Enlightened Travelers?
Cultural Attitudes, Cultural Competency and Study Abroad

by

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ABSTRACT

In this study the impact of outside the classroom activities and experiences of study abroad participants on cultural attitude change and perceived cultural competence was investigated. Motives to participate, expectations and outcomes of study abroad programs were also explored. The study used a mixed methods approach and was conducted in three parts including an exploratory sequential component followed by a concurrent embedded component. The exploratory sequential component included a photo elicitation project, the results of which contributed both to the results of the study and the development of the questionnaire used in the concurrent embedded component. The concurrent embedded component used a pre and post-test survey design and included a qualitative writing exercise with select participants between the completion of their pre and post-test questionnaires. The results suggest that study abroad participation does result in changes in both participants’ cultural attitudes and cultural competency. It was hypothesized that length of time abroad and the cultural distance of the host country would have an influence on the change in cultural attitudes and cultural competency. As found in previous research, length of time abroad was not found to be a major contributing factor to this change when considering the results of the pre and post-test survey. However, the results of the qualitative studies resulted in many questions about the impact of length abroad. Participants in longer-term programs discussed changes in their cultural attitudes in a more complex way than short-term participants. Longer-term participants expressed changes in their cultural competency differently as well, though not in a way that it can be conclusively said they were more culturally competent. The reverse was the case for cultural distance. Cultural distance was a factor in the changes
in cultural competency, however not in cultural attitudes when considering the results of the quantitative component. The qualitative results seem to bring up more questions. While shorter-term participants discussed cultural competency differently than longer-term participants, surprisingly the short-term programs had a higher percentage of participants studying in countries with large cultural distance than did long-term programs.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In his book A History of U.S. Study Abroad: Beginnings to 1965, Hoffa (2000) chronicles the origins of study abroad in the United States. Tracing study abroad back to 600 A.D., Hoffa explains how the modern construct of these programs evolved out of the European concept of the “Grand Tour” seen in 1800s where young sons of wealthy Americans were sent abroad to be exposed to art, architecture and culture (Hoffa, 2000).

Today study abroad programs, also referred to as international education or exchange programs, are academic experiences in which a student leaves his or her home country to study in another country for a period of time. These students are not seeking degrees in the foreign country but return to their home countries and institutions after the program is complete.

Study abroad programs provide an avenue for cultural immersion with a primary goal of creating opportunities for students to gain a heightened sense of living in a culture other their own. In an increasingly inter-connected global society, the ability to engage and communicate across cultures is an extremely important dimension of the modern world. Case in point, in November 2005 the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program released its report to the president of the U.S. and Congress. Stating plainly the ultimate goal of the Commission, the report begins “What nations don’t know can hurt them. The stakes involved in study abroad are that simple, that straightforward, and that important. For their own future and that of the nation, college graduates today must be internationally competent” (Lincoln Commission, www.nafsa.org). Partly as a result of the Lincoln Commission, the Senator Paul Simon
Study Abroad Foundation Act was introduced to the legislative branch of the U.S. government in hopes of helping to reach the goal of one million U.S. study abroad students by providing scholarships and aid to students. Endorsed by diverse organizations including the 9/11 Commission and Higher Education Associations, the Simon Act is evidence of the importance of study abroad programs (www.nafsa.org).

While the primary goal is learning, these experiences have nonetheless been referred to as tourist experiences that are more in depth than the usual vacation (Litvin, 2003). Study abroad participants are in a unique situation as travelers and learners who typically spend greater lengths of time abroad. Study abroad students do more than visit museums, churches and the local Irish pub. They are living with or among locals. Breaking bread, cooking food, praying, cleaning house, arguing, discussing, making jokes, understanding, making friends and often times, falling in love in their host culture. All of these experiences have a part of the changes in participants’ cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence.

Study abroad programs can range from short-term study tours, which combine academic study with a tour of several different destinations, to programs where a group of students live and go to school together to an immersive independent experience where students are integrated fully into school and everyday life. To take advantage of the time in another country, a main feature of most programs is interaction with the host culture. Whether specifically integrated into the program (home stays, organized events with locals or through the set curriculum) or in less formalized ways (becoming friends with or simply interacting with locals), cross-cultural interactions are a daily event for most students. All of these models offer cultural learning opportunities for students and
research has shown that experiences students have while participating in international education programs promotes cultural understanding and cultural competence and often leads to long term changes in attitudes and behaviors.

Tourism has been explained as a modern, social phenomenon with potential to unite people and cultures through intercultural exchange (D’Amore, 1988). Many studies have been undertaken to investigate the potential for tourism to advance world peace and there are even centers devoted to the study of peace through tourism. While there are those who refute this claim (Ap & Var, 1990) it can be acknowledged that the simple act of intercultural exchange which takes place during tourism does have potential to promote cultural awareness and in the process improve understanding between different cultures. The tourist has been studied from multiple perspectives including impacts, host-guest relations, attitudes, and economic impact to name a few. Despite the obvious links between tourism and study abroad, an aspect that is represented in relatively few studies is the consideration of the study abroad participant as a tourist as well as a student.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this combined exploratory sequential and concurrent embedded mixed methods study was to investigate how outside the classroom activities and experiences of study abroad participants impacts cultural attitude change and perceived cultural competence. Motives to participate, expectations and outcomes of study abroad programs were also investigated. The first phase was a qualitative investigation of students’ study abroad experiences using photo elicitation. This information was used to help answer the research questions and to develop the questionnaire for the second phase of the study. Next, the questionnaire was used to measure the relationship between
participation in a study abroad program and cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence of the participant. At the same time, an online writing exercise with participants explored cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency. In particular, how reasons to study abroad were connected to perceived outcomes allows study abroad professionals to better understand students and in the process advance the goals of cultural competence.

Limitations

The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. A university in the study, Arizona State University (ASU), is a large (> 60,000 students) public university with a Research I designation. Participants were limited to enrolled ASU students on a study abroad program.

2. A university in the study, Vanderbilt University (VU) is a small (< 7,000 students) private university. Participants were limited to enrolled VU students on a study abroad program.

3. Study abroad programs were limited to ASU and VU approved programs.

4. Annually nearly 2/3 of ASU students participate in short-term programs (2 – 10 weeks in length), which may or may not have an effect on the results.

Research Questions

1. How are cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency impacted by study abroad participation?

2. How are attitudes toward the host country impacted by study abroad participation?

3. How are motives to participate in study abroad related to perceived outcomes?
4. What are participant expectations of the study abroad program prior to participation?

5. What are the actual experiences and individual outcomes of participants in study abroad programs?

Hypotheses

1. Participation in study abroad programs will result in shifts in attitudes towards the host country.

2. Participation in study abroad programs will result in changes in perceived cultural competence.

3. Participants in programs with longer tenures abroad will show greater shifts in attitudes towards the host country.

4. Participants in programs with longer tenures abroad will show greater changes in perceived cultural competency.

5. Participants traveling to countries culturally different to their own will show greater shifts in attitudes towards the host country.

6. Participants traveling to countries culturally different to their own will show greater changes in perceived cultural competency.

Importance of the Study

This research will help stakeholders to better understand how participation in study abroad impacts cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency. As well, by exploring student motivations to study abroad, and student expectations and outcomes for study abroad universities, study abroad professionals and advocates may put research findings into practice by discussing ideas for program development and implementation,
pre-departure preparation, marketing, and assessment efforts. Tourism and study abroad are certainly different (as will be discussed later) but nonetheless naturally linked. A chief component of study abroad programs is participation in what can be considered typical tourist activities such as visiting sites of interest, interacting with the local culture and so on. Consideration of the study abroad student as a unique category of the tourist will build on research on the transformational nature of international tourism and how it impacts the traveler in terms of their intercultural competency and building of cultural awareness.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW
Study abroad as Tourism

Often due to the difficulty in convincing parents, university administrators, students and even potential employers after graduation that study abroad is more than a vacation, the academic components of study abroad are emphasized in the field of study abroad, or as it is frequently referred to, international education. It is likely that the study abroad professional would balk at the notion that study abroad is essentially a form of tourism. Still, study abroad may be classified in the overarching category of educational tourism. Educational tourism is a broad area and may include all types of tourism with an educational component (Ritchie, 2003). Some researchers have argued that all tourism is potentially educational but to fine-tune this, educational tourism can include university degree seeking students traveling as a part of a course or degree, adult learners traveling with organizations such as Elderhostel, alumni travel programs led by expert faculty members, language learner programs abroad, cultural tourism or volunteer tourism. Ritchie notes that educational tourists are “primarily motivated by education and learning but may be classified as tourists even if they are not perceived to be tourists or if tourism is not their primary motivation” (p.11). Despite the history of educational tourism from the Grand Tour of the 1800’s to the study abroad student of today, there has been scant research on education and tourism (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer & Benckendorff, 2012; Ritchie, 2003).

The benefits of participation in study abroad are numerous, universal across different countries and cross many dimensions including academic (contact with foreign
education systems, foreign language acquisition and introduction of different academic subjects), social (opportunity to travel, meet new people and leave regular life and routine), career (learn about a new field), and cultural (Teichler and Steube, 1991; Fischer 2010). When considering study abroad, it is important to note the differences between tourism and study abroad even though the study abroad student is still, by definition, a tourist. As noted above, there are differences in the length of time abroad, independent study abroad vs. faculty led group study abroad, type of living situation (home stay vs. dormitories or hotels), immersion opportunities, the study abroad destination, how familiar the student is with the culture of the host country, the personal beliefs of the student and many other differences. Study abroad programs can essentially be seen as intercultural communication in the context of tourism. Study abroad students have infrequently been studied as tourists. One notable study by Michael, Armstrong and King (2004) considered the travel behavior of international students in Australia. In particular, the researchers investigated the tourist activities students participated in, if the students influenced the travel decisions of friends and relatives, and the economic contribution of these students to the tourist economy, which was found to be quite large. Additionally, Litvin (2003) considered the international student market and specifically how the international student program, which Litvin calls an in-depth tourism experience, impacted their attitudes.

While the tourist activities of study abroad students have rarely been investigated, study abroad participation and the impact on cultural competence, attitudes and awareness have frequently been research topics. As well, changes in cultural attitudes and cultural awareness in tourists has been the focus of a few studies. One example can
be found in a paper by Berno and Ward (2005) who write about the main theoretical approaches to tourism and acculturation. They define acculturation as “the changes resulting from continuous first-hand intercultural contact (p. 593).

Theoretical Framework

Four theories make up the theoretical framework for this study. The theories help to explain the phenomenon of the study, provide the variables which need to be explored, and will be used in developing questions for both the qualitative and mixed methods components of the research.

Contact Theory

Considering interactions and relationships between different groups in The Nature of Prejudice, Allport (1954) put forth his contact theory, also known as inter-group contact theory. Allport begins to frame his theory with the statement that prejudice can be found in every part of the world in all different groups of people. He asserts that prolonged contact between groups can result in decline of prejudices as lengthy contact between groups will result in groups better understanding one another. However, contact must go beyond one-time interactions. Allport further explains that for contact between groups to be effective in reducing prejudice, several factors are required to ensure positive interactions between these differing groups. While requirement of these factors has been challenged (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008) and expanded on (Koschate & van Dick, 2011), Allport’s original work outlined the factors necessary for effective communication between groups as: 1) groups must be of equal status, 2) groups must cooperate and have common goals, and 3) there must be institutional support for this contact (Allport, 1954).
While Allport was originally writing in the context of relations between minority and non-minority groups in a variety of settings, contact theory has been applied as a framework to studies in multiple fields including education, ethnic relations, and tourism to name a few. The theory is particularly useful when explaining the cultural learning outcomes of study abroad programs. While studying abroad, students often have prolonged and meaningful contact with other groups which has been shown to change their attitudes and behaviors. According to the literature this contact has also been shown to have a positive effect on students’ cross-cultural awareness and learning.

**General Research Related to Contact Theory**

Contact theory has been used in a variety of other fields of study including education and ethnic and race relations. In a study conducted by Slavin (1985), the author reviewed previous studies employing contact theory on “racially mixed learning groups” (p. 57) in a classroom setting at a secondary or elementary school over a 10-week period. The author states that the review is generally in support of Allport’s theory considering that all the criteria, as outlined above, are met. For example, students indicated friendships across ethnicities and races different from their own (Slavin, 1985). The author sums up the paper by stating “There is a strong positive effect of cooperative learning on intergroup relations. Thirty years after Allport laid out the basic principles, we finally have practical, proven methods for implementing contact theory in the desegregated classroom” (p. 60).

In their research of anti-Muslim attitudes in the Netherlands, Savelkoul, Scheepers, Tolsma and Hagendoorn (2011) used contact theory to attempt to explain these attitudes. Based on contact theory, the researchers hypothesized “that a larger
outgroup size will induce the likelihood that people will have contact with friends and colleagues belonging to ethnic minority groups, which in turn will reduce anti-Muslim attitudes” (p. 750). Outgroup essentially refers to those that individuals do not consider to be part of their group. This was not fully supported in the research, however they explain the circumstances by further defining the contact between groups into contact with ethnic minority colleagues and contact with ethnic minority friends. In the case of contact between friends of different ethnicities, the authors did find a reduction in anti-Muslim attitudes. We can relate this back to Allport (1954) and determine that contact theory is supported in this case as the tenet of deeper contact is met when considering the relationships of friends versus relationships with colleagues which an individual cannot always chose (Savelkoul et al., 2011).

**Tourism Research Related to Contact Theory**

In the field of tourism, the impact of travel on tourists’ cultural attitudes has also been addressed in multiple studies. In particular, contact theory and cultural distance theory have been applied with varying degrees of success to investigate the tourists’ attitudes toward the host culture. The following were studies selected as examples of tourism research related to contact theory. Amir and Ben-Ari (1985) used contact theory to frame their study, which involved an intervention pamphlet about tourism in Egypt given to Israeli tourists traveling in Egypt. Finding the conditions of Allport’s (1954) contact theory prohibitive, the authors specifically designed the information given to the Israeli tourists to “psychologically prepare Israelis touring Egypt to accept new information” (p. 107). Differing results were found and interestingly overall positive attitude changes were not seen with the intervention of the pamphlet. The authors
conclude the pamphlet did not cause the participants to have more positive attitudes about the host country, Egypt, perhaps because their initial attitudes towards the Egyptians were already poor.

Milman, Reichel and Pizam (1990) also explored the attitudes of Israeli tourists to Egypt towards Egyptians, though no intervention was applied. Their hypotheses were based on contact theory and stated that Israeli tourists’ attitudes toward Egypt would be altered due to travel to Egypt. The hypotheses were not supported perhaps because the conditions outlined by Allport (1954) were not clearly met.

Anastasopoulos (1992) applied contact theory in a study of attitude changes of Greek tourists visiting Turkey. The author states in the introduction as an overview to contact theory that “the basic premise of the contact hypothesis is that social contact between two different ethnic groups within a country will somehow result in changing the attitudes, preconceived stereotyping, and prejudice that each group has held for each other” (p. 631), disregarding the criteria outlined by Allport (1954). In the study, the author uses Amir’s (1969) conditions for inter-group contact, which mentions equal status and an environment that promotes the contact and common goals. The results of the study were that the Greek tourists’ attitudes toward Turkey after their travel were not positive and their prejudices were not reduced. However, the conditions established by Allport were not met in this instance. Interestingly the author states “Tourism, by itself, neither leads to automatic prejudice reduction nor facilitates improvements in social relationships. Tourism simply provides the opportunity for the social contact to occur . . .” (p. 641).
Pizam, Jafari and Milman (1991) conducted a study of the attitudes of US visitors towards the USSR. They also used contact theory to explore if the interactions tourists had while visiting the USSR led to changes in attitudes of the US visitor. They found that the attitudes the US visitors had toward the Soviet Union and the people of the Soviet Union did not change in the study. They addressed specifically why there were no observed changes using Allport (1954) stating that in the study the conditions addressed above were not met including: 1) equal status, 2) cooperation and common goals, 3) deep contact between groups, and 4) no sanction for the interactions between groups.

**Study Abroad Research Related to Contact Theory**

Due to the emphasis on inter-group interactions, contact theory has utility in framing study abroad research and further understanding the shifts in study abroad participants’ cultural attitudes. In a study of US students studying in London, Janes (2008) employed contact theory to understand attitudes students had towards Britain. Specifically considering the idea of the tourist gaze as popularized by Urry (1992), Janes conducted an exploratory, qualitative study assessing attitudes throughout the study abroad program by prompting participants with questions regarding their perceptions of Britain. Janes was interested in the type of gaze these participants used to see Britain and if that differed from arrival to departure. Initially participants demonstrated “traditional tourist imagery” (p. 28) of Britain with an emphasis on the monarchy and heritage activities such as high tea. However, later in the program participants seemed to develop a more sophisticated understanding of Britain beyond what the tourist brochures promise. Individuals in the study exhibited enhanced cultural attitudes towards Britain. As well, the image they had of Britain had “modernized away from heritage images” (p. 30).
While high tea was still mentioned later in the program, understanding of the importance of the British pub to British culture was also recognized. Janes acknowledged that learning while on this program happened both inside and outside the classroom. Interactions students had with the culture contributed to their attitude changes, thereby supporting contact theory in this instance.

Horencyzk and Bekerman (1997) more explicitly used contact theory to form the framework of their experimental study involving Jewish-American youth visiting Israel for a summer program. The program involved a significant structured cultural encounter between the Jewish-American youth and their Jewish-Israeli peers consisting of a 5-day camp and a 2-day Israeli home stay. Participants were assessed on arrival in Israel and then midway through the program. At the point of the second assessment not all individuals had participated in the cultural encounter. This made an experimental design for the study possible. In the study the researchers make a distinction between the cultural encounter (inter-group interaction) and the normal tourist experiences those without the cultural encounter might have experienced, what the researchers called “intercultural acquaintance” (p. 74).

Depending on the model a study abroad program is following, this sort of structured encounter is not always the norm. Based on contact theory, the researchers hypothesized that those who had already experienced the cultural encounter at the time of the second assessment and therefore had lengthy contact with the outgroup (Jewish-Israeli youths) would have differing attitudes to those who had not yet participated in the cultural encounter. In the first assessment the Jewish-American youths tended to perceive his or her own group more favorably than the typical Jewish-Israeli youth. After the
second assessment all students exhibited no changes in how they perceived their own group. However, students who had already participated in the cultural encounter tended to think of the Jewish-Israeli youth to be more similar to them, further supporting contact theory.

Summary

For his seminal work, The Nature of Prejudice (1954), Allport was researching relations between minority and non-minority groups in the 1950s. Perhaps an update of the theory is needed considering the monumental changes the world has seen since then. However, from the research examined here on contact theory, it is clear that the theory is perhaps only useful as part of a theoretical framework to a study when applied in the manner in which Allport originally presented it.

When considering studies in the field of tourism where contact theory was used to frame the research, the theory was not supported (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985; Milman et al., 1990; Anastasopoulos, 1992; Pizam et al., 1991). One explanation for this is to return again to Allport’s (1954) criteria. In addition to other criteria, Allport mentions that prolonged contact between groups is required for there to be a reduction in prejudices. The lack of prolonged contact is perhaps a reason that the theory is not generally applied with success within the context of tourism where interactions are typically one-time, surface interactions. While there are many different types and forms, typically tourism does not organically give space for deeper contact between the tourist and the host/other tourists, unlike a study abroad program where these interactions may be intentionally integrated to a program or a natural occurrence due to the length of time abroad or the living situation of the student.
On the other hand studies using contact theory from a variety of other fields including the field of study abroad research show support for the theory when Allport’s conditions are met (Janes, 2008; Horencyzk, 1997; Slavin, 1985; Savelkoul et al., 2011). Particularly in the case of study abroad research presented in this review, greater support has been found for contact theory and the theory has also been useful in explaining the phenomena under study. For the purposes of this study, contact theory also helps to identify and clarify variables critical to the research including length of time abroad, type of contact, program models, housing situations, where interactions take place, and the nature of interactions.

Certainly, prolonged contact between different groups does not always result in union and harmony. As we’ve seen in the literature cited above, research using contact theory appropriately must ensure the critical conditions developed by Allport are met. Additionally beyond the use of contact theory, the majority of the studies mentioned above have two things in common. That is 1) the use of an experimental design where an intervention of some sort was employed and 2) the use of quantitative methods. For the current study a quasi-experimental design was also pursued, as this seems to be the most efficient way to assess attitude and perception change. As well, a mixed method approach was employed to address the research questions more comprehensively.

Intercultural Competence Theory

As shown above, contact theory is very useful in study abroad, both in general academic research on, for example, the outcomes of study abroad participation and in the design and implementation of programs, which successfully achieve cross-cultural goals for participants established for programs. In an ever-increasing globally connected
society, the ability to engage and communicate across cultures and development of cross-cultural skills is an extremely important proficiency. Employers, government officials, and educators acknowledged that in order to flourish in the “Global Village” (Gorka & Niesenbaum, 2001) nations and people would have to be culturally, technologically, and economically connected (Sanders & Morgan, 2001). However, to understand what cross-cultural goals are and how to achieve them we should first define cross-cultural skills. Much research has been conducted on attributes, which encompasses cross-cultural skills, variously known as intercultural effectiveness, intercultural competency, cross-cultural awareness, international understanding, and many other names.

A study by Hammer, Gudykunst and Wiseman (1979) explored intercultural effectiveness and the ways in which an individual can successfully function in another culture. The authors researched a group of students at the University of Minnesota who had lived outside the US for at least three months. As well these students were involved in the study at the suggestion of doctoral students in intercultural communication at the university who indicated these subjects displayed intercultural effectiveness. The participants were asked them to rank a variety of abilities in terms of importance to intercultural effectiveness. Through factor analysis, the researchers determined three important factors for intercultural effectiveness: 1) ability to deal with psychological stress, 2) ability to effectively communicate, and 3) ability to establish interpersonal relationships. Focusing on the second and third factors, some of the items, which went into the factors include for example, the “ability to enter into meaningful dialogue with other people” and the “ability to develop satisfying interpersonal relationships with other people” (p. 389). Several of these items link back to Allport’s (1954) first framework for
contact theory mentioned above. The first factor in the study related to psychological stress can be linked back to the entire framework of contact theory and possible breakdown of the framework if stress as a result of interactions in other cultures is not managed. Some items which made up this factor were anxiety and interpersonal conflict. As the authors state “intercultural experience is composed of many novel and new situations” (p. 389) and the ability to manage or deal with psychological stress is critical in developing or maintaining intercultural effectiveness. Persons more tolerant of ambiguity in different cultural situations will be able to manage their stress better and not allow it to impact their interactions and propensity to stereotyping or development of prejudices.

Hannigan (1990) also considered the attributes which make up intercultural effectiveness. Conducting an extensive review of the literature on the subject, Hannigan outlined the tools a person needs to effectively exist in a foreign culture around a set of abilities, attitudes and traits. Abilities included attributes seen in Hammer et al. (1978) including ability to have meaningful dialogue and other abilities to communicate in another culture. Attitudes included general appreciation, understanding and acceptance of other cultures. Finally, the traits deemed important to intercultural effectiveness according to Hannigan, included tolerance, flexibility and other more internal psychological orientations such as confidence and self-esteem. Hannigan expanded his model by also including traits which do not encourage intercultural effectiveness. These included ethnocentrism and narrow-mindedness among others (p. 107).

Contact theory and intercultural competence theory are naturally linked due to the focus on effective communication between different groups. In the first study of its kind,
Deardorff (2006) conducted research to establish consensus on the meaning of the term intercultural competency as well as the best way to assess intercultural competence. Separately addressing a group of international education administrators and a group of internationally known intercultural scholars, Deardorff developed two separate models of intercultural competence. Both models contain the same elements necessary to attain intercultural competence which came out of the research including, for example, cultural awareness, in depth understanding of culture, respect for others, openness to others, adaptability and flexibility. However approaches to the two models are different. The pyramid model emphasizes degrees of intercultural competence and the process model reveals the continuous process of developing intercultural competence.

Fantini (2000) outlined three “domains of ability” (p. 27) to describe intercultural competence in context of international education programs. They are:

1. the ability to develop and maintain relationships,
2. the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with minimal loss or distortion, and
3. the ability to attain compliance and obtain cooperation with others (p. 27).

In order to be proficient in these domains students must develop certain traits such as respect, flexibility, openness and adaptability. In addition, Fantini emphasizes the importance of five dimensions of intercultural competence: awareness, attitudes, skills, knowledge and foreign language proficiency. Focusing on the first four dimensions, similar to contact theory, intercultural competence theory acknowledges that interaction with different people and cultures will enable development of cross-cultural understanding and elimination of prejudices.
Study Abroad Research Related to Intercultural Competence Theory

While the delineation of intercultural competence theory by Deardorff (2006) and Fantini (2000) was relatively recent, many studies in the field of study abroad have been conducted to explore ideas which are inherently related to the theory. In fact, these evaluations and assessments have been conducted in many areas including appreciation of cultural differences/cultural competency and attitude toward foreign travel and life primarily in an effort to hold study abroad programs accountable for increasing participants’ education and cross-cultural awareness. Many studies are providing information that supports the outcomes of cultural awareness and intercultural competence for students participating in study abroad programs (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Coelho, 1962; Kitsantis, 2004; Kitsantis & Meyers, 2002; Kuh & Kauffmann, 1984; McCabe, 1994; Sindt & Pachmayer, 2006).

As early as 1962, Coelho (1962) recognized that study abroad provided a way to further international understanding through students living and traveling in a foreign country, exchanging with another group and learning the ways of another culture. Coelho acknowledges that international understanding is loosely defined. He characterizes the term in relation to the students’ expanded knowledge of international relations and the students’ development of connections with different people while studying in another country. Echoing contact theory, Coelho writes that when people interact, relations improve. He assumes that “familiarity breeds good will, or at least that the knowledge gained is a necessary . . . condition of friendliness” (p. 56). Carlson and Widaman (1988) in their study of students who spent their junior year abroad and students who spent their junior year on campus also hypothesized that participation in an
international education program would result in greater international understanding for students and that this change in attitudes would produce a change in behaviors. Carlson and Widaman tested international understanding in part with a series of statements where students were asked to indicate their personal view on each statement on a 5-point scale. Examples of the statements are as follows:

- Awareness of problems common to many nations
- Wish to help find solutions to global problems such as hunger, disease, etc.
- Respect for historical and cultural traditions and achievement of nations other than your own
- Desire to meet and interact with persons not from your home country (p. 5).

Respondents were also asked to determine the extent to which their views changed over the course of their junior year on several factors on a 5-point scale including:

- Your negative feelings about foreigners
- Your views that values of your own society are not universal and that values of other societies are just as valid
- Your respect for traditions, culture, way of life, etc. of other cultures
- Your belief that conflicts among particular nations do not affect the rest of the world (p. 5).

Carlson and Widaman performed a factor analysis on the results of the statement listed above and categorized the dimensions into four factors which they named international political concern, cross-cultural interest, cultural cosmopolitanism, and political isolationism. They found that the students who studied abroad showed significant change in each dimension but primarily in cross-cultural interest and cultural
cosmopolitanism. Carlson and Widman agree with Coelho saying that their study suggests, “that study abroad can be an important contributor to international awareness and potentially contribute to attitudes and behaviors that help foster international understanding” (p.15).

Kitsantis and Meyers (2002) applied the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) to students enrolled in a study abroad program. The CCAI assesses cross-cultural adaptability and has been used to help individuals studying, working or living in another culture to understand the factors and influences, which will enable them to be successful in a different environment. The CCAI specifically looks at four “critical skill areas” including emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity and personal autonomy, all of which contribute to an individuals’ capacity to succeed in cross-cultural situations. In this situation the CCAI was used both as a “pre-departure assessment instrument to provide important information as to a student’s strengths and weaknesses” and as “a format for the skill-development needed to take place to enhance a cross-cultural adjustment” (p. 14). To determine the “changes in students’ cross cultural adaptability” (p. 6) the researchers administered a pre and post-test to a group of students participating in study abroad and a control group not participating. Kitsantis and Meyers found that participation in a study abroad program did improve students’ cross-cultural adaptability and further confirmed that scores on the CCAI could predict success in a cross-cultural environment.

In their study on the outcomes of short-term study abroad programs, Sindt and Pachmayer (2006) identified four main categories of outcomes which emerged from the research: global competence, academic development, attitudes and personal
development. Students articulated some cultural learning in all the thematic categories. In the area of global competence students expressed that they expected their study abroad experience would help them to become more aware and develop an increased understanding of the world around them. “Attitudes” directly reflected the students’ desire to witness and learn about a new culture. The theme personal development is the most telling and expresses how participation in study abroad enables students to meet people from different cultures, “. . . gain a greater sense of their own self in a larger context . . .” and develop critical skills for cross-cultural communication skills. One student very concisely stated that his or her study abroad experience, “taught me to be understanding of other countries, and it taught me how important it is to be accepting of diversity and different lifestyles.”

Many other studies exist outside the area of cross-cultural awareness and intercultural competency outcomes that have relevance here. Kuh and Kauffmann (1984) took their study further than others when they performed a pre-test, post-test and another post-test one year later. This study mainly focused on the outcomes of personal development which students experience after they have participated in a study abroad program. However, they did find that exposure and immersion in another culture resulted in students having a greater appreciation of cultural differences. More importantly, these results seem to endure a year later.

Summary

Contact theory and intercultural competence theory both include contact with others as a part of the theory but the essential difference is that contact theory is a process involving groups with the outcome being a reduction of prejudice whereas intercultural
competence theory is an outcome in and of itself mainly concerned with the development of a competency in an individual. As well, development of intercultural competence theory has focused on how to assess it whereas contact theory has been roughly left open to interpretation, which may have led to inappropriate application in the past. According to the two studies mentioned above (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000), intercultural competence encompasses not only awareness and acceptance of differences but understanding of differences, an awareness of personal cultural values and what the differences are between one’s own culture and other cultures. Furthermore, intercultural competency is focused on the abilities to navigate and be comfortable in a culture different from one’s own. While both contact theory and intercultural competence theory mention reduction of prejudices as an outcome, differences remain in that intercultural competency is concerned with the development of an attribute in an individual (intercultural competency) and contact theory is concerned more specifically with contact between groups. Referring back to the purpose of this study, the impact of participation in study abroad programs on the individual in terms of cultural attitude change and perceived cultural competence is the primary consideration. While contact theory helps to identify the set of circumstances necessary for successful inter-group interactions, intercultural competence theory provides a way to understand and assess perceived cultural competency in an individual.

Cultural Distance Theory

Stated simply, cultural distance refers to the concept that individuals will feel more comfortable with people of cultures that are more similar to their own. Pioneered in the field of international business, cultural distance is similar to the concepts of social
identity (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985; Berno & Ward, 2005) and social distance (Nyaupane, Teye and Paris, 2008). The concept has been used in multiple topics of study to explain or address intercultural contact in a variety of different contexts, including business, tourism and on occasion study abroad. Hofstede (1983) is credited with developing cultural distance and is widely known for researching the dimensions of culture in the context of organizational culture of business. He identified four basic dimensions of culture including:

- power distance
- uncertainty avoidance
- individualism versus collectivism
- masculinity versus femininity (p. 46)

After additional research, Hofstede (2001) added the dimensions of long-term versus short-term orientation. Hofstede purported that these dimensions of culture could explain behavior, decision-making and difference between cultures. Hofstede quantified the differences between cultures by assigning a numerical value per dimension for each country in the study, grouping certain countries together as having cultures similar to one another.

Hofstede’s work has been criticized for several reasons including his research methods, the lack of focus on the individuals’ influence on culture, and the classification of a national culture (McSweeney, 2002), that is, he was assessing individual countries rather than cultures. Of course today cultures are blending more than ever with immigration and mobility all over the planet. However, essential components of culture can still be recognized regardless of national boundaries and immigration. Ask any
western traveler attempting to navigate the collectivist culture of Asia, or vice versa, they will likely be able to identify multiple obvious differences in the cultures of the west and the east.

Tourism Research Related to Cultural Distance

Within the tourism field, cultural distance has been used to explain guest and host interaction in tourism services from the hosts’ perspective (Moufakkir, 2011), behavior of travelers (Crotts, 2004), and destination choice (Ng, Lee & Soutar, 2007), with various results. Moufakkir applied cultural distance in his study of German and East Asian tourists visiting The Netherlands. The purpose of the qualitative study was to investigate the impact of cultural distance on the interactions of guests and hosts from similar cultures (interactions between German tourists and Dutch hosts) and dissimilar cultures (interactions between East Asian tourists and Dutch hosts). Specifically, the researcher assumed based on past research that the Dutch hosts would have more positive interactions with German tourists who were more similar to them culturally than the East Asian tourists. However, results of this study showed that the Dutch hosts had more negative opinions towards the German tourists than the East Asian tourists, contradicting the expectations of the researcher. Moufakkir suggests this is due to the gaze of the Dutch hosts being mediated by their historical relationships with Germans as well as expectations about the interactions. The Dutch hosts may have had different expectations about the German tourists versus the East Asian tourists which may have impacted their opinions towards each group.

Crotts (2004) also used cultural distance in his study of the travel behavior of US tourists traveling outside of the country. Crotts applied Hofstede’s (1983) model of
cultural distance to create differential quantitative measures of each cultural dimension between the participants’ country of origin and destination for international travel. Essentially, Crotts was interested in understanding if identified differences in each of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions had an impact on the travel behavior of his participants. The findings indicated that cultural distance was not a valuable predictor of travel behavior in this case. Crotts emphasized the potential influence of the individual participants’ own experience or inexperience with other cultures as a possible explanation for this result.

Ng et al. (2007) also considered the influence of cultural distance on travel behavior, specifically destination choice of tourists. An overview of several existing measurements of cultural distance in the current literature was provided and the researcher opted to employ those and Hofstede’s (1983) construct in much the same way as the Crotts (2004) study mentioned earlier. Ng et al. discovered that participants were more likely to visit a destination where the cultural distance between the destination and the home country was smaller. While not a part of the research by Ng et al. presented here, the travel experiences and preferences of the participants is likely a player in these results as well.

**Study Abroad Research Related to Cultural Distance**

Used either explicitly or not, cultural distance and Hofstede’s work is found less frequently in study abroad research and has primarily centered on the impact of cultural distance on the individual or the use of the theory to define cultural distances of the setting of the research. Examples of topics include the notion of self-discovery (Brown, 2009b), designing an intercultural communication course (Lucas, 2003), development of
world-mindedness (Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001), expectation formation (Nyaupane et al., 2008) and lack of adaptation to the host country in foreign students studying in Great Britain (Brown, 2009a).

Douglas and Jones-Rikkers (2001) set out to measure world-mindedness in study abroad participants. According to the authors, an individual who “recognizes and appreciates cultural differences” (p. 58) represents world-mindedness. Hofstede’s (1983) cultural dimensions and cultural distance theory worked in this study to help the researchers form one of their hypotheses. Acknowledging that the destination of the study abroad program can have a significant impact on how the student integrates into the new culture, Douglas and Jones-Rikkers hypothesized that development of world-mindedness in their participants would be greater for those students studying in a culture less similar to their own.

With study sites in Great Britain, Germany, China and Costa Rica, the researchers found partial support for their hypothesis. It was found that students in Costa Rica had a larger improvement in their world-mindedness scores than their peers who studied in Great Britain. Using Hofstede’s (1983) model, Great Britain and Costa Rica can be classified as dissimilar cultures, with Costa Rica being more dissimilar to the USA than Great Britain. Considering the four countries in the study, one would naturally assume that China would be less similar to the USA. So why does Hofstede’s construct fail to explain any difference? It’s possible other factors of the study abroad program impacted the perceived cultural differences experienced by the study abroad students. While China is likely more dissimilar to the USA than Costa Rica in Hofstede’s model, if students, for example, lived in a dormitory with other American students in China and with a Spanish-
speaking family in Costa Rica, that would impact the amount of perceived cultural difference.

The cultural attitudes that students have of the host country have also been studied with cultural distance forming part of the framework. Nyaupane, et al. (2008) used social distance and expectancy theory to explore how pre-trip attitudes are formed and what causes these attitudes to change. Interestingly, high pre-trip expectations were attributed to a post-trip negative attitude towards the host culture. In addition, it was expected that social distance to the host culture, that is how similar an individual is to the host culture, would figure importantly in forming pre-trip and post-trip attitudes to the host culture. While they found that social distance did contribute to pre-trip attitudes, the relationship to post-trip attitudes was weak.

Summary

Similar to contact theory, support for cultural distance theory was not found in the studies presented in this review (Crotts, 2004; Moufakkir, 2011). These two studies in particular reflect one of the criticisms of the theory as in both cases the lack of support of the theory can be partially related to the past experiences of the individual. Cultural distance as a framework is found far less frequently in the field of study abroad research and within study abroad research mixed support for cultural distance theory was found. Just as tourism and study abroad differ, cultural distance in these two contexts will differ as well. For the purposes of this study, the theory will be used to evaluate the cultural distance between the home culture and host culture of the participants. Furthermore, as will be explained in the next section, cultural distance has a great possibility of
influencing the choice of a study abroad program. Choice in turn dictates aspects of the experience that will impact inter-group contact and perceptions of cultural competency.

Motivation Theory

The final theory making up the framework of the current study is motivation theory. In his work on travel motivation, Crompton (1979) outlined nine motivational dimensions for pleasure vacations and destination choice. Seven he described as socio-psychological motives and the remaining two as cultural motives. His seven socio-psychological motives were “escape, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction” (p. 408). Novelty and education made up the cultural motives. Crompton’s use of the word “cultural” in this case is not entirely accurate for our purposes as they are not always directly related to culture. Novelty refers to adventure or something new while education refers to witnessing a certain unique aspect of the destination (for example the Great Barrier Reef or the Eiffel Tower). The motives classified as socio-psychological are unrelated to the ultimate destination choice of a tourist. These motives are considered push factors and the destination serves as a way to gratify these needs. The cultural motives are pull factors and directly related to what the destination has to offer. The results put forward that socio-psychological motives are more important in destination choice. Of particular importance when examining the reasons for study abroad participation are motives related to self-exploration and social interactions.

Iso-Ahola (1983) similarly discovered push and pull factors related to motivation to travel. Using a social psychology framework to develop his theory, Iso-Ahola identified two main influences on an individuals’ motivation for recreational travel; the
wish to step outside the normal personal and/or interpersonal environment and the wish to achieve specific personal and/or interpersonal gains (p. 55). These two influences interact with each other and are essentially the need to get out of a routine and the need to have psychological rewards. Escape and novelty, among other factors, play a role in this process. However, equally important is the idea of familiarity. Iso-Ahola posits that individuals must find a balance between the two to be able to achieve an optimal experience.

**Study Abroad Research Related to Motivation Theory**

Many commonalities can be found in the motivation to study abroad and in the motivation to travel, though there are relatively few studies which consider the study abroad student as a tourist. In their work on why students study abroad Nyaupane, Paris and Teye (2010b) outlined four dimensions of motives to study abroad. After performing a factor analysis on their data, they defined their categories as desire for international travel, escape, academic and social. The area of international travel primarily represents the culture dimension and the motivational pull factors. This dimension contains statements such as “experience culture of the host country”, “get broader understanding of the world”, and “socially/culturally learn more about the host country” (p. 265). Escape encompassed factors such as getting away from stressful situations, escaping everyday life. Academic motives were related to earning credit, learning more about the travel and tourism industry, and exploring future career paths. Finally, social motives included buying souvenirs for self and others and the opportunity to travel with friends. The majority of these motives can be found in the travel motivation theories and literature outlined earlier in the paper (Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1983).
In a follow up to that research note, Nyaupane, Paris and Teye (2010a) further investigated: 1) what motivated a student to choose a study abroad program and 2) the role of motives, previous travel experience and social ties in the formation of the attitudes students had about the destination before the study abroad program. Using the same four dimensions of motives to study abroad in the previous paragraph, they found that social ties and academic motives were the most important contributor to destination choice. Further they found that attitudes students had about the destination before the program were most influenced by social motives as outlined above.

Michael, Armstrong and King (2003) considered the motivation for students to study abroad in Australia and their travel behavior. According to their results, the most important reasons respondents gave for choosing Australia was the quality of the education and recommendation from friends and family. They link study abroad destination choices to tourism choices and further determine the economic impact of these study abroad tourists.

Kitsantis (2004) focused specifically on student reasons to study abroad and the resulting outcomes on the development of cross-cultural skills and global understanding. After completing a factor analysis, she found that her study participants had three motives for studying abroad including: 1) to enhance cross-cultural skills, 2) to develop expertise in a particular subject matter and 3) to socialize. Administering a pre and post-test assessing goals for participating in study abroad and cross-cultural skills, the results of the study indicated that cross-cultural skills and global understanding did improve for students after completion of the study abroad program. She states that the results of her study “demonstrated that study abroad programs significantly, contribute to the
preparation of students to function in a multicultural world and promote international understanding.” (p.447). Kitsantis further looked at the goals students had for study abroad and how goals impacted the outcomes of development of cross-cultural skills and global understanding. She found that specifically the goal to gain cross-cultural competence as expressed by the student was the only factor which could predict improvement in students’ global understanding and cross-cultural skills.

**Summary**

Though motivation theory in the context of travel and tourism has a much longer history of research, motives to study abroad are similar to motives for travel in general. Perhaps the only new motives identified in study abroad research are those related to academic outcomes (Kitsantis, 2004; Michael et al., 2003; Nyaupane et al., 2010a). Even these could be classified within Crompton’s (1979) education dimension, a pull factor of the destination, or perhaps the exploration dimension, a push factor of the destination. As mentioned earlier, travel motives related to self-exploration and social interactions are critical to understand when considering why students study abroad or why they choose a specific study abroad program. Specifically, motivation theory is important within the context of the current study as motives have a potential impact on the travel behavior of individuals. One element included within travel behavior is destination choice. As was discussed earlier, destination choice is linked to cultural distance (Ng et al., 2007). The amount of cultural distance an individual perceives between his or her own culture and that of the destination can influence how likely an individual is to visit that destination. With the vast choice in study abroad programs and destinations available at the universities under study, understanding the motives for studying abroad in general and
the motives for studying abroad in a particular destination is critical and impacts other aspects of the framework.

Research Gap

As evidenced by the literature review, prior research has been conducted on student expectations and perceived outcomes of participation in international education programs. However, a limited number of research studies have been directed at the factors that motivate students to study abroad in the first place. Furthermore, even fewer studies have focused research on the relationship between motives to study abroad and perceived outcomes. This study contributes to filling that gap and at the same time advances past research related to student expectations and perceived outcomes in the areas of cross-cultural understanding and cultural competency.

Another gap filled by this dissertation study is that the research was conducted using a mixed methods approach to explore the problem. The majority of literature approaches the problem from a positivist perspective. The inclusion of qualitative methods in addition to conducting a survey is necessary due to the nature of the research questions surrounding perceptions of cultural competency and attitudes toward another culture. Methods included a photo elicitation project to both provide data on the problem and to aid in development of the questionnaire. In addition, an online writing exercise was conducted with a purposeful sample of respondents to the questionnaire.

An additional gap filled by the study is the idea of researching the study abroad student as tourists. Some studies in the tourism literature have approached this (Nyaupane, Teye, & Paris, 2008; Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2010a) but the majority of studies involving study abroad students resides in the field of education or intercultural
communication (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Coelho, 1962; Kitsantis & Meyers, 2002; Kuh & Kauffman, 1984) and considers the development of cultural competency in the student through an academic lens, meaning classroom experiences, learning outcomes, and structured activities for example. This study seeks to explore how the tourist activities and experiences students have impacts their cultural attitudes toward the host country and their perceived cultural competence.

With respect to the theories used for this dissertation study, there are several theoretical gaps which might be addressed. While previous literature has not proven the utility of cultural distance in tourism research, the potential for its impact on study abroad has been mostly unexplored. As mentioned earlier, the study abroad student is a tourist but not in the typical sense. Study abroad participants are characteristically educated about their destination before arrival as an academic requirement and once onsite at the least have a greater opportunity to have a more immersive experience than a tourist due to multiple factors including length of time abroad, living arrangements and often fluency in the local language. Those factors coupled with the cultural distance of the study abroad destination has the potential to impact shifts in cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence in study abroad participants in a more profound way than the typical tourist. Much in the same way, intercultural competence theory as presented by Deardorff (2006) and Fantini (2000), has not been used in the context of tourism research. In particular this theory has great potential to be used as a framework for research in specialized areas of tourism research, for example volunteer tourism or cultural tourism.
When considering contact theory, mixed support in the studies included in the literature review point to the possibility that contact theory needs to be modernized to more accurately reflect the world today. Allport (1954) was writing in the 1950s and was primarily considering race relations and interaction between minority and non-minority groups. The transformation in social norms from that time until the present day has been tremendous. Additionally, Allport’s work assumes that people are ready for the intergroup contact described in the studies utilizing contact theory. Study abroad participants may be ready for this contact for a variety of reasons including comprehensive pre-trip orientations to the host culture and its people. As well, successful study abroad programs generally are developed to consider the conditions of contact theory (see page 9), while tourism is usually less structured. Contact theory is still useful in tourism research, but a modification of the theory might be in order at this time. The results of the research here may have potential to provide suggestions toward a new contact theory.

Additionally, existing scales on the subject of cultural attitudes focus on semantic differential statements to measure changes in cultural attitudes (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985; Milman, Reichel & Pizam, 1990; Pizam, Jafari, & Milman, 1991) or focus on classroom experiences and institutional orientation in terms of globalization (Kitsantis & Meyers, 2002). For this reason it was determined the development of new scale was warranted. This scale could be further tested on different populations including different study abroad groups but also potentially on volunteer tourists or cultural tourists.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The mixed methods approach to research has been gaining popularity over the last several years due to the mixing of qualitative and quantitative aspects it allows at all stages of the research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Using mixed methods capitalizes on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods while at the same time controlling for the limitations of each (Creswell, 2013). As will be described below, the mixed methods approach used in the current study provided a comprehensive approach to the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Design

The purpose of the study was to investigate how outside the classroom activities and experiences of study abroad participants impacts cultural attitude change and perceived cultural competence among students at Arizona State University and Vanderbilt University. Motivation to participate, expectations and actual outcomes for participants were also investigated. Due to the nature of the topic, a multiphase mixed methods design was used (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, a combined exploratory sequential approach and a concurrent embedded strategy were employed (see Figure 1 for a procedural diagram). Mixing quantitative and qualitative elements during data collection and interpretation allowed for the individual components of the research process to build on one another and make connections between the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).
Initially, qualitative data was collected as a first phase of the study. While parts of the questionnaire had already been developed at the time of the initial qualitative component, the results of this phase were used to build on the questionnaire items. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) discuss, when mixing methods during data collection one option is to use “the results of the first strand to shape the collection of data in the second strand” (p.67). As discussed below in Chapter 4 there were multiple items added to the questionnaire due to the results of the initial qualitative component.

The initial qualitative component of the study was followed by a two-part pretest-post test survey that also included qualitative methods to provide richer context and individual experiences from study abroad participants to complement the results of the questionnaire. The questions asked of participants in this embedded qualitative section were designed specifically to complement items from the questionnaire involving cultural competency and cultural attitudes. Additionally, in most cases participants in the qualitative section of this phase had completed both a pre and post-test questionnaire which serves to enhance the results.

Finally, quantitative and qualitative elements were mixed at the interpretation phase of the research. Each set of qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed separately, however the results were integrated where appropriate to complete the discussion of the research questions and hypotheses. As the main goal of using mixed
methods was to provide a more comprehensive approach to the research questions, mixing the results at the interpretation phase was a critical component of the project.

Qualitative Research Methods

As mentioned above, qualitative methods were used in both phases of the study including two projects conducted separately; a photo elicitation interview project and an email interview project with participants in the pre and post-test questionnaire. Qualitative methods are discussed in general and photo elicitation is discussed more specifically below.

The qualitative parts of the study employed phenomenology as a strategy of inquiry. The choice to use qualitative methods in addition to quantitative methods is validated in the literature on the topics of cultural attitudes and cultural competency. As well it was a logical decision because of the importance of the meanings of the comments of participants. The use of qualitative methods was necessary due to nature of the questions asked around cultural attitudes, cultural competence and other attitudes toward cultural differences. This is naturally a personal topic. In this case qualitative methods in conjunction with quantitative methods provided a personal study of individuals involved in the research in a unique way. While the results of the photo elicitation informed the development of the questionnaire, the email interviews conducted with participants allowed for microresearch (Stake, 2012) focused on the individuals who were also included in the results of the questionnaire in which they participated.

Deardorff (2006) determined through her work with intercultural scholars that the most effective way to assess intercultural competency was through a mixed methods approach. In her opinion, the use of quantitative instruments only told part of the story
and qualitative methods such as interviews and case studies were primarily advocated in the study of intercultural competency. Other researchers in the field focused solely on qualitative methods because of the personal nature of cultural attitudes and cultural competency. In her study of seven students studying in France for the summer, Wilkinson (1998) deliberately chose a qualitative research design in order to draw out the experiences of the students and how they were inevitably embedded in their own values and beliefs. In addition, McCabe (1994) also found the subject matter of developing cross-cultural understanding, or as he calls it a global perspective, more suitable to qualitative research methods. He states that “the descriptive nature of this study provided the opportunity to inspect the data for key words which indicated movement on the various dimensions” (p. 5) of global perspective. The way individuals feel about another culture and about their own ability to navigate and feel comfortable in another culture is influenced both by their past experiences and their present surroundings. The words and the context in which participants used them were important in this study. My role as a researcher when examining the data was to determine whether or not a relationship existed between study abroad participation and cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence.

Photo Elicitation

Photo elicitation is a research method whereby photographs chosen by the researcher or the respondent are presented in an interview situation (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Harper, 2002). In the context of research photo elicitation has been used in two ways: as a data collection tool and/or as a part of the data analysis process (Cederholm, 2004; Schwartz, 1989). Researchers can use the technique to help produce data in the
interviews or the photos themselves can be analyzed for their content in the cases where the respondents introduce photos.

This technique has been used in a number of fields with both purposes in mind primarily in sociology and anthropology (Dempsey & Tucker, 1991; Harper, 2002). There are a variety of examples of photo elicitation in numerous fields including investigations of education research and evaluation (Dempsey & Tucker, 1991), business research methods (Ryan & Ogilvie, 2011), rural sociology (Schwartz, 1989), ethnographies about specific cultures (Samuels, 2004), the meanings of outdoor experiences (Loeffler, 2004), research with children (Clark-Ibanez, 2004) as well as in methodological papers investigating the method itself (Carlsson, 2001; Dempsey & Tucker, 1991; Harper, 2002).

Photo elicitation is a natural technique to use in the field of tourism as most tourists take photographs to document their travel. Photo elicitation has been used to study the tourist experience in general (Matteucci, 2013), the backpacker experience (Cederholm, 2004) or simply to determine why tourists take photos in the first place and how photos might define the identity of the tourist (Belk & Yeh, 2011). In addition, photo elicitation has been used to discover how residents and guests view a destination (Garrod, 2008) and how residents view their community after tourism development (Kerstetter & Bricker, 2009).

Advantages

Harper (2002) suggested the potential for photo elicitation as a research method was great although he did not feel widely acknowledged. He believed that “images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words” (p. 13) based on the
differences in how the brain processes visual versus verbal information. Advantages of photo elicitation include the impact on 1) the research process, 2) the interview process, 3) participants’ memories, and 4) the actual information obtained in the interviews.

The use of photo elicitation may make participants more interested to participate in research than they would be in a more typical type of study as many find photography fun or interesting (Garrod, 2008; Matteucci, 2013; Samuels, 2004). With the current study, for example, recruitment to the photo elicitation portion versus recruitment into the other qualitative portion involving participants responding to questions via email was much simpler even though time requirements of the photo elicitation component were greater. Participants were given the option to share their stories through photographs and it can be assumed this was not an arduous task for most. While only 30 students completed all steps of the photo elicitation component, initially 243 students indicated they were interested in participating. In addition to participants finding photography a fun or interesting activity, many participants may join a photo elicitation study because they are eager to show off the photos they took, as was the case in the current study.

The use of photo elicitation may also have an advantageous impact on the interview process itself. A one-on-one interview with a stranger can be an awkward experience for both parties. Schwartz (1989), in her study of a rural Iowa town, found that the use of photographs in the interview helped to disarm the interviewee. In particular she likened looking at photographs in the interview to a “naturally occurring family event” (p.151) like viewing a photo album. It was a normal thing for these participants to do even if the circumstances of the interview may not have been normal. Other researchers have also remarked on how the use of photos in an interview setting
make participants feel more comfortable in the interview (Cederholm, 2004; Samuels, 2004) or how photos help researchers more quickly establish a rapport with participants (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Samuels, 2004) since each party has something to focus on: the photo (Carlsson, 2001). Clark-Ibanez found that photos could help develop a structure for the interview. By organizing an interview around a selection of photos the researcher can, for example, move to another photo in the event of conversation lulls and enforce an ending point to an interview when all photo selections have been reviewed. Clark-Ibanez feels that “researchers can use photographs as a tool to expand on questions and simultaneously, participants can use photographs to provide a unique way to communicate dimensions of their lives” (p.1512).

As most people can attest, viewing a photograph can often enhance memories. The impact of photos on participants’ memories is especially useful in the interview process. A participant may be able to answer questions in greater detail when presented with a photograph as the photo can help the mind recall more clearly and deeply (Cederholm, 2004; Clark-Ibanez, 2004). Photographs can easily take one back to a specific moment in time, even aid in recalling the emotions and experiences from when the photograph was taken. One respondent in the current study commented during her interview on a photo “It was a spot I found out (about) before I left, and so it was a spot I was anxious to go visit. And, just that experience was so powerful to me, that looking at that photo, I feel like I’m there again.”

When considering the information obtained in interviews using photo elicitation, much research points to the richness of the resulting data. Samuels (2004), in his study of child monks in Sri Lanka, used photo elicitation as a technique in later interviews he
conducted with the monks. When comparing the information he learned from the photo elicitation interviews to the earlier interviews where photos were not used, Samuels found the photo interviews yielded data which was “more detailed . . . more meaningful to the participants” (p. 1547) and included greater descriptions. Carlsson (2001), in her methodological paper on photo elicitation, found that when individuals provided explanations of a photo the quality of the explanation and the expression of feelings was better. In the current study there were times when participants were asked to interpret a photo and the response was less than deep, for example, when participants simply stated what the photograph was: a photo of turtles or a photo of the Eiffel Tower rather than explaining what the photograph meant. However, for the majority of respondents, photos seemed to make individuals not only more talkative but also more introspective when compared to typical interviews.

Disadvantages

While the advantages of using photo elicitation seem to far outweigh the disadvantages, there are still limitations to this technique many of which seem to be specific to the nuances of individual studies, including: 1) exaggeration, 2) type of photos submitted, 3) ethical concerns and 3) design of the project.

Carlsson (2001) discussed five arguments that explained the utility of photo elicitation as a research method. Her only specific concern with using photo elicitation was in her words “the risk to exaggerate, or read into the photos more than was the intention when taking them” (p.141). This was experienced in the current study in the case of several participants who, when discussing their photo submissions, talked about life-changing incidents, made analogies to religious conflicts in the Middle East, or in a
few cases were bought to tears. However, Carlsson believed this exaggeration only
served to enhance the interview data. This was the case for the current study as well. For
example, in one case while a participant was reviewing a photo she submitted to the study
during the interview she talked about how the study abroad program had changed her life.
We can assume it wasn’t the photograph that changed her life but instead her recollection
of the experiences. By including the photograph in the interview the participant was able
to remember deeply personal and meaningful experiences. Essentially, her reaction was
amplified by including the photograph.

In his paper, Matteucci (2013) discussed the tourist experience using photos of
flamenco dancers and culture he gathered and presented to participants. Participants
were asked to view the photos and discuss, among other things, if the photos represented
their experiences, if they could understand the feelings of the individuals in the
photographs, and to select which photos best represented their experiences. He mentions
one drawback to this research in that participants may select photos which portray the
experiences in a positive light. This is of course a risk in studies using respondent
generated photographs as well because individuals may only submit photos that show
themselves or their experiences in a positive way. That happened on more than one
occasion with the current study as indicated when participants mentioned they submitted
a particular photo for the aesthetic quality or because they “looked good” in a particular
photo. However, this doesn’t diminish the level of discussion in the interviews for the
most part, and in some cases led to profound revelations in the data related to the
development of self-esteem.
With respect to ethical considerations when using photographs taken by respondents, it is likely other people will be in the photographs that we can assume do not know they are potentially part of a research project. Another possibility is the respondent could submit photographs of illegal activity. The solution to this issue is to instruct participants to avoid submitting photographs which clearly identify others or depict illegal activities. In a situation where that happens, interviews can continue, but the researcher can decline to use the information as part of their overall project or publications.

Lastly, while not an issue in the current study, researchers have mentioned the design of the project as a potential disadvantage (Garrod, 2008; Ryan & Ogilvie, 2011). For example, if conducting a photo elicitation study where the investigation is on experiencing nature during the fall season and participants take photos during the winter season that can be a problem for the study. Again, this is more a problem with the design of the project which can be mitigated by enforcing a timeline on respondents. Additionally, if participants are required to take photos in situations where they would not naturally do so, that could also be an issue for participants. In the current study, taking photographs was a normal event for all of the participants. Particularly in the age of digital photography multiple participants indicated they had taken thousands of photographs on their study abroad program. The difficult part wasn’t taking the photograph, it was deciding which ten photos to submit for the study.

Quantitative Research Methods

Overall, the study utilizes a quantitative priority (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) giving prominence to the results of the survey when considering the purpose of the study.
A cross-sectional study of a large number of participants through the administration of a pre-trip and a post-trip self-administered online questionnaire ensured the information gathered could be analyzed and used to better understand participants. The pre-test was administered online before students studied abroad to assess their cultural attitudes to the host culture and perceived cultural competence. A similar post-test was administered online after the study abroad program had finished to assess the impact of their tourist activities and experiences.

**Exploratory sequential component**

For the first qualitative component of this study, a photo elicitation project was conducted in summer 2012. In the case of the current study, the participants were asked to submit and then to interpret the photographs during the interviews. I did not interpret the meanings behind the photographs. Instead, photo elicitation was used as a data collection tool and specifically as a device in the interviews to encourage talk and discussion on the personal and complex topics under study. Participants were asked to provide photos which represented best their experiences in another culture. The use of photo elicitation here allowed the participants, rather than the researcher, to define culture and what it meant to them in way that seemed mostly fun and interesting for the participants. Photo elicitation is particularly useful in this context. As summed up by Harper (2002), “Photographs appear to capture the impossible: a person gone; an event past. That extraordinary sense of seeming to retrieve something that has disappeared belongs alone to the photograph, and it leads to deep and interesting talk” (p.11) which it certainly did in the case of the current study.
Selection of Participants

The photo elicitation project involved 30 purposefully selected ASU students participating in a study abroad program during summer 2012. All students enrolled in an ASU summer study abroad program were given the option to participate in the study. Students were invited to participate in the study through their online study abroad student account, which all students must have in order to apply for and participate in an ASU study abroad program. The questionnaire inviting students to participate appeared as an action item in their account. The ASU study abroad office sent contact and program information for all students who answered yes to the invitation to participate. Initially 243 students indicated they would be interested in participating in the study. Forty-seven students sent photos for the study either by email or through a Facebook group created for the study. Of those 47 students, interviews were completed with 30 individuals.

This component of data collection involved students from ASU only for two reasons. First of all, as interviews were conducted with all photo elicitation participants it was much easier to facilitate in-person interviews with ASU students given that both the participants and I were located in Arizona for the majority of interviews. Secondly, Vanderbilt has a limited number of students studying abroad in the Summer term.

Data Collection and Recording Methods

In advance of interviews the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance approved the protocol for the interviews. Approval for exemption for the research can be found in Appendix A. Once students indicated their willingness to participate they were contacted via email (Appendix B). In this email it was explained to participants that they may submit photos via email or through a Facebook group set up specifically for the study.
Those wishing to submit via email were not contacted again until photos were requested. If participants wished to submit via Facebook they were given further instructions on how to join the Facebook group. Roughly mid-way through the study abroad program participants were contacted via email to ask them to submit photos at the time if they wished. Upon the end of the study abroad program, participants were contacted again via email to submit additional photos and to schedule an interview. Participants were asked to provide up to 10 photos. They were directed to provide photos which for them represented best their experiences in another culture. Students were interviewed on or near the ASU campus or via Skype if they were outside of the Phoenix area. Consent letters were presented to all participants to review in advance of the interview (Appendix C). Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each and were digitally recorded. Photo release forms were also given to participants to review and sign (Appendix D). While all photos were used in analysis of the project, if participants did not consent to have their photos displayed in subsequent publications of this research it was noted.

Interviews on their photo choices were conducted as soon as possible after receipt of photographs to clarify and validate the meanings of the photos to the individual. Metaphors were explored and participants were asked to illustrate with examples from their experiences wherever appropriate. For each photo submitted, the following questions were posed to the participant, some of which were based on questions asked by Carlsson (2001). These questions were semi-structured to ensure consistency in the interviews but also to allow for flexibility in probing specific issues for further
clarification. Additional questions were frequently determined at the time of the interview based on the responses of participants.

1. Interpret the photo for me. Tell me about this photo.
2. Why did you take this picture?
3. Why did you select this photo to send for the study?
4. What does this photo represent to you?
5. Do you remember what you were thinking at the time the photo was taken?
6. In hindsight, now that you have returned from your study abroad program, does this photo accurately represent your experience?
   a. Why or why not?
7. Additionally, if participants submitted more than one photo, they were asked which photo they liked the best and why.

No follow up interviews were required.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Following each interview, time was spent on jotting down notes, ideas and highlights of the interview. The digital recordings were transcribed word for word. After transcription, all interview documents were loaded to Atlas.ti (qualitative data software). Any additional notes were compiled and also loaded to the Atlas.ti document. Then all documents were read through multiple times. Following Corbin and Strauss (2008) I looked at the meanings of the words in the interviews, drew on personal experience with the field of study abroad and considered the emotions of the interviewees. From there several informal memos were written following Stake’s memoing technique (2010). These memos helped to form the analysis process and determine what was important in
the answers when considering the research questions. The memos were used to help develop the leads in the interviews which were followed, basically the emerging themes and ideas or comments which existed across programs and participants. Common themes from each experience were identified and explored. Memos were moved to general categories and then specific codes.

Atlas.ti was primarily used to manage the large number of codes and to help identify co-occurring codes in the analysis process. Essentially, the coding process was to: 1) use open coding to classify portions of the interview data into larger categories and 2) use axial coding with the assistance of Atlas.ti to determine how codes were related to one another to combine codes or create new codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This process was repeated always with the research questions in mind. Initially, 62 codes were identified. Co-occurring codes recognized in Atlas.ti were explored to ensure information overlapped or could be combined. After the initial analysis, 31 codes were discarded for the current study and the remaining codes were combined where appropriate to form the themes of the research presented in the results section. Data is represented by participant comments around the developed themes.

Concurrent embedded component

The second component of the study involved a quantitative assessment and qualitative exercise with study participants in the spring and early summer terms of 2013.

Quantitative component

In this study, participation in the study abroad program was similar to an experimental treatment with the post-test measuring changes in the dependent variables of cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence of the participant. These
variables were measured through the online questionnaires developed based on the literature, past research, and the findings of the photo elicitation study conducted in the summer of 2012. The online questionnaires include a series of questions investigating cultural attitudes and competence on a Likert scale and other measures such as unordered response. Open-ended questions were also used.

**Selection of Participants**

The study population was ASU and VU students participating in either an ASU or VU approved study abroad program during the spring or summer semesters. The sample was not random but instead all participants in a study abroad program in spring and summer 2013 at both universities were invited to participate in the study through their online study abroad student accounts. The population size was 1092 students. The questionnaire inviting students to participate appeared as an action item in their accounts. The ASU and VU study abroad offices sent contact and program information for all students who answered yes to the invitation to participate.

ASU and VU were selected for this study for various reasons. Primarily, it was out of convenience as I have connections at both institutions in the study abroad office. As well, both institutions provided diversity in terms of study abroad offerings with a variety of study abroad program models, length of programs and countries of study. Lastly, both institutions have very different profiles which contributed to the diversity of the participants as ASU is a large, public institution located in the Southwest USA and VU is a small, private institution located in the Southern USA.
Data Collection Methods

In advance of data collection the protocol was approved by the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance. Approval for exemption for the research can be found in Appendix E. Once students indicated their willingness to participate they were contacted via email (Appendix F). In this email it was explained to participants that the project would involve completion of an online survey before and after the study abroad program. As well, students were given a link to the survey and a code to enter which was specific to them to ensure confidentiality. Consent letters were also attached to the email for participants to review (Appendix G). For the study, a pre-test was administered online before students studied abroad to assess their cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence. A similar post-test was administered online after the study abroad program had finished to again assess the impact of their tourist activities on their cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence. In total 614 participants answered yes to the original invitation to participate in the study. These participants were sent an email with a link to the pre-test roughly one month before the start of their study abroad program. Regardless of whether or not the pre-test was completed, all students who answered yes to the original invitation to participate were sent an email with a link to the post-test roughly one week before the end of their study abroad program. In each case, students were sent reminder emails to complete the questionnaire. For both the pre and post-tests there was 326 attempts on the questionnaire with 264 complete questionnaires for the pre-test and 259 complete questionnaires for the post-test. Of all the pre and post-tests 179 could be matched to a specific individual.
**Data Collection Instrument**

The theoretical framework outlined in the literature review contributed to the development of items on the questionnaire. Contact theory with its emphasis on length of contact and type of contact experienced by one group interacting with another, aided in developing items for the questionnaire which reflected the variety of study abroad models and their influence on the attitude changes toward the host culture as experienced by the participants. Study abroad models can include, for example, differences in length of time abroad; housing situations, which may influence the depth of contact (for students living with host families or other nationals of the host culture rather than with students from the home country); or even academic content, such as learning the host culture language which may alter the nature of interactions experienced. Intercultural competence theory essentially represents an individual’s perception of her or his ability to communicate and engage in cultures different from her or his own. For that reason, pre and post test items tested for individuals' assessments of their abilities to be successful in the host culture. Cultural distance was used to assess and evaluate the cultural distance of the country where the student studied from their home country. The similarity or dissimilarity of the host country to the home country was used to examine the differences in changes in cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence. In addition to literature from the field of study abroad, motivation theory helped to contribute items to the questionnaire regarding reasons participants studied abroad in general and reasons participants studied abroad on the particular program. Results of the photo elicitation study also influenced the items in the questionnaire (see Chapter 4). As well some items were adapted from
Sindt and Pachmayer (2006). The pre-test questionnaire can be found in Appendix H and the post-test questionnaire in Appendix I.

The questionnaire was piloted at ASU with a select group of students in Fall 2012. Students enrolled in an upper-level tourism class for Fall 2012 were asked to participate in the pilot study. The pilot study was reviewed and any changes necessary were made to the instrument. These included mainly typographical errors and grammatical issues to ensure respondents could easily understand the questions.

Variables and Measurements

The pre and post-test questionnaire each consisted of 36 items with several of the items having multiple statements for participants to address. For the most part both tests were similar save for the post-test statements being re-worded to ask participants about the study abroad program in which they participated. Demographic information was collected on both tests and multiple open-ended questions about participants’ thoughts on culture were also on both tests. On the pre and post-tests cultural attitudes, cultural competency and motives were measured on 5-point Likert agreement scales. The pre-test also consisted of mainly open-ended questions regarding participants’ expectations of skills they would gain from study abroad and challenges they thought they would face while abroad. The post-test differed in that participants were asked several questions on a 5-point Likert scale about how often they participated in activities or events outside the classroom and about their daily experiences in the host country. Additional open-ended questions on the post-test queried participants on their fluency and use of the host country language while abroad and asked participants to recall specific experiences of cultural differences.
**Data Analysis Procedures**

Upon completion of data collection there were 8 separate data sets. These data sets were merged. First, all cases for ASU and VU students were merged followed by variables from the pre and post-tests. After merging, the data were cleaned for errors such as text entries in numeric fields, duplicates, etc.

For the pre and post questionnaire results, cases were matched by using the unique ID number that was designated to each participants and a descriptive analysis of demographic data was performed. Statistical tests for pre and post-tests of the same case were used and included factor analysis, correlations, multivariate analysis of variance, simple linear regression and paired sample t-tests. Results were interpreted based on the literature and past research for the effect of the tourist activities on cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competence while participating in the study abroad program.

**Qualitative component**

The concurrent embedded qualitative component of the study consisted of an online writing exercise which was conducted via email communication in spring 2013.

**Selection of Participants**

As part of the pre-test questionnaire, participants were asked if they wished to participate in a brief online writing exercise through email while they were studying abroad. Participants who responded yes were contacted by email roughly midway through their study abroad program. Initially, 28 students from ASU and 14 students from VU indicated they would participate in this section of the study. In total there were 18 participants who completed the exercise, 10 ASU students and 8 VU students.
**Data collection Methods**

As noted above, participants who responded yes to participate in this section on the questionnaire were contacted via email with five questions to respond to roughly midway through their study abroad program. Participants were reminded one time to complete the exercise. The most salient questions asked during the qualitative part of the study were around the topics of cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency. Participants were asked to reflect on the following questions:

1. How have your cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency been affected by your participation in this study abroad program?
2. How have your attitudes towards the host country been affected by your participation in this study abroad program?
3. How have your attitudes towards your home country changed with study abroad participation?
4. What were some the key learning incidents (Janes 2008) that influenced your cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency and where did they take place?

There was no need to transcribe this section as participants submitted all their answers via email.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis procedures for this section were the same as the photo elicitation section save for transcribing interviews which was not necessary as participants responded to questions via email. Initially, 26 codes were identified. From there codes
were combined or discarded with 12 remaining codes making up the framework for the three major themes found in the data which are presented in Chapter 4.

Summary

This multiphase study was conducted in two parts consisting of an exploratory sequential component in summer 2012 and a concurrent embedded component in spring and summer 2013. The initial qualitative component informed the questionnaire development and results of the study and was followed by a mixed method strategy involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Exploratory Sequential Component

This section is divided into two parts. The first part will explain the results of the initial qualitative component of the study, the photo elicitation study, and provide detail about the themes of cultural attitudes and development of cultural competency which were found in the data. Additional themes of each that further explained the actual experiences and individual outcomes of students participating in the programs are also presented in this section. The second part describes the ways in which the data contributed to the development of the questionnaire used in the concurrent embedded component. In addition a description of the participants is presented to give additional detail about them.

Description of Participants

For the photo elicitation study, all those studying abroad at ASU in Summer 2012 were invited to participate and 30 students completed the project, by sending photos from their trip and completing an interview based on the photo choices. The ASU study abroad programs for that term consisted of Faculty Directed programs where a group of ASU students traveled to their host country or countries together with one or more ASU faculty studying a specific academic area. Students in these programs earned direct ASU credit as if they were enrolled in the course at the ASU campus in Arizona.

Faculty directed programs offer academic coursework complemented with a tour of the host country or host countries. They are typically shorter in length, have no foreign language requirement, and often times travel to more than one destination. This
model does not always allow for extended periods at a destination or immersion into the host culture due to the living and traveling situation which is why they are sometimes referred to as “island programs”. However, similar to other study abroad program models, interactions with the host culture are generally a feature and can range from visiting touristic or cultural sites to organized functions, meetings, classes or guest lectures with locals and beyond. Additionally, participants have the opportunity to experience the host culture simply by virtue of being there. See Table 1 for a description of the participants and Table 2 for a summary of this information.

Table 1

Description of Participants – Summer 2012 Initial Qualitative Component

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>City, Country</th>
<th>Weeks abroad</th>
<th>Previous foreign travel</th>
<th>Previous travel to the region</th>
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 participant #2 studied computer programming in tokyo and kyoto, japan. he was an avid video game player and mentioned several times throughout the interview how he knew of specific places in japan due to recognizing them from video games as
well as movies. While he had not previously traveled in Japan, other than transiting through the Tokyo airport, this participant had lived in South Korea for two years and traveled to multiple places in Europe, the Bahamas and Egypt.

Participant #5 was studying literature and history in France. She had no knowledge of French and had not previously traveled to France or anywhere in the European region. She did have prior travel experiences to several unique destinations including India, Bangladesh and Malaysia.

Participant #11 had a significant amount of prior travel experience due to his former background with the military. Compared to most of the participants he was more focused on the aesthetics of the photos he took. However, he was studying film in Italy so the emphasis on submitting photographs with an aesthetic appeal makes sense. He mentioned little interaction with the local people and seemed to have more of a typical tourist experience. He had a great camera and wanted to capture photos of the experience and the other ASU students with whom he had traveled.

Participant #14 was studying in Florence, Italy and was fluent in Italian. This participant had studied on the same program the summer before and enjoyed herself enough that she decided to participate a second time in summer 2012. Rather than taking regular courses, she was completing an internship where she was tutoring beginning and intermediate Italian students from ASU on the same program. Prior to her traveling to Italy, she spent every summer in Ecuador with family until the age of 15. She had a strong desire to live in Italy and had plans to do so in the future.

Participant #26 was studying social, cultural and environmental change in China. Before summer of 2012 she had never left the US. She grew up in a rural area of Arizona
and related a lot of her experiences growing up into the interview about China. Specifically, concerning food she was mainly unfazed with exotic foods and an incident during the village stay. The group had seen live chickens during their village stay which presumably they later were served for dinner. From the interview she seemed more comfortable in less urban areas of China.

Participant #28 was also studying on the same program as participant #26 above. He grew up in West Africa and before traveling to China he had traveled in France. Likely because of his different cultural background growing up in Africa he appeared to be fairly comfortable in China which he said was similar to African countries because it was poor yet developing. He discussed specific meals which reminded him of meals in his home country and were so different than meal he was used to in his adopted country of the US.

Themes

cultural Attitudes

Cultural attitudes were conveyed by participants in three ways which are presented as sub-categories to the main theme. These sub-themes are 1) expectations and assumptions, 2) cultural adjustment and trying new things and 3) attitudes.

Expectations and Assumptions

While interpreting their submitted photos, several participants brought up expectations they had for their host country or host culture. In some cases their expectations were met and in others the expectations were not confirmed. Expectations centered on several key categories including: 1) traditional versus modern, 2) language and 3) general expectations.
**Traditional versus modern.** Participant #1, who traveled to China and had not traveled internationally beyond Mexico before the study abroad program, marveled at the modernity of China. Upon a visit to the Bund, a riverfront tourist area in Shanghai, she took a photo which resembled the London skyline to a degree (see Figure 2). She stated, “So that’s exactly why I took the picture because it looks completely like nothing I would expect in China.” She went on to say:

It (the photo) depicted a different country or a different part of the world, not China that I would expect to see. So I was very impressed and very surprised that the China that I imagined prior to going on this trip is so different from the China I saw in this area.

When asked what the China she imagined was she stated,

The China I imagined was . . . I knew that they were modern in many ways but I imagined very traditional . . . I guess more of a rural type of area, but I knew there were city areas but nothing compared to what this picture represents.

*Figure 2.* Shanghai, China skyline.
Participant #26 also travelled to China and had also been surprised at the level of modernity she experienced in China. She submitted a photo of a temple in Beijing and to her the photo represented what you expected to see in China. However, when asked to interpret the photo she said:

The photo is like... it’s like what you think about when you think of China. Like there’s temples [sic] everywhere. But that’s not true. There’s [sic] only a few temples and they are set up like this, like very touristy. You have to pay to get in, there’s [sic] just a lot of people there. Umm when you think about temples you think of something serene and quiet but no it’s not. It’s not. They took the temple and they made it something different in China.

Participant #8, who spent a month studying in Alicante, Spain, also expected a less modern city. “I thought it would be more spread out but it was very city-like, more than I expected. The buildings are all very close. It was just more modern than I thought it would be in general.” She mentioned that her expectations for Spain were based on things she had read and movies.

I read a lot before I went. I had never been out of the United States before, so through movies and letting my imagination go wild. It was a lot different, especially in Madrid. It wasn't as old as I thought it would be. It was a lot more modern.

Participant #2, who studied in Japan, was different than the other students mentioned in that he was expecting to see modern skylines on his study abroad. He had submitted a photo of a temple he visited in Kyoto and discussed that to him that photo represented
. . . what I wanted in Japan a lot. You know I knew there was going to be a lot of cityscape especially in Tokyo. But this is what I wanted to see more I think. It just kind of represents like the older traditional style of Japan that, you know, in especially movies that you see. I mean it just represented that era and I really like that part of Japan.

During the interview he repeatedly stated he was looking forward to seeing more traditional places in Japan. When asked where the images in his head were from he said the ideas came from he said, “Umm . . . a lot of different things I guess. Textbooks, again video games probably movies, TV shows. Probably the animated stuff too. Umm . . . all of that combined with what you see on the Internet.”

**Language.** While only six of the participants were studying in countries where English was the native language, relatively few participants mentioned language as an issue or potential issue. This is perhaps because most of the participants were traveling in European destinations where English is typically more widely spoken. Nonetheless, two participants who studied in Spain indicated their expectations that locals would speak more English. Participant #12 who was studying Spanish in Seville, Spain to help fulfill his Spanish minor indicated:

Interviewee: We always had to use it (Spanish). It was everywhere. It was more so than I thought.

Interviewer: Okay. You were thinking most people would be able to speak English?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. You had heard that? Or, you kind of thought that's how it was?
Interviewee: Well, when I went with my parents both times we had no issues. We could always find someone. But, now I have no idea. I don't know. Maybe they weren't trying to speak English . . .

Participant #8 who studied in Alicante, Spain was also expected people in Spain to speak English more. As mentioned above Spain was must more modern than she expected and she also mentioned, “Another thing was that they didn't speak as much English as I thought they would.”

Participant #16 studied in Costa Rica and was overall surprised at the hospitality of the people in Costa Rica. She mentioned she was expecting people would not “take” to her as well as they did. When asked why she thought that way she said she thought language was going to be an issue in Costa Rica. “Maybe the cultural barrier (was going to be an issue). My Spanish wasn't that great. I was able to communicate but maybe they might take offense at my not understanding Spanish that well or something.”

The lack of language seemed to impact participant #21’s experience in China. She had previously traveled in less traditional destinations like Pakistan, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, however China was different for this participant:

I guess China was different, though, because I didn't speak or read the language. So, half the stuff that was in English was obviously for tourists, and that's the only thing that I could read. So, I guess that sort of also drove where we went and what our experience in China was like, because we could not interact with the locals at any degree because we didn't speak the language.

**General expectations.** Participants expressed general expectations for the host country in a variety of ways. Several participants discussed expectations related to what
they thought they would see at the destinations in which they were studying. Participant #18 was a graduate student studying landscape architecture in Rome, Amsterdam and Paris. He knew about some aspects of Amsterdam and how certain things were legal or tolerated and this prior knowledge impacted what he expected to see in Amsterdam. Many times during the interview he mentioned how Amsterdam was so clean and nice and how it wasn’t what he expected.

When you think of Amsterdam you're like, it's legal drugs, prostitution. Okay. That's like Vegas and Vegas is nasty, dirty. So you're thinking it's got to be the same as Vegas or worse. Then you go there and it's the cleanest place ever. How does this exist?

On the other hand, to some extent the expectations of what participant #12 thought she would see in Spain were met. She had submitted a photo of a park in Madrid. When asked if the photo represented a part of her experiences in Spain she replied, “Yeah. Because this is a really cool park, and that's also how I imagined Spain, a bunch of parks, and people walking around, just during the day.”

Finally multiple students discussed their expectations of the host country based on what they thought they already knew about the host culture. In Israel participant #24 was acutely aware of the conflict between Arabs and Israelis based on her preparation for the study abroad program. Her guide was Israeli and had taken the group to an Arab market. Her guide explained “they're not bad people, they're just different, they believe this and we believe that, and there's an understanding, and no one crosses the understanding or the boundary lines.” She expected to routinely find evidence of the conflict saying, “I
thought it would be on a more daily, interpersonal level and it's really not.” She continued to explain:

It was just certain checkpoints maybe, if you're trying to get into a certain city, but it was never like, “Oh I'm not serving you”, or “Why are we at a Lebanese food restaurant” or “Why are we at an Arab market”, it was never like that. Everyone was really welcoming which was something that I really didn't expect.

Participant #27 who studied in New Zealand had expected to see the Maori influence but was not anticipating the influence of the British in the country despite the long history of British involvement in New Zealand. She submitted a photo of the train station in the town of Dunedin. When asked what the photo represented to her she expressed her thoughts on the cultural influence she expected.

And that was our first stop in NZ. So that was pretty cool. But the first place, I was expecting the Maori to be more in the agriculture and architecture I guess. And to find out that Britain also had a huge part in the architecture was pretty cool.

While participant #27 experienced something she didn’t expect and had found it relatively satisfying, the opposite happened to participant #8. She attended a bullfight in Madrid while studying in Alicante. She commented

It was kind of disappointing, I guess, because it wasn't how the movies portrayed it. It wasn't so one-on-one, like you would think, with a bull and a bullfighter. It was three different stages. It started with six on one and they pretty much would kill the bull before they would even get to one on one. It was a letdown. Then
they do six bulls each bullfight and it was bullfighting season so they do it every
day. It was really sad. But the Spaniards were so into it.

She also learned that tranquilizers were used on the bull during the bullfight by the
bullfighters. “They (the bullfighters) literally kill it. That was one thing I didn't know. I
thought it was just that a bull comes out, there's a fighter and there you go.”

**Cultural Adjustment and Trying New Things**

None of the participants indicated they had significant difficulty adapting to the
culture of their host countries. Simple things such as getting used to when you would
typically eat dinner or the cost of everyday items were part of the cultural adaptation
process but not overwhelming. A part of cultural adjustment is experiencing new things
and whether on a vacation or a study abroad program, inevitably an individual will try
new things be it food, adventurous experiences, speaking a foreign language or other
types of activities. For participants in the study primarily the focus was on trying new
foods unfamiliar to participants and what that meant to them.

Participant #17 who traveled to China found himself trying new things simply
because he was somewhere new. He said, “I would go and eat this weird stuff just
because I'm now in adventurous mode and I'm somewhere else, somewhere new. I can do
new things. I can do anything now.”

When asked if that was how he typically acted when in a new place he responded,

That's a hard thing to say. I feel like I adapt very easily. I don't go anywhere and
say, "Oh, I can't handle it," or something. So, I feel, overall, that I'm pretty easy-
going, that I can adapt pretty quickly to new situations but here in the US, I don't
hike as much (referring to a challenging hike on the Great Wall) and I don't go out
to actively seek new adventures as much. So, I think when I was in China that was very good.

Adaptability and acceptance were brought up several times during this particular interview. From the literature we know that these two traits are important in an individual being successful in cross-cultural interactions (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Hannigan, 1990; Hammer et al., 1978). The participant mentioned several times the idea of being more accepting of cultural differences. Particularly in China he noticed the prevalence of smoking and spitting which he said he learned was for health reasons to expel bad things from the body. He said things like “it's just a different attitude and you just have to be more accepting.”

Participant #19 also had comments about trying new foods. Having traveled to England for her study abroad program, she stated she had wanted to try the traditional Full English Breakfast since she arrived in England though her classmates didn’t quite understand why. “It was so delicious, and everyone when I was kind of telling them what was on it they were like sticking up their noses.” Participant #19 was studying food and culture but stated, “I never really thought about the different cultural types of food.” She determined to take full advantage of being in England down to trying new foods which was different than the actions she observed from other participants.

I think just going (to England) opened up my world too. I'm here, I'm going to try this food, this is the only time really I'll be able to try it. I know some people on my trip got their pizza and they got their hamburger and you can't do that. So I was just so excited to try something that I thought was super traditional. I had never done that before. I was trying to go head first into it.
Participant #24 who studied in Israel submitted a photo she took during a lunch with their tour guide where some individuals on the program became ill from the food including her. When asked if in hindsight the photo represented her experiences she replied,

Yes. Not everything in another place is always going to work out, and that's just part of the fun, it's not the end of the world. The first few days we were there, we were like, what if this is bad or what if this gets us sick? And then after that, you're like, who cares, if it does, we'll just go to their version of a Walgreens and we'll get something or we'll get a different snack.

She explained that “...just really going with the flow, trying to be as open as possible, that was a lot of that trip, just be open.” She stated that for the most part the rest of the students on the trip had the same mindset and speculated that as Israel was not a popular choice for most study abroad participants, those who did choose Israel tended to have more of an open mind to start with.

She also submitted photo taken at a local market. Participant #24 found the place “filthy” saying also “it smelled terrible”. She went in to the market anyway to try new things and described it as an “authentic place”. She said,

I guess kind of like the food, just really being open, going to new places, you can't ever really judge how something's going to be from the outside. You never really know the potential something has until you go into it.

Another photo submitted by participant #24 shows her riding a camel in the desert. While this is a typical activity tourists partake in, recalling the experience reminded the participant of her willingness to be involved with the host culture while she was studying
abroad. When asked if the photo represented a part of her experiences she replied, “Oh yes, definitely.” She went on to say:

It just makes me feel proud to know that I didn't just go there and halfway participate or halfway engage with people there, I fully tried to engage in every aspect that I could, and had really neat experiences that I get to tell people all the time now.

**Attitudes**

Participants typically conveyed their actual cultural attitudes in three ways. There were, of course, general expressed attitudes about the host country or about their workings in the host country. Additionally opinions on the differences and similarities to home were formed which also express their cultural attitudes

**General attitudes.** Participant #3 who studied in Paris, Amsterdam and Rome commented on the friendly disposition of the French. While the stereotype is that the French aren’t friendly to Americans or other foreigners she found the French different, particularly when she approached them with what can be assumed she means as a friendly attitude.

I think that they were actually really nice in France and I think personally that they basically treated foreigners the same way that Americans treat foreigners. And I think your attitude, how you go to them really spoke about the way they would reply back to you.

One of her classmates on the same program, participant #18, again was impressed by Amsterdam where he found the locals and very helpful and very friendly:
(in Amsterdam) You would ask somebody a question and everybody speaks English. You’d ask somebody a question, Okay. Where’s the metro? and they would be like, Oh, let me just show you. They would go out of their way to walk you all the way to the metro. Instead of just pointing on a map, they would walk you there. That happened numerous times. Every time we asked somebody they would just show us, they would walk us there. You’re like, Holy cow.

However, he had a very different experience than his classmate in Paris saying plainly, “Half the people were assholes in Paris” and that he “pretty much hated half the people in Paris.” He expressed the anti-American sentiment that he felt during the study abroad program. One evening when they were out in Paris they were not allowed into a club. He stated, “One club wouldn’t even let us in. They’re like, we don’t let Americans in here.” Going back to participant #3’s thoughts that how you approach people will impact their attitude towards you might explain his experiences. He mentioned in the interview how on some occasions him and others in the study abroad program were acting like “dumb Americans” and sometimes “making a scene.”

On the other hand Participant #22 said “we did our best to not do anything American, like blatantly obviously we’re not from here.” She found the people to be “in general not really harsh or unwelcoming” but still did experience anti-American sentiment. She told a story of a visit to a pub.

. . . we were in a pub and they started playing “Don’t Stop Believing” by Journey and we were just like, nobody react, nobody say a word, don’t do it, so. We had a friend that was talking to some locals and they’re just like I can’t believe you didn’t burst into song because all the Americans tend to do that, so . . . It was kind
of unusual, because we’re like, really? We don’t judge people that come to visit us for singing along to things like that, we’re just like, have fun with that, and they’re just like ugh, Americans, you know?

It’s clear past experiences these locals had with Americans influenced their reaction to this group of Americans.

Participant #24 had a different experience trying to explain to people back home why she would want to go to Israel. She submitted a photo of a large memorial menorah in Jerusalem. When asked if she felt the photo accurately represented some of the experiences she had on her study abroad she said

Yes definitely, it just really makes me reaffirm, and I’m just trying to tell people that I went to Israel, and they’re like, “Oh my god, why would you do that?” It’s like no, they’re great people and they constantly go forward with their life, and they’re all about helping and being who they are.”

Different from home. Participants talked about how their host country was different from home based on general comparisons, comparisons of certain traditions and comparisons that put the US in a negative light.

General comparisons. Participants made many general comparisons to their home country that centered on architecture and in some cases led the students to deeper impressions about their host country. Participant #8 who studied in Spain had numerous comments about the architecture there. She had never left the United States before her study abroad experiences and made many comparisons to Arizona and the US. For one photo she took in Alicante, she compared how she imagined structures were built in Spain versus the US. “Just how close all the buildings are. They don't flatten out the land
like we do here before building. If there's a hill, then you build your house slanted like 
that. They just go with it.” She said that in Spain, “Everyone has a balcony. It was really 
beautiful and there's all these different colors.” But she felt that in the States “We make 
all the houses look the same and there's not so many windows”, particularly in Arizona 
“where it's all flat and stucco and pueblo-looking.”

This participant also compared churches in Spain and the US. Having submitted a 
photo of La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona she stated:

I know we have churches that are just as beautiful as that but I feel like ours are 
more flashy and marble. Those are our kind of churches. This one has more of a 
nature look. It doesn't look old, but it has an older look about it.

Participant #24 who studied in Israel also compared the architecture of a religious 
structure in Israel to home. The photo she submitted was of the Dome of the Rock. She 
was studying terrorism so mentioned she was viewing through the eyes of a target of 
terrorism, but she could not help to also appreciate the beauty of the place. She says that 
she picked this photo to submit because:

It represents such a diverse culture and it's so different from anything you see 
here, where everything is tan and concrete and lacks color, each one of these is 
tiles [sic] that are colored something different, so it’s just so intricate.

When asked what she meant by saying the photo represented a diverse culture, she 
explained

I feel like Israel obviously has a lot of conflict around it, but even with that 
conflict, each of the entities fully represents themselves, there's no halfway. It's a 
very out-there, everyone knows what it is, whether that makes them a bigger
target or not, it doesn't matter, that's who they are, it's part of their faith, which is a big part of their life. I just think it was really great and it was something that not everyone gets to see.

Participant #8 also made a connection from architecture to a larger social commentary. She submitted a photo of the Plaza Mayor in Madrid. She stated, “people actually live in these buildings, which was very strange to me because it's a monument building now, I suppose. Here, if it was a monument, you wouldn't let just anyone live there, but they do.” She mentioned that she submitted the photo because she used it as a key point in Madrid to look for if she got lost. Earlier in the interview she had talked about how the houses being close together in Spain made her feel that the society was more open in terms of residents sharing their lives with one another. She goes on to say another reason she probably submitted the photo was this idea of a central park for a community to be together with one another.

. . . also because I feel like it's important but I can't give you reasons why. I know nothing about it, really. It was just in the center of town. There was always people [sic] there. There was just kids playing soccer there. It was a happening place.

**Traditions.** Statements from participants comparing unique traditions to the US were also found in the interviews which further explained or hinted at participants’ cultural attitudes. Participant #8 who attended a bullfight in Spain said that bullfighting was a “Spanish thing,” something people think about when they think of Spanish culture. She said, “they wouldn't be able to get away with that here, the killing bulls for no reason.” Participant #27 also witnessed unique aspects of New Zealand which influenced her cultural attitudes. When asked during the interview what the best thing she learned in
New Zealand was, she explained that it was the difference in the culture of New Zealand. While she had only previously traveled in Canada and Mexico she said, “It’s so hard to put into perspective but the culture is so much different than it is anywhere I’ve ever been.” When asked in what ways the culture was different she expounded on the influence of Maori culture and how that wasn’t something she was expecting.

Just how heavy the Maori is in everything everyone does. Its so hard to explain it but like all the tours we went on in any city, they introduce themselves, their canoe, their tribe, even if they weren’t Maori descent they would introduce themselves in Maori language. It was cool. It was really different though . . . I even asked like in the elementary schools and stuff they teach Maori songs, they teach a little bit of the language and everything. Kids are even learning it, at a young age.

She learned that the Maori culture was a part of life for everyone in New Zealand whether they were Maori or not.

The remaining discussions of traditions in the interviews centered on religious or spiritual traditions. Participant #24 who studied in Israel submitted a photo of Herzl’s grave in Jerusalem (see Figure 3). She liked that the grave was in a public place where anyone could visit and leave stones on the grave as a memorial. She said,

I just thought that was something that's really interesting because most of the time I feel like here, the dead are really separated from the living, and this was just a much more open place for people who are walking, and there were lots of tours, so and so was laid to rest here, et cetera.
She said that she didn’t think it was a cemetery but there was an area where soldiers were buried and a memorial wall where the names of victims of all the terrorist attacks were listed by decade. She said that she took the photo because

. . . it kind of captured part of the culture with the stones, and I thought it was really beautiful how well they take care of the dead, how they memorialize them. It's so beautiful, there's not one rotting flower.

![Herzl’s grave in Jerusalem, Israel.](image)

*Figure 3. Herzl’s grave in Jerusalem, Israel.*

Participant #12 who studied in Seville, Spain made comparisons between religion in Spain and in the US based on the architecture of churches he saw. He submitted a photo of himself standing by a church in Segovia. He said

. . . because churches there are so much more, I don't want to say religious, but they're more passionate about what they believe in, so they built, I guess more
elegant than some of the churches here are kind of plain. You can see there are some structures hanging from the top, and from the back there are the mosaics, and the sun is shining through.

He went on to say that seeing more ornate churches made him feel that in Spain they were “more passionate about what they believed in. They take it really seriously over there.”

Participant #24 also submitted a photo of a large menorah near the site of the memorial for those who lost their lives in terrorist attacks in Israel. When asked why she submitted the photo she made a long and insightful comment about the conflicts based on religion in Israel, how she interpreted the photo from that point of view and how it was different from home.

I just thought it was really neat, its really big and there's three distinct religions in Israel, and they all know that they're in conflict with one another. I think at a certain point that's really liberating because you're not really hiding anything. You acknowledge each other there and you acknowledge that maybe you're not on the best of terms but at least you have terms. I feel like sometimes, even here, people kind of hide their faith or don't go full force; it's a very touchy subject. There it's just a part of their life. You walk through a park and there's a six-foot menorah. That's just how it is. I just thought that was really neat. A lot of people associate the country with almost being not free, and I think they're more liberated than we are in certain aspects. I thought that was a really cool thing to see.
**Negative comparisons.** Comparisons that show the US in a negative light are inevitable for study abroad participants. Participants made comparisons to home in several aspects including the differences in daily life or the pace of life in their host country to more in depth commentary on the host culture.

Participant #3 studied architecture and art in Amsterdam, Paris and Rome and personally had more a of focus on learning and understanding how people functioned in their daily lives in the places she visited versus home. From her time in Rome, she submitted a photo of the Coliseum. She submitted the photo because she felt it captured how much ancient Rome influenced present Rome, how the city functioned and adapted and how and the modern was built around the ancient. She mentioned how cars were a secondary concern in Rome:

> You can tell the difference in lifestyle based on like being a car-dominated culture like it is here versus there. They don’t have like the big massive department stores that you go to one place and just drive right up to it, get back in. It’s a lot of walking and it’s a lot of small stores where you have to go to a lot of different places. And like you don’t really see parking lots. So it’s a big, like to me that was something that they instead of just wiping out something to put a parking lot in they’re just going to fit in what there already was. And I guess that’s kind of like what classic Rome speaks to me. They make it fit in the perimeters that they need it to but they’re not going to forget what it was.

From Paris she submitted a photo of a different kind of street scene, a pedestrian area by the Pompidou Center. She witnessed hundreds of people hanging out with several different kinds of street performers. She stated she took the photo initially
because of the social gathering taking place. Comparing the scene to home she said, “I felt like if this was in Arizona, you’d go out there and this entire place would be empty. There’d just be like nobody there. Or there’d be cars in there, you know?”

She continued making further comparisons to life in the US based on the photo.

Her feelings were from what she saw in France it was:

. . . a much more mixed living as opposed to like here’s your residential, here’s your business and you know nothing is connected. Everything’s connected there. I think it creates a really rich cultural life that we just don’t have over here. So a lot of what I was seeing and paying more attention to was that and like . . understanding or having a better understanding of why it works there and it’s not working here in my opinion. Or what to do to maybe hopefully implement that to work here.

When asked if she had ideas or solutions to implement in the US she explained more of what she thought the problems were in the US and why the solution might be so difficult to find:

We walked everywhere there pretty much and I would never walk that much here. And not only because it’s hot, I can deal with the heat but you’re not even offering shade you’re not offering places to sit down. You’re not . . . there’s no destination point that I really want to reach. And like there you’re always passing something and a lot of the living is above and you’ve got shops. There’s always something that you could go into.

And it’s the way America I think has evolved as a country versus that where it’s not in my opinion, its not an easy fix because, this is going to sound
really rude, America is a very lazy country. And it’s all about how much you can get in one place and how fast we can do it. And that’s not how it is there. So, how do you change something like that? Because that’s changing everything.

Participants when comparing to their home country also mentioned the pace of life in their host country. Both participants #5 and #14 talked about the slower pace of life in France and Italy where they studied, respectively. Participant #5 said,

They (the French) were really laid back, they liked to enjoy life. Whereas the Americans, we tend to kind of really move fast and you know just . . we’re more business focused whereas the French are more like really, really, really laid back.

Participant #14 discussed her thoughts that the people in Italy enjoyed the simple things and spent their time enjoying what they had instead of wanting “bigger, better, more” like she saw in the US:

They're happy with what they have. And I feel like here a lot of people tend to be wanting more, the best of the best and they want this and they want that but never settle for less but they're okay to settle for what they have in a way.

Her reflections can certainly be heard as a commentary on what she sees as materialism in the culture she knows in the US.

Still other participants had more weighty comments on their home culture through comparisons with the destination of their study abroad country. Participant #8 who studied in Spain submitted a photo from Madrid of the Spanish flag. She mentioned she saw Spanish flags everywhere in the country. She acknowledged that perhaps she just didn’t notice the American flag in the US but thought the Spaniards were “more into their country and more proud of it than Americans necessarily are” because of the prevalence
of the Spanish flag. When asked why she submitted the photo it was to represent how proud the Spanish were of their country. She stated the Spanish “They were very into being a group and I thought that signified it.” Additionally she mentioned how she had witnessed the same type of patriotism while watching the Euro Cup at a public viewing event in Madrid.

Participant #27 was studying Health and Culture in New Zealand. She had already previously mentioned how the indigenous culture of the Maori was a prominent part of the whole culture of New Zealand. Upon reviewing a photo she submitted of a recreation of a Maori village in Wellington she stated she felt like the Maori culture was embedded in New Zealand and in New Zealanders. She made a comparison of Maoris to Native Americans in the States.

. . . the kiwis, they really adapted to Maori instead of . . . in comparison to here with the Native Americans, we do acknowledge them and everything in all of our aspects but … New Zealanders, even the British NZ kiwis, they know how to speak Maori, they had tattoos of Maori. It was really cool.

Participant #23 also commented on negative aspects of the culture of the US in comparison to her host country of England. She submitted a photo of a sidewalk area in London. She had noticed a wide variety of flooring across London and had wondered why. She decided the variety was due to London trying to figure out the best material or pattern to prevent walkers from slipping in the rain or snow. From this she made a connection to innovation in England that she felt was different from the US. She believed that the political and education climate in Arizona had impacted our ability to innovate
I've come to see Arizona and the country that way. It's a very closed way of doing things. Everything is that if you don't have money, you can't do anything. You cannot innovate. If you don't have pals in high places you can't innovate. You can't . . . now with the financial things, you can't ask for a loan to open your own business. So you can't innovate. There’s [sic] a select number of people who are innovating and they're very conservative because they don't want to lose money. That's the direction we go to. "How can we make more money?"

**Similar to home.** Just as differentiating the host country from the home country works to form individual cultural attitudes, comparing the similarities an individual finds with their home culture can also impact the opinions which are formed about the host country. Participants articulated similarities between their host and home countries in a variety of ways including thoughts of cultural universality, things that were just like America and things that were just like home.

**Universality of culture.** Often times the realization of the universality of cultures not only makes cultural adaptation easier but also is a statement on the cultural attitudes the participants had about the host country. Participant #10 submitted a photo of a quote written into the floor at the atrium of the British Museum (see Figure 4). She said she submitted the photo because to her it showed her experiences in London which had so much to do with learning. When interpreting the photo she noticed the other people in the background of the photo “just having a chat” in the British Museum. While she didn’t know what they were discussing she said it pointed to a lot of her experiences in London. While she was impressed by how great London was she said a lot of Londoners seemed ignorant to these great things. She linked this back to how this was similar to
home. When asked what the photo represented to her, she said “I guess how certain things are common in all cultures and one of those things is that everybody tends to take for granted the good things that they have.”

Participant #15 submitted a photo she took at an aquarium in Spain. While taking the photo little kids walked by and were exclaiming to their mothers how the fish looked like Nemo from the popular animated film “Finding Nemo” at the same time she was thinking the same thing herself. She remarked that she selected the photo for the study “. . . because I thought it was funny how culturally it's kind of like a global culture that's been created where everywhere you go, especially in places that are more economically advanced people can relate to certain things.”

![Figure 4](image)

*Figure 4. Floor at the British Museum, London, England.*

Participant #24 tried to take pictures of daily life as she saw it in Israel. One photo she submitted was a picture of a meal of chicken and rice she had one day for lunch. She said she submitted the photo because it was interesting to see food from another culture and knew that people would ask her when she got home what she ate.
while in Israel. She mentioned the food was not much different from our own and the photo was:

. . . just to show that even though it's thousands of miles away, it's still just chicken and rice, it's not this exotic thing that how would you ever live on that, how would you ever survive in this place. Just kind of bridging the gap a little.

**Just like home.** Some participants found aspects of their study abroad host country to be just like or to remind them of his or her home. Participant #26 travelled to China. The study abroad group stayed in a village with a family for one night and she had submitted a photo of the woman they were staying with putting chickens in a cage (see Figure 5). She had gotten to know the women through her translator and with helping to cook dinner. She mentioned that in America we don’t usually know where our food comes from and she figured the chicken they ate the night before was one of these chickens. When asked if this was a new experience for her she replied that it wasn’t new but instead something she had experienced before in her family.

. . . my grandmother, my great-great grandmother had chickens and she . . . so I had been around chickens before and chicks but coming to China and seeing chickens again, like home chickens, it was nice to see that.
Participant #26, along with Participant #27, also made connections to their home based on the similarity of the landscape of their host country to their home country. Participant #26, who is from the White Mountains of Arizona, submitted a photo of a lake in China near the Great Wall (see Figure 6). She took great detail to explain the photo and said she submitted the photo because it was probably the cleanest waterway she had seen in China. To her, the photo represented natural scenery which was a contrast as she had spent most of her time in the cities of Beijing and Shanghai. When asked why she took the photo she said,

Cause it was, it was kind of to me it was universal because where I come from we have rivers and mountains just like that. But we don’t have a mine just over the hill. So it was pretty cool to me.
Participant #27 took a photo of a marina in Wellington, New Zealand. When asked why she picked the photo to submit for the study she said, “Umm this one I wanted to send it because my hometown looks just like it. It was like . . . it looks just like it. It’s just with people that have British accents, that’s the only difference really.” This participant had experienced some serious medical issues while in Wellington. She continued to say the photo represented a home away from home for her. “To me, I was going through a really rough time with medical everything. And that place, Wellington, was like a home away from home for me and I loved it.”

Development of Cultural Competency

In analyzing the data several sub-categories of the theme of development of cultural competency also emerged. They are 1) feeling like a local or identifying with the host culture, 2) personal growth and change, 3) life changing, 4) fulfilling a goal and 5) development of self-esteem. While there is overlap in these sub-categories they were distinct enough to warrant separate treatment in the results.
Feeling Like a Local (Identifying with the Host Culture)

Starting to identify with the local culture and perhaps even shunning your own was a topic referenced by many participants. Getting to that stage of feeling a part of your new home away from home is a part of the adjustment process, particularly for study abroad participants who typically spend longer times abroad getting to know the host country. Often times the place or situation was what prompted the participant to feel like a local in their host culture. Whether in sporting situations, eating and living situations, or just participating in daily life, several participants discussed feeling a part of the host culture.

On the last day of her program in Spain, participant #15 found herself at a showing of the final soccer game of the Euro Cup at a stadium in Madrid. She expressed that Madrid was like any other big city and she didn’t always feel a part of the city on a daily basis. However, the soccer game was a different experience. Surrounded by Spaniards wearing the colors of their teams on their faces and their clothes she said she felt unity with the host culture (see Figure 7).

Unity in that way, but I mean myself as well integrated in with them. But they all . . . we were all jumping around dancing, singing and we were all cheering for the same team. Whereas if I was going somewhere and I didn't know these people, they probably wouldn't talk to me.
Figure 7. Soccer game, Madrid, Spain.

Food is a huge part of many cultural experiences of the tourist, and the study abroad tourist is no exception. Several participants mentioned feeling like a local in the context of eating situations while abroad. Participant #1 who traveled to China submitted a photo of chopsticks for the project (see Figure 8). When asked what the photo represented to her, she expressed that chopsticks were a large part of her experiences in China. She knew how to use chopsticks before her arrival but in China they were forced to use them for every meal. She stated, “So I felt like I was legitimately Chinese now that I’m using chopsticks.” Participant #19 also had a more traditional experience with an eating situation while studying in England. She attended an afternoon tea at the British Museum with the rest of the participants on her study abroad program. This participant was in England to study food and culture for the summer. Afternoon tea is a typical tradition and likely something that many tourists partake in while visiting London. She said she thought her afternoon tea experience was “just very traditional, refined and I felt very British while doing it so was like really cool.”
For participant #5, the leaders of the study abroad program impressed upon the students the importance of food in French culture. The participant stated that on occasion the program leaders took them on picnics in Paris. They would introduce the study abroad participants to different types of French foods presumably so that they would know what to order in restaurants. From these experiences the participant stated, “You really learned how to eat like a French person. It was really great.” She went on to discuss a photo she submitted of the first dinner she and her roommates made in their apartment in Paris and how they “felt French” at the time. She said she wanted to “take a picture of that to show that oh we’re finally being kind of French. Because the French they actually cook for themselves every day. So I wanted to show us cooking a real French meal.” When asked if the photo represented a part of her experiences on her study abroad program the student replied, “Yeah I felt, I was so happy, I was so excited, I was like yay I’m being French! Like I only bought what I needed tonight and I guess I’ll go back to the grocery tomorrow.” She indicated that they continued to go back to their
local grocery store every day of the trip to purchase groceries for the meals they made at home.

Several participants in the study equated their host country with home. Participant #25, who studied in London said, “I just felt comfortable there.” Not that London felt more comfortable than home but that “It just felt like home. Like I could make it into home.” When asked why he thought that was, he replied, “I think the language had to do a lot with it. There's [sic] so many different cultures there.” Participant #8 who studied in Alicante, Spain submitted a photo of what was in her opinion a typical looking street in Alicante. When asked to discuss what the photo represented to her she claimed to have gotten attached to the city, “Looking back, it's where I lived. That's where I spent all my time. I miss it so much. I guess that's where I was most of my time so I got attached to it.” She went on to say, “That's my city.”

Participant #3 studied in multiple countries, Amsterdam, Paris and Rome, on one study abroad program. From her time in Rome she submitted a photograph of gelato. Recalling the moment the photo was taken, she said that it had started to rain and she and her classmate were just enjoying their time in Rome. They were in an area she referred to as “less touristy” in that the people there seemed to not know English very well and the streets were un-crowded. From this experience she was able to imagine what life might be like if Rome were her home.

We were just kind of wandering down like some smaller streets. So I think it just kind of was like, hey this is what it felt like. This is what I would do if I lived there. So it was kind of surreal in that sense.
She went on to say, “. . . it felt like it was more of a . . . like an act you would do if you were a citizen versus a tourist I guess.”

This idea of placing himself or herself as the opposite of a typical tourist was something that several participants brought up which fit into the theme of feeling like a local or identifying with the host culture. Participant #9 who studied in Guatemala submitted a photo of a local market in San Martín Jilotepeque. She thought the photo showed what daily life was like in communities in Guatemala. While she stated she only went to this particular market twice, when asked what the photo represented for her she said, “It was just cool that I could be a part of that community because this wasn't a typical tourist destination so looking back at it, it's just cool to think that I was involved in their daily activity.”

Participant #3, again who studied in Amsterdam, Paris and Rome submitted a photo from her time in Amsterdam of an outdoor social gathering along a canal. When asked if she thought the people were local or tourists she responded that she wasn’t sure but that there were lots of hotels around so perhaps there were tourists. However, she went on to say in, “Amsterdam you never felt like a tourist, you just felt like you were always part of it, which was cool.” She compared her experiences in Rome to her experiences in Amsterdam. She speculated that it was due to the language barrier in Rome but she said in Rome you always knew you were out of place whereas in Amsterdam “. . . you never felt out of place.”

One individual who studied in Paris, participant #5, indicated that her program leaders had encouraged the study abroad participants to not look or act like tourists while
in Paris but instead behave more like a French person or “try to be as French as possible.”

Participant #5 continued,

And then once we got to the trip he (the program leader) told us to actually, like, try to do really Frenchy things and try not to . . . he told us that the worst things we can do is to look like tourists. So we all tried all our best to not look like tourists because that’s just horrible. So we tried to do really French things.

The program leaders had shown the participants in the program fun ways of “being French.” This influenced the way the participant looked at this trip in compared to past trips. She stated:

So I really got to experience the culture that way. I actually tried to, you know, not be a tourist. And oh, I guess that’s it! I guess in the other vacations that I took I was all trying to be a tourist. I was just kind of in my old own world but in another place. But in the study (abroad program), this one here I was really, really trying my best to really experience it through another person’s eyes.

Finally in one case the participant did not even think of herself as a tourist.

Participant #14 had visited Italy three times and in summer 2012 she was studying in Florence, Italy for her second time.

I don't think of myself as a tourist just because I've been there three times and I know the area really well to the point where I can give people directions like, "Oh, this is where this is, this is where that is," and all of that. My friends were actually telling me I should be a tour guide there.
Personal Growth and Change

Discussions of the growth and change experienced by participants were routinely mentioned in the interviews. Interviewees described situations abroad where they felt independence, confidence and maturity. These traits are among many factors which have been shown to contribute to an individual being successful in cross-cultural situations (Kitsantis & Meyers, 2002; Hannigan, 1990).

Some participants mentioned the feeling of independence that they had while studying abroad which often times resulted in them feeling more confident or mature. In London participant #25 was, in his words, “more on my own there.” He described London as “…just a different experience.” He said he felt comfortable there stating that the language had a lot to do with it but also that the variety of different cultures made it feel like an American city. “I went everywhere I could by myself most of the time. I mean, when we had free time. That's why I miss it, I guess.”

During the interview participant #19 was asked if there was anything about her study abroad program or spending time in London that was going to make her a different kind of traveler in the future. She indicated that her experiences in England led her to feel more comfortable traveling in other places as well. She mentioned a trip to Chicago after she came back from England where she found herself in her hotel room not doing anything. Her response was to remember her experiences in London where she ended up being very comfortable exploring all sorts of different places. She called her time in London an “evolved” vacation and those experiences prompted her to go out explore Chicago. She stated:
I felt very more confident in myself, traveling by myself and going out to
different places. I felt confident that I won't get lost I could ask where I'm going.
Everyone spoke English so it really wasn't so scary, but I really, really enjoyed
the freedom and taking ownership of your vacation and your time. I just liked
being more involved in my travels.

Feelings of confidence and maturity were revealed throughout the interviews with
participants. Some participants submitted photos of specific points in the travels abroad
where the photo helped them recall the situation and their own feelings of change and
growth through the experiences. All participants were asked to choose their favorite
photo at the end of the interviews and participant #17 selected a photo he submitted of the
Great Wall in China. Once asked why he picked that as his favorite he recalled the day
he climbed the wall noting that it was a challenging experience for him and what that
meant to him:

the actual demanding nature of The Wall. I feel like I was able to meet the
challenge of that and once I knew that I could do that, it was kind of like, well, I
can do anything else. Throw whatever else China has at me and I'll be fine.

Participant #13 was studying international business management in Prague and
had never traveled outside the US prior to her time in the Czech Republic. While she
didn’t speak Czech and was unfamiliar traveling there she was determined to see the
Sedlac Ossuary, a chapel about an hour train ride from Prague. She submitted a photo of
the chapel for the study and to her the photo represented her confidence. She said, “it
also represents that if I put my mind to something, I'll go do it, because this was one
place that I was not going to miss, and I didn't.”
Another participant had a similar experience to this. While traveling in Dublin, participant #22 visited St. Patrick’s Cathedral. She described the photo she submitted of the Cathedral and why she liked the photo and the place so much. Much like participant #13 above, this was a place that she had always wanted to see and she discussed how visiting the Cathedral felt “almost like, completion of a goal to an extent.” She continued by saying, “That's what this trip was about, was like reaching my goals and planning new ones and moving forward and kind of becoming my own person.”

Participant #22 submitted additional photos that prompted conversations during the interview about how the study abroad program changed her directly. One photo she submitted was from Christchurch Cathedral in Dublin (see figure 9). She described the light in the photo as escaping from the sealed and locked gate. For her this symbolized her immaturity or feelings of dependence on other people but she made an analogy to her own experiences saying “if that light can get in, then my light can get out.” When pressed further to explain what she meant she said the photo represented:

an after effect of the experience, but yes, in its own way I think it represents that this summer was kind of a growing up experience in a lot of ways. Just because I didn't expect to come back so mature in my own self.

She continued saying the growing up experience was “very much a process that’s continuing to this day.”
In another part of the interview participant #22 was asked to illustrate with additional experiences how being abroad impacted her. She discussed how the simple act of maintaining vigilance with herself and her travel mates to avoid being pickpocketed impacted her. She said, “to an extent. And I think that being able to watch out for yourself and take care of yourself is a major step in maturity.”

**Life Changing**

For other participants the shift in personal growth and change they experienced as a result of study abroad was very meaningful and the participants were certain these feelings would persist. In one case, the participant explained the changes she felt as “life changing.” Participant #29 submitted a photo of view from the top of a mountain on the island of Capri, Italy. During the interview she started crying and said the photo
represented a new beginning for her. After queried further she explained the feelings she had looking at that view and how it impacted her life.

I really started to re-contemplate my life and I started crying it was beautiful.

And it was kind of a new beginning for me because I felt very distant from past things that had hurt me, from bad memories. Because I was in a new country and I was so far away. And it showed me that . . there’s so much more that I can see. If this is the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen so far and I’ve been to one country and there’s [sic] like 90 other countries out there. And so . . . I realized that umm . . my past troubles were so insignificant and I made so much out of them, compared to what . . . what fortune I could have in the future. What else I can see and so it made me realize that life is so much more, there is so much more out there for me after seeing that.

She said she was affected in a positive way and this moment helped her to move on.

When asked why she was so inspired in this moment she recalled feeling she had never seen anything so beautiful before and went on to say:

I felt insignificant. Not necessarily insignificant, but . . . I felt more inconsequential than I had in the past. Because I realized that there’s so many people in the world and so many different places and . . so many different things that everyone experiences. All over the world that my experiences is just a minute little piece. Comparatively.

Participant #22 also had a transformative experience studying abroad that she recalled through a photo she submitted. The photo was of a part of the Berlin Wall outside Imperial War Museum (see Figure 10). This particular piece of the wall was
graffitied with the statement “change your life.” In the participant’s own words seeing this was really impactful for me because this whole experience was just extremely life changing in and of itself, and it just kind of showed that the summer – was the biggest thing I've ever done in my life was go abroad.

She continued saying this one phrase summed up the experience she had, “It's just, Change your life and I did.” Once pressed further to expand on how the experience impacted her she went on to discuss changes she had noticed in herself.

I'm a lot more mature than before I left. I mean, 6 weeks, people don't think things really change in 6 weeks, but you know I would not necessarily think of 5 or 10 years down the road, I'd think next week I'm going to do this, next week I'm going to do that. Now I'm actually planning for my future, and not necessarily the immediate future, but even into the extended future.

Figure 10. Berlin Wall section, Imperial War Museum, London, England.
**Fulfill a Goal**

Goal fulfillment has been referenced in travel literature in terms of motives for travel which, as already examined, overlap with motives for studying abroad (Iso-Ahola, 1983). Goal fulfillment is linked with the development of self-esteem, which will be discussed in the next section.

Several participants submitted photos for the study which represented a specific accomplishment from their study abroad program. Starting with Participant #30, she traveled to New Zealand and Fiji for her study abroad experience. She submitted a photo from the international air terminal in Auckland that she took on arrival to New Zealand (see Figure 11). She said that she had been “swept away into the experience” and wanted to take a photo that signified her arrival in the country. She was excited to be there and noted that just looking at the photo took her back to the moment and feeling of arriving. When asked why she selected the photo she said, “Because . . . I think it kind of, just the fact that it says NZ and it is the first place that we . . . arrived to, it just kind of marks a special point in the trip. You know, you made it.”

*Figure 11. International Air Terminal, Auckland, New Zealand.*
Participant #24 submitted a photo of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem that for her represented the fulfillment of a goal (see Figure 12). She said this was her favorite photo of the ones she submitted for the study. She explained that she had seen a similar photo on the internet and had decided “right after I applied to the program, that I was going to put the backdrop of Israel on my computer as constant motivation and really working to get there.” She went on to say:

Then, I was actually there and I got to see all of those things. So this was one of the things that was in that, panoramic view of the skyline, so I was really excited that I finally made it there. After everything, I was standing right in front of it. It's a much better picture than the one on Google.

Figure 12. Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, Israel.

Participant #29 submitted a photo of herself at the top of a viewing point and her recollection of the photo represented goal fulfillment but also an emotional experience. She indicated this was her favorite photo of the ones she submitted because in her opinion she looked genuinely happy in the photo. When asked if she remembered what
she was thinking when the photo was taken she said she remembered feeling overwhelmed emotionally. She recalled her time in Arizona and compared it to the moment captured in the photograph from Italy and said, “I still felt like I wasn’t getting anywhere. Like I wasn’t accomplished. And at this moment I felt like, I was really doing some noteworthy.”

**Development of Self Esteem**

Two questions asked during the interview process yielded interesting though not entirely unexpected results. Among other questions, participants were asked to explain why they took the picture they submitted and if they remembered what they were thinking at the time the photo was taken. Participant answers to these two questions were peppered with statements which essentially spoke to the participants’ need to provide evidence that they were there whether it was London, the Great Wall, the Vatican, boasting about the experience and the desire to show the uniqueness of their experience. In many cases these comments were centered on what can essentially be seen as the development of self-esteem. As mentioned above, Hannigan (1990) linked self-esteem and confidence to traits important to intercultural effectiveness or the ability of individuals to successfully function in another culture.

**Evidence I was there.** Most participants who discussed evidence in the interviews did so in a very matter of fact way. Participant #25 submitted a photo of Big Ben in London. He talked about how Big Ben was “one of those iconic things to see when you’re in London” and that he submitted the photo “because I liked the way it looked. I think because it's Big Ben, it shows, oh, he was in London.” Participant #22 also submitted a photo of iconic images from her study abroad program to London.
When asked why she submitted the photo for the study she said simply “it's just like, I was in London, I was there.”

Participant #5 also submitted a photo of an iconic image, the Eiffel Tower in Paris. While she was less than excited to see the Eiffel Tower due to something she learned from her program leader she submitted the photo regardless. Her program leader had told the group that when the Eiffel Tower was first built the French hated it since it was different than the rest of the architecture in the city. “I was really like wow the Eiffel tower is not that cool but I just wanted to take a picture of it anyway to show that ok well I’m at the Eiffel Tower, whatever.”

Participant #9 was studying in Guatemala and submitted a photo she took while visiting a coffee plantation (see Figure 13). The photo included coffee products to purchase and the business card for the company. She thought the photo showed not only what the company did but also what she was doing in Guatemala for the people back home. “I wanted people to see, like, when I put it on my Facebook and stuff, I wanted people to see what I was doing.”

![Coffee Plantation, Guatemala.](image)

*Figure 13. Coffee Plantation, Guatemala.*
One participant in particular was very concerned about what he referred to as proof that he had been to China. Participant #28 had visited the Great Wall during his time in China and submitted a photo of himself at the Great Wall holding some rocks. He brought the rocks back to Arizona with him as a souvenir.

I want to bring like 2 or 3 rocks from the Great Wall. So to represent the time I visited the Great Wall. And this, the rock I have it with me now. When I see them, I say I am a part of the Great Wall or the Great Wall is a part of my life. And when people come visit me I show them, this is part of the Great Wall.

He also stated he brought the rocks back so others could be involved in the experiences he had at the Great Wall. He wanted people to be able to touch it, “To touch something from the Great Wall. Even if they didn’t go visit.”

The same participant submitted another photo of himself eating at a Chinese restaurant. He said when the photo was taken he was thinking of how people would see him eating and wonder if the photo was taken in the US or in China. However, he had a drink with Chinese writing on it and decided people would see that and know it was different. Evidence that he had been to China was important to him so people would believe he was there. He went on to explain:

Because here we don’t have (Chinese drinks) . . . we have it but most of the restaurants they don’t provide us the drinking with the writing on the label like that. So I think this is like proof to make a difference between a Chinese restaurant in America and a Chinese restaurant in China.

**Boasting about experiences.** Boasting about a travel experience is not unusual in travelers. For some participants in the study bragging rights were an integral part of
both taking the photos and submitting the photos for the study. For some participants it was important to place themselves in the experiences portrayed in the photographs. Participant #21 was studying in China and like many study abroad participants before her she took a photo of the Great Wall (see Figure 14). She said she had wanted to take a photo without any other people in the shot which was difficult. In general, she thought it was difficult to do your own thing in China since there were so many people. However, this photo was just the Great Wall and she found the scene peaceful and furthermore wanted to submit it because, “I just felt like it was just me and China in this photo, and that's why I wanted to submit it.” Participant #8 submitted a photo of the Royal Palace in Madrid, Spain. She said this was her favorite photo she submitted and when asked why she stated she thought the building was beautiful but also she felt drawn to it for some reason. “You feel important going there even though you're just walking by. But you could still feel the presence of it. I don't know. It was the best thing ever.”

Figure 14. The Great Wall of China.

Other participants talked about both how their experiences were unique and how they wanted to show off those experiences. Participant #30 traveled to New Zealand and Fiji. While in Fiji, the group spent a night in a local village where she and three other
girls stayed at the Chief’s house. She said it was special as normally only boys stayed at 
the Chief’s house. She submitted a photo of a meal they had that evening of fresh 
octopus cooked in coconut milk. When asked if she remembered what she was thinking 
when she took the photo she said, “just that I wanted to remember it. Because it is so 
unique and I kind of wanted to show it off.” Participant #29 submitted a photo of herself 
at the Vatican in Rome. While she said she was not religious it was essential to her to 
“memorialize” herself at this site. She considered being at the Vatican “a place that’s so 
central to so many people and historical was important to me.” She continued to say, “I 
was thinking that I wanted to show everyone that I was at the Vatican. So I could say 
that I saw it and I was there.”

Participant #21 also submitted a photograph of food, specifically a mushroom 
from a meal she prepared in China during a cooking class at a Hutong. She explained in 
detail about the mushroom, where they grew, how they tasted and so on. When taking 
the photo she remembered thinking:

Take this photo. It's going to look really good on your blog. Because if you want 
to talk about the food in China and unique finds in China, this is the thing to take 
a photo of, because you can't really find it anywhere else.

**Unique.** Often tied with the idea of boasting about a travel experience is the 
uniqueness of the travel experiences. Sometimes participants referenced a specific 
location or perhaps an experience which they had while abroad during the interviews. 
Participant #21 submitted a photo from the Forbidden City in Beijing. She stated she had 
taken lots of photos of the site and thought they were getting repetitive so she started to 
take more detailed photos of the buildings. She mentioned, “you can go to the Forbidden
City, or you can go to these places and see them online, but you have to really be up close
to see something of that great detail.” She felt that by taking up close photos she was
really seeing what she was looking at and that for her she was capturing something that
“maybe not a lot of other people will get to see unless they come.”

Participant #7 submitted two photos of a gondola ride at a rainforest preserve and
the Arenal Volcano in Costa Rica. Regarding the gondola ride, she said she submitted
the photo because of the uniqueness of the experience. She said, “I selected this photo
because I thought it was an opportunity few people get to see and experience.” Arenal
Volcano was considered a national treasure to the participant. She had a similar
statement about why she submitted the photo of the Arenal Volcano. “I selected this
photo because it is purely amazing and I think it is something few people have seen.”

Summary

The purpose of the exploratory sequential component was twofold: 1) to better
understand the research questions of the study and; 2) to help develop the instrument used
in the concurrent embedded component. While the basic structure of the questions asked
did not directly query participants about their cultural attitudes or cultural competency,
these themes came through in their answers. The two main themes that arose from the
photo elicitation interviews included cultural attitudes and development of cultural
competency. Participants discussed how study abroad participation had impacted them
particularly in the ways of developing cultural competency including feeling like a local,
growth and change, goal fulfillment and development of self-esteem.

Participants’ cultural attitudes were expressed in general statements about the host
culture and then in making specific comparisons about how the host country and culture
were different from home and similar to home. While participants were all interviewed after the end of the study abroad program changes in their cultural attitudes could be gleaned from discussions around expectations or assumptions participants had about their host country and culture due to prior experiences or information learned during study abroad orientations.

The themes of feeling like a local, personal growth and change, goal fulfillment and development of self-esteem are essentially a part of the development of cultural competency in individuals. Feeling like a local or identifying with the host culture contributes to the cultural adjustment process or adaptation process which, as will be discussed in later chapters, along with other items makes up the measurement for cultural competency. In terms of personal development, participants in the photo elicitation interviews described a variety of traits they felt they developed while abroad such as confidence, maturity and independence, sum of which have been determined are necessary for effective cultural competency (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Hannigan, 1990).

Questionnaire Development

While the theoretical framework for the paper contributed to the majority of the items on the questionnaire there were aspects of the instrument that were directly impacted by results of the initial qualitative component, the photo elicitation. The areas represented in the questionnaire which were influenced by the results of the photo elicitation includes 1) expectations, 2) prior experiences, 3) open ended questions on culture, 4) lure of the program leader and 5) incidents where cultural learning took place.
The expectations of participants in study abroad were a part of the original framework figuring prominently in understanding how the study abroad programs impact individuals, their cultural attitudes and their cultural competency. Participants talked about what they thought they already knew about their host culture, what they learned about their host and home culture and how the study abroad program impacted them through their discussions on expectations. The richness of the conversations on expectations from the photo elicitation encouraged the development of additional open-ended questions on the questionnaire (see Appendix H) to capture that richness with the groups in the quantitative component.

Prior experiences related to travel and where the participants grew up were items added to the questionnaire as a result of the photo elicitation study. Participants in the photo elicitation had a vast amount of different travel experiences. For many individuals their study abroad program was the first time they had left the country, while others had traveled a lot and to non-traditional destinations in the Middle East and Asia. Additionally several students had grown up outside the US. While the nationality of the participant was not a focus of the photo elicitation, it was clear where an individual grew up could impact the cultural distance experienced in another country. As stated earlier the past experiences of an individual have a great impact on the way he or she navigates and feels comfortable in another country. Therefore additional probes about those prior experiences were added to the questionnaire (see Appendix H).

For the photo elicitation study participants were asked to provide photographs which for them represented best their experiences in another culture. As could be expected participants in the study interpreted the word culture in a variety of ways. From
the photos submitted culture can comprise food, aspects of daily life, social life, style of
dress, and traditions among other things. Supplementary open-ended questions
addressing the culture of the host country were added to the questionnaire to allow for
individuals to express what they meant by culture (Appendix H Q26 – 29). During the
photo elicitation interviews when participants expressed cultural attitudes they were
asked from where they learned this information. A variety of answers were given
including from movies, video games, travel books, academic books, tour guides and their
program leader to name a few. Questions 30 and 31 were added to the questionnaire to
address this (Appendix H). Due to the importance many participants put on the
knowledge of their program leader, the lure of the program leader was added as an item
in the section on motives to study abroad (Appendix H Q 34).

The focus of this study was on outside the classroom experiences and in the
interviews participants mentioned a variety of experiences and places where they felt
their cultural learning happened including home stays, group events, independent travel
time and incidents in daily routines. Questions 18 and 19 on the post-test (Appendix I)
were introduced to address the differences in the types of activities participants took part
in with his or hers study abroad group and independently. As well question 28
(Appendix I) was added to tackle aspects of daily routines and their impact on
participants’ cultural learning.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Concurrent Embedded Component

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part provides general information about the qualitative and quantitative results which make up the concurrent embedded component of the study, including a description of participants, demographics and response rates. The second part details descriptive statistics and results of the factor analysis. Finally, the third part presents the results of each component structured around the applicable hypotheses and research questions.

Overview and Description of Participants

Qualitative Component

For the qualitative component a select group of ASU and VU participants studying abroad during Spring 2013 were involved in a writing exercise conducted via email about midway through their study abroad program. Responses were collected from 18 students (10 from ASU and 8 from VU). Participants were asked to respond to a specific set of questions. Those questions were:

1. How have your cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency been affected by your participation in this study abroad program?
2. How have your attitudes towards the host country been affected by your participation in this study abroad program?
3. How have your attitudes towards your home country changed with study abroad participation?
4. What were some the key learning incidents (Janes 2008) that influenced your cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency and where did they take place?

**Description of Participants**

All of the participants in this section of the study were enrolled in study abroad programs offered by ASU or VU for the spring term of 2013. The programs offered in this term differed from those offered in the summer term of 2012 in the variety of program models represented. In addition to faculty directed programs, participants studied in programs where they had options to take courses at a university with local students and other international students or at study centers which primarily catered to US students abroad. As well, there was a great variety of accommodations for these participants including home stays; dormitories with local students, other international students or US students; apartments; and other individual options. Participants were abroad from 15 – 29 weeks in total. Experience in the host language was a requirement of five of the programs represented. See Table 3 for a description of the participants. See Table 4 for a summary of participants’ gender, program duration and location abroad, and travel background.
Table 3

**Description of Participants – Spring 2013 Qualitative Component**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>City, Country</th>
<th>Weeks abroad</th>
<th>Previous foreign travel</th>
<th>Previous travel to the region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
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<td>Palma de Mallorca, Spain</td>
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<td>Buenos Aires, Argentina</td>
<td>21</td>
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</table>

n=18

Table 4

**Summary of Participants – Spring 2013 Qualitative Component**

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</thead>
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<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous foreign travel</td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance of host country</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=18
Quantitative component

This section presents the response rate, treatment of the data, participant demographics, and descriptive statistics.

Response Rate

The population size was 1092 students. The population size encompasses all participants in study abroad programs at ASU and VU in Spring and Summer 2013. As explained above, all participants were allowed the opportunity to take part in the study. Initially, 614 participants gave their consent to be contacted about the study. In total, there were 326 attempts on the pre-test and 326 attempts on the post-test. However, in terms of complete and usable questionnaires, there were 264 on the pre-test and 259 responses on the post-test, for a total of 523 responses. Of the collected pre and post-tests n=523 responses with an 85.2% response rate. From these 523 responses, 179 pre and post-tests could be matched to a specific individual resulting in a 34.2% response rate.

Treatment of the Data

Before more in depth analysis on the dataset one variable was recoded and several new variables were created and computed in SPSS.

Recoded variable. The recoded item was question 12 on the pre-test which asked participants’ levels of fluency in the host language. Initially the item in the questionnaire was coded as:

- It is my native language = 1
- Advanced reading, writing and speaking = 2
- Basic reading, writing and speaking = 3
- None=4
This was recoded so 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2 and 4 = 1 to more clearly represent a continuum of low to high in language ability which allowed for easier interpretation of statistical tests.

**New variables.** In all 30 new variables were created, majority of which came from the scales resulting from the factor analysis.

First the variable for cultural distance based on the host country of each participant was added to the dataset. The host country was known from the original participant list received from the study abroad offices at ASU and VU. As noted earlier, for this project Hofstedde’s (2001) measure of cultural distance was used. In several very large and related studies, Hofstede and others identified five indices each with a separate score which represented a category of cultural distance. They are power distance, individuality, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation. For this project power distance, individuality and uncertainty avoidance scores were used. This is because long-term orientation scores were only available for Asian countries and there were problems with measuring cultural differences in populations using the masculinity index (Hofstedde, 2001). Similar to Jackson (2001) the absolute difference scores on each index between the country and the US was summed to come up with a cultural distance score which was used in the data set. Countries with smaller cultural distance scores are closer culturally to the US, while countries with larger cultural distance scores are more distant culturally to the US. Countries not represented in Hofstede’s work (Fiji and the Dominican Republic) were assigned values of 300 each to represent a high cultural distance. After inspecting the cultural distance scores a new variable was computed to represent low, medium and large cultural distance based on natural breaks in
the scores and country arrangements. For example, countries with a low cultural distance included Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy. Countries with a medium cultural distance include Argentina, France and Israel. Countries with a large cultural distance included Brazil, Costa Rica, Morocco, China and Guatemala.

Then new categorical variables were computed for length of time abroad and housing. On the pre-test participants were asked to indicate the number of weeks they would be abroad. Answers varied from 1 week abroad to 40 weeks abroad. The original continuous variable was left in the dataset and a new variable was computed to represent short, medium and long-term length abroad. This was based on duration abroad classifications from the Open Doors Report published by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

Initially the item for housing allowed for participants to select multiple options which applied to them. The new variable which was created ranked the selection of each participant in terms of the level of engagement with the culture the housing option likely provided to the participant. Choices were grouped in this way:

- Apartment or Hotel/Hostel = lowest level of engagement
- Living with other US students = medium-low level of engagement
- Living with students from the host country and Living with students from many countries = medium-high level of engagement
- Host family = highest level of engagement.

This was somewhat of a judgment call based on the extensive knowledge I have of the study abroad programs offered at each university and how housing options influence cultural engagement. The new values were as follows:
• Apartment or Hotel Hostel = 1
• Living with other US students = 2
• Living with students from the host country and Living with students from many
different countries = 3
• Host Family = 4

In the dataset each case was reviewed and a value was assigned based on the
highest ranked option they selected to represent the new housing variable. For example if
students selected both living with a host family and apartment in the questionnaire they
were assigned a new value of 4 for host family. However, if participants selected both
living with other US students and living with students from the host country a value of 3
was assigned.

The final new variables which were computed involved the scales which resulted
from the factor analysis. First the pre and post-test means for each item that formed the
scales was computed into new variables. Then the differences were calculated by taking
the post-test means scores minus the pre-test means scores of each factor to form new
variables which represented the differences between the pre and the post-tests.

**Participant Demographics**

Participant demographics are presented in Table 5. These demographics represent
responses from the pre-test only n=284. In terms of gender 78 indicated they were male
(27.5%) and 206 indicated they were female (72.5%). As expected, the majority of
participants were between the ages of 18 – 20 (52.5%) with the next largest category
between the ages of 21 – 24 (32%). The remaining participants indicated they were
between the ages of 25 – 35 (11.3%) and 36 and over (4.2%). The oldest participant
indicated she or he was 60 years of age, with an additional 4 participants indicating they were in their late 40s – late 50s. Age was one category where ASU and VU students were notably different. All VU participants included in the demographics table were between the ages of 18 and 21 at the time of the survey. Table 6 presents characteristics of participants and the study abroad programs in the study. The sample for this study was more diverse than the reported US study abroad population (see Table 7). The sample was not random but a census of the population. However, the similarity of the sample to the general study abroad population allows inferences to be made based on this information.

Overwhelmingly, respondents had participated in short term (1 – 8 week) study abroad programs (69%). Only 32 respondents (11.3%) indicated they had participated in another study abroad program previously. A vast majority of participants had previous foreign travel experience with 224 participants (78.9%) indicating they had previously traveled outside of the US. While participants indicated previous travel to a diverse number of countries, primarily participants mentioned previous travel to Mexico, Canada and countries in the Caribbean and countries in Western Europe.
Table 5

**Participant Demographics – Spring and Summer 2013 Quantitative Component**

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>18 – 20</td>
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<td>21 – 24</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 – 35</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>36 and over</td>
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<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>Native American/Alaskan Native</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Graduate</td>
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n=284

Table 6

**Participant and Program Characteristics – Spring and Summer 2013 Quantitative Component**

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<td>Medium (9 – 15 weeks)</td>
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<td>Long (16 + weeks)</td>
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n=284
Table 7


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64.4</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black non-Hispanic</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White non-Hispanic</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>85.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Duration</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Term</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Semester</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Weeks or Less During Academic Year</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January Term</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Year</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Quarter</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Quarters</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar Year</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: age was not reported by Open Doors*

Factor Analysis

A factor analysis was performed on the variables related to cultural attitudes, cultural competency and motives for participation to test the reliability of the instrument, reduce the variables into more manageable components, and eliminate variables which did not contribute to the current study. To conduct the factor analysis on each main dependent variable a principal component analysis using a Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization was used. A description of each procedure can be found below.

**Cultural Attitudes**

Questions pertaining to cultural attitudes were found in question 25 of the pre-test questionnaire and question 26 of the post-test questionnaire, each made up of the same items 1 – 13 which were appropriately worded to represent pre and post. These items
were again reviewed and it was found that item 13 represented more the concept of cultural competency so it was not used in the factor analysis at this point and the first 12 items from the pre and post tests were used in two separate factor analysis procedures. A fixed number for factors was not used. Initially, the SPSS output indicated three factors however, on further inspection several factors were cross loading (items 2, 3 and 5), one item was not loading to any factor (item 11), and other items which were not obviously linked were loading together. Additionally, results were different on the pre and post-tests factor analysis. It was determined to remove item 11 from the factor analysis and perform the tests again. Items 2, 3 and 5 were still cross loading so they were removed separately and analysis was run again. However, removing each item separately did not eliminate the problem with cross loading so these items were all removed from the factor analysis with the intent to treat them as separate variables in any additional analysis. With the removal of these 4 items the test was run again. Two components for each the pre-test and post-test items were generated which matched each other, had items with Eigen values over .40 and were internally consistent. The two new components were named Cultural Attitudes – Similarity (items 1, 4, 6, 7 and 8) and Cultural Attitudes – Social Issues (items 9, 10 and 12). See Table 8 for a summary of results.

**Cultural Competency**

Cultural competency items are found in multiple questions each including multiple items which were the same on the pre and post-tests though worded differently. Questions included:

- Pre-test question 19 and post-test question 23 including items 1, 4, 8, 9 and 10
- Pre-test question 32 and post-test question 24 including items 1 – 11
• Pre test question 25 and post-test question 26 item 13 only

After a review of items four categories of cultural competency were determined. All pre and post-test items were used in two separate factor analysis procedures and a fixed number of factors was not pre-determined in the test. As expected, items converged on 4 components for both the pre and post-tests. Upon further inspection of the output it was found that components matched across pre and post-tests, Eigen values were above .40 and items were internally consistent. The new components were named Cultural Competency – Cultural Awareness, Cultural Competency – Different Cultures, Cultural Competency – Personal Assessment and Cultural Competency – Adaptation. See Table 9 for a summary of results.

Motives

Items concerning motives for study abroad participation are found in two different questions each with multiple items which tested general reasons for studying abroad and reasons for studying abroad in a particular country. Questions were asked on both the pre and post-test questionnaires though worded differently. Questions included:

• Pre-test question 33 and post-test question 20 items 1 – 9
• Pre-test question 34 and post-test question 21 items 1 - 10

With a review of questionnaire items, four theoretically linked categories were identified. All items from the pre and post-tests were used in two separate factor analysis procedures and a fixed number of factors was not indicated. Initially, factors in both the pre and post-test converged on six components. Further inspection of the output revealed items converged differently on the pre and post-tests. As well, unrelated items converged and others cross-loaded. Specifically the items causing issues were 33-1, 33-4, 34-1 and
34-5 (pre-test items referenced). The items represented respectively social, academic and familiarity motives. In particular the last item represented a negative statement about motives which may have caused issues for respondents so it was removed. Following this, tests were run again but fixing the factors to five, four and three components, however, problems remained. At this point, the remaining items were each removed separately and the factor analyses were run again for the pre and the post-test to see how this impacted the results. Items continued to converge differently on the pre and post-tests and cross-loaded in some instances. These items were removed entirely at which point items converged on three components which matched on the pre and post-tests, had Eigen values above .40 and had internal consistency. The new components were named Motives – Social/Cultural, Motives – Familiarity and Motives – Academic. See Table 10 for a summary of results.

Reliability tests were performed on all scales resulting from the factor analyses. Cronbach’s alpha was used in to test the consistency of each scale. A value of 0.7 or higher is considered an indication of good scale reliability. The majority of the scales considered were within the 0.7 or higher range with several in the 0.6 range though all above 0.65. Yu (2001) in his paper on interpreting Cronbach’s alpha stated that while 0.7 and above was deemed acceptable, scales with a lower value should not automatically be considered a “bad test” (p. 3). Several factors contribute to the Cronbach’s alpha value including the number of items in the measurement and the types of information being measured. With this information in mind, the scales with values below 0.7 were examined considering the removal of items, results of the factor analysis and theoretical sense of combining items and it was determined values were acceptable.
Table 8

*Factor Analysis of Cultural Attitudes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Similarity</th>
<th></th>
<th>Social Issues</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of the host country are like me</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.635</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of the host country are friendly to me</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td>.777</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host country has modern country amenities</td>
<td>.674</td>
<td>.619</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel close with the host country</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of the host country like Americans</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>.709</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.886</td>
<td>.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.829</td>
<td>.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.716</td>
<td>.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability (alpha)</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td>.721</td>
<td>.755</td>
<td>.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Items</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

*Factor Analysis of Cultural Competency*

|                                | Cultural Awareness | Different Cultures | Personal Assessment | Adaptation |
|                                |            | Pre  | Post | Pre  | Post | Pre  | Post |
| Appreciation- other cultures   | .820       | .808 |      |      |      |      |      |
| Increase knowledge- other cultures | .781 | .743 |      |      |      |      |      |
| More at ease with others       | .726       | .667 |      |      |      |      |      |
| Accurately describe host culture | .695 | .690 |      |      |      |      |      |
| Interest in global events      | .654       | .780 |      |      |      |      |      |
| Open to learning about others  |            |      |      | .872 | .861 |      |      |
| Respect for other cultures     |            |      |      | .857 | .864 |      |      |
| Interested in meeting others   |            |      |      | .766 | .717 |      |      |
| Aware of cultural differences  |            |      |      |      |      | .540 | .696 |
| People say I communicate in other cultures |      |      |      |      |      | .859 | .771 |
| People say I feel comfortable in other cultures |      |      |      |      |      | .827 | .807 |
| Friends from other cultures    |            |      |      |      |      |      | .722 | .741 |

126
In-depth understanding of cultures
Expect to feel out of comfort zone
Expect to encounter difficulties adjusting
Feel comfortable in other cultures
Easily adapt to other cultures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>Social/Cultural</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability (alpha)</th>
<th>Social/Cultural</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.833</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td>.855</td>
<td>.866</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Social/Cultural</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

Factor Analysis of Motives – Pre-test only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social/Cultural</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain understanding of host country</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn more about host country</td>
<td>.888</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance cross-cultural skills</td>
<td>.866</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience life in another country/culture</td>
<td>.844</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet people from other countries</td>
<td>.747</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialize with others</td>
<td>.724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ancestry</td>
<td>.784</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacts in host country</td>
<td>.720</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host country is similar to mine</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior experience in host country</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know someone on the program</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses offered</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic topic studied</td>
<td>.868</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor directing the program</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfill an academic requirement</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>Social/Cultural</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability (alpha)</th>
<th>Social/Cultural</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.903</td>
<td>.652</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Social/Cultural</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Academic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Normality

Tests of normality were performed on all scales resulting from the factor analysis, including Q-Q plots and histograms which could be reviewed and normality assessed.

Tables 11 – 13 present the descriptive statistics for the pre-test scales, the post-test scales
and the scales of differences between the pre and post tests. While some of the values of skewness and kurtosis results indicate the data might not be normal after an inspection of the Q-Q plots and histograms, data was concluded to be normal.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics – Pre-test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>-1.434</td>
<td>5.671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Culture</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>-1.047</td>
<td>1.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Assessment</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.787</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>-.293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>-.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>-.184</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives*</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Cultural</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.564</td>
<td>-1.598</td>
<td>5.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>-.840</td>
<td>.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.773</td>
<td>.448</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=264
*n=260

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics – Post-test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>-1.499</td>
<td>5.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Culture</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.463</td>
<td>-.902</td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Assessment</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.742</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>-.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>-.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>-.495</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.811</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Cultural</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.640</td>
<td>-2.429</td>
<td>8.545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>-.788</td>
<td>.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.757</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>-.064</td>
</tr>
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</table>

n=259
*n=269
Table 13

*Post minus pre-test results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Competency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>.578</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>3.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Culture</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>.503</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>1.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Assessment</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.236</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.457</td>
<td>.764</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Attitudes</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td>-0.133</td>
<td>.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-0.109</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td>-0.257</td>
<td>.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Cultural</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<td>-1.151</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.1596</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
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<td>.660</td>
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<td>1.625</td>
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</table>

Cultural Distance

In advance of analysis, cultural distance as measured in the project was explored further. Three items on the pre-test questionnaire related to cultural distance were identified. Several bivariate correlations were performed to investigate the strength of the relationship between each item and the cultural distance variable created from Hofstede’s work (2001). Spearman’s rho was used as the recoded variable for cultural distance which was an ordinal variable. The questions from the pre-test questionnaire related to cultural distance were as follows:

- Question 24 item 4 - I feel close with the culture of the host country
- Question 24 item 7 - The people of the host country are like me
- Question 24 item 11 - The people of the host country are not like me

Results confirmed the cultural distance measurement from the study. Question 24-4 and 24-7 both had moderate significant negative correlations to cultural distance.
with values of -.267 and -.293 respectively ($p = .000$). This means that as the level of cultural distance increased the less participants indicated agreement with the two items. Question 24-11 had a moderate significant positive correlation with cultural distance with a value of .241 ($p = .000$), indicating that as the level of cultural distance increased participants were more likely to agree with the statement that “the people of the host country are not like me”.

Hypotheses and Research Questions Results

**RQ4: Expectations of Study Abroad Participation**

When considering the hypotheses and research questions for the study, initially research question 4 regarding participant expectations was explored. Participants were queried about how they expected their study abroad program to impact them primarily via question 19 on the pre-test. Question 19 consisted of a series of statements measured on a Likert scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Mainly the statements in question 19 centered around aspects of cultural competency, however other general expectation statements were presented. Looking at the means of responses, participants tended to agree with the majority of the statements in question 19. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 14.
Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics – Expectations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will feel more at ease relating to people from other countries</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study abroad program will increase my interest to travel to other countries</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will feel closer to the concerns of the people of the host country</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study abroad program will increase my knowledge of different cultures</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While on the program, I will have cultural experiences few people have</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will visit my host country/countries in the future</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will have a better appreciation for the U.S.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will have a better appreciation for other countries and cultures</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will be interested in events related to global or intercultural issues</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will be able to accurately describe the culture of the host country to people who have never been there</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>.701</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=299

**H1, H2, RQ1 and RQ2: Study Abroad Participation, Cultural Attitudes and Cultural Competency**

Paired sample *t*-tests were performed to identify if significant differences existed between the pre and post-test results and the factors representing cultural attitudes (similarity and social issues) and cultural competency (cultural awareness, different culture, personal assessment and adaptation). The results of the *t*-tests are found in Table 15. Significant differences were found in the pre and post-test means for the cultural competency factors of personal assessment and adaptation and for the cultural attitudes factor of similarity.
Table 15

Paired t-test for comparison of pre and post-tests and factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Pre-test mean</th>
<th>Post-test mean</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>n=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>4.255</td>
<td>4.265</td>
<td>-.226</td>
<td>.821</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Culture</td>
<td>4.484</td>
<td>4.536</td>
<td>-1.356</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Assessment</td>
<td>3.326</td>
<td>3.569</td>
<td>-4.408</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>3.244</td>
<td>3.701</td>
<td>7.891</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>3.356</td>
<td>3.788</td>
<td>-9.255</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>3.248</td>
<td>3.158</td>
<td>1.541</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the qualitative component also contribute to the first two hypotheses. While participants were interviewed roughly in the middle of their time abroad, responses still point at the changes in cultural attitudes and cultural competency as a result of their experience to that point. The themes of perceived cultural competency and attitudes are detailed below.

As was discussed above, cultural competency has no formal accepted definition. However, many researchers agree on factors which are important for an individual to possess in order to be successful in cross-cultural situations including cultural awareness, openness, ability to communicate and so on (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Hannigan, 1990; Hammer et al., 1978). The qualitative component of this study can shed light on participants’ thinking in these respects. In response to the query on how their cultural competency was impacted by participation in study abroad, participants mentioned many of these traits. The results of this section are organized around three of these traits which were prominent in the answers from participants: cultural awareness, communication and acceptance/openness. Several participants indicated the study abroad program had no impact on their perceived cultural competency. While one student had traveled to Costa
Rica, the others had traveled to English speaking destinations in Europe including the UK and Ireland. Participant #23 who had traveled to Costa Rica said simply, “I don't think my cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency have been enormously affected by my participation in this program.” She explained that she had certain expectations of herself before traveling to Costa Rica which is likely the reason she did not see an impact on her own cultural competency.

I already knew coming into the program that being flexible and open-minded to cultural differences and that actively avoiding judging any cultural differences in comparison to my native culture would be key to adjusting and I haven't needed to change this mindset to function during day to day exchanges.

Participant #50 who traveled to Ireland expanded on why she didn’t think her cultural competency had been impacted by her study abroad program. She said, “I have traveled internationally previously, so I consider myself to have a high level of cultural competency.” However, she went to express her continued interest in other cultures. “I am still very interested in learning about and participating in other cultures; this increases with every cross-cultural experience.” Participant #2001 who traveled to England had a similar answer regarding previous travel experiences.

Without boasting too much, I think from the beginning I was not only a very open-minded individual that could adapt well to other cultures, but one who just happened to blend in quite well to British culture. I was never the archetypal "idiot abroad," in other words.
Rather pragmatically he observed, “The only challenge I faced was learning how to adapt to a new place largely on my own, which I believe I would have faced anywhere, even domestically.”

**Cultural awareness.** Several participants made general comments about the impact of his or her study abroad participation on their perceived cultural competency without much explanation. For example participant #2164 said, “I definitely feel that I have developed my cultural competency through my experience abroad” and participant #11 said, “My attitudes toward different cultures and my cultural competency have both increased greatly.” However there were more participants who elaborated on specifically how he or she felt participation had affected them. In terms of cultural awareness many participants made comments which demonstrated the impact of study abroad participation.

In discussing her cultural competency participant #2160 talked about the simple differences she found in Australia and how navigating those differences made her feel.

I am now aware of how many differences there could possibly be. Something as simple as ordering coffee or standing in line can be totally different in different cultures. I've made a fool of myself several times this semester because I assumed something was the same when it was not.

Other participants discussed how the study abroad program exposed them to a variety of cultures beyond the host country culture and how this also impacted cultural awareness. Participant #2157 who traveled to Australia remarked, “My cultural competency has definitely increased since coming to Australia since I have not only met a lot of Australians, but a lot of people from a lot of other countries as well through the
study abroad program.” Participant #43 had studied in Hungary. She also met peers from many other different cultures through her travels while studying abroad which affected her cultural awareness.

My cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency have been affected by me having a more broad understanding of the differences in cultures across the world. I'm studying in Hungary, but I've traveled to Austria, the Czech Republic, France, and Switzerland and even those countries that are so close together have major differences in their cultures and societal norms.

Participant #2128, a male participant who studied in Spain, came to a different realization about his cultural awareness as a result of his study abroad participation. He said,

In general, participating in a study abroad program has taught me that I am capable of living in a culture other than my own, but it has also made me realize that I will likely never be as comfortable in any foreign culture as I am in America.

He expressed his cultural awareness by saying that he now had an appreciation and respect for other cultures but that he could “also see that being raised in a certain environment has such a profound impact on our understanding of the world that it would be difficult to ever reach a point where I felt as comfortable here as I do back home.” He concluded by commenting that as a result of his study abroad participation his cultural competency had grown “but in the context of being a foreigner with a stronger understanding of this country rather than someone who blends in completely.”
Communication. While many comments about adapting to the host culture were made in relation to attitudes, fewer comments could be connected to cultural competency. However one participant in particular did make insightful comments about changes in her cultural competency due to an improved ability to communicate in the host culture. Participant #2086 recalled her arrival in Germany, her host country, and how things had progressed and changed for her as the semester went on.

In relation to my interaction with the German culture (which I am currently immersed in), I feel as though I have learned how to function fully here. When I first arrived here, I remember feeling overwhelmed but cultural differences, most extensively the language barrier, but I am now able to easily function within this society, almost without misunderstandings.

She continued by saying she was comfortable interacting with locals and further explained what she meant by that. “This means that not only am I almost completely speaking with native German speakers, but also that I feel that I have picked up on enough cultural norms (i.e. behavior on public transportation) to blend in here.”

Acceptance/openness. Acceptance of and openness to new experiences in new cultures are both critical elements for individuals to realize cultural competency. One can imagine that resistance to a new culture or experience can mean the difference between only existing in a new culture and actually becoming part of a new culture. Some participants wrote in very general terms how study abroad participation had impacted them in terms of acceptance and openness. Participant #74 who travelled to Italy, relatively culturally similar to the States, indicated he was expecting some differences between his home and host country but nothing severe. He mentioned there were some
things that He had to adjust to but noted his openness to the new culture by saying, “I guess I am more willing to just do something new without much hesitation.”

Other participants were less emphatic. For example, participant #11 who studied in Spain said simply, “I have learned to be more accepting of other cultures.” Participant #30 who studied in England said, “My horizons have been broaden and my judgments have been lessened and postponed.” Studying in the Dominican Republic, participant #2011 was also short on words but emphasized the impact of her study abroad program by commenting, “I have definitely become more open-minded, especially towards cultures with beliefs I would consider wrong or old-fashioned.”

Finally, participant #48 who studied in Ireland conveyed her acceptance and openness through her recount of experiences meeting new people. She said,

Living in Ireland away from my comfortable American surroundings has really encouraged me to speak to new people, people that may be from other places with interesting stories about their homes. Meeting an Italian, or a French person, a German, a Romanian is really exciting more than it is scary. When I meet new people from other countries, I think less about where they are from and more about who they are as a person.

Attitudes were expressed by participants in a variety of categories including cultural differences, accepting/adapting/understanding, attitudes toward the host country and attitudes toward the home country. Similar to cultural competency, several participants indicated they saw no change in their attitudes due to their participation in study abroad. As she indicated in the questions on cultural competency, participant #23 who traveled to Costa Rica also did not find her cultural attitudes had altered much due to
her study abroad participation. She had a better understanding of the functioning of the country but did not feel she developed different attitudes.

I don't know that my attitudes about the country have changed that much. I've certainly gained a more thorough understand of how the country works by virtue of being here but I don't have any strong opinions about the country.

She didn’t discuss previous travel experiences but conferred how she was prepared to travel in Costa Rica. “I was prepared for a lot of the cultural differences coming in thanks to some reading material provided by my program.”

Participant #2074 also did not feel any impact on her cultural attitudes. She explained in detail how the similarity of the cultures of her home and host country impacted this feeling.

The culture of Denmark is not too different from typical American culture. Denmark is a developed, industrialized nation similar to the United States. They listen to the same music, watch the same movies, sell the same type and quality of clothing, eat similar food, and have similar businesses. Aside from the historic architecture and structure of the city, my life as a young adult in Denmark has not felt much different than my life in America. The attitudes are a bit more liberal here, but on the whole, experiencing the “Danish culture” hasn’t totally changed my view of the world.

**Cultural differences.** In terms of cultural differences most participants discussed differences they found between their home and host culture and how these differences made them consider their cultural attitudes. Some participants talked about general
experiences in their host country and how those experiences impacted their attitudes.

Participant #40 who studied in Morocco said,

> It has opened up my eyes to cultural differences that exist in a developing country in comparison to a first world country such as the United States. This study abroad program showed me the differences in culture regarding gender and the youth in the universities.

Participant #55 also discussed cultural differences in more general terms. She was surprised at the differences she found between her home country and her host country, France. Starting by saying that of course she knew that “different countries had different cultures” but overall between the US and France I was more under the impression that they were pretty similar. And I suppose that this is true on the larger scale of things, but also there are so many small nuances that I was unaware of and didn't even think that I had to be aware of which surprised me.

Participant #2164 relayed a more specific example from her time in Argentina which made her realize cultural differences and impacted her attitudes. Writing roughly at the mid-point of her program she recounts a story:

> Since my arrival in Buenos Aires, I have certainly been challenged in what I consider to be right v. wrong and in what is actually just a cultural difference. For example, on my arrival, being the object of catcalls on the street made me extremely uncomfortable and afraid for my safety.

She went on to say that while she was still uncomfortable with what she considered a “commonplace demonstration of machismo,” this acknowledgment of cultural
differences had impacted her attitudes. “I feel that I have gained a greater understanding of this cultural difference, and it no longer makes me afraid.”

Lastly, participant #11 who studied in Spain remarked on how all cultures were different and how individuals should not judge cultures based on these differences. She said, “I have realized how culturally ignorant some people can be and made many observations on how each culture is different. Differences are neither good nor bad but simply just different.”

Understanding, accepting and adapting. This adoption of a neutral attitude on cultural differences expressed by participant #11 above is an important part in the process of understanding, accepting and perhaps eventually adapting to the host culture. Several participants expressed these sentiments about their host culture. Participant #48 who studied in Ireland answered the question on cultural attitudes by saying, “I feel my attitude towards other cultures has evolved away from plain curiousness to a respectful interest.” Participant #11 expanded on this by discussing acceptance of other cultures. Of her time in Morocco she said, “I have learned that my culture is not the only or right way to do things and I have learned to be more accepting of other cultures.” Other participants talked about how ultimately they began to adapt to the host culture.

Participant #11 continued from her previous statement by talking about her host culture in sentimental terms. She said of Morocco, “I think you grow to love the culture and after a while you start to embrace it as your own.” Participant #2086 also discussed adapting to the host culture in Germany as her time there passed. “As I have gotten more comfortable here, I have noticed myself adopting the attitudes of German culture and leaving behind some of the attitudes and opinions that I held as an American.”
Attitudes toward the host country. When asked to write about attitudes towards his or her host country comments were very diverse, often with the same participant exhibiting mixed feelings about the host country. This is to be expected as attitudes are complex and a result of many factors and experiences, past and present. The results for this theme are structured around general attitudes, idealization of the host country, social issues, and reversal of stereotypes. Additionally, as in the previous two sections, some participants indicated they experienced no changes in their attitudes. In general these participants who indicated they did not see a change in his or her attitudes toward the host country had expectations which were met during the time abroad. Participant #43 said that her attitude toward her host country, Hungary, were about the same as when she arrived. She explained that she did not have negative attitudes toward the country “because I always heard good things from people who have traveled here.” Based on this information her attitudes towards her host country were generally positive. She explained those positive attitudes by saying, “the people are wonderful, they're very interested in American culture, they like to practice their English speaking with us, and they're very welcoming to tourists from other countries.” Participant #50 was also in the same situation. She studied in Ireland and noted, “My attitude towards the host country has been favorable since the beginning of the program. I expected a high level of communal friendliness among local Irish people, and this has been confirmed.”

Additionally participants #55 and #2160 also had favorable attitudes towards their host country based on prior knowledge. Participant #55 commented, “I don't think my attitude about France has changed too much. I've always loved it and being here is really great.” Participant #2160 also said, “My attitudes themselves haven't really changed. I
still think Australia is a great country” however she goes on to say, “but now I am more familiar with it and can appreciate that it has its own problems even though they might not be on the world stage as much as we are in the US.”

**General attitudes.** General attitudes toward the host country were conveyed in expressions of the differences of the home country to the host country, negative experiences in the host country and fondness for the host country.

Similar to participants in the photo elicitation study, several participants expressed their attitudes toward their host country by discussing how the host country was different or in some cases opposite to their home country. When mentioning differences, some participants often mentioned less pronounced differences experienced in the host culture. Participant #2157 who studied in Australia wrote about how she noticed differences she never thought about including, “the standard size of paper, very different words for the same thing even among English-speaking countries, differently pronounced letters of the alphabet, and the lack of one-cent coins here.” While participant #18 did not note specific examples of differences she did say she “was not expecting to have the "culture shock" that I experienced.” She studied in England and found things to be similar but not exact to home which was disconcerting. “Having things be so similar and still slightly "off" has been off-putting at times, but it is all part of the experience.”

Two participants discussed the conveniences of the US compared to their host countries. Participant #55 was in France for the entire semester and speculated that might be why she missed some conveniences of home.
I might say that because I'm here for such a long time I miss some of the conveniences of home. And by conveniences it I mostly mean certain stores, like Target or Walgreens, where I know I can get everything I need in one place instead of having to go to lots of different specialty shops the way it is here in Paris.

Participant #2086 also considered the conveniences of home, however the difficulties in the host country had become somewhat routine. At about the halfway point of her program in Germany she noticed, “The things that were annoying at the beginning of the program (i.e. most stores being closed on Sundays) now seem completely normal.” She said she had “gained an appreciation for the differences between German and American cultures over the past three months or so.

Participant #2001 had a different experience in England regarding the larger stores so common in the US which made other participants consider conveniences. In comparing the US to England he thought, “though England is not infested with tasteless, big box retailers like Walmart, its franchises are just as obnoxiously ubiquitous–if not more so–as they are in the United States.” Another participant spoke differently about Australia in regards to big business and her attitudes toward her host country. Participant #2160 said, “I see now how much Americans rely on and take comfort in big business. Australia is all about supporting local businesses and small companies; the only real chain businesses are grocery stores.”

Bureaucracy was a focus for participant #2164. As will be discussed below, while she had become very fond of her host country of Argentina she noted that, “I am
often frustrated with Argentine bureaucracy and have often missed the straight-forwardness of the university and government systems in the U.S.

Negative experiences in the host country were not abundant and typically negative comments were followed by statements which conflicted with the negative comment, again showing the complexity of attitudes. Participant #18 wrote “At times, I have felt that some people are very Anti-American, but I have also met some people who are very friendly and interested in my home country.” She also wrote about how upon arrival in England there was a problem with her visa that caused the border patrol agents to hassle her at the airport. While at the time of responding to the initial questions she indicated she still had anxiety about her experiences with entering to the country she still have positive feelings toward her host country.

Participant #2128 studied in Mallorca, Spain. He said that he enjoyed many aspects of living in Spain but also had “some negative impressions of some aspects of the country, including the unclear expectations of the education system and the overly lax attitude on the part of the government in contexts like public transportation.” He articulated that often living in Spain was frustrating if one was looking for “more precise answers” however he found he appreciated some aspects of life in Spain such as the laid back approach to socializing and the workload.

Much like his counterparts above, participant #2001 also expressed negative experiences in his host culture particularly with respect to social opportunities in England. He said, “I am pleasantly surprised at how friendly and helpful the British are, yet a bit shocked by how difficult it is to establish a friendship.” He noticed that the British were like him. “They are, in fact, very much like me, in this regard, and I realized
how much I depended on people that were more solicitous and outgoing than I am in the States.” He finished his thought by saying the point of his answer was to demonstrate “that my study abroad experience changed my attitude toward my host country by immersing me in that environment for longer than a cursory travel.”

In terms of fondness for the host country participants often seemed eager to talk about their experiences in another country. Participant #2157 admitted that she did not know much about her host country of Australia before she arrived “aside from the fact that there were a lot of kangaroos, koalas, and attractive surfer boys.” She found those things to be fairly true but stated “I have obviously learned so much more as well, and have come to grow very fond of it, compared to before the program, when my attitude towards Australia was fairly detached but intrigued.” Participant #2164 divulged how she did not really know if she would “fit into” a large Latin American city, Buenos Aires. However, she did fit in and furthermore said “I have truly fallen in love with its big-city busyness mixed with its Latin American relaxed vibe.”

Participant #48 discovered that Ireland was not indistinguishable from the rest of the European countries but instead she had come to see Ireland “as a nation with its own interests and cultural values just as we do in the States.” She continued by saying “I’ve grown very fond of Ireland and its citizens.” Finally, other participants simply commented on their affection for the lifestyle in their host country. For example, we have participant #74 who stated simply “The country has been great . . . Italy has shown me a different kind of lifestyle that I can adapt to mine back home.” In addition participant #2128 explained that he had “come to appreciate some aspects of the lifestyle here and in general find it more relaxed than the American one.”
**Idealization of the host country.** Along with a fondness for the host country, some participants came to idealize the culture of the host country. In most cases this idealization was tempered with some skepticism but not in all cases. When asked how her attitudes towards the host country, Germany, had been affected by study abroad participant #2086 said, “I have also begun to view the German way of doing many things as the “better” way, which I assume is just the result of acclimating to them.” She concluded by saying “I can honestly say that my experience studying abroad has only made me even fonder of Germany.”

Participant #2074 had some issues with what she saw as her host country’s intolerance of diversity (discussed below) but over the course of her study abroad program in Denmark she seemed to begin to think almost everything was better there. She defended Denmark by saying “For a lack of better words, they have their shit together.” She saw the US as “complex and dysfunctional in a lot of ways because there is so much disagreement.” In a lengthy response she named the virtues she saw in Danish culture.

In Denmark, this welfare state exists that just puts everyone in the country on the same level. Every person is equal to the next. The majority of people have similar income levels after taxes, no matter what their job is. They have free education all the way through college and free health care. There is this sense of safety and security, because everyone is guaranteed to have at least enough to survive and raise a family. I know that many countries would not function as well under the same policy, but I have a great deal of respect for Denmark for making this work so well. The Danes are environmentally friendly and health conscious.
The children are mature and independent. The people are encouraged to foster their talents, follow their passions, and spend their life doing what they want to do.

She compared Denmark to the US saying that life in Denmark is:

much better than home, where often children are encouraged to chase careers that can guarantee them money and benefits, rather than the careers that they want.

There is a sense of egalitarianism, self-determination, open-mindedness, and happiness in this country, and I have really come to love and appreciate it.

Participant #2001 also discussed his idealization of his host country of England. He said, “Initially, I just assumed everything about Europe, and London in particular, was better than everything in the United States. To a certain extent, I still maintain this attitude.” He continued with why he felt this way explaining how “. . . from a cultural and intellectual standpoint England is much more enriched than the United States. However, there are certain respects in which neither country is above reproach.” He admitted that his time in England had “dismantled some of my idealization of its culture” but had also created “new and more valid idealizations.” While his attitude was not one of complete idealization of his host country he concluded by saying “Generally, I still prefer England, though.”

Social issues. Several participants commented on social issues they saw in the host country often to his or her surprise. Comments were primarily around issues of discrimination that they either witnessed or learned about in the host country. As mentioned above, participant #2074 came to idealize her host country of Denmark to an extent. However, she also experienced instances which caused her to feel that Denmark
was intolerant of diversity. She noticed the homogeneity of the Danish people saying, “When you walk around Copenhagen, you see so many people with white skin, blonde hair, and a fair complexion.” As a result this participant saw that in Denmark people of “other races, ethnicities, and cultures have begun to really stand out to me because they are so minimal.” She mentioned that in her first week in Denmark she was told “that the people of Denmark prefer and purposefully try to keep its population homogenous. To me, that just sounds ridiculous. I understand that Denmark has political and social agendas that are different from America, but I do not like that homogeneity is something they strive for.”

While she understood that the Danes valued their heritage and were trying to maintain that heritage, participant #2074 was surprised to learn about these Danish policies. She also relayed a story she heard from a classmate in a course she took in Muslim studies. The classmate told her “the Muslim citizens in Denmark are treated poorly by the others, like they are second-class citizens.” She continued by saying, “When I hear these kind of things, I am taken aback, and I get defensive. I feel like by experiencing these circumstances, I have really come to know about my own opinions and attitudes.”

Participant #43 who studied in Hungary also had comments on diversity in her host country. She said, “there are a lot of Caucasian and Asian people in Hungary, so if a person of any other race is present, people have a tendency to stare because they're not used to it.” She also had comments about homosexuality in Hungary. She compared her home and host country when she said,
even though Americans may see the United States as far behind the times in terms of social standards, we are pretty advanced. In terms of gay marriage and stuff, it's not even normal for people to be openly gay to the public because it's kind of looked down upon.

Lastly, participant #40 who studied in Morocco had comments about the treatment of women in her host country. She was surprised to find that women were treated differently in Morocco. When asked about her attitudes towards her host country she wrote,

I still have a hard time grasping the inferiority and disrespect of many women in this country. Even though every man does not treat women inferiorly, there is a large number of men that do not respect women-foreign or not.

Reversal of stereotypes. Some participants held generalizations or stereotypes about their host country before they arrived which were overturned while studying abroad. Some cases were straightforward as in participant #30 who said simply, “I have realized how wrong it is to generalize the British. They all have so many different accents.” and participant #55 who said about France, “From my experiences, the French are actually quite polite (not rude as everyone stereotypically assumes).” Other cases were silly but with significant concerns like participant #48 who said about her host country of Ireland, “I have, in fact, found out that Ireland is not full of redheaded drunkards and that this image of Ireland is something the Irish are trying to change.” Another participant, #2128 who had visited his host country of Spain previously remarked how “Participating in this study abroad program has allowed me to see that
Spain is a more diverse place than I realized, since I had been to other parts of Spain before but never to Mallorca.”

**Attitudes toward the home country.** As we saw in the section above on attitudes toward the host country, when participants were asked to discuss how studying abroad had impacted their attitudes towards their home country responses were often conflicted again revealing the complexity of attitudes. The results for attitudes toward the home country are organized around several areas including general attitudes, comparisons between the home and host country, criticism of the home country and appreciation of the home country. Unlike some of the previous sections above, only one participant who traveled to Ireland indicated her attitudes towards her home country had not been impacted by her study abroad participation.

**General.** Several participants expressed general attitudes toward their home country with some participants discussing these attitudes in relation to themselves. Participant #2086 who studied in Germany elaborated on certain attitudes towards home which will be addressed below, however she could not say what she missed about her home country. She said, “I assume that once I return to the U.S. I will figure out what I truly missed, but for now I have definitely lost appreciation for many things there.”

Participant #2074 who studied in Denmark mentioned a variety of things about herself when discussing how her attitudes towards her home country have been affected by study abroad participation. She thought that her experiences on her study abroad program had helped her become more aware of her own opinions and attitudes. However she seemed to still want to learn more. After learning more about Denmark she said she
was interested in becoming more involved in politics in the US. When comparing Danish and US politics she thought the US was "a bit of a mess" and further remarked,

I think one way my attitude has changed is that I have more curiosity now. As I mentioned before, I have never become fully involved in politics, but when I return home, I want to become more aware. I want to know more so that I really come to know my own opinions about the United States.

**Comparisons.** Several participants made specific comparisons to the US when asked how their attitudes toward their home country had been impacted by study abroad. These comparisons depicted the US in both positive and negative lights. Most participants made comparisons on what could be considered more weighty issues but still general comments were made. Participant #2086 said that she had "lost appreciation for the United States after living in Germany for a few months." She indicated that since arriving in Germany she tended to emphasize those things that she thought Germany did better than the US, mentioning both public transportation and grocery store prices.

With regards to comparisons between the home and host country that brought to light more serious issues, participants considered education, freedoms and economics. Participant #43 stated clearly that she felt education was taken for granted in the US when comparing to her host country of Hungary. While in Hungary she had the opportunity to tutor English to students at a local university. These students had moved from rural areas to Budapest. Her impression of these students was that they were “very motivated and excited to learn, because they know that the opportunity they got to go to a great school should be appreciated and that they need to keep up their grades to stay in the college.” Participant #40 also made comments comparing education in her host
country of Morocco with the US. She explained that education was free in Morocco and
she felt people in Morocco took education more seriously. While perhaps counter-
intuitive, she went on to say, “With free education, many of the students attempt to go
abroad and get an even higher education. In the United States, it appears as though many
of the students take our education system for granted.”

This same participant had other comments about her home country that put the
US in a more positive light. She noted that living in Morocco had made her realize the
importance of freedom of religion and equality between genders. In her own words she
said she had “never really seen the importance of having religious liberty and the
importance of coexistence until this study abroad program.” She continued to talk about
freedom in the US and compared her experiences as a woman in her home and host
country. She said,

As a women here, I feel uncomfortable walking many places by myself. While in
America, women have much more freedom. Granted, a lot of this gender concern
stems from religion; however, this just goes back to why I appreciate religious
liberty and freedom in the United States of America.

Lastly, participant #2074 expressed somewhat negative views of the political
system in the US compared to her host country of Denmark. Learning more about the
political and economic systems of Denmark she remarked,

it has started to stand out more and more to me that the politics and economics of
the US are a bit of a mess. Now that I’ve seen Denmark, where every citizen
seems to be on the same page together, the discord that exists within the United
States really stands out.
Her surprise at the intolerance of diversity she found in Denmark was discussed above. Perhaps the homogeneity in Denmark that she found unappealing had some impact on the harmony she saw in Denmark.

**Criticism of the home country.** Much like participants in the photo elicitation study, some participants had criticisms of their home country which displayed their attitudes. Criticisms were grouped around opinions of other Americans, ignorance, and social and political issues.

Two participants expressed their attitudes toward their home country by their observations of other Americans in their host country. Participant #55 relayed an interesting story of her encounters with other college-aged Americans on the metro in Paris. She said that she considered herself a “culturally aware person” who was open to learning about other cultures. However, she went on to say, “What's funny though is that now I am more critical of other people based on their nationalities especially my own.” She communicated the story of encountering loud and obnoxious Americans on the metro where she couldn’t wait to get off the train. She said, “in the metro I absolutely hate being next to the loud, noisy Americans which totally doesn't make any sense because I'm an American!” These experiences led her to be “more aware of how an outsider sees us.” She said she didn’t like “being mistaken for an American on the metro, or being around them.” She explained this feeling as a “cultural aversion”

Participant #74 had similar experiences in Italy. While in Italy he noticed “Americans, especially American girls, will act as if an Italian should know what they want when ordering a meal or some kind of service.” From these interactions he could see the perceptions of Americans by Italians were confirmed. His reaction was to make
an effort to “try to understand when an Italian is short with me because I am sure they had to deal with other Americans who did not respect them before.” This participant also said he had “noticed how much more Americans feel self-entitled.” That behavior bothered him and as a result he tried to “be as respectful to the locals as I can.”

When discussing ignorance, participants mainly put the blame on Americans. Participant #30 wrote about how she found Americans to be self-centered. She realized this while studying in England. Regardless of whom she spoke with, to her it seemed that everyone knew something about Americans. While on the other hand she often did not even know the location of their country on a map. She said, “It’s really sad” and concluded by saying “I realize more that America isn't perfect.”

Participant #2157 also said she realized the ignorance of Americans while studying abroad in Australia. She noted, “I have realized how ignorant America is of most of the rest of the world, and how much the rest of the world knows about America.” She mentioned she thought it was strange that the US was brought up frequently in her classes and also commented on the American influence in Australia with “fast food restaurants, general stores, music, movies, etc.” She continued to explain that while the US had such vast influence on the world “it is kind of sad to think about how little America knows about the rest of the world.” She detailed an example from her time in Australia in the following quotation.

For example, probably because of the American movies they watch, if there is a different word for something here, the Australians usually know what the US equivalent is, and they know a decent amount about American culture. However, I
am still learning Australian equivalents of US words, and I knew nothing about their country before coming here.

With respect to social and political issues participants had diverse comments which illustrated their attitudes toward their home country. Participant #2164 also commented on what she saw as the ignorance of Americans. She commented on how the fierce passion with which Argentines assert their political beliefs makes me aware of how complacent and uninformed we as Americans so frequently are when it comes to politics. It makes me wish that U.S. youths were as politically active and passionate as are Argentine youths.

Participant #2164 also had several comments about her experiences in Argentina and how these came to shape her opinions about her home country of the US. She wrote how, while studying in Argentina, she had “come to realize how centrally important the U.S. actually is on the international scale and also how important we THINK we are on the global scale.” Her emphasis on the word think tells a larger story which she explained with additional comments. “In each of my classes at the local Argentine universities of UBA and UCA, I am continuously confronted with the disgust that Argentines feel concerning the imperialist, sticking-our-nose-in-everyone's-business tendencies of the U.S.” Participant #2011 who studied in the Dominican Republic had similar comments. When asked how the study abroad program had impacted her attitude toward her home country he said,

I have definitely begun to realize how much we take for granted in the USA, also the kind of influences we've had over the years. Our involvement in foreign affairs has had both good and bad consequences for the world around us.
Appreciation of home. As to be expected, time immersed in another culture also led participants to begin to appreciate the home country. Due to time abroad, many participants had begun to view their home country in different ways. When asked how their attitudes towards their home country had been affected by study abroad, many participants simply discussed they felt fortunate and had more gratitude for the US. Here are some comments from students that express that.

Participant #43: My attitudes towards the United States have changed in that I really have a first-hand knowledge of how fortunate we are in America.

Participant #48: Firstly, as anyone who has been away from home for a long time, I have realized how much I take for granted. My parents, my brother, my living situation, my luxuries. The United States seems like a luxurious cruise liner that can fulfill any demands I may have. My attitude has changed from feeling slightly entitled to the greatness and convenience of the United States to an appreciation and I certainly have more gratitude.

Participant #74: I am much more proud to be an American after this experience. I see the kinds of opportunities that I have at my fingertips.

Other participants revealed their appreciation through discussions about the culture of the home country. Participant #2074 wrote extensively about the homogeneity she learned about and saw in her host country of Denmark. While there were numerous things she liked more about Denmark, she still had positive things to say about US culture. When asked how are attitudes about her home country had changed she said, “I have come to appreciate the diversity and tolerance of culture that America allows.”

Participant #2164 also discussed things she had learned while in Argentina and how those
things had altered her attitudes toward her home country. While she had many damning things to say about US politics, what she learned about Argentinian history impacted her opinions about the US greatly. She said,

In addition, every class that I have at the public university here (UBA) shakes my cultural perceptions. Because my course is on the 20th century Social History of Argentina, we discuss the numerous coup d’états and military dictatorships that are interlaced throughout the history of this country. As a result, I have gained an immense appreciation for democracy and for how consolidated democracy is in the U.S. (i.e. we never feel fear of military dictatorship).

Participant #2128 who studied in Spain also commented on how his attitudes towards his home culture had improved due to study abroad participation. He said,

In most ways, being here has actually made me appreciate the United States more. I've seen the great cultural impact our country has on the rest of the world, as the vast majority of music, movies, and television here come directly from America. I've also come to appreciate the fact that the United States feels more open to the influence of other cultures - we regularly eat food from different nationalities, interact with people of different backgrounds, and hold positive attitudes of most parts of the world.

Interestingly his own experiences living as a foreigner in Spain also made him think critically about the plight of immigrants in the US. He wrote, “However, I do understand a little better the difficulties immigrants to the US have when they don't speak the language, and I've realized that we should be more understanding and patient with these people.” He finished by discussing where he sees himself in the future. “In general
though, although I've really enjoyed my time here, being away from the United States has made me realize that in the long term I see myself living within the US.”

**Variables Effecting Changes in Cultural Attitudes and Cultural Distance**

Subsequent to the t-tests, a series of MANOVA tests were performed to investigate if the independent variables of length abroad and cultural distance contributed to the significant differences in the pre and post-test dependent variables of cultural attitudes and cultural competency. It was determined to use one way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to test for differences between groups rather than ANOVA to reduce the risk of Type I errors (Spicer, 2005).

**H3: Length Abroad and Cultural Attitudes**

A one-way MANOVA was performed to ascertain the impact of length abroad on post minus pre test differences in participants’ cultural attitudes. Both factors of cultural attitudes (similarity and social issues) were used as dependent variables in the test. Participants were divided into one of three groups based on their length of time spent abroad including short, medium and long-term length abroad. The initial assumptions for the test of independent observations and adequate sample size were met (Fields, 2009). Tests were run to check for outliers and normality for each group of the independent variable length abroad and for cultural attitudes. Box plots were inspected for all levels of length abroad and the dependent variables. For the cultural attitudes factors, one outlier was found for similarity and four outliers were found for social issues. Neither factors had any extreme outliers. All outliers were reviewed in the dataset and they were determined to be valid data points so were left in the analysis. Q-Q plots were also reviewed and data were determined to be roughly normal.
To detect for multivariate outliers a Mahalanobis distance for length abroad and cultural attitudes was calculated in SPSS. The largest value was 8.59. With 2 dependent variables the critical value to consider was 13.82 (Pallant, 2007), therefore no multivariate outliers were found. Using a Pearson correlation, multicollinearity was not found \((r = -.156, p = .037)\). As well, Box’s M Test was used to assess for homogeneity of variance-covariance. There was no violation of this assumption as the test statistic was greater than .001 (Fields, 2009), \((p = .946)\). Participants in the medium length abroad group had a higher mean difference between the post-tests and pre-tests for both cultural attitude factors of similarity and social issues. For participants with short and long-term lengths abroad the mean differences between the post-tests and pre-tests were negative for social issues. Using Pillai’s Trace \((V)\), length of time abroad was not found to have a significant effect on the differences between the post-tests and pre-tests of the combined dependent variable cultural attitudes, \(F(4, 352) = 2.16, p>.05\) (see Table 16).

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
<th>Univariate</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>.415(^A)</td>
<td>.680(^A)</td>
<td>.391(^A)</td>
<td>1.332</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>-.158(^A)</td>
<td>.290(^AB)</td>
<td>-.031(^A)</td>
<td>2.400</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MANOVA model: \(V=0.048, F=2.157, p>.05\)
\(^a\)Means with the same superscript are not significantly different at the .05 level.

**H4: Length Abroad and Cultural Competency**

A one-way MANOVA was performed to ascertain the impact of length abroad on post minus pre test differences in participants’ cultural competency. The factors of cultural competency resulting from the factor analysis were used as dependent variables in the test (cultural awareness, different culture, personal assessment and adaptation).
Again, participants were divided into one of three groups based on their length of time spent abroad including short, medium and long-term length abroad. The initial assumptions for the test of independent observations and adequate sample size were met (Fields, 2009). Tests were run to check for outliers and normality for each group of the independent variable length abroad and cultural competency. Box plots were also inspected for all levels of length abroad and the dependent variables. Fourteen outliers were detected for cultural distance and the cultural competency factors of cultural awareness and seventeen outliers were detected for different culture. Four outliers were identified as extreme for cultural awareness and four outliers were identified as extreme for cultural difference. Eight outliers were found for the cultural competency factors of personal assessment and four were found for the adaptation factor. All outliers were reviewed in the dataset and they were determined to be valid data points so were left in the analysis. Q-Q plots were also reviewed and data were determined to be roughly normal.

To detect for multivariate outliers a Mahalanobis distance for length abroad and cultural competency was calculated in SPSS. The largest value was 16.58. With 4 dependent variables the critical value to consider was 18.47 (Pallant, 2007), therefore no multivariate outliers were found in the data. A Pearson correlation showed small to moderate correlations between the dependent variables ($r = .154$ to $r = .304$), therefore it was determined there was no multicollinearity. Homogeneity of variance-covariance was found using Box’s test ($p = .043$). Similar to cultural attitudes, participants in the medium length abroad group had a higher mean difference between the post-tests and pre-tests for all but one of the cultural competency factors. Mean differences for the
medium length abroad group were larger for cultural awareness, different culture and personal assessment. The long-term length abroad group had the largest mean differences between the post-tests and pre-tests in the adaptation factor. Mean differences in cultural awareness for the short and long term length abroad groups were negative, however all other values were positive. Using Pillai’s Trace, length of time abroad was not found to have a significant effect on the differences between the post-tests and pre-tests of the combined cultural competency dependent variable, $F(8, 338) = 1.47$, $p>.05$ (see Table 17).

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of length abroad on cultural competency</th>
<th>Means(^a)</th>
<th>Univariate (F)</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.050(^A)</td>
<td>.386(^B)</td>
<td>-.023(^A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Culture</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.047(^A)</td>
<td>.107(^A)</td>
<td>.047(^A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Assessment</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.154(^A)</td>
<td>.464(^A)</td>
<td>.384(^A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.415(^A)</td>
<td>.500(^A)</td>
<td>.559(^A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MANOVA model: \(V=0.067, F=1.470, p>.05\)

\(^a\)Means with the same superscript are not significantly different at the .05 level.

### H5: Cultural Distance and Cultural Attitudes

Following the tests for length of time abroad and the dependent variables a similar one-way MANOVA was run to assess if cultural distance had an impact on the cultural attitudes of similarity and social issues. For cultural distance, participants were divided into one of three groups based on the cultural distance of the host country they visited. The three groups represented low, medium and large cultural distance. The initial assumptions for the test of independent observations and adequate sample size were met (Fields, 2009). Tests were run to check for outliers and normality for each group of the independent variable cultural distance and cultural attitudes. Box plots were
inspected for all levels of cultural distance and the dependent variables. For the cultural attitudes factor one outlier was identified for similarity and seven outliers were identified for social issues, none of which were identified as extreme outliers. It was determined that these outliers were valid data points and it was decided to leave them as a part of the analysis. Q-Q plots were also reviewed and data was determined to be roughly normal.

To detect for multivariate outliers a Mahalanobis distance for cultural distance and the cultural attitudes factors was calculated in SPSS. No multivariate outliers were found as the largest value was 9.83 which was not over the critical value of 13.82 for two dependent variables. Using a Pearson correlation, multicollinearity was not found ($r = -.156, p = .037$). Box’s Test of equality of covariance was used to assess for homogeneity of variance-covariance. There was no violation of this assumption ($p = .143$).

Participants in the large cultural distance group had a higher mean difference between the post-tests and pre-tests for similarity, followed by participants in the medium cultural distance group. Similar to length abroad, all mean differences between the post-tests and pre-tests were negative for social issues. Using Pillai’s Trace, cultural distance was not found to have a significant effect on the differences between the post-tests and pre-tests of the combined dependent variable cultural attitudes, $F(4, 352) = 1.33, p>.05$ (see Table 18).

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Means$^a$</th>
<th>Univariate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>.336$^A$</td>
<td>.504$^A$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>-.039$^A$</td>
<td>-.113$^A$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MANOVA model: $V=0.030, F=1.331, p>.05$

$^a$Means with the same superscript are not significantly different at the .05 level.
**H6: Cultural Distance and Cultural Competency**

The final one-way MANOVA was run to test the impact of cultural distance on the cultural competency factors of cultural awareness, different culture, personal assessment and adaptation. Participants were divided into one of three groups based on the cultural distance of the host country they visited, including low, medium and large cultural distance. The initial assumptions for the test of independent observations and adequate sample size were met (Fields, 2009). Tests were run to check for outliers and normality for each group of the independent variable cultural distance and cultural competency. By examining box plots, six outliers were detected for cultural distance and the cultural competency factor of cultural awareness and twenty were identified as outliers for the factor different culture. One outlier was identified as extreme for cultural awareness and ten outliers were identified as extreme for cultural difference. As well, four outliers were detected for cultural distance and the cultural competency factor of personal assessment and one outlier was detected for adaptation, though none were identified as extreme. Q-Q plots were also reviewed and data was determined to be roughly normal.

To detect for multivariate outliers a Mahalanobis distance for cultural distance was calculated in SPSS. The largest value was 21.97. With 4 dependent variables the critical value to consider was 18.47 (Pallant, 2007) and further inspection revealed there was one multivariate outlier found. The case was reviewed and determined to be valid. Considering the robustness of the MANOVA test it was determined to leave this data point. A Pearson correlation showed small to moderate correlations between the dependent variables ($r = .154$ to $r = .304$), therefore it was determined there was no
multicollinearity. Homogeneity of variance-covariance was found using Box’s test \( p = .376 \). Participants in the medium cultural distance group had a higher mean difference between the post-tests and pre-tests for all cultural competency factors. For participants in the small cultural distance group mean differences between the post-tests and pre-tests were negative for cultural awareness. For participants in the large cultural distance group mean differences between the post-tests and pre-tests were negative for the personal assessment factor. Using Pillai’s Trace, cultural distance was found to have a significant effect on the differences between the post-tests and pre-tests of the combined dependent variable cultural competency, \( F(8, 338) = 1.98, p<.05. \), indicating there was a significant effect of cultural distance on the change in cultural competency (see Table 19).

Table 19

| Impact of cultural distance on cultural competency |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                 | Low            | Medium         | Large          | Univariate     |
| Cultural Awareness | -.082^A         | .118^A         | .006^A         | 1.941          | .147          |
| Different Culture  | .044^A          | .102^A         | .000^B         | .437           | .647          |
| Personal Assessment | .297^A         | .337^A         | -.064^B        | 3.929          | .021          |
| Adaptation        | .369^A          | .566^A         | .529^B         | 1.251          | .289          |

MANOVA model: \( V=0.089, F=1.978, p<.05 \)

^Means with the same superscript are not significantly different at the .05 level.

Univariate tests for individual variables were completed for the statistically significant MANOVA models to explore the effect of cultural distance on each dependent variable separately. The differences between the post-tests and pre-tests for cultural awareness \( F(2, 171) = 1.94, p>.05 \), different cultures \( F(2, 171) = .437, p>.05 \), and adaptation \( F(2, 171) = 1.25, p>.05 \), were not found to be statistically significantly different. A statistically significant difference was found for the dependent variable personal assessment, \( F(2, 171) = 3.93, p<.05 \). Further review of the Boneferroni post
hoc test for the dependent variable personal assessment revealed the differences between the small and large cultural distance groups and the medium and large cultural distance groups were statistically significant. There was an increase in the personal assessment score between the post-tests and pre-tests in the medium group and the small group of .0395 which was not statistically significant ($p = .948$). There was an increase in the personal assessment score between the post-tests and pre-tests in the small group and large group of .3615 which was statistically significant ($p = .031$). Finally, there was an increase in the personal assessment score between the post-tests and pre-tests in the medium group and the large group of .4010 which was statistically significant ($p = .036$).

**RQ3: Motives and Expected Outcomes from Study Abroad**

A series of simple linear regressions were performed to determine how motives to participate in study abroad were related to actual perceived outcomes. For these tests the pre-test motive factors resulting from the factor analysis made up the independent variables and the post-test cultural competency factors made up the dependent variables. Scatter plots were run for all combinations of independent and dependent variables and approximately linear relationships were found. For each of the plots there did not appear to be strong linear relationships between the variables. However, there did not appear to be a violation of linear assumptions, as the data was not curved in any way. As well independence of errors was tested using the Durbin-Watson test. Values ranged from 1.526 to 2.186 where the acceptable value is around 2 (Fields, 2009), therefore independence of errors is assumed. An examination of the scatterplots created in the regression procedure revealed homoscedasticity of the data. Histograms and P-P plots were reviewed and it was found that residuals were approximately normally distributed.
with some more normal than others. The regression models for social/cultural motives and all cultural competency variables were statistically significant while all other tests were not. The results indicated that social/cultural motives to study abroad significantly predict outcomes of perceived cultural competency. More specifically results were as follows:

- Social/cultural motives and cultural awareness, $F(1, 173) = 88.041, p < .000$. Social/cultural motives accounted for 33.3% of the variability in cultural awareness.

- Social/cultural motives and different cultures, $F(1, 173) = 32.293, p < .000$. Social/cultural motives accounted for 15.2% of the variability in different cultures.

- Social/cultural motives and personal assessment, $F(1, 173) = 12.047, p < .001$. Social/cultural motives accounted for 6.0% of the variability in personal assessment.

- Social/cultural motives and adaptation, $F(1, 97) = 4.434, p < .05$. Social/cultural motives accounted for 1.9% of the variability in adaptation.

Key Learning Incidents

A central factor of the research at hand was the exploration of study abroad as tourism. In particular in all aspects of the current research participants were primarily asked to consider their outside the classroom experiences while participating on study abroad. Study abroad participants typically do much more than simply sit in a classroom just in another country. Participants in the study were asked to detail key learning incidents that influenced cultural attitudes and perceived cultural competency.
Additionally participants were asked to say where these incidents took place. When discussing key learning incidents participants brought up a variety of responses which were categorized here into social life, daily life and school life.

**Social Life**

Discussions of social life centered naturally on making friends either with people from the host country or people from other places. Participant #2157 who studied in Australia said plainly, “Honestly most of the key learning incidents that influenced my cultural attitudes have just come about through conversation with other people.” Participant #2086 became friends with a native of Germany who coincidentally was going to be studying the following semester at her home institution of Vanderbilt. Making this friend made her feel much more comfortable in Germany. Participant #2086 said, “By meeting her and her friends, I was pleased by how warm and welcoming they were and they have helped me feel even more comfortable living in a (no longer) foreign city.”

Other participants cited key learning incidents meeting others and socializing at bars or clubs. Participant #2128 said, “Some moments that have been responsible for my positive impressions are the first time I went to a Spanish bar with friends and met some of the locals, which led to conversations that I really enjoyed.” Participant #30 who studied in England also indicated meeting people in “clubs and pubs” had a large influence on her cultural attitudes and cultural competency. She said on weekends they would meet British people and talk about their lives. She went on to say, “Most of the realizations occurred when talking to foreigners or British natives in my kitchen with my flatmates or out on the weekend in clubs and bars.” She relayed a story of an evening
when she met other foreigners from Lithuania and Australia who were studying in England. While she doesn’t explain how it changed her she said, “The conversations and interactions I had that night changed me. The way Lithuanian's perceive America is vastly different from myself and the Australians I have talked to.”

Meeting other foreigners in the host country was something several participants mentioned. In addition to meeting people from Lithuania and Australia while studying in England, participant #30 had a roommate from Germany. She said about the roommate, “My German flatmate is one of the sweetest people I have ever met and I just realize how we are people growing up similarly just in different parts of the world.” Participant #2157 who studied in Australia also mentioned interactions with foreigners as key learning incidents. She traveled to New Zealand while on the study abroad program and referenced a conversation she had one night while staying at a hostel in Queenstown, New Zealand. The conversation was a discussion about the cultural ignorance of the US compared to the rest of the world. In what sounds like the beginning of a joke participant #2157 said there were “three Americans, two Canadians, a Norwegian, an Irish, and a Chilean” involved in the conversation. She commented how, “in the US, at least in my experience and where I have lived, it is rare to find such a diverse combination of people together.”

Another participant referred to a less than pleasant but still enlightening situation which her and her female roommates experienced in Morocco. Participant #40 made several references in regards to her surprise at the treatment of women in Morocco. She relayed a story of how when they walked into a bar she said, “many guys would come up to us and try to hand us money as if we were prostitutes.” She was unclear as to why
men made this assumption and when they asked local students about it they were told, “any respectable Muslim woman will not be seen out late at night, especially in bars because they were assumed to be prostitutes.” Much like her surprise at the overall treatment of women she “was just really shocked that women cannot go out and be social in such a place.”

**Daily Life**

Activities of daily life were brought up frequently as key learning incidents which had an impact on participants. In terms of daily life participants discussed their living situations, inconveniences, bureaucracy and getting around.

Participant #2011 who studied in the Dominican Republic lived with a local host family while studying abroad. When asked to relate key learning incidents from her time there among other things she said, “conversations with my host parents at home and at meals” had influenced her cultural attitudes and cultural competency. Participant #18 who studied in England also referenced her host family when talking about how her attitudes were impacted. She had the option of whether or not to live with a host family and decided she would. She said, “Choosing to live with a host family was a terrific choice because I am "forced" to interact with British people and I believe that has had a very positive impact on my time here.” When answering the question on key learning incidents participant #2128 who studied in Spain mentioned a specific interaction with his host mother. He had come home late one evening but his host mother had a very calm reaction to his late arrival. This led him to further understand “the more laid-back approach to time here.”
While inconveniences experienced in another country were brought up by quite a few participants in the photo elicitation study only one participant in this section mentioned the inconvenience of living abroad as a key learning incident. When asked about key learning incidents participant #48 said, “The toughest thing for me to get used to was not having huge megastores that have anything you want. In Ireland, I have to go to multiple little stores to find what I am looking for.”

Some participants had issues dealing with the bureaucracy in their host country which influenced their cultural attitudes and cultural competency. Participant #2001 who studied in England discussed an incident he had at the library of his school which caused him to rethink the way college students are treated in his home country.

I was shocked to be fined 20 pounds when I accidentally left the university library without checking out a book. While I still do not agree with their policy to this day, I was surprised to find that when I appealed the fine, the person in authority was willing to sit down with me for 20 minutes and explain exactly why that rule was enforced. At my home university, I feel as if the person would have just dismissed my appeal and argued merely from his/her authority that those were the rules and that's that. In this country, they seem to treat you like an adult far earlier than they do in the United States, where at times even university students can feel almost patronized by their superiors.

Participant #18 also had an issue with the bureaucracy in England which influenced her opinion of the English authorities. She said,

Sadly, I was hassled at the airport upon arrival because they claimed that I needed a Tier 4 Visa when I was only staying for five months and needed the simple
"student visa" so that made me disgruntled with England authority from the beginning and has also caused a bit of anxiety to occur when I come to any border patrol.

Participant #48 also mentioned getting around Dublin as a key learning incident for her. She said learning how to get around “was very stressful to find where I was and what I was looking for. I had to ask multiple Irish people for help, so that definitely influenced my attitude towards Irish culture.” Participant #50 who studied in Ireland as well also brought up the transportation systems as a key learning incident for her. She said that the most important cultural learning moments for her happened during interactions with bus drivers. Bus was her main method of transport while abroad and she said,

Surprisingly, the bus drivers themselves are extremely friendly and helpful. Numerous times, I have had to ask a bus driver upon entering a bus if it goes to a certain destination. Each driver has given a helpful answer; additionally, some will even call out the location as we are approaching it - a practice not a part of the normal driving routes. Not only did she find these interactions to be personable and helpful they also helped her “to become confident in my navigation of the Dublin bus system.”

Participant #2128 who studied in Spain also mentioned transportation as a key learning incident however he had less positive experiences than the two participants above. He had indicated some negative impressions of Spain including what he saw as an “overly lax attitude.” When answering the question on key learning incidents he mentioned a time he purchased train tickets and how that experience influenced his
attitudes. “Other moments that have inspired the attitudes I've listed above include times when I've purchased train tickets only to find there's no service that day with virtually no notification.”

Other participants revealed key learning incidents in terms of getting around with the local language. Participant #2086 who studied in Germany had taken a trip to Prague by train. At some point in the train trip she was transferred to a bus. Wondering why she asked a train employee. She said, “I was able to successfully ask a Deutsche Bahn employee why we were being transferred to a bus, with no difficulty. . . overcoming the language barrier has been a huge part of feeling as though I am functioning fully in German society.” Participant #11 who studied in Spain also mentioned a similar feeling. While she did not give a specific incident, this participant said, “I think the key learning incidents that influenced my cultural attitudes would be the times in which I was doing simple daily tasks and errands and they posed big problems because of language barriers, cultural differences, etc. “

Surprisingly, only one participant recalled an experience with crime as being a key learning incident. Participant #2164 was studying in Argentina. She was told before departure that Buenos Aires was a large city and she would need to have the same level of vigilance about her own safety as she would in any large city. Before going to Argentina she had spent three month working in Washington, DC with no incident. However, during her first week in Buenos Aires she robbed while departing from a subway station. She recalled that

This was a key learning incident because I was quickly confronted by the crime and economic desperation that are so prevalent in this city. Since that incident, I
have been hyper-alert to what is going on around me when I walk down the street or sit in a restaurant-- always with my bag clutched tightly to me.

Lastly, some students mentioned that simply walking around their host city or country as a key learning incident. Participant #2160 who studied in Australia said that it was hard to isolate one specific key learning incident which influenced her cultural attitudes and cultural competency. However, he did say that one of the most influential learning environments for her was walking around the streets of Sydney. She said that observations he made on the streets “allowed me to accumulate specific as well as general knowledge about Australian culture.” Participant #2086 also referenced walking around her adopted city of Regensburg, Germany as a key learning incident. She discussed her transformation studying abroad saying,

Although this is obviously not a complete transformation, there are definitely moments when I think something and immediately think “wow, I sound like an actual European.” I would say that all of these changes have come as a result of immersion within the society (i.e. walking around the city) rather than my courses at the university.

School Life

While the participant above specifically mentions the courses at her university in Germany as not contributing to her cultural attitudes or cultural competency many other participants talked about the influence of school life on them.

Several participants discussed school life and key learning incidents in terms of how it was different from what they were accustomed to. Participant #18 who studied in England said that the differences between the US and the UK university systems were
large. Specifically, she said, “the teaching methods are very different from what I have experienced at ASU. Feedback is not regularly accessible from the professor/tutors, so that has been slightly distressing, but it has helped me to work harder on planning my assignments.” While this proved to be a challenge she still determined that it was helpful for her to understand these different methods of teaching. Participant #2128 also compared his experiences at his home institution with those at his host institution. He recalled these experiences as “key learning moments” and went on to explain more specifically that these moments included “the first classes we took with Spaniards where we realized that their behavior in the classroom is much less formal than that of Americans, and my first interactions with professors in which I struggled to understand their expectations for assignments because they give them in a much less clear manner than in the United States.” Participant #48 who studied in Ireland made a simple comparison to her home university when she discussed the differences between the schools. She said, “the university here was a challenge to get used to, especially its course registration. I will never take Blackboard for granted ever again.”

Finally, two participants referenced their coursework as providing key learning incidents for them. When asked about the key learning incidents which influenced her cultural attitudes and cultural competency, participant #2011 who studied in the Dominican Republic simply answered, “My classes at my host university here were very enlightening.” Lastly, participant #23 who studied in Costa Rica also talked about her course work at her host institution when referencing key learning incidents. She said, I've learned a lot about the country from seeing the news and listening to professors talking about some of the politics of the country. It also helps that I'm
taking a lot of history classes here, which allows to understand some of the context for the things discussed by my professors.

Summary

In this concurrent embedded component the research questions were explored from both a qualitative and a quantitative perspective. It was found that participation in study abroad does result in changes in participants’ cultural attitudes and cultural competency. In the quantitative component significant differences were found in the cultural competency factors of personal assessment and adaptation and in the cultural attitudes factor of similarity. Participants in the qualitative component discussed their cultural competency in terms of cultural awareness, communication and being accepting and open to others. Cultural attitudes were discussed in a host of ways including acknowledgment of cultural differences, accepting/adapting/understanding, and by expression of attitudes towards the host country and the home country.

To investigate the reasons for the change in cultural attitudes and cultural competency MANOVA tests were performed using length of time abroad and cultural distance as the independent variables. Length of time abroad was not found to have a significant impact on changes in either cultural attitudes or cultural competency. As well, cultural distance was not found to have a significant impact on changes in cultural attitudes. However, cultural distance was found to have a significant impact on changes in cultural competency. The results of univariate tests on the significant results revealed a statistically significant difference in the cultural competency factor of personal assessment. Specifically, the change in perceived cultural competency between the small and large cultural distance groups were statistically significant for personal assessment.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In this study the impact of outside the classroom activities and experiences of study abroad participants on cultural attitude change and perceived cultural competence was investigated. Motives to participate, expectations and outcomes of study abroad programs were also explored. There were multiple research questions which guided the study as well as hypothesized relationships for the main variables in the study.

The study used a mixed methods approach and was conducted in three parts including an exploratory sequential component followed by a concurrent embedded component. The exploratory sequential component included a photo elicitation project, the results of which contributed both to the results of the study and the development of the questionnaire used in the concurrent embedded component. The concurrent embedded component used a pre and post-test survey design and included a qualitative writing exercise with select participants between the completion of their pre and post-test questionnaires.

The results suggest that study abroad participation does result in changes in both participants’ cultural attitudes and cultural competency. It was hypothesized that length of time abroad and the cultural distance of the host country would have an influence on the change in cultural attitudes and cultural competency. As found in previous research, length of time abroad was not found to be a major contributing factor to this change when considering the results of the pre and post-test survey. However, the results of the qualitative studies resulted in many questions about the impact of length abroad. Cultural
distance was a factor in the changes in cultural competency but not in cultural attitudes. This chapter presents a discussion of the results structured around the research questions and hypotheses, implications of this research and recommendations for future research

Discussion

H1, RQ1, RQ2 and RQ4: Study Abroad Participation and Cultural Attitudes

One of the foundational questions of the current study was regarding cultural attitudes and study abroad participation. This question was addressed in research questions 1 and 2 and hypothesis 1. The research questions asked how cultural attitudes and attitudes towards the host country were impacted by study abroad participation while the hypothesis more specifically stated that participation in study abroad would result in shifts in participants’ attitudes towards the host country. While several prior studies have concluded participation in study abroad results in changes in cultural attitudes (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Coelho, 1962; Horencyzk & Bekerman, 1997; Janes 2008; Kuh & Kaufman, 1984; Sindt & Pachmayer, 2006) it was important to attempt to establish this in the current study both to further related research and to allow for the variables of length abroad and cultural distance to be considered in terms of their impact on attitudes and cultural competency.

In this case hypothesis 1 was supported. As noted above, in the quantitative component, two multi-item cultural attitudes variables were constructed following a factor analysis: similarity and social issues. Based on the results of the paired sample t-tests, the pre to post-test change in the factor similarity was significant indicating that study abroad participation did have an impact on cultural attitudes as measured in the current study which supports past research. As presented in Chapter 5, the similarity
factor was composed of five statements regarding whether participants felt the host
country was familiar or similar, if they felt close to the host country, and if the people of
the host country were friendly to them or liked them. Social issues was composed of
several statements regarding the existence of discrimination in the host country to probe
awareness of these issues.

In regards to social issues in the current study, no significant result was found in
the quantitative results and the post to pre-test difference actually went in a negative
direction. In the studies contained in the literature review, social issues have been
represented in a variety of ways including specific targeted statements as in the current
study or more general statements exploring an awareness of common global problems
(Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985; Anastasopoulos, 1992; Milman et al., 1990). Many of these
studies also found no or mixed attitude change in terms of these issues. As presented in
the literature review, contact theory has not typically been supported when applied in the
field of tourism likely due to the conditions for effective communication, which Allport
(1954) outlined, being unmet in the tourism context. Study abroad, however, may allow
for Allport’s conditions to be met more completely than short-term tourism, particularly
when considering lengthy contact between groups and common goals of groups.

Considering this, what in particular was different with the scenario of the current study
that resulted in lack of a significant difference between the pre and post test social issues
measure? Certainly a variety of social issues were touched on by the qualitative
participants but not as directly as expected. Perhaps the participants were not as educated
about the social issues of their host country prior to participation as they thought, an idea
that is suggested by the quantitative results. Or perhaps during the time abroad
participants had become accustomed to displays of discrimination in the host country to the point it was not a considered factor, as indicated by some participants in the qualitative groups.

Returning to the factor of similarity, acknowledging similarities between the home and host culture either through direct expressions or comparisons is a theme in the literature. In the current study, participants in both qualitative exercises also conveyed changes in their cultural attitudes and attitudes towards the host and home country with respect to similarity though often this was expressed in making comparisons to home, both positive and negative, as was also found by Carlson and Widaman (1988) and Janes (2008). Allport (1954) discusses familiarity in his contact theory by purporting that lengthy contact between groups may result in groups better understanding each other. Horencyzk et al. (1997) utilized contact theory to frame their research of cultural attitude change in study abroad participants. Horencyzk et al., after an intervention of a cultural encounter, found that the group under study tended to see themselves as more similar to the group they had encountered much like the study abroad participants related differently to the statements about familiarity and similarity in the current study before and after study abroad.

But why do these changes in cultural attitudes matter in the first place? Allport (1954) alleged that when groups better understood each other there would be a reduction in prejudices between groups. Coelho (1962) discovered the same in study abroad participants finding that when students interacted with others in another culture relations improved. Much later, Carlson and Widaman (1988) provided an extension to these related studies by suggesting that the relationships which develop between different
groups during study abroad participation could potentially result in a change in behaviors leading to improved international understanding.

Perhaps the idea of improved international understanding resulting simply from contact between people who are different from one another is a lofty concept to accept. However, similar to what we saw in Janes’ study (2008), the use of qualitative methods in the current study provided additional context to the results of the paired sample t-tests where the similarity factor of cultural attitudes was the only statistically significant result. In addition to discussions around similarity and familiarity, participants in both qualitative exercises also discussed the impact of study abroad on their cultural attitudes by explaining how study abroad led them to acknowledge cultural differences and resulted in changes in their ability to understand, accept and adapt to cultural differences, all elements necessary for attaining cultural competency according to previous work on the topic (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Hannigan, 1990). When participants discussed more spontaneously the impact of study abroad participation on their cultural attitudes during the interviews, rich and varied thoughts were found. Furthermore, cultural attitudes were revealed to be more complex among the participants in the concurrent embedded component, the longer-term participants.

However, regardless of the expressed complexity of cultural attitudes, thinking about the concepts of “over there” – as in over there people walk everywhere or over there people enjoy life – and “over here” – as in the US – is an important idea to grasp. While attitudes towards how the participants felt about the US when they returned might not be readily divulged, all the comparison and making the distinction of “over there” is saying something. It’s separating home and host and forming opinions, good and bad,
about both countries. This hints to ways in which people apply new experiences to existing cognitive frameworks.

**H2 and RQ1: Study Abroad Participation and Cultural Competency**

A second important question to the current study was regarding how study abroad participation impacts cultural competency. This question was addressed in research question 1 and more specifically in hypothesis 2 that speculated that study abroad participation would result in changes in participants’ perceived cultural competency. Hypothesis 2 was supported. On the pre and post-test questionnaires perceived cultural competency was measured using four different factors including cultural awareness, different culture, personal assessment and adaptation. While all but the cultural awareness factor went in a positive direction from the pre to the post-test, based on the results of the paired sample t-tests, only the pre to post-test change in the cultural competency factors of personal assessment and adaptation were significant.

The cultural competency factors of personal assessment and adaptation explored in the pre and post-test questionnaire were made up of four items each. Personal assessment essentially asked participants their agreement with statements about how they felt others viewed their ability to communicate and feel comfortable in other cultures and the extent to which they felt they had an understanding of other cultures. Adaptation also included statements regarding participants’ comfort levels in other cultures but also asked about participants’ difficulties adapting to other cultures. In this study, participation in study abroad had an impact on perceived cultural competency which generally supports the results of past studies (Coelho, 1962; Kitsantis, 2004; Kitsantis & Meyers, 2002; Kuh & Kauffmann, 1984; McCabe, 1994; SIndt & Pachmayer, 2006).
Kitsantis and Meyers (2002) explicitly discuss adaptability in their research. Specifically, they found that participating in study abroad improved students’ ability to adapt to another culture which was also found in the current study. Additionally, Kitsantis and Meyers measured what they called perceptual acuity which focused on communication across cultures and seems to be related to the factor of personal assessment in the current study. Much like the current study, Kitsantis and Meyers determined that participation in study abroad improved perceptual acuity. Both of these areas are necessary traits in Deardorff’s model for intercultural competency.

When examining the variables which have been used to make up cultural competency more closely, we see that some researchers discussed developments in individuals’ cultural competency more generally including Coelho (1962) and Sindt and Pachmayer (2006) in terms of improved cultural understanding, cultural awareness, interest or concern for other cultures. Carlson & Widaman (1988) also found an improvement in students’ cultural competency in their study primarily in two areas: interest in others and a concern for others. Kitsantis and Meyers (2002) tackled openness for other cultures and found that study abroad participation improved those feelings of openness in participants. The factors of cultural awareness and different culture in the quantitative component are where the current study diverged from past work. While they encompass two factors of the overall cultural competency measure, the results from the quantitative component were not significant and, as mentioned earlier, the post to pre-test difference in cultural awareness was negative. However, the participants in the qualitative components did tend to discuss changes in their cultural awareness and acceptance and openness to other cultures. It is possible other variables interceded in the
quantitative results including the type of study abroad program, past travel experiences and cultural distance as is discussed below.

As noted earlier, intercultural competency theory as presented by various researchers including Deardorff (2006), Fantini (2000) and Hannigan (1990) provided the necessary backdrop to both assess and understand cultural competency in study abroad participants in the current study. As we can see, cultural competency has no formal accepted definition. However, many researchers agree on characteristics which are important for an individual to possess in order to be successful in cross-cultural situations including cultural awareness, openness, ability to communicate, tolerance, confidence and self-esteem (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Hannigan, 1990) which the current study was intending to capture. When cultural competency came up in the interviews, either through direct questions or indirectly, participants mentioned development of many of these traits as a result of study abroad. The significant results found in the paired sample t-tests for the factors of personal assessment and adaptation supports past results while the results for the factors of cultural awareness and different culture does not. However, participants in the qualitative components discussed how study abroad impacted them with respect to all these factors which tends to support past literature.

**H3: Length Abroad and Cultural Attitudes and H4: Length Abroad and Cultural Competency**

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were not supported. While intuitively it seems like the longer participants are abroad the greater the change will be in cultural attitudes and cultural competency, this was not the case overall in the present study. Although the quantitative results indicate length had no impact on changes in the cultural attitudes and cultural
competency of participants, the results of the photo elicitation and embedded qualitative component potentially reveal something more as discussed below.

The topic of length abroad has been explored and confirms the results of the quantitative component of the current study. In a study conducted at Arizona State University in 2006 the same result was found (Sindt & Pachmayer, 2006). The members of the study were participants in short-term study abroad programs offered in the summer. While in this study there was no comparison made to participants in long-term programs, the benefits to students was clear. Participants commented how participation in the study abroad program taught them to be more understanding and accepting of other cultures and helped them improve cross-cultural communication skills. Perry, Stoner and Tarrant (2012) also considered short-term study abroad programs and how these programs might allow for a “transformative learning experience” that influences the development of global citizens which they describe as thinking and acting globally. Using two distinct education theories, the authors propose that if planned with critical reflection embedded for participants, short-term programs may result in participants’ development of global citizenship.

Dwyer (2004) also studied the impact of length abroad on participants in study abroad. Using a sample which included long-term and short-term participants in study abroad over a 50-year period, Dwyer organized her findings around academic attainment, intercultural development, career impact and personal development. In general, findings were the same regardless of length abroad. Specifically, with intercultural development and personal development, these constructs included elements of both cultural attitudes and cultural competency. As was found in the current study, the impact was greater for
long-term participants but results were significant regardless of length abroad. Similar to Perry et al., Dwyer speculates that “careful educational planning” (p.161) may be one reason short-term programs appear to be just as successful as long-term when considering benefits to participants.

There has been a steady increase in participation in short-term study abroad programs over the last several decades. Short-term study abroad programs are the fastest growing sector of study abroad according to the IIE Open Doors report (2013). This is likely due to many factors including limitations in college students’ programs of study which may make it difficult to be away for an entire semester and economic considerations that make a short-term program more attractive. It is likely studies were undertaken at least in some part in an effort to ensure short-term study abroad programs are equal to longer-term programs in terms of outcomes for participants.

As discussed above, participants in both the photo elicitation and the embedded qualitative component of the research indicated study abroad participation had an impact on both their cultural attitudes and cultural competency even though all participants in the photo elicitation were on short-term programs while all participants in the embedded qualitative component were in long-term programs. However, participants in the concurrent embedded component (who were all attending medium length or long-term programs) expressed their cultural attitudes in more complex ways than the participants in the photo elicitation study (who were all attending short-term programs).

It is difficult to make comparisons between the results of the photo elicitation and the embedded qualitative component for many reasons. Not only were the nature of the questions different, the timing of the data collection was different for each as the
participants in the embedded qualitative study were in the midst of their study abroad experience while those in the photo elicitation were recalling their experiences. As well, the embedded qualitative sample included participants from VU and ASU while the photo elicitation study included only ASU participants. In addition, there were notable differences in previous foreign travel experience and the cultural distance of the countries in which participants were studying which may or may not have impacted results. In the embedded qualitative study, 83% of participants had previous experience traveling abroad with 70% of the participants in the photo elicitation indicating the same. In terms of the cultural distance of the host country, participants studying in countries with a medium level of cultural distance were roughly the same across the embedded qualitative group and the photo elicitation group. These groups did differ in the low and large levels of cultural distance of the host country with a higher percentage of the photo elicitation participants studying in countries with larger cultural distance. How this might impact cultural attitudes or cultural competency is unclear as other factors including the program model may impact both variables, however the potential impact is discussed below.

What is noteworthy is that even with these differences in the participants, cultural attitudes were discussed in very similar ways though the intensity of the discussion varied between the groups of participants. During the interviews most participants made many neutral comments on how their host country was different from home. Mixed in with these neutral comments, many participants also expressed their attitudes toward their host country by differentiating it from the US. For example, participants in the photo elicitation discussed the age of buildings in England, topless beaches in France or types of food in China. Participants in the embedded qualitative study similarly discussed how
things in the host country were different than home but also extended this view by expressing complex attitudes writing about their negative experiences in, or negative opinions about, the host country and their fondness for the host country concurrently. Both groups of participants had individuals who seemed to idealize the host country to some extent. However, this idealization seemed to be one sided with the photo elicitation participants stating more simply the host country was “better.” On the other hand, several times participants in the embedded qualitative component made disparaging remarks about injustices seen in the host country but also idealizing the country at the same time, suggesting a less romanticized point of view.

There were also some differences in the themes that emerged in both qualitative studies with respect to cultural attitudes. Perhaps due to the construction of the study, participants in the photo elicitation project spoke at length about two areas not referenced much in the embedded qualitative study: expectations and trying new things. Research question #4 focused on expectations and how participants anticipated their study abroad program would impact them. Participants in the photo elicitation frequently brought up expectations of the host country or expectations of the study abroad experience. These expectations are important in the current study as participants used expectations to form cultural attitudes as revealed in the photo elicitation results. With respect to expectations, it is possible the theme was frequently found in the photo elicitation results as participants were asked to reflect on the experience through the photographs submitted and discuss whether or not the photograph accurately represented the experience in hindsight, so naturally expectations were revealed as participants talked about what they thought the experience was going to be like compared to reality. Examination of these
expectations is relevant here as it helps us to see how cultural attitudes were impacted by study abroad participation. Recall a participant (#24) in the photo elicitation study who went to Israel. Before departure she was sure she would find daily evidence of the Arab-Israeli conflict but that wasn’t the case. While it isn’t clear from the interviews if her understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict improved as a result of her study abroad experience, it is apparent that her understanding of the two cultures and how they interacted did. Several participants also recalled how things in the host country were different than expected. This was addressed briefly in the embedded qualitative component in the theme reversal of stereotypes, but it was not as prevalent as with the photo elicitation participants. As is addressed below, investigating if and how stereotypes change over the course of study abroad is a potential area of future research.

With regard to trying new things, perhaps participants in the photo elicitation mentioned how they tried new things because that was central to their shortened experience abroad, similar to a vacation. Even so while “trying new things” seems innocuous, there is a link to cultural adjustment for some participants. The act of trying new things can set a stage for study abroad participants to either engage or not engage in the host culture and in the long term determine the level of cultural adjustment an individual experiences and the cultural attitudes they adopt (Kitsantis & Meyers, 2002). I can say with almost complete certainty that participants in the embedded qualitative component also tried new things while abroad but their longer experience in the host country may have resulted in other issues having precedence when answering the questions from the study. Participants in the embedded qualitative component did not typically mention actual activities but instead expressed this same sentiment by writing
about adoption of a neutral attitude towards the host culture and how this allowed for greater acceptance of the host culture and even some adapting to the host culture ways, a factor in cultural competency. They were open to new experiences and trying new things as well.

While we can see that study abroad participation had an impact on participants’ cultural attitudes for the most part, and this is confirmed by the significant results of the paired sample t-tests, we can also see that the participants in the embedded qualitative study indicated deeper impacts on their cultural attitudes. The cultural attitudes expressed by these participants were, by and large, much more complex than the views expressed by the photo elicitation participants. Recall that participants in this component of the study were all on long-term study abroad programs and in the midst of their study abroad experience having been contacted for interviews roughly midway through their program. As is addressed above, length of time abroad did not seem to impact changes in cultural attitudes or cultural competency according to the quantitative results, however, comparing the results here demonstrates that participants in longer term study abroad programs in this study had more substantial impacts or at least could express their cultural attitudes in a more multifaceted manner. Again, it is difficult to compare the two qualitative exercises, as they were different in many ways. As well, there is no anticipation the results of the qualitative studies can be extended to the general population. However, when considering length of time abroad and cultural attitude change the findings of the qualitative components in the current study differ from many previous studies on the topic save for Dwyer (2004).
Cultural competency was a theme in both the qualitative embedded component and the photo elicitation project although photo elicitation participants were not directly queried about the impact of study abroad participation on their cultural competency. What was particularly interesting in the photo elicitation project was participants’ emphasis on the development of cultural competency through personal growth and change or the internal psychological orientations referenced by Hannigan (1990). On the other hand participants in the embedded qualitative component discussed the impact of study abroad by mentioning changes in cultural awareness, ability to communicate and feelings of acceptance and openness for the host culture, similar to Deardorff (2006) and which can also be found in the four cultural competency factors of the current study.

In the photo elicitation interviews many students mentioned how they “felt like a local” while reviewing photos they submitted. They discussed how they knew how to get around the place they were studying in, how they felt comfortable and confident in their host country or a part of the community, and in some cases how their host city was “their city”. Many participants separated themselves from the tourist sometimes exclaiming that they were not tourists. Interestingly, the topic of being a tourist came up one time only in the embedded qualitative interviews. Participants in the photo elicitation further explained the impact of the study abroad experience discussing how the experience was life changing, represented the fulfillment of goals or encouraged the development of self-esteem.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the themes of perceived cultural competency which resulted from the embedded qualitative section were acceptance/openness, cultural awareness, and communication. Recalling Deardorff (2006), these themes seem to
follow her process model for intercultural competency including what she refers to as attitudes, knowledge and comprehension and external outcome respectively.

As we have already seen, trying new things or being open to new experiences had an impact on photo elicitation participants’ cultural attitudes. However, again there is a relation to acceptance of and openness to new experiences in new cultures which participants conveyed. These are both critical elements for individuals to realize cultural competency (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Hannigan, 1990). One can imagine that resistance to a new culture or experience can mean the difference between only existing in a new culture and actually becoming part of a new culture. With respect to cultural awareness, participants in the embedded qualitative component considered how time in another culture had taught them to notice differences in other cultures and increased their knowledge of the other culture. While cultural awareness had been developed there was still the realization that there was much to learn. One participant even expressed that he now understood he would likely never feel entirely comfortable in another country.

We can see that study abroad participation had an impact on participants’ perceived cultural competency and this is confirmed by the significant results of the paired sample t-tests and the results of both qualitative components. What is less clear is if length abroad had an impact on the level of cultural competency experienced by participants. Are the participants from the embedded qualitative study further along that path to cultural competency? The emphasis photo elicitation participants gave to changes in internal psychological orientations suggests this, but in general no conclusions can be made due to the varying structures of each study as will be addressed below.
H5: Cultural Distance and Cultural Attitudes

Hypothesis 5 was not supported. Cultural distance did not seem to play a part in cultural attitudes in the current study. The MANOVA models run to test the impact of the cultural distance of the host country on cultural attitude change were not significant. We can also see in the results of the photo elicitation and embedded qualitative component that both groups of participants experienced changes in their cultural attitudes regardless of the cultural distance of the host country. These results of the current study are both supportive and contradictory to past research.

The photo elicitation students had a higher percentage of participants studying in countries with larger cultural distance, however the participants in the embedded qualitative component revealed deeper, more multifaceted changes in cultural attitudes. In particular, the current study conflicts with Allport (1954) who outlined in his contact theory that equal status among groups was a factor for groups’ better understanding one another. When we look at cultural distance as measured in the current study we can imagine that the typical US study abroad student is not of equal status to the typical host/local resident in a country with large cultural distance such as Morocco or Guatemala, though of course this is not always the case. According to Allport we would expect the participants in countries with a large cultural distance to have smaller changes in their attitudes. However, when we look at Moufakkir (2011), Nyaupane et al. (2008), and Crotts (2004) all of whom applied a measurement of cultural distance or social distance in a tourism context, results were similar to the current study. Moufakkir had hypothesized that two groups similar to one another would have more positive opinions towards one another. However, he found the opposite in his study. He offers that the two
similar groups may have advance expectations about each other which impacted their opinions. Nyaupane et al. found that social distance did not contribute to post trip changes in attitudes toward the host country for study abroad participants. They attributed this result in part to participants having high but unmet expectations about the country they were visiting. Crotts found that cultural distance did not have an impact on traveler behavior and he explains that individual characteristics and past experiences of participants may have had a greater impact than cultural distance alone. Additionally, Ye, Zhang and Yuen (2013) found that the level of intercultural competency in an individual actually impacted the effect of cultural distance which is important to consider in the study abroad student, or any individual for that matter, who may already have a level of cultural competency.

We can add to past literature, as it is reasonable to consider that the cultural distance of a country might not impact cultural attitudes when considering the study abroad student. By and large study abroad participants are prepared to go to the host country. They have a good idea what to expect about the host country. Additionally, participants self-selected the host country and clearly already have an interest in having an international experience (Carlson & Widaman, 1988). As we saw in the embedded qualitative component, several participants indicated participating in study abroad had no impact on changes in their cultural attitudes toward the host country. In some cases participants expressed how cultural attitudes did not change as expectations for the host country were met. For example, a participant expected the Irish to be friendly and they were. Other participants had prior knowledge of their host country and were prepared and therefore cultural attitudes did not alter. To an extent this confirms that the construct
of cultural distance could have had an impact on the results of this study as it does not take into account individual characteristics or study abroad program characteristics which might impact the amount of cultural distance an individual feels.

**H6: Cultural Distance and Cultural Competency**

Hypothesis 6 was supported when considering the results of the pre and post-test questionnaire. Initial results of the MANOVA test found a significant relationship between cultural distance and the cultural competency factor which included cultural awareness, different culture, personal assessment and adaptation indicating that the amount of cultural distance experienced by the individual did have an impact on changes in perceived cultural competency. When MANOVA univariate tests were reviewed it was revealed that only one of the cultural competency factors was significant on its own: personal assessment. Within that factor, the differences in cultural competency were statistically significant between the small and large cultural distance group and the medium and large cultural distance group as was expected, with the mean differences being largest between the medium and the large group. These results both support and contradict past research.

While cultural distance has been used as a construct in several studies related to study abroad (Brown, 2009a; Brown, 2009b; Lucas, 2003), most have not tended to focus on how cultural distance was related to cultural competency. Douglas and Jones-Rikkers (2001) however did investigate the relationship between cultural distance and cultural competency, or as they called it world-mindedness, using Hofstedde’s construct. Similar to the current study they hypothesized the greater the cultural distance the greater the development of world-mindedness. However, they only found partial support for this
hypothesis. In the study, students participating in study abroad in Costa Rica showed a larger increase in their world-mindedness scores than students in Great Britain. However, students in China did not show larger improvements, contrary to what was expected. It is possible that the individual characteristics of both the individuals participating in the study abroad programs and the programs themselves contributed to this result.

While the statistical tests clearly show cultural distance was a factor in improving cultural competency, the results of the qualitative components are less conclusive. Again, the photo elicitation component had a larger percentage of participants studying in countries with a large cultural distance. As discussed earlier, when talking about cultural competency, participants in the photo elicitation tended to focus on development of the psychological orientations necessary for effective intercultural interactions. Participants talked about feeling comfortable in the host country, fulfilling goals, and the development of self-esteem. Several participants spoke more directly about cultural distance and cultural competency in relation to the language of the host country. As we can see from Chapter 5, a number of countries with a low level of cultural distance were English speaking which seems to have impacted how participants coped in the host culture. For example, participant #19, who studied in London for 4 weeks said:

I think I would’ve had a lot of different experiences if I wasn't in an English-speaking country. I'm pretty culturally aware but I would feel very out of my element if I had to eat foods I was completely unfamiliar with all the time. . . It's very similar, the cultures are very similar so I felt at home, but in a new place, so I was very comfortable there.
In contrast, when asked how participating in study abroad had affected cultural competency, participants in the embedded qualitative component discussed acceptance and openness, cultural awareness and in some cases the ability to communicate in another culture. Also, similar to the way in which some participants discussed cultural attitudes, several participants mentioned how there had been no impact on their cultural competency. These participants tended to either know what to expect or were already experienced travelers who indicated having a high level of cultural competency before studying abroad.

**RQ3: Motives and Expected Outcomes from Study Abroad**

The research question regarding how motives were related to perceived outcomes attempted to address a gap in previous research where motives had not been researched much in combination with outcomes. For this question, the dimensions resulting from the factor analysis for motives in the pre-test were used along with the post-test results for the factors of cultural competency. As a result of the factor analysis, three groups of motives were found: academic, familiarity and social/cultural motives. The result of the factor analysis further confirms past research related to motives for study abroad in the tourism literature (Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1983) and the study abroad literature (Kitsantis, 2004; Michael et al., 2003; Nyaupane et al. 2010a).

Regression tests performed identified social/cultural motives as predictors of the outcome of perceived cultural competency to varying degrees. Social/cultural motives accounted for 33.3% of the variability in the cultural awareness factor, 15.2% of the variability in the different cultures factor, 6% of the variability in the personal assessment factor and just 1.9% in the adaptation factor. All of these groups of variables made up
the overall cultural competency measurements in the study. When we consider the items in the social/cultural motive factor it makes sense that the variables would be related. Primarily the items in the social/cultural motives asked participants to indicate their agreement with several statements that have direct connections to cultural competency including gaining understanding or learning about the host country, developing cross-cultural skills and meeting people from other countries. When we further consider the relationship between each cultural competency factor and the social/cultural motives we see the same pattern. While all the regressions performed with the social/cultural motives were significant, cultural awareness and different cultures had higher R-squared results. The factors of cultural awareness and different cultures more directly address the criteria for cultural competency such as interest to learn about other cultures, or appreciation of other cultures. On the other hand, the factors of personal assessment and adaptation address the personal attributes or capacity of the individual to develop cultural competency. When considering all of this it is clear to see how social/cultural motives might predict outcomes in this area.

The other two motive factors, academic and familiarity did not have significant results. Familiarity captured motives around participants’ familiarity with something about the program such as the host country or a friend who was also participating. The academic factor addressed academic motives such as the courses offered or the academic topic being studied. Neither factor appears to have much relationship to cultural competency. What this can teach us about motives and outcomes seems very logical; they are very tightly tied together which may impact program development as explained below.
This section of the current research was exploratory. The literature review references only one piece of past research concerned with motives and outcomes (Kitsantis, 2004). In her study Kitsantis found that the motivation to gain cultural competence was the only factor which could predict improvement in global understanding and cross-cultural skills, as is the case with this study.

Conclusions

In summary, the results of the current study indicate that study abroad participation does result in changes in both participants’ cultural attitudes and cultural competency which supports previous literature. The impact of length abroad and the cultural distance of the host country on changes in both cultural attitudes and cultural competency were also considered. Previous research has suggested length of time abroad is not an important factor when considering the change in study abroad participants’ cultural attitudes and cultural competency and the results of the quantitative component in this study confirms the same. However, results of the qualitative components are less apparent. Though the same research questions drove both qualitative studies, they were constructed differently, which makes comparison of the results difficult. When we do compare the two qualitative studies we can see distinct differences in how participants presented their cultural attitudes. Participants in longer-term programs discussed changes in their cultural attitudes in a much more complex way than short-term participants. Longer-term participants expressed changes in their cultural competency differently as well, though not in a way that it can be conclusively said they were more culturally competent.
The reverse was the case for cultural distance. In the current study, cultural distance was a factor in the changes in cultural competency, however not in cultural attitudes when considering the results of the quantitative component. The qualitative results seem to bring up more questions. As already mentioned, shorter-term participants discussed cultural competency differently by tending to focus on psychological orientations like confidence and self-esteem which Hannigan (1990) identified as critical pieces of cultural competency. Longer-term participants focused more on attitudes and comprehension similar to Deardorff’s model (2006). The focus was different, but it isn’t clear if one group is further along the path to cultural competency than the other. What complicates matters further is that in this study, the short-term programs had a higher percentage of participants studying in countries with large cultural distance than did long-term programs.

What we can be sure of based on the results of the current study is that participants often have profound experiences while studying abroad which impacts their feelings about themselves and how they function in the world. For many study abroad participants this is their first time living away from family and friends in independent situations. The shock of living in another culture and making his or her way through daily life in a foreign place can have dramatic impacts on a study abroad participant.

**Theoretical Implications**

**Contact Theory**

In the current study contact theory (Allport, 1954) provided the circumstances for successful interactions between different groups including lengthy contact and equal status between groups. Contact theory has previously been used as a framework in
tourism research (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985; Milman et al., 1990; Anastasopoulos, 1992; Pizam et al., 1991) without much support, and in study abroad research (Horenczyk & Bekerman, 1997; Janes, 2008) with mixed support. Results of past tourism research suggest that the theory was not always applied correctly or completely and did not take into account all of Allport’s criteria for effective and successful interactions. However, similar to past research in study abroad using contact theory, it was found that study abroad participation alone resulted in shifts in participants’ cultural attitudes and cultural competency in the current study, supporting Allport’s theory.

When we look further at the current study and consider the quantitative results, length of time abroad was not a factor in shifts in cultural attitudes or cultural competency as was hypothesized due to emphasis put on prolonged contact in contact theory. As well, this result supports past literature on length abroad. The qualitative results do show that short and long-term participants differed in the complexity of their cultural attitudes but, even our short-term participants were typically spending an average of four weeks abroad which could be classified as prolonged contact, a part of Allport’s contact theory, and enough time for most individuals to shed their anxiety about interacting with others as the qualitative results showed. These results suggest that lengthy or prolonged contact may not be as important a factor as previously assumed which was also mentioned in a recent study (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner & Christ, 2011). Particularly in the study abroad student, or perhaps the cultural tourist or the volunteer tourist, who may be better prepared for successful contact, length of contact might not have as large an impact. However, the results of past studies combined with the results of
the current study imply that contact theory is possibly not useful in the context of mass tourism.

Equal status between groups was not directly measured in the current study. If we extrapolate equal status from the cultural distance construct used in the current study from Hofstedde (2001), we find that equal status was also not an important factor, as participants’ attitudes towards the host culture shifted regardless of the cultural distance of the host country. As well, past studies in the field of tourism found that just because groups were similar to one another did not mean they would get along better or have more positive opinions of one another (Moufakkir, 2011). This brings up the question as to how we measure what is meant by equal status.

Certainly equal status is important to consider in the context of study abroad. Some researchers have described study abroad as neo-colonialism (Caton & Santos, 2009) or as a “pursuit of the exotica” (Woolf, 2006) which some developing countries are not equipped to handle. Equality between groups is difficult to manage on study abroad programs as not every activity is monitored by the organization or institution involved in the program, particularly for students venturing to developing countries. As much of a student’s time abroad is spent doing everyday activities, there needs to be a realization and understanding on the part of the student that “in many of the places you travel, your relationship to the local population is primarily economic and is broadly influenced by dramatic differences in wealth” (Chambers, 2005, p. 32). Maybe just the realization of the vast differences which exist between the typical US college student and the majority of the world will be eye-opening enough as to encourage cultural empathy, which is related to Allport’s factor of cooperation and common goals.
The present study suggests that at this time a modernization of the theory may be needed. As well, additional testing of the theory which acknowledges that not all of the original conditions are necessary while considering the individual traveler and her or his ability to effectively communicate with other groups should be undertaken to attempt to understand if these criteria are no longer required.

**Intercultural Competence Theory**

For the most part, the current study illustrates the utility of intercultural competency theory and the variety of ways it has been presented in the past (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000). In the current study it was found that study abroad participation resulted in shifts in both cultural attitudes and cultural competency, attitudes being the beginning of both models presented by Deardorff and a dimension of cultural competency as outlined by Fantini, confirming the accuracy of the construct. When we consider attitudes and cultural competency in relation to length abroad and cultural distance, results in the qualitative components split rather than aligned as might be expected due to the relationship between the two in intercultural competency theory. While participants in long-term study abroad programs exhibited more complex cultural attitudes, they were not necessarily more culturally competent than participants in short-term study abroad. Deardorff does state that while “individuals can enter these frameworks at any particular point, attitude was a fundamental starting point” (p. 255). However, as noted previously, it is difficult to make comparisons in the current study due to the different constructions in the qualitative components. Nonetheless, as Deardorff herself stated, a mixed methods approach was the best to use when considering intercultural competency. The varied results between the quantitative and qualitative
components of the current study suggest that additional investigation of this theory using a mixed methods or qualitative approach is needed.

**Cultural Distance Theory**

As explained earlier, in this study, cultural distance was measured using several factors from Hofstede’s work (2001). This theory had not been widely used in tourism or study abroad research. Furthermore, when used in these fields, researchers typically found mixed support or no support at all for the theory (Crots, 2004; Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001; Moufakkir, 2011). While the outcome of this construct is acceptable it is somewhat simplistic, as it does not take into account the individual experiences of participants. As we saw in the discussion of the impact of cultural distance on cultural attitudes and cultural competency, several participants indicated there was no impact basically saying he or she was prepared for the study abroad experience either because of prior knowledge about the host country, or prior travel in general or to the specific region. In addition to prior knowledge or previous foreign travel, there are a variety of other characteristics which could influence how cultural distance is experienced, for example:

- number and location of previous trips abroad
- where prior knowledge came from (self, friends, family, teachers, guidebooks, media, etc.)
- where the individual was born
- where the individual grew up
- prior cross-cultural experiences
- living situation on the study abroad program or
level of fluency in the host language prior to study abroad

In both qualitative exercises, much importance was put on the word ‘culture,’ however the word was not defined for participants. In the photo elicitation, students were asked to provide photos which represented best their experiences in another culture while in the embedded qualitative exercise participants were asked how their cultural attitudes and attitudes towards their host and home country had been impacted by study abroad.

What does culture mean to an individual? Do people use similar concepts when defining the word? Do people use different concepts when defining the word? From these interviews we can start to think about the differences in defining the meaning of culture. Naturally, the past and present experiences of an individual will influence what they think culture is. If one has spent long periods of time in another country or culture, he or she may be more in tune to not just notice the differences but to also understand them which influences his or her cultural attitudes. If a person lives with a family who doesn’t speak his or her language and doesn’t “look like” one’s own family, she or he may adapt more easily, or at least not be confused as easily, by the culture.

From the photos submitted and the interviews participants feel that culture can encompass:

• What and when a person eats
• Nightlife or social life (where to go, when to go, how often, etc.)
• Dress
• Traditions/Holidays
• Where people live
• Historic places
• Something different from us
• A way of life (fast paced, slow paced, importance of family, materialistic)
• A people (The French, the Brits or Spaniards, for example)
• Something not “touristy”

Culture is a complex word. This study and previous studies (Crotts, 2004, Moufakkir, 2011; Ye, et al., 2013) suggests both past and present experiences influence the way an individual understands what is meant by the word culture, his or her own comfort level in that culture, the way an individual feels about another culture, and ultimately the attitudes an individual forms about another culture. Developing an index to be used alongside Hofstedde’s idea of cultural distance which takes into account these individual characteristics and aspects of the study abroad program might more accurately capture cultural distance to improve upon the current study and be applied in other tourism contexts such as cultural tourism or volunteer tourism.

Motivation Theory

In terms of motivation theory, the current study reinforces the vast amount of research related to motives for travel. In the current study, three motives were identified after a factor analysis: social/cultural, familiarity and academic. The familiarity factor appears new, however when we examine the factor we can see the items fit within social interactions and cultural motives (Crompton, 1979). Primarily the contribution is in linking motives with outcomes. As found in the current study and similar to a previous work (Kitsantis, 2004), social/cultural motives could predict the outcome of perceived cultural competency in study abroad participants to varying degrees. This is potentially useful information for study abroad stakeholders. Understanding the motives and goals
of a participant could aid in the development of successful, sustainable study abroad programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

One potential way to build on this work is a re-framing of the current study using Bennett’s Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity to explore how the participants in the current study reacted to cultural differences. For example, when we consider Bennett’s (1986) minimization stage, we can see connections to each component of the current study. Making comparisons to home was a theme in both the qualitative exercises and the quantitative study via the cultural attitudes factor which had a significant post-test minus pre-test difference. While it is poetic to think that we all see the same moon, seeing similarities between the home and host culture is a part of the cultural adjustment process, and viewed through Bennett’s lens similarities take on a different meaning. According to Bennett, at this stage the individual is still essentially ethnocentric, not culturally competent, and looking for similarities to “bury the difference” and preserve “one’s own world view (p.183).” Bennett’s model could be useful when exploring tourism and cultural attitudes and cultural competency as well. Evaluating each stage of cultural development Bennett presented could allow for greater conclusions to be made about tourism, cultural attitudes and cultural competency.

Included in the wealth of data collected in the pre and post-test questionnaire, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions. Pre-test only questions addressed expectations about the study abroad programs including the following:

1) What skills do you expect to gain from participating in study abroad?

2) What do you expect to learn about your home culture?
3) What do you expect to learn about the culture you are visiting?

4) What challenges do you think might you encounter abroad?

Participants discussed how they expected to learn about cultural differences, the influence of their home culture on the larger world, and how Americans are perceived. In terms of expected challenges, participants addressed homesickness, adapting, anti-American sentiment, communication difficulties, and culture shock. However, participants expected to develop cultural awareness, understanding, and cultural competence while abroad.

Additionally, several questions were asked on both the pre and post-test questionnaire around impressions and stereotypes of the host country and level of familiarity with the host country. An interesting question to explore in this section centers on stereotypes. Participants were asked in the pre-test and the post-test to describe their host culture in three words. How did this change from the pre to the post-test? Did participants reveal greater understanding of the host culture as found by Janes (2008) in her study? What factors might have influenced any change? A study could explore individual answers, link to the significant results found in the current study and compare additional aspects of the study abroad program and characteristics of the student.

When we look back at motives and outcomes, the questions might be why is it relevant to understand or further explore the relationship between motives and outcomes? In this study, the outcomes of cultural competency were significantly tied to social/cultural motives which reflected cultural competency in the construct. We could extrapolate that academic motives would be tied to academic outcomes and so on.
Study abroad programs come in all shapes and sizes. Some program examples include: 1) short-term study tours, which combine academic study with a tour of several different destinations generally led by a faculty member from the home institution; 2) programs where a group of students from the home country live and go to school together; and 3) immersive independent experience where students are integrated fully to school and everyday life in the host country (Open Doors Annual Report, 2013). Other researchers have further defined programs in relation to cross-cultural encounters (Engle & Engle, 2003). Despite past literature, some researchers do not believe that short-term programs can result in any development of cultural competency or changes in cultural attitudes. However, as this program model is the fastest growing segment of study abroad in terms of participation in the US (Open Doors), some investigation of how a short-term program can be developed and still attain cross-cultural goals is needed. As well, the connection between short-term study abroad programs and tourism is quite clear as primarily short-term study abroad programs encompass study and touring in the host country.

A final area of potential research is to expand the current framework to other types of tourism. Links between study abroad, volunteer tourism and cultural tourism are clear and extending the current study to these types of tourism would be interesting. Especially considering the ambitious goals of some volunteer tourism programs and the difficulty in preparing a program which can attain those goals (Andereck, McGehee, Lee & Clemmons, 2012), evaluating participants’ experiences using the current framework could result in valuable information for improving the practices of tour providers, benefiting both the tourist and the host involved in the volunteer tourism project.
REFERENCES


Fischer, K. (2010, October). Study Abroad’s new focus is job skills. The Chronicle of Higher Education. LVII, 9.


To: Kathleen Andereck  
UCENT  

From: Mark Roosa, Chair  
Soc Beh IRB  

Date: 03/13/2012  

Committee Action: Exemption Granted  

IRB Action Date: 09/13/2012  

IRB Protocol #: 1203007571  

Study Title: Tourism, Cultural Attitudes and Study Abroad  

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(1) (2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.
APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL – SUMMER 2012
Hello!

I’m contacting you because you indicated on your ASU Summer Study Abroad online application your interest in participating in a Photo Research Project I am conducting this summer. This research project will involve analysis of photos you’ve taken during your summer program that you submit for the study. Your photographs tell a story and we want to hear yours!

Attached to this email you will find an information letter for you to review what is involved in the study and a photo release agreement, which you will sign later in the study.

For the first part of the study, you will submit up to 10 photos to me for the project. You have the option to upload photos via a closed Facebook group or via email to me. You will receive reminder emails to email or upload photos approximately mid-way through your program and near the end of your program.

After the end of your program I will schedule a debriefing interview with you that we can conduct in person or via skype or other video chat method.

At this time, please respond to this email to let me know if you prefer to submit photos by:
Uploading to a closed Facebook group (I will send you instructions to join the group)
OR
Via email to me at ara@asu.edu

Remember, if you participate in the study you will be entered into a drawing to win $50 in cash!

Please let me know if you have questions!

Thank you!

Ara Pachmayer
Ph.D. student
ara@asu.edu
APPENDIX C

CONSENT LETTER – SUMMER 2012
INFORMATION LETTER
Tourism, Cultural Attitudes and Study Abroad

Date

Dear Student:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Kathy Andereck in the School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate the relationship between participation in study abroad programs, tourism and cultural attitudes among students at Arizona State University (ASU).

I am inviting your participation to take part in this study. I will be using a method called photo elicitation to collect data, which involves submission of up to 10 photographs taken on your study abroad program to me. You will be contacted during your study abroad program to send photos to me and after the end of your program to send additional photos to me via email or a closed Facebook group. Students should send photos that best represent their experiences on their study abroad program. Students should avoid submitting photos that identify other people or illegal activities. I will conduct a subsequent interview lasting for about one hour with you to discuss your choice of photos and to clarify and verify information during the beginning of the Fall 2012 semester at ASU. I may need to follow up with you after the interview has taken place for an additional 30 minutes to verify information or ask follow up questions.

You must be 18 years or older to participate and your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Although there is no benefit to you participating in this study, the results of the study may be used in scholarly journals and/or presentations at conferences to discuss the benefits of study abroad for college students. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. While the interview will be digitally recorded and a transcription of the interview will be made your name will not be known or used. In addition any potential details from the interview, which could lead to the subject being identified will be removed from all resulting write up of the information. Submitted photos may be used in reports, presentations, or publications with the permission of the participant (see attached ASU photo release form) and photo credits will be given.

I would like to audiotape this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. The only data will be the digital recording, transcripts and notes. These will be stored in a locker secured by a lock and key at the Downtown Phoenix Campus in University Center 550. Once the interview is transcribed the recording can be destroyed. It is anticipated that the digital recording will need to be kept for eight months. The transcription will not contain any information, which might identify the subject.
If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: ara@asu.edu or kandereck@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.
APPENDIX D

PHOTO RELEASE FORM
Photo Release Form

I grant permission to the Arizona Board of Regents, on behalf of Arizona State University, to use photographs taken by me for use in university publications, including web sites or other electronic forms or media, and to offer the photographs for use or distribution to other university departments, without notifying me.

I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the photographs, publications, or electronic matter that may be used in conjunction with them now or in the future, whether that use is known to me or unknown, and I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising from or related to the use of the photographs.

I hereby agree to release and hold harmless the Arizona Board of Regents, on behalf of Arizona State University, via electronic or media, from and against any claims, damages or liability arising from or related to the use of the photographs, including but not limited to any re-use, distortion, blurring, alteration, optical illusion or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in production of the finished product. It is the discretion of ASU to decide whether to use the image.

I am 18 years of age and I am competent to contract in my own name. I have read this release before signing below, and I fully understand the contents, meaning and impact of this release. I understand that I am free to address any specific questions regarding this release by submitting those questions in writing prior to signing, and I agree that my failure to do so will be interpreted as a free and knowledgeable acceptance of the terms of this release.

Name:____________________________________

Date:__________________________

Address:____________________________________

Signature:____________________________________

Email:____________________________________

ASU Affiliation (check one):

____ Student
____ Staff
____ Faculty
____ Alumnus
____ Other, please specify____________________

Department or Major:____________________________________

Photo caption(s):

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Revised 1/26/2005
http://www.asu.edu/webcommunication/
APPENDIX E

APPROVAL FOR EXEMPTION FOR RESEARCH SPR/SUM 2013
To: Kathleen Andereck  
UCENT

From: Mark Roosa, Chair  
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 12/05/2012

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 12/05/2012

IRB Protocol #: 1210008486

Study Title: Tourism, Cultural Attitudes and Study Abroad

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.
Hello!

I'm contacting you because you indicated on your ASU Study Abroad online application your interest in participating in Study Abroad Research I am conducting. This research project will involve completion of a brief online survey before and after your study abroad experience. Everyone has a different study abroad story. We want to hear yours!

For the study, the time commitment for both surveys is expected to be about 20 – 25 minutes each. Attached to this email you will find an information letter for you to review with additional details about the study.

The online survey is available at
http://asupublicprograms.us.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eY968ugKu6vDq8R

Please enter code 1 when prompted.

Remember, if you participate in the study you will be entered into a drawing to win $50 in cash!

Please let me know if you have questions!

Thank you!

Ara Pachmayer
Arizona State University
Ph.D. student
ara@asu.edu
APPENDIX G

CONSENT LETTER SPR/SUM 2013
INFORMATION LETTER

Tourism, Cultural Attitudes and Study Abroad

Date

Dear Student:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Andereck in the School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate the relationship between participation in study abroad programs, tourism and cultural attitudes among students at Arizona State University (ASU) and Vanderbilt University.

I am inviting your participation to take part in this study. Your participation will involve completion of a brief online survey before you study abroad and brief online survey after you have finished studying abroad. The time commitment for both surveys is expected to be about 20 – 30 minutes in total.

In addition, you will also have the option to participate in an online writing exercise conducted through email while you are studying abroad. The time commitment for this option is expected to be about 20 – 40 minutes in total.

You must be 18 years or older to participate and your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Although there is no benefit to you participating in this study, the results of the study may be used in scholarly journals and/ or presentations at conferences to discuss the benefits of study abroad for college students. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. Both the data from the survey and the online writing exercise will be written up as part of the analysis, results and discussion section of the dissertation. In addition, the results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be known or used. Results of the surveys will be shared in aggregate form.

Transcriptions of the online writing exercise will be stored in a locker secured by a lock and key at the Downtown Phoenix Campus in University Center 550. The transcription will not contain any information, which might identify the subject.

As an additional incentive students who participate in the study will be entered into a drawing to win $50. The raffle entries will not be tied to your responses.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: ara@asu.edu or kathleen.andereck@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.
APPENDIX H

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE
Spring/Summer 2013 Pre-test

Intro Thank you for being part of this study. Your thoughts and opinions are greatly valued!

Q1 Please enter the code referenced in the email you received here.

Intro This section asks questions about you and about your study abroad program.

Q2 How many weeks will you be away from the United States?

Q3 Have you ever traveled outside of the United States?
   - Yes (1)
   - No (2)
   If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Have you ever lived outside of the Un...

Q4 How many times have you traveled outside of the United States?

Q5 What countries/regions have you visited prior to your study abroad program?

Q6 Have you ever lived outside of the United States?
   - Yes (1)
   - No (2)
   If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Have you participated in another stud...

Q7 If yes, what countries have you lived in outside of the United States?

Q8 Have you participated in another study abroad program?
   - Yes (1)
   - No (2)
   If No Is Selected, Then Skip To What best indicates the type of study...

Q9 If yes, where did you study abroad?

Q10 What best indicates the type of study abroad program you are participating in? Please select all that apply.
   - ASU Faculty Directed program (1)
   - Exchange program (2)
   - Partnership program (3)
   - Other (4) ____________________
Q11 What best indicates your living situation while studying abroad? Please select all that apply
- Host family (1)
- Apartment (2)
- Hotel/Hostel (3)
- Living with other US students (4)
- Living with students from the host country (5)
- Living with students from many different countries (6)
- Other (7) ____________________

Q12 What level of fluency do you have in the language of the host country?
- It is my native language (1)
- Advanced reading, writing and speaking (2)
- Basic reading, writing and speaking (3)
- None (4)

Q13 What is your gender?
- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q14 What is your country of birth?
- United States (1)
- Other (2) ____________________

Q15 In what country have you lived for most of your life?
- United States (1)
- Other (2) ____________________

Q16 What is your age?

Q17 What is your academic status?
- Undergraduate (1)
- Graduate (2)
- Non-Degree (3)
Q18 What is your race/ethnicity?
- Asian/Pacific Islander (1)
- Black non Hispanic (2)
- Hispanic (3)
- Native American/Alaskan Native (4)
- White non Hispanic (5)
- Other (6) ____________________

Q19 The next section is to determine how you expect your study abroad program to influence you. Please choose one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will feel more at ease relating to people from other countries (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study abroad program will increase my interest to travel to other countries (2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When I return, I will feel closer to the concerns of the people of the host country (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The study abroad program will increase my</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 234 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of different cultures (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>While on the program, I will have cultural experiences few people have (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will visit my host country/countries in the future (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will have a better appreciation for the U.S. (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will have a better appreciation for other countries and cultures (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will be interested in events related to global or intercultural issues (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I return, I will be able to accurately describe the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q20 What skills do you expect to gain from participating in study abroad?

Q21 What do you expect to learn about your home culture?

Q22 What do you expect to learn about the culture you are visiting?

Q23 What challenges do you think might you encounter abroad?

Q24 What skills do you currently have that will help you work through issues you might encounter in another country/culture?
Q25 What are your overall perceptions of the host country? Please choose one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The people of the host country like Americans</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to find people of difference races and religions in the host country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everyone in the host country likely speaks the same national language</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel close with the culture of the host country</td>
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<tr>
<td>The host country is not a multicultural country</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect the host country to have the amenities of a modern country (6)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people of the host country are like me (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I expect the people of the host country to be friendly to me (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racism exists in the host country (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrimination based on sexual orientation exists in the host country (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The people of the host country are not like me (11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I expect to</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
find discrimination based on gender in the host country (12)

I do not expect to feel out of my comfort zone in the host country (13)

Q26 List 3 words that describe the culture of the host country in which you will be studying?

Q27 How would you describe your level of familiarity with the culture of the host country?

Q28 What stereotypes do you already have about the host country?

Q29 What is your initial impression of the host country?

Q30 Why do you think that way?

Q31 Where did you learn this information?
Q32 How would you assess yourself with respect to your experiences with or your knowledge of other cultures? Please choose one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t expect to encounter difficulties adjusting to the host country’s culture (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the most part I feel comfortable in other cultures (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider myself to be a person who can easily adapt to other cultures (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of cultural differences (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am open to learning about other peoples and cultures (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have respect for other cultures (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am interested in meeting and interacting with people who are not from my own country (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have an in-depth understanding of cultures other than my own (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Many of my friends are from cultures other than my own (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>People from other countries have told me that I seem to feel comfortable in other cultures (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>People from other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
countries have told me that I can communicate effectively in other cultures (11)

Q33 The next section is to determine your reasons for studying abroad in general. Please choose one answer for each statement. I chose to study abroad as it will give me the opportunity to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet people from my home country who are also studying abroad (1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet people from other countries (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulfill an academic requirement (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve my foreign language skills (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience life in another country/culture (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain a greater understanding of the host country (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learn more about the host country/host culture (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance cross-cultural skills (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialize with others (9)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q34 Why did you select the country in which you will be studying? Please choose one answer for each statement. I chose to study abroad in the country I selected because

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of the language spoken in the country (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Of prior experience with the culture or country (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of my ancestry (3)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The country/culture is similar to mine (4)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The country/culture is not like mine (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I know someone going on the program (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have contacts/friends/family in the country I am studying in (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The academic topic being studied (8)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The courses being offered (9)</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>The instructor directing the program (10)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q35 Please indicate any additional reasons you chose to study abroad in the country you selected.

Q36 Would you be interested in participating in a brief online writing exercise through email while you are studying abroad? If you answer yes, you will be contacted by me roughly half way through your program with several short questions which you can answer by email.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
APPENDIX I

POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE
Thank you for being part of this study. Your thoughts and opinions are greatly valued!

Q1 Please enter the code referenced in the email you received here.

This section asks questions about you and about your study abroad program.

Q2 How many weeks were you away from the United States?

Q3 Had you ever traveled outside of the United States before your study abroad program?
   - Yes (1)
   - No (2)
   If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Have you ever lived outside of the Un...

Q4 How many times had you traveled outside of the United States?

Q5 What countries/regions had you visited prior to your study abroad program?

Q6 Had you ever lived outside of the United States?
   - Yes (1)
   - No (2)
   If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Have you participated in another stud...

Q7 If yes, what countries had you lived in outside of the United States?

Q8 Had you participated in another study abroad program?
   - Yes (1)
   - No (2)
   If No Is Selected, Then Skip To What best indicates the type of study...

Q9 If yes, where did you study abroad?

Q10 What best indicates the type of study abroad program you were participating in? Please select all that apply.
   - ASU Faculty Directed program (1)
   - Exchange program (2)
   - Partnership program (3)
   - Other (4) ____________________
Q11 What best indicates your living situation while studying abroad? Please select all that apply
- Host family (1)
- Apartment (2)
- Hotel/Hostel (3)
- Living with other US students (4)
- Living with students from the host country (5)
- Living with students from many different countries (6)
- Other (7) ____________________

Q12 What is your gender?
- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q13 What is your country of birth?
- United States (1)
- Other (2) ____________________

Q14 In what country have you lived for most of your life?
- United States (1)
- Other (2) ____________________

Q15 What is your age?

Q16 What is your academic status?
- Undergraduate (1)
- Graduate (2)
- Non-Degree (3)

Q17 What is your race/ethnicity?
- Asian/Pacific Islander (1)
- Black non Hispanic (2)
- Hispanic (3)
- Native American/Alaskan Native (4)
- White non Hispanic (5)
- Other (6) ____________________

Q18 Participants on study abroad programs may also participate in activities or events outside the classroom either as a part of the study abroad program structure or independently. The next questions are to determine how often you participated in activities or events outside the classroom. Please choose one answer for each statement.
On my study abroad program I participated in the following outside of the classroom as part of the study abroad program structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never (1)</th>
<th>Rarely (2)</th>
<th>Sometimes (3)</th>
<th>Often (4)</th>
<th>Very Often (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting local people (students, etc.) at study abroad program events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making friends with locals at study abroad program events</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country related events (festivals, holidays, events)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized tours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural excursions (5)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteering (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Column 1</td>
<td>Column 2</td>
<td>Column 3</td>
<td>Column 4</td>
<td>Column 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work projects with locals (7)</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time job (8)</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking in the host language (9)</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local sport or cultural organization (10)</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q19 On my study abroad program I participated in the following outside of the classroom on my own/with other students NOT as a part of the study abroad program structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never (1)</th>
<th>Rarely (2)</th>
<th>Sometimes (3)</th>
<th>Often (4)</th>
<th>Very Often (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting local people (students, etc.) (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making friends with locals (2)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country related events (festivals, holidays, events) (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized tours (4)</td>
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<td>Cultural excursions (5)</td>
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<td>Traveling on my own (6)</td>
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<td>Volunteering (7)</td>
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<td>Work projects with</td>
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<td>locals (8)</td>
<td>Part-time job (9)</td>
<td>Speaking in the host language (10)</td>
<td>Local sport or cultural organizations (11)</td>
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</table>
Q20 When considering your reasons to participate in study abroad, please indicate how each of the following factors influenced your overall experience. Please choose one answer for each statement. Studying abroad gave me the opportunity to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet people from my home country who were also studying abroad (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet people from my host country/another country (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulfill an academic requirement (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve my foreign language skills (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience life in another country/culture (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain a greater</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding of the host country (6)</td>
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<td>Learn more about the host country/host culture (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance cross-cultural skills (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialize with others (9)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q21 Why did you select the country in which you studied? Please choose one answer for each statement. I chose to study abroad in the country I selected because

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of the language spoken in the country (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Of prior experience with the culture or country (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of my ancestry (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The country/culture is</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
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<tr>
<td>similar to mine (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The country/culture is not like mine (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I knew someone going on the program (6)</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had contacts/friends/family in the country I was studying in (7)</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>The academic topic being studied (8)</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>The courses being offered (9)</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>The instructor directing the program (10)</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q22 Please indicate any additional reasons you chose to study abroad in the country you selected.
Q23 The next statements are to determine how your program influenced you. Please choose one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel more at ease relating to people from other countries (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The study abroad program increased my interest to travel to other countries (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel closer to the concerns of the people in the host country (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The study abroad program increased my knowledge of different countries (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had cultural experiences few people have (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Score 1</td>
<td>Score 2</td>
<td>Score 3</td>
<td>Score 4</td>
<td>Score 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I will visit my host country/countries in the future (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have a better appreciation for the U.S. (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have a better appreciation for other countries and culture (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The program increased my interest in events related to global or intercultural issues (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can accurately describe the culture of the host country to people who have never been there. (10)</td>
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</table>
Q24 Now that you have studied abroad how would you assess yourself with respect to your experiences with or your knowledge of other cultures? Please choose one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did not encounter difficulties adjusting to the host country’s culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>For the most part I feel comfortable in other cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>I consider myself to be a person who can easily adapt to other cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am aware of cultural differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am open to learning about other peoples and cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Score 1</td>
<td>Score 2</td>
<td>Score 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have respect for other cultures (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am interested in meeting and interacting with people who are not from my own country (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have an in-depth understanding of cultures other than my own (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Many of my friends are from cultures other than my own (9)</td>
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<td>People from other countries have told me that I seem to feel comfortable in other cultures (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>People from other</td>
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</table>
countries have told me that I can communicate effectively in other cultures (11)

Q25 Think of an experience you had while studying abroad related to outside the classroom experiences which led you to acknowledge a cultural difference. What did you learn from this experience?
Q26 Now that you have studied abroad what are your overall perceptions of the host country? Please choose one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The people of the host country like Americans (1)</td>
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<td>I found people of different races and religions in the host country (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>Everyone in the host country speaks the same national language (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel close with the culture of the host country (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>The host country is not a multi-cultural</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country (5)</td>
<td>The host country had the amenities of a modern country (6)</td>
<td>The people of the host country are like me (7)</td>
<td>The people of the host country were friendly to me (8)</td>
<td>Racism exists in the host country (9)</td>
<td>Discrimination based on sexual orientation exists in the host country (10)</td>
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</table>
I found discrimination based on gender in the host country (12)

I did not feel out of my comfort zone in the host country (13)

Q27 List 3 words that describe the culture of the host country in which you studied.
Q28 The following section is to learn more about your daily experiences in the host country outside of the classroom. Please choose one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never (1)</th>
<th>Rarely (2)</th>
<th>Sometimes (3)</th>
<th>Often (4)</th>
<th>Very Often (5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often did you speak in the host country language? (1)</td>
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<td>How often did you feel immersed in the culture of the host country? (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often did you have interactions with people from the host country? (3)</td>
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<td>I felt like I was a part of the local culture of the host country (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>My interactions with locals from the host</td>
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</table>

264
country helped further my understanding of the local culture (5) 

Q29 Please choose one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was difficult to adjust to the host culture (1)</td>
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<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was difficult to readjust to being back home (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel close with the culture of the host country (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q30 Who was your first friend that you made abroad?

Q31 How did you meet people/make friends on your study abroad program?
Q32 Was English the primary language spoken in the country you studied abroad?
☐ Yes (1)
☐ No (2)

Q33 What level of fluency do you have in the language of the host country?
☐ It is my native language (1)
☐ Advanced reading, writing and speaking (2)
☐ Basic reading, writing and speaking (3)
☐ None (4)

Q34 Now that you have completed your study abroad how would you describe your level of familiarity with the culture of the host country?

Q35 Now that you have completed your study abroad program what is your impression of the host country?

Q35 Why do you think that way?

Q36 Where did you learn this information?