

**Author:** Smoot, Jennifer A.

**Title:** *Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity within a Company's Organizational Structure Utilizing The Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*

The accompanying research report is submitted to the **University of Wisconsin-Stout,**

**Graduate School** in partial completion of the requirements for the

**Graduate Degree/ Major:** MS Technical and Professional Communications

**Research Advisor:** Joleen Hanson, Ph.D.

**Submission Term/Year:** Fall 2017

**Number of Pages:** 91

**Style Manual Used:** American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> edition

- I have adhered to the Graduate School Research Guide and have proofread my work.
- I understand that this research report must be officially approved by the Graduate School. **Additionally, by signing and submitting this form, I (the author(s) or copyright owner) grant the University of Wisconsin-Stout the non-exclusive right to reproduce, translate, and/or distribute this submission (including abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video. If my research includes proprietary information, an agreement has been made between myself, the company, and the University to submit a thesis that meets course-specific learning outcomes and CAN be published. There will be no exceptions to this permission.**
- I attest that the research report is my original work (that any copyrightable materials have been used with the permission of the original authors), and as such, it is automatically protected by the laws, rules, and regulations of the U.S. Copyright Office.
- My research advisor has approved the content and quality of this paper.

**STUDENT:**

**NAME:** Jennifer Smoot **DATE:** 8-23-17

**ADVISOR:** (Committee Chair if MS Plan A or EdS Thesis or Field Project/Problem):

**NAME:** Joleen R. Hanson, Ph. D. **DATE:** 2 Dec 2017

This section for MS Plan A Thesis or EdS Thesis/Field Project papers only  
Committee members (other than your advisor who is listed in the section above)

1. CMTE MEMBER'S NAME: Marya L. Wilson, Ph. D. **DATE:** 26 Sept 2017
2. CMTE MEMBER'S NAME: Daniel Ruefman, Ph. D. **DATE:** 26 Sept 2017
3. CMTE MEMBER'S NAME: **DATE:**

**This section to be completed by the Graduate School**

This final research report has been approved by the Graduate School.

Director, Office of Graduate Studies: **DATE:**

**Smoot, Jennifer A. *Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity within a Company's Organizational Structure Utilizing the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity***

**Abstract**

In a fast-paced world of constantly emerging new technologies, it has become easier for companies of all sizes to venture into the world of international business, whether they have the knowledge and skills to succeed or not. Recognizing that many American businesses have some level of ethnocentrism (or lack of intercultural sensitivity) in their corporate culture that can be detrimental to a company's international growth, it would be beneficial for a company to recognize and eliminate or at least minimize their ethnocentric attitudes.

To examine these attitudes, this thesis surveyed 326 employees from an international food company using research based from Milton J. Bennett's Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity to look at the levels of ethnocentrism within their hierarchal structure. The results suggest that there are areas where the company can improve the level of intercultural sensitivity amongst all hierarchal levels and that time and international experience are the best indicators for levels of intercultural sensitivity. Mitigating intercultural risk both from an employee perspective and from a business perspective is key to the success of a company's goals for international or global growth.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my husband, Chip, and my kids, Charlie, Tim and Hannah for their support and encouragement in working towards my master's degree and, in particular, during the writing of this thesis. I absolutely need to thank my advisor Joleen Hanson for encouraging and teaching me along the way how to be a researcher. Your teaching skills helped me make this thesis one I am proud to put my name on. It took a little longer than expected but it is done! Finally, thank you to UW Stout for offering this master's program online and supporting the students in your distance education programs. Not everyone is within driving distance of a University with the program/degree you desire. I would not have reached this major life goal without this opportunity.

**Table of Contents**

Abstract ..... 2

List of Tables ..... 6

List of Figures ..... 7

Chapter I: Introduction..... 8

    Statement of Problem..... 9

    Research Questions ..... 15

    Purpose of the Study ..... 15

    Assumptions of the Study ..... 16

    Definition of Terms..... 16

    Limitations of the Study..... 18

    Methodology ..... 19

Chapter II: Literature Review ..... 21

    Globalization..... 21

    Cross Cultural Risk..... 22

    Understanding Ethnocentrism..... 24

    Measuring Ethnocentrism ..... 26

    Similar Research ..... 28

Chapter III: Methodology ..... 31

    Subject Selection and Description ..... 31

    Instrumentation ..... 33

    Data Collection Procedures..... 35

    Data Analysis ..... 36

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Limitations .....  | 37 |
| Chapter IV: Results.....   | 38 |
| Survey Data Analysis.....  | 38 |
| Interview Analysis Including a Comparison to Survey Data.....            | 47 |
| Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations.....               | 63 |
| Discussion.....  | 63 |
| Conclusions.....   | 72 |
| Recommendations.....   | 75 |
| References.....  | 77 |
| Appendix A: Denial Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above .....       | 80 |
| Appendix B: Defense Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above.....       | 81 |
| Appendix C: Minimization Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above ..... | 82 |
| Appendix D: Acceptance Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above .....   | 83 |
| Appendix E: Adaptation Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above .....   | 84 |
| Appendix F: Integration Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above.....   | 85 |
| Appendix G: Survey Questions .....                                       | 86 |
| Appendix H: Interview Questions .....                                    | 90 |
| Appendix I: Interview Questions from Hammer, M.R. et al (2003).....      | 91 |

### List of Tables

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Ethnocentric Definitions - Inexperience .....   | 25 |
| Table 2: Ethnocentric Definitions - Any Two Countries .....  | 25 |
| Table 3: Ethnocentric Definitions - Us Versus Them.....  | 26 |
| Table 4: Time Spent Working with Company Partners Outside of their Home Country.....                       | 40 |
| Table 5: Number of Potential Participants by Hierarchal Level.....   | 40 |
| Table 6: Statistically Significant Differences when Comparing "First Language" .....                       | 44 |
| Table 7: Statistics Based on Time Spent Living Outside of Home Country .....                               | 47 |
| Table 8: Number of Years Working at The Company.....   | 48 |
| Table 9: Hours Spent Working with Partners Outside of Their Home Country.....                              | 48 |
| Table 10: Survey Scores Compared to Interviews: Denial Stage .....   | 50 |
| Table 11: Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey:<br>Defense .....     | 53 |
| Table 12: Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey:<br>Minimization..... | 55 |
| Table 13: Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey:<br>Acceptance .....  | 57 |
| Table 14: Leadershi pand International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey:<br>Adaptation.....   | 59 |
| Table 15: Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey:<br>Integration ..... | 60 |
| Table 16: Comparing International Experience and Language Experience to the DMIS Levels..                  | 62 |

### **List of Figures**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Length of Time Employed by The Company Based on Hierarchal Levels ..... | 39 |
| Figure 2: Means for Hierarchal Levels Within The Company. ....                    | 43 |
| Figure 3: Means Based on First Language .....                                     | 45 |
| Figure 4: Means for Time Spent Living Outside of Home Country.....                | 46 |

## Chapter I: Introduction

The business world of today is one of constant change. There are many different components to this change, including international business opportunities, but the dramatic increase in the use of technology to communicate, especially internet usage, over the last fifteen to twenty years allows businesses to reach further across the globe for less money and time than ever before (Popescul, 2009). A few words typed into a search engine can bring a wealth of information and knowledge never accessible before, especially information about doing business in other countries. International markets, once only open to large companies with deep pockets, are now accessible to companies as small as one person. A meeting that only a few years ago would have meant airfare, hotel costs, and many days away from the office to meet, can now happen through video conferencing in an hour. Even social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, make reaching out to potential business partners faster and easier.

To understand how much has changed both in the impact of burgeoning international markets and increased technology opportunities, we will look at several areas. One indicator is the governmental statistic for the United States (US) Exports of Goods and Services (Trading Economics, 2016). As the name implies, this is the value of goods and services exported by U.S. companies to other countries. The dollar amounts went from a record low of \$772 Million in March of 1950 to a record high of more than \$2 Trillion in October of 2014, an increase of more than 25,000%. This increase was relatively slow until 1985 and has climbed steadily since, with a few sharp spikes in 1998, 2007 and 2014. Coincidentally, the Internet (World Wide Web) as we know it, was open to the public in 1993 with 36% of American adults using it by 1998, 73 % in 2007 and 87% in 2014 (Pew Research Center, 2014). At the same time, the percentage of American adults with access to high speed internet (versus using dial-up modems) increased to



67% by 2015 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Finally, education and research around this globalization movement has also increased. The last fifteen years show a dramatic increase in searchable scholarship using the terms “Intercultural Sensitivity” or “Global Competency” two terms you will see throughout this thesis. A search in Google Scholar and the UW-Stout Library for the term “Intercultural Sensitivity” increased 1342% and 802% respectively for items published between 1900-2000 versus 2001-2016. The search for the term “Global Competency” in published works increased 1900% on Google Scholar and 805% from the UW-Stout Library for the same periods of time.

The items listed above are just a few of many different factors in play around the same time as a result of globalization efforts. Those in the field of Technical and Professional Communications are in an important position in this movement and must stay on top of all the changes to stay current. Increased interaction with companies outside of the U.S. creates an increased need for strong intercultural communications skills with an emphasis in intercultural sensitivity or global competence (Olson & Kroeger, 2001).

### **Statement of Problem**

Miscommunication is likely to happen when a company first begins to work outside their home country. As stated earlier, technology allows for easier access to the international markets for less time and money than in years past. Therefore, there is a good chance companies are not as experienced in international business when they start and most likely have not built up strong international communication skills at the outset. Some communication adjustments are relatively simple, but the company needs to be aware that they need to make the changes in the first place. The following examples show a few common problem areas that can make a big impact on communication when acknowledged. If you sit back and just listen to normal, everyday

conversation here in the U.S. you will likely hear phrases such as “Don’t drop the ball,” or, “I am between a rock and a hard place,” or, “Those are a dime a dozen.” Analogies, idioms and metaphors are very common in our language, especially sports related ones. One that I personally use all the time and did not realize was related to sports is “hands down” (this term comes from horse racing when a jockey is so far ahead he can relax the reigns and drop his hands down). Some of these are such a part of our language (or even culture, when we are talking about sports) that we have no problem understanding what the speaker means. On the other hand, if you are from China and English is not your first language, you may not understand what your business partner is trying to say. You may even take offense at the phrase because when you mentally translate it, it means something inappropriate in your language. Literal language is key when communicating with those using English as a lingua franca (ELF).

Another common communication problem for ELF in our country, as well as many others, are multiple words with the same meaning: Fall vs Autumn; couch vs sofa; dog vs canine; strong can be stable, secure, solid, tough. Some vocabulary is also hard to translate into other languages. When writing emails, important documents or even technical documents that are going to be used in other countries but not translated, it is very important to be consistent in your terminology and to be careful about getting overly wordy, which can easily confuse those who use ELF.

There are also verbal communications issues for ELF. Anyone with at least a little bit of experience speaking in another language has probably had the chance to listen to a native speaker in that language. If they talk slowly in their language, you can generally follow or get the general idea of the conversation. If you hear them speak at their normal pace, you may find it hard to grasp anything they are saying. This is no different in the business world.

Communicating at a slower pace, one that matches the language skills of the person you are speaking with, can help ease language miscommunications associated with ELF.

These examples may seem like common sense but in a company without international experience coming from a strong English language background, these mistakes are common. In my personal experience educating a company making similar mistakes, they were surprised how a simple change in thought could make a large impact. It made sense to them once they were made aware of why they should make the changes.

Communication issues are compounded by the presence of a fallacy about English as the Business Lingua Franca (BELF) (Maclean, 2006; Ehrenreich, 2010), meaning, the business world uses English as the main language so everyone can communicate in one language. In my research as well as general conversations, when asked about potential communication problems working internationally, I frequently hear the response: “We don’t have issues since everyone speaks English.” There is a missing component in this argument. Just because a business partner speaks English does not mean that their English comes from an American business perspective. Their country’s culture, as well as the business culture they work within, plays a very large role in how they interpret what is said, as acknowledged in Maclean (2006), “. . . research has found that non-native speakers often fail to communicate in spite of a competent command of the English language, because their language use is tied to the cultural framework of their first language” (p. 1382).

Communication problems as they relate to integrating language usage with culture are not unique to the United States. Wu & Zhang (2009) bring the example of high context cultures (such as Japan, Italy, Spain) versus low context cultures (such as the US, Germany, Switzerland). It isn’t enough to know the vocabulary of the other culture. The meaning of a word or phrase in

a high context culture has just as much to do with *how* it was said, the context of it, as it does a direct translation of the word. The example earlier was *several words* having the same meaning. In this case, it would be *one word* having several meaning and context is vital to the end meaning: “In some intercultural business negotiations, when the American partner thinks it will become a deal, the Japanese partner is expressing refusal indirectly” (Wu & Zhang, 2009, p. 4). The common occurrence of this language and culture barrier is, as many researchers agree, due to a lack of experience or a lack of acknowledgement of cross-cultural issues in communication. This attitude is what researchers consider “Ethnocentrism”, a phase within the intercultural sensitivity realm.

Ethnocentrism has been defined by numerous researchers. For the purposes of this research the focus will be on two definitions: Leininger & Yuan (1988) definition, “Expecting the many to accommodate the few” (p. 20); and Bennett’s (2004) definition, “the experience of one’s own culture as ‘central to reality’ . . . the beliefs and behaviors that people receive in their primary socialization are unquestioned; they are experienced as ‘just the way things are’” (p. 62). In my own personal observations, while working at a small manufacturing company that was new to international markets, I noticed that even within one company an observer can find different levels of ethnocentrism between upper level management and those lower on the organizational chart. In this case, upper management did not feel language or culture was a potential block to growth and development. This was very tied into the assumption of BELF. Everyone they communicated with (generally fellow upper level management partners) did speak English. On the other hand, the U.S. employees working the help desk and the U.S. tech writers creating the manuals for their products had very different experiences. They were working directly with the off-shore technicians installing the equipment. The technical

documents were not translated into any other language, nor were they optimized for anyone outside of the United States to use. Therefore, the help desk employees not only had language barriers but were also trying to explain complicated technical directions without any international communication training. They noticed communication problems on a daily basis.

Not only can ethnocentrism affect the way a company from the United States deals with its international partners, but if those higher up in the organization don't recognize their ethnocentric behavior, and those lower down the organizational chart experience the effect of lack of recognition on a daily basis, this can cause internal strife within an organization.

Through these observations and further course work, I developed a strong interest in intercultural sensitivity, ethnocentrism and, in particular, the use of the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) created by Milton Bennet (Bennet, 2004). The DMIS describes a six-stage journey from the most ethnocentric "Denial of cultural differences" to the opposite end of the scale (what Bennett calls the "ethnorelativism" side) "Integration of cultural difference into identity". As a business woman with a personal focus on how to help companies grow, especially new companies, I resonate strongly with Bennett's reason for creating the DMIS: "I wanted to explain why some people seemed to get a lot better at communicating across cultural boundaries while other people didn't improve at all, and I thought that if I were able to explain why this happened trainers and educators could do a better job of preparing people for cross cultural encounters" (Bennet, 2004, p. 62).

Without strong communication practices, American businesses will struggle to get ahead in any market, much less an international one. It is true that there seem to be many large companies based in the United States that appear to have mastered the art of communication in all areas and at all levels (Proctor and Gamble, Kimberly Clark, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, etc.). They

have had an international side to their business for many decades and have systems and methods that work for them when doing business in many different parts of the world. How about other companies just starting to venture into the international market with their products? While going through a learning curve is an important part of the process of growing as a company, some “learning” situations have pitfalls that are too great to overcome for an inexperienced international business. Is there a way to help a company just starting out avoid learning by trial and error? Professional and technical communicators often have roles as members of teams that work within several areas, and different levels of the organizational chart of a company, including project management, internal communications, marketing, sales or even design teams. With their specialized background in communications, they are in a prime position to recognize and help solve communication issues such as ethnocentrism. Even better, if they were trained on specific tools that would help them both in their own educational process but also allow them to educate those in their company, they could potentially escalate their own company’s venture into international markets with less risk of failure as far as culture and communications are concerned.

Recognizing that many American businesses have some level of ethnocentrism in their corporate culture and that, depending on how ethnocentric a company is, it can be detrimental to that company’s growth internationally, it would be beneficial to a company to eliminate (or at least minimize) the ethnocentric attitudes. If a company recognizes their level of ethnocentrism early on, it would be reasonable to project that the learning curve involved in becoming an international/multi-national/global company will be shorter and harmful missteps as they relate to intercultural communication can be avoided.

## **Research Questions**

This thesis will examine the following research questions:

1. Will drawing on Milton Bennett's 6-stage Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to measure the levels of ethnocentrism within an American company doing business outside of the United States show multiple stages of ethnocentrism between employees at different hierarchal levels within the company?
2. If the first language of the employee is not English, will there be a significant difference between the six stages of the DMIS categories of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation or integration compared to those who speak English as their first language?
3. Will a comparison of length of time an employee has lived outside of the United State show a significant difference between the six stages of the DMIS categories of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation or integration?

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine if there are different levels of ethnocentrism within one company's hierarchal organization. Since this research specifically looks at ethnocentrism from an Intercultural Sensitivity point of view it was important to research a company that does business internationally. It was also important to select a company that is large enough to have enough employees at different hierarchal levels of their organizational chart to get an appropriate sample size. The company chosen for this research project was a private label food company headquartered in Wisconsin with more than 7000 employees worldwide. An electronic Qualtrics survey was sent out to 1129 employees located in the United States and Spain. This survey gathered information to get a baseline idea of where individuals fall within

their employment level on the DMIS scale. Finally, follow-up interviews were conducted with ten of the survey participants.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

Several assumptions were made when doing this research:

1. Honesty and truthfulness from the survey and interview participants in answering the questions
2. Ethnocentrism can be an unconscious bias. It is not an intentional approach when doing business internationally.
3. Ethnocentrism can be hard to measure without a tool such as the DMIS so it is generally not a focus point for many companies.

### **Definition of Terms**

There are several terms that will be used throughout this paper. The following are the definitions of those terms:

**Business culture.** Every company, no matter the size, industry or location, has a distinct look and feel to the way they do business. They may have a very casual environment (dress requirement, look of the work environment, even the attitudes of those in the company) or very formal. There may be a lot of people milling about or a very quiet, strict work-focused environment. These traits are what make up the business culture of a company on the surface. Business culture can go deeper as well. It can be the mission statement and how closely it is followed. It can be the internal ethics of how the company requires its employees to conduct business or how it perceives the growth of its employees. The business culture is typically similar throughout the company even if they are spread out through numerous locations. It can both benefit and hurt the company based on how well it is perceived by the employees. Business



Culture is what makes two companies distinctive from each other even if they are manufacturing and selling the same product in the same market.

**Business English as a lingua franca (BELF).** This term references the fact that English is the common language for doing business in a country that does not use English as its primary language.

**Cross cultural communication/intercultural communication.** According to Baraldi (2006) “communication is intercultural when different cultural perspectives prevent the creation of a single, shared culture” (p. 54).

**Development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS).** This is the model created by Milton J. Bennet to measure ethnocentrism within an organization: “. . . it is a model of changes in worldview structure, where the observable behavior and self-reported attitudes at each stage are indicative of the state the underlying worldview” (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 423). The model includes six levels: Denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration

**Ethnocentrism.** There are numerous different definitions (see p. 25 of this paper for a complete list). Bennett’s (2004) definition expresses the thoughts of many researchers: “the experience of one’s own culture as ‘central to reality.’ By this I mean that the beliefs and behaviors that people receive in their primary socialization are unquestioned; they are experienced as ‘just the way things are’” (p. 62).

**Global competency.** “A globally competent person has enough substantive knowledge, perceptual understanding, and intercultural communication skills to effectively interact in our globally interdependent world” (Olson & Kroeger, 2001, p. 117).

**Globalization.** A company will have business internationally but not be considered Global until they “have significant investments and profit centers in many countries, with no single center of dominance” (Fidelity, 2017). Globalization is the process of becoming global.

**Intercultural sensitivity.** The level of recognition one has towards the differences of other cultures. The more sensitive you are to a culture other than your own, the more you can relate and integrate yourself directly into that other culture.

**Risk management.** “Risk management is the continuing process to identify, analyze, evaluate, and treat loss exposures and monitor risk control and financial resources to mitigate the adverse effects of loss. Loss may result from the following: financial risks such as cost of claims and liability judgments; operational risks such as labor strikes; perimeter risks including weather or political change; strategic risks including management changes or loss of reputation” (Marquette University Risk Unit, n.d.).

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were several limitations to this study.

1. Utilizing one company to conduct the research with was informative but if more than one company was researched as a comparison, the results for both may have been more generalizable.
2. During follow-up interviews, cultural issues as they related to gender were brought up quite frequently. It would have been interesting to analyze the data based on gender.
3. The final limitation involves the participants comprehension of the survey questions themselves. These were obtained from an existing published research paper. Since this survey was sent to some employees in Spain, with the help of the company’s Spanish-speaking HR representative (the primary company contact during the

research phase), modifications were made to the questions so they were easier for those who don't speak English as a primary language to understand. The modified questions were sent to all participants but there is a possibility that those who don't speak English as a primary language may have still misinterpreted those questions.

## **Methodology**

The company that was chosen for this research is a food manufacturer with their headquarters in Wisconsin and locations throughout North America, South America, Europe and Asia. This employee-owned company (hereafter referred to as The Company) was founded more than 70 years ago and currently has over 7000 employees worldwide. The Company produces and sells their products to fast food chains, restaurants, grocery stores, among other areas, and is exported to over 55 countries across the world annually.

This current research study involved both a quantitative survey and a qualitative interview with survey participants that indicated their willingness to participate in the interviews on the survey. The survey was comprised of demographic questions, questions directly from Olson & Kroeger's (2001) research, and some questions from Olson & Kroger (2001) that were modified per The Company's request. Olson & Kroeger's (2001) research questions were modeled after Milton Bennet's DMIS model and revolved around the six categories of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and integration. The survey was sent to 1129 of The Company's employees throughout their home office and the Madrid, Spain location within the four job classification categories: Executive, Directors/Plant Managers, Leader, Individual Contributors. The purpose of the survey is to find out if there is a difference in ethnocentrism between hierarchal levels, language skills and international experience. The data was analyzed using SPSS with Anova testing.

The qualitative open-ended interview questions were from Hammer et al. (2003). The questions specifically from this research were designed with the DMIS in mind and are loosely associated with the six categories. Demographic questions were created by the researcher to find out more about the interview participant and to garner a deeper understanding of the culture at The Company as it pertained to working with their international partners. The survey data was used in conjunction with the interview information to draw several conclusions. Most notably, the more experience a partner has with international cultures, the more sensitive they are to intercultural issues affecting business decisions.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

This research draws from several related areas of scholarship, including, intercultural communications, intercultural sensitivity, professional communications, globalization and multiculturalism. The following literature review explores the topics of cross-cultural risk, understanding and measuring ethnocentrism as they pertain to the related areas of scholarship.

### **Globalization**

International, multinational, global, transnational. These are all different classifications in the business world that, to the average person, seem to represent the exact same thing – doing business somewhere outside of the United States. In personal observations watching a debate unfold between two business people, it became apparent that there is much more to this terminology and the actual progression a company goes through as they gain experience in the international world. The argument over classifying a company may seem like a fairly new, modern phenomenon but as far back as 1969, when Howard Perlmutter (1969) wrote “The Torturous Evolution of the Multinational Corporation”, we see the debate over business classification developing. His paper starts with humorous examples of the thought process behind companies describing why they are multinational. At the core, Perlmutter (1969), uses these examples to show how difficult it is to classify organizations and why it is so important to these same organizations: “part of the difficulty in defining the degree in multi-nationality comes from the variety of parameters along which a firm doing business overseas can be described” (p. 11). For companies in the United States just starting to venture into the globalized world, these classifications can be used as a guide for their progress. In turn, each classification employs a different set of communication “rules” so it is important for companies to understand where they fall within the matrix of this classification system. Hout, Porter & Rudden (1982) also discuss in

depth the parameters of a globalized company, in particular those that have been successful. Numerous times throughout the article they describe successful globalized companies as those who have "...accommodated local differences..." (p. 104), a trait that is missing within ethnocentric companies. Finally, financial company Fidelity discusses the trouble of classifying organizations but has more straightforward descriptions, primarily for financial reasons:

*"Domestic* firms operate mostly or completely within the United States

*International* firms are headquartered in the United States but maintain significant investments outside the country and have geographically diverse profit centers

*Global* firms have significant investments and profit centers in many countries, with no single center of dominance" (para. 2-4) (Emphasis added)

For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on Fidelity's definition of "International Firms."

### **Cross Cultural Risk**

If this relatively "simple" task of classification can lead to confusion and debate, it is understandable how easy it is to make communication mistakes all along the way when a company just starts venturing into the world of international business. When cultures not normally associated with each other are now relying on each other (because of globalization) to do business, cross-cultural communication is the connection (Baraldi, 2006). Anytime a company starts a new venture, there will be a level of risk associated it. Managing risk is an important process in business. Many companies have entire Risk Management departments dedicated to the task. For many companies first venturing into international markets, managing cross-cultural risk is not usually a priority (Wu & Zhang, 2009). It may not even cross their minds that there is such a thing as cross-cultural risk and, therefore, they may not plan for risk related problems by asking questions about how they will do business internationally. Risk

related questions companies expanding overseas should ask might include the following: Do they modify their policies and practices to include or recognize the way the employees they will be hiring are used to communicating? Will they train or educate off-shore employees on the American way of doing business? Will they just assume that the way a business overseas is run is the same as it is in the U.S., purely because those at the management level speak English? Even more importantly, have those at the management levels stopped to consider the communication issues employees lower on the organizational scale might run into as they, too, need to communicate with the international partners? Ehrenreich (2010) described just such a situation: “recent research suggests that top management in large MNC’s [Multi-National Companies] is not sufficiently aware of the existence of language-related problems on the lower hierarchal levels” (p. 412). Unfortunately, learning about risk in this haphazard manner can be very detrimental, time consuming and financially costly.

Additional risk associated with intercultural communications is high context societies vs low context societies (Wu & Zhang, 2009; Meyer, 2014). In a high context society, there are a lot of shared experiences that allow one communicator to be able to understand the meaning of another communicator even if meaning is not expressed explicitly. They tend to be countries with centuries of history, such as China, Japan or India. Meyer (2014) shows that high context “...messages are often conveyed implicitly, requiring the listener to read between the lines . . . it is subtle, layered and may depend on copious subtext” (p. 30). Low context culture, on the other hand is typically seen in countries that are younger with not as much history (the United States, for example). According to Meyer (2014) communicators in Low Context cultures “ . . . communicate as literally and explicitly as possible . . . [communication] is all about clarity” (p. 29). High context versus low context communication styles may not be acknowledged until one

side misunderstands the intentions of the other side. Some of these misunderstandings are avoidable and unnecessary when businesses are able to understand the issues and plan for this risk.

The phenomena of not recognizing the need to change business practices to accommodate all, which can be both between international partners and within the hierarchy of an international company, is the emphasis of this thesis.

### **Understanding Ethnocentrism**

Many researchers are interested in the subject of cross-cultural communications from the perspective of trying to define and understand ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is a communication phenomenon that happens when interacting with cultures other than your own. In a broad sense, we are talking about the cultures of at least two countries. However, ethnocentrism can just as easily happen in one country, especially in different geographical regions in a country as large as the U.S., or within a company as well. Differences can show up even in the mere daily tasks that an executive performs versus a production line employee. If the production line employees don't agree with an executive decision, issues can quickly escalate into an "Us versus Them" mentality.

Various definitions of ethnocentrism have been used by scholars who study this phenomenon. The following tables are put together to show a few common themes identified from the literature that stand out. First, companies may not even realize they have an ethnocentric attitude since they do not have the international experience to be able to see how their behavior could be construed as ethnocentric (Bennett, 2004; Leininger & Yuan, 1998).



Table 1

*Ethnocentric Definitions - Inexperience*

| Authors                 | Definitions   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Leininger & Yuan (1998) | The ethnocentric approach is a traditional strategy, reflecting the belief that “what worked at home will work abroad” (p. 20)  |
| Bennett (2004)          | . . . the experience of one’s own culture as ‘central to reality’. By this I mean that the beliefs and behaviors that people receive in their primary socialization are unquestioned; they are experienced as ‘just the way things are’ (p. 62) |

Second, ethnocentrism is not exclusive to the United States (Washington, 2013; Neuliep, 2014). These definitions could be applied to any two cultures across the world:

Table 2

*Ethnocentric Definitions - Any Two Countries*

| Authors           | Definitions   |
|-------------------|---|
| Washington (2013) | . . .this view of things in which one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it . . . (p. 21)<br><br>Ethnocentrism is deceptive precisely because members of any culture view their own behavior as correct (p. 22) |
| Neuliep (2014)    | The attitudes and behaviors of ethnocentric persons are biased in favor of the in-group, often at the expense of the out-group. (p. 205)  |

Third, and by far the largest theme, is the “Us vs Them” mentality (Baraldi, 2006; Qingwen, Day, & Collaço, 2008; Wu & Zhang, 2009). The definitions from Washington, 2013, Neuliep, 2014, in table 2 could also be grouped here (see Table 3):

Table 3

*Ethnocentric Definitions - Us Versus Them*

| Authors                        | Definitions  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Baraldi (2006)                 | Ethnocentrism means the interpretation and evaluation of another's behavior using one's own standard, i.e. distinguishing between a positive Us and a negative Them. (p. 57)   |
| Qingwen, Day, & Collaço (2008) | Ethnocentrism is viewed as lacking acceptance of cultural diversity and intolerance for outgroups (p. 29)  |
| Wu & Zhang (2009)              | Ethnocentrism is the risk that people believe their behavior is superior to others from different cultures, and treat the other culture with prejudice, due to the difference of cultural orientation in psychology. Both individuals and organizations may have the sense of superiority. |

In this grouping, the reference to “Us versus Them” is a potentially treacherous situation that may very well be the cause of many major conflicts, not just in business but in world affairs as well. There is no attempt, in these scenarios, to recognize other cultures and their beliefs. If a business starts their international branch with this attitude, it will be a very short-lived experience.

### **Measuring Ethnocentrism**

Since this research focuses on the extent of ethnocentrism within one organization, it is important to recognize and/or measure ethnocentrism. There are numerous models measuring or classifying ethnocentrism described in the literature. Perlmutter (1969) and Leininger & Yuan (1998) describe a model that is more observational and qualitative based – not necessarily measurable on a quantitative scale. Both focus on a model that moves from ethnocentric to polycentric (moving away from ethnocentrism and trying to work towards a combined business model supporting all cultures), to geocentric (the ultimate goal of fully integrated, intercultural

business model recognizing all similarities and differences to be able to work together). The strengths of this model include acknowledging that as a company grows, so, too, do its ethnocentric attitudes. It acknowledges the importance of culture in moving away from ethnocentrism.

Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011) developed a model they call “Global Communicative Competence (GCC)” which is based on three layers: “Multicultural competence, competence in English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) and the communicator’s business know-how” (p. 244). This model discusses what many international companies in the U.S. already agree to: the English language is prevalent enough to be able to do business overseas without much trouble communicating. The authors also acknowledge that looking exclusively at common language without taking culture of the native speaker into consideration does not add to an individual’s level of GCC (p. 248). Strictly looking at common language would not be completely functional in business, either, since having common language competence is not the same as understanding the culture you are doing business in. With the inclusion of the multicultural competence and business know-how, this model pulls together all the important aspects of measuring ethnocentrism within a business context and parts of this model were applied to this research.

Finally, we come to Bennett’s (2004) research and his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). Bennett created this model after years of observing interactions between people of different cultures and how some people were just better at communicating in this environment than others. He specifically noticed that there were different levels of experience that people moved through as they became more aware and sensitive to other cultures. His six-stage model works to categorize people and businesses along a scale from

ethnocentrism, “to refer to the experience of one’s own culture as ‘central to reality’.” (p. 62), to ethnorelativism, a term coined by Bennett that means “the opposite of ethnocentrism - the experience of one’s own beliefs and behaviors as just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities” (p. 62). Those six stages are denial, defense and minimization on the ethnocentric side and acceptance, adaptation and integration on the ethnorelative side. Bennett doesn’t look at any of the stages as bad versus a good, rather it is about the quality of the experience individuals have:

In general, the more ethnocentric orientations can be seen as ways of avoiding cultural difference, either by denying its existence, by raising defenses against it, or by minimizing its importance. The more ethnorelative worldviews are ways of seeking cultural difference, either by accepting its importance, by adapting perspective to take it into account, or by integrating the whole concept into a definition of identity. (p. 63)

Bennett’s model is more detailed and comprehensive than the other models outlined above. Specifically, it acknowledges the complexity of the progression from one side to the other and six stages allows for explicit detail and description of the levels of ethnocentrism versus a three-step model, such as Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta’s (2011). By drawing on the DMIS model, this research looks to measure the different levels of ethnocentrism a company has, even within their own organization.

### **Similar Research**

The research study most similar to this thesis is Milton J. Bennett’s comprehensive studies on intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1998; Bennett 2004), in particular, the research outlined above from Bennett (2004). In one of Bennett’s earlier works (Bennett, 1998), he starts

to lay the groundwork for concept of a developmental model and even describes the six stages that are eventually in his formal DMIS. His 2004 research explores and develops the sequence of the different levels of development in intercultural sensitivity, eventually leading to the creation of the DMIS. In using a grounded theory approach to develop the DMIS, Bennett explains not only the different stages of developing a more comprehensive intercultural sensitivity but also what behavior, comprehension, knowledge or attitudes an individual or group (i.e.: The Company) must evolve from before they are considered interculturally competent at that particular level. My research adds to this model by looking at intercultural sensitivity from within one large group and seeing how the individual parts add to, or take away from, the evolution of the group as a whole. My research also explores if The Company does anything to move the evolution of those less experienced in intercultural sensitivity along to help the group as a whole become more competent and sensitive as far intercultural communications is concerned.

Additional research similar to this thesis is from Qingwen, et al. (2008). Their research looks at three different areas: ethnocentrism, intercultural communication sensitivity, and multiculturalism. Their specific goal is to study whether a person's level of intercultural communication sensitivity or their level of multiculturalism are, more or less, effective at overcoming ethnocentrism. This research, similar to those described above, considers ethnocentrism to be correlated to a lower level of understanding of culture and its importance in a globalized world. They strive to find a way to measure, educate and diminish the effects of ethnocentrism and, therefore, conflict, between groups of different cultures. Their study involved a survey of 419 undergraduates from both a small private university and a large state university and included sections with instruments to measure their three main focus areas of

ethnocentrism, intercultural communication sensitivity and multiculturalism. Their results show they made a correlation between higher levels of both intercultural communication sensitivity and multiculturalism with lower levels of ethnocentrism, and hope the impact of their study will encourage further research into intergroup communications.

Finally, the Olson & Kroeger (2001) research uses survey data from 52 faculty and staff at an American university to identify international backgrounds, global competency and intercultural sensitivity. The objective of this research is to understand the international competency and sensitivity of their own faculty and staff, with the end goal to further the campus competency through curriculum and professional development with an international focus, meeting the needs of a more globalized world.

They rely on Bennett's descriptions of the ethnocentric and ethnorelative stages to evaluate the respondent's answers. They combined answers from the DMIS questions with their own global competency questions to get a more thorough understanding of the impact of proficiency in more than one language and experience abroad have on the survey results. The survey questions provided in Olson & Kroger's (2001) research were used in this current research project. The interpretations of the survey data were also fundamental in clarifying the results of this current research.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to determine if there are different levels of ethnocentrism within one company's hierarchal organization. The methodology for this research is based on Bennett's (2004) DMIS model and uses questions developed by Olson & Kroeger (2001). The research data was collected via a survey sent out to 1129 potential research participants and a follow-up interview conducted with ten of those survey participants. This chapter will describe the research participants, the methods used for data collection and data analysis as well as describe further limitations of the study.

#### **Subject Selection and Description**

This research is broken into two different parts: the survey and the interviews. For this reason, there are two different methods used to select the subjects. The following sections break down the process for each part of the research process.

**The survey.** To participate in the qualitative survey, an email invite from the HR department with a link to the Qualtrics survey was sent to 1129 company partners. The Company partners asked to participate in this research were located in the U.S. Home Office, the U.S. plant locations (the majority of the survey invitations, 1079, were sent to these locations) as well as in the Madrid location (50 survey invitations were sent here). Other company locations were excluded for various reasons, including: limiting the size of the study while still getting international partners involved; some locations were not conducive to the study because of strong language barriers; the company itself was most interested in seeing results from the ones described above. The same survey was sent to all participants. The research participants were from four different hierarchal levels of the company: 19 Executives; 54 Director's/Plant Manager's (Directors/Plant Managers); 571 Leaders; and 539 Individual Contributors. These

partners were in 10 different company departments including: International, Finance, HR, Enterprise Quality, Legal/Regulatory, Operations, Supply Chain, Sales, Information Systems, Product Life Cycle Strategies. The survey was completely voluntary and anonymous and was open for 3 weeks. At the mid-way point and closer to the end of the survey time-frame, a reminder email was sent by the HR department to all participants to remind them of the survey time-frame and encourage participation for those who had not taken the survey yet. Partner's needed to be 18 to participate but otherwise there were not any other restrictions to participation.

**The interviews.** At the end of the survey, participants were asked to volunteer for the follow-up interview. To narrow down the research participant pool from the 75 that originally agreed to participate, they were sent an email directly to re-confirm their willingness to participate. From this list, a total of nine research participants were chosen based on their hierarchical level within the company. Aside from hierarchical level, the possible participants were chosen based upon who replied first from the follow-up email with a maximum of one from the Executive Level, three from the Directors/Plant Managers level, three from the Leadership level and three from the Individual Contributor level. Due to the lack of response at the leadership level from the original responses, it was necessary to send an email to a few specific participants at the leadership level known to have taken the survey but who did not originally volunteer for the interview. From this, one additional participant was found for the Leadership level to fill all possible positions for a total of ten interview participants. This mix of participants were from Madrid, the U.S. home office and from the U.S. plants with a variety of length of time working at the company from 5-22 years.



## **Instrumentation**

This research uses a mixed methods format. The instrumentation for the qualitative survey and the qualitative interviews are broken down independently in the following paragraphs.

**The survey.** The first part of this mixed methods research involved a twenty-eight question Qualtrics electronic survey, a survey tool provided for by UW-Stout. The survey included ten demographic questions and eighteen core questions. The ten demographics questions were multiple choice with some questions allowing for more than one answer. These questions asked for length of time at The Company, level and department at The Company, and whether the research participants have any international experience (working, living outside of the U.S. and if they have multiple language skills). This information was used to better understand the level of experience, in terms of general work experience and international experience, within The Company. The eighteen core questions were from Olson & Kroger's (2001) research and break down to include three each for the six DMIS categories. On the ethnocentric side of the scale are denial, defense, and minimization; on the ethnorelative side, acceptance, adaptation and integration. The questions were scored on a 5-point Likert scale with 1= Disagree, 2= Somewhat Disagree, 3= Neither agree or disagree 4= Somewhat Agree and 5= Agree (see Appendix B for the actual questions asked on the survey). A couple of the questions were modified from the original questions in Olson & Kroger (2001), as suggested by the contact at The Company, to allow for those speaking a language other than English as their primary language and to understand the meaning of the questions. The survey was needed to gauge where the company was along the progression line from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism.

**The interview.** The open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted with ten participants from the survey who volunteered, or were asked, to be a part of the interviews. Questions 1-13 (see Appendix C) were developed by the researcher with the purpose of getting more in-depth information than the survey provided. The questions surrounded what the research participant specifically did for The Company; how communication in The Company was perceived by the participant; if the participant was located outside of the U.S. or worked with those located outside of the US, how was the communication; and to describe any training provided to help the partners communicate appropriately with the partners not located in the US.

Questions 14-21 were from research by Hammer et al. (2003) (See appendix D). These questions were chosen specifically because they were interview questions categorized within the six DMIS stages. One each was chosen from the six categories (for the adaptation stage, the question, as presented in Hammer et al. (2003), was a three-part question and was used in its entirety). Again, the purpose of using questions revolving around the DMIS was to allow for the research participants to go into further detail than what the survey would allow, giving them room to show their thought process where it involves communications and the DMIS scale.

It was possible to correlate the survey responses to the interview participants, with the exception of one interview participant added at a later date. For this participant, extra questions, repeated from the survey, were added to gather similar information to the other participants but the scores from the official survey could not be correlated to this individual due to lack of name or contact information added at the end of the survey. The correlated information between the survey and the interview was used more in the analysis of all of the data rather than in a way to guide any conversation during the interviews.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection for this mixed methods research is described separately in the next few paragraphs based on whether it was for the survey versus the interviews.

**The survey.** An email with an introduction to the survey, information about the research and the researcher and the link to the survey itself was sent through the company's Human Resources department. This survey was sent to 1129 potential participants at the company's home office, U.S. plant locations, as well as their Madrid office. The survey was administered digitally through Qualtrics and was open for three weeks, allowing for participants to take the survey from any location and at any time. Several email reminders were sent out by The Company's HR representative to all potential participants during this period to engage as many participants as possible to take the survey. Once the survey was closed, any unfinished surveys were cleared from the system and were not part of the final results. There was a survey response rate of 326 or 28.9% for this research.

**The interviews.** At the end of the survey there was an opportunity to volunteer for a follow-up interview. The twenty-one question, open ended interview was conducted at the convenience of the participants. The participants were asked to reserve an hour of time for the interview and the most interviews averaged about forty-five minutes in length, depending on how much the participant expanded on the questions or, in some cases, as time permitted based in the participants schedule. The interviews were conducted on site at The Company or via SKYPE, an online video conferencing service, for those not located near The Company. Notes were taken during the interview and the interviews were recorded (with participant permission) to allow for re-playing during analysis.

## **Data Analysis**

Data Analysis is also different based on whether it was the survey or the interviews. The following paragraphs show how the data was analyzed for each part of this mixed methods research.

**Survey data.** This data was analyzed with the IBM SPSS Version 23 data analysis software. The one-way ANOVA test was used to compare several variables against the six DMIS categories, including: Employment level within the company; length of time at the company; which department the employee works in; how much time the employee has spent living outside the US; and whether the interviewee spoke a language other than English as their first language.

**Interview data.** The interviews were analyzed for any possible similarities and differences between the interview participants within the same variables as the survey question: Employment level within the company; length of time at the company; which department the employee works in; how much time the employee has spent living outside the US; and whether the interviewee spoke a language other than English as their first language. Some of the survey questions had a direct correlation with the six DMIS categories and with the voluntary addition of personal information it was possible to compare the interview participants survey answers with their interview answers (with the exception of the participant that was added last). This allowed for a more in-depth analysis of where The Company's partners were on the ethnocentrism scale.

## Limitations

Limitations for the survey include:

1. The time it took to take the survey may have been too long for some of the potential research participants and therefore fewer finished the survey than would have if the survey was shorter.
2. The survey was set up to require answers to all the questions. Some people may have gotten to a question they did not want to answer or know how to answer and therefore stopped and did not finish the survey. If questions were optional, there may have been a higher percentage of completed surveys.

Limitations for the Interviews include:

1. For some potential participants, finding forty-five minutes in already busy schedules to sit down for the interview was difficult. Therefore, participation in the interview process was limited.
2. Some of the interview questions asked employees to point out flaws or problems The Company has with communications. The interview participants may not have been as open with their answers in a face to face setting, even though they were told their answers were anonymous and confidential.

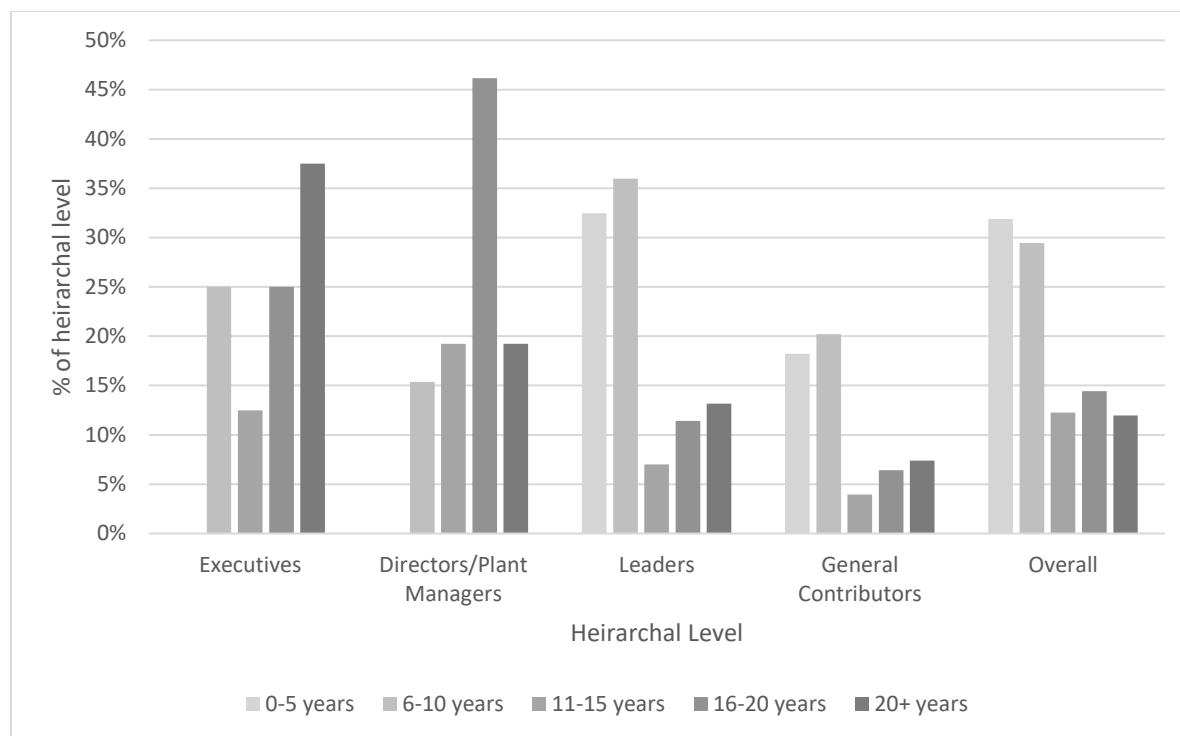
## Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study is to determine if there are different levels of ethnocentrism within one company's hierarchal organization and whether language or international experience influences levels of ethnocentrism. A total of 326 (or a 28.9% return rate) surveys were completed. Ten follow-up interviews were conducted during an eight-week period after the survey was closed with participants from the survey who volunteered for the interviews. The following paragraphs are an analysis of the data collected in this mixed-methods study.

### Survey Data Analysis

The survey comprised the largest amount of data in this research. The following information describes the participant backgrounds, analysis of the survey itself and analysis of the results based on each research question.

**Participant background information.** There were several demographics questions asked in the survey to better understand the make-up of The Company. Overall, the largest group of The Company partners was comprised of those employed for 0-5 years (31.9%). The breakdown of time at The Company versus hierarchal level shows a distinct correlation between the partners level of employment with the number of years they have been employed at The Company: of the Executives, the majority have worked for The Company 21+ years; the larger majority of Directors/Plant Managers have been at The Company for 16-20 years; The majority of Leaders are split between 0-5 years and 6-10 years; for Individual Contributors the largest group have an average length of time of 0-5 years with The Company (see Figure 1 for a detailed breakdown for the length of time employed at The Company).



*Figure 1.* Length of time employed by The Company based on hierarchal levels.

To understand the international experience the U.S. and Madrid partners bring to The Company, they were asked if they have lived outside of their home country. The majority of participants (72.9%) have never lived outside their home country. The rest of the participants were close to evenly split between a year or less (10.7%) and more than a year (11.3%) living outside of their home country.

The Company is an international company with responsibilities crossing borders and divisions (domestic or international). Even if a partner is in the international division, this does not necessarily mean they will have actual communication with a partner outside of their home country. It is also true that if a partner is in the domestic division, they may still communicate with a partner in a different country. Therefore, it was important to find out what percentage of partners spend some of their work-week communicating with partners from a different country.

Table 4

*Time Spent Working with Company Partners Outside of their Home Country*

| Hours per week              | Percent of Employees per Category |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Never                       | 57.4%                             |
| 5 hours or less each week   | 27.3%                             |
| 6-15 hours each week        | 8%                                |
| More than 15 hours per week | 7.4%                              |

At The Company, there are four main hierarchal levels for the day to day operations that are included in this study: Executives; Directors/Plant Managers; Leaders; Individual Contributors. It is typical in many U.S. based businesses, especially ones as large as The Company, for their organizational structure to look like a pyramid with executives comprising the smallest number of employees and the next levels each increasing in size. That is the case with this company as well. This research compares intercultural sensitivity within the different hierarchal levels and was, therefore, necessary to know the numbers of participants from each level.

Table 5

*Number of Potential Participants by Hierarchal Level*

| Hierarchal Level         | Number of people at The Company from U.S. and Madrid locations asked to participate in the survey | Number of survey participants | Percentage of each level that participated in the survey |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Executives               | 19  | 8                             | 42%  |
| Directors/Plant Managers | 54  | 26                            | 48.1%  |
| Leaders                  | 517   | 114                           | 22%  |
| Individual Contributors  | 539   | 178                           | 33%  |



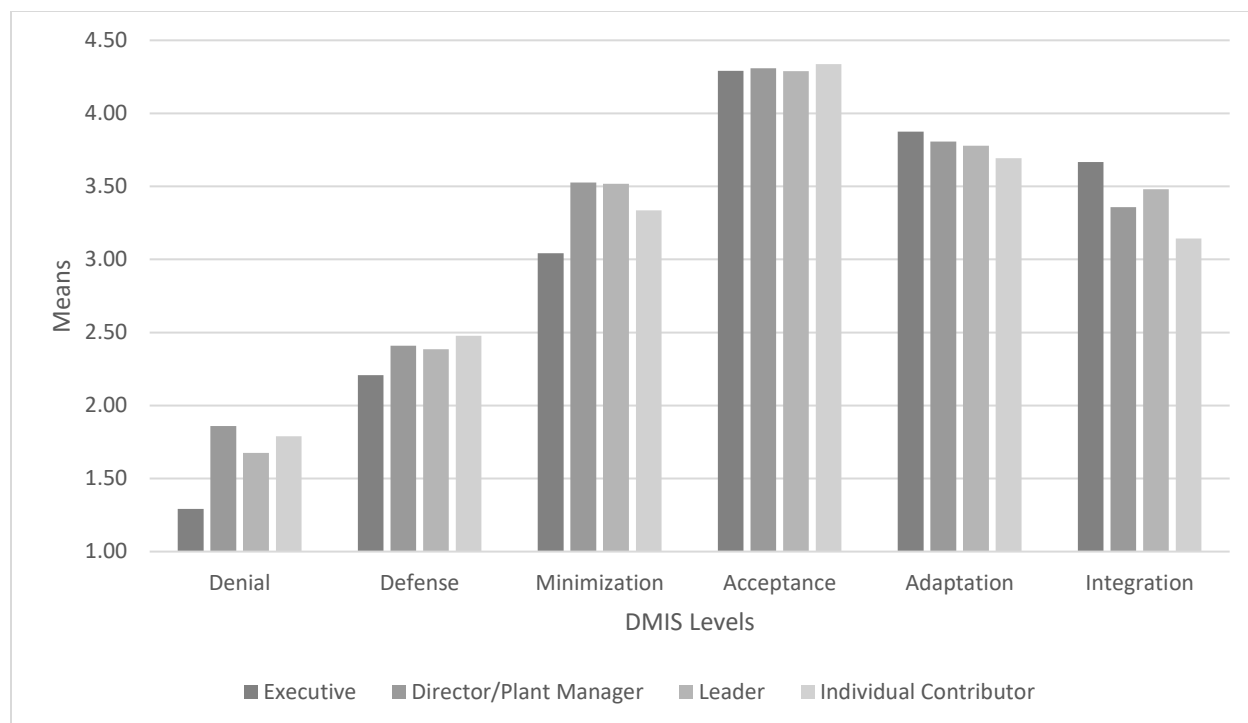
**Survey information.** The eighteen core questions of the survey break down to include three for each of the six DMIS categories. Appendices A thru F show the three questions grouped within their category, the overall mean of the category as well as the mean of each individual question. There is also a breakdown of the percent of those replying with 4 or 5 for each question, correlating with a “somewhat agree” or “agree” answer.

The variables in this research are non-continuous but when looking at the average means, there is a steady increase in the overall mean through the first three DMIS stages of denial, defense, and minimization (the ethnocentric stages) with 1.74, 2.44 and 3.41 respectively. The mean peaks at the acceptance stage with a 4.32 and goes back down for adaptation (3.73) and integration (3.29), the three ethnorelative stages. The results show, on average, all levels of employees disagreed with statements that expressed denial and defense and represent a stronger agreement with the three ethnorelative stages, in particular, the acceptance category questions. The implication is The Company is more rooted in the acceptance stage of the DMIS scale.

**Research question 1. Will drawing on Milton Bennett’s 6-stage development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) to measure the levels of ethnocentrism within an American company doing business outside of the United States show multiple stages of ethnocentrism between employees at different hierarchal levels within the company?**

Comparing the overall means for each organizational level (See Figure 2), on the ethnocentric side of the scale, the denial and defense categories had the lowest means or lowest levels of agreement with the questions. Acceptance, the first category on the ethnorelative side of the scale, had the highest means, or highest level of agreement with the questions, for all four hierarchal levels.

There is a statistically significant difference between “Leaders” and “Individual Contributors” at the integration level ( $\alpha = .05$ ;  $p = .009$ ; std deviation .10606). This shows that a higher percentage of Leaders were in agreement with the questions at the integration level than the Individual Contributors. The number of responses for the Executives, while a high percentage of the total number of partners at this level, is still a very low number and, therefore, there was not sufficient statistical power to measure statistical significance. On the other hand, looking at Figure 2, the actual means do show large gaps in several subsets when comparing Executives to the other levels: at denial, Executives (mean of 1.29) compared to all other levels (Directors/Plant Managers 1.86; Leaders 1.68; Individual Contributors 1.79) were lower in agreement with denial questions; at minimization, Executives (mean of 3.04) compared to both Directors/Plant Managers (3.53) and Leaders (3.52) were still lower in agreement with the questions pertaining to this stage; at integration, Executives (3.67) when compared to Individual Contributors (3.14) were much higher in agreement with integration stage questions. For all other stages (defense, acceptance and adaptation), there was not an observable difference in the means between the hierarchal levels. In other words, The Company partners were similar in their levels of agreement with the questions at these stages, but the Executives were overall more in agreement at the higher ethnorelative stages (adaptation and integration) than the other hierarchal levels.



*Figure 2.* Means for hierarchal levels within The Company.

**Research question 2. If the first language of the employee is not English, will there be a significant difference between the six stages of the DMIS categories of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation or integration?** For the purposes of this study, participants were asked “What language is your first language.” The majority of the answers were English (94.3%) and Spanish (3.9%) with a small group (1.8%) from French, Italian, German, Portuguese and Russian. This final group is put together as “other” in the data analysis. There were two areas that showed a statistically significant difference. Responses at the adaptation and integration levels indicate that partners who speak English as a first language show more ethnocentrism than those who speak Spanish or other languages (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Statistically Significant Differences when Comparing "First Language"*

| DMIS Level  | Language Comparison | Statistical Significance                     |
|-------------|---------------------|--|
|             |                     | p=.003                                       |
| Adaptation  | English vs Spanish  | std deviation=.1975<br>alpha=.05<br>p=.043   |
|             | English vs Other    | std. deviation=.28701<br>alpha=.05<br>p=.005 |
| Integration | English vs Spanish  | std. deviation=.24842<br>alpha=.05<br>p=.030 |
|             | English vs Other    | std. deviation=.36164<br>alpha=.05           |

Figure 3 shows the means for the three language categories. The Acceptance stage had the highest means for all three categories (English=4.31; Spanish=4.44; Other=4.56). Those in the “other” category (languages spoken by a minority of people at The Company) had the highest overall means for the three ethnorelative stages of Acceptance (4.56), Adaptation (4.39) and Integration (4.17). They also had the three lowest means on the ethnocentric side (denial 1.61, defense 2.33, minimization 3.00). Partners speaking English as a first language lagged behind other partners in their answers to all the questions that measured the ethnorelative side of the scale while both Spanish and English speakers scored higher on the ethnocentric side of the scale versus the “other” category. Overall, those speaking Spanish or “other” languages had a higher level of intercultural sensitivity as laid out by the DMIS.

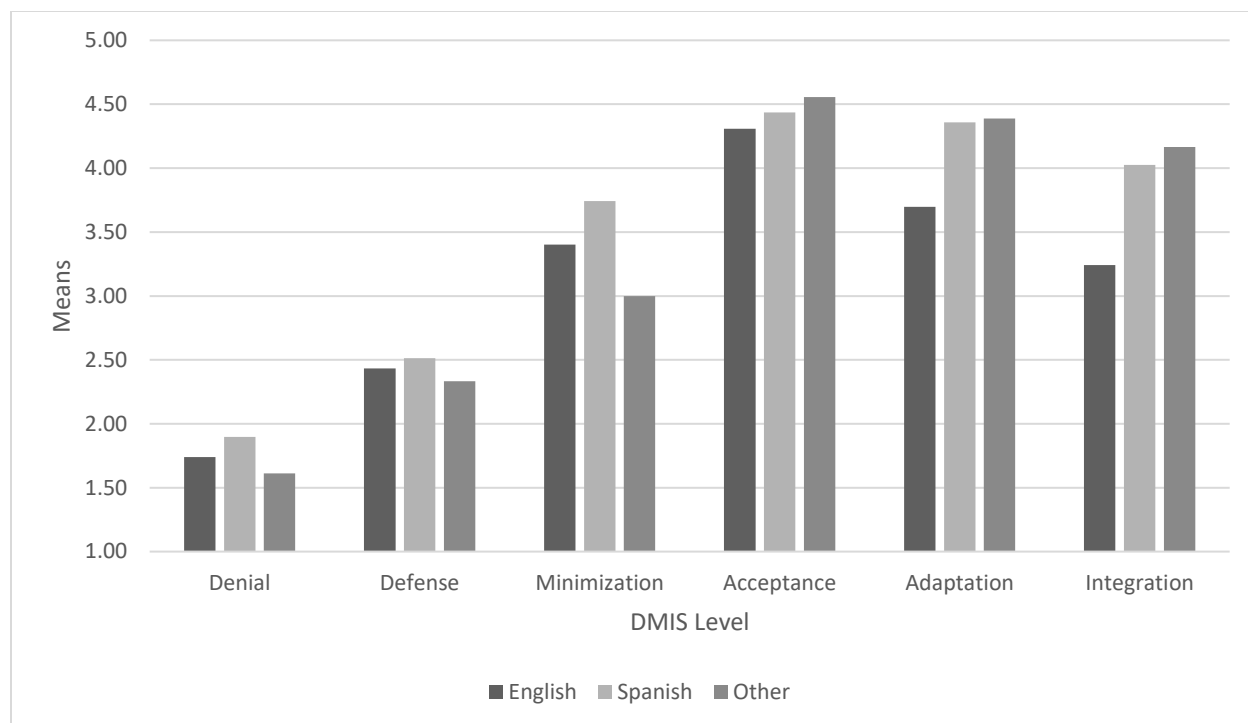
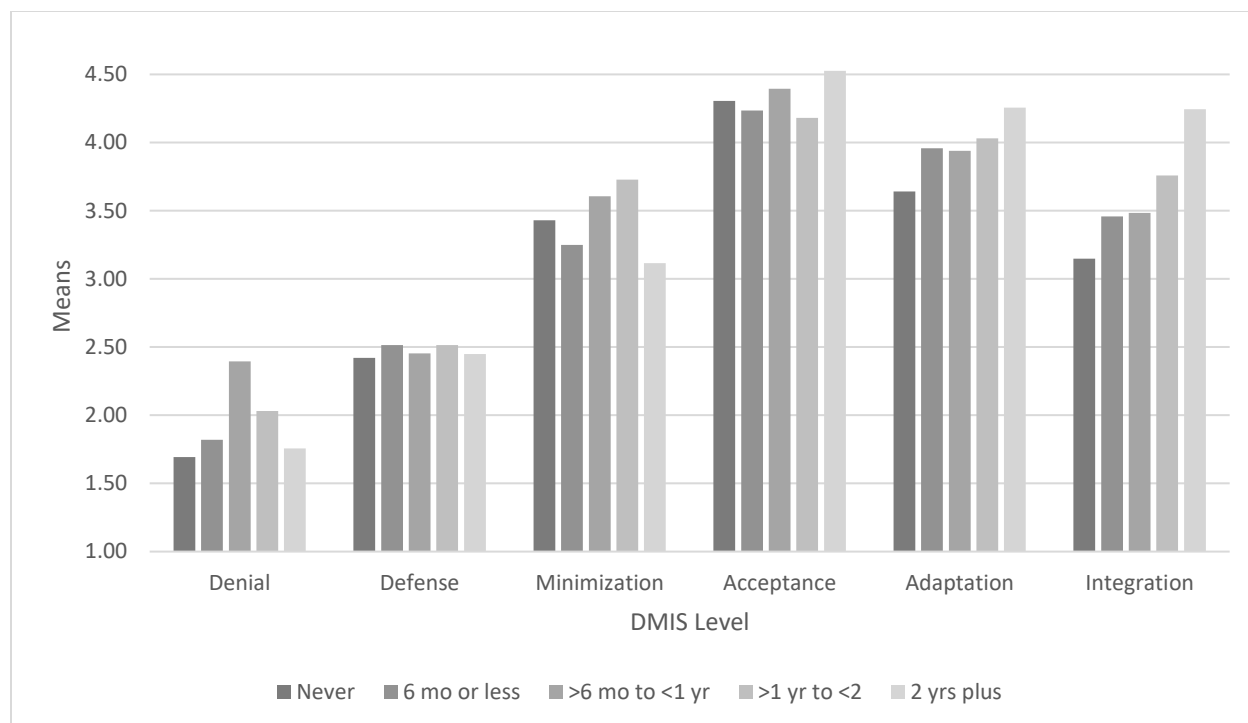


Figure 3. Means based on first language.

**Research question 3. Will a comparison of length of time an employee has lived outside of the United State show a significant difference between the six stages of the DMIS categories of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation or integration?** For this question, the data is grouped into those that never lived outside of their home country, those that lived outside for six months or less, more than six months but less than one year, more than one year but less than two years, and more than two years. There are numerous significant data points for this variable (see Figure 4).



*Figure 4.* Means for time spent living outside of home country.

The data shows that the acceptance stage has the highest means with the most participants in agreement with the questions in this stage. Those who have lived outside their home country for two years or more had the highest mean levels for all three ethnorelative stages (acceptance 4.53, adaptation 4.26, integration 4.24). The data in figure 4 also shows a pattern in five of the six stages: those with 2 or more years of living outside their home country have the lowest ethnocentric means and the highest ethnorelative means compared to all other data points. The exception is the defense stage where the 2 years or more group was .03 higher than the Never group. Table 7 shows the areas where there was a statistically significant difference between the different time frames of living outside of their home country.

Table 7

*Statistics Based on Time Spent Living Outside of Home Country*

| DMIS Level  | Time Spent Outside Home Country | Statistical Significance                     |
|-------------|---------------------------------|--|
|             |                                 | p=.028                                       |
| Denial      | >6mo to <1 yr vs 2 yr plus      | std deviation=.21643<br>alpha=.05            |
|             | Never vs >6 mo to <1 yr         | p=.002<br>std. deviation=.18532<br>alpha=.05 |
| Adaptation  | Never vs 2 yr plus              | p=.000<br>std. deviation=.14201<br>alpha=.05 |
|             |                                 | p=.010                                       |
| Integration | 6 mo or less vs 2 yr plus       | std. deviation=.23894<br>alpha=.05           |
|             | Never vs 2 yr plus              | p=.000<br>std deviation=.17381<br>alpha=.05  |

**Interview Analysis Including a Comparison to Survey Data**

The following information is a breakdown of the demographic answers from the survey as they pertain to the interview participants. The length of time working at The Company varied with the largest percentage of the participants currently working between 6-10 years, (40%). Compared to the total group of research participants, where the majority have worked at The Company for 0-5 years, the interview group has been at The Company longer (Table 8).

Table 8

*Number of Years Working at The Company*

|             | Interview Participants | Total Participants |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 21+ years   | 10%                    | 11.9%              |
| 16-20 years | 20%                    | 14.4%              |
| 11-15 years | 20%                    | 12.3%              |
| 6-10 years  | 40%                    | 29.4%              |
| 0-5 years   | 10%                    | 31.9%              |

The participants from the interviews have a wide range of hours working with partners outside of their home country with the majority working more than 15 hours per week (See Table 9).

Table 9

*Hours Spent Working with Partners Outside of Their Home Country*

| Hours Per Week              | Interview Participants | Total Participants |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 0 hours per week            | 10%                    | 57.4%              |
| 1-5 hour per week           | 20%                    | 27.3%              |
| 6-10 hours per week         | 0%                     | 27.3%              |
| 10-15 hours per week        | 30%                    | 4.3%               |
| More than 15 hours per week | 40%                    | 7.4%               |

Of the interview participants, 50% use a language other than their primary language on a regular basis or every day (versus 9.8% of the total participants) but only one out of the ten speaks a language other than English as their primary language. 30% of the interview participants are currently working on location at one of the international locations and 60% have



spent at least 6 months living outside of their home country at some point in their lives (compared to 14.7% of the total participants). Overall, the interview participants are more experienced than the rest of the participants, not only based on length of time working at The Company, but also with direct contact with international experience including language, living outside of their home country and amount of time working directly with international partners.

**Responses to interview questions related to ethnocentric DMIS stages (denial, defense, minimization).** Denial is a stage in which people are not generally against cultures other than their own but rather do not even recognize other cultures (Bennett, 2004). The answers here follow the same trend as the survey data: the higher up the hierarchal scale, the more the participants notice culture and therefore have a lower level of denial. The few exceptions include the Executive level and for two participants at the Individual Contributor level. During the interview, the Executive felt there was not much cultural difference at The Company (a denial based comment) because the business culture was strong and similar throughout the company. The interviews for Individual Contributor 1 and Individual Contributor 2 show less of an awareness of culture, putting them higher in the denial category than their survey score shows. Table 10 shows the comparisons between the interviewees survey and interview scores along with their level of leadership (for Tables 10-15, leadership experience is scored as high for Executives and Directors/Plant Managers, medium for Leaders and low for Individual Contributors. International Experience was scored high, medium and low based on the combination of what their first language was (higher score for anything other than English), time living outside of their home country, number of hours working with partners outside of their home country, and how often they use a language other than their primary language. The levels of agreement in the interviews are scored as low, medium, and high. The culmination of these

scores was based on the number of positive, negative or neutral answers to the questions in Appendix D. The survey scores came directly from the survey where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest.)

Table 10

*Survey Scores Compared to Interviews: Denial Stage*

| Interviewee              | Leadership Experience | International Experience | Level of agreement with denial: Interviews | Survey Score |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------|
| Executive                | High                  | High                     | Medium                                     | 1.67         |
| Director/Plant Manager 1 | High                  | High                     | Low  | 2.33         |
| Director/Plant Manager 2 | High                  | High                     | Low  | 2.33         |
| Director/Plant Manager 3 | High                  | High                     | Low  | 1.67         |
| Leader 1                 | Medium                | High                     | Low  | 1.0          |
| Leader 2                 | Medium                | Low                      | Low  | 1.0          |
| Leader 3                 | Medium                | Low                      | High                                       | NA*          |
| Individual Contributor 1 | Low                   | Low                      | High                                       | 2.0          |
| Individual Contributor 2 | Low                   | Low                      | High                                       | 3.33         |
| Individual Contributor 3 | Low                   | Medium                   | Low  | 2.33         |

\* Note. Leader 3 took the survey but was added to the interview at a later time not allowing for correlation to survey scores.

The defense stage is the stage in which culture is recognized but the people believe their culture is superior to others (Bennett, 2004). According to the survey scores, the interview participants score on the lower end of the defense scale, meaning they are not in “defense”. During the interviews, it was also clear that many of the participants want to recognize, or at

least understand the importance of recognizing, other cultures, another indication of a lower agreement with the defense stage questions.

The partners with not only leadership training but strong international experience utilized their skills and experience to work through the communication barriers or avoid them altogether. Here is an example from a partner at the Director/Plant Manager level currently living and working in Madrid:

It happened once between Spain, Portugal [and the Czech Republic]. They [a partner from the Czech Republic] came to me and said: ‘I don’t understand? We wanted them to do this and they said ‘Yes’ but then they didn’t [do it]’ And I said ‘yeah, in Spain and in Portugal, ‘Yes’ doesn’t always mean ‘Yes’. Someone might say yes to you because they don’t want to say no. . . there [Portugal or Spain], saying no is somehow worse than saying yes. That can be really upsetting to someone in the Czech Republic where it is much more direct” (Director/Plant Manager 1, October 21, 2016).

Another example comes from a partner at the Leader level with numerous years of international experience “In regards to Germany, your speaking can be more direct. It is better if you are more direct. . . India, on the other hand, if you are too direct you are going to hurt somebody’s feelings . . .” (Leader 1 Interview, October 24, 2016).

At the Individual Contributor level, it is more of a learn as you go scenario at The Company. This is the experience one of the Individual Contributor partners had during an integration process with a new plant overseas:

At the start I didn’t know enough. . . and I think I approached him [the overseas vendor], unfortunately a little harshly . . . he didn’t have a comfort level, once he

gained that I think we both kind of adapted to a point. Before that, I think, we kind of butt heads. . . Its more adapted now. I would say that I have learned more” (Individual Contributor 1 Interview, October 24, 2016).

In some cases, the interviewees really do not recognize the cultural perspective of some of these interactions. In a scenario similar to the Director/Plant Manager partner’s experience, here is the perspective from an Individual Contributor partner:

With the partners in India, especially at a certain level . . .that person kept telling us ‘yup, yup, its done, its done, its done’ . . . they really want to please you . . .and they want to tell you what you want to hear . . . it almost comes across as dishonesty to us [U.S. partners]” (Individual Contributor 3 Interview, October 24, 2016).

In this next example of an interaction between one of the Leaders and a French representative, the representative was not used to being questioned on the details of how to do her job and it caused some initial strife with the partner: “The hardest trade show is Paris but the French aren’t very easy to work with to begin with . . . She [the trade show representative] told me I ask too many questions”. (Leader 3 Interview, December 28, 2016).

Overall, based on the survey scores of all the participants, the more leadership experience combined with international experience a partner had, the more likely they were to recognize cultural differences for what they were and not that one culture was correct (or superior) and the other wasn’t, therefore having lower scores at the defense stage (see Table 11). The survey statistics for the interviewees, on the other hand, show a different trend. The mean for both the Directors/Plant Managers and Leaders was 3.0 for each group (see Table 11). In comparison, the mean for all participants, separated by hierarchal level was 2.4 (see Figure 2) for both the Directors/Plant Manager level and Leader level. This represents a more ethnocentric view point

for the interviewees at the defense stage compared to the total group of Director/Plant Managers or total group of Leaders.

Table 11

*Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey: Defense*

| Interviewee              | Leadership Experience | International Experience | Level of agreement with defense: Interviews | Survey scores |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|---------------|
| Executive                | High                  | High                     | Low   | 2.33          |
| Director/Plant Manager 1 | High                  | High                     | Low   | 3.00          |
| Director/Plant Manager 2 | High                  | High                     | Low   | 2.33          |
| Director/Plant Manager 3 | High                  | High                     | Low   | 3.33          |
| Leader 1                 | Medium                | High                     | Low   | 3.0           |
| Leader 2                 | Medium                | Low                      | Low   | 3.0           |
| Leader 3                 | Medium                | Low                      | High  | NA*           |
| Individual Contributor 1 | Low                   | Low                      | High  | 3.0           |
| Individual Contributor 2 | Low                   | Low                      | High  | 2.0           |
| Individual Contributor 3 | Low                   | Medium                   | Medium                                      | 2.33          |

\* Note. Leader 3 took the survey but was added to the interview at a later time not allowing for correlation to survey scores

According to Bennett (2004), those in the minimization stage are more apt to notice cultural similarities. Minimization is also a transitional stage between the ethnocentric and ethnorelative phases. The scores on the survey bounced around from a low of 1.67 to a high of 4.67 (out of 5), with no clear trend amongst the hierarchal levels. The interviews allowed for a little more clarification about the beliefs of the partners for this stage: The three leadership levels all agreed, with one exception (a partner that has been a leader for less than a year), that it is

important to focus on differences, or both similarities and differences. One Director/Plant Manager put it this way: “I think it is dangerous to not acknowledge the differences . . . otherwise, the marginalized groups never get the attention they need to be successful” (Director/Plant Manager 2 Interview, November 21, 2016). A Leader said it this way when asked if it was more important to pay attention to cultural differences or similarities: “Both! . . . But you need to know what the differences are in order to be an effective leader” (Leader 2 Interview, October 24, 2016).

Individual Contributors all said it is more important to look at similarities, a view in line with the minimization stage. The following comment was similar to comments from the other Individual Contributors: “Focus on the similarities . . . People are people. We just need to figure out how to get along” (Individual Contributor 2 Interview, October 21, 2016).

Based on the interviews, the trend in this ethnocentric stage is similar to the other two stages: Those with leadership and international experience are lower on the minimization scale than the Individual Contributors.

Table 12

*Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey: Minimization*

| Interviewee              | Leadership Experience | International Experience | Level of agreement with Minimization: Interviews | Survey Score |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------|
| Executive                | High                  | High                     | Medium   | 4.67         |
| Director/Plant Manager 1 | High                  | High                     | Low  | 3.00         |
| Director/Plant Manager 2 | High                  | High                     | Low  | 1.67         |
| Director/Plant Manager 3 | High                  | High                     | Medium   | 3.33         |
| Leader 1                 | Medium                | High                     | Medium   | 2.33         |
| Leader 2                 | Medium                | Low                      | Low  | 4.00         |
| Leader 3                 | Medium                | Low                      | High   | NA*          |
| Individual Contributor 1 | Low                   | Low                      | High   | 1.67         |
| Individual Contributor 2 | Low                   | Low                      | High   | 3.33         |
| Individual Contributor 3 | Low                   | Medium                   | High   | 4.0          |

\* Note. Leader 3 took the survey but was added to the interview at a later time not allowing for correlation to survey scores

**Responses to interview questions related to ethnorelative DMIS stages (acceptance, adaptation, integration).** The acceptance stage question, “Do you make any special effort to find out more about the cultures around you?”, had similar answers from the interview participants. Without exception, those in one of the three leadership areas were very eager to explore other cultures in depth: “That is one of the things I love most about my job! I get to meet people from different places. I get to pay attention to the way they greet each other or what they eat. . . I ask questions about their culture. . . just by showing interest then that goes a long way” (Leader 2 Interview, October 24, 2016). Similarly, from another Leader:

That is one of the reasons that I took this international role so I could work with people who speak different languages and have different backgrounds, that is very interesting to me. When I travel to different areas I ask questions, try the local food the local drink, get people talking about their area and what they know. They like to talk about themselves and where they are from. If you can find that common ground, people are more likely to open up to you.” (Leader 1 Interview, November 21, 2016)

At the Individual Contributor level, there is still a general curiosity of other cultures, especially the countries where The Company is located: “As we add new plants, I spend time on Google Maps and look at where all our plants are” (Individual Contributor 3 Interview, October 21, 2016). The depth of the effort to find out more about cultures is related to the necessity of working with the international partners, which, coincidentally, seems to correlate to the leadership levels of the interviewees.



Table 13

*Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey: Acceptance*

| Interviewees             | Leadership Experience | International Experience | Level of agreement with acceptance: Interviews | Survey Score |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------|
| Executive                | High                  | High                     | High   | 4.33         |
| Director/Plant Manager 1 | High                  | High                     | High   | 4.33         |
| Director/Plant Manager 2 | High                  | High                     | High   | 5.00         |
| Director/Plant Manager 3 | High                  | High                     | High   | 4.00         |
| Leader 1                 | Medium                | High                     | High   | 4.67         |
| Leader 2                 | Medium                | Low                      | High   | 4.67         |
| Leader 3                 | Medium                | Low                      | Low  | NA*          |
| Individual Contributor 1 | Low                   | Low                      | Low  | 4.33         |
| Individual Contributor 2 | Low                   | Low                      | Low  | 3.33         |
| Individual Contributor 3 | Low                   | Medium                   | Low  | 4.67         |

\* Note. Leader 3 took the survey but was added to the interview at a later time not allowing for correlation to survey scores

At the adaptation stage, a person should accurately understand another culture from that culture's perspective. The three-part question asked of the interviewees, "Do you try to adapt your communication to people from other cultures? Does it mean anything to you to look at the world through the eyes of a person from another culture? Do you feel you have two or more cultures?", is to get an in-depth understanding of where the interviewees stand when it comes to really understanding other cultures.

The majority of the interviewees at all levels (80% total) say they make some sort of effort to adapt their communication to other cultures. Seeing the world through the eyes of

another person (worldview) is a little more difficult for those at the Individual Contributor level as well as the one newer Leader (#3). One participant at the Individual Contributor level mentioned that it is easier to see the worldview in hindsight, not in the heat of a project: “I think that is really hard to do. It is very challenging when you are specifically working on something. I think you almost have to step back and re-analyze” (Individual Contributor 3 interview, October 24, 2015). The Executive feels he can see a worldview from the perspective of another culture but it isn’t always easy: “I think I do. Do I struggle with it at times? I do. What I struggle with mostly are the groups of people that are oppressed. I see it, I accept it, I don’t respect it but I accept it” (Executive interview, October 24, 2016). The only interviewee who thinks they are part of more than one culture is the participant with the most experience internationally (Leader 1). The Executive and two of the Director/Plant Manager’s sense they are close to having more than one culture but not all the way there yet (See Table 14).

Table 14

*Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey: Adaptation*

| Interviewees             | Leadership Experience | International Experience | Level of agreement with adaptation: Interviews | Survey Score |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------|
| Executive                | High                  | High                     | High   | 4.67         |
| Director/Plant Manager 1 | High                  | High                     | High   | 3.67         |
| Director/Plant Manager 2 | High                  | High                     | High   | 5.00         |
| Director/Plant Manager 3 | High                  | High                     | High   | 4.67         |
| Leader 1                 | Medium                | High                     | High   | 4.33         |
| Leader 2                 | Medium                | Low                      | High   | 4.33         |
| Leader 3                 | Medium                | Low                      | Low  | NA*          |
| Individual Contributor 1 | Low                   | Low                      | Low  | 4.00         |
| Individual Contributor 2 | Low                   | Low                      | Low  | 2.67         |
| Individual Contributor 3 | Low                   | Medium                   | Medium   | 3.67         |

\* Note. Leader 3 took the survey but was added to the interview at a later time not allowing for correlation to survey scores

Finally, at the integration level, a person should be able to easily move in and out of different cultures and be considered fully functioning within those multiple cultures by others. The question asked of the interviewees was “If you feel you have two or more cultures, has your adjustment to other cultures led you to question your own identity or do you feel apart from those cultures that you are involved in?” The interviews reveal a slightly different theme from the survey results. Only the Executive and Leader 1, have enough intercultural sensitivity to question their own identity. Leader 2 has a high level of agreement with this stage but does not have any international experience. During the interviews, it became clear that this person’s idea

of culture had to do with gender and racial diversity, not based on international culture. While an important aspect of any company's internal culture, gender and race were not a focus of this research and that background information was not gathered during the survey or interviews. In either case, he did feel it was his responsibility as a leader to make sure he understood the cultures in his environment and did understand the concept of the integration stage. The rest of the participants are not quite in agreement with this category even though the survey data results show a high level of agreement with questions pertaining to integration.

Table 15

*Leadership and International Work Experience Comparing Interview to Survey: Integration*

| Interviewees             | Leadership Experience | International Experience | Level of agreement with integration: Interviews | Survey Score |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------|
| Executive                | High                  | High                     | High  | 4.67         |
| Director/Plant Manager 1 | High                  | High                     | Low   | 4.33         |
| Director/Plant Manager 2 | High                  | High                     | Low   | 5.00         |
| Director/Plant Manager 3 | High                  | High                     | Low   | 4.00         |
| Leader 1                 | Medium                | High                     | High  | 4.33         |
| Leader 2                 | Medium                | Low                      | High  | 5.00         |
| Leader 3                 | Medium                | Low                      | Low   | NA*          |
| Individual Contributor 1 | Low                   | Low                      | Low   | 2.67         |
| Individual Contributor 2 | Low                   | Low                      | Low   | 2.33         |
| Individual Contributor 3 | Low                   | Medium                   | Low   | 2.67         |

\*Note. Leader 3 took the survey but was added to the interview at a later time, not allowing for correlation to survey scores

**Results based on international experience including language.** The partners with a high level international experience were coincidentally also all at the leadership level or higher. The partner with the most international experience is the only participant whose first language is not English (he speaks Portuguese as his first language and also Spanish). Four of the partners with international experience had survey scores that put them in the Adaptation or Integration categories. Again, they were also all Leaders or higher on the hierarchal scale for The Company. One partner at the Leadership level and one at the Individual Contributor level were both at Acceptance based on the survey. The interviews reveal similar results. The partners with international experience were at a higher level of intercultural sensitivity at the Adaptation and Integration stages than the rest of the participants. For the Leader who scored higher at the Acceptance level on the survey, the interview answers are more consistent with an Integration level. The interview for the Individual Contributor level partner with international experience shows consistency with the survey results (see table 16).

Table 16

*Comparing International Experience and Language Experience to the DMIS Levels*

| Interviewees             | International Experience | Experience with language other than primary | DMIS Level based on Interviews* | DMIS level based on Survey* |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Executive                | High                     | Low   | Ada                             | Ada/Int                     |
| Director/Plant Manager 1 | High                     | High  | Acc/Ada                         | Ada/Int                     |
| Director/Plant Manager 2 | High                     | High  | Ada                             | Int                         |
| Director/Plant Manager 3 | High                     | High  | Acc/Ada                         | Ada                         |
| Leader 1                 | High                     | High  | Int                             | Acc                         |
| Leader 2                 | Low                      | Low   | Acc                             | Acc                         |
| Leader 3                 | Low                      | Low   | Min                             | NA**                        |
| Individual Contributor 1 | Low                      | Low   | Acc                             | Acc                         |
| Individual Contributor 2 | Low                      | Low   | Min                             | Acc                         |
| Individual Contributor 3 | Medium                   | High  | Acc                             | Acc                         |

Note. \*Min=minimization; Acc=Acceptance; Ada=Adaptation; Int=Integration

\*\* Leader 3 took the survey but was added to the interview at a later time not allowing for correlation to survey scores

## **Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

Up to this point in the paper we have laid the ground work for measuring intercultural sensitivity through a discussion of the problem a lack of intercultural sensitivity can cause for a company. We have reviewed the literature and similar studies to this research and we have explored the survey and interview data for this research. This next section is a discussion and interpretation of what the research data means as well as recommendations for companies to help improve their level of sensitivity and for further research.

### **Discussion**

There is a general understanding in the business world that as an employee moves up the hierarchal scale within their company, their leadership skills will improve. Employees not only bring their own experiences to the table, a company's focus on training leaders should also train them for handling all types of communication issues, including intercultural sensitivity. If, in fact, a company is functioning this way, you would likely see a stair step pattern similar to the one in Figure 2. At the left side of the chart, the ethnocentric stages, the Executives have lower means (or less ethnocentrism) than the Individual Contributors. At some point, it levels out (as we currently see at the acceptance level), where the majority of the company reaches its highest level of intercultural sensitivity based on the DMIS scale and then the steps would reverse for the ethnorelative side of the scale with Executives with the highest means (more intercultural sensitivity) and the means go down with the next few stages but still remain higher than the Individual Contributors. Or, in a very intercultural sensitive company, the chart would only continue to go up through at least the adaptation stage.

The company in this research has a goal of growing beyond just an international company; they are on their way to becoming a Global company. As a reminder, global

companies are “firms have significant investments and profit centers with no single center of dominance” (Fidelity, 2017). Based on the data from both the survey and the interviews, The Company is in what Bennett would consider the intermediate DMIS stage of acceptance when it comes to intercultural sensitivity. Bennett (2004) shows that the adaptation stage will offer a stronger global connection and success for companies like the one in this research: “Adaptation involves the extension of your repertoire of beliefs and behaviors, not a substitution of one set for another” (p.71).

**Research question 1. Will drawing on Milton Bennett’s 6-stage development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) to measure the levels of ethnocentrism within an American company doing business outside of the United States show multiple stages of ethnocentrism between employees at different hierarchal levels within the company?** The first research question looks at the different levels of ethnocentrism within the hierarchal organization of The Company. With the survey results and the follow-up interviews, several conclusions can be drawn. The company follows the trend of Executives having less agreement with denial and more agreement with integration (again, showing less ethnocentrism than the other levels). The same could be said about the Individual Contributors who are more in agreement than the other hierarchal levels at the ethnocentric side and less in agreement at the ethnorelative side. The interview conversations also show a similar pattern with Individual Contributors. At the Executive level, however, the interviews revealed a slightly different angle, one that could be considered more ethnocentric than the other leaders at The Company.

At this company, the Executives are ultimately responsible for the success of The Company through strategic growth of the business as well as strategic growth of the team members they are responsible for. It is important to look at the big picture at this level, to have a



more visionary outlook. That is not to say intercultural sensitivity issues are not their responsibility. The Executive interviewed for this research made it very clear that strong local leadership, whether in the U.S. or abroad is vital to the success of The Company. They are not trying to replace local culture but, rather, embrace it. At the same time, The Company has a very strong internal business culture, one they are not willing to give up just to have an international (or global) business. There are certain company culture practices that may be considered American (or more ethnocentric) but will follow The Company to every location. This looks like denial and a lack of acceptance of another culture, but this executive brings up an interesting point, one that does not fit neatly within the boundaries of a model like the DMIS:

The mindset is Glocal which is the blend of Global and Local . . . come in and re-assess over time everything to try and conclude the local practices that must sustain to be viable. The Global is . . . around values and certain standards that have to be done [The Company] way, for lack of a better word, because we believe so strongly in them. . . Companies that go abroad and they come in too heavy handed, and they just Americanize it or make it their way, don't make it. The other side, if you just literally buy it. . . if you are not providing the leadership of what the company stands for, you are too hands off. Its finding this balance of respect local, understand it but you need to bring in some global standards and say over time, if you are going to be a part of [The Company] family. (Interview with Executive, October 24, 2016)

The business culture standards as well as any systems they put in place (such as safety, HR, Finance or even branding) are what make The Company who they are and not just any other food company. Again, this may look or sound like a denial or an ethnocentric attitude but as the

Executive explained, it is necessary to have some pushback on accepting every cultural aspect of the international country you are moving your business into and instead keeping some of the American culture to truly succeed at keeping your identity as an international company. The question becomes if this thought process is what is keeping the company from moving into the adaptation stage, which is important to becoming truly global, or does it bring up a bigger issue in today's world of corporate branding that the DMIS ignores?

There are several DMIS categories where the ideal trend is disrupted (see Figure 2). At the category of denial, while the means are overall very low (not ethnocentric for any hierarchal level) the Directors/Plant Managers have the highest mean, or, the least amount of disagreement with those survey questions. At minimization, both Directors/Plant Managers and Leaders have higher means than the other two groups, implying a more ethnocentric belief system. One possible explanation for the ethnocentric leaning trend may have to do with the placement on the hierarchal scale for Directors/Plant Managers and Leaders. As a rule of thumb, Executives manage the Directors/Plant Managers who manage the Leaders who, in turn, manage the Individual Contributors. As the Directors/Plant Manager and Leaders grow and learn in their own roles, they may be more concerned with instilling the strong company culture where there is more of an attitude of "we are one team." According to the overall low scores, they don't ignore cultures or are in defense against them, but they are working to find common ground, a necessary leadership skill. This may lead to a more ethnocentric view point at these two stages than the rest of the hierarchal levels.

There is another possible explanation. What became apparent through the interviews is that the term "culture" represents many different possibilities to the partners. The survey questions for minimization, such as "I understand that differences between people from different

cultures exist but believe that we should focus on the similarities. We are all human” are more generic. They do not specifically reference culture as in one country versus another. Not all the partners work internationally and without the benefit of a face to face explanation of which culture the questions were referencing, as in the interviews, there is a good chance that the participants were looking at a more localized version of culture such as the plant culture versus home office, or culture as it relates to gender. They could also be thinking of culture in terms of the people on their own team, not in a broader, more worldly sense. Both Leaders and Directors/Plant Managers working closely with those they are responsible for, are more likely to want to keep the peace when there are employee issues and will likely look at similarities versus differences which is considered more ethnocentric for the minimization stage.

Finally, at integration, Leaders have a higher mean than Directors/Plant Managers. At The Company, Leaders work very closely with a variety of partners, not just one level of The Company. The group also has less experience with The Company (32.5% have worked for The Company for 0-5 years). Some might be switching jobs from a different company but many in the Leader bracket are just out of college. When comparing someone coming out of college today (the Leaders) versus 15-20 years ago (the Directors/Plant Managers), the business world has become more globalized, more technological, and there is more disbursement of cultural information. All the aspects of today’s business world are part of the collegiate experience, giving newer graduates more exposure to global issues. This may explain why they are stronger in the integration stage than Directors/Plant Managers.

There are anomalies that need to be pointed out. In Table 16, the means for questions 2.2 and 2.3 were 1.5 and 1.94 consecutively. Question 2.1 has a much higher mean of 3.87. A couple of modifications were made to the original question. The Original Question was: “I have

lived for at least 2 years in another country and believe that American society should embrace the values of this other culture in order to address the problems of American contemporary society” (Olson & Kroeger, 2001, p. 126). The contact at The Company for this research suggested removing the first part of the question about living in a different country for two years (this made the question a confusing two-part question) and modifying to acknowledge the partners who speak English as a second language. Also, since the survey included the Madrid partners, the references to “America” in the original question was replaced with “my country” (see Table 19, Q 3.1 for modified version of the question). Removing this question from the research would have brought the average mean down for the minimization stage but since the mean even with this question included is still in the low category (a low level of ethnocentrism), the results would not change so the question was left in the data results.

There is also an anomaly with question 3.2: “I think that all human beings are subject to the same historical forces, economic and political laws or psychological principles. These forces, laws or principles are invariable across cultures” (see table 19). This question has a considerably lower mean (2.55) than question 3.1 (mean=3.87) or question 3.3 (mean=3.8). There was a comment sent to the company representative suggesting that some of the questions were two questions in one, which were hard to answer. This was one of those questions. If they agreed with one part of the question but not the other, it is likely they went with a lower answer.

What is interesting to note is the survey was conducted during the final months of a very divided and highly emotional American political campaign, especially where it pertained to the acceptance of other cultures. This also could have had an impact on the response to question 3.2, or a number of the other questions in the survey that relate to getting along with other cultures, such as question 3.1: “I understand that cultural differences between people from different

cultures exist but believe that we should focus on similarities. We are all human.” Since it is not possible to say exactly why the mean is lower, the decision was made to keep the question in the data.

For research question 1, using Milton Bennett’s 6-stage DMIS does show significant differences in all three ethnocentric stages and adaptation and integration on the ethnorelative stages within the company’s hierarchal levels. The acceptance level on the ethnorelative side was not significantly different across the hierarchal levels. This information was verified with follow-up interviews.

**Research question 2. If the first language of the employee is not English, will there be a significant difference between the six stages of the DMIS categories of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance adaptation and integration?** The research participants were from the U.S. home office or the Madrid location but some partners may travel to multiple company locations throughout Europe. Several more have transferred to Madrid from the U.S. or to the U.S. from other countries. Of the partners speaking a language other than English as their first language, 68.4 % work in the international department at The Company. The Company also has a requirement that anyone in a leadership role must speak English.

Partners that can speak multiple languages have also most likely been exposed to multiple cultures along the way, whether through family members or their own personal experiences, such as living abroad during college. Along the same lines, if there are partners that grew up in any of the European countries, for example, there is a high likelihood that they have been exposed to multiple cultures over time purely because of the proximity to other countries and the freedom to travel easily between those countries. As Bennett (2004) states, “a sophisticated sojourner can observe subtle differences in nonverbal behavior or communication

style, while a naïve traveler may notice only differences in the money, the food, or the toilets. As categories for cultural difference become more complex and sophisticated, perception becomes more interculturally sensitive” (p. 73). It should not be surprising, then, that at the ethnorelative side of the DMIS scale, both Spanish and “Other” languages have the highest means for the three categories but especially notable at adaptation and integration: they are more interculturally sensitive than their English as a first language counterparts.

The anomaly comes in with Spanish speakers at the ethnocentric side of the scale. They have the highest means for all three DMIS categories. There are numerous possibilities for this trend. Since the Madrid plant was included in the survey but not the Mexico plant, it is more likely that the Spanish speakers are coming from Madrid. According to a U.S. partner at the Director/Plant Manager level currently working in Madrid: “Spain is not an English-speaking country. Movies are dubbed into Spanish versus using captions. Partners in Spain don’t speak it [English] very much so language is more of a barrier here” (Director/Plant Manager 1 Interview, November 21, 2016). Whether this is because of a more monoculture society, like the US, or for some other reason, their weaker disagreement with the ethnocentric side of the scale could be a correlation to language usage. The fact that they are similar to the “Other” language speakers on the ethnorelative side could represent that they are still part of Europe and do have exposure to other cultures on a more regular basis.

For research question 2, there is a significant difference between those from the “other” category versus the English speakers for all six DMIS stages. The significant difference between Spanish speakers and English speakers does not appear until the last two ethnorelative stages. Without more interview information from multiple non-English speakers, it is difficult to say

with any level of certainty that it is just the difference in first language that causes the statistically significant differences.

**Research question 3. Will a comparison of length of time an employee has lived outside of the U.S. show a significant difference between the six stages of the DMIS categories of denial, defense, minimization, acceptance adaptation and integration?** To help employees working with international partners, The Company does offer some small bits of cultural educational information through various means (printable materials, information in their internal newsletter, classes for expats). When asked during the interviews, only two interviewees took advantage of these materials and most of the other interviewees didn't know about the resources or did not feel they were very helpful. Most of the partners working internationally have had to learn lessons through trial and error, not always in a positive way, or through past personal experience such as living abroad. One of the interviewees from the Director/Plant Manager level, who has lived outside of the U.S. for two plus years and has years of company and leadership experience was even caught off-guard in a situation with a new but very direct boss who didn't like a project she had done for him. She took it personally until a co-worker reminded her that her new boss comes from a culture where directness is expected. With that context in mind she moved past the original conflict.

Bennett (2004) does make it clear that intercultural sensitivity comes with exposure to other cultures more than any other way. It can't always be taught in a classroom. This final research question, looking at the amount of time partners have spent living outside their home country, shows just that. In general, the more experience a partner had with living somewhere outside of their home country, the more advanced they were in intercultural sensitivity. This is especially pronounced with partners who have lived two or more years outside of their home

country for five of the six stages and particularly at the integration stage compared to all other categories.

One of the interviewees was a Leader who is originally from Brazil, worked for five years in the U.S. and has been in Madrid for the last two years. He describes how long it took to really feel integrated into the U.S. culture: “Probably after two or three years in the U.S. Before that you are experiencing and learning about the other cultures but that is not enough to change the way you do things. After two to three years it starts to stick” (Leader 1 interview, October 24, 2016).

For research question 3, the data does show that the longer a person has lived outside of their home country, the more interculturally sensitive (ethnorelative) they are. There is a significant difference between the six stages of the DMIS. Information from several of the interviewees also verified what the survey data shows.

## **Conclusions**

There are several key take-aways from this research. This first one does conflict with some of the research from Bennett (2004). It is very clear Bennett argues that to progress to a more interculturally sensitive company, a company needs to find a way of not just accepting of other cultures but also have two cultures working at the same time (adaptation). While it is logical that a company would need to evolve and transform to work with overseas partners, there is a strong argument that a company IS its culture. In today’s competitive business world, brand or company identity is an important piece to the success of a company. How does a company “adapt” yet keep that identity in place? Is a more globalized business world more accepting of business culture and therefore less evolution is necessary? I do feel it is very important to evolve to the adaptation stage, and a company truly in this stage described by Bennett (2004) will be



able to resolve a lot of the cultural issues. That said, there is a new reality in the business world, including globally, and separating brand identity from its culture may not work anymore. It is still a progression within the adaptation stage but with more recognition of a singular cultural identities.

A second point brought out in this research is that a company must also be able to recognize when the culture of a potential international partner conflicts too much with their own. They need to consider whether venturing into a particular country is the right business decision. Several times, during the interviews, the Caste system in India (one of The Company locations) was brought up as a difficult cultural aspect to watch from an American point of view but also recognizing that The Company had to accept it since they weren't able to change the country's culture. While cultures need to be accepting of each other to be considered ethnorelative, if there is a cultural behavior in another part of the world that is detrimental to the people a company would be working with, that is a risk they need to take seriously in making the business decision to expand internationally.

Jumping into overseas markets without much thought to the cultural risks is a mistake that less interculturally sensitive companies or companies new to international markets, will make. If the right leadership is not in place, a Glocal one (a combination of global and local practices with a local expert on site to guide the global experts), as the Executive points out, the risk of failure due to cross-cultural issues is high. At the same time, a company needs to understand that the risk is there at all in order to educate themselves on how to succeed internationally They need to know what they don't know. Training needs to happen on both sides but in this case, The Company does not go into new markets, or at least ones they are not

intimately familiar with, without an advisor of some sort on the ground in that potential new market.

This leads into another point from similar research by Bennett (2004). The more experience an individual, or a company has with other cultures, the more interculturally sensitive (more ethnorelative and less ethnocentric) they are. It takes exposure and hands-on experience to truly advance to the ethnorelative side of the DMIS scale. Over and over similar comments were made during the interviews that problems with intercultural communication were diminished with the opportunity to meet face to face: “There is nothing better than breaking bread with people around the world to learn about their culture and what motivates them” (Director/Plant Manager 2 Interview, November 21, 2016).

Intercultural sensitivity does not happen overnight. This research has good evidence correlating the amount of time a partner has spent living outside their home country with where they are on the DMIS scale. The company in this research has been doing business in international markets since 1992. They now have plants in 13 countries and export goods to over 55 countries. Even with this experience they readily admit they are still learning and working towards becoming a truly global company.

The final point brought out by the research is looking at cross-cultural risk from the standpoint of the people in The Company. While the statistics show that the overall trends for intercultural sensitivity within the hierarchal levels are similar, there is still enough of a difference between the hierarchal levels to recognize that those lower on the hierarchal scale are not being exposed to the proper information to help them through intercultural issues. The interviews showed the difference between leaders that had experience dealing with intercultural issues and Individual Contributors that were really learning as they go. The less global a

company is, the less this risk may affect them. To go global, though, the people at all levels of the organization must have a broader understanding of the issues revolving around intercultural sensitivity. The risk needs to be managed.

### **Recommendations**

The Company has goals to become a Global company, a step beyond where they currently are. It is the partners of The Company that will help them get there more than any other aspect of doing business. To reach the goal of continued expansion globally, The Company will want to educate and expose their partners to a wider variety of world views to recognize and minimize conflicts surrounding intercultural sensitivity in the workplace. Training programs are a piece of this puzzle and should be available for all partners in The Company, not just those at the leadership levels. When a company is global, even if all employees don't technically work in the international side of the business, they will still have direct contact with international partners from other cultures no matter which department they work in. It was also made clear in this research that direct exposure to other cultures is better than learning in a classroom. On a large scale, that may be difficult to do for all partners at The Company. It may be important, in the future, to hire partners that already come to the table with international experience either through living with multiple cultures or having traveled and lived internationally for a significant amount of time. Managing the intercultural risk is vital to The Company's long term Global goals.

The company used for this research has had several decades of international growth and experience, much of it before technology was as widespread as it is today. Further research would benefit from comparing a company with experience to one just starting the international business journey. The research should focus on the differences younger international companies experience versus the more established and experienced international companies. While it may

be easier than in the past to start an international business, it would be interesting to find out if it is also easier to succeed or if technology has just increased the level of competition for businesses.

## References

- Baraldi, C. (2006). New forms of intercultural communication in a globalized world. *International Communication Gazette*, 68(1), 53-69.  
doi:10.1177/1748048506060115
- Bennett, M. J. (1998). Intercultural communication: A current perspective. In Milton J. Bennett (Ed.) *Basic concepts of intercultural communication: Selected readings*. (pp. 1-34).  
Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Bennett, M. J. (2004). Becoming interculturally competent. In J.S. Wurzel (Ed.) *Toward Multiculturalism: A Reader in Multicultural Education*. (pp. 62-77). Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation.
- Ehrenreich, S. (2010). English as a business lingua franca in a German multinational corporation: Meeting the challenge. *Journal of Business Communication*, 47(4), 408-421.  
doi:10.1177/0021943610377303
- Fidelity (2017). *Understanding the differences between domestic, international, and global companies*. Retrieved from <https://www.fidelity.com/learning-center/trading-investing/fundamental-analysis/domestic-international-global-companies>
- Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International journal of intercultural relations*, 27, 421-443. Doi:10.1016/S0147-1767(03)00032-4
- Hout, T. M., Porter, M. E., & Rudden, E. (1982). How global companies win out. *Harvard Business Review*, 60(5), 98-108.
- Leininger, C. & Yuan, R. (1998). Aligning international editing efforts with global business strategies. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 41(1), 16-23.

- Louhiala-Salminen, L., & Kankaanranta, A. (2011). Professional communication in a global business context: The notion of global communicative competence. *Professional Communication, IEEE Transactions on*, 54(3), 244-262. doi: 10.1109/TPC.2011.2161844
- Maclean, D. (2006). Beyond English. *Management Decision*, 44(10), 1377-1390.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00251740610715704>
- Marquette University Risk Unit. (n.d.). *What is risk management*. Retrieved from <http://www.marquette.edu/riskunit/riskmanagement/whatis.shtml>
- Meyer, E. (2014). *The culture map: Breaking through the invisible boundaries of global business*. Philadelphia, PA: Public Affairs.
- Neuliep, J. W. (2014). The necessity of intercultural communication. *Intercultural communication: A contextual approach*. New York, NY: Sage Publications.
- Olson, C. L., Kroeger, K. R. (2001). Global competency and intercultural sensitivity. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 5(2), 116-137. Doi:10.1177/102831530152003
- Perlmutter, H. V. (1969). The torturous evolution of the multinational corporation. *Columbia Journal of World Business*, 9-18.
- Pew Research Center. (2014, March 11). *World wide web timeline*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/03/11/world-wide-web-timeline/>
- Pew Research Center. (2015, December 21). *Home broadband 2015*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/home-broadband-2015/>
- Popescu, D. (2009). Information and communication technologies: One engine of globalization. *CES Working Papers*, 1(2), 20-36.

- Qingwen, D., Day, K. D., & Collaço, C. M. (2008). Overcoming ethnocentrism through developing intercultural communication sensitivity and multiculturalism. *Human Communication, 11*(1), 27-38.
- Trading Economics. (2016). *United States exports of goods and services*. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/united-states/exports>
- Washington, M. C. (2013). Intercultural business communication: An analysis of ethnocentrism in a globalized business environment. *Journal of Business & Management, 1*(1), 20-27.
- Wu, X., & Zhang, S. (2009, September). Identification of cross-cultural risk in multicultural interactions of transnational corporations. In *Management and Service Science, 2009. MASS'09. International Conference on* (pp. 1-4). IEEE.

### Appendix A: Denial Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above

| Denial Questions   | % scoring 4 or above (Somewhat Agree or Agree) | Mean |
|--|--|------|
| 1.1 I do not really notice cultural differences.                                       | 14.1%  | 1.83 |
| 1.2 I have intentionally sought to live in a racially or culturally separate community | 11.7%  | 1.91 |
| 1.3 I think that cultural diversity really only exists in other places.                | 3.4%   | 1.48 |
| Averages for the category  | 9.7%   | 1.74 |



**Appendix B: Defense Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above**

| Defense Questions         |  | % scoring 4 or above<br>(Somewhat Agree or Agree) | Mean |
|---------------------------|--|---|------|
| 2.1                       | I believe that people from my country should embrace the values of other cultures in order to address the problems of my country's contemporary society. | 71.5%   | 3.87 |
| 2.2                       | I am surrounded by culturally diverse people, and I feel like my cultural values are threatened.   | 4.3%  | 1.50 |
| 2.3                       | I sometimes find myself thinking derogatory things about people who look or act differently from me.   | 14.7%   | 1.94 |
| Averages for the category |  | 30.1%   | 2.44 |

### Appendix C: Minimization Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above

| Minimization Scores       |   | % scoring 4 or above<br>(Somewhat Agree or<br>Agree) | Mean |
|---------------------------|---|--|------|
| 3.1                       | I understand that differences between people from different cultures exist but believe that we should focus on similarities. We are all human.  | 69.4%  | 3.87 |
| 3.2                       | I think that all human beings are subject to the same historical forces, economic and political laws, or psychological principles. These forces, laws or principles are invariable across cultures. | 32.2%  | 2.55 |
| 3.3                       | I believe that physical displays of human emotions are universally recognizable: A smile is a smile wherever you go.  | 73.4%  | 3.80 |
| Averages for the Category |   | 58.3%  | 3.41 |

**Appendix D: Acceptance Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above**

| Acceptance Questions   | % scoring 4 or above<br>(Somewhat Agree or Agree) | Mean |
|--|---|------|
| 4.1 I believe that verbal and nonverbal behavior vary across cultures and that all forms of such behavior are worthy of respect. | 94.5%   | 4.64 |
| 4.2 I acknowledge and respect cultural difference. Cultural diversity is a preferable human condition.                           | 90.0%   | 4.43 |
| 4.3 I think that cultural variations in behavior spring from different worldview assumptions.                                    | 75.7%   | 3.88 |
| Averages for the Category  | 86.7%   | 4.32 |

### Appendix E: Adaptation Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above

| Adaptation Questions      |   | % scoring 4 or above (Somewhat Agree or Agree) | Mean |
|---------------------------|---|--|------|
| 5.1                       | I have added to my own cultural skills new verbal and nonverbal communication skills that are appropriate in another culture. | 60.1%  | 3.69 |
| 5.2                       | I believe that culture is a process: One does not have culture, one engages in culture.                                       | 64.7%  | 3.67 |
| 5.3                       | I am able to temporarily give up my own worldview to participate in another worldview.  | 70.0%  | 3.84 |
| Averages for the category |   | 64.9%  | 3.73 |

### Appendix F: Integration Means and Percentage of Scores 4 or Above

| Integration Questions     |   | % scoring 4 or above (Somewhat Agree or Agree) | Mean |
|---------------------------|---|--|------|
| 6.1                       | I can act as a cultural mediator and serve as a bridge between people of different cultures.  | 39.0%  | 3.02 |
| 6.2                       | I am able to analyze and evaluate situations from one or more chosen cultural perspectives.   | 51.9%  | 3.42 |
| 6.3                       | When faced with a choice about how I am going to respond to a given situation, I am able to shift between two or more cultural perspectives and consciously make a choice to act from one of these cultural contexts. | 50.3%  | 3.43 |
| Averages for the category |   | 47.0%  | 3.29 |

### Appendix G: Survey Questions

1. How long have you worked for The Company?  
0-5 years (1) 6-10 years (2) 11-15 years (3) 16-20 years (4) 21 or more years (5)
2. Please choose which location you are currently working from:  
US Home Office (including those working remotely) (1) U.S. Production Plant (2)  
Outside of the U.S. (3)
3. Which area(s) are you currently working in? (Choose all that apply)  
International (1) Finance (2) HR (3) Enterprise Quality (4) Legal/Regulatory (5)  
Operations (6) Supply Chain (7) Sales (8) Information Systems (9)  
Product Life Cycle Strategies (10)
4. Choose the selection below that best matches your current position:  
Executive (1) Director/Plant Manager (2) Leader (3) Individual Contributor (4)
5. I have lived outside of my home country for:  
Six months or less (1) more than six months but less than one year (2)  
more than one year but less than two years (3) more than two years (4)  
I have never lived outside of my home country (5)
6. Which language is your first language:  
English (1) Spanish (2) French (3) Italian (4) German or German Dialect (5)  
Chinese or Chinese Dialect (6) Portuguese (7) Russian (8) Japanese (9)  
Hindi (10) Arabic or Arabic Dialect (11) Bengali (12) Other (13)  
If you chose "Other", please write in your language below
7. I use a language other than my first language:  
occasionally (1) on a regular basis but not every day (2) every day (3)  
I don't use another language (4)
8. I am currently engaged in professional work with at least three people in another country  
(or countries):  
1-5 hours per week (1) 6-10 hours per week (2) 0-15 hours per week (3)  
more than 15 hours per week (4)  
I do not engage with professionals in any other countries (5)

9. I understand that differences between people from different cultures exist but believe that we should focus on similarities. We are all human.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
10. I think that all human beings are subject to the same historical forces, economic and political laws, or psychological principles. These forces, laws or principles are invariable across cultures.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
11. I do not really notice cultural differences.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
12. I am linguistically and culturally competent in at least one language and culture other than my own.  
Incompetent (1) Moderately incompetent (2) Neither competent nor incompetent (3)  
Moderately competent (4) Competent (5)
13. I believe that people from my country should embrace the values of other cultures in order to address the problems of my country's contemporary society.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
14. I believe that verbal and nonverbal behavior vary across cultures and that all forms of such behavior are worthy of respect.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
15. I have added to my own cultural skills new verbal and nonverbal communication skills that are appropriate in another culture.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
16. I have intentionally sought to live in a racially or culturally separate community.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)

17. I can act as a cultural mediator and serve as a bridge between people of different cultures.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
18. I think that cultural diversity really only exists in other places.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
19. I am surrounded by culturally diverse people, and I feel like my cultural values are threatened.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
20. I feel self-confident and comfortable socializing with people from other cultures.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
21. I believe that physical displays of human emotions are universally recognizable: A smile is a smile wherever you go.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
22. I am able to analyze and evaluate situations from one or more chosen cultural perspectives.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
23. I believe that culture is a process: One does not have culture, one engages in culture.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
24. I acknowledge and respect cultural difference. Cultural diversity is a preferable human condition.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)
25. I sometimes find myself thinking derogatory things about people who look or act differently from me.  
Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)



26. When faced with a choice about how I am going to respond to a given situation, I am able to shift between two or more cultural perspectives and consciously make a choice to act from one of these cultural contexts.

Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)

27. I am able to temporarily give up my own worldview to participate in another worldview.

Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)

28. I think that cultural variations in behavior spring from different worldview assumptions.

Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)  
Somewhat Agree (4) Agree (5)

If you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, please add your name and contact information below. All personal information and responses will be kept private and confidential.

Name (1) Phone Number (2) Email Address (3)

## Appendix H: Interview Questions

1. Could you tell me what you do here?
2. Do you personally have any communication with partners outside of the US?
3. Which country are they located in?
4. What form of communication do you use (Email, phone, video conferencing, in person)?
5. When looking at the organizational levels, can you choose where they fall on the chart?  
Do you know which department they are in?
6. How would you describe the level of communication with the partner(s)?
7. Do you run into any complications when trying to communicate with partners outside of the US? Either language or business misinterpretations? Can you give an example?
8. Do you feel your co-workers (at all levels of the organization) who also work with international partners have the same communication experiences you do? Please explain.
9. Can you describe what kind of training The Company offers to prepare you to work with those outside of the United States?
10. On a scale of 1-5 with five being excellent and 1 being poor, how would you rate The Company in terms of keeping partners informed of what is going on with The Company as a business as well as general internal communications?
11. Do you have an example of something positive?
12. Do you have an example of where internal communications need improving?
13. Do you feel your organization is responsive to change when employees have brought up suggestions or solutions to potential communication issues? Please elaborate on an experience you have personally had or know of.

**Appendix I: Interview Questions from Hammer, M.R. et al (2003)**

1. Do you think there is much cultural differences around here? (Denial)
2. What kinds of difficulties or problems associated with having cultural differences around here exist? (Defense)
3. When it comes down to the bottom-line, is it more important to pay attention to cultural differences or similarities among us. If respondent emphasizes the importance to pay attention to similarities, follow-up with, “What do you think the similarities are?”  
(Minimization)
4. Do you make any specific efforts to find out more about the cultures around you?  
(Acceptance)
5. Do you try to adapt your communication to people from other cultures? (Adaptation)
6. Does it mean anything to you to look at the world through the eyes of a person from another culture? (Adaptation)
7. Do you feel you have two or more cultures? (Adaptation)
8. Has your adjustment to other cultures led you to question your identity? Do you feel apart from those cultures that you are involved in? (Integration).