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Studying Abroad and Intercultural Outcomes: Differences Experienced Between International

Exchange Students and U.S. Study Abroad Students

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A dissertation

present to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership,

with a concentration in Higher Education Leadership

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by

Patricia Lin-Steadman

December 2020

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Dr. James Lampley, Chair

Dr. Don Good

Dr. Terence Hicks

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ABSTRACT

Studying Abroad and Intercultural Outcomes: Differences Experienced Between International

Exchange Students and U.S. Study Abroad Students

by

Patricia Lin-Steadman

A major focus of many U.S. higher-education institutions is to increase internationalization of

their campus through, in part, the promotion of study abroad experiences among domestic

students and to recruit and retain international students to their institution. This study explored

the effects of certain factors on various domains of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale

(GEMS) – Cultural Engagement, Ambiguity Tolerance, Knowledge of Host Site, and Diversity

Openness – among U.S. students who have studied abroad and international exchange students

who have studied in the U.S. There was a particular focus, on determining whether U.S. study

abroad students, compared to international students, rate differently on GEMS scales, after

controlling for other possible confounding variables. Participants were recruited from three

Southeastern, public, 4-year universities and were eligible if they were enrolled at any of those

universities in the last five years.

A hierarchical regression analysis revealed several factors significantly affected each of the

various outcomes on the GEMS. Cultural Engagement and Ambiguity Tolerance were both

predicted by the institution of study and the type of student (U.S. study abroad versus

international exchange). Knowledge of Host Site was predicted by whether or not the trip was

government sponsored, pre-trip familiarity with the host culture, and type of student. The overall

regression model for Diversity Openness was not significant. These results provide insights into key factors that affect the overall global engagement of college students and can be used to inform university faculty and staff about features they can add to improve campus internationalization efforts.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents who always instilled the importance of education in me. I also want to dedicate this study to my daughter, Aiyana, in hopes that I can inspire her to work hard and dream big.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

In today's world where globalization is almost inevitable and the travel and flow of information and people is made much easier, internationalization in the university setting is becoming widespread (Biles & Lindley, 2009; Pandit, 2009). Most higher education institutions have some type of diversity-related institutional goal, mission, or learning outcome. With this push toward internationalization, students from all over the world have access to a wider array of post-secondary education options, ostensibly able to study anywhere (even if only temporarily). Consequently, for many institutions, competition for students has branched far beyond the regional reach of a university. To remain competitive, institutions that wish to attract students from the global realm must provide appropriate resources and tools specific to global students (Pandit, 2009).

Studying abroad has many advantages. Senator J. W. Fulbright (1961) not only highlighted the opportunities to advance the human race by cross-fertilizing cultures, but also commended the elimination of unfounded prejudices and stereotypes through study abroad opportunities. Similarly, the U.S. Department of State emphasized the importance of studying abroad as it will help future leaders experience new cultures, encounter new perspectives, and work and communicate with diverse people (USA Study Abroad, n.d.b).

Although study abroad has been present since World War II (Pandit, 2009), the number of students studying abroad has increased in the last few years. According to the 2019 Opendoors report, 341,751 U.S. students studied abroad for academic purposes in the 2018-19 academic year, which was an increase of 2.7% from the previous year (Institute of International Education, n.d.b). Similarly, 1,095,299 international students studied abroad in the U.S. in the 2018-19 academic year, which was a 0.05% increase from the previous year (Institute of International

Education, n.d.b). Out of the 1,095,299 international students, 62,341 were non-degree or exchange students who were in the U.S. (Institute of International Education, n.d.a).

To maximize students' educational experiences, institutions need to understand what types of challenges study abroad and international students may experience (Crockett et al., 2007; Cuadrado & Tabernero, 2014; Yoko & Megumi, 2014). According to Yoko and Megumi (2014), when students attend foreign universities, they experience both the typical stressors common to collegiate education as well as additional stressors specific to foreign education and immigration. For example, students leave behind their home supports and, they typically must start from scratch to build a new, local support system. (Crockett et al., 2007). They also tend to experience acculturation stressors (Cuadrado & Tabernero, 2014). Personality factors and language proficiency can further aid or hinder this acculturation process (Choi et al., 2015; Lacina, 2002; Mesidor & Sly, 2016). For instance, as stated in Northouse (2016), based on the five-factor model of personality, students who have higher levels of extroversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness, may be more likely to adjust to the new culture as they tend to be sociable, self-confident, and adaptable. Similarly, students who have, or who perceive themselves to have, better English language skills have an easier time participating in the new environment. These students feel more comfortable participating in class and talking to domestic students and thus are typically able to more readily integrate into their new host culture (Geary, 2016)

According to Yan Lo-Philip et al. (2015), students are better prepared for a study abroad term, if they have had the opportunity to foster their intercultural competence, cultural engagement, ambiguity tolerance, and diversity openness. Intercultural competence is how well a person can relate to people from other cultures without being judgmental, while reacting

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appropriately in new or unfamiliar settings (Yan Lo-Philip et al., 2015). Cultural engagement refers to how a person views diversity and differences. The more contact one has with people from diverse backgrounds, the more likely that person will find connections between the different cultures and people (Shadowen et al., 2015). Studying abroad exposes students to unfamiliar cultural norms and customs, which may involve a number of ambiguous situations. The ability to feel comfortable and competent in a new situation or place is referred to as ambiguity tolerance or tolerance for ambiguity. Students with higher tolerance for ambiguity can manage this type of situation with less distress. Finally, individuals who are open to diversity are more likely to enjoy being challenged by other cultures and by studying, working, or living in an unfamiliar location. While institutions can provide experiences that help prepare a student in these areas prior to study abroad, it is important to note that studying abroad can help develop these traits as well.

These diverse traits can be developed through experiential learning, collaborative learning, and the environmental factors encompassed in social learning theory. Through experiential learning, students learn by doing. Experiential learning is the hallmark of studying abroad; some would say it is the point of studying abroad, to experience first-hand a new culture (Nelson & Klak, 2012; Roberts et al., 2013). Collaborative learning allows students to take the lead in their learning rather than the instructors (Laal, 2013; Loes et al., 2018).

By solving a problem or finishing a task as a group, students have opportunities to share responsibilities, sustain academic debates, and self-evaluate (Cabrera et al., 2002; Loes et al., 2018). Collaborative learning is often accomplished outside of the classroom; hence study abroad is an ideal opportunity to achieve and enhance collaborative learning. Social learning theories sustain that learning is influenced by the environment, what people take away from it,

and how they relate to it (Funder, 2016). Studying abroad introduces students to new social contexts and environments, which in turn presses them toward intrapersonal change, a core mission of any educational endeavor.

Getting students interested in international study is the first step to introducing students to the benefits of international education. It is also important to provide students the resources and programs that will help them have a positive experience so that they can maximize growth in their intercultural outcomes like cultural engagement, ambiguity tolerance, and diversity openness. Examples include the home institutions providing students with a pre-departure orientation and the host institution hosting an orientation session upon arrival as well. Campus counseling and mental health services are also important to help students through any transitioning struggles they may experience (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). Academic help should also be provided as students might be taking courses in a second language or coming from countries where the education etiquette is different than their home country (Geary, 2016; Yoko & Megumi, 2014). Finally, it is important to provide opportunities outside of the classroom for students to connect with locals and learn from the host culture. As with their local counterparts, foreign students' satisfaction in the social and academic arena can determine how well their study abroad experience goes (Cuadrado & Tabernero, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

In this research, I will focus on two populations: non-degree seeking or international exchange students coming to the U.S. and U.S. students studying abroad. Most of the existing literature on international students (those coming to the U.S. to study) focuses on their academic adjustment, the stressors they face as they enter a new culture, and the factors that may affect their adjustment. Additionally, much research in the field of international education focuses on

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degree-seeking international students (those who stay in the U.S. for the entirety of a degree)

instead of on non-degree or exchange international students. Conversely, much of the literature

on U.S. students going abroad focuses on cultural adjustment, the difference in benefits between

short-term and long-term study abroad experiences, and the development of intercultural

competence. Relatively little research is currently available that compares the experiences and

personal gains of U.S. study abroad students and non-degree-seeking international students in the

U.S. Therefore, I am interested in determining if there are any differences in perceived gains in

intercultural outcomes between U.S. study abroad students and non-degree international students

attending a college in the U.S.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this non-experimental, quantitative survey research was to determine the

predictive value of a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience,

institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host

country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of

previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture) on the Cultural Engagement

dimension of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) for short-term U.S. Study

Abroad and International Exchange Students in the last five years. Specifically, the outcomes

being predicted were students' scores on cultural engagement, ambiguity tolerance, host site

knowledge, and diversity openness on The Global Engagement Measurement Scale.

A short-term study abroad experience is usually considered to be a two to eight week

experience. In my study, short-term will encompass students studying abroad anywhere from two

weeks to one academic year, thereby matching the non-degree-seeking students' short-term

duration of stay, which usually ranges from two weeks to one academic year.

Research Questions

The following research questions are based on the four different constructs present in the Global Management Measurement Scale.

Research Question 1: Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Cultural Engagement construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Research Question 2: Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Ambiguity Tolerance construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Research Question 3: Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Knowledge of Host Site construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language

proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Research Question 4: Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Diversity Openness construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Significance of the Study

Research has identified many benefits to studying abroad (Biles & Lindley, 2009; Kuzma et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2015). In fact, studying abroad is essential in the higher education curricula of many countries (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). This study is potentially important because it is one of the few that considers both U.S. students and international exchange students studying abroad. It also considers non-academic factors and how the experience abroad facilitated the development of the students' intercultural traits.

Additionally, the results of this study may also help institutions promote international education. Positive results showing high development of intercultural traits after a study abroad experience could help motivate other students to study abroad and to help convince faculty that encouraging their students to take the chance is worth the investment. The results can also help institutions consider best practices and procedures at other institutions to help students be prepared for their experience abroad.

Delimitations and Limitations

In the present study, it was assumed that each participant completed the survey only once. It was also assumed that participants provided true, non-random responses.

My study was delimited to U.S students at three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities who studied in a foreign country in the last five years, and to international students studying at the same institutions. One limitation in this study was the narrow scope of this sample as the surveys were distributed to only three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities. They were not only in the same U.S. geographic area, but they were all public, 4-year institutions. Another limitation is that the sample may not be representative of the population because response rate could not be tracked. Furthermore, the staff might not have had the most updated contact information for all the students who qualified for this study (because students could have already graduated from the institutions), potentially narrowing the pool of participants. Similarly, many students who are sent recruitment materials and who fit the study criteria might have also missed the social media post or recruitment email if they do not check their email or social media often.

Given that my sample involved surveying both domestic and international students, timing of data collection may have impacted response rates. Different countries have dissimilar school sessions, and as a result some students who were otherwise eligible for the study may have missed recruitment messages due to being "on break". As another limitation, most of the questions on the survey involved self-reporting of certain assumptions. The data do not include any objective corroboration that student perceptions are accurate.

A limitation of this study is that students who have recently returned or embarked on study abroad may report their experiences differently than those students who are further removed from their study abroad experience. Perceptions about an experience often change over

time, and the amount of time between completion of international study and participation in the research may have an impact on students' outlook on their experiences.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were used in this study:

Study Abroad: A temporary, academic enrollment in a place outside of a person's home country (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).

For the purposes of this study, study abroad will be limited to U.S. students studying abroad for a period of two weeks to one academic year.

Exchange student: A student from a foreign country who holds a J-1 visa (nonimmigrant visa) approved to participate in a certain exchange program or short-term non-degree seeking study (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

Domestic student: A U.S. citizen (including naturalized, refugees, permanent residents, or asylees) (Wichita State University, n.d.).

For the purpose of my study, a domestic student is also someone who has lived in the U.S. (excluding foreign territories) for the majority of their life

International student: For the purposes of this study, a student who is not a U.S. citizen, has lived outside of the U.S. for the majority of their life, and has come to the U.S. to study (University of California, Berkeley, n.d.).

Foreign student: A student who is not studying in their primary place of residence. This includes both domestic students studying abroad and internationals students studying in the U.S. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Cultural Engagement: One's worldview and attitudes towards other cultures and to diversity (Shadowen et al., 2015).

Tolerance for ambiguity (or ambiguity tolerance): The ability for people to feel comfortable and competent in a new environment or situation (Shadowen et al., 2015).

Host site knowledge: How familiar the individual is with the community they lived in during their study abroad experience (Shadowen et al., 2015).

Diversity openness: The tendency to enjoy the intellectual challenge of being introduced to different cultures and people, diverse ideas, values, and perspectives (Shadowen et al., 2015).

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 includes the introduction, the purpose, the significance, the research questions, the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the study. The research questions and definitions of terms that will be used throughout the study are also presented in the first chapter. Chapter 2 presents a review of the current literature that related to the research questions posed. Chapter 3 contains the methodology for this non-experimental, quantitative, survey study. Chapter 4 displays the research finding and survey results. Finally, conclusions and recommendations can be found in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Because of the diversity present in today's world, there is an increased likelihood for people to encounter others from diverse backgrounds on a daily basis (Biles & Lindley, 2009; Pandit, 2009). Taking this probability into consideration, higher education institutions have made it a goal to incorporate inclusion, global engagement opportunities, and diversification into their learning outcomes and institutional missions, so that students can be better prepared (both personally and professionally) to succeed in the workplace. Encouraging students to study abroad and to interact with international students on campus are highly impactful ways to expose students to cross-cultural learning opportunities (Pandit, 2009).

In this section, I will start by briefly documenting the history of internationalization and study abroad efforts. I will then explore the importance and benefits of studying abroad as well as the acculturation process and how this can affect students' experiences while studying in another country. I will next examine intercultural outcomes like intercultural competence, intercultural sensitive, cultural engagement, ambiguity tolerance, and diversity openness as these are the skills that will be measured in this study. Next, I will review a few theories applicable to study abroad like experiential learning, collaborative learning, and social learning. Finally, I will present and discuss ways to help study abroad students while they are abroad.

Internationalization and a Brief History of Study Abroad

Even though internationalization could be considered the pursuit of economic, political, cultural, and social benefits by crossing nation-state borders, every university has its own way of achieving internationalization (Biles & Lindley, 2009; Pandit, 2009). For some colleges it means recruiting more international scholars and students; for others it means promoting the study abroad program for their domestic students, and yet for others it may mean collaborative

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research with international institutions (Biles & Lindley, 2009). Some reasons universities would want to implement internationalization and globalization include fostering more globally competitive students, staying economically and academically competitive, and strengthening and nurturing international relations. As noted in Kuh's (2008) high-impact learning practices, higher education institutions should highlight diversity and global learning opportunities that help students experience and explore different cultures and different people.

Higher education promotes economic development, cultural diversity, and political democracy, as well as prospects for individuals who complete higher education (Rena, 2010). It is because of this mentality that higher education has become a national interest in developing countries with an international focus. Using international partnerships to reinforce research and improvements could stimulate a country's scientific and economic development (Jowi, 2012). Thinking of higher education as a requisite for development has led to the commodification of knowledge and education. Universities are now pressured to expand and diversify, to increase faculty salaries, to equip facilities with the latest technology, to become more accountable, and to achieve greater quality and efficiency (Rena, 2010).

Although internationalism has boomed in the past few decades, this notion of educating foreign nationals or sending people overseas is not a new concept (Pandit, 2009). After World War II, language and cultural training became vital to maintain control over the world and to promote peace. It was believed that peace could be achieved if a common language was used. If different countries were able to communicate, it was less likely that misinterpretations and misunderstandings would occur. The effort of learning a new language might have also shown that a country was serious about making peace with another country. During the Cold War, U.S. higher institutions were seeking internationalization mainly for political reasons. International

education was implemented to reach peace. After the Cold War, the focus of internationalism changed to an economic one; academic capitalism gave rise to the idea that knowledge was a commodity to be owned, marketed, and sold. Pandit (2009) concluded that, the goal of higher education was no longer the increase of knowledge, but knowledge as a revenue generator.

The Fulbright Act of 1946 was instituted as a formal governmental initiative to promote internationalization of human capital (Fulbright, 1961). The goal was for those being trained in the U.S. to become familiar with and understand the U.S. culture in order to sympathize with it when it came to international affairs. In 1960, Title VI of the Higher Education Act financed foreign language centers and multidisciplinary programs. As technology advanced, it became important for U.S. institutions to recruit highly educated students, especially from China and India, to work in the science and technology sectors. After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. recruited foreign students to build friendships and associates around the world. As internationalization became more widespread, countries other than the U.S. started recruiting international students, creating a competition for human capital (Pandit, 2009). Thus, both political and economic factors have influenced the internationalization of higher education across the world.

Importance, Benefits, and Criticisms of Studying Abroad

According to Martin et al. (2015), studying abroad has positive impacts on a student's college experience. Students gain "a greater understanding of other cultures, identity shifts, and perspectives, [which in turn contribute] to students' academic and personal growth" (p. 619). Studying abroad helps students develop their critical thinking skills, be more creative and receptive to new experiences, improve their problem solving and decision-making competences, and be more empathetic and understanding of cultural differences (Antonakokopoulou, 2013;

Martin et al., 2015). Similarly, Kuzma et al. (2012) listed greater understanding, appreciation for other cultures, expanding perspectives, opportunity to travel and make new friends as reasons why students should choose a study abroad experience. Studying abroad has a positive impact on students' academics and future career choices (Dwyer, 2004b). Kelleher (2013) suggested there were personal and professional benefits to nursing students studying abroad including the provision of health care services to subcultures, the skills to adapt to new environments, more effective nursing care, enhanced self-efficacy and confidence, creativity to think outside the norm, ability to connect to others, and cognitive development.

The U.S. Department of State encourages the exchange of students through different initiatives and scholarships. A few examples of opportunities for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students include the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program, the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, and The Boren Award for International Study (USA Study Abroad, n.d.a). Conversely, examples of programs for international exchange students include Fulbright Foreign Student Program, Global Undergraduate Exchange Program, Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, and the Study of the United States Institutes for Student Leaders (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d.).

IES Abroad, a not-for-profit study abroad program provider since 1950, conducted a survey of alumni from over a 50-year period (1950 to 1999) to assess how the alumni's experience impacted their lives, careers, education, and worldviews (Dwyer, 2004a; IES Abroad, n.d.). Many claimed that the study abroad experience affected their future academic experiences, that it reinforced their learning of a foreign language, and that it increased the interest in their field of study (IES Abroad, n.d.). The majority of the participants also observed a better

understating of their own culture and biases and highlighted the fact that their experience abroad

continued to help when they interacted with people from other cultures and how they sought out

friendships with diverse people. IES Abroad (n.d.) also reported that studying abroad impacted

participants' career choices (for example working abroad or volunteering). Respondents reported

the experience increased their maturity, self-confidence, tolerance for ambiguity, and impact on

their worldview.

Dwyer (2004a) noted different trends through the decades. Students who studied abroad

in the 1990s were more likely than those in the 1950s and 1960s to choose short term programs,

experience prior study abroad before their experience with IES Abroad, and chose their

undergraduate institution based on the study abroad opportunities available. Also, increasingly

by decades, more participants reported using foreign language on a daily basis, getting jobs

overseas, and studying abroad more than once during their college careers. On the other hand,

factors like personal and social growth, ambiguity tolerance, and maintenance of contact with

other students who participated stayed consistent throughout the five decades (Dwyer, 2004a).

Even though study abroad has its benefits, educators are concerned that today's students

are not able to convey those benefits when asked during a debrief or during a job interview

(Kowarski, 2010). When students are not able to articulate the impact study abroad had on their

college career and personal growth, employers are more likely to undervalue the experience.

Unfortunately, this can lead to the belief that study abroad is not worth the expense and trouble

because it does not correlate to better opportunities in the job market (Kuzma et al., 2012). To

combat this, institutions like Clemson University are implementing new approaches in their

study abroad programs. For example, they are asking students to create videos, interview local

people, write blogs, and present their experience on campus in order to create opportunities for

these students to reflect on their experience and learning. Being able to explain their experience through different multimedia outlets may help students express their cultural and personal discoveries (Kowarski, 2010). Despite the benefits of studying abroad, not many U.S. students are taking advantage of these programs. The Open Doors report noted that, although the number of U.S. students studying abroad is increasing, only 16% of all U.S. undergraduate students study abroad during their college degree (Institute of International Education, n.d.b). According to Kuzma et al., reasons for not studying abroad include parents' concern for safety, fear of delaying graduation, programs being too expensive, and the experience not adding much to their resume.

Acculturation

Acculturation can be a stressor for students studying abroad. According to Cuadrado and Tabernero (2014), acculturative stress can be defined as "a particular relationship between a person and his or her intercultural environment (with its sub-consequent changes) that is appraised as exceeding the existing self-resources and endangering the person's well-being" (p. 443). Acculturative stress is highly relevant to international students because it manifests when people identify cultural struggle and then lack sufficient resources to assist with adapting to the cultural struggle (Cuadrado & Tabernero, 2014). Earlier, Berry (2005) defined acculturation as "… the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (p. 698). Acculturation involves both psychological and sociocultural adaptations when a person enters a new culture (Jackson et al., 2013). Psychological adjustment includes a person's feelings, and sociocultural adjustments refers to the ability to fit in (Yoko & Megumi, 2014).

The acculturation process is complex and manifests differently in each person. When a person experiences struggles during the acculturation process, it is referred to as acculturative stress (Crockett et al., 2007). Acculturative stress is highly relevant to study abroad students because it manifests when people identify cultural struggles and then lack sufficient resources to adapt to these struggles (Cuadrado & Tabernero, 2014). Acculturative stress is also related to poorer overall mental health. Crockett et al. (2007) found that Mexican and Mexican American students who had experienced higher acculturative stress also experienced high levels of depression and anxiety. It is important to note, however, that it is possible to combat acculturative stress. In the same study Crockett et al. (2007) found that peer and family support were negatively correlated with anxiety symptoms, and active use of coping skills reduced depressive symptoms. These are key findings that can inform institutional efforts to prevent or otherwise reduce some overall negative effects of acculturative stress.

Cultural shock is a part of the acculturation process. Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) defined cultural shock as "the affective, behavioral, and cognitive disorientation that sojourners experience when in an unfamiliar culture" (p. 550). International students go through different stages of adjustment as they enter a new culture, and it is especially difficult for those students whose home values and ideas are different from that of the host culture (Yoko & Megumi, 2014). Through the use of Ting-Toomey's (Hotta & Ting- Toomey, 2013) Identity Negotiation Theory (INT), the researchers learned that international students felt rejection by domestic students due to their perceived differences. Moreover, international students felt marginalized instead of welcomed as special guests. Perceived discrimination can also negatively affect the cross-cultural adjustment process, especially for non-White students (Yoko & Megumi, 2013).

Social Connectedness

Related to the construct of acculturative stress, Yeh and Inose (2003) introduced the concept of *social connectedness,* which is defined as "an aspect of the self that manifests the subjective recognition of being in close relationship with the social world,[the] lasting sense of connectedness [that] directs individuals' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in social situations" (p.17). Social connectedness could be a predictor of the level of a student's acculturative stress. It would be easier for an international student with a higher sense of connectedness to relate to others and for a student who lacks this connectedness to feel depressed and anxious (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Yeh and Inose reported that students from collectivist cultures (e.g. Asian, African, Latin American) tend to develop concepts of the self that are determined by how close friends feel and behave around them. Therefore, when these students come to the U.S. (where independence from others is usually the norm and the notion of self is different) their social connectedness might be lower than what they were accustomed to in their native countries, making their stress levels higher than their other international peers (Yeh & Inose, 2003; Zhao et al., 2005). As a result, any student's given level of social connectedness, and what they value with respect to forming that sense of connectedness, is likely to closely interact with that student's level of acculturative stress at any given time.

Sojourner Adjustment

Sojourner adjustment is the way a person visiting a different country or culture offsets needs and hurdles in the environment such as stress, perceived discrimination, language proficiency, and social support. Cultural intelligence (the ability to interact, adapt, and function successfully across cultures) and emotional intelligence (the capability to recognize and manage one's emotions, and interact with others) are both related to sojourner adjustment (Mesidor &

Sly, 2016). An international student who has a high cultural and emotional intelligence is more likely to show healthy adjustment cross-culturally (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). Students who are depressed are more likely to have a negative relationship with self-esteem, optimism, and hope (Jackson et al., 2013). The use of maladaptive coping skills, such as isolation, anxiety, poor diet and sleep schedule, and negativity, also contributes to more depressive symptoms. Mesidor and Sly (2016), also expressed the importance of having a positive family community. The transition is easier for students who have secure attachments to their families because attachment security often translates to global security, increasing confidence in the world as a safe place.

Conversely, Tas (2013) indicated that discrepancies between expectations and reality can affect the adjustment process. Whether students can adapt and deal with their new environment might determine whether the student stays in the country. As an example, if a student's only sample of foreign higher education comes from movies, where schools and classes are depicted as picturesque, easy, and relaxed, they are likely to find when they actually go to foreign institutions that reality is not as simple. In movies the realities of difficult sojourner adjustment are rarely depicted, creating an illusory sense of ease for some who watch the movie.

Sojourner adjustment appears to be a temporary state (Pedersen et al., 2011). Although students who go to a foreign country for a short time still experience adaptation stressors like homesickness, anxiety, and social isolation, these temporary stressors do not appear to contribute to durable changes in cultural identity (Pedersen et al., 2011). In their research, Jang and Kim (2010) found that neither short-term nor long-term sojourners seemed to have increased levels of cultural identity (the degree to which the exchange student feels like a part of the host culture). It appears that when a student views their visit to a country as being temporary (a sojourn, rather

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than an emigration), they are less likely to incorporate the host country's culture into their own cultural identity (Jang & Kim, 2010).

Intercultural Outcomes

Studying abroad should not only be about academic gains like learning a new language or earning credits but also about developing intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, cultural engagement, global mindedness, tolerance for ambiguity, and diversity openness.

Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Sensitivity

Because of the importance attributed to intercultural exchange in today's world, it is critical that institutions provide meaningful and well-planned opportunities for their students to study abroad (Antonakokopoulou, 2013; Yan Lo-Philip et al., 2015). These opportunities should emphasize learning about a different culture as well as critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, and intercultural competence (Yan Lo-Philip et al., 2015). Yan Lo-Philip et al. (2015) defined intercultural competence as the ability for a person to interact with people from other cultures appropriately (without violating communication and cultural norms) and effectively (being able to achieve one's desired goal). This definition was based on several concepts in cross-cultural communication, including the ability to respond to others by being nonjudgmental, to communicate properly in each culture, to acquire new knowledge, to be empathetic, and to appropriately react to new and unfamiliar situations (Yan Lo-Philip et al., 2015). Additionally, Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) noted that intercultural competence examines the external and visible behaviors that an individual exhibits while in a different culture, and their aptitude to act in culturally appropriate ways.

Gertsen's model of intercultural competence contains cognitive, affective, and conative aspects (Gertsen, 1990; Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). The cognitive aspect refers to the awareness of

cultural differences, and the knowledge of the foreign location, its cultural values and norms, communication styles, and social interaction. The affective aspect includes the motivation and commitment to relating with locals, having a positive mindset towards the host culture, and accepting and respecting the host culture's customs. The conative aspect describes the knowledge of different communication patterns and non-verbal communication cues (Gertsen; Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012).

Another model of cultural competency was described by Bolten (as cited in Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012) consisted of different sub-domains such as professional intercultural competence (knowing one's profession and professional experience), strategic intercultural competence (problem solving, decision making, and organization skills), individual intercultural competence (optimism, tolerance for ambiguity, disposition to learn), and social intercultural competence (willingness to socialize with locals, adjustment, empathy). Bolten stated that culture changes constantly and that the circumstance and the person involved determines the levels of each subdomain.

Heinzmann et al. (2015) found that students who studied abroad in places that were culturally and linguistically different from their home culture got to develop their intercultural competence more extensively. Additionally, those students who were more interculturally competent before the experience were also more interculturally competent than their peers after the trip. The authors also found that contact with local individuals contributed to the intercultural learning of students who study abroad (Heinzmann et al., 2015). They also stressed the fact that things like sharing similar interests or having equal social status were important to establish positive intercultural attitudes.

Additional factors that can contribute to a person's intercultural competence include the duration of contact with locals, the motivation present, and the attitudes of all people involved in the encounters (Heinzmann et al., 2015). Heinzmann et al. (2015) suggested that students who take part in a short-term study abroad program do not fully reach intercultural competence. These students do not have enough time to experience culture shock or intercultural difficulties, which in turn does not press them to grow interculturally. Similarly, students who already have a positive intercultural attitude toward the host country before departing their home country might not experience much transformation in their intercultural competence because confirmation bias tends to stifle transformative change. In other words, a student with positive expectations may largely ignore negative cultural stressors as they occur, in turn reducing the transformative effects of those stressors. Sometimes students travel abroad with such high expectations that the real experience could never live up to the contrived fantasy. Therefore, when such students are confronted with cultural difficulties, they may return to their home country with a sort of "let down" effect, thereby rating the experience as a whole as being "disappointing" (Heinzmann et al., 2015; Lokkesmoe et al., 2016).

While intercultural competence is more of an outward experience, intercultural sensitivity refers to the internal process that takes place in order to develop the psychological ability to manage and experience cultural differences (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004). Bennett (1993) also previously described intercultural sensitivity as "the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference that constitutes development" (p. 24). Bennett proposed that the process of intercultural sensitivity requires the individual to understand, create, and experience differences which will eventually lead to the increase in perception and acceptance of cultural differences. When students study abroad, they increase their levels of

intercultural sensitivity which in turn helps develop more proficiency in intercultural competence. Ideally, students will reach a point at which their behavior becomes fluent and natural, allowing them to blend sensibly into multiple cultural settings without having to be constantly vigilant of their own and others' behaviors (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004).

Deardorff (2006) used a Pyramid Model of intercultural competencies to illustrate and summarize the process from intercultural sensitivity to intercultural competence. The model includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes as the main competencies, which can fall into internal and external outcomes (Streitwieser & Light, 2017). Knowledge refers to acknowledging that one's culture can affect oneself and others, skills refers to how a person learns and utilizes cultural knowledge, and attitudes refers to the degree to which one is willing to experience unfamiliar situations (Streitwieser & Light, 2017). Desired internal outcomes include adaptability, flexibility, and empathy for different cultural environments, views, styles, and norms, whereas desired external outcomes include behaving and communicating in a culturally effective and appropriate way (Deardorff, 2006).

Cultural Engagement and Global Mindedness

Cultural engagement, also referred to as cross-cultural awareness, describes a person's "… worldview or attitudes toward cultural differences, diversity, and exchanges. It includes concepts such as global-mindedness, defined as a worldview that is future-oriented and extends beyond national borders" (Shadowen et al., 2015, p. 232). Having more exposure to other cultures helps a person realize the interconnectedness between the different cultures and people (Shadowen et al., 2015).

Because of today's highly diverse workforce and society, people are bound to expand their toolbox to communicate, work, and relate to people from other ethniticities and cultures

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(Lokkesmoe et al., 2016). If someone fails to adjust to such culture, their employment or current situation may suffer. Lokkesmore et al. surveyed students from four U.S. and Brazilian institutions who participated in a governement-sponsored exchage program. They used the Intercultural Development Instrument (IDI), an assessment tool for intercultural competence, to see how participants understood and responded to cultural differences and similarities. Lokkesmoe et al. found no significant change between the pre and post-test scores, suggesting that the program had no effect on the students' cultural engagement levels. However, the results from the qualitative analysis from mid-semester and end-of-program were in contradition to the quantitative data by revealing that students observed academic and professional development, were appreciative for being able to meet new people and learn about a new culture, improved their language skills, and were able to handle cultural and social adjustments (Lokkesmoe et al., 2016). These results were consistent with other research that simply sending individuals abroad without careful planning, training, mentoring, and feedback will not necesarily increase one's cultural engagement (Heinzmann et al., 2015; Lokkesmoe et al., 2016).

Ambiguity Tolerance or Tolerance for Ambiguity

Students who study abroad are usually faced with new and unfamiliar situations. The ability to feel comfortable and competent in such situations and to go beyond their comfort zone can be defined as the tolerance for ambiguity (Shadowen et al., 2015). Budner (1962) defined tolerance for ambiguity as how much an individual seeks out an ambiguous situation (as cited in Bakalis & Joiner, 2004; Dewaele & Wei, 2012; Herman et al., 2009). Budner considered an ambiguous situation to be characterized by novelty (a new situation with no familiar cues), complexity (a situation with many cues to consider), and insolubility (a situation with many contradicting cues) (Dewaele & Wei, 2012). Dawaele and Wei (2012) indicated that learning a

foreign language in a country where the language is spoken increases the student's awareness of cultural differences, promotes culture and diversity learning, and incites critical assessment of their own culture.

Tolerance for ambiguity is a frequently measured trait in study abroad research. Japanese students with high levels of tolerance for ambiguity expressed less culture shock and performed better during their study abroad experience, and Australian students who studied abroad scored higher on tolerance for ambiguity than peers who did not study abroad (Bakalis & Joiner, 2004; Dewaele & Wei, 2012). Bakalis and Joiner (2004) agreed that students with higher tolerance for ambiguity are more likely to choose to study abroad as they will be more likely to seek programs that are exciting, new, and stimulating. Conversely, students with low tolerance may shy away from these experiences as they are unknown, unstructured, and foreign. Dewaele and Wei (2012) measured tolerance for ambiguity with 2,158 language learning students and found that multilingual students score higher in tolerance of ambiguity. Their results also showed that once a person reaches the knowledge of three languages, their tolerance for ambiguity does not seem to affect their levels of tolerance. They also claimed that being in another country pressures individuals to recognize that their personal values and beliefs might not be the same as local people's (Dewaele & Wei, 2012).

Diversity Openness

As described by Shadowen et al. (2015), individuals who are open to diversity enjoy being challenged by different ideas, values, and perspectives. They also appreciate diversity, different cultures, and people who are unlike them. People who are open to diversity are also more likely to relate and work in a diverse setting (Shadowen et al., 2015). This was similar to Yakunina et al.'s (2011) suggestion that openness to diversity could be a multicultural attitude

that may be developed or changed. By experiencing cross-cultural training and by being exposed

to diverse environments, an individual may develop more positive attitudes toward diversity.

These findings help reinforce the importance of identifying students who are having more

difficulty adjusting as well as the need to encourage faculty and staff to create more positive

multicultural environments that will influence students' stances and mindsets toward diversity

(Yakunina et al., 2011).

Loes et al. (2018) reported that collaborative learning, which will be described later,

encouraged students to discover and learn from different cultures and perspectives. Having to

work in diverse groups allowed students to work on their capability to consider and accept their

diverse peers' thoughts and viewpoints and thus resulted in increased in diversity openness.

Results showed that the more a student was exposed to collaborative learning, the more likely

they would seek out students of different races and nationalities outside of the classroom (Loes et

al., 2018). According to Bowman (2014), diversity in the university setting has increased, and

increasing diversity-related knowledge and experiences is a goal that higher education

institutions cite in their mission statement. Therefore, it is important to help students experience

diversity related knowledge and experiences to create a positive campus climate. However,

Bowman cautioned against forcing diversity efforts onto students and to give them the option to

participate or not. Nonetheless, institutions should facilitate experiences that occur naturally in

the classroom, resident halls, and common areas (Bowman, 2014).

Theories Applicable to Study Abroad

Experiential Learning

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), blended two bi-polar continua: the abstract-

concrete (theory versus tangible objects when learning a new concept or experience) and the

active-reflective dimension (direct participation versus detached observation). Experiential learning progresses through four modes: concrete experience (CE), abstract conceptualization (AC), reflective observation (RO), and active experimentation (AE). In the CE mode, individuals live in the moment and rely on their intuition while in the AC mode, individuals use logical thinking and rationalization. In the RO mode, individuals are willing to consider several alternatives, and in the AE mode, individuals take risk in learning and test previously created ideas (Atkinson & Murrell, 1988; Li & Armstrong, 2015). Flexibility and active participation are key to creating new experiences and learning (Atkinson & Murrell, 1988; Li & Armstrong, 2015). Additionally, researchers have found that people develop in these four modes. Through CE, one can improve their affective (sensing) skills, through RO they can build perceptual (observing) skills, through AC one can develop symbolic (thinking) skills, and through AE, they can foster behavioral (acting) skills (Atkinson & Murrell, 1988).

Based on Kolb's model, Nelson and Klak (2012) defined experiential learning as the combination of someone's knowledge about a topic, the application of this knowledge in real world situations, and the reflection of said knowledge and practical experience. Additionally, Roberts at al. (2013) reviewed the importance of a learner's motivation and existing knowledge and perceptions to a learning experience. They suggested that experiential learning includes the notion that all new knowledge builds upon previous knowledge and that it requires the interaction between an individual's inner being and their outside environment (Roberts et al., 2013).

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) suggested the following teaching and learning practices could be considered experiential learning: first-year experiences and seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses,

collaborative assignments and tasks, research, *diversity and global learning*, ePortfolios, service or community based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects (AACU, n.d.). Given the diversity and global scope of study abroad programs, study abroad is a prime example of an experiential learning opportunity.

Collaborative Learning

The collaborative teaching approach is common in higher education and it involves students teaching each other with the professor acting as a guide. It is a joint effort between students and faculty and thus moves away from a teacher-centered classroom (Loes et al., 2018). In collaborative learning, the members work toward the same goal, which can be solving a problem, creating a product, or completing a mission (Laal, 2013). By utilizing collaborative learning, instructors can help students learn how to work with others who might have diverse perspectives as grouping is usually done randomly or by the instructor (Laal, 2013; Loes et al., 2018). Students are actively engaged with each other as they share and listen to ideas of others (Laal, 2013).

According to Laal (2013), for an exercise to be considered collaborative learning it needs to fulfill the following elements: clearly perceived positive interdependence (students need to rely on each other and believe that working together will produce better results), considerable interaction (members share knowledge with each other, provide feedback, and encourage one another), individual accountability and personal responsibility (all members need to complete their part and learn the materials), social skills (students learn skills such as leadership, decision-making, conflict management), and group self-evaluating (the group members assess progress and identifies potential changes that might help). Because collaborative learning may lead to equal share between members and collaboration instead of competition, it pushes students to

consider other students' varied ideas and perceptions (Cabrera et al., 2002; Loes et al., 2018).

Using collaborative learning may inspire instructors to also use more hands-on approaches to

teaching like think-pair-share, small group discussions, and problem-solving group work (Loes

et al., 2018). Students engaged in these active types of learning retain the material better as they

are actively involved in the process, and by teaching others, they master the materials (Laal,

2013).

Cabrera et al. (2002) remarked that collaborative learning has been associated with

student affairs for many years through programs like orientation, living and learning

communities, and community service opportunities. However, the collaboration between efforts

inside and outside of the classroom has been on the rise as higher education practitioners

recognize the importance of collaboration between these two realms (Cabrera et al., 2002). It is

important to promote a learning community that respects diversity, promotes dialogue and

debate, and cultivates a sense of belonging by allowing opportunities to connect students with

other students and both faculty and staff (Cabrera et al., 2002).

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theorists believe that "… the ways people think, plan, perceive, and

believe are important parts of learning…" (Funder, 2016, p.523). Rotter's (1954, 1982) Social

Learning Theory (SLT) includes a particular focus on expectancy, expectancy value, and locus

of control. A component of SLT includes the premise that people think they will be rewarded if

they behave a certain way and will consequently value the reward for which they have worked.

The expectancy value theory believes that decisions are determined by the size of the

reinforcement and the likely results of the behavior (Funder, 2016; Rotter, 1954 & 1982).

Another component of the SLT is Locus of Control (LOC). LOC is a continuum that exhibits the

level in which individuals see a connection between their actions and their reward. For example, the more a person believes that things happen by luck or fate, the more externally controlled they are. McLeod et al. (2015), proposed examining study abroad through the use of Rotter's SLT as students who study abroad might have certain expectations before traveling. Additionally, McLeod et al., stated that students who are more internally controlled tend to perform better in unstructured and unfamiliar situations since they are more likely to utilize their own skills to problem solve.

A second SLT was proposed by Bandura (1971, 1977). Although it builds onto Rotter's theory, it has differences (Funder, 2016). Of note, Bandura introduced self-efficacy, which is the belief that one is capable of doing something. Instead of a person deciding to take action based on the reward, it is based on the person's belief in their own capabilities. Bandura also stated that increased in self-efficacy can lead to increased motivation and performance (Bandura 1971 & 1977; Funder, 2016). Bandura also suggested observational learning as a positive learning technique. If students observe other students studying abroad and how it positively affected them, they might be more likely to take the leap themselves. Finally, Bandura coined the term "reciprocal determinism," which stated that the person, the behavior, and the environment are in constant interaction with each other (Bandura 1971 & 1977; Funder, 2016). In other words, a person is free to choose which environment to engage in, how they want to interact and change the social situation in the environment, and also to create a "self-system" based on these experiences to describe one's own self (Funder, 2016). When students attend college, they choose who they make friends with, how they perform in the environment, and what they take away from it. Therefore, it is important for higher education practitioners to create and to foster a

campus environment in which students can value, respect, and learn from diverse populations and ideas.

Five Factor Model of Personality

The Five-Factor Model of personality includes neuroticism (predisposition to be anxious, insecure, hostile, and vulnerable), extraversion (tendency to be sociable and self-confident), openness to experience (inclination to stay informed, be creative and curious), agreeableness (tendency to be accepting, trusting, and conforming), and conscientiousness (predisposition to be organized, dependable, and thorough) (Northouse, 2016). Researchers use this model widely, including some who study people being introduced to other cultures.

Choi et al. (2015) used McCrae and Costa's Five-Factor Model to look at the relationship between personality and national culture as the situation variable. In this study, they were interested in whether the situation factor (national culture) triggered or suppressed these personality traits. They posited that people with lower levels of neuroticism are more likely to build positive relationships with others, be more emotionally stable to new situations, and are less likely to react negatively to the situation. Therefore, they would be more likely to feel more comfortable in a new culture. Extraverted people are likely to be happy in their environment and get positively attached to its members. These people will be more likely to relate to local people and be happy in a new culture. People who are open to experiences are likely to seek alternatives and diverse opportunities and thus are more likely to seek study abroad experiences. People with high agreeableness are usually cooperative, considerate, and flexible which also helps during a study abroad experience. Finally, people with high conscientiousness are organized, hardworking, loyal, and achievement oriented. These people are more apt to be committed to a new culture and work hard to follow its cultural norms and rules (Choi et al., 2015).

Similarly, Jang and Kim (2010) conducted a study to determine if the characteristics of the host culture (whether they were collectivists or individualist) would affect how study abroad students experienced acculturation. They found evidence to suggest that personality played a big role for those students going to individualistic countries and that following cultural norms and values would be key for those students going to collectivist countries (Jang & Kim, 2010).

Chickering's Seven Vectors on Student Development

Chickering and Reisser (1993) stated that a student's identity formation could fit in a seven vectors model. Each vector builds on each other, but it is not strictly sequential (Drexler & Campbell, 2011; Patton et al., 2016). Students can progress through the seven vectors at different rates and might deal with more than one vector at a time (Patton et al., 2016). As summarized in Patton et al. (2016), the seven vectors include:

- Developing competence (involves gaining knowledge and improving critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and leadership skills)

- Managing emotions (the development of the acceptance of emotions like anger, anxiety, guilt, inspiration, and learning how to express and regulate these)

- Moving through autonomy toward independence (recognition of how important interconnectedness with others is)

- Developing more mature interpersonal relationships (increase the ability to accept, tolerate, and respect differences)

- Establishing identity (being able to self-accept and integrate)

- Developing purpose (establishing goals and commitments)

- Developing integrity (balancing one's own interests with other's)

Additionally, Chickering and Reisser (1993) proposed seven key influences that can affect a student's development in college: 1) institutional goals and objectives can have a powerful impact on what types of programs and events are made available for students; 2) the size of the institution can limit the number of chances for personal development (the more students there are, the fewer opportunities for substantial participation); 3) faculty need to be accessible, authentic, know students, and communicate adequately with them outside of the classroom setting to facilitate development; 4) the curriculum needs to be diverse and conscious of individual differences to make the learning relevant and in turn aid in development; 5) professors need to interact with students, provide timely feedback, and respect individual students' differences and needs; 6) the institution must create opportunities for groups to form (whether formally or informally) so that students can learn from and support each other; and 7) faculty and staff should collaborate to provide experiences, programs, and services that will help develop the whole student (Patton et al., 2016, p. 299-302).

Applying Chickering's theory to foreign students, institutions can provide positive influences on international student development by providing a campus culture that is supportive of their ethnic/racial background. For example, institutions can include promotion of diversity in their mission statement, provide financial support for multicultural events and resources, keep a manageable student population size that includes plenty of diverse students, recruit more faculty from different cultures who are open to including classroom materials written by authors of diverse backgrounds, plan adequate study abroad programs, and provide safe spaces for students from all cultures to gather. It is important for students to feel like they matter, like their feelings count, like others are interested in them, and that they help make a difference (Dixson Rayle & Chung, 2007; Drexler & Campbell, 2011).

Ways to Help Study Abroad Students While Abroad

Studying in another country, no matter for how long, can be stressful and scary. It can be even more taxing if the student is not prepared or is not presented with appropriate services and resources (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). Behrnd and Porzelt (2012) stated that even though most students experience culture shock and acculturative stress while abroad, each student has different experiences, and there is no way to create a perfect plan of action that will help everyone on the same level. However, there are best practices or possible suggestions to help students through the process in order for them to gain the most out of their experience abroad (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012).

Pre-departure and Orientation

A pre-departure orientation should be offered to all students studying abroad (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). During this pre-departure session, it is important to acknowledge the cultural differences they might experience. Jang and Kim (2010) stated that students should also be aware of differences in terms of the notion of self, the way the host culture sees social relationships, and how this may be different from what the student is used to. It is also important to go over topics like security and safety issues, intercultural communication, and culture shock. Similarly, the host institution should host an orientation for exchange students in which they can share pertinent information like the university related services and resources available, the process to register for classes, local culture tips, and immigration protocols and procedures. As Lokkesmoe et al. (2016) suggested, in country, real-time coaching and mentoring can be helpful in developing students' cross-cultural awareness.

Campus Counseling and Mental Health Services

Mesidor and Sly (2016) also referenced campus counseling for foreign students as a resource to aid the adaptation process. However, some foreign students may be hesitant to use these services due to both general and culture-specific barriers. Some may believe that by seeking psychological help they are disrespecting their parents; others might not trust the counselors, and others may believe that attending sessions might cause them to lose their scholarships (Lacina, 2002). Another portion of students might believe that using mental health care goes against their cultural background. Others might not be aware of these services, and yet others prefer informal networks of information (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). When students do use these services, cultural competence of counselors is paramount. Because foreign students are comprised of a diverse group, counselors should, before treating a student, educate themselves on that student's culture of origin to be able to offer culturally sensitive and applicable services (Jacob & Greggo, 2001).

Academic Help

Academic adjustment is also a difficult area. When students go to a different country, they often need to adjust to a new educational system. Examples of differences include the credit system, the curriculum, the evaluation process, the process to register for classes, the emphasis on diverse learning styles, the relationship between faculty and students, and language barriers (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). Asian students for example, are not used to participating in class or doing presentations (Yoko & Megumi, 2014). These students are used to a more structured system in which rote memorization of materials is common and there is no discussion during class (Geary, 2016; Yoko & Megumi, 2014). Furthermore, as Yoko and Megumi (2014) stated,

high expectations are usually placed on international students to perform well academically, which can contribute to the academic stress.

As Lacina (2002) suggested, international students are a transitional group of immigrants who stay for a short period of time in order to achieve an academic goal. With academic attainment being a primary goal, professors and academic departments are a key part of a students' college experience. It is important that instructors address diversity matters in the classroom. Tompson and Tompson (1996) and Lacina argued that faculty, administration, and local students should be aware of the problems and be mindful and educated about the problems students face in order to be able to help this group of students adjust. For example, to prevent miscommunication and misunderstanding, faculty should be mindful of their word choice when communicating with international students, and, in return, international students should also make an effort in becoming familiar with some of the most common phrases, idioms, and slang used in the U.S. (Lacina, 2002).

Some researchers recognize the importance and breadth of the academic realm. Copice and Tracewski (2016) created the *The Belonging Model*. This model had a three-tiers that included the use of a cohort, the focus on a collaborative school environment, and the significance of global network. The goal was to provide an integrated, helpful, and structured first year experience to international students through the use of alternative assessments, workshop attendance, tutoring sessions, academic enrichment opportunities, buddy programs, and participation in multicultural clubs (Copice & Tracewski, 2016).

Social Life Help

Any student's social interactions with others is a vital and integral part of college life. Students may experience loneliness, unfamiliarity with a new town, difficulties adjusting to the

format of college classes, problems with time management. However, this social adjustment for foreign students encompasses a wider array of issues. Foreign students not only have to adjust to all the changes local students experience, but also have to face a new culture, customs, and language (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Klomegah, 2006; Mesidor & Sly, 2016). For example, because foreign students are not usually able to bring their friends and families with them to college, they are required to build a new social network in a short amount of time, which can be a different experience compared to a college student whose friends and family are still in the same country, state, or even town (Lacina, 2002).

Jackson et al. (2013) found that the level of self-esteem, optimism, and hope were not related to difficulties with social adjustment. However, these researchers indicated that social support acts an intermediary between depressive symptoms and acculturative stress. Klomegah (2006) defined alienation as "the state of feeling confused, lost, lonely, helpless, and desire for dependence" (p. 303). Students who have constant interaction with other students tend to be less alienated from the college experience. Klomegah has suggested that foreign students face higher levels of alienation compared to their domestic counterparts. However, Klomegah (2006) found through their study at a small minority-serving college, that there was no evidence that international students experience a higher level of alienation compared to their domestic counterparts. Allowing exchange students to relate and communicate with each other is also helpful. This can be done by hosting special events for this group of students, housing them in the same dorm or building, having former exchange students be available for presentations or questions.

Social Network Sites (SNSs)

In recent years, there is more interest in studying the role of social network sites (SNSs) in the adjustment process for international students (Lin et al., 2011; Rui & Wang, 2015). The use of SNSs have proved beneficial to international students as they are able to stay connected to friends back home as well as local friends (Lin et al., 2011; Rui & Wang, 2015). Social capital can be defined as the benefits obtained by forming relationships (Lin et al., 2011). Social capital can be divided into bridging (loose relationships) and bonding (strong relationships). Through an online survey to 195 participants, researchers found that the use of Facebook significantly predicted online bridging capital but not offline bridging capital, and that horizontal collectivism and extroversion were significant factors that influenced social capital (Lin et al., 2011). Students who spent more time using Facebook to communicate with friends at home were better socially adjusted. Similarly, they also found that students who spent more time using Facebook to interact with local students were better adjusted socially as well.

Rui and Wang (2015) used the Anxiety/Uncertainty Management theory (AUM) to find out how the use of SNSs are related to cross-cultural adjustment. Individuals who have low uncertainty and anxiety can better communicate and adapt to domestic students. These scholars found that the effect of SNS on cross-cultural adjustment was dependent on who the foreign student communicated with, how they used SNSs to communicate, and how proficient the student was with the host language. Proficiency of host language led to uncertainty reduction and more interactions with domestic students. SNSs were not found effective at maintaining distant ties and face-to-face interactions were more beneficial. This suggests that SNSs should be used as a complimentary tool and not the sole one. SNSs are not to be used to replace personal

contact/friendships, but it is an important tool for foreign students when adjusting to a new culture (Rui & Wang, 2015).

Friendship with Domestic Students

Glass et al. (2014), affirmed that the establishment of intercultural friendships depends on the geographic origin of the student. The authors also suggested that these friendships promote recreation participation on campus and adaptation to the new culture. Moreover, certain international students seemed to favor relationships with co-nationals. Glass et al. found that Eastern/Southeastern Asia, Southern Asian and Middle Eastern/North African students had a harder time making friends with domestic students compared to their European counterparts. Additionally, these researchers also observed that students from non-European countries had established more friendships with co-national peers than with national (or domestic) students. Rienties and Nolan (2014) reached similar conclusions as they found that Asians students were more segregated from domestic students compared to their non-Asian counterparts.

The lack of friendships with domestic students can also be attributed to domestic students' attitudes. According to Lacina (2002), some U.S. people can still be xenophobic, and as a result, they might not be as patient when listening to someone with an accent. They may also be apprehensive of other cultures based on stereotypes and on current political situations with the country of origin. Jargon, slang, and idioms may cloud international students' comprehension and sometimes cause misinterpretations and miscommunication. For example, a U.S. student trying to be polite can say "I'll call you soon" and because international students might not know the etiquette of conversations, might take the phrase literally and then be upset when he/she does not receive a phone call. Furthermore, some authors such as Bulthuis (1986) have written that the United States is a highly individualistic society and the concept of friendship might be viewed as

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less permanent. International students coming from other more collective societies might have a

hard time making friends in this new setting (Lacina, 2002).

Chapter 3. Research Method

In the current study, a non-experimental, quantitative approach was used to analyze the experiences and trait development of U.S. students who studied abroad for a short term (two weeks to one academic year) and international exchange students who came to study in the U.S. for a short term (two weeks to one academic year) within the last five years. Participants were recruited from three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities and were administered The Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) along with other survey questions. These additional survey items included demographic and other descriptive items (see Appendix A). Key outcomes of interest included differences in subscale scores on the GEMS: cultural engagement, ambiguity tolerance, host site knowledge, and diversity openness after their experience abroad.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

To compare the experiences and trait development of U.S. students studying abroad and international exchange students coming to the U.S., the following research questions guided the study.

Research Question 1

Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Cultural Engagement construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Ho1: Being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) does not have a relationship with scores on the Cultural Engagement construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture).

Research Question 2

Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Ambiguity Tolerance construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Ho2: Being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) does not have a relationship with scores on the Ambiguity Tolerance construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Research Question 3

Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Knowledge of Host Site construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

> Ho3: Being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) does not have a relationship with scores on the Knowledge of Host Site construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Research Question 4

Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Diversity Openness construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Ho4: Being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) does not have a relationship with scores on the Diversity Openness construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Instrumentation

I constructed a survey that was administered through QuestionPro, an online survey-making program. The survey was divided into three main sections. The first section included six multiple-choice items that asked for non-identifiable general information about the participants' study abroad experience including country of origin, institution attended while abroad, and duration of study.

Section II contained five items in total and asked participants about their experience prior to their term abroad including how familiar they were with the host culture and language and if they had experience traveling abroad. The responses to the eleven items in the first two sections serve as descriptive data and to measure (and control for) potential confounds that may predict differences in the main outcomes of interest, which are contained in the third section of the survey. In other words, in the proposed regression, the items gathered in these sections are entered as predictors in regression equations.

Section III of the survey included all 37 items from The Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS), a free and open source instrument. GEMS was created by researchers at the University of Delaware (Shadowen et al., 2015) and designed to measure the

impact of a broad range of higher education internalization efforts. Consistent with the original

GEMS, these items used a Likert response, including "strongly disagree," "disagree," "agree,"

and "strongly agree."

During development of the GEMS (see Shadowen et al., 2015), the authors built the scale

with a focus on four constructs:

- Cultural engagement, which can be defined as a person's "…worldview or attitudes

  toward cultural differences, diversity, and exchanges" (p. 232).

- Host site knowledge, which is a person's knowledge of the host culture (its social and

  cultural norms, its history, and its political issues and structure)

- Ambiguity tolerance, which is a person's ability to feel comfortable and knowledgeable

  in a new or unfamiliar situation or place

- Diversity openness, which measures the tendency to enjoy the intellectual challenge of

  being introduced to different cultures, races, values, ideas, and perspectives (p. 233).

A factor analysis of each above construct within the GEMS – completed during scale

development (Shadowen et al., 2015) – revealed a multifactorial structure to most scales.

Cultural Engagement contained three subdimensions: a) global mindedness, b)

interconnectedness, and c) pluralism. Ambiguity Tolerance included two dimensions, flexibility

and preference for new situations. Host Site Knowledge was unifactorial. Finally, Diversity

Openness divided into two scales, which the authors dubbed "friend" and "sibling." The

complete survey, including the GEMS questions and scales can be found in Appendix A.

Initial reliability and validity estimates as reported in the GEMS scale-development study

revealed each construct of the GEMS to have good internal reliability ranging from $\alpha = .77$

(Cultural Engagement) to $\alpha = .90$ (Diversity Openness). Bivariate correlations also suggested

each scale to perform within expectation with regard to initial convergent and divergent validity estimates (see Shadowen et al., 2015).

Sample

There were three main strata of participants in my study – eligible students from the three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities. Additionally, there were two subgroups for each these three main stratifications, 1) U.S. students who have studied abroad for a short-term in the last five years at either of the three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities, 2) international exchange students who came to either of the three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities, to study for a short-term. As mentioned earlier, "short-term" is defined in this study as any time period between two weeks and one academic year.

Participants were recruited through non-random sampling. Each institution is a public, southeastern university and thus likely to share several commonalities in internationalization efforts. I gained access to potential participants through the international and study abroad offices at each institution. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and participants were allowed to skip questions. By sampling from multiple institutions, I was able to increase sample size to 201 participants overall.

The inclusion criteria included:

- Current or former U.S. students from three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities who studied abroad for a short term (two weeks to one academic year) in the last five years

- U.S. students must have been enrolled in of the three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities during their study abroad experience

- International exchange students who came to study at the three Southeastern,

  public, 4-year universities for a short term (two weeks to one academic year) in

  the last five years

- Adults over the age of 18

- English speakers

Data Collection

I collected data through an online survey described in the Instrumentation section. After

the survey was constructed and the appropriate IRB approvals were obtained from all three

institutions, I contacted the appropriate staff members (study abroad and international office

coordinators and directors) at each university to ask that they send out an invitational email

containing a link to the research survey to qualifying students. If a recipient of the invitation

chose to click the link, their web browser would direct to QuestionPro software to begin

administration of informed consent and, subsequently, the research survey. Confidentiality of

data was ensured through the utilization of QuestionPro's Respondent Anonymity Assurance

(RAA). This is a security feature that ensures that the respondents' email, IP address, country

code, and region were not collected. Also, SSL encryption was used by QuestionPro.

Additionally, given that some participants in the survey were from European countries,

additional steps were taken during the consent portion of the survey to inform potential

participants of their rights according to the New European Union General Data Protection

Regulation (GDPR).

The surveys were conducted online during a period of four weeks from April 13, 2020 to

May 10, 2020, and email invitations were sent two times during the four-week collection period.

Additional recruitment occurred through social media, with study staff posting recruitment ads through various social media accounts including Facebook and Instagram.

Data Analysis

All data analysis procedures were conducted using IBM-SPSS statistical software. I used hierarchical, multiple linear regression to analyze the effects of international study (U.S. students studying abroad versus foreign students studying in the U.S.) on each of the constructs: Cultural Engagement, Ambiguity Tolerance, Host Site Knowledge, and Diversity Openness. In other words, each of the four constructs were the outcomes in various regression models. The primary predictor variable of interest in each regression was Type of Student: dummy coded as 0: U.S. Study Abroad and 1: International Exchange Student. A significant effect of this predictor was basically (mathematically) equivalent to a t-test, with a significant p-value indicating there was, in fact, a difference in outcome between these two groups. Control variables were also entered into the regression equation in a hierarchical fashion to test if differences may be attributable to confounds such as institution of study (each of the three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities entered again as dummy variables), length of stay (entered as ordinal data), government sponsorship of international study experience (yes versus no), pre-trip familiarity with host country (ordinal data), pre-trip language proficiency (ordinal data), years since study experience (interval data), pre-trip exposure to foreign persons (nominal, yes/no data), and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture (ordinal data). Thus, a total of 10 predictors (including two dummy predictors for the polytomous variable of institution of study) were planned for the current study. An a-priori G-Power analysis for the current model suggested a minimum sample size of 188 participants for a detecting a conservative, small-to-medium

effect ($f^2 = 0.07$), which is consistent with the target sample size of the current study (Faul et al., 2009).

To perform a hierarchical analysis, regression was run first with the nine control predictors, followed by a second regression with all 10 predictors (adding "Type of Student" variable). The change in R^2 between the two models showed the additional effect of the primary variable of interest (type of student) to determine if this variable added significantly to the overall model. The F-change statistic determined if the change in R^2 was statistically significant. This process was completed for each of the four outcomes of interest.

Chapter 4. Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the predictive value of a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture) on the various dimensions of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) for short-term U.S. Study Abroad and International Exchange Students. Specifically, the outcomes being predicted were students' scores on cultural engagement, ambiguity tolerance, host site knowledge, and diversity openness on the GEMS. The study presented four research questions, the results of which are in this chapter.

The sample included U.S. study abroad students and international exchange students who were enrolled in three Southeastern, public, 4-year universities in the last five years. A total of 899 people viewed the survey, and 303 people started the survey. Of those 303, 11 people were terminated for not qualifying for the study, and 56 people dropped out before completion of the survey. Thus, 236 people completed the full survey. Of 236, survey completers, 35 participants were further removed due to have incomplete data, leaving a final sample of 201 participants. Of the 201 participants, 148 (73.6%) were U.S. students who studied overseas, and 53 (26.4%) were international exchange students who came to the U.S. to study (Figure 1). Additionally, 46 students were affiliated with "Institution 1," 77 with "Institution 2," and 78 with "Institution 3" (Figure 2). Eighty-eight students studied overseas during 2019, 55 during 2018, 38 during 2017, 17 during 2016, and three during 2015 (Figure 3). Most participants (62) studied overseas for one semester; 23 studied overseas less than two weeks; 57 studied overseas between two to four

weeks; 41 students studied overseas between four weeks and one day to eight weeks; and 18

students studied overseas for one academic year (Figure 4).

　　Out of the 201 students, 61 students received some type of governmental funds for their

trip (either from host or home government), whereas 140 students did not receive any

governmental funds (Figure 5). Thirty-two participants reported to be not at all familiar with the

host country or culture; 64 reported to be slightly familiar; 68 were moderately familiar; 33

reported to be very familiar; and 4 reported being extremely familiar (Figure 6). Eighty-seven

participants rated themselves as being novice at the language spoken in the host country; 38 self-

rated intermediate; 31 self-rated advanced; 21 self-rated proficient/superior; and 24 self-rated

native (Figure 7). One hundred percent of participants reported they had exposure with people

from other countries before their experience overseas. Eighty-one of the participants considered

their previous travel experience or exposure to people from other countries as very helpful when

studying overseas, while 36 found it extremely helpful, 49 moderately helpful, 28 slightly
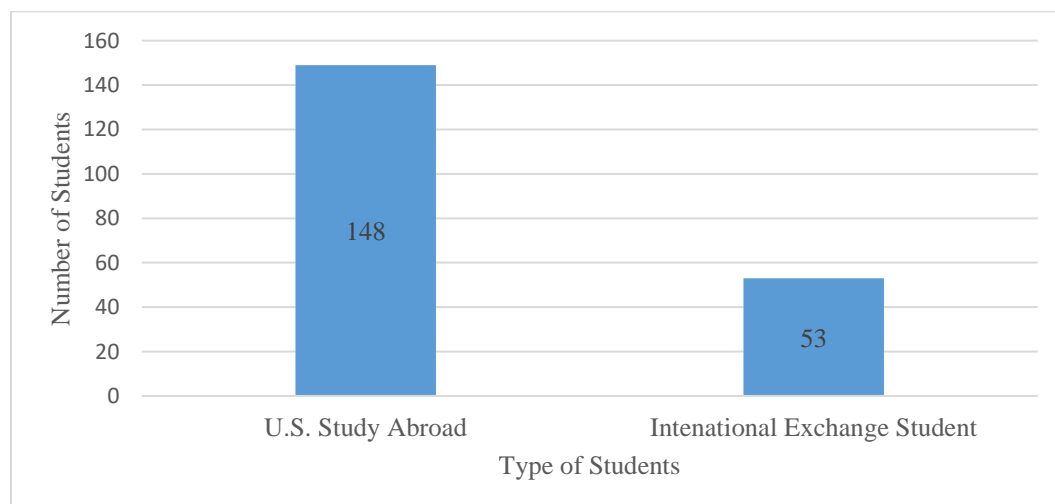
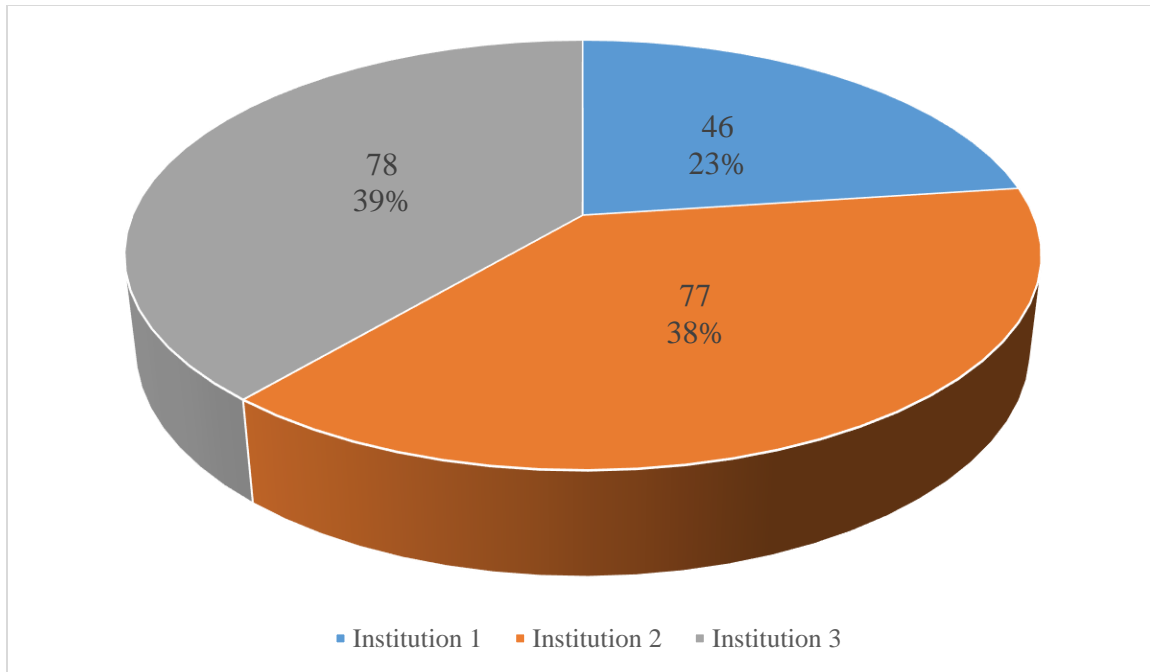helpful, and seven not helpful at all (Figure 8).

Figure 1. Type of Students
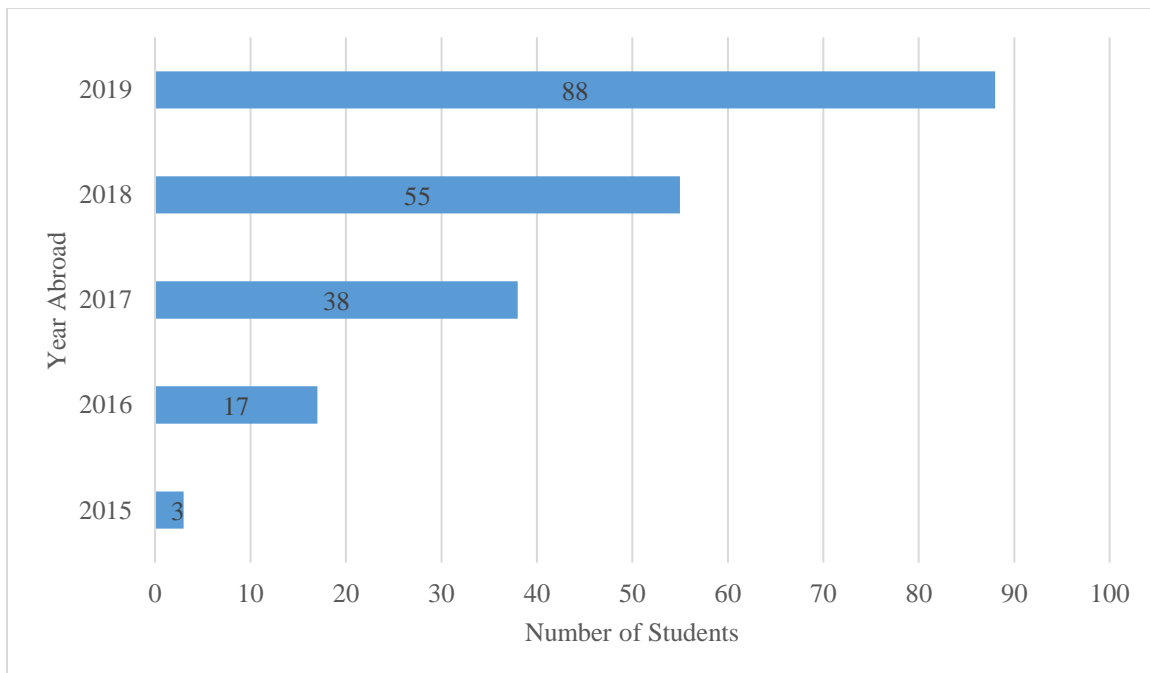
Figure 2. Institution Affiliation
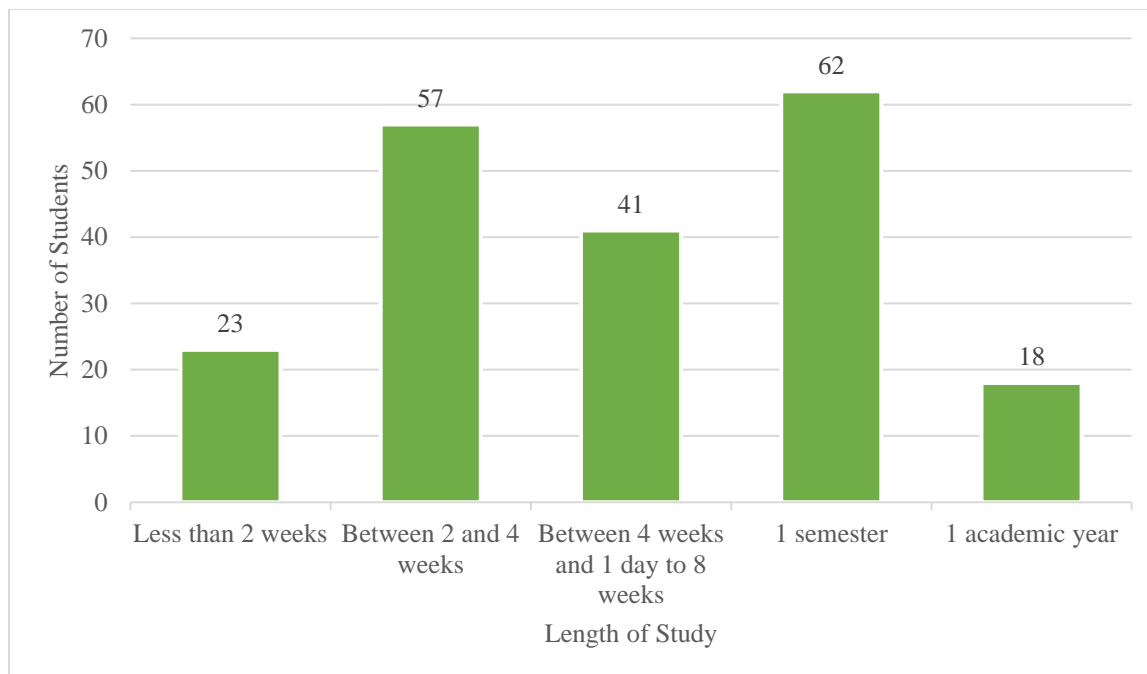

Figure 3. Year Abroad
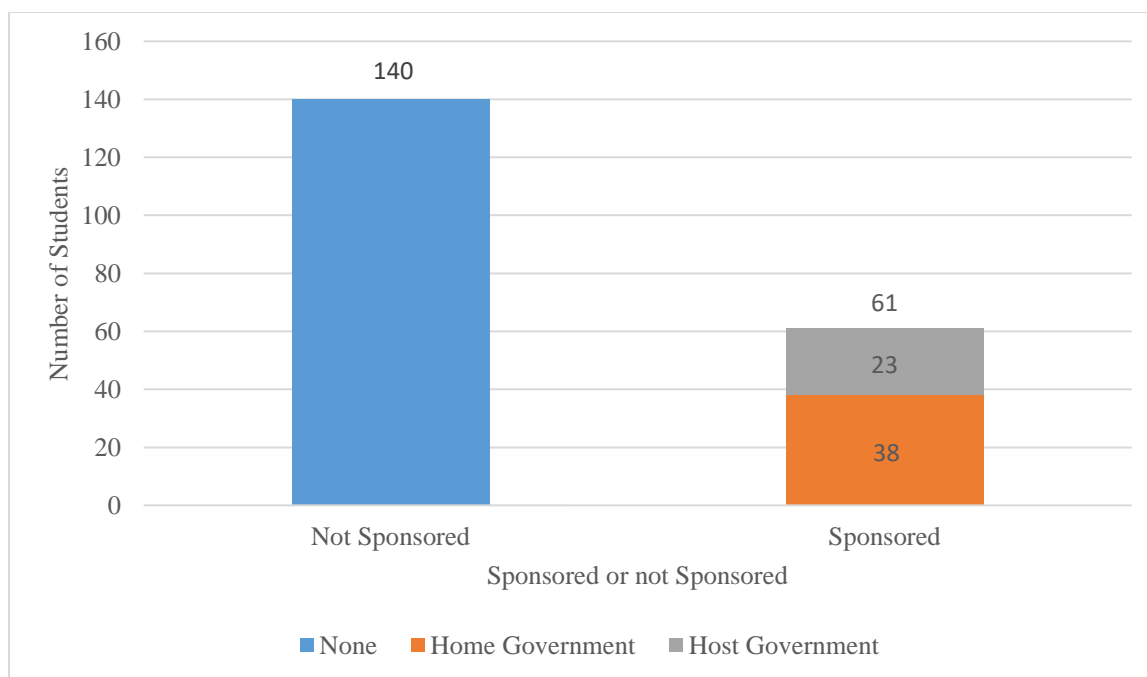
Figure 4. Length of Study
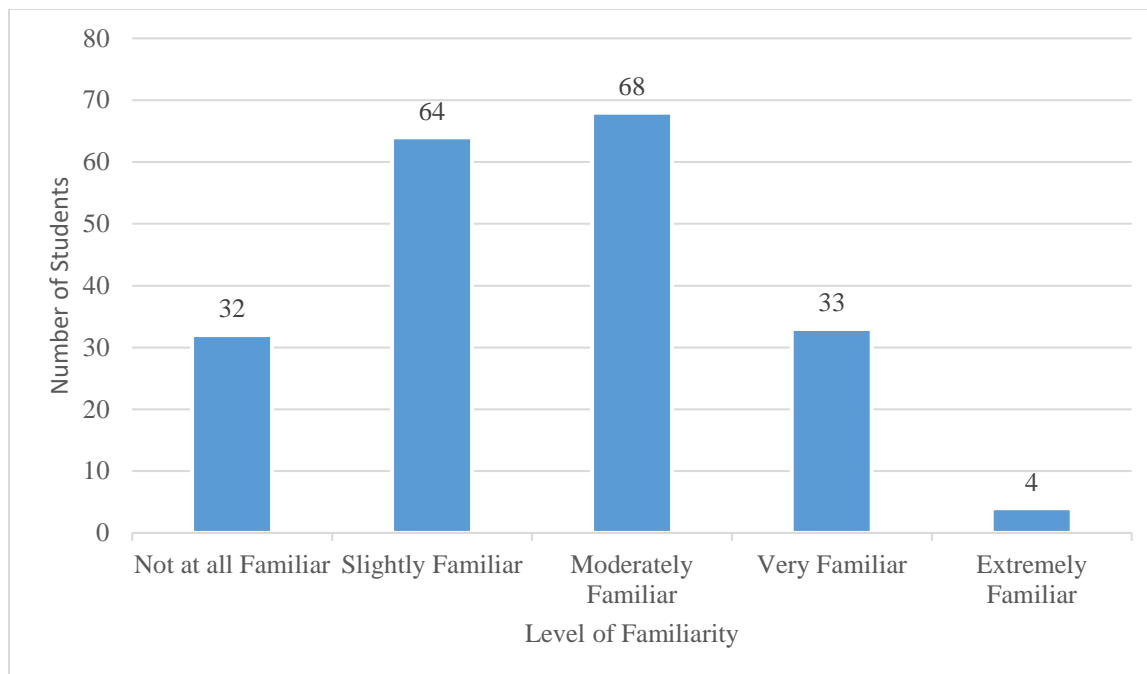

Figure 5. Sponsored Study Numbers

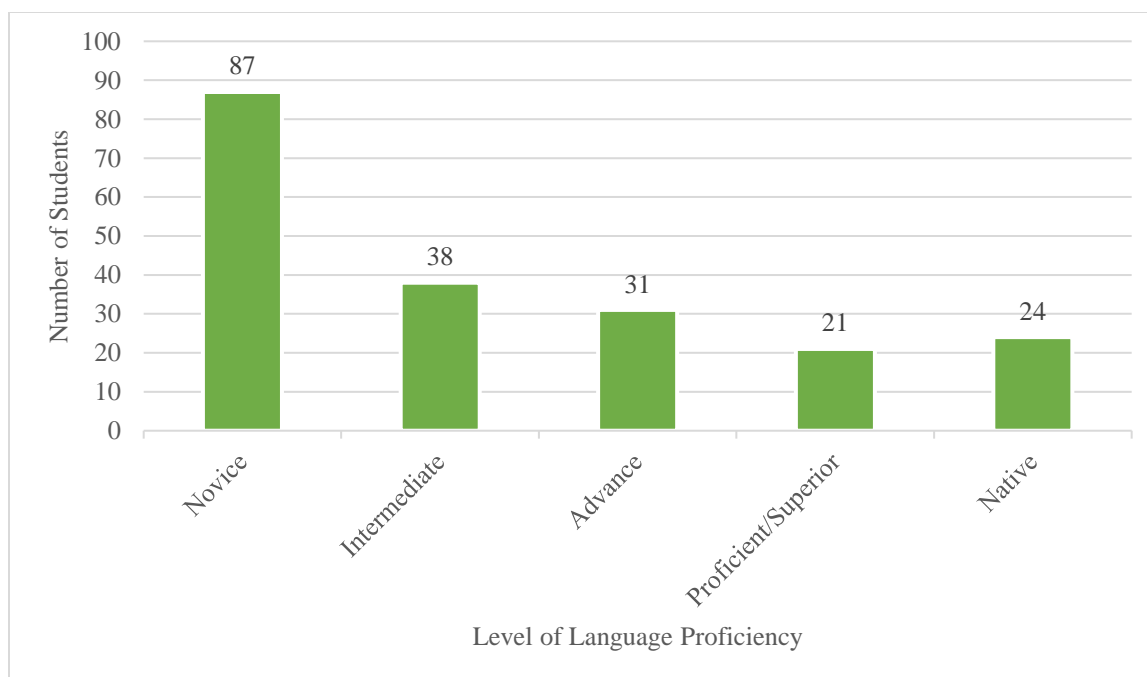*Figure 6*. Familiarity with Host Country or Culture

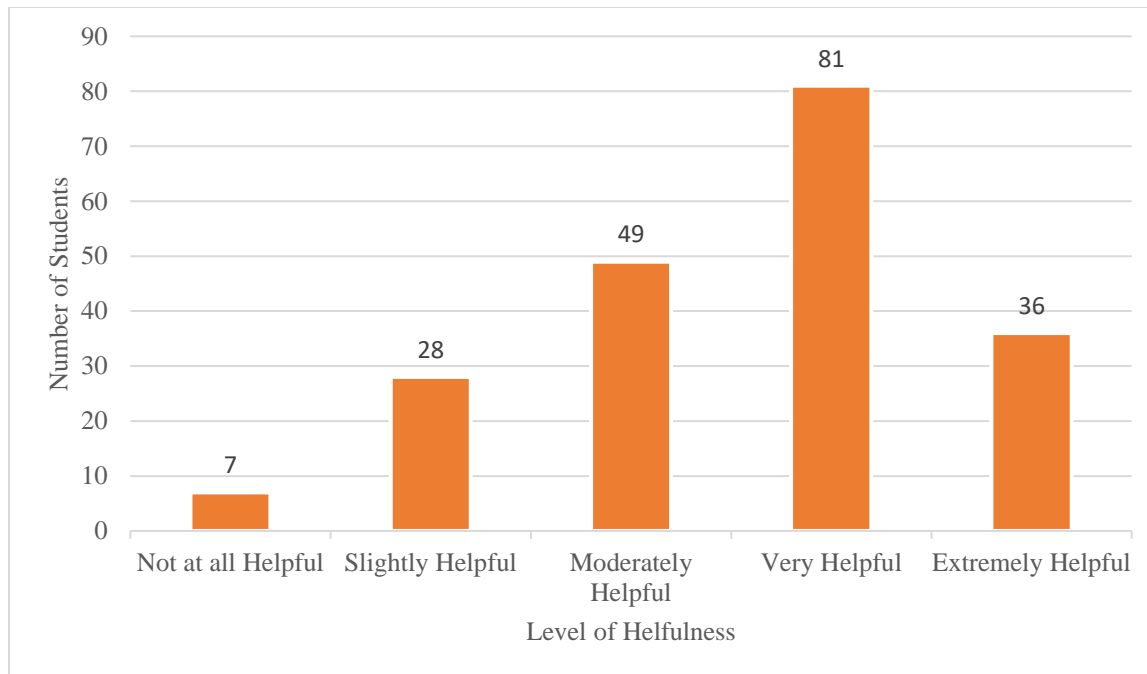*Figure 7*. Language Competency Prior to Experience Abroad

Figure 8. Previous Travel Experience

Variable Coding

There was a mixture of predictor variables in this study; some were nominal and some interval. Furthermore, one nominal variable (university of study) was polytomous, having three levels (Institution 1, Institution 2, Institution 3). This variable, thus, was dummy coded as described in Fox (2016), with Institution 3 arbitrarily assigned as the "reference" baseline category. Additionally, the question whether students were sponsored by a government was recoded into a dichotomous variable (0 = not funded; 1 = funded by home or host government). The remaining nominal variables were all dichotomous. One dichotomous variable (previous exposure to foreign persons; 0 = no; 1 = yes) was removed from all analyses, because there was no variability on the factor – all respondents indicated they had some previous exposure. A total of nine predictors, including dummy-coded variables, were entered in regression analyses in a stepwise fashion for each outcome.

Research Question 1

Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Cultural Engagement construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Ho1: Being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) does not have a relationship with scores on the Cultural Engagement construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture).

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the null hypothesis for research question 1, with the eight predictors entered in step 1 and the primary variable of interest (being an international student versus a U.S. student who studied abroad) added in step 2. This hierarchical design allowed an incremental analysis of predictors. In step one, predictors included government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip

experiences to adjustment to host culture. The regression equation for Model 1 in predicting

Cultural Engagement is:

Cultural Engagement = .750 (sponsor) - 2.412 (institution 1) - 2.889 (institution 2) + .473 (year

abroad) + .193 (length of stay) + .182 (familiarity of host country/culture) - .516 (language

competency) + .242 (perception of pre-trip experience) + 38.170

In step two of the hierarchical regression, I added whether a student studied in the U.S. or

outside the U.S as a predictor. The regression equation for predicting Cultural Engagement in

this second model is:

Cultural Engagement = .750 (sponsor) - 1.674 (institution 1) - 2.184 (institution 2) + .564 (year

abroad) + .429 (length of stay) + .317 (familiarity of host country/culture) - .350 (language

competency) + .219 (perception of pre-trip experience) - 3.149 (U.S. vs international) + 36.777

For Model 1, the linear combination of the predictors was significantly related to Cultural

Engagement ($F(8, 192) = 2.89$; $p = .005$). The same was true for Model 2 ($F(9, 191) = 3.99$; $p <$

.001). The F-change for Model 2 was 11.51, which was significant ($p = .001$) and the R^2 change

between Model 1 and Model 2 was .05. R^2 for Model 2 was .16, indicating that the combination

of predictors in Model 2 explained approximately 16% of the variance in Cultural Engagement.

These results show a clear effect of type of student on Cultural Engagement, null hypothesis 1

was rejected.

Individual correlation coefficients for each predictor in each model are reported in Table

1. Model 2 is the primary model of interest in this study, only Model 2 statistics are described in

text below. Of the nine predictors, two were significant, Institution 2 ($p = .006$) and whether

students were classified as U.S. students or International Exchange ($p = .001$). These data

indicate that students from Institution 2 tended to score lower on Cultural Engagement (B = -

2.18) compared to students from Institution 3 and that International Exchange students scored

lower on Cultural Engagement (B = -3.15) compared to U.S. students. In dummy-coded

regression, pairwise comparisons are automatically reported between each dummy variable and

the baseline reference variable, in this case, Institution 3. As outlined in Fox (2016) a simple

procedure allows pairwise comparisons between other (non-reference) variables, by simply

taking the difference between each variable's dummy-regressor coefficients. So, in this case, the

difference between Institution 1 and Institution 2 = -1.674 – (-2.184) = 0.510, which is not a

statistically significant value. Thus, the only significant comparison in Cultural Engagement

Scores is when comparing Institution 2 to Institution 3. Tests to see if data met the assumption of

collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern (Tolerance ranged from .48 to .97;

VIF ranged from 1.03 to 2.07) (Table 1 for details).

Table 1.

Cultural Engagement Coefficients Model 1 and Model 2

		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	*p*	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1	Sponsor	-0.09	0.75	0.900	0.83	1.21
	Institution 1	-2.41	1.05	0.023	0.50	1.98
	Institution 2	-2.89	0.77	0.000	0.70	1.43
	Year Abroad	0.47	0.36	0.189	0.69	1.44
	Length of Study	0.19	0.31	0.530	0.74	1.35
	Familiarity of Host Country/Culture	0.18	0.36	0.618	0.73	1.37
	Language Competency	-0.52	0.26	0.049	0.73	1.38
	Perception of Pre-Trip Experience	0.24	0.30	0.428	0.97	1.03
Model 2	Sponsor	0.75	0.77	0.333	0.74	1.35
	Institution 1	-1.67	1.05	0.111	0.48	2.07
	Institution 2	-2.18	0.78	0.006	0.65	1.54
	Year Abroad	0.56	0.35	0.109	0.69	1.45
	Length of Study	0.43	0.31	0.164	0.70	1.43
	Familiarity of Host Country/Culture	0.32	0.36	0.375	0.72	1.39
	Language Competency	-0.35	0.26	0.177	0.70	1.43
	Perception of Pre-Trip Experience	0.22	0.30	0.460	0.97	1.03
	U.S. vs International Exchange Student	-3.15	0.93	0.001	0.56	1.79

a. Dependent Variable: Cultural Engagement Total

Research Question 2

Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Ambiguity Tolerance construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

> Ho2: Being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) does not have a relationship with scores on the Ambiguity Tolerance construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

A second hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the null hypothesis for research question 2, using the same rationale and procedures as outlined above in Research Question 1. In step one, predictors included government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture. The regression equation for Model 1 in predicting Ambiguity Tolerance is:

Ambiguity Tolerance = .338 (sponsor) - .929 (institution 1) + 1.099 (institution 2) + .433 (year abroad) + .227 (length of stay) + .183 (familiarity of host country/culture) - .110 (language competency) + .391 (perception of pre-trip experience) + 16.974

In step two of the hierarchical regression, I added whether a student studied in the U.S. or outside the U.S as a predictor. The regression equation for predicting Ambiguity Tolerance in this second model is:

Ambiguity Tolerance = .883 (sponsor) - .452 (institution 1) + 1.554 (institution 2) + .492 (year abroad) + .379 (length of stay) + .270 (familiarity of host country/culture) - .003 (language competency) + .377 (perception of pre-trip experience) - 2.032 (U.S. vs international) + 16.076

For Model 1, the linear combination of the predictors was significantly related to Ambiguity Tolerance ($F(8, 192) = 2.25$; $p = .026$). The same is true for Model 2 ($F(9, 191) = 3.00$; $p = .002$). The F-change for Model 2 was 8.28, which was significant ($p = .004$) and the R^2 change between Model 1 and Model 2 was .04. R^2 for Model 2 was .12, indicating that the combination of predictors in Model 2 explained approximately 12.4% of the variance in Ambiguity Tolerance. These results show a clear effect of type of student on Ambiguity Tolerance, null hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Individual correlation coefficients for each predictor in each model are reported in Table 2. Given Model 2 is the primary model of interest in this study, only Model 2 statistics are reported below. Of the nine predictors, only two were significant, Institution 2 ($p = .010$) and whether students were classified as U.S. students or International Exchange ($p = .004$). These data indicate that students from Institution 2 tended to score higher (B = 1.55) on Ambiguity Tolerance compared to students from Institution 3 and that International Exchange students scored lower on Ambiguity Tolerance (B = -2.03) compared to U.S. students. As noted earlier, in

dummy-coded regression, pairwise comparisons are automatically reported between each

dummy variable and the baseline reference variable, in this case, Institution 3. In this case, the

difference between Institution 1 and Institution 2 = -.452 – 1.554 = -2.006, which is a statistically

significant value. Thus, there was also a significant pairwise difference between Institution 1 and

2 on Ambiguity Tolerance. Students from Institution 2 scored higher than students from

Institution 1. Tests to see if data met the assumption of collinearity indicated that

multicollinearity was not a concern (Tolerance ranged from .48 to .97; VIF ranged from 1.03 to

2.07) (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Ambiguity Tolerance Coefficients Model 1 and Model 2

		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	*p*	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1	Sponsor	0.34	0.57	0.551	0.83	1.21
	Institution 1	-0.93	0.79	0.243	0.50	1.98
	Institution 2	1.10	0.58	0.061	0.70	1.43
	Year Abroad	0.43	0.27	0.112	0.69	1.44
	Length of Study	0.23	0.23	0.330	0.74	1.35
	Familiarity of Host Country/Culture	0.18	0.28	0.508	0.73	1.37
	Language Competency	-0.11	0.20	0.577	0.73	1.38
	Perception of Pre-Trip Experience	0.39	0.23	0.090	0.97	1.03
Model 2	Sponsor	0.88	0.59	0.135	0.74	1.35
	Institution 1	-0.45	0.80	0.571	0.48	2.07
	Institution 2	1.55	0.59	0.010	0.65	1.54
	Year Abroad	0.49	0.27	0.067	0.69	1.45
	Length of Study	0.38	0.23	0.107	0.70	1.43
	Familiarity of Host Country/Culture	0.27	0.27	0.322	0.72	1.39
	Language Competency	0.00	0.20	0.989	0.70	1.43
	Perception of Pre-Trip Experience	0.38	0.23	0.097	0.97	1.03
	U.S. vs International Exchange Student	-2.03	0.71	0.004	0.56	1.79

a. Dependent Variable: Ambiguity Tolerance Total

Research Question 3

Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Knowledge of Host Site construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

Ho3: Being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) does not have a relationship with scores on the Knowledge of Host Site construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

A third hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine null hypothesis 3, using identical rational and procedures as described in previous research questions. In step one, predictors included government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture. The regression equation for Model 1 in predicting Knowledge of Host Site is:

Knowledge of Host Site = 1.184 (sponsor) - .900 (institution 1) - .258 (institution 2) - .0.32 (year abroad) + .187 (length of stay) + .474 (familiarity of host country/culture) + .056 (language competency) + .176 (perception of pre-trip experience) + 13.060

In step two of the hierarchical regression, I added whether a student studied in the U.S. or outside the U.S as a predictor. The regression equation for predicting Knowledge of Host Site in this second model is:

Knowledge of Host Site = 1.758 (sponsor) - .398 (institution 1) + .220 (institution 2) + .030 (year abroad) + .347 (length of stay) + .566 (familiarity of host country/culture) + .168 (language competency) + .161 (perception of pre-trip experience) – 2.139 (U.S. vs international) + 12.114

For Model 1, the linear combination of the predictors was not significantly related to Knowledge of Host Site ($F_{(8, 192)} = 1.75$; $p = .09$). However, Model 2 was significant ($F_{(9, 191)} = 2.59$; $p = .008$). The F-change for Model 2 was 8.72, which was significant ($p = .004$) and the R^2 change between Model 1 and Model 2 was .04. R^2 for Model 2 was 0.11, indicating that the combination of predictors in Model 2 explained approximately 11% of the variance in Knowledge of Host Site. These data demonstrate a clear effect of type of student on Knowledge of Host Site, and null hypothesis 3 was rejected.

Individual correlation coefficients for each predictor in each model are reported in Table 3. Because Model 2 is the primary model of interest in this study, only Model 2 statistics are reported below. Of the nine predictors, only three were significant: whether the experience was governmentally sponsored ($p = .004$), how familiar the student was with the host country and culture before the experience overseas ($p = .044$), and whether students were classified as U.S. students or International Exchange ($p = .004$). These data indicate that students who received sponsorship from either their host or home government scored higher than those who received no

governmental funding (B = 1.76), that students who were familiar with the host country and culture beforehand scored higher than those who were not (B = .57), and that International Exchange students scored lower on Knowledge of Host Site (B = -2.14) compared to U.S. students. Tests to see if data met the assumption of collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern (Tolerance ranged from .48 to .96; VIF ranged from 1.03 to 2.07) (see Table 3).

Table 3.

Knowledge of Host Site Coefficients Model 1 and Model 2

		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	*p*	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1	Sponsor	1.18	0.58	0.043	0.83	1.21
	Institution 1	-0.90	0.81	0.271	0.50	1.98
	Institution 2	-0.26	0.60	0.666	0.70	1.43
	Year Abroad	-0.03	0.28	0.909	0.69	1.44
	Length of Study	0.19	0.24	0.434	0.74	1.35
	Familiarity of Host Country/Culture	0.47	0.28	0.095	0.73	1.37
	Language Competency	0.06	0.20	0.783	0.73	1.38
	Perception of Pre-Trip Experience	0.18	0.24	0.456	0.97	1.03
Model 2	Sponsor	1.76	0.60	0.004	0.74	1.35
	Institution 1	-0.40	0.82	0.627	0.48	2.07
	Institution 2	0.22	0.61	0.718	0.65	1.54
	Year Abroad	0.03	0.27	0.913	0.69	1.45
	Length of Study	0.35	0.24	0.149	0.70	1.43
	Familiarity of Host Country/Culture	0.57	0.28	0.044	0.72	1.39
	Language Competency	0.17	0.20	0.404	0.70	1.43
	Perception of Pre-Trip Experience	0.16	0.23	0.488	0.97	1.03
	U.S. vs International Exchange Student	-2.14	0.72	0.004	0.56	1.79

a. Dependent Variable: Knowledge of Host Site Total

Research Question 4

Does being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) have a relationship with scores on the Diversity Openness construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

> Ho4: Being a non-degree seeking international student (compared to a U.S. student studying abroad) does not have a relationship with scores on the Diversity Openness construct of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) after controlling for a set of linear variables (government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture)?

A fourth hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the null hypothesis for research question 4, using the same rationale and procedures outlined in previous research questions. In step one, predictors included government sponsorship of international experience, institution of study, time since studying overseas, length of stay, pre-trip familiarity with host country, pre-trip language proficiency, pre-trip exposure to foreign persons, and perceptions of previous pre-trip experiences to adjustment to host culture. The regression equation for Model 1 in predicting Diversity Openness is:

Diversity Openness = -.190 (sponsor) + .365 (institution 1) + .216 (institution 2) + .022 (year abroad) + .282 (length of stay) - .085 (familiarity of host country/culture) + .095 (language competency) - .092 (perception of pre-trip experience) + 47.202

In step two of the hierarchical regression, I added whether a student studied in the U.S. or outside the U.S as a predictor. The regression equation for predicting Diversity Openness in this second model is:

Diversity Openness = .539 (sponsor) + 1.003 (institution 1) + .824 (institution 2) + .100 (year abroad) + .486 (length of stay) + .032 (familiarity of host country/culture) + .239 (language competency) - .112 (perception of pre-trip experience) - 2.717 (U.S. vs international) + 46.000

For Model 1, the linear combination of the predictors was not significantly related to Diversity Openness ($F(8, 192) = .23$; $p = .985$). The same is true for Model 2 ($F(9, 191) = 1.02$; $p = .424$). The F-change for Model 2 was 7.28, which was significant ($p = .008$) and the R^2 change between Model 1 and Model 2 was .036, indicating that Model 2 was a significant improvement over Model 1, even though neither reliably predicted Diversity Openness. Overall, the data here indicate a failure to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, no further analyses are offered for individual regression coefficients on Research Question 4.

One reason for a lack of significant results for Diversity Openness may have to do with the distribution of scores within the sample on this variable. Scores on Diversity Openness showed a heavily skewed (-2.00) and kurtotic (4.25) distribution, which may have affected hypothesis testing, due to non-normality of distribution. Furthermore, an examination of the standardized residuals scatterplot suggests the data also violate the assumption of homoscedasticity (see Figure 9). However, because heteroscedasticity tends to produce *lower p-*

values for coefficients in regression, it is unlikely that correcting heteroscedasticity would improve results, as all *p*-values in this case here were already above .05.

Correcting for skewness can be completed through transformations. Negative skewness is best corrected by transformations using "squares," as recommended in Tukey's Ladder of Powers model (Tukey, 1977). I tested whether various transformations would improve skewness and kurtosis, by raising each participants Diversity Openness Total Score to the second, third, and fourth powers, respectively, until a satisfactory reduction in skewness and kurtosis was achieved. An acceptable reduction was achieved when Diversity Openness was raised to the fourth power. However, a separate set of regression analyses on these transformed data still did not produce any significant results. Though the models were improved, significance statistics were still well above .05 level of significance (*p*-value for Model 2 = .289).
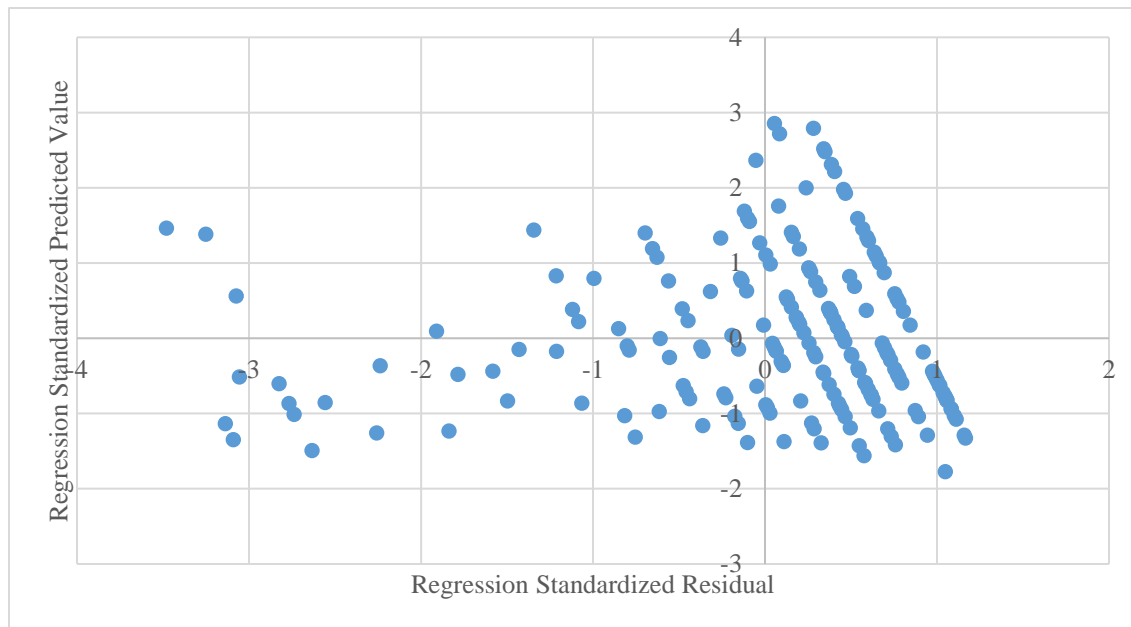

Figure 9. Scatterplot of the Standardized Residuals

Table 4 summarizes the correlation coefficients for all dependent variables using both regression models for each of the four constructs (cultural engagement (CO), ambiguity tolerance (AT), knowledge of host site (KHS), and diversity openness (DO)). After the "U.S. vs. International Exchange student" variable was added in step two, the F value was significant for all constructs except for diversity openness. Additionally, the variable yielded significant Beta values under all constructs (although, because the overall model was not significant for Diversity Openness, individual coefficients should not be interpreted).

Table 4.

Regression Coefficients

	Model 1				Model 2			
	CE	AT	KHS	DO	CE	AT	KHS	DO
Step 1								
Sponsor	-0.09	0.34	**1.18***	-0.2	0.75	0.88	**1.76****	0.54
Institution 1	**-2.41***	-0.93	-0.9	0.37	-1.67	-0.45	-0.4	1
Institution 2	**-2.89*****	1.1	-0.26	0.22	**-2.18****	**1.55****	0.22	0.82
Year Abroad	0.47	0.43	-0.03	0.02	0.56	*0.49*	0.03	0.1
Length of Study	0.19	0.23	0.19	0.28	0.43	0.38	0.35	0.49
Familiarity of Host Country/Culture	0.18	0.18	0.47	-0.1	0.32	0.27	**0.57***	0.03
Language Competency	**-0.52***	-0.11	0.06	0.1	-0.35	0	0.17	0.24
Perception of Pre-Trip Experience	0.24	0.39	0.18	-0.1	0.22	0.38	0.16	-0.11
R^2	0.11	0.09	0.07	0.01				
F	**2.89****	**2.25***	1.75	0.23				
Step 2								
U.S. vs International Exchange Student					**-3.15*****	**-2.03*****	**-2.14****	**-2.72****
R^2					0.16	0.12	0.11	0.05
F					**3.99*****	**3.00****	**2.59****	1.02

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Chapter 5. Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I present a summary and a discussion of the results. These conclusions will be connected to past research and results unique to this study. Chapter five concludes with recommendations for practice and future research.

Summary and Discussion of Results

The overall results of this study agree with research suggesting that studying abroad can be beneficial, allowing students the potential to develop their intercultural competence, learning of cultures, and empathy towards other cultures and people (Antonakokopoulou, 2013; Fulbright, 1961; Martin et al., 2015; Pandit, 2009). Therefore, it is important to continue to promote study abroad and the importance of culturally aware citizens, especially after events like the COVID-19 pandemic. Many hurdles have been added to U.S. students studying overseas as well as international students coming to study in the U.S. flights are limited, embassies are closed, and countries have closed borders. These inconveniences can be a real deterrent for people to consider studying overseas. Furthermore, there have been discriminatory incidents against certain races because of the origin of the virus (Phillips, 2020). If people are more culturally competent for example, these incidents might decrease. As mentioned by Fulbright (1961), it is important that our nation promotes the internationalization of human capital, the building of international friendships, as well as the teaching of the U.S. culture by allowing international students to come to the U.S.

After adding U.S. study abroad students versus International Exchange students as a variable, not only did results suggest that being an international student does make a difference when taking the GEMS, but it also showed international exchange students seemed to score lower in all four constructs. One possible reason might include the fact that international students

reported having traveled abroad an average of 15 times ($\bar{x}$ = 15.30; SD = 2.94) before their study abroad experience compared to only 3.5 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.53; SD = .63) times average for U.S. study abroad students. Having travelled abroad more times before their study abroad experience could have affected international students' responses to the GEMS items because they could have already been at the higher spectrum of the answers before their experience abroad. Thus, the specific study abroad experience might not have had as significant an impact on them, compared to U.S. students.

Another reason might be the degree of preparation these two groups of students might have had before their study abroad experience. Perhaps international students had a more robust pre-departure orientation or conducted more research and thus the impact did not seem as pronounced. A third reason might be because as Yoko and Megumi (2014) and Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) suggested, it might be more difficult for international students to adjust to a new culture (especially if it is very different from theirs), or are more likely to feel perceived discrimination. Maybe, the international students who participated in this study had lower cultural and emotional intelligence compared to their U.S. study abroad counterparts and thus had a harder time adjusting and accepting cultural differences (Mesidor & Sly, 2016).

Under the Cultural Engagement construct, data from Model 1 suggested a difference between Institution 1 and Institution 3, but once the U.S. Study abroad versus International student variable was added in Model 2, the results did not show significance. Consequently, it appears that the type of student (U.S. versus International) promoted the true difference in Cultural Engagement between these two institutions. On the other hand, differences between Institutions 2 and 3 held significance in both models, suggesting, perhaps, that Institution 3, compared to Institution 2, may be doing something better with regard to their promotion of

Cultural Engagement among their students. This may be due to the difference in the planning, training, and mentoring process students might have experienced at their institution. In line with what research reports, the better prepared, trained, and supported a student is, the more likely they will be to gain skills under cultural engagement (Heinzmann et al., 2015; Lokkesmoe et al., 2016).

Another interesting finding in the data was also in the change of significance of language proficiency when type of student was added in the second model. At first (in Model 1), language proficiency appeared to be negatively related to Cultural Engagement, with higher language proficiency in host country leading to *decreased* Cultural Engagement. Logically, this finding is difficult to understand. However, Model 2 sheds light on why this may have occurred, as the finding disappeared in Model 2, replaced instead by a significant association between type of student (International versus U.S. Study Abroad). One explanation could be that international students reported higher levels of proficiency in the language spoken in their host countries compared to the U.S. students ($p < .001$). Thus, in this case, because international students scored lower on Cultural Engagement compared to U.S. students, and because international students also rated themselves as more language-proficient than U.S. students, the true effect of language on Cultural Engagement is really due to the type of student, and not to actual language proficiency. Although research seems to be unclear about the correlation of language proficiency and intercultural competence, there seems to be an advantage when students utilize the host culture language while abroad (Savicki, 2011).

Under the Ambiguity Tolerance construct, the answers from students in Institution 2 showed that students at this institution had different results (compared to both Institutions 1 and 3) but were not dependent on whether they were U.S. or international students. Again, this may

be due to the type of pre-trip training and services offered to international exchange students at that institution. Institutions conduct different kinds of pre-departure orientations and provide different levels of support before, during, and after a study abroad program. Hence, students from a certain institution might feel better prepared and supported to study abroad and similarly, international students might feel more comfortable at certain institutions based on the services and resources available there. Even though the years since study abroad experience was not significant, it was close ($p = .067$) and a positive correlation, and thus merits a closer look. An explanation for this finding might be the fact that ambiguity tolerance may take time to develop in students.

The results for Knowledge of Host Site showed that whether a student was sponsored or not made a difference and that familiarity of host site culture and country made a difference (and that it mattered whether a student was a U.S. or an international student). Government-sponsored programs are generally established between countries with existing relationships, and, thus, there is an increased likelihood a student will already have some familiarity with the host culture. Furthermore, government-sponsored programs are often specifically designed to enhance knowledge of host site, as a means to boost international relations between the sponsor and the host. Furthermore, being familiar with the host country and culture, by definition, would logically also increase knowledge of the host site, and so that particular finding is unsurprising.

The difference in type of student (U.S. Study Abroad versus International) on Knowledge of Host Site may be due in large part to the types of countries in which U.S. students choose to study. A majority of U.S. students studied in countries with cultural similarities to U.S. culture, and thus, as a result, they tend to have less new material to learn to assimilate to the host culture. International students, on the other hand, come from a wider range of origins, and many with

disparate cultures compared to their host U.S. culture, thereby challenging knowledge acquisition more strongly (Institute of International Education, n.d.b).

No item was significant under Diversity Openness. Perhaps this was because 100% of participants reported to have experienced knowing, studying and/or working with someone from another country. As Shadowen et al. (2015) and Yakunina et al. (2011) suggested, individuals who experience diversity are more open to diverse situations. Since these individuals had already been exposed to diverse environments, and since individuals who are already open to diversity are more likely to be ones that will study in a foreign country, there is less variability on this variable compared to others, and thus, less room for the regression models to work as intended.

It is also important to point out that the samples were unmatched as there were three times the number of U.S. students compared to the number of international exchange students who participated in the survey. Additionally, the ratio of participants from the different institutions were disparate as there were twice as many participants from each of Institutions 2 and 3 compared to Institution 1.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on previously conducted research and this study, there are a few recommendations I would like to propose to ensure that students who study overseas can benefit fully.

Travelling before their study abroad experience seemed to make a difference in the responses to GEMS item for international students. As an institution, it might be hard to pay for students to travel abroad, but an alternative could be to adopt collaborative and experiential learning to allow students to not only learn from others that are different but to also be a part of practical learning and experiences. An institution can also ensure they promote studying abroad. Not only will students grow academically and personally, but the institution will gain more

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global-minded individuals. Additionally, institutions should consider promoting government-sponsored programs to its students or hosting governmental sponsored programs on their campus.

Recruiting a diverse student and faculty and staff population would also allow the student body to experience a diverse setting, which could help students adapt better when it comes time to studying overseas. All participants in this study reported to have known someone from another country or culture and it could have been the reason why they might have chosen to study abroad, or it might have helped them be more open to the development of their different cultural competencies.

Institutions that the students were affiliated with caused some changes in the data. This suggests that perhaps some institutions are doing more or are providing better resources for their study abroad and international exchange students. Therefore, as a sending institution, it is important to be ready to guide students studying abroad before, during, and after their trips by helping students through the application process and by hosting pre-departure and re-entry orientations. It is important that students are familiar with their host country and culture before leaving their home country as it could ease their transition. As a receiving institution, it is important to make sure that the incoming students have access to campus counseling and mental health services, academic, and social life help, as they are key in helping with their adjustment process. Institutions might want to consider researching best practices and consulting with other institutions to model program, services, and resources that students might find helpful.

Finally, it is important to create a campus culture that embraces diversity and promotes cultures by investing in staff, training, and resources for both U.S. students studying abroad and international students coming to the institution. To internationalize a campus, every stakeholder

needs to be on board and fulfill their role and responsibilities. Without the adequate campus culture, students would not be able to experience the benefits of studying abroad and the development of intercultural competency.

Recommendations for Further Research

After conducting this research, I believe there are several ways to continue researching this topic. It would be interesting to conduct GEMS as a pre- and post-test for students studying overseas. This would allow a research to determine if there is a difference in self-assessment scores on the four GEMS constructs: Cultural Engagement, Ambiguity Tolerance, Knowledge of Host Site, and Diversity Openness. If the results are positive (if their ratings go up), it could help add to the literature on benefits of studying abroad.

Different types of institutions like private versus public, rural versus urban, or small versus large. could also affect the results and thus would be interesting to administer GEMS in an expanded group of institutions. The type of school may increase or inhibit a students' prior multicultural experience. For example, private institutions might be more able to provide hands-on or experiential learning opportunities because of the smaller class sizes or students in rural areas may not even consider studying abroad because of their ties to their families and community. These experiences in turn could ignite the desire to study abroad as well as prepare them to be successful during their experience abroad.

My focus in this research was on whether international exchange students and U.S. study abroad students had different results in the GEMS. However, there are other factors that could be compared. For instance, perhaps focusing on students who studied abroad in one certain continent or geographic location (i.e. Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East, Europe, South America, or Africa) could help narrow the research. For example, students coming to the U.S. from certain

countries might be more prepared than students coming from other countries, and U.S. students going abroad might have different experiences based on their host country. Similarly, only surveying students who studied overseas for one of the timeframes used in this study (i.e. less than two weeks, one semester, or one academic year). Students who stay in a country for a longer period of time might see bigger or smaller gains compared to those who only stayed for a shorter time period. Perhaps including or focusing on internships abroad could also be an option. Students experiencing an internship overseas might have different growth and views on the four GEMS constructs.

A mixed methods research could also help obtain more robust answers and data from participants. It would be interesting to conduct interviews with participants to see what additional insights they have about their experience overseas and their observed growth related to their cultural traits. Additionally, speaking with participants could also spark additional research questions and research areas.

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APPENDIX: Instrument

Dear Participant: My name is Patricia Lin-Steadman, and I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University (ETSU). I am working on a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The name of my research study is "Do incoming and outgoing students have different outlooks about their experience abroad?" This research study will collect information about you. In this form, we will call that information "Personal Information," and it will include your name, demographic information, and your responses to any tests, surveys or procedures described in this informed consent form. Specifically, the data will include information about your study abroad experiences and your self-evaluation on certain skills and behaviors. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time for any reason by simply exiting the survey. If you withdraw your permission, you will no longer be able to participate in the study. No new information will be collected about you or from you by the study team. Your withdrawal has no effect on the lawfulness of the data processing that occurred prior to your withdrawal. Your Personal Information that has already been collected to the time of your withdrawal will be kept and used to guarantee the integrity of the study and/or for any other purposes permitted under applicable data protection and privacy laws. All of the data collected will be confidential and anonymous. The purpose of this study is to determine if there are any differences in perceived gains in skills and behaviors between U.S. study abroad students and non-degree students attending a college in the U.S. Once you give your consent, you will complete a brief online survey using QuestionPro software. To be eligible for the study, you must be:
1) A current or former U.S. student from Institution 1, Institution 2, or Institution 3 who studied abroad for a short term (2 weeks to one academic year) in the last 5 years OR
2) An international exchange student who came to study in the U.S. for a short term (2 weeks to one academic year) at Institution 1, Institution 2, or Institution 3 within the last 5 years.
You must also:
1) Be able to read and write English with at least basic fluency
2) Be 18 years or older at time of the research
It is expected that the survey will take about 20 minutes to finish. You will be asked questions about how your study abroad experience impacted certain skills and behaviors. Since this study deals with opinions and self-evaluation, the risks are minimal and are not expected to exceed the typical risks of browsing the internet. This study may benefit you or others by recognizing the benefits of studying abroad on certain skills and behaviors. Your confidentiality will be protected as best we can. Since we are using technology no guarantees can be made about the interception of data sent over the Internet by any third parties, just like with emails. We will make every effort to make sure that no identifying information is linked with your answers. QuestionPro has security features that will be used. Under their Respondent Anonymity Assurance (RAA), respondent email, IP address, country code, and region will not be collected. Also, SSL encryption will be used by QuestionPro. Although your rights and privacy will be protected, the East Tennessee State University (ETSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) (for non-medical research) and people working on this research can view the study records. To maximize your privacy, it is recommended that you use a private computer and a secure connection while accessing the survey. You can decline to participate in any part of this study for any reason and can end your participation at any time. Your Personal Information will be treated in compliance with applicable data protection laws. ETSU is the controller of your Personal Information

collected for this study. ETSU is based in the United States and will follow U.S. law with regard to the storage and management of your data. The European Commission has determined that the data protection laws of the United States do not protect personal information to the same extent as those of the European Economic Area. By signing this consent form, you consent to the transfer of your information to the U.S., ETSU, and those working with ETSU will take steps to maintain the confidentiality of your Personal Information. ETSU, the IRB(s), myself, and my dissertation chair (James Lampley, Ed.D.) will obtain and use your Personal Information to conduct and manage this study, and will comply with legal or regulatory requirements, including to:

- verify that the study is conducted correctly, and that study data are accurate;
- answer questions from IRB(s) or government or regulatory agencies;
- contact you during and after the study (if necessary);
- and answer your data protection requests (if any).

Your Personal Information may also be used by the individuals and groups listed above to: publish summaries of the study results in academic journals, on the internet or at educational meetings of other researchers. You will not be directly identified in any publication or report of the study. But, some journal representatives may need access to your data to verify the study results and ensure the research meets the journal's quality standards. Also, journals may require that certain data from the study that does not directly identify you (i.e., de-identified survey responses) be made available to other researchers for further research projects. Improve the quality, design and safety of this study and other research studies. Conduct additional studies with the data collected in this study to advance scientific research and public health. At this time, we do not know the specific details of these future research projects. If your Personal Information is used for additional studies, specific safeguards will be used to protect the data, which may include: Using only information from which your direct identifiers have been removed instead of information that readily identifies you. Limiting access to specific individuals who are obligated to keep the information confidential. Using security measures to avoid data loss and unauthorized access. Anonymizing the data by destroying the link between the information and your personal identifiers. When required by applicable law, ensuring that the scientific research has the approval of ethics committees, IRBs, or other similar review groups. ETSU will retain your Personal Information (including your Coded Information) for the period necessary to fulfill the purposes outlined in this informed consent form, unless a different retention period is required or permitted by law. Your rights related to your Personal Information collected under the study are described below. If you wish to exercise any of these rights, you must contact the University Counsel.

- You have the right to see the information being collected about you in the study.
- You have the right to correct or update your Personal Information if it is inaccurate.
- You have the right to limit the collection and use of your Personal Information under certain circumstances (for example, if you think that the information is inaccurate).
- You have the right to receive your Personal Information in a structured, common computer format (for example, in a readable text electronic file or chart) for your own purposes or for giving it to others, as required by applicable data protection laws. You may not have the right to receive your Personal Information that has been used for public interest purposes or in the exercise of official authority vested in ETSU.
- You have the right to request the deletion of your Personal Information if you are no longer participating in the study. However, there are limits on your ability to request

deletion of your Personal Information. ETSU may keep and use some or all of your Personal Information if deletion would seriously impair the study (for example, if deletion would affect the consistency of study results) or if your Personal Information is needed to comply with legal requirements.

- You have the right to make a complaint to a data protection authority within the EU (http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/article-29/structure/data-protection-authorities/index_en.htm).

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me, Patricia Lin-Steadman at 423-425-5936. I am working on this project together with my dissertation chair, James Lampley. You may reach him/her at 423-439-7619. Also, you may call the chairperson of the IRB at ETSU at (423) 439-6054 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone who is not with the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439-6002.Thank you again for your time and participation. Sincerely,

Patricia Lin-Steadman

Clicking the AGREE button below indicates I have read the above information
- I agree to volunteer
- I am at least 18 years old
- I am able to read and write English with at least basic fluency
- I am/was a U.S. student from Institution 1, Institution 2, or Institution 3 who studied abroad for a short term (2 weeks to one academic year) in the last 5 years OR I am an international exchange student who came to study in the U.S. for a short term (2 weeks to one academic year) at Institution 1, Institution 2, or Institution 3 within the last 5 years.

1. I agree
2. I do not agree

I am 18 or older
1. Yes
2. No

I am able to read and write English with at least basic fluency
1. Yes
2. No

I am a current or former U.S. student from Institution 1, Institution 2, or Institution 3 who studied abroad for a short term (2 weeks to one academic year) in the last 5 years OR I am an international exchange student who came to study in the U.S. for a short term (2 weeks to one academic year) at Institution 1, Institution 2, or Institution 3 within the last 5 years.
1. Yes
2. No

Section I. Information About Your Experience Abroad

Choose the statement that best describes you
1. I am a U.S. student who studied abroad in another country
2. I am an international student who studied in the U.S.

In which country did you study
1. Afghanistan
2. Albania
3. Algeria
4. Andorra
5. Angola
6. Antigua and Barbuda
7. Argentina
8. Armenia
9. Australia
10. Austria
11. Azerbaijan
12. The Bahamas
13. Bahrain
14. Bangladesh
15. Barbados
16. Belarus
17. Belgium
18. Belize
19. Benin
20. Bhutan
21. Bolivia
22. Bosnia and Herzegovina
23. Botswana
24. Brazil
25. Brunei
26. Bulgaria
27. Burkina Faso
28. Burundi
29. Cabo Verde
30. Cambodia
31. Cameroon
32. Canada
33. Central African Republic
34. Chad
35. Chile
36. China
37. Colombia
38. Comoros
39. Congo, Democratic Republic of the

40. Congo, Republic of the
41. Costa Rica
42. Côte d'Ivoire
43. Croatia
44. Cuba
45. Cyprus
46. Czech Republic
47. Denmark
48. Djibouti
49. Dominica
50. Dominican Republic
51. East Timor (Timor-Leste)
52. Ecuador
53. Egypt
54. El Salvador
55. Equatorial Guinea
56. Eritrea
57. Estonia
58. Ethiopia
59. Fiji
60. Finland
61. France
62. Gabon
63. The Gambia
64. Georgia
65. Germany
66. Ghana
67. Greece
68. Grenada
69. Guatemala
70. Guinea
71. Guinea-Bissau
72. Guyana
73. Haiti
74. Honduras
75. Hungary
76. Iceland
77. India
78. Indonesia
79. Iran
80. Iraq
81. Ireland
82. Israel
83. Italy
84. Jamaica
85. Japan

86. Jordan
87. Kazakhstan
88. Kenya
89. Kiribati
90. Korea, North
91. Korea, South
92. Kosovo
93. Kuwait
94. Kyrgyzstan
95. Laos
96. Latvia
97. Lebanon
98. Lesotho
99. Liberia
100. Libya
101. Liechtenstein
102. Lithuania
103. Luxembourg
104. Macedonia
105. Madagascar
106. Malawi
107. Malaysia
108. Maldives
109. Mali
110. Malta
111. Marshall Islands
112. Mauritania
113. Mauritius
114. Mexico
115. Micronesia, Federated States of
116. Moldova
117. Monaco
118. Mongolia
119. Montenegro
120. Morocco
121. Mozambique
122. Myanmar (Burma)
123. Namibia
124. Nauru
125. Nepal
126. Netherlands
127. New Zealand
128. Nicaragua
129. Niger
130. Nigeria
131. Norway

132. Oman
133. Pakistan
134. Palau
135. Panama
136. Papua New Guinea
137. Paraguay
138. Peru
139. Philippines
140. Poland
141. Portugal
142. Qatar
143. Romania
144. Russia
145. Rwanda
146. Saint Kitts and Nevis
147. Saint Lucia
148. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
149. Samoa
150. San Marino
151. Sao Tome and Principe
152. Saudi Arabia
153. Senegal
154. Serbia
155. Seychelles
156. Sierra Leone
157. Singapore
158. Slovakia
159. Slovenia
160. Solomon Islands
161. Somalia
162. South Africa
163. Spain
164. Sri Lanka
165. Sudan
166. Sudan, South
167. Suriname
168. Swaziland
169. Sweden
170. Switzerland
171. Syria
172. Taiwan
173. Tajikistan
174. Tanzania
175. Thailand
176. Togo
177. Tonga

178. Trinidad and Tobago
179. Tunisia
180. Turkey
181. Turkmenistan
182. Tuvalu
183. Uganda
184. Ukraine
185. United Arab Emirates
186. United Kingdom
187. United States
188. Uruguay
189. Uzbekistan
190. Vanuatu
191. Vatican City
192. Venezuela
193. Vietnam
194. Yemen
195. Zambia
196. Zimbabwe

During your time abroad, which of the following institutions were you affiliated with?
1. Institution 1
2. Institution 2
3. Institution 3

When did you study abroad? (if you studied abroad more than once, choose your most recent experience)
1. 2015
2. 2016
3. 2017
4. 2018
5. 2019

How long did you study abroad? (Choose one option)
1. Less than 2 weeks
2. Between 2 weeks to 4 weeks
3. Between 4 weeks and 1 day to 8 weeks
4. 1 semester
5. 1 Academic Year (2 semesters)

Was your study abroad experience sponsored by your government or the host country's government? (i.e. SUSI, Ugrad, IREX, etc.)
1. Yes, funded by home government
2. Yes, funded by host government
3. No

Section II. Experience Prior to Studying Abroad

How familiar were you with your host country/culture before your study abroad experience?
1. Not at all familiar
2. Slightly familiar
3. Moderately familiar
4. Very familiar
5. Extremely familiar

How competent were you at the language spoken in your host country, prior to starting your studies there?
1. Novice
2. Intermediate
3. Advanced
4. Proficient/Superior
5. Native

Before studying abroad, how many times have you traveled outside of your home country?
(Enter a number)

Before studying abroad, have you had exposure with people from other countries?
1. No
2. Yes

How helpful do you feel like your previous travel experience or exposure to people from other countries helped with your adjustment to the host culture?
1. Not at all helpful
2. Slightly helpful
3. Moderately helpful
4. Very helpful
5. Extremely helpful

Section III. University of Delaware's Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS)

For the next section, please think about how your study abroad experience affected the following skills/behaviors

Please mark the response that most closely aligns with your feelings about the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It is interesting to spend time talking with people from other cultures.	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. People in my home country are entitled to the standard of living they can afford, even if it has a small negative impact on the environment.	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. In addition to being a citizen of my own country, I think of myself as a global citizen.	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. It is important that universities promote understanding among students of varying backgrounds.	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. I support policies that maintain the present system of distribution of the world's wealth and resources.	❏	❏	❏	❏
6. The needs of my home country and its citizens should be the highest priority when my country's leaders negotiate with other countries.	❏	❏	❏	❏
7. I like trying to understand people's behaviors in the context of their own culture.	❏	❏	❏	❏
8. I feel a strong connection with humanity worldwide.	❏	❏	❏	❏
9. People in my home country can learn from people in other parts of the world.	❏	❏	❏	❏
10. I identify as a member of the worldwide community.	❏	❏	❏	❏
11. My home country's values are most likely the best in the world.	❏	❏	❏	❏
12. I feel irritated when people from other countries do not understand how things are done in my home country.	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please check the response that you think most closely aligns with your personality.
Note: "Ambiguity" refers to something that is open to more than one interpretation, something that it is uncertain, or something that is not clearly defined.

	Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
13. I am comfortable with ambiguous situations.	❏	❏	❏	❏
14. I prefer situations where there is some uncertainty about potential outcomes or solutions.	❏	❏	❏	❏
15. I enjoy solving problems that must be viewed from multiple perspectives.	❏	❏	❏	❏
16. I feel that I can handle ambiguous situations.	❏	❏	❏	❏

17. I prefer to have new experiences rather than familiar or routine experiences.	❏	❏	❏	❏
18. I feel competent navigating ambiguous situations.	❏	❏	❏	❏
19. I enjoy exploring new places where I am unfamiliar with the geography or the people.	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please answer the following questions regarding your knowledge of your program site:

	No	Maybe	Probably	Definitely
20. I have sufficient knowledge of my host site to explain a current issue there to a friend or family member who has never been there.	❏	❏	❏	❏
21. I can discuss with confidence at least two historic events that are important to the population of my host site	❏	❏	❏	❏
22. I can discuss with confidence the system of government and politics in my host site.	❏	❏	❏	❏
23. I have sufficient knowledge of my host site to have a discussion about a current social or economic issue of importance to the area.	❏	❏	❏	❏
24. I can explain with confidence what the community is like at my host site.	❏	❏	❏	❏

Imagine you just met a new person who is a potential friend. Could you become good friends with this person if you discovered that the person…

	No	Maybe	Probably	Definitely
25. … holds different political beliefs and opinions than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
26. … is from a different socioeconomic background than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
27. … has different religious beliefs than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
28. …has a different sexual orientation than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
29. …is from a different cultural background than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
30. … is from a different racial or ethnic background than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
31. …is from a different country than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏

Imagine that your sibling or best friend is considering marrying someone. You meet this person and discover that he or she has one of the following characteristics. Would it negatively impact your judgment of this person if he or she:

	No	Maybe	Probably	Definitely
32. …holds different political beliefs and opinions than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
33. … is from a different socioeconomic background than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
34. … has different religious beliefs than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
35. … is from a different cultural background than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
36. … is from a different racial or ethnic background than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏
37. …is from a different country than you?	❏	❏	❏	❏

VITA

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