation are suddenly threatened by an economic, political, and social climate which makes an objective examination difficult and potentially unpopular” (Pfaffenroth, 1997, p.4).

Issues on university campuses regarding international students include attempts to create a multinational campus with global world views, concerns that institutions are inadequately prepared to deliver appropriate services to foreign students, outcries that foreign students are taking the seats that should have gone to domestic students, marketing to international students and competition with other countries for admissions, disagreements on what the ideal number of international students on a campus should be, political situations involving other countries that create a backlash against foreign students, dealing with the language barrier of incoming students and hiring potentially unintelligible teaching assistants, and frequent changes in immigration policy and visa availability (Pfaffenroth, 1997).

Other fears related to educating foreign students in the U.S. include whether or not universities should be educating our economic competitors and taking jobs away from Americans, whether foreign students should be paying more tuition than domestic students since they aren't paying taxes, the fact that teaching a foreign student who may have difficulty with the language, customs, and educational culture takes extra time from the professor, and the question of whether university faculty and staff are doing enough

to combat the poverty, social isolation, and culture shock that occur in many of our foreign students (Pfaffenroth, 1997).

Administrators are reluctant to set organized and publicized policy in how to handle all aspects of the education of international students. Sara Pfaffenroth (1997) stated in her study on institutional policy and international students that financial and political considerations, instead of policy, have typically guided institutional behavior. Because of the uneasy feelings of some toward international students at our institutions, creating and publicizing a policy would invite too much attention from legislators, alumni and community members.

“A *Newsweek* article estimates that between one-third and one-half of the world’s top positions in politics, business, education and the military will be held during the next twenty-five years by the international students now attending U.S. colleges and universities, and yet studies show that more than 40% of such students feel ‘unwelcome, lonely, and isolated’ at their colleges” (Pfaffenroth, 1997, p. 8). These impressions can have lasting global consequences and can affect U.S. and foreign relations for years to come. “If Americans wish to maintain a global presence and global influence, it is time our institutions of higher education think seriously and systematically about what they want to do with their international students” (Pfaffenroth, 1997, p. 9).

Educators need to deliver what it is they sell to prospective international students, and this means being sensitive and accommodating to the special needs they bring to an academic program in the United States. If these needs are not addressed, the school will secure a reputation as being insensitive to international students, and this ultimately

means lost revenue for the school. Educators should be familiar with cultural differences and be willing to make adjustments, within reason, to accommodate these differences and special needs (Rees & Porter, 1998).

Adjustment Needs of International Students

International students come to a new university with the same anxieties as other college students such as adjusting to increased responsibility and academic concerns, but they are also facing adjustments to an entirely new culture and social situation. Manese, Leong and Sedlacek (1985) conducted a thorough study on the adjustment needs of international students studying at U.S. universities. They found the primary reasons these students had for attending college were to cultivate the intellect, pursue knowledge and prepare for a career. Significantly fewer international students than domestic students mentioned socializing and clarifying a personal identity as a goal while attending college. Academic concerns of international students included improving writing and speaking skills, receiving help in scheduling their classes, and developing better study skills. The most important needs mentioned by international students were financial needs, educational attainment, and obtaining professional expertise and practical experience. They were most fearful of not meeting financial expenses and not earning high enough grades (Manese et al, 1985).

Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) found that international students identified the areas in which they needed the most adjustment and assistance as language skill, academic issues, cultural differences, racial discrimination, and social interaction with host country students. Difficulty understanding accents, taking notes and listening at the

same time, and answering questions in class were identified as problems. Many students speak their native language in social situations with other international students, so they do not get the practice they need in American social conversation. International students cited language difficulties and shyness as the primary reasons for not interacting socially with host country students (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986).

Academic achievement is the highest priority for most international students and they experience strong academic pressures, both internally and externally. They often feel a great pressure to perform well academically as their families or governments are paying for them to study abroad. There seems to be a true desire to succeed for the sake of the family and a fear of disappointing them, especially for students from Asia. In addition, international students must learn and adapt to the cultural differences in the classroom. In Asian cultures, students are taught to listen in the classroom, not to be argumentative or to discuss their opinions. This contributes to frustration in the U.S. classroom for both the foreign student and the teacher, especially when participation is part of the grade (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986). International students are often reluctant to open up in classroom discussions and are sometimes timid in team and group situations. Teachers need to be sensitive to these cultural differences and take them into consideration when assigning projects and grading participation. Teachers also need to be sensitive to the use of metaphors, slang words and colloquialisms, as international students will not immediately grasp the meaning of such phrases (Rees & Porter, 1998).

Another concern of international students is the choice of food offered in dining halls and food courts in campus facilities. They would like more cultural variety of food

and more vegetarian selections. There are also complaints about intramural and intercollegiate sports offerings. Many international students requested soccer and rugby be offered, as these are sports played more in international cultures. Another common issue is with campus transportation. Many foreign students do not purchase cars and they have a hard time getting around campus, around town to do shopping, and attending social events off campus (Luzzo et al., 1996).

In a study by Boyer and Sedlacek (1986) at the University of Maryland, College Park, 24% of international students reported the hardest part of adjusting to college was meeting the financial expenses. Earning satisfactory grades was reported by 14%, studying efficiently (10%), becoming a more critical and independent thinker (10%), budgeting time wisely (9%), deciding how much to get involved in campus issues (8%), getting to meet and know other students (7%), and selecting a field of study and/or career (4%) (p. 10).

Russian student Stanislav Shekshnia (1991) described his adjustment to an American business school program and the differences between the two cultures,

Much more difficult (than adapting to classes) was the process of getting adjusted to American life – cultural adaptation, including what takes place in business school outside of the educational process. We and they have very different systems of life values, concepts of what is good or bad, attitudes toward work, tastes, traditions, and even general education... There is the individualism of Americans, something that is totally uncharacteristic of our culture... Reliance on one's own powers, the basic motto in American life, is very hard for people who have been brought up in a society that has long and firmly established collectivist traditions... Here it's every man for himself – in fact, each one is first a competitor in the struggle for a higher grade, and only then a comrade-in-arms. (Shekshnia, 1991, pp.89-90)

In their study on foreign students at a Canadian university, Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) found 91% of foreign students feel themselves victims of racial discrimination. The students feel service workers and teachers are less polite and less helpful to them, and that testing and grading favored Canadian students. The authors suggested that host universities be more concerned about international students' personal and social adjustment because successful academic achievement is more likely if the students are happy with their environment and feel accepted.

Because international students are likely to face adjustment issues such as culture shock, language problems, and isolation and loneliness, these issues are often manifested as anxiety and depression. It is estimated that of those coming to the U.S. to study, approximately 20% will face severe psychological problems and will be in need of counseling or psychological care. "The sociocultural issues suggested that poor mental health of international students resulted not just from being a student or being a foreigner, but from a combination of the two. Single students, married students living away from their spouses, young students, women, undergraduates, Asians, and Arabic-speaking students were found to be the most vulnerable to poor mental health" (Leong & Chou, 1996, p. 220). The authors found their sample of international students to have higher rates of mental health issues than the general student population, as well as higher rates of mental health issues prior to overseas studies.

Schram and Lauver (1988) studied alienation factors in international students, and defined alienation as feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social estrangement. "Students from Asia, followed by those from Africa, had slightly higher

alienation scores than students from the Middle or Near East and Latin America.

International students most likely to be at risk were non-European undergraduates who spent little time with others” (Schram & Lauver, 1988, p. 148).

Sodowsky and Plake (1992) examined the acculturation of students studying in the U.S. from various countries and continents.

Africans, Asians, and South Americans perceived prejudice significantly more than did Europeans; in fact Europeans disagreed that there was prejudice. Muslims perceived the greatest amount of prejudice, then Buddhists, Hindus, those who did not belong to any organized religion, and finally Protestants and Catholics. Subjects in this study based racial identity not so much on race issues as on religion, values, need to depend on or seek freedom from symbols of their nationality group, physical appearance, and language/accent. (Sodowsky & Plake, 1992, p. 54)

In a report by The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (1979), it was suggested that international students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels need some type of formal orientation program prior to or at the start of their academic program. Foreign students should be given a crash course in American life and culture, and social and political institutions in the U.S. Other suggested orientation topics include information about the community, driving requirements, banking, postal services, housing options, as well as the registration, fee payment, library services, health services, etc. at the university.

In addition to the adjustment needs and identified concerns above, international students often mention career goals and anxiety about the job search process. International students seem to have a fairly clear idea about what they want to study and the types of careers they wish to pursue, but they are less certain when it comes to exploring job opportunities, conducting a job search, and preparing themselves for those

careers in which they are interested (Manese et al., 1985). “Though students were generally satisfied with their progress in achieving their academic goals, the lack of practical training and career uncertainty were reported as matters of great concern” (Herbert, 1981, p. 69). The following section explores the career advising needs of international students and how our university career centers are living up to these needs and expectations.

Career Advising for International Students

Although universities have been providing fairly comprehensive career services to students for quite some time, the services are still inadequate when it comes to serving international students seeking work either in the U.S. or back in their home countries. It is believed that the vast majority of professionals in university settings are completely unprepared to assist and counsel foreign national students. Even professionals such as international student advisors, academic advisors, and career counselors have not been properly trained or educated in the cross-cultural differences and needs of most of the international students on the university campus. Counselors have a lack of information regarding employment opportunities in students’ native countries, a lack of information regarding job opportunities in the United States available to international students, an insensitivity to international and global concerns, and a lack of understanding of cultural differences, values, and work ideals. They are also poorly educated in the work laws of the United States and how they apply to foreign students and employees. All career services professionals working with international students must understand the work laws in the United States, including the various visa types and restrictions, and know

what a foreign national student is required to do if he/she wishes to stay and work in this country (Walter-Samli & Samli, 1979). Specific visa issues and work restrictions will be addressed later in this research.

When he surveyed college students at Brigham Young University, James MacArthur (1980) found that international students came to U.S. schools with fairly clear career goals. They did not seem to need as much career counseling as the U.S. students in terms of the direction of their coursework and how that related to their career goals. They knew what their interests and skills were and what type of jobs they would like to pursue. What the international students said they needed the most was assistance with the job search and placement process including skills such as resume writing and interviewing the American way. They knew what they wanted to do, they just did not know how to get there, and this applied to the job search either in the U.S. or back in their home countries (MacArthur, 1980).

Shen and Herr (2004) interviewed 19 international graduate students in masters and doctoral programs at an East-coast university to determine their career needs and thoughts about the career services available to them. They found the students had very differing ideas about their responsibilities and career plans post graduation. Some of them exhibited collective ideals which included needing to return home to their countries to be with their families, provide income for their families, and a commitment and obligation to their country. Other international students were influenced by more individualistic ideals which included a desire for personal success, more opportunity for career promotion, a higher salary, and a more comfortable working and living

environment. According to Leong (1995), Asian cultures in particular subscribe to a collective rather than individual orientation to life decisions. This means decisions, such as where to earn an education, what to study, and career aspirations, are influenced by family members, particularly one's parents. In the United States, where citizens have a more individualized orientation, decisions are based more on what the individual wants for him or herself and not as much on what will make the family or community proud.

In her dissertation study, Hemla Singaravelu (1998) examined Asian International, Non-Asian International, and Domestic students and their career decision-making and readiness. She found that all three student groups expressed a similar level of career readiness and had given thought to how they would achieve their career goals. As Leong (1995) and Shen and Herr (2004) reported, domestic students had lower family influence scores as well as friend influence scores than both the Asian International and the Non-Asian International students, indicating that international students' decisions are more impacted by family and friend's opinion.

Through their interviews with international graduate students, Shen and Herr (2004) found that many international students feel they receive greater career-related help from their academic departments than the designated career centers on campus. They felt the career centers were too oriented toward U.S. citizens and did not have enough information about jobs in other countries or companies in the U.S. who were willing to hire international students. The students felt that contact with faculty, attending professional conferences and networking with other colleagues in their specific field were more beneficial in helping them find employment in the United States.

Another suggestion was to include counselors or advisors in the career center who are bilingual and who can communicate with students in their native language and improve the image of the career center as being accessible and accommodating to international students and their unique issues. In addition, “computer software featuring a variety of languages that facilitate students’ accesses to the job banks of other countries should be installed in the center...and universities can subscribe to newspapers, newsletters, and journals from the students’ home countries” (Shen and Herr, 2004, p. 27).

Leong and Sedlacek (1987) suggested that career development and job search lessons need to be adapted to address the specific needs of international students, as they most likely have been designed with U.S. students in mind. “Services tailored to their special needs will have to be developed if they are to be effective” (Leong & Sedlacek, 1987, p. 9). This would mean providing them time to speak one-on-one with a career counselor in order to discuss their career plans, as well as giving them information on specific careers and how to prepare to be successful in those careers. In the same study, the international and U.S. students were asked about communication and study skills, and both groups ranked a need to improve writing skills and presentation skills at the very top.

The job search in the U.S., including locating job opportunities, what resumes looks like, and the entire interview process is very different than in many other countries. At Catholic University of America, Alan Goodman (1988) regularly presents a workshop for foreign national students who want to learn about the American job

search process. He includes information on the policies and procedures of practical training, the U.S. employment system, job search strategies and resources, resume writing and interviewing skills. Time is spent discussing the cultural differences between U.S. employers and those in their home countries. For example, U.S. employers expect a candidate to be assertive and confident, whereas those characteristics might be thought of as inappropriate in other countries. It is explained that direct eye contact is expected in the U.S., even though it may be considered disrespectful in other countries. Appropriate interview dress, self-disclosure, punctuality, and written and verbal communication styles are addressed. An immigration attorney speaks with the students about work eligibility and the different work visa types in the U.S.

Goodman (1988) also suggested having a panel of international student alumni who found practical training or sponsorship employment speak to the current students about the job search and the efforts involved. It is usually very helpful for students to hear this information directly from people who experienced it.

International students are often unaware of the U.S. interview style and what is expected of them during the interview process. "International students interviewing for professional positions encounter differences in communication (verbal and nonverbal), dress, and customs, which affect their ability to communicate effectively in an interview situation...international students frequently possess the qualifications for the position they desire, but lack the awareness and skills related to presenting that information" (Wortham, 1986, p. 179). Wortham (1986) described a group formed at Penn State University to assist international students with their interview skills and provide an

environment of support as international students are practicing these skills. Students discuss cultural differences in interviewing styles and practice the skills that are expected in an American-style interview. One common cultural difference includes using direct eye contact. In America, eye contact represents honesty in communication, but in other countries it may be thought of as inappropriate, especially between a man and woman. Americans like to have greater personal space when speaking to another person than in other cultures, and where speaking about oneself in a confident manner is considered positive in America, it is considered rude or too personal in other cultures.

Similar to the interview skill group at Penn State is a Job Search Club for international students examined by Bikos and Furry (1999) at Kansas State University. Job Search Clubs (JSC) are organizations led by someone with experience in career development and job search skills and attended by university students. The students learn not only from the leader's expertise, but also from sharing information and tips among group members. There is "use of role-playing, feedback and structured activities, with an emphasis on empowerment through information, training, and support" (Bikos & Furry, 1999, p. 33). Topics addressed in the JSC include developing job search plans, using campus career services, writing resumes, dealing with visa status/work permits, using the Internet, writing job search correspondence, networking, researching employers, working with references, job search etiquette, and interviewing.

Information collected from the international JSC participants indicated that 54% were seeking employment solely in the United States, 42% were seeking jobs in the U.S. or in their home country, and 4% reported that they would work "anywhere." These

international students reported that their greatest need regarding career services was assistance in getting practical work experience (Bikos & Furry, 1999).

Bikos and Furry (1999) conducted pre-tests and post-tests with the international students who participated in the six week Job Search Club to see if there would be increases in particular job search behaviors because of the JSC experience. “Statistically significant increases were identified in the following activities: contacting the campus career center, writing a resume, writing a cover letter, and participating in a job search interview. Participants reported having greater career self-efficacy, greater vocational identity, and requiring less information regarding their occupational choice” (Bikos & Furry, 1999, p. 38). Students reported that the most important topics were resume and cover letter writing and interviewing skills. They felt less time should be spent on evaluating job offers and reviewing the computerized campus career search resources. Most students thought the JSC should be longer than six weeks. Many students reported feelings of increased confidence in their job search skills and the ability to find a job when that time came (Bikos & Furry, 1999).

Staff at the Career Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia recognized the need for specialized career services for international students and designed a program to specifically address this need. They realized that each nationality of students needs something slightly different in terms of career development education, and because the Asian student population is often the largest, they started their program by focusing on the Asian students and plan to expand the process to all international populations in the future (Yang et al., 2002).

At MU-C, an emphasis was placed on helping students develop job search skills and finding related work experiences rather than career decision making exploration, as many international students already have a good idea about what they want to do, but do not know the steps involved to actually find the jobs in that area. One area they emphasized was making sure international students understood the U.S. work permit policies and the process a company goes through to hire an international students to work in their organization (Yang et al., 2002). When an international student understands the H1-B visa process and the company's hiring process, he or she is better equipped to negotiate with the HR Manager for his/her hire.

Another important part of the MU-C program for international student career services is the marketing of the program. Other research indicates that international students are often hesitant about seeking out help, so making them aware of these services and making them easy to use is important. Brochures and website information in English as well as various foreign languages is shared with the students and encourages use of the career center and its services. International student campus organizations were targeted and asked to relay information to their members. The career center also employed international students as staff and assistants so students would feel comfortable accessing the services and know their needs were being understood (Yang et al., 2002).

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) Degree

The research in this study pertains to a specific type of international student the career development and job search issues that this specialized professional student faces.

The MBA is considered a professional degree in the same vein as a Doctor of Jurisprudence. It is a graduate degree in business that prepares the student for a more advanced career in business and trains him/her to be a strategic manager who can solve problems and manage employees in a variety of organizations. Having the degree often facilitates promotion to upper management within a company and can give a worker a way to change direction mid-career and assume more responsibility. In 1991, there were 78,255 students enrolled in an MBA program in the United States. In 2000, there were more than 112,258 students enrolled, a 43% increase in MBA enrollment in 9 years (Mangan, 2003). There are hundreds of MBA programs in the United States, and international institutions are developing similar programs at a rapid rate.

In a study by the Graduate Management Admission Council, 2000 first-year MBA students were asked what they expected from an MBA and what their expectations were for their post-MBA employment experiences. The most frequently cited reason students pursue an MBA was for career mobility, which included career advancement or career change and increased career options. The next 3 reasons in order were the development of business-related knowledge, personal satisfaction, and to earn more money. The authors of the GMAC study reported that 94% of all respondents mentioned career factors somewhere in their response as a reason for seeking an MBA. Students identified the most important factors in their post-MBA job as good chances for promotion, interesting work, the chance to develop their own special abilities, competent coworkers, fair promotions, authority to get the job done, a competent supervisor and good pay (Stolzenberg & Giarrusso, 1988, pp. 6, 12).

In the same study, students listed the things they disliked most about their previous jobs as poor chances for promotion, unfair promotions, and pay inequities. These dissatisfactions are consistent with the reasons students choose to pursue an MBA and their expectations of future work experiences. The MBA students were asked about potential changes in their future employer and/or in their future job positions, and 47% said they planned to change both their employer and their job position. Twenty-one percent planned to change their position but stay with their previous employer, 1.5% said they planned to change their employer but not their job position, and 31% said they plan to change neither – they would go back to their previous employer in the same position. This last category consisted mostly of part-time students who were working while attending school, and many of their companies were assisting with tuition payments (Stolzenberg & Giarrusso, 1988, pp. 12, 14).

When students were asked about their planned area of specialization, “45% said finance and business economics, 20% said marketing, followed by general management, accounting, management of information systems, and international business” (Stolzenberg & Giarrusso, 1988, p. 9). The position that most students sought was an executive or managerial position (80%). Eleven percent were seeking a professional specialty, 6.3% were seeking a sales position, and 1.5% were seeking an administrative support position (Stolzenberg & Giarrusso, 1988, p. 125). “Eighty percent of the respondents anticipate they will find the type of position they most desire in six months or less” (Stolzenberg & Giarrusso, 1988, p. 17).

Thompson and Gui (2000) conducted a study to determine the reasons why Asian men and women executives choose to pursue an MBA. Corporations in Asia and China specifically are demanding better educated, professional managers as they continue to grow and compete economically. “As China and the rest of Asia attract increasing amounts of direct foreign investment and continue to liberalize their markets, demand for MBAs is likely to run into the millions” (Thompson & Gui, 2000, p. 236). Until recently, many Asians seeking MBAs needed to study in Europe or the United States to earn such a degree, but Asia is formulating more native MBA programs that fit the needs of Asian business and local markets much better.

A group of Hong Kong business executives who returned to school to earn an MBA were asked what their primary reasons were for pursuing the degree. The top answers were related to specific learning goals such as improving analytical ability and learning more about business management. Next in the ranking were items related to improving job opportunities and changing career paths, and following those were more personal reasons such as enhancing self esteem, making money, and gaining contacts (Thompson & Gui, 2000, p. 236).

MBA programs today attempt to develop international managers, leaders who can be comfortable with employees of every culture and who can adapt to various business environments regardless of the country or location. Although U.S. MBA programs try to teach international business and cultural diversity in the classroom, students learn most about business as it is in the U.S. The development of an international manager includes nurturing the following characteristics,

strategic awareness, adaptability in new situations, sensitivity to different cultures, ability to work in international teams, language skills, understanding international marketing, relationship skills, international negotiation skills, self-reliance, high task-orientation, nonjudgmental personality, understanding international finance, and awareness of own cultural background. (Satterlee, 1999, p. 3)

In order for business schools to develop international managers, they “must employ faculty with international experience, enroll a high proportion of students from other nations, and use teaching materials based on international business” (Satterlee, 1999, p. 3). There has been a great demand from international students for a U.S. MBA degree, and MBA programs around the country typically admit between 20-40 % of their incoming class from countries outside of the United States.

International Students and the MBA

MBA programs are making a conscious effort to recruit talented international students to their programs because “foreign candidates offer not only a huge new pool of potential pupils, but they also give domestic students a competitive advantage by exposing them to cultural differences they’re bound to encounter at some point in their working lives... Today more than ever, you’ve got to be aware of the effect the business decisions you make have on your international partners” (Calleja, 2000, p. 109). MBA programs are focusing their curriculums on the global business environment and adding more international students to the classes, which helps with this global education and diverse business environment. “Having international students on-site gives us some real-time information on what’s going on in different countries” says Randy Kudar, director of the MBA program at the Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario (Calleja, 2000, p. 109).

As discussed in the sections above, international students in any U.S. university program are going to experience some adjustment problems and encounter a different level of service from many of the university offices because of their unique and sometimes complicated situations. The MBA students are similar to the undergraduate students in their adjustment to the U.S. culture, frustration with learning the language, and in their career development and job search efforts. In his study on international students attending Frostburg State University, and specifically the MBA program at that institution, Vit Vareka (1993) found 4 significant needs and concerns of international students. Lack of health care coverage, financial difficulties, lack of connection to the community and social support, and job placement difficulties were the most commonly mentioned concerns of international MBA students.

Administrators in management education programs need to be sensitive to the needs and adjustments that international students face. These include culture shock, separation from family and social support systems, language challenges, financial issues, employment issues, living arrangements, climate differences, and different methods of teaching and learning (Rees & Porter, 1998). “Most management teaching is in the context of a developed industrial society with high educational standards, effective government, political democracy and a secular state. International students being taught by United Kingdom [and U.S.] providers often come from very different backgrounds” (Rees & Porter, 1998, p. 211).

One common debate concerns how much a professor should adapt his/her syllabus, teaching style and classroom content to be applicable to the international

students' home situation. On the one hand, the international student made a choice to study in the U.S. and should be willing to adapt to the style and content. On the other hand, it would be developmentally and educationally enriching if the courses were tailored to the students' cultural needs so everyone in the classroom could learn about the cultural differences as well as giving the international students some experiences that relate to business situations when and if they return to their home countries (Rees & Porter, 1998).

As mentioned in a previous section, the ability of an international student to master the English language in written and verbal form is crucial to his/her success in an American program. "Proficiency in spoken and written English is the greatest single factor in the academic success of the foreign student in the United States...Often those students with inadequate English are from the newly independent countries which have the most urgent need to send young people here for training" (NAFSA, 1979, p. 15).

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is required at almost every MBA program of foreign applicants. A minimum score is required for admission to insure the student will be able to comprehend the intensive lectures, work in groups with other students and complete the necessary written and oral assignments. Students who are on the borderline score of the TOEFL, but possess the other necessary skills and qualifications, should be expected to take intensive English language classes upon arrival in the United States and work with a tutor throughout the program to improve their English skills.

Most of the top MBA programs present a required communications course for both international and domestic students that end up being especially important to the international students' education. Included in these courses are sections on American business practices, English writing skills, oral presentation skills, and business etiquette. At the University of Akron, Diana Reep requires students in her MBA writing course to complete assignments including a persuasive letter, an oral presentation and a brochure based around their countries of origin. The content is familiar, but the challenge is communicating it to the class in grammatically correct English while demonstrating persuasive principles (Reep, 2000).

The communications course in the MBA program should help students address typical workplace communication events and skills in which they feel they need to improve. Some real-world communication events might include telephone sales calls, written correspondence, letters of recommendation, evaluation reports, video-conferencing meetings, team meeting processes, and the business lunch. In their study on MBA students at Georgetown University, Reinsch and Shelby (1997) researched the work-related communication concerns that most bothered the students and the communication skills they would most like to improve. The students ranked the top 10 communication abilities upon which to improve as: 1. Better analyze the situation, 2. Be more persuasive, 3. Explain the situation more clearly, 4. Be appropriately assertive, 5. Control nervousness, 6. Respond better to inappropriate behavior, 7. Express more confidence, 8. Respond better to others' emotions, 9. Deliver better speeches, and 10. Write more professionally. Students felt the most challenging communication situations

were in face-to-face or telephone interaction (as opposed to written communication) and involved a higher-ranking person such as a boss or supervisor. They also reported feeling most insecure in interactions that involved conflict or persuasion. Students felt they needed the most practice with these types of situations (Reinsch & Shelby, 1997).

Students who speak English as their first language described dyadic situations as the most challenging, whereas those who speak English as a second language felt larger work groups and team meetings were more challenging. It can be speculated that students who are not as comfortable with the English language have a harder time negotiating multiple conversations at the same time and picking up on subtleties and slang, where it may be easier to focus and concentrate on the context and meaning in a one-on-one conversation. Reinsch and Shelby's (1997) findings suggest that management students can improve communication through classes that stress "oral communication, particularly in dyadic, work group, team meeting, and presentation settings, and by giving significant attention to issues of conflict, of persuasion, and of interaction across organizational boundaries" (p. 21).

Hiring an MBA – What Companies Want

For MBAs, both domestic and international, finding a good job after graduation is about having previous work experience, good communication skills, and networking with people in the business world. Less emphasis is placed on the actual MBA academic curriculum. "Today, real-world experience is far more important. An MBA alone just doesn't open the doors it once did...employers these days give more weight to your experience than to your degree, but they are still more likely to favor people they know"

said Scott Gordon, director of Spencer Stuart's tech-industry recruiting practice (Raskin, 2002, p. 42).

Most of the MBA programs that rank in the top 50 in popular business magazines require two to five years of prior work experience for admission. Gone are the days when a student could earn a Bachelor's degree and directly enter a top graduate management program. This makes the average age of the students in these programs close to 27 or 28, rather than 22 or 23 as found in other professional graduate programs (i.e. law school and medical school). It is assumed by employers that these students with prior work experience will be better able to apply the management education to real world experiences and more likely to make connections between theory and practice. Students with prior work experience are also believed to have clearer occupational goals and have a maturity to take on managerial roles immediately upon graduation from the MBA program (Dreher & Ryan, 2000).

Dreher and Ryan (2000) conducted a study to determine the predictive power of previous work history as it relates to academic success in the first year of the MBA program. They found that there was a very slight correlation between the number of years of work experience and grades during the first semester of their MBA program – those with fewer than 2 years of work experience had slightly lower grades than those with 2-5 years of experience. But the authors stated that the difference was not particularly meaningful. Better predictors of first year grades were the quality of undergraduate institution (undergraduate schools ranked in the top 25 by *U.S. News and World Report* produced students with higher MBA grades), undergraduate GPA (the

higher undergraduate GPA, the higher MBA GPA) and total GMAT scores (the higher the GMAT, the higher the MBA GPA).

When general and functional managers at companies were asked what skills were most important for job effectiveness of MBA graduates, interpersonal skills ranked highest followed by technical skills and written and oral communication skills (Kane, 1993). The assumption is that most graduates of MBA programs are going to have the necessary technical skills and knowledge in their specialty areas, so what sets them apart from one another is their ability to clearly communicate ideas, to establish interpersonal relationships, and to work effectively in a team environment.

In a similar study, Phillips and Phillips (1998) found qualities in students that seem to positively influence hiring decisions by companies include a high GPA, involvement in extracurricular activities, good interpersonal skills, ability to work well on a team, and strong communication skills. In the consideration of international students for employment, the skill of communication in English, both verbal and written, was one of the most important determinants. Regardless of the student's technical or financial skills, he/she needs to be able to communicate with team members, upper level executives and customers in order to function successfully.

Applicants must weigh various job factors in deciding which job and employer will suit him/her best. A satisfied employee produces a higher quality and quantity of work, has lower absenteeism, and a lower turnover rate. Companies can design workplace environments as well as the structure of the job to attract quality employees and keep them working productively (Phillips & Phillips, 1998).

Results indicated that the following items (listed in order, beginning with the highest rated) were the most important in helping MBA students differentiate among prospective employers: opportunity for advancement, challenging or interesting work, positive organizational climate, job security, good training program, and good health insurance. (Phillips & Phillips, 1998, p. 163)

These results indicate that students are thinking more about their future and their job satisfaction than about the amount of money they will be making.

Companies also must weigh various factors when choosing job candidates and from which schools they will find their new employees. In a survey by Garcia (1986) companies were asked from which U.S. MBA schools they prefer to hire students. Thirty-seven percent do not have preference in school location, 16% prefer business schools with strong reputations in a particular functional area, and 13% prefer schools that are the highest ranked (Garcia, 1986, p. 77).

In his Master's thesis, Noah Garcia (1986) examined to what extent U.S. multinational companies were utilizing the resource of U.S. educated foreign national MBA students and their hiring practices of these students. Through surveys with many U.S. multinational companies, he discovered that the use of U.S. managers in overseas offices (expatriate managers) has not always produced successful results. "The lack of adaptability, insensitivity to other cultures, high failure rate and associated costs, problems of repatriation, and excessive salaries are all common in the use of expatriate managers" (Garcia, 1986, p. 2). Depression and stress reactions are common results of an expatriate placement, which can cause decreased productivity or even a premature return and becomes costly to the company (Garcia, 1986). Companies have been increasing their use of local nationals for foreign subsidiary management as well as U.S.

educated foreign nationals to assume these managerial positions with the hopes of an easier cultural transition and more realistic salary expectations (Garcia, 1986).

When asked why companies do not hire more foreign national MBAs for their U.S. operations, many responded that it was their policy to hire only U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Much of the time, company representatives could not articulate why this was the policy. Others responded that there is no need to hire international students, because there are large numbers of U.S. citizens who are qualified for the jobs (Garcia, 1986). Companies say a lack of knowledge of American culture and poor English language skills are reasons they do not like to hire international students. But the most frequent reason cited by U.S. hiring departments for not hiring foreign students is the complex employment visa process. It takes up to 6 months for the H1-B work visa to be granted, and companies feel they lose valuable training and production time getting an international student up to speed (Hankins, 2001).

When Garcia (1986) asked companies whether they actively sponsored foreign MBAs for work permits in the U.S., 78% said they did NOT actively sponsor them. Since the only way for foreign students to work in the U.S. longer than one year is to have a company sponsored work visa, this percentage indicates that foreign students have a very difficult time finding companies willing to hire them in the U.S. Only 38% of the same companies indicated they did not actively hire domestic MBAs for work in their companies.

Though many American companies are eager to hire foreign graduates of U.S. business schools to work here and overseas, some aren't – and schools cite worry about scaring off recruiters as an additional reason to limit their foreign enrollments. Merck & Co. says it typically doesn't interview foreign nationals

because immigration officials, reluctant to conclude that foreign MBAs have skills not widely available among U.S. citizens or permanent residents, won't grant them work visas. Exxon Corp., too, says it sees no need to recruit foreign-born MBAs to work here. Says Joseph H. Fitts, Exxon's MBA recruiting coordinator: 'There's an ample supply of U.S. citizens.' (Fuchsberg, 1990, p. B1)

"Many U.S. companies, fearful of red tape, either won't hire non-U.S. nationals or will hire them only if they agree to work in their home countries. Andersen Consulting [now Accenture], one of the largest hirers of new MBAs, recruits at more than 100 B-schools, but formally holds presentations for non-citizens at only eight of them" (Reingold, 1998, p. 104).

Companies seem to recognize the value of hiring foreign national students and admit that these students often have a more rounded global background, are multi-lingual, and tend to be exceptional students. But companies are still reluctant to hire these students who require a U.S. work visa and may only stay a few years in the U.S. and then return to their home countries.

U.S. Work Permits for International Students

The greatest obstacle to hiring a foreign national MBA student to work in a U.S. company is the acquisition of a work visa so the student can be employed legally in the States. When students come to study in the U.S. from another country, they obtain a student visa (usually an F-1 visa) that allows them to reside in the U.S. for the time it takes to complete their academic degree. The Immigration and Naturalization Service regulates the F-1 student visa program at approximately 6,000 educational institutions. A smaller number of schools and organizations participate in the J-1 exchange visitor program regulated by the Department of State. Even smaller is the M-1 student program

for vocational students. If students do not follow the regulations for each visa exactly, they can lose their legal status, get deported and not be allowed to finish their academic program or re-enter the country. Schools have “designated school officials” and “responsible officers” who are responsible for making sure the international students are in compliance with their visa regulations and counsel international students on visa status issues. These officials need to be experts in immigration law and practice (Kennedy, 2002).

Recent homeland security measures imposed after 2001 are having a greater impact on international students studying in the U.S. and are making it more difficult for students to get visas. The Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act signed into law by President Bush in 2002 further restricts the entry requirements for foreigners wanting to study in the U.S. Background checks are conducted and the newly instituted SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) program keeps track of students once they enter the country. Universities are now required to notify the INS if a registered international student fails to enroll within 30 days of registration. President Bush also proposed constraints on international students studying and training in sensitive areas such as those that use biological agents and nuclear materials (The Economist Global Agenda, 2002).

Universities are fearful that foreign students will be hesitant to study in the U.S. now that regulations are more strict. “Higher education is the fifth-largest service-sector ‘export’ according to data from the Department of Commerce” (The Economist Global Agenda, 2002, p. 2). It will be financially and educationally detrimental to U.S.

institutions of higher education if international students decide to study elsewhere instead of coming to the States.

Students studying on an F-1 visa are eligible to work up to two years in a full or part-time job related to their course of study in a program called Practical Training. Twelve of these months may be spent working during one's academic program and the other 12 may be spent working after graduation (Goodman, 1988). When a company wants an international employee to work longer than the one year of practical training, it helps the employee apply for an H1-B visa, which allows him/her to work in the United States for that company for a period of up to 6 years. The next and final step in work sponsorship is for the international student to apply for a green card, which allows him/her to work permanently in the U.S. The sponsorship process can be expensive and time consuming, and companies often prefer to hire a U.S. citizen rather than risk the time and money on a visa sponsorship for an international student.

Obtaining authorization for practical training as well as the longer-term H1-B work visa has always been difficult for companies and international students. But in the last 3 years, it has become a much greater frustration and a more complex process. The United States has changed since September 11, 2001 when foreign terrorists took the lives of thousands of U.S. citizens and visitors in New York City and Washington D.C. Because of these attacks, national security and the procedures to protect the people living in the United States have drastically changed. Federal regulations governing foreign students have been tightened and restricted, and new security mandates have made travel and study in the U.S. by foreign nationals very difficult and uncertain. It is

more difficult for all foreigners to get student visas, foreign student applications are being scrutinized more carefully, and foreign student applications are rejected more frequently than they were before the attacks of 2001 (Southwick, 2001).

In just the past few years, the experience for an international student studying in the U.S. has become even more difficult than it was before, as has the search for a job upon graduation from a U.S. academic program. Even though it has always been a challenge for international students to find work in the U.S., prior to the fall of 2001, quite a few international MBA students were finding jobs in the U.S. after a concentrated job search. Today, it is exceptionally difficult for international students to find work in the United States. A combination of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center and the struggling economy between 2001 and 2004 has made it nearly impossible for international students to find a company willing to sponsor him/her for a U.S. work permit. U.S. corporations have decreased hiring drastically, and when there are jobs available, there are plenty of U.S. citizens to fill the spots. “In October 2003 a law increasing the number of H1-B visas [was] set to expire, chopping available H1-Bs from 195,000 a year to 65,000... While MBAs would still make up a small portion of the allotment, if all visas are issued before students get to commencement, jobless foreign grads will have no choice but to head home” (Hindo, 2002, p.2).

International students are finding it necessary to return home to their countries of origin for employment, something that many of them are reluctant to do. Being able to work in the U.S. after the completion of an academic program is very desirable, as one

gains important business skill and experience in the U.S. workforce. Foreign nationals make much more money in the U.S. monetary exchange and can pay off student loans more quickly and send money home to their families.

Given the issues stated above and the impact these issues have on thousands of international students studying in the United States, it is clear that more data and information is necessary in order to best serve these students. Although scarce, literature examining career counseling and placement variables of international students shows that they struggle with their job searches and need more guidance from career services staff in how to best prepare themselves to conduct a job search. Many of the articles used in this study mention international students as a group different from U.S. students, but their individual country and regional difference are not often addressed. This study will break down foreign national students into their respective regions of origin to explore differences in where they take jobs, differences in salary levels and in prior experience and education. The results will give career services practitioners a bit more information about the variety of international students and allow them to customize their approaches to career services delivery.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The target population for this study consisted of foreign national students who graduated from full-time MBA programs at United States universities in the 2000-2001 academic year. The specific MBA programs were identified through the national organization, “Master of Business Administration Career Services Council” (MBA CSC). The MBA CSC is a voluntary professional association of career services professionals working with MBA students in programs throughout the country. At the time this study was started in the Summer of 2001, there were 125 MBA programs in the United States that had membership in MBA CSC.

The majority of full-time MBA programs in the United States typically have between 20-40 % international students in each class. Depending on the total size of each MBA class, a school could have between 15 and 700 international students studying in the program at any one time. For the purpose of this study, MBA career center directors submitted employment data for only their international MBA students who graduated in the 2000-2001 year. No contact was made by this researcher with any of the international students themselves. All communication was with the MBA career center directors and the data collected already existed.

Instrumentation

As part of MBA CSC membership, member schools are asked to collect employment data on their graduating students. This data includes job offer and

acceptance data, base salary, bonus amounts, job function, job industry, and the geographic location of the new job. In addition, students are asked to report information regarding their Bachelor's degree concentration, the number of years of work experience prior to entering the MBA program, and from what geographic region they came. MBA CSC has created standards as to how this data should be collected from the students and how it should be reported to the media (MBA CSC Standards for Reporting MBA Employment Statistics, 2002).

Each MBA career services director can collect the data from his or her graduating students in the way most convenient for him or her. Some distribute paper surveys for students to complete. Other directors create an electronic survey form on their website. And others use the electronic data collection site set up by MBA CSC on their homepage (www.mbacsc.org). Regardless of the means by which the data are collected, each school is to collect the same data according to the *MBA CSC Standards for Reporting MBA Employment Statistics*. In this study, the MBA career center directors were asked to query the employment data from only their international students who graduated in the 2000-01 academic year, and send the information to this researcher in an electronic spreadsheet.

Procedures and Data Collection

For the purpose of this study, the MBA career services directors were each sent a letter outlining the purpose and significance of the project [Appendix A], a guide sheet outlining the exact data to be sent [Appendix B], and an electronic spreadsheet in which to “copy and paste” the data for convenience [Appendix C]. Most directors already had

the employment data from their students in some type of electronic spreadsheet for easy access and summary. It was expected that it would be fairly easy for each director to query only their international student data and copy it into the spreadsheet provided.

MBA CSC Standards require that career center directors collect placement data from their MBA students during the summer post-graduation and that the data collection be completed by September 30th of that year. For example, the MBA students who graduated in December 2000 and May 2001 were to report their employment data to their career centers throughout the summer of 2001. All data for that class were to be collected by September 30, 2001. October and November are the months in which these data are compiled and reported to the popular business ranking publishers such as *Business Week*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, etc. The results of the ranking surveys typically come out the following spring.

The initial solicitation of data for this study occurred April 15, 2002 by email. A follow-up email was sent to each director on May 23, 2002 with a deadline of June 20, 2002. By this June 20th deadline, 34 schools had responded with the placement data for their international MBA students from the 2000-01 graduating class. After discussion with many of the directors at the annual MBA CSC conference June 21-24, 2002, personal follow up phone calls in July and August, 2002, and a final email request on September 18, 2002, 15 additional schools sent data for a total of 49 responding schools [Appendix D].

Of the initial 125 member schools that were considered for this study, eight of the programs were eliminated as they did not have full-time, residential MBA programs.

Their programs were either part-time or evening programs, which did not fit the original intent of this study. Of the remaining 117 schools, 9 school representatives did not have the data collected or could not find the data as they had recently taken over the director position and could not find the previous director's records. Six of the schools' directors refused to send the data because of confidentiality issues, or they just were not interested in participating. This left 102 schools, 53 of which never responded to the 5 requests for data. Of the 102 eligible schools, it was estimated from the enrollment numbers and percentage of international students per class posted on each school's website, that there was the possibility of receiving 5916 data points from international students if all 102 schools responded. Forty nine schools (48% of the schools) participated in this study, and data from 2570 international students (43% of the eligible students) were received.

To address concerns about the representative nature of the sample collected from the eligible schools, the respondent schools were examined in light of the type of school (public vs. private), the geographic regions of the U.S. the schools represent, and where the schools stood according to the MBA Rankings for the 2001 MBA class. Of the 49 schools represented in the study, 30 of them were public schools (61%) and 19 were private (39%). Of the 53 non-respondent schools, 21 (39%) were public and 32 (61%) were private. Obviously, public schools responded more readily to this study. The participating and non-participating schools represented all regions of the United States as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Geographic Regions of MBA Programs

Geographic Region	Responding Schools - N	Percent of Total	Non-Responding Schools - N	Percent of Total
Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NY, NJ)	7	14.3	14	26.4
Mid-Atlantic (DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV)	4	8.2	7	13.2
Midwest (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI)	13	26.5	8	15.1
South (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN)	7	14.3	13	24.6
Southwest (AZ, CO, NM, OK, TX)	10	20.4	6	11.3
West (AK, CA, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY)	8	16.3	5	9.4
Total	49	100	53	100

U.S. News and World Report and *Business Week* are the two publications that have ranked business schools the longest and are publications read frequently by prospective MBA students. MBA programs are ranked by various business publications to give prospective students information on the quality of the programs and the average salaries of their graduates. The rankings and statistics from the graduating class of 2001 were reported in *U.S. News and World Report* in April of 2002 (Shea, 2002). Of the U.S. programs ranked in the “Top 50” of this publication, 29 (58%) of those schools participated in this study. Eighteen (35%) of the schools in the “Top 50” did not participate in this study. The 3 remaining “Top 50” schools were not members of the MBA CSC in the year 2001 (Table 2).

Table 2. MBA Programs by Ranking Clusters in *U.S. News & World Report*

Ranking Cluster	Responding Schools - N	Percent of Total	Non-Responding Schools - N	Percent of Total
1 – 10	3	6	6	11
11-20	9	18	1	2
21- 30	6	12	3	6
31 – 40	8	16	3	6
41 - 50	3	6	5	9
51 and above	20	41	35	66
Total schools	49	100	53	100

Business Week ranks MBA programs every other year, and the 2001 graduating class was not ranked that year. *Business Week* published a report for the 2002 graduating class (Merritt, 2002), and of the “Top 30” ranked schools, 19 (63%) of those schools participated in this study and 10 (33%) of those schools were non-respondents for this study. One school in the “Top 30” was not a member of MBA CSC in 2001.

Although many of schools in this study were not ranked in the “top” of each publication, there is an even distribution of ranked vs. unranked schools. There was a fairly even distribution of schools by geographic region, and both public and private institutions were adequately represented. It was thought that this sample was representative of the larger population of the 102 MBA programs that were members of MBA CSC at that particular time and that were eligible for this study. It was determined that a 43% student response rate and a 48% school response rate was adequate, and the collected data would provide a realistic picture of the employment situations for international MBA students in the 2001 graduating class.

Data Analysis

Data were collected, analyzed and reported for a group of foreign national MBA students as collected by career services directors who agreed to participate. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to answer the research questions. The three independent variables of country of origin, years of prior work experience, and undergraduate major were statistically analyzed as they predict variation in the dependent variables of (a.) salary, (b.) signing bonus, (c.) functional area, (d.) industry area, and (e.) geographic location of the new job using Analysis of Variance, Chi-Square tests, and Ryan-Elinot-Gabriel-Welsch F follow-up tests. Quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS 12.0 for Windows (2004). An alpha level of at least .05 was desired for significant results. Analysis, interpretation, and reporting followed principles as outlined in *Educational Research: An Introduction* (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this sample of international students graduating in 2001 from U.S. MBA programs, data from a total of 2570 students were analyzed, although particular data points were missing from a number of these students. Although each school is asked to conform to the MBA CSC Reporting Standards, some career center directors do not collect all of the requested data. There were also quite a few cases where a student chose to report only select pieces of data, rather than filling out the entire employment survey as requested. When data were missing for a given variable, that observation for that particular question was eliminated.

Analysis Overview

A total of 115 non-U.S. countries were represented in this sample. The “top 10” represented countries comprised nearly 65% of the total international MBA student population, and the top 20 countries comprised over 80% of this population (Table 3). This means the remaining 20% of international students came from the other 95 countries represented.

Because 96 of the countries had fewer than 30 data points, and to make the citizenship numbers more robust, the countries were grouped into geographic regions based primarily on continent. The 115 countries represented in the study and how they were grouped into country regions for the purpose of analysis are shown in Appendix E. The 5 regions and participant numbers from each region are displayed in Table 4. The country region of “North America” excludes the United States.

Table 3. Top 20 Countries Represented by Sample

Country	n	Percent of Total	Country	n	Percent of Total
China	401	16	Peru	62	2.5
India	308	12	Thailand	60	2.4
Japan	195	8	Germany	59	2.4
Korea	179	7	Argentina	50	2
Brazil	122	5	France	43	1.7
Taiwan	115	5	Colombia	40	1.6
Mexico	95	4	United Kingdom	38	1.5
Russia	69	2.7	Singapore	34	1.4
Canada	66	2.6	Indonesia	30	1.2
Turkey	64	2.5	Philippines	26	1

N = 2477

Table 4. Country Region Groupings

Country Region	n	Percent of Total
Africa	44	1.8
Asia/Asia Pacific	1446	58.4
Europe	463	18.7
North America	194	7.8
South America	330	13.3

N = 2477

The research questions discussed in Chapter I address the relationship between three independent variables: country of citizenship, years of work experience prior to the MBA program, and undergraduate degree major, and whether these variables are related to success in job placement. In this study, the primary measures of success in job placement were the amount of base salary and the signing bonus a student received as part of the job offer. Other relationships explored were between the three predictor variables and job function, job industry, and geographic location of the job.

Research Question 1

Is country of origin related to job placement variables for foreign national MBA students?

The independent variable that formed the basis for this study was that of country of origin or citizenship. As discussed early in this section, the countries represented were grouped into regions to make for more robust comparisons. As country region is a categorical variable, each region was coded for the analysis such that Africa was represented by “1,” Asia/Asia Pacific by “2,” Europe by “3,” North America by “4,” and South America by “5.”

Global Model: Country Region, Salary, and Signing Bonus

Descriptive statistics for country region, salary and signing bonus are shown in Table 5. It was found that salary and signing bonus were significantly correlated with each other ($r = .435, p < .001$). To account for this covariance between salary and signing bonus, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run for the global test variables of the relationship between country region, salary and signing bonus. From this global MANOVA, the Wilks' Lambda test revealed a statistically significant effect of country region on salary and signing bonus ($F [8, 2282] = 5.386, p < .001$). The effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .019$) indicated a very small amount, 1.9 %, of explained variability.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Country Region, Salary and Signing Bonus

Country Region	Salary			Signing Bonus	
	N	M	SD	M	SD
Africa	21	80809.52	18494.916	17809.52	10376.025
Asia / Asia Pacific	618	81216.18	21240.349	15351.95	10900.309
Europe	199	83359.69	16618.997	18566.22	13237.096
North America	103	87094.38	15819.250	21881.87	14981.665
South America	206	84368.62	17172.388	19955.40	13191.393

Country Region, Salary and Signing Bonus

A univariate test (ANOVA) run for the effects of country region on salary was statistically significant ($F [4, 1142] = 2.738, p < .028$). The effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .009$) indicated that only .9% of the variability in salary can be explained by country region. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance for country region and salary did not meet the assumptions of homogeneity, however given the fact that Levene's test is liberal with large samples and considering the robustness of the F test, the F ratio for between subjects was interpreted as significant.

The corresponding Ryan-Einot-Gabriel-Welch F follow-up test (REGWF) revealed a significant difference between salaries of students from North America and those from Asia ($\bar{X}_{\text{North America}} - \bar{X}_{\text{Asia}} = 5878.20, p < .05$) and a significant difference between salaries of students from North America and those from Africa ($\bar{X}_{\text{North America}} - \bar{X}_{\text{Africa}} = 6284.86, p < .05$). No other follow-up comparisons were significant.

A univariate test run on the effects of country region on signing bonus was also statistically significant ($F [4, 1142] = 10.625, p < .001$). The effect size (partial $\eta^2 =$

.036) indicates that 3.6% of the variability in signing bonus can be explained by country region. The assumption of homogeneity for country region and signing bonus was met.

An REGWF follow-up test revealed a statistically significant difference between the signing bonus amounts of students from Europe and Asia ($\bar{X}_{\text{Europe}} - \bar{X}_{\text{Asia}} = 3214.27, p < .05$); between students from North America and Asia ($\bar{X}_{\text{North America}} - \bar{X}_{\text{Asia}} = 6529.93, p < .05$); and between students from South America and Asia ($\bar{X}_{\text{South America}} - \bar{X}_{\text{Asia}} = 4603.46, p < .05$).

It is recognized that the region of Africa still had a small cell size even after the country groupings were made. Collapsing the countries in Africa with another region was not advisable given the qualitative differences of students from these regions. Out of respect to these qualitative differences, individuals from Africa were not combined with individuals from other regions purely for the purpose of complying with an $n = 30$ observations cell size standard.

Country Region and Job Function

Except for the region of South America, the function of finance was performed most often in students' initial job placement post graduation (Table 6). Consulting was the first job of choice for the South American students, and consulting was the second job of choice for all other regions. Marketing was the third most frequent function for Asia/Asia Pacific, Europe, North America and South America, where management was the third most frequent function for Africa. The functions of Human Resources and Accounting were obviously not popular functions for international MBA students to

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Country Region and Job Function

Country Region		Accounting	Consulting	Finance	Management	Human Resources	Marketing	MIS	Operations/Supply Chain	Total
Africa	N	0	7	12	4	0	3	1	2	29
	Percent	0	24	41.4	13.8	0	10.3	3.5	6.9	1.7
Asia/AP	N	37	229	327	87	2	181	48	31	942
	Percent	3.9	24.3	34.7	9.2	.02	19.2	5.1	3.3	54.6
Europe	N	8	96	126	27	2	53	10	8	330
	Percent	2.4	29.1	38.2	8.2	.06	16	3	2.4	19.1
North America	N	1	39	62	20	0	25	1	8	156
	Percent	.06	25	39.7	12.8	0	16	.06	5.1	9.0
South America	N	3	92	77	29	0	53	5	9	268
	Percent	1.1	34.3	28.7	10.8	0	19.8	1.9	3.4	15.5
Total	N	49	463	604	167	4	315	65	58	1725
	Percent	2.8	26.8	35.0	9.7	.02	18.3	3.8	3.4	

perform after finishing their program, as less than 1% of the total students took a job in HR and fewer than 3% of the total students accepted a job in Accounting.

For the statistical comparison between country region and functional area, the region of Africa was removed as there were cell sizes of 0. The functional area of Human Resources was also removed for the same reason. A Chi-Square test of independence revealed a statistically significant effect of the students' country region on the functional area of the job they accepted, ($X^2 [18] = 41.82, p < .001$). Effect sizes ($\phi = .173$ and Cramer's $V = .086$) indicated that only small amounts of the variability in the functional area can be explained by country region.

Chi-Squares were calculated on individual cells (Table 7) to determine where the significant differences between observed and expected values existed. South American students had a greater frequency of taking a consulting job than would be expected by chance ($X^2 [1] = 5.43, p < .025$). Asian students had a greater frequency of taking jobs in management of information systems than would be expected by chance ($X^2 [1] = 4.32, p < .05$). North American students had a *lower* frequency of accepting jobs in management of information systems than expected by chance ($X^2 [1] = 4.06, p < .05$).

Table 7. Frequency Distribution and Chi-Squares for Country Region and Job Function

Country Region		Accounting	Consulting	Finance	Management	Marketing	MIS	Operations	Total
Asia/Asia Pacific	Observed	37	229	327	87	181	48	31	940
	Expected	27.2	253.3	328.9	90.6	173.3	35.6	31.1	
	Chi-Square	3.53	2.33	.01	.14	.34	4.32*	.0003	
Europe	Observed	8	96	126	27	53	10	8	328
	Expected	9.5	88.4	114.8	31.6	60.5	12.4	10.9	
	Chi-Square	.23	.65	1.21	.67	.93	.46	.77	
North America	Observed	1	39	62	20	25	1	8	156
	Expected	4.5	42	54.6	15	28.8	5.9	5.2	
	Chi-Square	2.72	.21	1.0	1.67	.50	4.06*	1.5	
South America	Observed	3	92	77	29	53	5	9	268
	Expected	7.8	72.2	93.8	25.8	49.4	10.1	8.9	
	Chi-Square	0	5.43 **	3.0	.39	.26	2.57	.001	
Total		49	456	592	163	312	64	56	1692

* p < .05; ** p < .025

Country Region and Industry

In all five country regions, the industry in which students accepted work most frequently was the service industry (Table 8), with over 60% of students taking jobs in this industry. The service industry includes consulting services, financial and banking services, entertainment and hospitality, as well as other services. The industry with the second highest frequency of all country regions was the manufacturing industry, which includes consumer products, energy, pharmaceuticals, technology, telecommunications, transportation and other manufacturing products. Government and non-profit organizations were not popular industries into which international MBA students entered for their first employment position upon graduation.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Country Region and Job Industry

Country Region		Manufacturing	Services	Non-Profit	Government	Total
Africa	N	9	19	0	1	29
	Percent	31	65.5	0	3.5	1.7
Asia	N	351	585	4	7	947
	Percent	37.1	61.8	.04	.07	54.5
Europe	N	105	221	4	1	331
	Percent	31.7	66.8	1.2	.03	19.1
North America	N	58	93	3	1	155
	Percent	37.4	60	1.9	.06	8.9
South America	N	114	160	0	0	274
	Percent	41.6	58.4	0	0	15.8
Total	N	637	1078	11	10	1736
	Percent	37	62.1	.06	.06	100

For the statistical comparison between country region and industry area, the industries of non-profit and government were removed because they had cell sizes of 0. A Chi-Square test of independence was calculated comparing the students' country region with the industry areas of manufacturing and services ($X^2 [4] = 6.19, p < .185$) resulting in no significant differences within the table (Table 9). Thus, the individual chi-squares resulted in no significant differences as well.

Table 9. Frequency Distribution and Chi-Squares for Country Region and Job Industry

Country Region		Manufacturing	Services	Total
Africa	Observed	9	19	
	Expected	10.4	17.6	28
	Chi-Square	.19	.11	
Asia/Asia Pacific	Observed	351	585	
	Expected	347.7	588.3	936
	Chi-Square	.03	.02	
Europe	Observed	105	221	
	Expected	121.1	204.9	326
	Chi-Square	2.14	1.27	
North America	Observed	58	93	
	Expected	56.1	94.9	151
	Chi-Square	.06	.04	
South America	Observed	114	160	
	Expected	101.8	172.2	274
	Chi-Square	1.46	.86	
Total		637	1078	1715

Country Region and Geographic Location

International students often study for their MBA in the United States with the desire to gain a few years of work experience in U.S. businesses before returning with this knowledge to their home countries. As seen in Table 10, of the 1678 students who answered this question, 70% (and a majority of all five country regions) stayed in the U.S. for their initial work assignment.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics for Country Region and Geographic Location

Country Region		International Location	United States	Total
Africa	N	9	18	27
	Percent	33.3	66.7	1.6
Asia/Asia Pacific	N	263	658	921
	Percent	28.6	71.4	54.9
Europe	N	110	201	311
	Percent	35.4	64.6	18.5
North America	N	38	115	153
	Percent	24.8	75.2	9.1
South America	N	84	182	266
	Percent	31.6	68.4	15.9
Total	N	504	1174	1678
	Percent	30	70	100

A Chi-Square test of independence was calculated comparing the students' country region with the geographic locations in which they took their first post-MBA job

($X^2 [4] = 7.58, p < .108$) resulting in no significant differences within the table (Table 11). Although Europe had the highest percentage of students return to their home region, there was still no country region with a significant difference in the number of students returning to their home region for employment.

Table 11. Frequency Distribution and Chi-Squares for Country Region and Geography

Country Region		International Location	United States	Total
Africa	Observed	9	18	
	Expected	8.1	18.9	27
	Chi-Square	.10	.04	
Asia/Asia Pacific	Observed	263	658	
	Expected	276.6	644.4	921
	Chi-Square	.67	.29	
Europe	Observed	110	201	
	Expected	93.4	217.6	
	Chi-Square	2.95	1.27	311
North America	Observed	38	115	
	Expected	46	107	153
	Chi-Square	1.39	.60	
South America	Observed	84	182	
	Expected	79.9	186.1	266
	Chi-Square	.21	.09	
Total		504	1174	1678

Global Model: Employment Geographic Location, Salary and Signing Bonus

Comparisons were made to determine if international students who took jobs in the United States made significantly different salaries and signing bonuses than those international students who took jobs in international locations. Descriptive results of salary and bonus by geographic location of the students' employment are displayed in

Table 12. From a global MANOVA, the Wilks' Lambda test revealed a significant effect of employment geography on salary and signing bonus ($F [2, 1109] = 18.441, p < .001$). The effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .032$) indicated a small amount, 3.2 %, of explained variability was attributed to geographic location.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics for Employment Geography, Salary and Bonus

Geographic Location	Salary			Signing Bonus	
	N	M	SD	M	SD
United States	864	83572.97	17527.930	16751.08	11918.472
International	248	76656.49	24776.533	17630.22	14149.995

Employment Geographic Location, Salary and Signing Bonus

The univariate test of employment geography on salary was statistically significant ($F [1, 1110] = 24.551, p < .001$). The effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .022$) indicated that 2.2% of the variability in salary can be explained by the geography in which the students works. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance for geographic location and salary did not meet the assumptions of homogeneity, however given the robustness of the F test, the F ratio for between subjects was interpreted as significant. There was no significant difference in signing bonus between students who took jobs in the United States and those who took jobs internationally ($F [1, 1110] = .961, p < .327$).

Research Question 2

Is number of years of prior work experience related to job placement variables for foreign national MBA students?

The second major independent variable was “prior work experience” or the number of years a student worked in a full-time job prior to the start of his or her MBA program. Descriptive statistics for salary and signing bonus by years of prior work experience are shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics for Prior Work Experience, Salary, and Bonus

Years of Prior Work Experience	N	Salary		Signing Bonus	
		M	SD	M	SD
0	27	64550.00	17565.925	10812.96	8700.813
1	21	69357.14	17918.665	9133.33	8101.440
2	157	74071.04	21708.426	14134.30	10337.207
3	135	80711.11	19355.603	19951.85	13457.350
4	211	80131.28	17415.282	16449.29	11603.905
Cluster 1	551	77372.42	19654.441	16092.80	11824.792
5	119	83652.10	15344.864	16389.35	13147.653
6	77	83711.69	15244.127	15916.23	9752.774
7	54	86058.33	15486.347	17701.85	10554.092
8	75	84099.95	19470.002	14798.00	8784.440
Cluster 2	325	84168.04	16334.486	16128.10	11044.015
9	13	91200.00	20548.804	19407.69	9044.931
10	12	91166.67	24401.316	12958.33	11382.719
11	4	113500.00	10279.429	12500.00	6454.972
12	9	82555.56	17393.326	16000.00	16673.332
13	2	92510.00	10592.460	12500.00	3535.534
14	3	59373.33	14408.960	8743.67	7144.587
15	0				
16 or more	2	108500.00	44547.727	1500.00	2121.320
Cluster 3	45	90149.78	22922.183	14578.47	11379.866
Total	921	80394.74	19109.892	16031.27	11525.995

One can see an overall steady increase in salary as the number of years of work experience increased, with the salary topping out at the 11-year mark (Figure 1). The signing bonus took a less clear progression with the highest average bonus received by those with only 3 years of work experience (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Line Chart of Salary by Years of Prior Work Experience

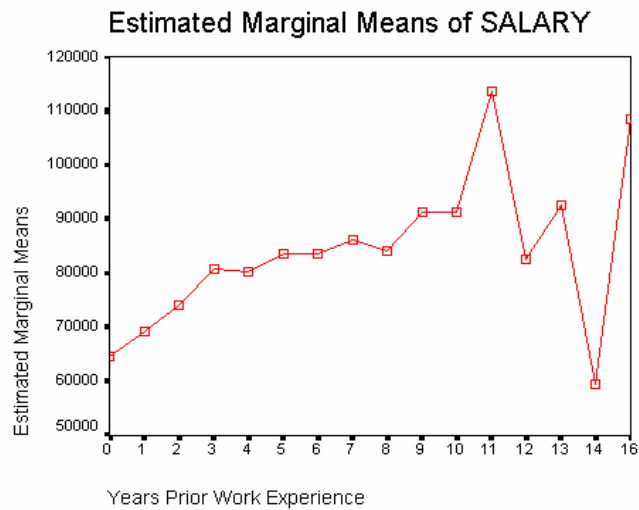
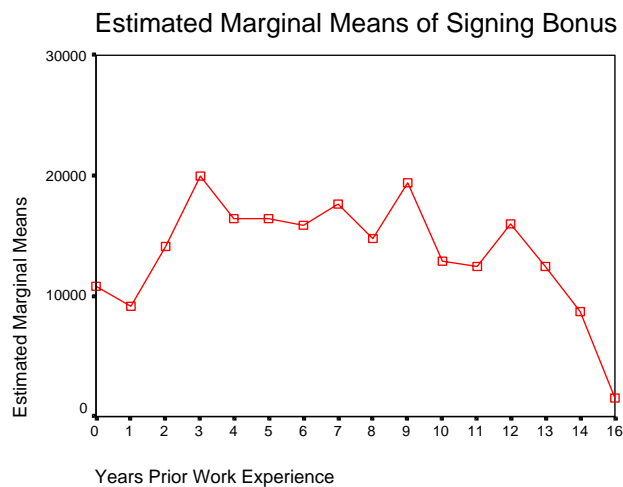


Figure 2. Line Chart of Signing Bonus by Years of Prior Work Experience



In examining the years of 9 – 16, it is evident that the cell sizes were quite small and there was much volatility in those numbers. Because there were too many cells with fewer than 30 data points for years of prior work experience, the years were grouped into clusters to provide for a more robust comparison. Years 0-4 were grouped into “cluster 1,” years 5-8 are represented by “cluster 2” and years 9-16+ are “cluster 3.” Descriptive statistics for these clusters are also seen in Table 13.

Global Model: Years of Prior Work Experience Cluster, Salary, and Signing Bonus

From a global MANOVA run on the clusters, the Wilks’ Lambda test revealed a significant effect of years of prior work experience (clustered) on salary and signing bonus ($F [4, 1834] = 13.606, p < .001$). The effect size ($\text{partial } \eta^2 = .029$) indicated that only 2.9 % of the variability in salary and signing bonus can be explained by the years of prior work experience as clustered.

Years of Prior Work Experience Cluster, Salary, and Signing Bonus

A univariate test run on the clusters revealed a statistically significant effect of years of prior work experience on salary ($F [2, 918] = 19.873, p < .001$). The effect size ($\text{partial } \eta^2 = .041$) indicated that 4.1% of the variability in salary can be explained by the clusters of years of work experience. Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variance for clusters of years of work experience and salary did not meet the assumption of homogeneity, however given the robustness of the F test, the F ratio for between subjects was interpreted as significant. In a REGWF follow-up test, it was found that all three clusters were significantly different from one another at a .05 alpha level, with students in cluster 3 (9-16 years of prior work experience) earning the highest salaries.

A univariate test run on the clusters for years of prior work experience and signing bonus did not reveal a significant effect ($F [2, 918] = .376, p < .687$).

Research Question 3

Is undergraduate major related to job placement variables for foreign national MBA students?

The third independent variable was “undergraduate major” or the academic area in which these MBA students earned their Bachelor’s degree. The majority of MBA students came from a background of technical/engineering or business, and the “other” category captured liberal arts, sciences, education, agriculture, pre-med, etc. (Table 14).

Table 14. Descriptive Statistics for Undergraduate Major, Salary, and Signing Bonus

Undergraduate Major	Percent of Total		Salary		Signing Bonus	
	N		M	SD	M	SD
Business	382	44%	77688.11	20393.332	15367.29	10155.869
Technical	317	36%	82963.82	18167.061	16688.84	11433.210
Other	177	20%	80251.13	19750.854	14309.60	9860.358

Global Model: Undergraduate Major, Salary, and Signing Bonus

From a global MANOVA, the Wilks’ Lambda test revealed a significant effect of undergraduate major on salary and signing bonus ($F [4, 1744] = 4.392, p < .002$). The effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .010$) indicated that only 1 % of the variability in salary and signing bonus can be explained by undergraduate major.

Undergraduate Major, Salary and Signing Bonus

A univariate test revealed a significant effect of undergraduate major on salary ($F [2, 873] = 6.356, p < .002$) and the effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .014$) indicated 1.4% of the variability in salary can be explained by undergraduate major. A REGWF follow-up test showed that students with undergraduate majors in technology received a significantly higher salary than those who majored in business ($\bar{X}_{\text{technology}} - \bar{X}_{\text{business}} = 5275.71, p < .05$). The assumption of homogeneity for between subjects was met.

A univariate test also showed a statistically significant effect of undergraduate major on signing bonus ($F [2, 873] = 3.084, p < .046$) with the effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .007$) indicating that only .7% of the variability in signing bonus can be explained by undergraduate major. The REGWF follow-up revealed that students with undergraduate majors in technology received a higher signing bonus than those who majored in subjects “other” than technology and business ($\bar{X}_{\text{technology}} - \bar{X}_{\text{other}} = 2379.24, p < .05$). The assumption of homogeneity for between subjects was met. The results indicate that students with a technical undergraduate degree fared the best when it came to both their salaries and signing bonuses in their post-MBA employment.

Undergraduate Major and Job Function

Descriptive statistics for job function based on undergraduate major are seen in Table 15. The students studying business as undergraduates took jobs in finance, consulting, and marketing most frequently, and those with technical undergraduate majors went into consulting, finance, and marketing in this order of frequency. The students with an undergraduate major in “other,” which includes the arts and sciences,

went into the functions of finance, consulting and marketing in that order – the same as the business undergraduates. Again, regardless of one's undergraduate major, the functions of human resources and accounting were not popular with the MBA students.

For the statistical comparison between undergraduate major and functional area, the function of Human Resources was removed as there were cell sizes of 0. A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the students' undergraduate major with the functional area of the job they accepted, ($X^2 [14] = 91.54, p < .001$) resulting in a significant difference within the table (Table 16). Effect sizes ($\phi = .265$ and Cramer's $V = .188$) indicated that small amounts of the variability in the functional area can be explained by undergraduate major.

Chi-Squares were calculated on individual cells to determine where the significant differences between observed and expected values existed. Business majors had a greater frequency of taking jobs in finance than would be expected by chance ($X^2 [1] = 7.10, p < .01$), and technical majors had a greater frequency of taking a job in MIS ($X^2 [1] = 25.0, p < .005$) and in operations/supply chain ($X^2 [1] = 5.72, p < .025$) than was expected by chance. Business majors had a lower frequency of taking a job in MIS than was expected by chance ($X^2 [1] = 8.25, p < .005$). Technical majors had a lower frequency of jobs in Accounting ($X^2 [1] = 4.69, p < .05$) and in finance ($X^2 [1] = 12.96, p < .005$). Students with an undergraduate degree of "other" had a lower frequency of taking jobs in MIS ($X^2 [1] = 5.35, p < .025$) than expected by chance.

Table 15. Descriptive Statistics for Undergraduate Major and Job Function

Undergraduate Major		Accounting	Consulting	Finance	Management	Human Resources	Marketing	MIS	Operations/ Supply Chain	Total
Business	N	28	123	223	38	2	117	10	14	555
	Percent	5	22.2	40.2	6.8	.04	21.1	1.8	2.5	41.5
Technical	N	8	139	113	53	0	90	43	24	470
	Percent	1.7	29.6	24	11.3	0	19.1	9.2	5.1	35.1
Other	N	12	74	114	30	2	72	5	4	313
	Percent	3.8	23.6	36.4	9.6	.06	23	1.6	1.3	23.4
Total	N	48	336	450	121	4	279	58	42	1338
	Percent	3.6	25.1	33.6	9	.03	20.9	4.3	3.1	100

Table 16. Frequency Distribution and Chi-Squares for Undergraduate Major and Job Function

Undergraduate Major		Accounting	Consulting	Finance	Management	Marketing	MIS	Operations/ Supply Chain	Total
Business	Observed	28	123	223	38	117	10	14	553
	Expected	19.9	139.3	186.6	50.2	115.7	24.1	17.4	
	Chi-Square	3.3	1.91	7.10***	2.97	.02	8.25****	.66	
Technical	Observed	8	139	113	53	90	43	24	470
	Expected	16.9	118.2	158.3	42.6	98.2	20.4	14.8	
	Chi-Square	4.69*	3.66	12.96****	2.54	.69	25.0****	5.72**	
Other	Observed	12	74	114	30	72	5	4	311
	Expected	11.2	78.5	105.1	28.3	65.2	13.5	9.8	
	Chi-Square	.01	.26	.75	.10	.71	5.35**	3.43	
Total		48	336	450	121	279	58	42	1334

* p < .05; ** p < .025; *** p < .01; **** p < .005

Undergraduate Major and Industry Area

Descriptive statistics for job industry area based on undergraduate major are seen in Table 17. The services industry attracted students from all undergraduate majors first and the manufacturing industry was second for all majors. Again, regardless of one's undergraduate major, the industries of government and non-profit were not popular with the international MBA students.

Table 17. Descriptive Statistics for Undergraduate Major and Job Industry

Undergraduate Major		Manufacturing	Services	Non-Profit	Government	Total
Business	N	199	352	5	3	559
	Percent	35.6	63	.8	.5	41.4
Technical	N	216	253	3	2	474
	Percent	46	53	.6	.4	35.1
Other	N	119	192	2	3	316
	Percent	37.6	60.7	.6	1	23.4
Total	N	534	797	10	8	1349
	Percent	40	59	.07	.06	100

A Chi-Square test of independence was calculated comparing the students' undergraduate major with the industry of the job they accepted, ($X^2 [6] = 12.26, p < .056$) resulting in no significant difference within the table (Table 18).

Table 18: Frequency Distribution and Chi-Squares for Undergraduate Major and Job Industry

Undergraduate Major		Manufacturing	Services	Non-Profit	Government	Total
Business	Observed	199	352	5	3	
	Expected	221.3	330.3	4.1	3.3	559
	Chi-Square	2.24	1.43	.20	.03	
Technical	Observed	216	253	3	2	
	Expected	187.6	280	3.5	2.8	474
	Chi-Square	4.3	2.6	.07	.23	
Other	Observed	119	192	2	3	
	Expected	125.1	186.7	2.3	1.9	316
	Chi-Square	.30	.15	.04	.64	
Total		534	797	10	8	1349

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to identify relationships between the placement variables of international MBA students in the hopes of finding useful information for career services professionals in the advising of these students. The study began by examining the research on career services on university campuses for international students and what career centers are doing to serve this unique population. The review of the literature gave little insight into actual placement variables of international students, but it gave a solid foundation for advising these students and reinforced the fact that they are an underserved group of students with different needs than U.S. students. This study specifically examined international MBA students, a small but demanding subset of the international student population.

Students from countries all over the world come to the United States to earn a graduate degree in business management with the desire of gaining knowledge and the hopes of improving their job prospects. Many of them hope to stay in the States to work for a few years to gain experience in American business practices. This study examined whether or not there were differences in salary, signing bonus, job function, job industry and geographic location based on the international students' country of origin, the number of years of prior work experience, and their undergraduate major. This information may help career centers counsel their international students more effectively and may also help MBA admissions offices make decisions about which students would yield the most successful placement statistics.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based only on the data collected from the 2570 international MBA students in this study who graduated in the 2000-01 academic year. The conclusions cannot be generalized to other MBA populations or other academic years. Although many of the results presented in this study indicated statistically significant differences, the effect sizes for all comparisons were quite low, indicating a less robust “real-world” significance. It is recognized that although statistically significant results were found, the unexplained variance is accounted for by many other unexamined factors.

1. The region of Asia / Asia Pacific sends more than 3 times the number of students to study for MBA degrees at U.S. universities than each of the regions of Africa, Europe, North America and South America.
2. International students from North America have the highest average salary and signing bonus amounts of the five geographical regions. Students from Asia / Asia Pacific and Africa receive the lowest salaries.
3. Although the effect sizes were very small for the influence of country region on job function, international MBA graduates from all regions except South America appear to pursue the job function of finance most frequently in their first post-MBA job. The South American students accept positions in consulting most frequently. Regardless of country of origin, MBA students do not frequently accept positions in the functions of human resources and accounting.

4. International MBA students accept jobs in the services industries most often, regardless of their country of origin. They rarely accept jobs in the government and non-profit industries.
5. Over 70% of international MBA students accept work in the United States after graduation instead of returning to their home countries or another international location, regardless of their country of origin.
6. International students accepting jobs in the United States receive slightly higher salaries than students accepting jobs in an international location. There is no significant difference in the signing bonus amounts received in the U.S. vs. international locations.
7. The more work experience an international student has prior to beginning his/her MBA program, the higher his/her salary will be post-MBA. Salaries peak when the student has between 9-11 years of prior work experience.
8. Although effect sizes were very small for the influence of undergraduate major on salary, international students majoring in a technical field (computer science, engineering, etc.) in their undergraduate studies made slightly higher starting salaries and signing bonuses in their post-MBA jobs than those majoring in business or other fields.
9. Students studying business and “other” areas as undergraduate students took jobs in finance most frequently, and those with technical undergraduate degrees took jobs in consulting most frequently. Regardless of one’s undergraduate major,

these international MBA students did not frequently take jobs in human resources or accounting functions.

10. Regardless of undergraduate major, international students in this study took jobs in the services industry with the most frequency and in the manufacturing industry with the next greatest frequency.

Discussion

It was anticipated that there would be some differences in the “success” and job choices of certain international students, but it was unclear where these differences would lie and what their choices would be. It was found that students from the North American region (comprised primarily of students from Canada and Mexico) made the highest salaries and received the highest signing bonuses in their post-MBA jobs.

As was revealed in the results, although there was a statistically significant effect on salary and signing bonus by country region, the effect size indicated that only .9% of the variability for salary and 3.6% of the variability for signing bonus can be attributed to country region. These very small effect sizes make these results less significant in a “real-world” sense and indicate that there are other factors also contributing to the variance. Caution is recommended when making generalizations based on these numbers.

One speculation for the slight difference in monetary compensation by country of origin is that the language skills of the North American students were beneficial in finding work in the U.S. The Canadians are in demand for their English language skills and their similarity to the U.S. students. As many businesses in the United States now

operate in both English and Spanish, and since people of Hispanic ethnicities are increasing rapidly in the U.S., it can be speculated that the Spanish language is in high demand in American businesses as well. The more in demand a particular skill, the more likely one is to be well compensated for that characteristic, either in their base salary or in a one-time signing bonus that convinces them to accept the offer.

One other possible explanation for the Canadian students being hired at U.S. companies and receiving higher salaries might be that they qualify for a different visa type than students from the other international locations. The majority of international students need a company to sponsor them for an H1-B visa, which, as stated in Chapter 2, is very hard to get. The Canadian students are eligible for TN1 visas under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). These work visas are available at the borders, are granted immediately, do not cost the employer anything, and are renewable indefinitely (TN1 Visa for Canadians, 2005). Thus it is almost as easy to hire a Canadian student as it is to hire a U.S. student. Unfortunately, the difficulty of obtaining an H1-B visa makes hiring students from other international locations more complicated.

In an examination of students' country of origin and the choices they made related to the types of jobs they accepted after graduation, only very slight differences were found. Students from all geographic regions tended to select the job functions of finance, consulting, and marketing at a similar rate. And students from all regions seemed to reject the functions of human resources and accounting at a similar rate. One explanation for the low level of interest in human resources could be that this job function typically requires exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, areas in

which the international students tend to lack confidence. Students who wish to enter or continue in the field of accounting are more likely to earn a degree specifically in accounting, such as a specialized master's degree in accountancy which would allow them to sit for the CPA exam. An MBA program does not typically include enough accounting courses to meet the requirement for the CPA designation.

In looking at the job industry in which international MBA students enter post-graduation, there is a preference for the services and manufacturing industries, regardless of the country of origin. The services industry covers all financial and consulting services, which accounts for a large area of interest for the MBA students as seen in the functional areas. It makes sense that the government does not attract many international students, as the U.S. government agencies have very strict rules about hiring non-U.S. citizens to work on government contracts. Very few government agencies will consider hiring an international student to work for them because of the sensitive nature of their contracts. It is more unclear as to why the non-profit sector is less desirable to international students, but based on experience, the non-profit agencies have not traditionally needed to hire MBAs at their management levels. It is also widely known that non-profit agencies pay lower salaries than for-profit corporations, and MBA students often have salary requirements that cannot be met by non-profit agencies. Non-profit agencies may also be less able to afford the H1-B visa application fees needed to hire and sponsor an international student as an employee.

From these results on functional area and industry area, it does not seem as though career centers need to make significant changes in how they are introducing their

international MBA students to various career choices. Students from all country regions seem attracted to similar functions and industries. It is important that all students, regardless of country of origin, be exposed to all possible career options, and that they have the opportunity to pursue those for which they are most qualified and feel most passionate about.

This research revealed that 70% of the international MBA students who came to study in the U.S. took employment positions in the United States (regardless of their countries of origin), where the other 30% took positions in a location outside of the states. It is not known in which countries this group of 30% took their jobs. It can be speculated that a great number of them returned to their home countries for work, but it is possible some of them took jobs in international locations outside of their home countries. Since so many international students desire jobs in the United States upon graduation, it seems as though this 2001 graduating class did very well meeting this goal. Counseling implications include ensuring all international students know what their options are and what the difficulties might be in finding work in the United States. Difficulties include visa issues, the job market at the time they are seeking work, and the potential bias against hiring international students over American students for job openings. In the beginning of 2001, there were different challenges and options to international students than there are today. A complete discussion of these issues will follow the summary section.

The second major predictor variable in this study was that of “years of prior work experience.” This includes the number of years a student worked in a professional job

after earning his/her Bachelor's degree and prior to starting the MBA program. As company recruiters repeatedly say, they are looking not only for a strong academic performance in the MBA program, but for candidates who have significant and related prior work experience. Most agree that prior work experience helps a student better understand his/her academic material and apply this learning to real-world experience. These students can more immediately apply their business school classroom learning in the work environment upon graduation from the MBA program.

Most MBA programs would prefer their incoming students have a minimum of 2 years of work experience prior to beginning the program. In this sample of international MBA students, there was a clear increase in starting salary post-MBA as the years of prior work experience of the students' increased. After 11 years of prior experience the relationship between work experience and salary became less clear, most likely because of the small cell sizes. For the amount of signing bonus earned post-MBA, there was a less clear linear relationship. Those students with 0-1 years of experience had a lower bonus average than those with between 2 and 11 years. Not explained is why students with 3 and 9 years of prior experience had the highest bonus averages.

As stated previously, base salary and signing bonus are one way an MBA program measures its students' success. It seems clear that the greater number of years of work experience (particularly between 2-11 years), the greater the salary potential. This leaves an MBA program with the task of admitting students with the ideal amount of work experience – somewhere between 2 and 11 years. It also presents a challenge to career services professionals to help those students with fewer than 2 years of work

experience in their salary negotiation skills. And it places a responsibility on the faculty and MBA staff to help students develop skills that can compensate for their lack of work experience.

The third predictor variable was “undergraduate major.” MBA programs categorize students’ undergraduate concentrations into three categories: business, technical (engineering, information systems, etc.) and other (which include all arts and sciences, pre-law, communications, education, etc.). The MBA is a very quantitative degree which requires analytical thinking along with significant coursework in finance, accounting, statistics and information systems.

Forty-three percent of the students in this study were business undergrads, 32% were technical, and 25% were “other.” The results of this study showed that the students with undergraduate majors in technology did have slightly higher salaries and bonuses, but that the students with “other” undergraduate degrees did not fare any worse than those with undergraduate degrees in business. The goal of an MBA program should be to create as diverse a student body as possible so the students can learn from each other, but if high salaries are important outcomes to a program, than admitting more technology undergrads might be beneficial.

MBA students tended to enter similar job functions regardless of their undergraduate majors, although the business undergrads entered finance fields slightly more frequently and the technology undergrads entered information systems and operations functions slightly more frequently. As seen in comparisons of country region, regardless of undergraduate major, the students entered into the industries of

services and manufacturing the most frequently and tended to steer away from the non-profit and government sectors.

Recommendations

1. University career center staff should hold special programs for international students to address their unique cultural, adjustment, and communication needs as they relate to their job search.
2. Career center staff should work with the International Student Services office on campus to educate international students about the different employment visa types available to them and the process a company must go through to secure these visas and hire international students.
3. University career centers need to help international students, the Asian and African students in particular, practice their salary negotiation skills. It is unclear from the data whether the North and South American students have mastered the skill of salary negotiation and are increasing their salaries and bonuses through negotiation, or whether there is something inherent in this type of student that commands a higher salary. There may be other factors contributing to their slightly higher salaries that are not covered in this study. Regardless, improved negotiation skills can help all students ensure the highest salary possible.
4. MBA Programs should admit more students who have at least 2 years of work experience to ensure the highest average salary possible. This also ensures richer work backgrounds of students so they can learn more from each other's

experiences and have something to which they can apply their classroom learning.

It is interesting to note that the variable that had the greatest affect on the salary and signing bonus amounts of the international students was that of the number of years of prior work experience. This is a variable that is under the control of the student, a factor that is influenced by effort and choice. Country region or the student's nationality, which is a factor not under the student's control, did not have a great effect on salary and signing bonus. It is encouraging to think that individual differences not under the control of the student may have less influence on their value as perceived by an employer. It would be interesting to see if gender, also a factor not under the student's control, had any influence on the salary or signing bonus level of the student.

Discussion of Recent Changes in MBA Hiring

The data for this study were collected from the international MBA students who graduated in May 2001. Since that time, the U.S. economy and job market have changed dramatically, which has greatly affected foreign national students and their job search. In May of 2001, MBA students, both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals, were still experiencing the glow from the dot-com bubble of the late 1990's which resulted in higher starting salaries and near-immediate job placement for U.S. citizens. In actuality, the economy was beginning a downslide that would soon affect the entire U.S. workforce. Investors and consumers were just beginning to realize the magnitude of the economic loss resulting from the failure of thousands of small technology start-ups, and large technology firms were also starting to feel the effects.

In 1998, 1999 and 2000, large and small IT companies were snapping up anyone with technology experience to join their teams to help them compete in the marketplace and to finish their Y2K projects. As shown in the previous data, many of the international students studying in the U.S. came with engineering and technical backgrounds, which made them excellent hires for U.S. technology companies. Technology firms were able to apply for immediate work visas for these students, as many of them had skills that were in high demand and there weren't enough U.S. citizens with the necessary skills. Firms outside of the technology sector were also experiencing growth, and were willing to hire international students to fill their finance, consulting, and operations positions. MBA salaries soared to an all-time high because of the huge demand for their talent and the competitive marketplace. MBA students with degrees from reputable schools and some solid work experience could demand inflated salaries and signing bonuses.

In early 2001, the dot-com and technology sector started feeling the effects of a market unable to sustain so many vendors, such rapid growth, and an uneventful Y2K process. That same year, accounting scandals at major corporations led to an increase of massive employee lay-offs. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 completed that economic burst and hurled the country into panic and the job market into a rapid decline. The graduating MBA classes of 2002 and 2003 had two of the most dismal hiring years since a similar hiring downturn in the early 1990s. Companies laid off thousands and thousands of workers, cut their new

hires drastically, and many companies cut out MBA hiring all together since it cost them too much to hire and keep an MBA graduate.

In times of economic weakness, recruiters seek to minimize the risk inherent in their investments. Surveyed during the 2002-03 recruiting cycle, 96 percent of corporate recruiters who hire MBAs said the economy was weak. In the same survey, the criterion cited most often as extremely or very important in deciding to hire an MBA grad was the candidate's having had an internship or other functional experience directly related to the requirements of a given job. Factoring directly applicable work experience into the hiring decisions is one way for recruiters to mitigate risk. Doing so ensures that a new hire can begin to contribute to the organization immediately, without a major investment in training. (Olkin, 2004, p. 13)

As hard as it was for a U.S. MBA graduate to find work in 2002 and 2003, it was nearly impossible for international MBA students to find work in the United States.

Even if companies did hire a few MBA grads, there were so many U.S. citizens looking for work, it was difficult to justify hiring an international student over a U.S. student.

“Employers are growing more reluctant about [international students] because of stringent immigration rules” (Dunham, 2002b, p.B4).

Companies wanting to hire an international student to work in the U.S. are required to sponsor the international student for a work visa (typically the H1-B visa), complete legal paperwork and pay a fee for the visa. In 2001, the government issued 195,000 H1-B visas to international workers (Hankins, 2001). By 2004, the US government only made 63,000 H1-B visas available, which made jobs for international students that much harder to find. “Visa-issuance statistics from the [U.S.] State Department show a significant decline since 2001, when 32,867 visas were issued to Chinese students and 28,344 were issued to Indian students. As of mid-September 2004,

those figures were 25,310 and 21,755 respectively,” representing a 23% decline in visas for both populations (Mooney & Neelakantan, 2004, p. A41). Companies prefer to save their visa sponsorships for their technology and research positions, which make it more difficult for the international business graduates to find work. Since late in 2001, international students have had to scour the country for job opportunities, and a much greater number end up returning to their home countries since they cannot find work in the U.S.

Many business schools anticipated a recruitment rebound by the spring of 2003, but that graduating class had as difficult a time finding jobs as the 2002 class. Accounting scandals and stock market drops contributed to the risk-adverse attitude of hiring managers (Dunham, 2002a). “MBA recruiting continues to be challenging although it is slowly picking up from a dismal rate in 2002 and 2003. McKinsey & Co., a management consulting firm that hires MBA graduates from the top schools in the country, hired nearly 2,100 MBAs in the first half of 2001. From the 2002 graduating class they hired fewer than 800 MBAs, a direct result of a slumping economy and uncertainty about the future need of consultants to corporate businesses” (Dunham, 2002a, p.B6).

In addition to fewer international students being employed by U.S. companies, the number of international students applying and being admitted to U.S. MBA programs has decreased in the past few years. “The number of students from China applying to American graduate programs for the fall 2004 term plunged 45 percent from last year, according to a survey by the Council of Graduate Schools released in

September. India experienced a 30 percent drop. The total number of international graduate-student applications fell by 28 percent” (Mooney & Neelakantan, 2004, p.A41).

A combination of factors is involved in the decrease in international applications and admissions to U.S. business schools. The decrease in H1-B visas available post-graduation for employment in the U.S. has discouraged foreign students from making the commitment to study in the U.S. and has led admissions offices to deny more foreign applications (Mooney & Neelakantan, 2004). The success of an MBA program has much to do with the job placement opportunities upon graduation from the program, and if the international students aren't able to find work in the U.S., the program's "success" rate will decline. In addition, "the stagnant U.S. economy has shrunk the chance of finding good jobs in the United States after they earn their degree" (Mooney & Neelakantan, 2004, p.A41). So even if there were enough work visas to offer these international graduates, they realize their prospects of finding work in the U.S. after graduation is negatively affected by the sluggish economy and decreased job opportunities available.

Career services professionals have always been challenged by the unique needs of international students seeking work in the United States. And in the past 3 years, the challenge has only grown greater. Not only do career services professionals still need to educate these students about the American job search, interviewing skills, resume writing, and communication skills, but they are faced with the realization that it is exceptionally difficult to find companies willing to sponsor these talented students to

work in the United States. Many of these students come to the U.S. to study with the expectation they will work here for several years in order to apply their education and immerse themselves in the marketplace of the most powerful business economy in the world. It is a huge disappointment and a cause of great frustration when they cannot secure work and end up having to return to their home countries when their student visas expire. Career services professionals often feel frustrated and helpless when they are unable to assist in making this dream come true for these ambitious students.

Recommendations for Future Research

If this research were to be repeated on the graduating international MBA students from the years of 2002, 2003, 2004, or 2005 the results would most likely be very different. Based on personal observation, it is predicted that salary averages would be lower, there would be fewer signing bonuses (if any) given, the number of international students staying in the U.S. for employment would be lower, and there would be a lower percentage of graduates going into the information technology fields. Clearly there is a lot of variability left unexplained in the factors examined here, and there are a great number of studies to do that would address much of this unexplained variability.

1. A replication of this study can be done taking into account other variables not controlled for in this research, such as gender, age, language skill, the type of prior work experience, whether the student sought out career assistance, the academic performance in the MBA, the student's GMAT and TOEFL scores, etc.

2. A replication of this study on the 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 classes would give a better overall picture of how international MBA students fare during differing economic climates.
3. An investigation can be done to determine whether the lack of international MBA hires in the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 in the United States had more to do with the economy, the availability of work visas, or whether there was any type of cultural bias in hiring international students post-9/11. This might be obtained by surveying the company hiring managers and recruiters and asking them why they chose to hire or not hire international MBA students during those recruiting cycles.
4. Completion of a survey of this same sample of international MBA graduates to assess their career progression, promotion, satisfaction, and return on investment after they have been in the work force for 5 years. Also, it might be useful to see how many of them are still working in the U.S. and how many have returned to their home countries after a few years of working in the U.S.
5. Comparative studies are recommended for domestic MBA students' (U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and green card holders) job placement variables with the international students' to see what kind of differences exist.
6. Additionally, the comparative data collected above could be divided by type of school (private vs. public), the rank of program in the popular business magazine rankings (top 25 vs. top 50 vs. bottom 50, etc.), or by geographic region of the

school (northeast schools vs. west coast schools) to look for differences or similarities.

All of this information would be very valuable to the MBA program staff that make the decisions about which students to admit as well as the career services staff who counsel the students on their job search options. The more information available, the better we are able to serve these unique populations of international students and MBA students.

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APPENDIX A**SURVEY LETTER SENT TO MBACSC CAREER CENTER DIRECTORS**

Darby Scism
1000 E. University Dr., #1003
College Station, TX 77840
Work: (979) 845-3173
Home: (979) 268-1087
dscism@tamu.edu

March 29, 2002

Dear MBA CSC Member,

I am a current Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education Administration at Texas A&M University. I am also an Assistant Director of Graduate Business Career Services, have been a member of MBA CSC for 4 years, and have worked with MBA students for the past 8 years at both Texas A&M and Indiana University. I am writing my dissertation on the placement of international MBA students with an emphasis on country of origin, and I need your help in making this a thorough and significant piece of research.

As we all know, our international students are some of our greatest assets, and their placements are some of our greatest challenges. The idea behind studying their placement rates, locations and salaries based on country of origin is to give us as career services professionals a more complete picture of which students are having the most success and which students need more of our attention. I believe the results of this study will assist both MBA career services and admissions professionals in serving our international population more effectively.

I am seeking placement information for your international students who were enrolled in an MBA program and who graduated in August 2000, December 2000, and May 2001. Data I receive will remain confidential, and no data will be identifiable by school program or individual at any time.

The requested data points reflect the reporting standards that MBA CSC has asked all MBA Career Services Offices to adopt and implement. If you need more information regarding these standards or more detailed definitions of the categories, please refer to the "Reporting Standards" section on the MBA CSC website at <http://www.mbacsc.org>.

Your assistance in this research will be invaluable and appreciated. I would be pleased to share my completed results with you as well as present my research at a future MBA CSC conference. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Darby Scism
Ph.D. Candidate
Texas A&M University

Dr. Stan Carpenter
Major Professor
Texas A&M University

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS FOR CAREER CENTER DIRECTORS

This survey has been designed to help us as career services professionals understand the job market for foreign national MBAs for the period of Summer 2000, Fall 2000, and Spring 2001. A summary of the results of the survey will be sent to all participating programs as well as presented at future MBA CSC Conferences. **To eliminate re-entering the data, it is strongly preferred that the information be entered in an Excel spreadsheet and returned as an email attachment to Darby Scism at dscism@tamu.edu. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact:**

Darby Scism
Assistant Director, Graduate Business Career Services
Mays Business School, Texas A&M University
TAMU 4216, College Station, TX 77840
Phone (979) 845.1998 Fax (979) 845.3184

Use the following lists to help you complete the survey:

LIST A. Job Search during MBA Program

1. Seeking Employment
2. Not Seeking Employment
3. No Information

List B. Undergraduate Major

1. Business
2. Technical
3. Other

LIST C. Function/Position Task Area

1. Accounting
2. Consulting
3. Finance
 - a. Corporate
 - b. Investment Banking
 - c. Private Client Services
 - d. Other Finance
4. General Management
5. Human Resources
6. Marketing
 - a. Brand Management
 - b. Business Development
 - c. Sales
 - d. Other Marketing
7. MIS
8. Operations/Supply Chain
9. Other _____(please specify)

LIST D. Industry/Employer Classification

1. Manufacturing
 - a. Consumer Products
 - b. Energy
 - c. Pharmaceuticals
 - d. Technology
 - e. Telecommunications
 - f. Transportation
 - g. Other Manufacturing
2. Services
 - a. Banking/Financial Services
 - b. Consulting
 - c. Entertainment/Hospitality
 - d. Other Services
3. Non-Profit
4. Government

APPENDIX C

DATA COLLECTION SPREADSHEET FOR CAREER CENTER DIRECTORS

Full-Time Program Data

1. Your School's Name _____
2. Name of Person Completing Survey _____
3. Phone Number _____
4. Please complete the following chart based on each foreign student who graduated during the 2000-2001 recruiting cycle.

Please return completed survey before May 13, 2002 by email to: dscism@tamu.edu

Student	Country of Citizenship	Job Search during MBA Program (Use List A)	UG Major (Use List B)	Years of Previous Work Experience	Employed at Graduation	Employed at Graduation Plus 90 Days	Location of Job Accepted (City, State & Country)	Functional Area of Job Accepted (Use List C)	Industry Area of Job Accepted (Use List D)	Salary (US \$)	Signing Bonus (US \$)	Other Guaranteed Compensation
1.												
2.												
3.												
4.												
5.												
6.												
7.												
8.												
9.												
10.												
11.												
12.												
13.												

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITIES CONTRIBUTING EMPLOYMENT DATA FOR 2001

INTERNATIONAL MBA STUDENTS

Arizona State University - Carey	University of Arizona - Eller
Baruch College/CUNY - Zicklin	University of California, Berkeley - Haas
Boston College - Carroll	University of California, Irvine
Carnegie Mellon University	University of California, Los Angeles - Anderson
Colorado State University	University of Connecticut
Cornell University - Johnson	University of Georgia - Terry
DePaul University - Kellstadt	University of Iowa - Tippie
Duke University - Fuqua	University of Kansas
Emory University - Goizueta	University of Massachusetts, Amherst - Isenberg
George Washington University	University of Michigan
Georgetown University - McDonough	University of Minnesota - Carlson
Indiana University - Kelley	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Iowa State University	University of North Carolina - Kenan-Flagler
Northwestern University - Kellogg	University of Notre Dame - Mendoza
Purdue University - Krannert	University of Oklahoma - Price
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute - Lally	University of Oregon - Lundquist
Rice University - Jones	University of South Carolina - Moore
Santa Clara University - Leavey	University of South Florida
Texas A&M University - Mays	University of Southern California - Marshall
Texas Christian University - Neeley	University of Texas at Austin - McCombs
Thunderbird-The American Graduate School of International Management	University of Texas at Dallas
	University of Utah - Eccles
	University of Virginia - Darden
	University of Washington
	University of Wisconsin-Madison
	Vanderbilt University - Owen
	Washington University - Olin
	Yale University

APPENDIX E

COUNTRIES GROUPED INTO REGIONS FOR ANALYSIS

Africa	Asia / Asia Pacific	Europe	North America (excluding the United States)	South America
Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.	Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, Cyprus, Georgia, Guam, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Lebanon, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen.	Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia.	Antigua, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico.	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela

VITA

Darby C. Scism
 4600 Washington Blvd., #104W
 Arlington, VA 22201
 darby@gwu.edu

EDUCATION

- August 2005 Ph.D., Educational Administration, Texas A&M University
 College Station, TX
 May 1991 M.S., Counseling Psychology, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
 May 1989 B.A., Psychology, Miami University, Oxford, OH

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2003-present The George Washington University, School of Business, Washington, DC
 Director, Graduate Career Center

 1998-2003 Texas A&M University, Mays Business School, College Station, TX
 Assistant Director, Graduate Business Career Services

 1994-1998 Indiana University, Kelley School of Business, Bloomington, IN
 Assistant Director, Business Placement Office

 1992-1994 Meadows Hospital, Bloomington, IN
 Assessment Counselor/Case Manager

 1991-1992 Family and Children's Center, Inc., Mishawaka, IN
 Counselor

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- 1994-present National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)
 1998-present MBA Career Services Council (MBACSC)
 1998-2002 Southwest Association of Colleges and Employers (SWACE)