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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN  
A COLLEGE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM**

A Thesis in

Leisure Studies

by

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this dissertation is to determine the program effects of studying abroad for college students at a northeastern U. S. university including: the motivation for studying abroad, the relationships between participants' characteristics and program effects, and the interrelationships among program effects. A series of investigations have been conducted to answer three research questions and six proposed hypotheses. The questions and hypotheses are based on the results of a pilot study and an intensive review of the previous literature. A total of 265 college students participated in this study and completed a web-based survey in 2005.

The dissertation is organized in a three-article format. The first study explores the motivations for studying abroad and concludes, via qualitative content analysis, that there are six main motivations for studying abroad: cultural learning, academic learning, foreign experience, personal development, pleasure, and social interactions. Moreover, this motivation study showed that the expectancy-valence theory is an alternative approach to interpret participants' motivations for studying abroad and the findings exemplify and illustrate that students are motivated by the expected program benefits. However, this study did not testify the application of expectancy-valence theory in study abroad context.

The second study determines the program effects and examines the relationship between participants' characteristics and program effects. Five program effects are extracted from the answers to a 24-item questionnaire including: language learning, cultural immersion, foreign connection, personal growth, and career development. The results suggest that gender and year-in-college are not significant predictors in terms of program effects. Also, the rest of the findings suggest that business and science majors have higher levels of foreign cultural learning than art majors. Also, the semester-based programs significantly contribute to increasing foreign connections because the homestay option is the most effective living arrangement for foreign

language learning among all residency arrangements. Local friendships also contribute to foreign connection and cultural learning.

The third study examines six hypotheses with respect to the interrelationships among program effects. Two models were derived from previous literature and tested in these data. After statistical analyses, an intercultural connection model suggests that language learning is the antecedent for cultural immersion and cultural immersion is the antecedent for foreign connection. Cultural immersion fully mediates the relationship between language learning and foreign connection. In a personal progress model, foreign connection serves as an antecedent both for personal growth and career plans and personal growth also has positive relationship to career plans. Personal growth partially mediates the relationship between foreign interaction and career plans.

Taken together, all results suggest that studying abroad plays a crucial role in the “University of Travel” (Pearce & Foster, 2007), where the close relationship between travel and learning. College officials might consider developing more customized programs for specific target audiences than before, like language learning-oriented or foreign experience-oriented travel programs based on the findings from the second and third studies. From an academic perspective, this study might serve as the primary step in describing the program effects and comprehending how tourism and education cohere together in a travel context. Moreover, future research is needed to examine the program effects longitudinally and experimental-designed research would be an effective approach to identify the cause and effect relationships in terms of program effects.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

The nexus between tourism and education is an enduring phenomenon that originated with the European Grand Tour of the 17th century and continues today with the modern study abroad program. Nowadays, as an increasing number of people participate in studying abroad programs, studying abroad is a new trend in the tourism market. The Open Door Study (IIE, 2004 & 2005) showed that between 1994 and 2004 there was a dramatic growth--an increase of 140% --in edu-tourism. Moreover, more educators have begun to advocate that in this global era students should increase their international experience and knowledge by studying abroad. Furthermore, research suggests that such experiences can increase students' academic development and provide them with an edge on the job market (Carlson, Burn, Ussem and Yachimowicz, 1990; Gmlech, 1997; Hill, 1987; Jackson, 2006; Kauffman, Martin, Weaver, & Weaver, 1992; Laubscher, 1994; Ritchie, 2003; Stitsworth, 1988). As a result, colleges and universities have integrated studying abroad programs into their higher education curriculum plans and have encouraged students to participate (Carr, 2003). In an overly competitive global market, traditional classroom learning is often perceived to not be sufficient and therefore foreign study is an effective way for students to gain professional development (Carlson and Widaman 1988).

As more colleges and institutions include study abroad programs as an educational option, there is a need for relevant evaluation methods and additional research in order to design even better programs and justify the program effects. As Jenner and Smith (1997) noted, so far little comprehensive research has been conducted to understand this segment in the education-tourism complex. Furthermore, as Ritchie (2003) noted, current tourism research examines study

abroad programs as one of several general travel forms, but such study results do not sufficiently cover the educational tourism segment. Since the increasing market offers more possibility than ever for empirical examination, it is an excellent time to conduct more research.

Although different researchers have begun to investigate the effects of study abroad programs, the picture is still incomplete. Therefore, in order to better understand the effects of studying abroad on the participants themselves, I use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to construct the comprehensive picture of the program effects. Specifically, I conduct a series of investigations and analyses in order to provide a complete picture of the program effects including motivations for studying abroad, program effects on different populations, and I develop a structural theory for program effects. In the following three chapters I present the findings from a cross-disciplinary perspective. First, I identify motivations for participation in college study abroad programs and exemplify the relationship between motivation theories and practical findings. Second, while considering the influence of participants' characteristics and program features on the program effects, I endeavor to establish the academic basis for educational study abroad programs and empirically identify all possible outcomes for studying abroad. Third, I attempt to establish a model for the educational abroad program effects and validate the proposed model through empirical examinations.

## Literature Review and Theoretical Frame Work

### *Motivation for Travel*

Motivation, the force to initiate, direct and arouse human behaviors, varies from person to person and in different contexts (Arkes & Garske, 1977; Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Pearce, 1982). Since the 1970s, several travel motivation studies have attempted to explain and profile the possible motivations for travel behaviors (Beard and Regheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979; Dann,

1977 & 1981; Fodness, 1994; Hudman, 1980; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Krippendorf, 1987; Mansfeld, 1992; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; Plog, 1974). Specifically, two different approaches (Jamal & Lee, 2003), the micro and macro approaches, have offered insights on motivations for travel. From the micro perspective, human needs theory (Maslow, 1970) and ERG (Existence, Relatedness, Growth) theory (Alderfer, 1969), proposed the hierarchy of needs and stated that humans consistently satisfy lower-order needs before they attempt to meet their higher level needs. For example, traveling is an upper level need to acquire self-actualization or personal growth. Furthermore, Lee and Crompton (1992) expanded on Alderfer's argument and suggested that the people travel primarily in search of novelty. Iso-Ahola (1982) asserted that tourists are also motivated by their desire to seek knowledge, social interactions, and escape from their routine. However, the micro social psychological approach has not identified all motivations for travel. A broader frame is needed to understand motivations for traveling.

From the macro perspective, Dann (1977) proposed a push and pull model for travel motivation and explained that according to the relationship between travel and social interaction, people are motivated to travel by their desire to escape their feelings of isolation and because they want to interact with people who are not a part of their routine life. Many subsequent empirical examinations of travel motivations have supported Dann's theory of push and pull motives for travel (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996; Hanqin and Lam, 1999; Kim and Lee, 2002; Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994).

To more fully understand how people generate their reasons for traveling, expectancy theory has offered an alternative view of travel motivation. Vroom (1964) proposed expectancy theory to explain organizational behaviors in the management field. Vroom argued that people are motivated to make efforts towards their goals if they believe it will result in good performance

and this good performance will lead to desired outcomes. Driver and his colleagues (Driver & Knopf, 1977, Driver & Tocher, 1970, Manfreda, Driver, & Tarrant, 1996) applied Vroom's theory to recreation-related activities and argued that people participated in specific recreation activities because of the desired physical or psychological outcomes. Expectancy theory could serve as a useful approach in interpreting the reasons behind pursuing specific recreation activities in the educational tourism field.

### *Study Abroad Program Effects*

As Mark Twain asserted in 1899, "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness" (as cited in Smith, 2001). In fact, research has demonstrated that significant effects of studying abroad includes an increase in world-mindedness, sympathy with people in the world, and personal development of autonomy and self-esteem (Gwynne, 1981; Nash, 1976; Pyle, 1981; Rose, 1969). Moreover, studies have also suggested that studying abroad has multiple benefits including: academic development, linguistic improvement, cultural connection, appreciation of cultural differences, sense of independence, sense of adventure, and openness to a new world (Carlson, Burn, Ussem and Yachimowicz, 1990; Jackson, 2006; Kauffman, Martin, Weaver & Weaver, 1992; Opper, Teichler, Carlson, 1990; Talburt & Stuart, 1999). To further illustrate the positive affects of studying abroad, Black and Duhon (2006) conducted a quasi-experimental study on the study abroad program effects and suggested that students who study abroad have significantly higher levels of tolerance, self-confidence, sense of independence, openness in after-program survey when compared to their pre-program survey results. The following section explores the previous studies and summarizes the most updated developments of the field in order to establish a solid basis for future analysis.

### *Study Abroad and Academic/Language learning*

Study abroad programs offer the chance to link theory and reality and therefore these programs facilitate experiential learning, the opportunity to construct one's own knowledge via their first-hand experience (Ritchie, 2003). In fact, studying abroad is an ideal context of experiential learning. As Coleman (1976) and Steinberg (2002) affirmed that students learn from their first-hand experiences during travel. Ultimately, such experiential learning helps students integrate their educational experiences into their lives (Dewey, 1963; Freire, 1970). As a direct result of the natural connection between travel and experiential learning, researchers have widely applied experiential learning theory to study abroad programs, field trips, and international curricula. Laubscher (1994) suggested study abroad programs validate the learning process in transforming abstract concept into concrete experiences. More specifically, Sutton and Rubin (2001) substantiated the significant academic gains earned through study abroad. In their study, they employed experimental research design to compare an at-home group to the study abroad group and the findings showed that the latter had an increased level of achievement in four learning areas: functional knowledge, knowledge of world geography, knowledge of global interdependence, and knowledge of cultural relativism.

For most students, the first priority of studying abroad is foreign language development and they believe that an authentic language learning environment is a significant factor in successful second language acquisition (Carlson & Yachimowicz, 1987; Prater, Barutia, Larkin, & Weaver, 1980, Jackson, 2006). Hence, linguistic studies have shown that the study abroad learning context creates an effective learning context for participants to increase their vocabulary (DeKeyser, 1986; Lennon, 1990; Milton & Meara, 1995; Walsh, 1994) and oral proficiency (Freed, 1995; Lafford, 1995). Several studies have further confirmed that studying abroad

improves language acquisition. For example, Carlson et al. (1990) showed that American college students made substantial language gains during their study abroad program in Europe. More recently, Segalowitz et al. (2004) compared two different learning contexts (a studying abroad environment and an at-home environment) and concluded that study abroad students made significant progress in expression of oral proficiency, communication skills, and attention control.

### *Travel Abroad and Cultural Learning*

Through study abroad programs, inter-group interactions are an effective way to learn about different cultures and ways of life across societies. Liu, Sheldon and Var (1987) reported that more than 50 percent of those surveyed believed that tourism could boost cultural exchange and mutual understanding. This belief that study abroad participants would learn to understand a different culture through traveling to another country has been confirmed in a myriad of studies that show that study abroad participants not only learn about differences between cultures and ethnicities, but also become intimately familiar with the host culture (Carlson et al., 1990; Hill, 1987; Laubscher, 1994; Milleret, 1991; Opper, Teichler, Carlson, 1990; Riedel, 1989; Roberts, 1994; Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 1998; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995).

Most importantly, numerous studies have shown how beneficial inter-cultural contact is. For instance, Abrams (1979) suggested that intimate interactions increase inter-cultural understanding and this was further supported by Dwyer (2004) who showed that intensive close contacts with local culture allows students learn more about foreign languages and cultures. Moreover, Carlson and Widaman (1988) suggest that the study abroad program will help students increase their cross-cultural interests and sensibilities and Gmelch (1997) demonstrated that studying abroad facilitates personal growth and understanding of culture, life, and self. In

addition, the SAEP study (Carlson et al., 1990) concluded that participants increase their knowledge about the cultural life, customs and traditions, and social structure of the host country. Finally, in Armstrong's (1984) empirical study, he found that American college students who studied abroad in Mexico changed their stereotypes of Mexico and Mexicans and increased their cross-cultural knowledge. Overwhelmingly, previous literature and current research validates the presence of cultural learning effects.

#### *Study Abroad and Career Development*

Some literature suggested that in a globalized era, study abroad programs also help students obtain career advantages. According to Carlson et al. (1990), study abroad programs and overseas learning experiences provide students with a chance to consider overseas employment and potentially increases students' success on the job market. This occurs apparently because studying abroad experiences can change students' values or attitudes and therefore influences their short and long-term career objectives (Hadis, 2005). From a slightly different perspective, Kauffman et al. (1992) suggested that studying abroad overseas may give students advantages on the international job market. These findings are further substantiated by Pearce and Foster (2006) who stated that the learning opportunities during a trip would be relevant to participants' future employment. In addition, to the research findings in leisure studies, some international businesses emphasize overseas experience as a desired qualification on their job announcements (Hannigan, 2001). Most immediately, students who study abroad demonstrate an increase in their interest in an internship in foreign countries (Dwyer, 2004).

#### *Study Abroad and Personal Growth*

In terms of an increase in autonomy and self-esteem, the effects of studying abroad on personal growth are significant (Gwynne, 1981; Nash, 1976; Pyle, 1981; Rose, 1969). Hadis

(2005) concluded that the program helps students be independent and open to world cultures since they need to live on their own during the program. Students indicate that personal growth ranks as the most important gain during their study abroad programs (Enrenreich, 2006). Program participants tend to have higher levels of self-confidence, maturation, and tolerance of ambiguity than their counterparts (Dwyer, 2004). Laubscher (1994) indicated that the studying abroad experience increases participants' autonomy, independence, self-confidence, and tolerance of differences. Gmelch (1997) concluded that personal growth effects are even more prominent than academic or professional growth since students learn how to solve problems and cope with psychological and environmental changes. Since they live on their own, students gain a sense of self-independence and adapted themselves into the new environment. Other studies (Hansel, 1988; Stitsworth, 1988) also found that studying abroad increases students' self-confidence and helped them become familiar with an international environment. As the literature suggests, experience in studying abroad supports participants increases their personal growth levels and personal growth is a substantial program effect and that is evident in many previous studies. However, it might be a self-selection effect; specifically, students might be very independent before they participate in programs and they do not significantly contribute to personal growth.

#### *Program Effects and Foreign Interactions*

Close relationships or psychological attachments with local hosts are an important part of the studying abroad experience for most participants. Such interactions certainly contribute to intercultural understanding and stereotype reduction between program participants and local hosts (Allport, 1954; Carlson & Widaman, 1998; Cook, 1984; Gareis, 2000; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Stangor, Klaus, Stroebe, & Hewstone, 1996). Study abroad students have intensive

interactions with host peers during the program, which increases their opportunities for an in-depth understanding of local culture and the host environment. As Burnett and Gardner (2006) suggested, participants have different program perceptions that are directly related to how they interact with local people. The foreign interactions might trigger other program effects and local social interactions often yield a chance for cultural awareness between students and hosts (Astin 1993). Pearson-Evans (2006) even suggested that a social network with local friends or companions helps ease the students' transition from their home culture into their host culture. The temporary loss of their immediate family ties or friends at home is made considerably easier through building networks with local host families. However, some studies showed less optimistic results and cautioned that some students only develop superficial relationships with their local hosts because they prefer to make friends with program companions instead (McKinlay, Pattinson, & Cross., 1996; Nesdale & Todd, 1993).

#### *Other Alternative Points and Comments*

Based on the literature review, many researchers suggested that study abroad programs enhance academic/language learning, cultural understanding, career development, personal growth, and foreign interaction. However, others have questioned the salience of the effects of cultural and knowledge learning in study abroad programs. In her study of study abroad program to France, Wilkinson (1998) stated that the unexpected language barrier and the short-length of a study abroad program meant that cultural knowledge and mutual understanding did not increase. Furthermore, Pickert (1992) and Milleret (1991) suggested that the effects of language and cultural learning would be hard to identify for the short-term programs. In contrast, Bruner (1991) suggested that in an ideal situation it may be possible for tourism to foster cultural understanding and personal growth. However, based on the findings of their empirical study,

Litvin (2003) and Askjellerud (2003) doubted that tourism could ease stereotypes or increase cultural understanding. Gartner and Bachi (as cited in Litvin, 1994) also affirmed that intercultural understanding would not exist between tourists and their host country, because of the tourist's foreignness to local people. In Pizam's four studies (1996) on the effects of travel contact, little empirical evidence was found to justify the assumption that contact between tourists and locals fostered cultural or mutual understanding.

A well-designed itinerary and program could have positive effects on students as Tomljenovic and Faulkner (2001) compared the Croatian and Australian cases. Despite questions about the program's effects, some researchers have recognized that study abroad programs could contribute to students' language competency, cultural knowledge development and personal growth (Hill, 1987; Laubscher, 1994; Milleret, 1991; Riedel, 1989; Roberts, 1994; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995). To comprehensively understand the effects of study abroad programs, this study intends to identify all possible results based on the reviews of the previous literature and to determine the differences between previous literature and the current study.

#### *Participant Characteristics and Program Effects*

In addition to identification of possible program effects, another important part of this study is to evaluate how those effects are influenced or predicated by both participants' characteristics and program features. Engle and Engle (2003) confirmed that participants' characteristics contribute to the different program effects in their study. This study will utilize six predictors, including age, gender, academic major, program length, living arrangements, and local friendships, to increase the power of explanations of program effects (Aveni, 2005; Carlson et al., 1990; Carlson & Widman, 1989; Fraser, 2002; Hoffman-Hicks, 2000; Ritchie, 2003; Weaver & Lawton, 2003).

### *Gender and Age*

Gender and age are significant indicators for travel experience (Sirakaya & McLellan, 1997; Hsu & Sung, 1997). Weaver and Lawton (2003) suggested that female tourists are more likely to be involved in learning activities during their travel experiences than their male counterparts. Carlson and Widaman (1988) found female study abroad participants often acquired more worldly knowledge than their male counterparts. These results are also consistent with a study completed by Useem and Useem (1967). Isabelli-Garcia (2006) reported that the gendered experience in study abroad contexts influences students' learning outcomes in foreign language acquisition.

### *Academic Major*

Sutton and Rubin (2001) suggested that students' college majors influence their study abroad learning outcomes. For instance, in terms of their understanding of knowledge of global interdependence, education majors score significantly lower than any other major. In contrast, business-majors score considerably lower than other majors in their understanding of cultural relativism. Carlson and Widaman (1988) found that more than other students, those students majoring in fields in the humanities increase their attention and knowledge on foreign issues during their study abroad program. Astin (1993) discovered that most program participants who travel abroad are in the humanities and social sciences, followed by students majoring in business. Based on the literature, this study will evaluate the effects of the study abroad program by using the factors previous literature has suggested.

### *Duration*

Program duration significantly influences students' academic learning, intercultural development, career development, and personal growth (Dwyer 2004). More specifically,

program duration positively influences the participants' cultural knowledge and foreign language acquisition (Dwyer, 2004). Similarly, Allen (2002) found that the short-term study abroad programs do not have the same significant effects on linguistic development. Specifically, the program length shaped second language development (Carlson et al, 1990). Fraser (2002) and Hoffman-Hicks (2000) acknowledged the role of program length in second language acquisition. However, Hoffman-Hicks (2000) indicated that students in year-long programs may not necessarily develop a positive relationship with their local hosts, which may lessen their access to gaining foreign language skills.

### *Living Arrangement*

The living arrangement or residency options also significantly impact the program effects (Laubscher, 1994). Non-academic activities, such as homestay and social events, facilitate intercultural exposure (Cluett, 2002) and homestay arrangements have a longer lasting effect than formal activities. Hull and Lemke (1978) stated that homestay residency options significantly contribute to the out-of-class learning experiences. Rivers (1998) did a research on American college students who studied in Russia during cold war and found that those students who lived in a dorm outperformed those who lived in homestay family in speaking skills. Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) stated that the host families not only supply food and shelter but they are also the informal linguistic and cultural teachers or tutors (Law 2003).

### *Local Friendships*

Friendships with local people may generate effects on the program participants since those locals play an essential role in assisting participants in increasing their knowledge of the foreign culture. Mass tourists have fewer encounters or contacts with local people than study abroad participants. These tourists mostly stay in an isolated tourism infrastructure, such as a

hotel or resort and follow a fixed itinerary, which does not offer opportunities to interact with or understand local people in any depth (Anastasopoulous, 1992; deKadt, 1979). McIntosh, Goeldner, and Ritchie (1995) found that mass tourists prefer to stay in a foreign environment similar to their own hometown and that they have limited occasions to develop interactions with locals. Intensive contacts with local hosts might offer an opportunity to increase friendship levels, which could influence many program effects.

### *Interrelationships among Program Effects*

As some researchers have argued, program effects do not stand alone; in fact, there are relationships among program effects. However, current research does not inclusively explore the interrelationships of the five commonly proposed program effects. The following section will review relevant literature, which serves as the basis for my future analyses.

#### *Language Learning and Cultural Immersion*

There is a positive relationship between language learning and cultural immersion. Language learning is the antecedent for cultural immersion. Var and Ap (1998) conducted studies on travelers from six countries and suggested that foreign language skills facilitate cultural learning. They observed that people with higher language skills more easily embrace learning in foreign cultures. Foreign language skills also contribute to cultural understanding (Kim, 1988). Other research has suggested that cultural immersion effects depend on participant's foreign language skills (Pearson-Evans, 2006). Jackson (2006) suggested that an authentic language learning environment is the critical factor for intercultural learning because it helps students immerse themselves in local life.

In a study he conducted focused on an exchange program to France, Wilkinson (1998) discovered that certain factors including a short-length of stay and unexpected language barriers

interfere with the development of cultural knowledge and mutual understanding. This suggests that foreign language skills are an effective determinant for cultural immersion. The results from the pilot study also confirmed that supPLICATED foreign language increases the level of cultural immersion and helps students get involved in local life.

### *Cultural Immersion and Foreign Interaction*

As for the relationship between cultural immersion and foreign interactions, a review of the literature indicates that their relationship is reciprocal, not one way. In-depth cultural learning and immersion influences participants' relationships with local hosts (Pearson-Evans, 2006). As Pearson-Evans demonstrates in the study of Irish students who studied abroad in Japan, students tend to immerse themselves into Japanese cultural customs first. After that, with proven language proficiency, local people treat them as a part of their community and participants then could establish relationships with locals. As shown in the dissertation's pilot study, cultural immersion is the antecedent for foreign interaction. Some participants indicate that cultural learning helped them shorten cultural distances between themselves and local hosts and it deepens their relationships with locals. Such cultural learning or immersion helps them to build social networks and close relationships.

However, some research indicated the reverse relationship between cultural immersion and foreign interactions. For example, Lutterman-Aguillar and Gingerich (2002) stated that intercultural understanding increases due to interactions with local hosts. In sum, arguments about the relationship between cultural immersion and foreign interaction will be settled by statistical validation procedures in the data analysis part of this study.

*Language Learning and Foreign Interaction*

Language learning and advancement plays a critical role in foreign interactions. Jackson (2006) stated that students' linguistic improvements are motivated by their intentions of interacting with local people and establishing relationships with local hosts. Students try to establish relationships with local friends or host family members by conversing with these native speakers. Through such occasions, students learn how to start conversations with hosts in their daily lives. Students perceive that they have made progress in their oral expression and listening skills through these informal and casual interactions.

Once students are proficient in their foreign language, they might feel comfortable enough to establish friendships with locals. Moreover, foreign language proficiency is the key for interacting successfully during social activities and foreign interactions. It also helps students move from their feeling of being a stranger to a feeling of similarity between themselves and their hosts (Papatsiba, 2006). As study abroad program participants increase their exposure to the local culture, studying abroad context creates the close social networks and close relationships necessary to fully advance their second language skills (Campell, 1996; Isabelli-Garcia, 2006; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Levin, 2001).

On the contrary, the unsophisticated foreign language learner may be too shy to increase interactions with locals. Aveni (2005) did observations on such situations and indicated that students have negative attitudes towards local hosts if their own incompetent foreign language skills cause misunderstandings or misconceptions between themselves and their hosts. As Person-Evans (2006) suggested, foreign language skills are an important approach to help students build and maintain their own social networks with locals.

### *Foreign Interactions and Personal Growth*

Gray, Murdock, and Stebbins (2002) studied the study abroad effects and suggested that students' positive interactions with their foreign hosts contribute to the students' personal growth. More specifically, students state that they have achieved an increased sense of independence, which comes from their experiences of successfully dealing with challenges and difficulties during the program. Furthermore, students believe such international experiences give them an advantage in the current internationalized career market. Gmelch (1997) reported that students who had lived in foreign environments before indicated that they had learned how to cope with psychological and physical changes. These kinds of experiences facilitate personal growth. Students become more independent than before after they adapt themselves into the unfamiliar living environment (Hansel, 1988; Stitsworth, 1988). Kauffman (1992) also indicated that personal advancement is related to intercultural adaptation levels. Calvin (1999) conducted a study of second language acquisition in Wales and concluded that the ability to communicate with local hosts increases students' self-confidence and positive attitude towards language learning.

In addition, Hensley and Sell (1981) found that close contacts with local people contribute to higher levels of students' self-esteem, an important part personal development. Such growth effects also are confirmed in Wilkinson's study (1998) which indicated that living with local people positively increases students' sense of independence. Jackson (2006) observed Hong Kong students who studied abroad in Britain and found that the students gained confidence in intercultural encounters and independence in their lives even though they felt anxious and disappointed at the very beginning of the program. Ultimately, such out-of-classroom experiences contribute to students' sense of autonomy, independence, and self-confidence

(Laubscher 1994). Papatsiba (2006) confirmed that studying abroad is a way to achieve a sense of autonomy and independence.

#### *Personal Growth and Career Plan*

Unfortunately, there is little study abroad literature that discusses whether personal growth acquired during studying abroad contributes to students' future career options. However, Schein's (1990 & 1996) career anchor theory concluded that a personal sense of independence and autonomy is one of the crucial anchors that determines an individual's career. Moreover, Arthur and Roussen (1996) stated that career plans or choices depend on people's perceptions of their personal characteristics.

When people have a strong sense of autonomy and independence, they are more likely to consider career options overseas. As Schein (1990) stated, people who value independence like to work at their own pace and therefore try to work at institutions or agencies that allow maximum freedom. Also, their international experience increases their own professional competencies and increases their adaptation levels to a transnational working environment. In an era of globalization, overseas experience increases participants' advantages on the job market. In a qualitative study, Suutari and Taka (2004) concluded that in a global context, internationalism is an important career anchor that provides key employment advantages.

#### *Foreign Interactions and Career Plan*

As for the relationship between foreign interaction and career plans, some literature suggested that a relationship exists in the studying abroad context. Carlson et al. (1990) argued that career development is one of the denoting reasons for students to participate in study abroad programs. In fact, experience interacting with local hosts may change students' values or attitudes and might influence career objectives or orientations (Hadis, 2005). Research also

confirms that due to their exposure to foreign cultures and programs, the program participants tend to have career orientation toward international corporations (Hannigan, 2001). Students who have studied abroad are more likely to consider opportunities in the global market. For the interrelationships among program effects, previous studies suggested a fragmented relationship between program effects. Also, the findings demonstrate a program effect model which allows me to examine whether or not one program effect will influence the others. However, additional models, more specifically theoretical program effect relationship models or proposals, are needed to validate these findings by way of empirical examination. For validating the proposed models (intercultural connection and personal progress), confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling are utilized to determine the effectiveness of the hypothetical models.

### Research Purpose

Although different research approaches have been employed to attempt to understand the effects of study abroad programs, the picture is still incomplete. The primary purpose of this study is to offer a clear and holistic picture of why students want to participate in programs and how programs affect students. Given the importance of studying the effects of study abroad on participants, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, are utilized to construct the comprehensive picture about program effects. Each of the following three chapters (from two to four) is a stand-alone study and, together, they serve as elements in the final comprehensive picture. In chapter two, the study uses a qualitative approach to explore motivations for participation in college study abroad programs. The purpose of chapter three is to examine the perceived program effects in terms of multiple predictors (gender, years in school, academic majors, program length, residency arrangement and status of local friendship). The third study

attempts to establish a model for the perceived program effects and validate the proposed model through empirical examination.

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to meet its goals, I investigate the motivations for studying abroad, study the relationship between five program effects, and propose two three-dimensional models. Based on the study's purposes, the following three research questions and six hypotheses are proposed to direct this research study:

- RQ 1. What is/are the motivation(s) for study abroad?
- RQ 2. How many reliable and interpretable components in terms of program effect are there among the variables derived from reviews of the literature and results of a pilot study?
- RQ 3. Are there significant mean differences in terms of proposed program effects for individuals who vary in terms of gender, years in school, academic majors, program duration, residency arrangement and local friendships?
- H1. Language learning is significantly and positively related to cultural immersion.
- H2. Cultural immersion is significantly and positively related to foreign interaction.
- H3. Language learning is significantly and positively related to foreign interaction.
- H4. Foreign interaction is significantly and positively related to personal growth.
- H5. Personal growth is significantly and positively related to career plan.
- H6. Foreign interaction is significantly and positively related to career plan.

### Contributions of the Research

The contribution of this study is to foster an understanding of the effects of study abroad programs. Through this study, questions about the effects of studying abroad are answered, and

study abroad programs can be more strongly positioned within the tourism development industry than before. Furthermore, the declared program outcomes can hopefully be justified by the empirical research of this study. As for the long-term goals of this study, it may demonstrate that study abroad programs are an ideal and practical alternative to traditional classroom experiences. From a management perspective, results derived from this study can be used to improve program designs. In this way, administrators can use the data to make their programs fit students' needs and magnify the positive program effects.

In addition to practical contributions, this study also has methodological implications. A future study will suggest that adopting an experimental research design can illustrate the effects produced by study abroad programs. An experimental design increases the power of the causal explanation and prevents a spurious relationship between the causal and effect variables (Schutt, 2001). The current survey research design serves a description function, but an experimental design can increase the power of the explanation and identify the causal relationship between studying abroad and potential effects. Furthermore, future research focused on foreign study abroad students in the United States, would be an interesting way to study whether international students studying in America experience the same program effects as American students studying abroad. Moreover, a comparison between American and foreign study abroad programs could also serve as one of indicators to compare the cultural differences between American people and foreign people.

## Research Design and Methods

### *Population and Sampling*

As addressed above, the three primary objectives of this study are to use the college student sample in order to determine and justify the motivation(s) for study abroad, the

relationships between program effects and participants, and the interrelationships among program effects. The target population of this study is college students from a northeastern U. S. university who finished study abroad programs in 2005. A web-based survey was utilized to both distribute the survey and to collect data from the target population.

To understand why students choose to engage in study abroad programs is the first step to explore students' program experience. In the motivation study, I employed a qualitative approach to capture students' subjective meanings of their experience. In this study, I drew on a sample of 265 participants, which satisfy the minimum requirements suggested by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006). In order to reach data saturation, they recommended a minimum of 12 informants for interviews. For the studies in chapter three (program effect examinations) and four (interrelationships among program effects), sample size needs are also satisfied with minimum requirements for statistical tests (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Specifically, the relationships between program effects as well as the interrelationship among program effects involved four types of statistical procedures: exploratory factor analysis (thereafter EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (thereafter CFA), multivariate analysis of variance (thereafter MANOVA), and structural equation modeling (thereafter SEM). Therefore, sample size considerations differ based on the different statistical methods. For factor analysis, Hair et al (2006) suggested that the preferred sample size is a 10:1 ratio of observations to each variable. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested that because the correlation coefficients among variables tend to be less reliable if the sample size is small, a sample size from 200 to 300 would be acceptable for a reliable latent construct.

However, Stevens (1992) stated that sample size does not matter if four or more factor loadings are over .60 levels in one construct. Besides, Monte Carlo studies suggested that size of

the factor loadings is more important than the sample size (G. Chick, personal communication, May 16, 2008). That is, this study also paid close attention to the size of the factor loadings based on the statistic test results later. As for MANOVA, the sample size requirement is related to group size instead of the total amount of the sample (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). Based on Hair et al's suggestions (2006, p. 408), two minimal requirements must be satisfied for MANOVA. First, the sample size in each cell should be greater than the number of dependent variables. Second, they recommended a minimum of 50 observations in each category. For SEM, Hair et al (2006) suggested that the sample size of 250 or more is acceptable. Son (2006) suggested that the ratio of sample size to each observed variable should be 15. Therefore, accounting for these sample size requirements, a sample of 250 or more is an acceptable level in this inferential study. I use as ample size of 265 in this because it will have adequate power to explain the findings from the program participant population at the northeastern university.

#### *Pilot Study*

In the fall of 2004, an open-ended pilot study and a literature review was conducted. In the open-ended pilot study, thirteen study abroad alumni answered questions about the effects of their respective programs. The results from the pilot study served as a preliminary basis from which to create and develop the questionnaire for the web-based program effect survey. The survey in the present study is based both on intensive literature reviews and the answers from the pilot study. Later, in order to increase the effectiveness of the survey a panel of experts<sup>1</sup> for its face validity evaluated the survey.

According to the preliminary findings, most of the participants believed that study abroad programs increase the students' interactions with diverse people, improve their foreign language skill level, as well as influence their academic development or personal growth. These findings

resemble those of previous literature. Also, students reported that they were motivated to study abroad by their desire to meet their leisure/recreation needs, to meet culturally diverse people, and the opportunity to enhance their learning performance. All claimed effects in the pilot study were taken into account for survey instrument development.

### *Data Collection*

With approval from the Institutional Review Board, I began to collect the data and analyze the results. Data were collected from participants of the study abroad programs at a northeastern university in the United States. The web-based survey package was distributed to the program alumni along with the institution's own survey in the summer of 2005. The participants finished the surveys and returned them via on-line survey drop-box. The results were stored in my secure database storage for analysis.

### *The Survey Instruments*

The instruments (see Appendices A & B) includes measurements of the program effects, questions related to gender, years in school, academic major, local friendships, program length, and residency arrangement. The survey package also has another two separate sheets, including the recruitment advertisement and the consent form.

This study employs a self-administrated survey for data collection. In order to develop the questionnaire for this study, a pilot study was conducted in the spring of 2004. Thirteen program alumni participated in semi-structured interviews and answered questions regarding their perceptions of the program effects which allowed me to clarify and refine items on the questionnaire. The questions for this survey were based on the answers from the northeastern university program alumni and previous study findings (Carlson, Burn, Ussem and Yachimowicz, 1990; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Coelho, 1962). After reviewing literature on

academic learning, language learning, cultural development, cultural immersion, personal development, foreign connection, and career development, and conducting the pilot study, main constructs were summarized for developing the questionnaire in the formal study. There are twenty five items regarding in the formal survey for program participants

In order to ensure the accuracy of the survey instrument, face validity of this survey is evaluated to evaluate the adequacy of survey questions (Babbie, 2001). For that, a panel of experts<sup>1</sup> examined the whole questionnaire to render the level of face validity before I published the survey. In addition, six independent variables, including gender, year in school, academic major, program duration, residency option, and local friendship, were considered in order to understand how students' different socio-demographic characteristics and personal program experiences yield their perceptions of program effects.

#### *Data Analysis*

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied to the data analysis strategies for three research questions and six hypotheses. In the qualitative analysis of motivations for studying abroad, I employed content analysis for qualitative data analysis and I used the intercoder agreement to check for the reliability of the data analysis. As for coding scheme, I employed a "top-down" approach, where the scheme mostly derived from previous literature. However, some coding categories were generated from dataset as King (2004) suggested bottom-up approach. Specifically, based on the coding scheme, I utilized content analysis to classify, categorize, and sort the text passages which were collected from the participants. Second, in order to increase coding quality, a second coder joined in the data analysis and independently evaluated the coding consistency between myself and the second coder. The second coder was a doctoral candidate in social sciences and has utilized content analysis in multiple projects

including her master's thesis. Cohen Kappa coefficients were utilized to evaluate the degree of intercoder agreement (i.e. the consistency of coding itself).

As Berelson (1952) suggested, content analysis is an effective way to analyze the data from open-ended questions. Flick (2006) and Silverman (2001) agreed that coding and categorizing are the main analyses for original data texts. Therefore, after data collection, the answers from open-ended questions were coded and categorized according to the following four steps: data reduction, data display, verification, and diagram drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction is the first step to reduce and code the original text passages into "themes" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.11). Second, the similar themes would be organized to a specific category derived from coding scheme mostly derived from previous literature. Finally, I utilize coding diagram that consist of a hierarchy structure including category, theme, and coded passages. More specifically, a category was the highest level and it is a description of a motivation for studying abroad and a theme was the second level, a thought unit, where similar meanings and coded passages are aggregated and coded together under a specific category. After I analyzed and summarized the original text, the appropriate codes were labeled and categorized into the same category. Finally, I created a structured flow chart in order to conclude and verify the relationship among codes. In order to check for the reliability of coding itself, I also recruited a second coder; a doctoral candidate majored in education with established credibility in qualitative research, to evaluate the consistency of interpretation. Most researchers (Perreault & Leigh, 1989; King, 2003) indicated that a comparison between two or more coding results developed independently by more than one coder is a common procedure for evaluating intercoder agreement. In this study, the second coder independently examined my coding system by agreement or disagreement on my coded passages.

I used the intercoder agreement statistic, Cohen's Kappa, to examine the level of consistency of the coding. The intercoder agreement (reliability) test is thought to be the best way to increase the quality of content analysis (Abedi, 1996; Berelson, 1952; Carey, Morgan, Oxtoby, 1996; Hruschka, Schwartz, St. John, Picone-Decaro, Jenkins, Carey, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Stemler, 2001). Specifically, at first, I developed a hierarchy coding system with category, theme, and coded text passages by analyzing all text passages derived from this study. Second, I instructed the second coder and worked with her on the judgments of the appropriateness of the coded schemes I developed. We examined all coded text passages and decided whether they were in the appropriate category or not. This inter-coder reliability test, Cohen's Kappa coefficient, is a ratio of numbers of agreement to total numbers of agreement and disagreement on the coded text passages. After that, a 2 by 2 contingency table was constructed to show the agreement or disagreement on the coded text as judged by two coders across all text passages.

As for the analysis of the relationship between program effects and participants' characteristics in the second study stage, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), served as a statistical procedure to locate the latent factors within a set of items (Frabrigar, Visser, & Browne, 1997). EFA is initially utilized for data reduction and generates constructs or dimensions from the data set for further comparisons. Namely, EFA serves as the first step for future statistical procedures. Later, the constructs derived from EFA become the basic analysis units for future comparisons with the independent variables via analysis of variance. For that, since they can improve the chances of discovering the actual changes by controlling Type I error from separate ANOVAs (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and take the correlation among dependent variables into account (Weinfurt, 1995), six separate MANOVAs are carried out to examine the

relationships between independent predictor groups to the combined program effect factors and determine group differences in program effects. In order to provide unbiased parameter estimates, cases with missing values were deleted in the pre-analysis screen.

Each MANOVA analysis involved three steps in this study:

- 1) The Omnibus  $F$ -test was used to judge whether or not there were different combined mean scores of program effects associated with the six predictors. Pillai's Trace statistic was used to interpret the multivariate results if the equal variance cannot be assumed in Box's tests (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). If the omnibus test failed to find a significant association, no additional test was carried out.
- 2) When significant overall  $F$ -test values were identified in each MANOVA, two post hoc statistic analyses were employed to determine the mean difference across various levels, Descriptive Discriminant Analysis (DDA) and analysis of variance (ANOVA). DDA would serve as the method to identify how the combined effect factors discriminate among the independent predictors and to indicate which dependent factors make the most contribution to significant difference on the whole model (Huberty and Olejnik, 2006). Field (2005) also stated that DDA after MANOVA would consider all dependent variables in terms of one dimension, but ANOVA would separately test the individual relationships between program effects and predictors. However, this study utilized two post hoc analyses to examine the mean differences after MANOVA. As for statistical indicators in DDA, Wilks's Lambda coefficients were used to decide whether the combinations of dependent variables (variates) significantly discriminate the predictor groups or not and Standardized Canonical Coefficients indicated how dependent variables contribute to the significant model (Fields, 2005).

3) For those significant factors (variates) in MANOVA and DDA, post hoc analysis (Scheffe) is utilized to determine where the specific differences lie at the group level (Stevens, 1992). To avoid the inflation of Type I errors (falsely rejecting a correct hypothesis) on the test results, the significant level is adjusted to .01, as Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested.

The final procedure was to construct a model for perceived program effects. For that, three statistical analysis procedures were utilized to validate models for study abroad program effects, EFA, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structure equation modeling (SEM). The LISREL 8 statistical program was utilized in CFA and SEM to examine measurement and structural model. Since there is not a prior study that is similar enough to this one to provide a theoretical basis, EFA served as the first step statistical procedure (Hair et al., 2006) to determine construct items (Wegener & Fabrigar, 2004) and decrease error variances of construct correlations (Bollen, 1989; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). After the EFA procedures, CFA and SEM were utilized to specify program effect models when there was not an existing theory to confirm the appropriateness of the hypothetical models. As Anderson and Gerbing (1988) suggested, this two-step modeling procedure was utilized. All model identifications are based on the covariance matrix and maximum likelihood estimation (ML) is used to find good fit model via a series of indexes offered by the LISREL 8 program (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). Thus, for this study, ML was used to test the six hypotheses in the following statistical analyses and to identify the best-fitting models based on the current data set. The re-specified or modified models would serve as a structural theory to explain relationships between constructs and variables as well as between constructs and constructs.

To ensure the accuracy of model specifications, various statistical measurements were utilized to secure reliability and validity, including Cronbach's alpha (Nunnally, 1978) and

construct and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2006). Additionally, as the methodology literature suggested to do, face validity was also assessed by a panel of subject matter experts<sup>1</sup> (Babbie, 2001; Wegener & Fabrigar, 2004). As for the cross-group validation in model confirmations, a split sample size in this study did not have enough power of inference and was not fully supported by methodological suggestions from Hair et al. (2006). To improve on this deficiency, all reliability and validity tests and goodness of fit indexes were used to validate the structural models.

After brief descriptions of the study's purpose, research questions, hypotheses, data collection and data analysis procedures, I examined the three objectives in this study, respectively, including motivations for studying abroad, the relationships between program effects and participants' characteristics, and the interrelationship among program effects.

#### Definitions

Study abroad program:

Participating in an academic activity for class credits or not, beyond the political or cultural borders of the host country. It is one of sub-types of educational tourism as Rodger (1998) suggested.

Program duration:

In this study, the program duration was classified into long-term, summer, and short-term programs. A long-term program was defined as at least a semester (ranging from thirteen to fifty two weeks). Summer programs were between one to three months (ranging from four weeks to twelve weeks) and short-term programs were less than a month (ranging from one to four weeks).

Academic majors:

In this study, all students' majors were categorized into one of four groups: Liberal Arts,

Business, Science, and Arts. Liberal Arts included all majors in the College of Liberal Arts and College of Communications. Business included majors in the college of business. Science referred to all majors in the College of Science, College of Agricultural Sciences, College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Health and Human Development, and College of Information Sciences and Technology. Arts included all majors in the College of Arts and Architecture.

Residency arrangement:

Indicating where the participants live during the program. It is measured by three categories according to the northeast university study abroad program brochure, including on-campus dormitory, off-campus apartment, and home stay with local family.

Motivation:

The reason for the action; that which gives purpose and direction to behavior like participation in travel. Four major motivations were identified in the previous pilot study, including leisure/recreation, learning, career, and personal growth.

Understanding:

Perceiving and comprehending the nature and significance of the people and culture in the host country.

Cultural learning:

Defined as acquaintance with different information economy systems from different area. The culture could be defined as “information economy” by Roberts (1964), in which group members acquire, store, create, retrieve, and transmit a set of information.

Personal development:

Indicated acts of improving in academic knowledge achievements and sense of reinforcing self-sense/image.

Foreign interaction:

A kind of reciprocal action that occurs when local people and tourists have an effect upon one another.

Foreign experience:

Defined as knowledge derived from observation of or involvement in overseas events of things.

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## ORIENTATION TO CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2 is a stand-alone section of my dissertation and it serves as a manuscript for a future publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The purpose of Chapter 2 is to examine the motivation(s) for studying abroad. Specifically, this chapter is guided by the first research question:

RQ 1. What is/are the motivation(s) for studying abroad?

In order to answer this question, I reviewed the current literature about motivations for traveling and studying abroad and then I conducted a web-based survey at a large northeastern university which investigated why students participated in study abroad programs. To gain an in-depth understanding of their motivations, I employed open-ended questions to capture the participants' full answers.

The results of this study will hopefully serve as the foundation of a line of research in motivations for studying abroad and also employed as part of the groundwork for future studies of motivation in the future. In this chapter, I delineated and discussed the research results.

## CHAPTER 2

### An Examination of Motivation for Studying Abroad:

#### Abstract

Studying abroad is a major emerging trend in the tourism industry. Over 200,000 U.S. college students participated in more than 1,000 study abroad programs in 2006 alone. However, very little information has been collected to understand students' motivations for studying abroad. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to identify motivations for participation in college study abroad programs and illustrated the relationship between motivation theories and practical findings. I recruited a total of 265 students for an online motivation study and I employed a qualitative inquiry to collect and analyze the students' responses. This study identified six main motivation categories for studying abroad: cultural learning, academic learning, personal development, foreign experience, pleasure and social interactions. Cultural learning and foreign experience are the most prominent reasons for student participation in this study. Personal development is one of major reasons to study abroad, but it might not be a prevailing motivation for pleasure-oriented travel. Comparing motivations for general tourism with study abroad programs, academic learning and personal development are two unique motivations for study abroad program participants. The findings were examined in terms of expectancy-valence theory as an alternative approach for interpreting the findings since the theory suggests that program effects are the main driving forces for study abroad. Also, the expectancy-valence theory has been utilized in leisure/recreation fields to gauge the relationships between the expected benefits and behavioral intentions. This study serves as a primary step to initiate a new line of study abroad research and findings may guide program planners in designing better educational travel programs.

## Introduction

Studying abroad is a new trend in the tourism market and each year more people participate. According to the Institute of International Education, over 200,000 American college students studied abroad in the 2005 academic year, an increase of 8% compared to the previous academic year. Moreover, when compared to the total number of students who studied abroad in 1994, this is an almost 140% increase (IIE, 2004 & 2005). Over the last decade, more colleges and universities have encouraged their students to increase their international experience and knowledge by studying in foreign countries. College or university officials have suggested that such experience will advance their academic development and increase their competitive edge on the job market. As a result, colleges and universities have integrated study abroad programs' into students' college educations in order foster their ability to adapt to an era of globalization (Carr 2003). Unfortunately, in an overly competitive global market, traditional classroom learning might not be sufficient. Therefore, researchers have suggested foreign study as an effective way for students to gain necessary professional development. For example, Coelho (1962) and Deutsch (1970) observed students' abroad experience and concluded that study abroad programs help students increase their level of international understanding. Similarly, Carlson and Widaman (1988), who compared students who studied abroad with those who stayed at home, suggested that studying abroad contributes to intellectual and professional development, personal growth, and international understanding.

As more colleges and institutions offer study abroad programs, relevant evaluation methods and additional research are necessary in order to design better programs. However, as Jenner and Smith (1997) suggested, little comprehensive research has been conducted to understand this segment in the education-tourism complex. Furthermore, as Ritchie (2003)

indicated, current tourism research examines study abroad programs as one of general travel forms, but such study results do not sufficiently cover the educational tourism segment. However, since there were insufficient literature on educational abroad programs and their relevance to tourism, I used tourism-related literature to support the findings in this study. From a tourism perspective, previous research has suggested that motivation for travel is a key aspect of tourism development and explains the driving forces behind travel behaviors (Fodness, 1994; Gilbert, 1991; Murphy, 1985). Therefore, in order to understand educational tourism more fully, I believed it is essential to explore the motivations for studying abroad. Therefore, this study located participants' motivations for studying abroad. I utilized qualitative inquiry because it would provide a way to examine all of the possible self-pro-claimed motivations for studying abroad. These findings might help college administrators or policy makers more fully understand the value of study abroad programs and develop the most appropriate programs. .

Motivation factors are the main way for researchers in the tourism and marketing fields to understand and classify both the types of tourists (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990) and their travel patterns (Crompton, 1979). Tourism practitioners may be able to use the insights gained from this study to segment their products, enhance service quality, develop customer loyalty and position themselves in the market. There have been multiple tourism motivation theories or schemes suggested to capture tourist's needs or motivations (Dann, 1981; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Jafari, 1989), but the variety of traveling motivations makes it difficult to measure simultaneously. Current travel motivation models seem unable to fit all contexts. As Crompton (1979) noted, it is difficult to locate an all-inclusive answer for traveling motivation (s). Study abroad programs have different features than pleasure-oriented travel, but there is not enough research on the uniqueness educational tourism (Ritchie, 2003). This study empirically

examined and explored the motivations for studying abroad and served as the fundamental first step in studying the educational tourism market. This empirical examination of the program participants strengthens the current findings on study abroad motivation.

### Previous Literature

Motivation, the force to initiate, direct and arouse human behaviors, varies not only from person to person, but in different contexts (Arkes & Garske, 1977; Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Murray, 1964; Pearce, 1982). Motivation, a human inner force that drives behaviors and motivation, is an appropriate lens through which to examine how behaviors are generated. Current motivation theories have identified a dynamic interaction between inner needs and external actions. In fact, a growing body of literature focuses specifically on the relationship between needs and traveling behaviors and explores the inner forces that initiate, direct, and arouse human's traveling behaviors. Since motivation is the basis for all travel-related behaviors, researchers have used various approaches to identify motivations for traveling (Parrinello, 1993). However, as Harrill and Potts (2002) suggested, because of the complex nature of human travel motivations, it may not be possible to create an all-inclusive travel motivation theory. Therefore, researchers have drawn on a variety of interdisciplinary travel motivation studies to explain and profile the possible motivations for travel behaviors since the 1970's (Beard and Regheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977 & 1981; Fodness, 1994; Hudman, 1980; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Krippendorf, 1987; Mansfeld, 1992; Pearce & Caltabano, 1983; Plog, 1974).

The findings in tourism motivation do not only fully account for the motivations of tourists, but do not effectively identify the unique needs and desires of students who study abroad. Most tourism studies still focus on pleasure tourism and focus on the motivation for studying abroad is minimal. This study was an attempt to describe and understand motivations

for studying abroad. Furthermore, since study abroad uniquely combines learning and traveling, this study ultimately proposed a new motivation model for studying abroad.

Motivation theories can be divided into two levels, micro and macro. As Jamal and Lee (2003) have suggested, the two-level approach is similar to the social psychological and sociological approaches in tourism motivation research. The social psychological approach explores the human micro and intrinsic driving forces of motivation while the macro sociological approach focuses on the interactive results of motivation. In order to offer researchers a comprehensive view, both micro- and macro- levels of tourism motivation theories are interrelated and embedded in the tourism motivation systems.

#### *The Micro-Level Approach: Psychological Approaches*

From the micro perspective, humanistic or social psychological theories evaluate the inner motivations for traveling and discuss the human hierarchy of needs, intrinsic motivation, and how human's attempt to compensate for the discrepancy between their needs and desires and their inability to meet their satisfactions (Crompton, 1979). Crompton and Kay (1997) defined travel motivation as "a dynamic process of internal psychological factors (need and wants) that generate a state of tension or disequilibrium" (p.427). Thus, the micro psychological approach addresses the association between internal needs and the initiation of external behaviors.

Human needs theory (Maslow, 1970) or ERG (Existence, Relatedness, and Growth) theory (Alderfer, 1972) proposed a hierarchy of needs (including relaxation, stimulation, relationships, self-esteem, and self-actualization). Moreover, it stated that humans will satisfy the lower-order needs before they attempt to meet their higher level needs. This theory serves as the original work from which social psychological approach of tourism motivation developed. For instance, Pearce and his colleagues (Pearce, 1988, Pearce, 1993; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983) utilized

Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of human needs theory as the basis for their travel career ladder. According to their theory, there are five different levels of travel motivations: relaxation, safety/security, relationship, self-esteem, and personal development. People travel in order to satisfy their lower-level needs such as relaxation and safety, followed by the higher-level needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization (Pearce, 1988, 1993). At least one of the hierarchy motivations dominates their travel decisions and their travel needs are based on their previous experience (Pearce & Lee, 2005).

However, with the exception of the travel career ladder study, little empirical evidence supports the hierarchy motivation theory. Also, the travel career ladder does not account for all motivations. Mayo and Javis (1981), for example, indicated that travel satisfies multiple needs including curiosity and exploration, which are not included in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Furthermore, Lee and Crompton (1992) employed Berlyne's (1960) concepts of novelty to explore motivations for travel and suggested that seeking novelty is a primary reason why people travel. In another relevant view on the motivations for travel, Iso-Ahola (1982) suggested tourists are also motivated by intrinsic reward seeking, and a desire to escape their routines.

In general, the micro-level or intrinsic motivation approaches focus on personal internal and unique demands which initiate and direct travel behaviors. Parrinello (1993) concluded the intrinsic travel motivation theory has been adopted to explain human travel behaviors. However, since touring behavior is a function of social and cultural factors, for a better understanding of human travel motivation, social parameters should be included (Jamal & Lee, 2005). The sociological approach suggests that travel is a social motivation that arises out of the reciprocal relationship between human behaviors and societal trends. Such alternative inquiries of travel

motivation should simultaneously take individual psychological disposition and social context into consideration.

### *The Macro-Level Approach: Sociological Approaches*

To create a more in-depth understanding of human travel motivations, researchers use a macro-level sociological approach to examine human travel motivations. Since the psychological motivations for travel, do not entirely explain human travel behaviors, the macro sociological approach attempts to offer an in-depth understanding of human travel behaviors by combining the micro psychological approach with social environmental factors. The following section discussed macro-level approach to tourism motivations.

#### *Push-Pull Model*

At first, Dann (1977) utilized a non-social psychological view of travel motivation and proposed the most popular travel motivation theory, the push and pull model, based on the anomie and ego-enhancement travel motive concepts from his Barbados study. Dann (1977) suggested the motivations for travel are based on the need for escape and social recognition. He developed the push-pull model to identify motivations to explain a desire to travel in his empirical study in Barbados and stated how people want to leave their home environment (push) and travel to the destination with specific features (pull). “Anomie” (social isolation) and “ego-enhancement” (social interaction and recognition) are the main factors for “push” force in this travel motivation model. Specifically, Dann suggested that people like to travel in order to escape an isolated environment and to interact with new people. The push and pull theory has been substantiated in numerous empirical studies further refined in theoretical studies in tourism motivation studies since Dann’s original 1977 study. Crompton (1979), for example, identified nine push and two pull factors for traveling, included seven push and two pull factors for general

pleasure tourism including escape from routine, exploration of self, relaxation, prestige, regression (some improbable behaviors), enhancement of kinship, social interactions, novelty and education. Krippendorff (1986) built on these earlier findings by arguing that tourism offers people a non-violent pressure release valve and therefore is crucial for keeping good order in society. More recently there have been multiple empirical studies that have supported Dann's theory of push and pull motives (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996; Hanqin and Lam, 1999; Kim and Lee, 2002; Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). Furthermore, Bogari, Crowther, and Marr (2004) also comparatively examined tourists from the Middle East through the push and pull model and claimed its validity in identifying travel motivations.

*An Alternative Approach in the Leisure/Recreation Context: Expectancy-Valence Theory*

The micro- and macro-levels motivation theories neither attempt to identify the decisive orientations behind human travel behaviors, but it severely minimizes the significance of social and cultural factors. However, expectancy-valence theory which has received considerable attention in outdoor recreation research, attempts to fill this gap. As Driver and his colleagues suggested (Driver & Knopf, 1977, Driver & Tocher, 1970, Manfreda, Driver, & Tarrant 1996), expectancy theory provides a different perspective for travel motivation. More specifically, Krippendorff analyzed the various tourism motivation theories and concluded that most tourists' motivations are explained by researchers in terms of self-oriented motivations (as cited in Witt & Wright, 1992). Krippendorff critiques this emphasis and notes that even though people are motivated for travel mostly due to their own perceptions and determination, social motivations are still important. To more fully understand how people generate their lists of reasons for travel; expectancy theory facilitates another point of view. Originally, expectancy theory, which was created by Vroom (1964), was used to explain organizational behaviors in the management field.

Vroom indicated that there are three components (expectancy, instrumentality, and valence) in expectancy theory and explained that people are motivated to make efforts towards their goals if they believe it will result in good performance (expectancy) and this good performance will lead to desired outcomes (instrumentality). Moreover, people will assign values to their preferred outcomes (valence). People engage in specific behaviors based on the values of the expected outcomes, their belief in the capabilities of the desired performance, and perceived probability of expected outcomes. That is, the expectancy-valence theory is one of micro-approaches for tourism motivation theories.

As for its application in leisure and recreation fields, Witt and Wright (1992) did an introductory study about the application of expectancy theory could in the tourism context. This theory offers a sophisticated framework for the analysis of tourism motivation. More specifically, Manfreda et al. (1996) built on the earlier work of Driver and his colleagues and utilized a meta-analysis of 36 studies on individuals' recreation experiences and developed a Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale with 108 items to investigate all potential motivations for the recreation activity; they suggested that 19 motivation domains occur repeatedly. The development of the REP scale supported the application of expectancy theory to recreation-related activities.

Recently, the expectancy-valence model has been utilized in outdoor recreation fields to understand visitors' motivations for specific activities. Kyle, Absher, Hammitt, and Cavin (2006) conducted research to observe the relationships between motivation and enduring involvement by sampling campers across three different camp sites in a southeastern national forest area. They hypothesized a connection between motivation and the involvement in specific leisure activities in order for justifying an expectancy-valence model (Lawler, 1973). The study

postulated that participants were motivated to participate in these activities on account of their awareness of the benefits associated with these specific activities. Flood (2002) also employed the expectancy-valence model as theoretical foundation to measure how campers' wilderness perceptions influence campsite management in northeastern Montana. Specifically, he suggested that personal levels of motivation and expectations derived from previous experience, influence visitors' present wilderness experience, which is instructive for officials to form appropriate management strategies in a wilderness setting.

Expectancy theory might offer an additional explanation to explore tourism motivations other than the micro and macro-level motivation theories as it covers most personal behavior initiation process and decisions on specific activities. Tourism researchers would use this theory as an alternative way to interpret the reasons behind pursuing specific recreation activities in the modern era. This study will combine the survey findings of this study with the current travel motivation theories to establish a motivation model for studying abroad.

## Methods

### *Profile of Participants*

In 2005, there were about 1000 American college students from a wide variety of majors who participated in education abroad programs at a northeastern university. A total of 265 college students responded to the call for study participants posted on a web-based study abroad forum hosted by Study Abroad Office, and were voluntarily recruited as the survey participants. Table 1 profiled the characteristics of participants. Based on the participants' profile analysis, most participants were female undergraduate students (71 %) and less than two percent of participants were graduate students. Most of the participants were college juniors and had majors in fields in the liberal arts or business. Some students indicated that their study abroad experience

was their first time to study abroad and travel on their own to foreign countries. The study abroad programs the students participated in varied in length from a few weeks to one or several semesters. The most popular programs were Europe-based summer programs, which are the same as reports from university Study Abroad Office.

Table 1  
Characteristic of Participants in the Study Abroad Motivation Study

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender, N=265		
Male	78	29.4
Female	187	70.6
Years in School, N=264		
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3	1.1
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	39	14.8
4 <sup>th</sup> year	175	66.3
5 <sup>th</sup> year	47	17.8
College, N=263		
Arts	28	10.6
Business	68	25.9
Liberal Arts	108	41.1
Science	59	22.4

### *The Survey*

To collect participants' motivations for study abroad, this study employed an internet-based qualitative inquiry. Because I intended to explore and document the complexity of motivations for studying abroad, a qualitative inquiry was adopted. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) have suggested, the qualitative method takes the contextual conditions and subjects' diversity into account and discovers principles grounded in empirical evidence. The qualitative approach is able to capture participants' subjective understanding and interpret their personal claimed motivations for studying abroad. Also, this study attempted to gather preliminary

descriptive information about students' motivations for studying abroad. Based on the study characteristics, a qualitative approach was the best inquiry for this motivation study.

The online survey technique was adopted to collect participants' responses from survey questions in this study. Generally, online surveys have been designed almost exclusively for quantitative inquiries (Hewson, 2003), but more recently on-line qualitative methods have been developed, and now includes e-mail interviews, online focus groups, online observations, and virtual ethnographies (Hine, 2000). Moreover, as Mann and Stewart (2000) suggested, the use of internet-based surveys has been an increasing trend in qualitative research. Web-based data collection has become an increasingly popular tool for qualitative research due to the fact that it allows participants and researchers to have unlimited access to questionnaires, costs relatively little, and effectively maintains and protects anonymity (Flick, 2006). In this study, Lime Survey (formerly PHPSurveyor) software was used to publish the survey and retrieve participants' responses. This software also assisted me in compiling and saving all data in the storage system for future analysis.

### *Procedures*

A web-based study abroad program survey hosted by the Lime Survey program was utilized as the tool to collect the data from participants with its advantages in free service and autonomous database system. This internet-based survey was set up for program alumni to record their opinions regarding their program experience.

The recruiting emails were sent to the 2005 program alumni to explain the study's purpose, procedures for taking the survey, and their rights. Two hundred and sixty five students responded to the recruiting call and the consent forms were sent to the participants. The response rate was about 27 percent of all program participants. To maintain confidentiality, all

respondents' identities were replaced by virtual numbers, five digits randomly assigned by the computer system. The virtual numbers ensured there was no connection between respondents' true identity and their survey answers; the virtual numbers protected their privacy and met the IRB human subject requirements for confidentiality. The survey consisted of four questions. The survey asked participants to provide their personal information (gender, years in school, academic major and previous study abroad experience) and to describe their motivation for studying abroad: "Please list the reasons and explain why you participate in the 2005 college study abroad program" (see Appendix A). Most students answered this question with one to three sentences. Twenty three students described their motivations for studying abroad in more than one paragraph.

The personal information helped to construct the profile of the participants. As it turns out, the student population is quite homogenous. After taking the online survey, the Lime Survey program automatically generated the participants' responses to confirm their responses for data accuracy. I retrieved the answers for the data analysis through the storage system within the Lime Survey program.

### *Data Analysis*

#### *Content Analysis*

As Flick (2006) and Silverman (2001) suggested, coding and categorizing are the main forms of data analyses for text. In this study, I utilized content analysis to identify the possible motivations for studying abroad. For the data analysis of this study, I employed qualitative content analysis as a subjective interpretation of the text data derived from the open-ended survey through the coding process of identifying themes. Content analysis has been conceptualized as an effective instrument to sort large amounts of text from human

communication into fewer categories through unobtrusive coding procedures (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; Stemler, 2001; Weber, 1990). Content analysis has served as an effective qualitative research tool to analyze textual data obtained from opened-ended survey questions, interviews, observation manuscripts, and printed media including newspapers, books, and manuals (Berelson, 1952; Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). Counting the words or calculating phrase frequency is not the only function of content analysis; it also has the capacity to examine the meaning of the contents and classify them into explicit categories with similar meanings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Weber, 1990). Therefore, content analysis serves as the basis of multi-method research and the first step for empirical examinations of data characteristics (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). Since being objective is one of the features to detect patterns of responses, authors from disciplines such as communications (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002) and consumer behaviors (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991), suggested that content analysis is an effective research method. In this study, content analysis was utilized to identify structures underlying participants' responses and also served as a method to formulate the conceptual frameworks of motivations for studying abroad. I concluded that content analysis was an appropriate research method to objectively and systematically evaluate the content of qualitative data (Berelson, 1952; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991).

As for the coding scheme in this study, I utilized the “top down” approach (King, 2004) by constructing a hierarchical system to analyze all text passages and categorize them into three levels: category, theme, and coded text. The hierarchy coding scheme, mostly derived from previous studying abroad literature, would have acceptable reliability and validity and developing a new coding scheme might not be a necessary step King (2004) suggested. Specifically, all motivation categories were derived from the literature and sources of categories

listed in Table 2. Also, to have an inclusive scheme, I also employed “bottom-up” approach to explore possibility of any new category generated from dataset. That is, intensive reviews of the literature and empirical examinations on the passages derived from this survey were the two main resources to construct the code scheme in this study. In this study, some motivation categories (such as cultural learning, academic learning, and foreign interaction/understanding) had already emerged before the coding process but the empirically coded texts or themes led to categories in this study which were not developed in previous studies.

Table 2  
Coding Categories and Sources in the Motivation Scheme

Coding Categories	Sources
Cultural Learning	Helber (1998) Kalinowski & Weiler (1992) Manfredo et al. (1995) Van Hoof & Verbeeten (2005)
Academic Learning	Carlson et al. (1990) Oppen et al. (1990)
Foreign Experience	Dann (1977) Crompton (1979) Josiam et al. (1994) Schroth & McCormack (2000)
Personal Development	Carlson & Widaman (1988) Gmelch (1997) Hansel (1988) Stitsworth (1988)
Pleasure	Carr (2000) Sirakaya & McLellan (1997)
Social Interaction	Carlson et al. (1990) Van Hoof & Verbeeten (2005) Bodger (1998)

In the coding system hierarchy, the highest level in my coding system is the category, followed by theme and coded text. A category served as a description of a motivation for studying abroad and consists of at least one theme with several coded texts in this study.

### *Intercoder Reliability*

Since content analysis is an objective-oriented qualitative data analysis method, intercoder agreement or reliability evaluation is a key issue and is also the main research focus in many disciplines across natural and social sciences including education, medicine, and psychology (Abedi, 1996). Establishing sufficient intercoder reliability has been recognized as one of the important issues in text-based analysis (Gorden, 1992; Hruschka, Schwartz, St. John, Picone-Decaro, Jenkins, & Carey. 2004; MacQueen, McLelland, & Milstein, 1998; Perreault & Leigh, 1989; Tinsley & Weiss, 1975, Tinsley & Weiss, 2000). Neuendorf (2002) even suggested, “Without the establishment of reliability, content analysis measures are useless” (p.141). Lombard et al. (2002) stated that intercoder reliability is the most important issue for content analysis since the research results might be doubted without a multi-coding process. Namely, a single coder might intuitively categorize a text message into themes and utilize his or her own idiosyncratic methods to interpret the data set. It is hard to substantiate the consistency of coding judgments for a single coding process. To increase the quality of the final coded data, more than one coder who independently works on the same data set would reduce measurement errors made by one coder and raise the levels of measurement consistency in identification of themes in codes derived from text messages. Perreault and Leigh (1989) recognized the significance of intercoder reliability in increasing the quality of qualitative data analysis and how intercoder reliability contributes to the improvements in consistency of coding schemes. High levels of consistency in the coding results are achieved from intercoder reliability by comparing two or more coding structures in the same data set. Furthermore, facilitating intercoder reliability on a qualitative data set would not only examine the measurement (i.e. coding of data) accuracy, but

also is one of the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for a criterion for validity in the study results (Lombard et al., 2002).

In this study, the inter-rater agreement or consistency was evaluated by “the extent to which the different judges tend to assign exactly the same rating to the object” (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000, p.98). To substantiate the degree of inter-rater consistency, the Cohen Kappa (Cohen, 1960) coefficient is recommended as the most effective evaluation tool (Dewey, 1983; Perreault & Leigh, 1989). The Cohen kappa coefficient (K) formula is listed below:

$$K = \frac{P(A) - P(E)}{1 - P(E)}$$

where  $P(A)$  is the proportion of cases in which agreement exists between two and  $P(E)$  is the proportion of cases in which raters would agree by chance. The value of  $P(E)$  can be obtained from the following calculations:

$$P(E) = \frac{(\text{Total number of agreement cases from coder 1}) * (\text{Total number of agreement cases from coder 2})}{\text{Total number of coded passages} + (\text{Total number of disagreement cases from coder 1}) * (\text{Total number of disagreement cases from coder 2}) / \text{Total number of coded passages}}$$

K is interpreted as the agreement scale between two coders and ranges from 0 (no agreement) to 1 (perfect agreement). The coding results are organized into a two by two contingency table first and the coefficient of Cohen Kappa will be calculated later.

#### *Data Analysis Process*

To obtain unbiased and objective results, I employed a two-phase qualitative content analysis. This involves data coding and intercoder agreement evaluation. In the first phase, I applied a three-step procedure to identify possible motivation categories and their themes (Charmaz, 2002). The first step is that I, the primary coder, reviewed the whole data set and

made the initial coding of the text passages based on the coding scheme. More specifically, I labeled all text messages with a word or phrase to represent the original passage, which served as the most basic step for code system construction in this study. The second step was for me to identify mutually exclusive categories appearing in text passages as Gorden (1992) suggested. For that, categories and themes were formed based on the reviewed literature and the students' responses to the preliminary motivation questions. I compiled a list of codes corresponding to themes observed in the dataset. This list served not only as a guide to code text data for the primary coder, but I also utilized it as the training materials for the second coder in the second phase. Next, in the third step, I utilized the categories and themes to classify, categorize, and sort the collected data set from the on-line survey. I coded a total of 570 text passages into the six main motivation categories and eleven themes that emerged after the coding process in the first phrase.

In the second stage, to reach relatively objective research results and reduce the subjective biases, I utilized the second coder agreement method to examine the categorization agreements between two coders. The Cohen Kappa formula was utilized to evaluate the intercoder agreement (reliability) later. A doctoral candidate with experience in qualitative studies was recruited as a second coder in this study. The second coder was trained by intensive reviews on the existing coding scheme and small-scale coding practice. Later, the second coder examined whether the coding itself is consistent within coding schemes across the 570 text passages or not. After she completed her training, the second coder worked with me to independently evaluate the appropriateness of categorizations for all coded passages. As for the intercoder agreement procedure, most qualitative researchers suggested (Hughes & Garrett, 1990; Sasone, Morf, & Panter, 2004) that intercoder agreement procedure includes comparisons of two

coding results derived from two coders. Namely, the second coder should independently make judgments on the coded passages and the results from the second coder should compare with the first coder's later. It is an accepted procedure for intercoder agreement in qualitative research. That is, the intercoder agreement statistic addressed the evaluation of the consistency of interpretation in this study.

The two coders made judgments across 570 text passages to see whether they were coded into predetermined categories or not. Table 3 demonstrated the comparisons of agreement and disagreement on each coded text passages between the myself and the second coder regarding 570 text passages.

Table 3  
Distribution of Agreements and Disagreements on Coded Texts between Primary Coder and Secondary Coder

Primary Coder	Second Coder		Total
	Agree	Disagree	
Agree	491	46	537
Disagree	18	15	33
Total	509	61	570

This contingency table indicates 491 coded texts are placed into the same categories. The two disagreements cells, 46 and 18, showed the number of times a coded text is categorized into different categories by the primary coder, but not by the secondary or vice versa. Specifically, I agreed these 46 coded passages should be in specific categories, but the second coder did not agree with these categorizations. Also, there are disagreements on 18 coded passages where the secondary coder agrees on the original coding decisions, but I overruled or changed my own coding decisions. Finally, both primary and secondary coders agreed that 15 coded passages should be recoded into different categories. In this table, it also shows that I made 5 percent (33 out of 570) of the coding discrepancies after I re-examined my own coding schemes in the

second stage. The calculation of Kappa (assisted by the online program on Vassar College website (<http://faculty.vassar.edu/lowry/kappa.html>) equals .85 in this study. This is an acceptably high inter-coder consistency as Krippendorff (1980) and Neuendorf (2002) suggested that .8 represents good reliability. Thus, intercoder agreement (reliability) is at an acceptable level and suggests that consistently coded results derive from this data analysis. As discussed above, it should be noted that the high level of the Cohen Kappa coefficient only refers to the consistency in coding itself instead of coding schemes in this study.

### Results

The findings that follow represent the motivations for participating in a study abroad program. Six main motivation categories are identified in this study (the themes are listed in parenthesis) including cultural learning (learning about different cultures, cultural learning about self, academic learning (classes abroad; chance to learn; language learning), foreign experience (escape from routine; live abroad), personal development (being independent; career consideration), pleasure, and social interactions (see Figure 1). Specifically, learning about different cultures, language learning, escape from routine, being independent, pleasure, and social interactions were derived from literature. Cultural learning about self, class abroad, chance to learn, live abroad and career considerations emerged from the data analysis.

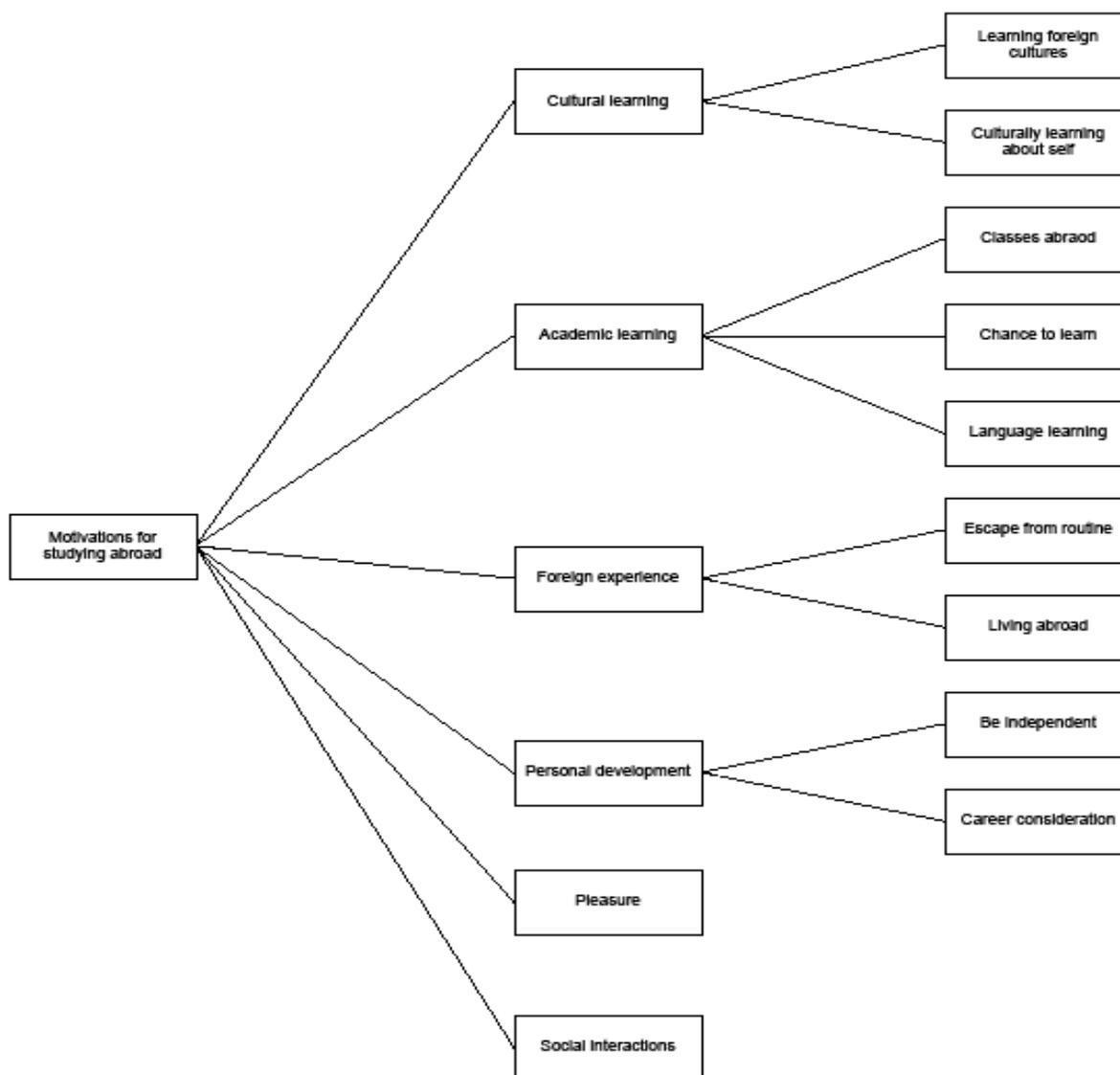
#### *Cultural learning*

Over 60% (159/265) of participants stated that they wanted to travel abroad because they wanted to experience different cultures. The study abroad program makes it easy to encounter world cultures on a daily basis and as one respondent noted it provides a “*great opportunity to experience a new culture.*” An authentic foreign cultural environment has appeal for students because it allows them to go abroad to learn more about different world cultures. After coding,

two themes were summarized in the cultural learning category, including learning about different cultures and learning about oneself. Within the learning different cultures theme, participants' responses also present different degrees of desire to learn about different cultures.

Figure 1

Six Main Motivation Categories and Nine Themes from Content Analysis



### *Learning about Different Cultures*

The most common theme in the cultural learning category was to learn from different cultures. About 68 percent of total respondents suggested it was the main motivation for studying

abroad. They suggested, “[I] learn about a new culture by fully integrating myself with locals”; “I have always wanted to study abroad because the best way to learn about another culture is to actually live there,” and “[I] do it for the cultural diversity that I would encounter” Participants thought the different cultural environment would help them understand and learn other cultures as they indicated that “I wanted to explore a different culture and see what there is outside of the United States”; “[I] wanted to learn [about] another cultures outside of my comfort zone,” “I participated in the 2006 program to get a better understanding of a culture I was interested in,” and “I wanted to learn about another culture first hand.” As one participant stated, “Because I have lived in the same town my whole life I felt like it was time to go somewhere new.” Cultural learning became a leading motivation for joining in educational abroad program as many of the participants had similar statements, “I wanted to experience different cultures to see if people were really different than Americans.” Participants felt that they could learn different ways of life and see something different in foreign countries.

At the same time, students wanted to be aware of the differences in cultural background when they were in contact with people from distinctive cultures. They stated that that “gaining cultural awareness is my main purpose for the study abroad program” and “I was looking for an opportunity to spend time Germany to improve my cultural awareness.” One participant even stated that “I wanted to gain an appreciation and understanding of a culture very different from mine.” Furthermore, participants also showed their passion for indulging in a new culture and said that “I was dying to experience other culture and truly immerse myself in a new land” and “I also wanted to immerse myself in a different culture for an extended period of time.” Cultural immersion motivation could be explained as an antecedent for understanding different cultures, “I wanted to immerse myself in another culture and get to know it very well.”

Some participants, who were minorities or who came from immigrant families, had other concerns in their cultural learning motivations. Some participants reported they are motivated to learn more about their home cultures and reported: *“I desired to learn the culture of my family and relatives,”* and *“I am in Chile right now, where my dad was born. Because of that, I felt the need to come here to discover things about where I came from.”* They were motivated to learn about their original cultures and the program served as a “root-finding” journey, as some participants mentioned *“I have Italian ancestry, which is part of [the]reason why I chose Italian study abroad program,”* and *“I wanted to go to Ireland to study my family’s roots and the history a[nd] politics of the country.”*

#### *Culturally Learning about Self*

Students were also motivated to travel abroad in order to experience how other people view them. Students thought they could learn about their own cultures if they understood better how local residents view Americans. Only about 3 percent of students (8/265) were eager to understand how people around the world saw Americans. They stated *“[I] like to learn more about myself and my own culture”* and *“getting different perspectives on the United States.”* The other participants suggested that they joined the program because *“I wanted to see how America and Americans are viewed by those who live in other countries,”* and *“I wanted to learn about how other nations view my culture.* At the same time, participants hoped the program would teach them about the world. For example, one respondent reported: *“I wanted to gain a view of the world outside of my education bubble”* and *“I wanted an opportunity to experience life outside the United States on an everyday basis and for an extended period of time.”*

Two different themes in the cultural learning category might explain students’ perceptions of cultural learning motivations and how those motivations inspired their acquisition

of foreign cultural knowledge and firsthand experience with people with different ethnic backgrounds.

### *Academic Learning*

One of the primary motivation categories for studying abroad was academic learning. The majority of participants placed it as the very first motivation for studying abroad. Three themes emerged from the academic learning category, including the fact that studying abroad offered a chance to learn, provided opportunities to take classes abroad, and facilitated learning a second language. They are presented as following:

#### *Chance to Learn*

About 6 percent of students (16/265) said that their main purpose in studying abroad was to increase their worldly and academic knowledge. At the most general level, many students noted how studying abroad simply helped them broaden their level of knowledge about the world. These students commented that they hoped to: “*expand my knowledge of different views around the world*” or “*to know more information about different subjects.*” However, other students identified increasing or supplementing education they had received in the classroom. For example, one student voiced the belief that “*learning not only occur[s] in the classroom, but everywhere.*” Another student related the decision to study abroad to a desire to increase the knowledge they received in the classroom by writing, “*As a classical archeology major, I found it very useful to see and experience what I was studying outside of the classroom.*” This response reflected the students’ desire to obtain practical experience and to actively participate in first hand learning.

### *Classes Abroad*

About 67 percent of students (178/265) were motivated to engage themselves in a study abroad group because they thought the class abroad would have extra benefits or features that the traditional classroom could not offer. As one participant reported, she hoped “*to enrich my in-classroom education at my university with real world experience.*” In addition, many abroad classes appealed to students because they are perceived as easy in three ways. Students often seemed to perceive study abroad courses as being less academically challenging, easy to enroll into, and less expensive than classes at their home university. However, other respondents studied abroad not because the program was easy, but because it was challenging. One student, for example, was motivated to study abroad because he found a host country with an “*excellent academic program.*” The abroad program became another option among their college programs.

Some participants also stated that abroad classes were required by their university program. Studying abroad was often a requirement for participants who major or minor in fields within liberal arts, business, or architecture. Some business hubs and art palaces such as Singapore and Rome became classrooms for students from all over the world. One student indicated “*Our program forces us to spend our 4<sup>th</sup> spring semester in Rome because of my architecture major.*” “*It is required to study abroad for an International Business minor.*” One student indicated that he was motivated by chances to integrate his interests and foreign learning opportunity, “*I have been studying Japanese since the age of ten or so, and between basic interest and academic requirements, I opted for a study abroad program.*” This study shows most students were motivated to participate in study abroad programs because they were part of academic program requirements; “*The study abroad semester is an integral part of the bachelor degree, therefore architecture students are expected to go abroad to Rome.*”

### *Language Learning*

Close to 23 percent of respondents (61/265) stated that foreign language learning was their main reason for participating in the study abroad program. They believed that the programs provided an authentic learning environment that was not available in their hometown.

Participants indicated that they “*wanted to learn a new language*” or “*gain language skills*”. In this study, based on the cross-reference between participants’ majors and motivations, the majors in fields within liberal arts and business showed a higher interest in foreign language learning than students with other majors (71 percent vs. 29 percent). More specifically, these participants saw studying abroad as the perfect way to advance their listening and speaking. They were motivated to join the program because they wanted to “*perfect language skills*”, “*completely be immersed in French language*”, “*become fluent in Spanish*”, and “*to practice speaking Spanish*”. They also had statements such as “*I am a German major, and I was looking for an opportunity to spend time in Germany to improve my language skills*”, and “*I wanted to go abroad to better my understanding of the Spanish language*”. They wanted to learn or become more advanced in a foreign language, so they were motivated to improve their skills through participating in a study abroad program.

Based on the participants’ motivation statements, four learning-related themes, including the chance to learn, take classes abroad, complete required credits, and advance language learning made up the academic learning motivation category. Academic learning ranked as one of the primary motivations for studying abroad and participants also suggested that this motivation distinguishes studying abroad from other pleasure-oriented travel.

### *Foreign Experience*

Foreign connection/experience was also one of the motivation categories other than learning for studying abroad. For example, one participant said, *“I wanted to be able to say I lived in Europe for several months.”* They believed that studying abroad allowed them to fulfill their dreams of connecting in a deep and meaningful way with local residents. The most common statement is *“I want to see a new place and have experience living in a foreign country.”* Participants concluded that they enjoyed interacting with people in a foreign country and some of them also showed some degree of emotional attachment to the local communities after the program. Some of them showed strong intentions to *“come back and live here after [I] graduate.”* This kind of psychological attachment is not very common in tourism since tourists often have constraints in terms of distance they are able to travel and personal financial ability to pay for their trip. However, in this study, such motivations were only very prominent for those who had previous traveling abroad experience after cross-referencing their personal information. Foreign exotic experience may motivate their desire to study abroad, which is identical for most travel motivation, escaping from routine environment (Krippendorf, as cited in Witt & Wright, 1992). After analysis, two themes, escaping from routine and living abroad, comprised the foreign connection/experience category.

#### *Escape from Routine*

A common theme in the foreign connection/experience category for students was the desire to escape their normal routine; where about 42 percent of total participants (111/265) reported escape was their main reason for studying abroad. Most of them simply wanted to change their current living environment. *“I wanted a change in environment and a break from intense studying associated with the sciences. I wanted to take a break from my university”*.

Additionally, the foreign university offered participants a chance to try different programs.

Participants said “[I] desired to get out of my university” and “I wanted to get away from the routine at my university. A structured study abroad program is an opportunity I would probably only have in college and I could not pass up the opportunity!” One student even indicated that a long program, such as semester abroad program, would help them escape from their routine life, such as “I wanted to get out of my university for a semester and experience something totally different. I needed to get away for a bit” and “I wanted to join a semester program to totally change of scenery and pace of college life.”

#### *Live Abroad*

Twenty percent of students (53/265) stated that they were motivated to join the study abroad program because of the opportunity to live abroad. The living abroad theme became part of foreign experience motivation category and this desire identified an emotional connection to the place they visited. “I never lived in a foreign country before and recognized this as a great opportunity to do so” and “I wanted to experience life outside of the United States for an extended period of time.” They also thought it might be a rare chance to live abroad for a longer period of time. The short-term travel program could not satisfy their motivations to have a long stay in foreign countries, “I always wanted to study abroad because it could be the only opportunity I had in my life to live in another country and not just be a tourist for two weeks”, “I really wanted to visit and live in another country, and this was the best and most convenient time in my life to do so.”

Some participants stated that they wanted to travel or study in a specific place because they wanted to return to an area they had previously visited. One student expressed his emotional attachment and connection to a place he had previously visited: “I had studied abroad last year

*in the same place, Italy, and I wanted to come back again.” and “I loved Spain and visited there before. Studying abroad program gave me a chance to return to Spain for a longer period of time”.* Students felt an emotional attachment to their places of study because the place had significant meaning to them and they were drawn to the particular spatial setting.

### *Personal Development*

One of the unique substantial motivation categories found in the data analysis of this study was personal development/growth. In this study, thirty seven percent of participants (98/265) agreed that a study abroad program gave them invaluable experience living independently and outside of their “environmental bubble”. As they reported *“I wanted to be mature as well as gain independence, true independence. It is a life changing experience”* and *“I wanted to step outside my comfort zone and gain a sense of independence.”* In addition, as cited in their responses, they wanted to join programs because they hoped it would help them to develop their career plans. During their program, they could establish connections as well as have the chance to evaluate their working environment. Two themes were categorized into this subcategory, being independent and career considerations.

### *Being Independent*

The study abroad program provided students with a chance to live independently in a new environment. As one participant reported, *“[I chose to study abroad in order to] develop my independence from my family and friends, [and] to live on my own for the first time.”*

Students lived by themselves on campus or might have the chance to live with foreigners outside of the United States. Thirty four percent of respondents in this study suggested that being independent is the reason for studying abroad. For example, they said, *“I wanted to discover for myself how independent I could be”* and *“I wanted to be more independent than ever, to have the*

*opportunity to live in a foreign country for almost six months, on my own, and be able to adapt to living in a large city.*” The opportunity to step outside of their environmental bubble granted them a chance to be more independent than before. Additionally, the notion of a challenge appealed to participants and they felt rewarded by a chance to challenge themselves to live elsewhere. Such benefits also became a main motivation for studying abroad. Based on their answers, typical responses included the motivation to *“Challenge myself by living somewhere foreign”* and *“Independence, the challenge of moving as far from home as possible.”*

Participants believed that the program would help them grow up and they would enjoy the challenge of living on their own.

#### *Career Considerations*

Career development was one of the specific themes in the personal growth category in the studying abroad context. Only a small proportion of students (about 3 percent, 8/265) believed that working outside of America enhances their career development, especially if they hoped to find work overseas after they finished their degree, *“I wanted to work overseas after graduation.”* Most general tourist would not use travel as one of tools for personal career development. They stated *“I have international business minor and I chose a program in Italy because I might have chance to work in Milan, the business capital of Italy”* and *“For my future career, studying abroad might help me have a good chance at an internship opportunity. It also looks good on a resume.”* Building a good resume was often a part of a career-related motivation. They said *“I participated in the study abroad program to broaden my resume”* and *“To improve my resume with EU working experience.”* Participants also emphasized that building interpersonal connections was important to them. As one student stated, *“[I want to] build connection[s] with others for future working opportunities.”*

### *Pleasure*

About 3 percent of participants (8/265) indicated that having fun or pleasure is one of reasons for studying abroad, even though it is a small proportion in all motivation categories. They said, *“I wanted to get away from my place for the winter! I also thought it would be a good way to learn Spanish and have a really fun semester”*, *“I wanted to have fun”*, *“It has lots of party there”*, and *“I wanted to have fun by taking a break from my university.”* From the students’ perspectives, participating in a study abroad program can be like a spring break holiday. Therefore, the pursuit of pleasure was also one of motivations to study abroad for students.

### *Social Interactions*

Meeting new people was one of the motivations disclosed in participants’ statements. Fourteen percent of total respondents (37/265) indicated that social interactions with their companions or local residents were one of the motivations for study abroad. They wrote, *“I wanted to make new friends”*, and *“[I like to] meet new people outside United States.”* They anticipated that they will meet people from all over the world. Participants stated that *“I wanted to meet new people of different cultures and meet new people with different viewpoints”*, and *“I always thought it would be fun to get to know people from another country.”* They indicated the social motivations, including making friends or meeting people from all over the world, was one of the important reasons for studying abroad.

### Discussion

Based on the summaries of the motivation statements, six motivations were identified: 1) cultural learning, 2) academic learning, 3) foreign experience, 4) personal development, 5) pleasure, and 6) social interaction. The students ranked cultural learning (77%) and foreign

experience (62%) as the most prominent motivations for studying abroad, followed by academic learning (48%), personal development (37%), social interactions (14%) and pleasure (3%).

Comparing the findings with the motivations for general tourism suggested that they were both similar to and different from the pleasure travel motivations in tourism literature.

#### *Similarities in Motivations between Study Abroad Programs and General Tourism*

As for the similar part, most study abroad program participants believed travel was a way to promote learning about cultural differences and they were motivated to engage a trip to advance their knowledge, which suggested the nexus between tourism and learning are enduring. However, motivation for learning was both evident for this study and for tourism motivation theories. Other studying abroad motivations, such as pleasure and foreign experience, were also significant as previous literature suggests.

#### *Motivation for Learning*

From the current tourism motivation perspective, and as Kalinowski and Weiler (1992) suggested, learning has often been part of the motivation for traveling and modern people, who are often rushed, seem to enjoy learning in their leisure time. Furthermore, Cross (1981) contended that the push factor is similar to the learning motivation because education has been perceived as an escape from routine. Helber (1988) and Read (1980) suggested that education has gradually become an important part of tourists' experience. Gray (1970) suggested that "wanderlust" makes people leave for a new environment. Fodness (1994) also supported the idea that the motivation for traveling is to gain knowledge through traveling. Iso-Ahola (1982) proposed that learning through travel is a reward that satisfies intrinsic motivation. Manfredo et al. (1995) did a meta-analysis of the current leisure motivation studies and stated that the learning motivation domain is one of motivations for recreational activities. The literature

(Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977) supports the idea that the learning motivation is present even in general pleasure travel but is a more prominent motive in “education priority” tourism.

As participants indicated in this study, learning-related motivations were prominent for participating in study abroad program. Many participants indicated that chances to learn, take classes abroad, complete required credits, and learn a language motivated them to study abroad. Perhaps most important, as Carlson et al. (1990) found, the foreign learning environment offers chances to learn that are not available at home. Moreover, as Wojtas (as cited in Ritchie, 2003) suggested, studying abroad helps students to bridge the gap between theory and reality and motivates them to fully engage in the learning process. The motivation of a chance to learn is also supported by Schild’s (1962) findings that learning helps participants adjust themselves to the local society. In addition to the adjustment function, most participants stated that they joined a program because it helps them meet some curriculum requirements.

As for cultural learning motivation, it was the most prominent motivation for studying abroad. Students were motivated to see, experience, and immerse themselves in local cultures abroad. This finding was consistent with the findings from the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP, Carlson, Burn, Ussem, & Yachimowicz, 1990, 1990). In SAEP, researchers found that the desire to experience foreign cultures or increase cultural understanding was one of the most important reasons for studying abroad. Van Hoof and Van Verbeeten (2005) also suggested that one of the three most important reasons for studying abroad is to “live in another culture” (p. 47). The students in this study also stated that they hoped to learn more about their own particular culture to understand the differences between their own culture and the culture they are visiting, which corresponded to similar findings in the SAEP project (Carlson et al., 1990). Some participants even indicated the program attracted them because it was similar to another kind of

root-finding tour. Many of them were from the immigrant families and finding roots was a very unique reason for studying abroad as students wanted to understand their family's cultural and ethnic background via study abroad program.

#### *Foreign Experience Motivation*

As for the foreign experience motivation, escaping from the routine living environment and living abroad are themes in this category. Participants stated that they liked to study abroad because it gives them a chance to live in a new environment filled with different people, cultures, and natural environments. Schroth and McCormack (2000) completed studies on study abroad program participants and stated that seeking new experiences is a significant motivation for students. Josiam, Clements, and Hodson (1994) conducted studies about college students' travel behaviors and stated that they are motivated to get away from their routine life. Escaping from routine is also very common in pleasure travel literature and it is one of the push factors in the push-pull model (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979).

#### *Pleasure Motivation*

Travel for fun or pleasure is a main motivation for college students as Carr (2003) indicated. As part of their holiday experience, they participated in various "hedonistic" (p.185) activities such as partying, drinking and participating in social activities. Sirakaya and McLellan (1997) found that drinking and having fun are the most popular activities for college students. In this study, participants stated that pursuing pleasure was one of their motivations for study abroad, the same as general tourists suggested.

#### *Social Interaction Motivation*

The social interaction motivation was the same for study abroad students and general tourists, as Crompton (1979) suggested. As for social interaction motivation, program features

and the extended stay period in local community increased social opportunities with local residents and students were motivated by such opportunities. Students also stated that study abroad programs gave them a chance to live in foreign countries. Carlson et al. (1990) as well as Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005) stated that a desire for living in another country is one of the motivations for the program. Overseas study provided an immersion situation (Bodger, 1998) and is attractive to students because it makes living abroad feasible. The participants were often emotionally attached to local places and liked to return to the country after they had visited it initially. After comparing their previous travel experience, place-attachment motivation was very salient for those who visited the places before. The place attachment concept has been utilized in various outdoor recreation related fields for over two decades (Kyle et al., 2004; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989). Some participants in this study endorsed emotional attachment as part of the reason for studying abroad, and they indicated that they would like to return to live after they graduate.

As discussed above, four motivations, including learning, foreign experiencing, social interaction, and pleasure, are identical both for study abroad program participants and general tourists as the findings suggested. Unique motivations for studying abroad were discussed below.

#### *Differences in Motivations between Study Abroad Programs and General Tourism*

Based on the findings of this study, academic learning and personal growth are particularly unique reasons for joining the study abroad program while learning, pleasure, foreign experience, and social interactions are reasons common to both educational abroad programs and general travel packages.

### *Academic Learning Motivation*

As for the difference between these findings and general tourism motivation literature, academic learning and personal development were unique motivations for study abroad students. For academic learning motivation, except for knowledge learning motives, students were motivated to participate in the program because of external factors, including university policy and department requirements. Academic learning was a very prominent factor for students' decisions to study abroad as they were seriously committed to learning during the trip.

Language learning motivation was one of themes in academic learning in this study. As Carlson et al., (1990) and Oppen et al., (1990) suggested, one of the motivations for studying abroad is to improve foreign language ability, and respondents in the current study saw learning the language as one of important motivations for studying abroad. The study abroad context significantly improved students' abilities to communicate by improving their vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and language proficiency in French, Spanish, and Russian (Brecht et al., 1990; Collentine & Freed, 2004; Freed, 1995; Gunterman, 1995; Lafford, 1995; Milton & Meara, 1995; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). The participants might be aware of how effective study abroad was for advancing communicative proficiency and they were motivated to participate in study abroad programs as some linguistic educators suggested.

### *Personal Development Motivation*

Pursuing personal development also became a reason to study abroad. Two themes in this category were being independent and gaining career experience. First, more than half of participants hoped that the program would help them grow up and become independent. Personal growth has become a popular need for program participants (Carlson & Widaman, 1988). Second, Gmelch (1997) conducted studies of American study abroad participants and concluded

that overseas studying experience would help students increase their advantage in their future career life in the modern globalization era. Studies conducted by Hansel (1988) and Stitsworth (1988) also had similar findings. Students like to study abroad because it gives them a chance to establish their own connections with foreign or transnational employers. They believe that studying abroad will help them become familiar with a globalized world. The findings of the current study further substantiate Armstrong's finding (1984) that students are motivated to study abroad to advance their careers. As reviews on general tourism literature show, most tourists would not treat their travel as one of tools for their personal growth or development.

Such general comparisons of findings among the tourism literature, studying abroad research, and the current study illustrated the differences and similarities in motivations for studying abroad and general tourism (see Table 4). Specifically, knowledge learning and personal growth motivations seemed to distinguish students' motivation for studying abroad from the general tourist motivations.

Table 4  
Comparisons of Motivations between Study Abroad Programs and General Tourism

Study Abroad Programs	General Tourism
Learning	Learning
Foreign Experience	Foreign Experience
Pleasure	Pleasure
Social Interaction	Social Interaction
Academic Learning	
Personal Growth	

*Expectancy-Valence Approach for Motivations for Study Abroad Programs*

Those six different motivation categories with nine themes explained students' reasons for studying abroad. The purpose of this study was to understand the reasons why students join in study abroad program and to compare the findings from current tourism motivation and study abroad literature. After examining the current tourism motivation theories, the study findings

suggested that motivations for studying abroad are benefit-oriented and most students decided to participate in study abroad programs because of a desire for personal advancement in academics and for personal growth. As for tourists, sense of displacement or personal relaxation might dominate their needs for travel. Current tourism motivation theories such as push-pull models and search for authenticity do not totally explain the reasons for studying abroad indicated by this study.

From another perspective, the six motivations for studying abroad also could be treated as the value in participating in the program and could also be kinds of rewards. Expectancy theory (Lawler, 1973; Vroom, 1964) might be utilized to interpret the results other than micro- and macro-level travel motivation theories for understanding students' reasons for joining programs as it has been widely utilized to examine the motivation for the specific recreation activities and leisure involvement in the leisure and outdoor recreation field (Driver & Knopf, 1977; Kyle et al., 2006; Manfreda et al, 1996). Expectancy theory suggested a specific behavior results from individual choice among alternatives. Vroom (1964) suggested that human motivation is a kind of hierarchical function of expectancy, instrumentality, and outcome values. Individuals are motivated to make efforts when they believe the efforts will lead to good performance and the desired valued outcomes. In other words, the specific outcomes or benefits are the reasons for humans to take actions. Expectancy theory was utilized to understand the reasons why students decided to participate in the programs. For example, students believed participating in studying abroad programs will lead to the desired outcomes in their own perceptions (expectancy). Next, the students thought that they would obtain their desired outcomes if they physically participate in the study abroad programs (instrumentality). All participants place their value on participation in the study abroad programs (valence). Namely, the six motivations for studying abroad

demonstrate the benefits of studying abroad and show that the participants were motivated to study abroad for the specific benefits or desired outcomes, according to the expectancy-value theory.

Expectancy theory could serve as an alternative way to interpret the unique motivations for studying abroad, academic learning and personal growth. These two motivations also equals to two benefits of studying abroad, which do not prevail in general tourism very much. Those who seek the six benefits (i.e. academic learning, cultural learning, foreign experience, personal growth, pleasure, and social interactions) are motivated to join in the program because participants are aware of the perceived benefits and they place idiosyncratic value on the programs. The theories of tourism motivation would partially explain why people are engaged in studying abroad since general tourism and study abroad are different travel activities. Also, there is not an all-inclusive theory of tourist motivation as it is difficult to simplify psychological and sociological factors into a ubiquitous theory that can be generalized to all tourism contexts (Page, 2005). Expectancy theory could be an alternative approach to general tourism motivation theories to interpret students' motivations to study abroad. Namely, the six motivations are the outer motives for studying abroad and the expected goal or outcomes would be the inner force to drive their participation.

### Conclusion

The philosopher St Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430) wisely observed that the world is a great book (cited in McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1995), and therefore traveling the world is the way to read the whole book. The study abroad program has become an important vehicle to read this masterpiece (Turner & Ash, 1975). The European Grand Tour of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was the pioneer for such study abroad programs, but participants were limited to

privileged elites only. Krippendorf (1987) argued that between the agricultural age and the present information society, motivations to travel might shift from resting and recreating to the drive to experience something new, and, ultimately, developed into the desire to learn new knowledge. Recently, Kim, Oh, and Jogaratnam (2006) suggested learning is also one of the important motivations to travel for college students. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, studying abroad has been integrated into the current higher or adult education system and offers an alternative way for knowledge advancement and personal growth. Differences between tourism and studying abroad depict the different motivations for both activities. To explore their motivations for studying abroad is always the main concern of relevant research in the educational tourism field and more studies should be conducted in response the fast growth in studying abroad.

However, very little information has been collected to identify the needs and behaviors of studying abroad (Ritchie, 2003). This study tried to empirically explore students' motivations for studying abroad and serves as the introductory step for future tourism or education researchers. The findings should help college officials or institution administrators determine why people engage in educational travel and help them design appropriate programs based on participants' various motivations and needs.

In summary, it is hoped this study will provide understandings on the nature of the participants' motivations for educational tourism and serve as an initial approach to develop a new tourism motivation theory. The qualitative inquiry into motivation in this study is the first step for a series of studies in educational tourism. Most people, including study abroad program participants, believe travel is a way to promote learning and they are motivated to engage a trip to advance their knowledge. The findings may serve as the groundwork for developing quantitative scales to verify the possible motivational forces and dimensions in educational

tourism. In addition, increasing growth rates of study abroad programs also reveal their importance in the college education system and the necessity to form a solid academic foundation for effectively understanding educational tourism.

Furthermore, this study does not only offer an inclusive view of study abroad motivations, but also proposed an alternative approach to understand how outcome benefits are associated with individual's motivation in tourism context. Specifically, this study reveals that foreign experience, cultural learning, and academic learning rank as the top three motivations for studying abroad, and are generally the same as those found in other current educational abroad studies. Additionally, in comparison to previous studies, this study also highlights two other unique motivations which do not prevail in motivations for general tourism. From a broad perspective, this study also proposes that approach, the expectancy model, to understand the relationship between outcome benefits and motivation formation in study abroad context. Namely, such an alternative approach could be used to understand how individuals' studying abroad behaviors are driven or directed by apparent program effects while the push-pull model, seeking and escaping theory, do not fully explain the motivations for such specific travel activity. The expectancy-valence theory offers an alternative approach to understand human motivations for travel and their touring behaviors and might be used in future research.

#### Limitation

The value of Cohen Kappa coefficient in this study is .85 but might be inflated due to lack of total independence of the two coders. Note that the process was similar to constant comparison as Hruschka et al. (2004) suggested, where two or more coders independently code the full set of messages based on the same coding scheme.

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### ORIENTATION TO CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 is a stand-alone section in my dissertation and it serves as a manuscript for a future publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Chapter 3 examines the relationship between participants' characteristics and program effects. Specifically, this chapter is guided by the second and third research questions:

RQ 2. How many reliable and interpretable components in terms of program effects are there among the variables derived from reviews of literature and results of the pilot study?

RQ 3. Are there significant mean differences in terms of proposed program effects for individuals of different gender, years in school, academic majors, program duration, residency arrangement and local friendship?

This study examines the current studies regarding program effects and attempts to determine the program effects from participating in studying abroad through an omnibus test. The study offers an all-inclusive and holistic view of how characteristics of programs and participants influence the program effects. I employed four different statistical procedures to investigate these relationships including factor analysis, multivariate analysis of variance, discriminant analysis and Scheffé post-hoc analysis with Bonferroni adjustments. As for the interrelationships among program effects, they are not the primary goal of this chapter, and so I examined them fully in chapter 4.

An Examination of the Effects of Participation in Study Abroad Programs at a Northeastern  
University

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the possible effects on participants of study abroad programs at a northeastern university. Two hundred and fifty six students consented to this research and completed a web-based questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis showed five perceived program effects after data extraction and rotation: language learning; cultural immersion; foreign connection; personal growth; and career development. After the discovery of these five latent effects, I utilized multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), discriminant analysis, and a series of post hoc analyses to understand how independent indicators influence significant program outcomes. Based on the findings, gender and years-in-school were not significant predictors for the perceptions of program effects in this study. The results also revealed that business and science majors perceive higher levels of the foreign cultural learning effect than art majors. Also, the semester-based program participants were more likely to interact with locals than short-term program counterparts. As for the relationship between residency option and program effects, participants believed that a homestay residency was a more effective medium for the foreign language learning effect than other living options including on-campus dormitory and apartment living. Finally, participants believed that local friendships significantly influenced their connection with local people and their subjective understanding toward local cultures. As a result of this study, college officials will be able to more fully customize study abroad programs, so that each program successfully promotes all five program effects. From an academic perspective, this study is the first study to describe the perceived

program effects in terms of participants' characteristics and to comprehend how tourism and education cohere in a travel context; this study will be an invaluable precursor for future studies.

## Introduction

In 2005, the Institution of International Education listed approximately 3,000 short-term, study abroad programs around the world offered for college students and professionals by universities and other institutions (IIE, 2005). In the United States, the number of the students who participated in study abroad in 2005 reached 174,629, an almost 145 percent increase since 1991 (IIE, 2004). The continuing increase of students studying abroad suggests that students are eager to experience different cultures firsthand. In fact, this trend was preceded in the broader tourism market when in the late 1970s through the 1980s learning-centered activities gradually replacing passive and pleasure-oriented passive activities (Krippendorf 1987). This interest in learning activities continues to today and more recently, Smith and Jenner (1997) highlighted a recent an important tourism trend of leisure-education hybrid activities.

Travel has long served as an effective means of knowledge acquisition and people have been using education as a means of travel for about four hundred years (Kalinowski & Weiler, 1992). More recently, in the last decade, the nexus between tourism and education has become an enduring element of the tourism market (Pearce & Foster, 2007). Currently, study abroad programs are used as tools to develop cultural understanding; to strengthen academic performance for college students; and to increase advantages in job market (Chickering & Reisser, 1983; Pickert, 1992).

Toncar and Cudmore (2000) suggested that studying abroad increases student's knowledge and experience and enable students to see the world in new ways. Increasingly, study abroad, as reflected in the growing number of students who are participating (Open Doors, 2006), effectively facilitates cross-cultural understanding and provides important opportunities for teaching students how to be citizens in the modern global village (Var & Ap, 1998). The

assumption is that such exchange programs, which allow students to share thoughts and feelings with local hosts, yield specific effects on the students including learning a language, increasing cultural understanding, and developing personally and professionally. Researchers (Bywater, 1993; Roppolo, 1996; Smith & Jenner, 1997) have suggested the number might be proportionate with such rapid growth of educational tourism since there are more opportunities for empirical examinations on program effects than ever. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to establish the academic basis for educational study abroad programs and empirically determine their outcomes while considering the influence of participant characteristics and program features on the program effects. This study responds to a call from Richter (1989) to scientifically examine program benefits and effects.

#### Review of the Literature

As Mark Twain asserted in 1899, “travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness” (as cited in Smith, 2001). Gonsalves (as cited in Macleod, 1998, p.151) echoed this sentiment when he suggested that tourism could serve as “means of education, cross-cultural communication and the development of meaningful relationships”. Research has demonstrated that significant effects of studying abroad include an increase in world-mindedness, sympathy with people in the world, and personal development of autonomy and self-esteem (Gwynne, 1981; Nash, 1976; Pyle, 1981; Rose, 1969). To empirically explore the program effects on college students, Jackson (2006) observed students from Hong Kong studying abroad in England and reported six evident benefits including: linguistic improvement, cultural connection, appreciation of cultural differences, sense of independence, sense of adventure, and openness to a new world. Kauffman, Martin, Weaver and Weaver (1992) stated there are three apparent effects in their study on educational abroad program, including intellectual/academic

development, expanded international perspectives, and personal development. Talburt and Stuart (1999) have suggested significant gains after programs, including: the knowledge of foreign cultures and local societies, improved second language proficiency, and increased social competence. Some studies claimed that, after participating in a study abroad program, students increased their cultural knowledge, advanced their destination language proficiency, and enhanced their personal social skills (Carlson, Burn, Ussem and Yachimowicz, 1990; Opper, Teichler, Carlson, 1990). Most recently, Black and Duhon (2006) conducted a quasi-experimental study on the study abroad program effects and suggested that students have significantly higher levels of tolerance, self-confidence, sense of independence, openness. The following section explores the previous studies and summarizes the most updated developments of the field in order to establish a solid basis for future analysis.

#### *Travel and Study Abroad*

As for the relationship between travel and education, Weiler and Hall (1992) indicated that more and more people not only treat their holidays as “pure” recreational opportunities, but people also believe that they can develop personally or develop personal knowledge through travel. As tourists have shifted their focus from relaxation to cultural exploration, they have become primarily interested in foreign cultures and people (Buhalis, 2001). This emerging trend has presented the possibility of “edu-tainment,” the combining of education and entertainment, and demonstrates that such programs would not only increase foreign knowledge levels but also contribute to personal advancement (Buhalis, 2001, Kalinowski & Weiler, 1992; Ryan, 1997).

The purpose of study abroad programs is different from the purpose of mass tourism because mass tourism is a pleasure-oriented standardized package and learning is not the main concern for service providers. Specifically, educational travel does not only offer a more

authentic learning environment, but also facilitates experiential learning (Laubscher, 1994). Such an experiential learning process suggests that the desired abstract learning concepts would be effectively achieved once the learner could be actively engaged in the materials or activities on a concrete level (Dewey, 1938; Freire 1971). Experiential learning theory supported the incorporation of travel and learning and suggested that travel serves as an effective way to promote learning in academic context (Montrose, 2002).

### *Study Abroad Program Effects*

Research has demonstrated that significant effects of studying abroad include an increase in worldmindedness, sympathy with people in the world, and personal development of autonomy and self-esteem (Gwynne, 1981; Nash, 1976; Pyle, 1981; Rose, 1969). Other studies have suggested that programs result in: academic development, linguistic improvement, cultural connection, appreciation of cultural differences, sense of independence, sense of adventure, and openness to a new world (Carlson, Burn, Ussem and Yachimowicz, 1990; Jackson, 2006; Kauffman, Martin, Weaver & Weaver, 1992; Opper, Teichler, Carlson, 1990; Talburt & Stuart, 1999). Black and Duhon (2006) conducted a quasi-experimental study on the study abroad program effects and suggested that students have significantly higher levels of tolerance, self-confidence, sense of independence, and openness. The following section explores the previous studies and summarizes the most updated developments of the field in order to establish a solid basis for future analysis.

### *Study Abroad and Academic/Language Learning*

Since study abroad programs offer the chance to link theory and reality, these programs facilitate experiential learning. Experiential learning is popular in many college majors including geography, history, biology, and management because studying abroad allows students to

construct their own knowledge via their first-hand experience (Ritchie, 2003). Coleman (1976) and Steinberg (2002) stated that students learn from their first-hand experiences during travel and such experiential learning helps students integrate the educational experience into their life (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1971). Experiential learning theory has been widely applied to study abroad programs, field trips, and international curricula (Laubscher, 1994). This theory explains the learning process in the program abroad context and explains how students learn about a new culture from concrete, out-of-class experience.

As for the knowledge acquired during studying abroad, Sutton and Rubin (2001) conducted an experimental comparison of the learning effects of study abroad program between participants and non-participants and they suggested that, when compared to the at home group, the study abroad group showed a higher level of achievement in four learning areas . These included functional knowledge, knowledge of world geography, knowledge of global interdependence, and knowledge of cultural relativism.

For most students, the first priority of studying abroad is foreign language development and they believe that an authentic language learning environment is a significant factor in successful second language acquisition (Carlson & Yachimowicz, 1987; Prater, Barutia, Larkin, & Weaver, 1980; Jackson, 2006). Furthermore, linguistic studies demonstrated that the study abroad learning context created an effective learning context that helps the participants to increase their vocabulary (DeKeyser, 1986; Lennon, 1990; Milton & Meara, 1995; Walsh, 1994) and oral proficiency (Freed, 1995; Lafford, 1995).

Carlson et al. (1990) suggested that American college students who studied in Europe made substantial language gains. However, Carlson was not sure if students who studied in non-European areas would achieve the same results. According to Laubscher's (1994) interviews

with program alumni, conversing with local hosts was the most significant part of the study abroad experience. Segalowitz et al. (2004) compared two different learning contexts, domestic classrooms and study abroad programs, and concluded that study abroad students make significant progress in expression of oral proficiency, communication skills, and attention control. The at-home group, however, has more significant gains in grammatical analysis ability than the study abroad group.

### *Travel Abroad and Cultural Learning*

Every single culture can be defined as an “information economy” in which group members acquire, store, create, retrieve, and transmit information (Roberts, 1964). Goodenough (1957) proposed that, “A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them (p. 167).” Through study abroad programs, inter-group interactions become effective ways of learning about different cultures. Liu, Sheldon, and Var (1987) reported that over 50 percent of participants agree that tourism boosts cultural exchange and learning which effectively foster cross-cultural appreciation and challenge stereotypes between hosts and tourists. Study abroad participants learn to understand the other culture through tourism. They learn differences in cultural and ethnic background and became intimately familiar with the host culture. (Carlson et al., 1990; Hill, 1987; Laubscher, 1994; Milleret, 1991; Opper et al., 1990; Riedel, 1989; Roberts, 1994; Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 2000; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995).

Dwyer (2004) observed that interactions between local hosts and students, allows students to learn more about foreign languages and cultures. Contacts with local culture

contribute to the appreciation of diverse cultures. Abrams (1979) also suggested that intimate interactions in travel increase inter-cultural understandings as diverse people try to get along with each other.

Carlson and Widaman (1988) conducted experimental studies and compared study abroad and at-home groups in terms of program effects. They suggested that study abroad programs help students increase their interests in other cultures. Through cross-cultural contact, studying abroad facilitates personal growth and understanding of culture, life, and self (Gmelch, 1997). In addition, the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP) (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz., 1990) concluded that participants increase their knowledge about cultural life, customs and traditions, and social structure of the host country.

Levels of global cultural awareness and intercultural understanding would increase as study abroad programs create opportunities for intercultural contact (Lutterman-Aguillar & Gingerich, 2002). Students also increase their levels of cultural sensitivity by interacting with local hosts. Through studying abroad, students become aware of how local people live in a different way from their own way of life and they may become interested in immersing themselves in local life. To a large extent, such contact also makes students learn about themselves and take a more critical view on their own role in the world. It also challenges students to more critically examine their beliefs about other cultures. In another case of the cultural learning effect, Armstrong (1984) found that American college students claimed a Mexican educational tour changed their stereotypes regarding Mexico and Mexicans and increased their cross-cultural knowledge. Overwhelmingly, previous literature and current research validates the presence of cultural learning effects.

### *Study Abroad and Career Development*

Study abroad programs also help students obtain career advantages. Carlson et al. (1990) suggested students who studied abroad might increase their success on the job market and programs also provide students with a chance to consider overseas employment. From an application perspective, studying abroad experiences increase students' ability to adapt to different environments and serve as expeditor for their job applications as Opper (1991) observed. Such international exchange experience might influence their short and long-term career objectives and planning (Hadis, 2005). As for long-term effects, Kauffman et al. (1992) stated that program participants with exposures to foreign societies have more advantages than their counterparts when they apply for jobs in transnational corporations. Recently, Pearce and Foster (2007) conducted a study on the functions of travel and the after-trip learning achievements in a web-based study with about three hundred backpackers. They suggested that travel contributed to knowledge acquisition and skill development. In addition, students often demonstrate an increase interest in internships in foreign countries after studying abroad (Dwyer, 2004). Moreover, international businesses often place emphases on overseas experience see it is as part of the desired qualifications for their overseas positions (Hannigan, 2001).

### *Study Abroad and Personal Growth*

Studying abroad has a significant effect on personal growth in terms of an increase in autonomy and self-esteem as indicated by previous studies (Gwynne, 1981; Nash, 1976; Pyle, 1981; Rose, 1969). Hadis (2005) did a study on the effects of study abroad programs and concluded that they help students develop independence and openness to world cultures. Students rank personal growth as one of the most important gains after studying abroad (Enrenreich, 2006). Moreover students' sense of independence increases (Hadis, 2005). Program

participants tend to have higher levels of self-confidence, maturation, and tolerance of ambiguity than their counterparts (Dwyer, 2004). However, it may be that such personal development may be reflective of students' personal characteristics and may not necessarily suggest that there is a causal relationship between program participation and personal development.

Studies on study abroad program effects suggest that participants have different self-perceptions of autonomy, independence, self-confidence, and tolerance of differences after participating in programs (Laubscher, 1994). Gmelch (1997) analyzed students' personal daily program journals and concluded that personal growth effects are even more prominent than academic or professional growth due to the fact that students learn how to solve problems and cope with psychological and environmental changes during their trip. Students do not only focus on knowledge inquiry but also learn how to live on their own. Carlson and Widaman (1988) stated that such personal growth is one of the goals for foreign study. As some literature suggests, students gain a sense of self-independence and adapt themselves into the new environment. Other studies (Hansel, 1988; Stitsworth, 1988) found that studying abroad increases students' self-confidence and helps them become familiar with an international environment. Specifically, they found that students perceive themselves as more independent in their thinking and see themselves as more capable of adapting to local environments. Personal growth occurred due to students' efforts to adjust themselves to the local environment and learn how to cope with new change (Chickering & Reisser, 1983; Brueggemann, 1987). Papatsiba (2006) observed program participants and found living abroad helps them achieve a sense of autonomy and independence. As the literature suggests, studying abroad helps participants increase their level of personal growth levels and it is a substantial program effect that is evident in many current studies. However, as discussed, it is possible that self-selection plays a

significant role; students with a higher sense of independence or autonomy may be drawn to study abroad.

#### *Foreign Interactions and Program Effects*

Close relationships or psychological attachments with local hosts is an interesting part of the study abroad experience and such interaction also contributes to intercultural understanding and stereotype reduction (Allport, 1954; Carlson & Widaman, 1998; Cook, 1984; Gareis, 2000; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Stangor, Klaus, Stroebe, & Hewstone, 1996). Study abroad students have intensive interactions with host peers and it increases opportunities for in-depth understandings of local culture. Burnett and Gardner (2006) analyzed how Chinese study abroad students accommodated themselves into university life in England. They suggested that participants had different program perceptions depending on how they interact with local people. In other words, the type and quality of foreign interactions triggers other program effects. Local social interactions yield a chance for cultural awareness between students and hosts during the program (Astin 1993). Pearson-Evans (2006) even suggested that a social network with local friends or companions helps students ease the transition from their home culture into their host culture. The loss of their immediate family ties or friends at home is made significantly easier through building networks with local host families. However, some studies showed less optimistic results and cautioned that some students only develop superficial relationships with local hosts because they prefer to make friends with their own program companions instead (McKinlay, Pattinson, & Cross, 1996; Nesdale & Todd, 1993).

#### *Other Alternative Points and Comments*

While many researchers recognize that study abroad programs have various effects in enhancing academic/language learning, cultural understanding, career development, personal

growth, and foreign interaction, others have a different opinions and questioned the salience of the effects of cultural and knowledge learning in study abroad programs. Wilkinson (1998) stated that because of the unexpected language barrier and the short-length of stay, the study abroad program did not contribute to cultural knowledge and mutual understanding in her study of a program in France. Furthermore, Pickert (1992) and Milleret (1991) suggested that the effects of language and cultural learning are hard to identify for the short-term programs.

In addition, Bruner (1991) also suggested that tourism can foster the cultural understanding and personal growth in an ideal situation, but it is hard to find in the actual traveler's experience. Askjellerud (2003) and Litvin (2003) doubted that tourism or travel could ease stereotypes or increase cultural understanding. Gartner and Bachi (as cited in Litvin, 1994) also stated that tourism does not promote intercultural. In Pizam's four studies (1996) on the effects of travel contact, little empirical evidence justifies the contact's function in fostering cultural or mutual understanding.

Tomljenovic and Faulkner (2001) compared the Croatian and Australian cases and suggested that study tours could increase foreign cultural understanding, but it also could have negative effects if the program is not well-designed. Despite questions about the program's effects, some researchers still recognized that study abroad programs contribute to students' language competency, cultural knowledge development and personal growth as they affirm what students learn during programs and also arouse students' interests in that area (Hill, 1987; Laubscher, 1994; Milleret, 1991; Riedel, 1989; Roberts, 1994; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995).

Based on the previous literature review, most studies suggest that studying abroad programs facilitate five program effects: learning, cultural immersion, personal growth, foreign interactions, and career development. This study tended to identify all possible results based on

the reviews of the previous literature and compare its results with previous studies in order to justify the differences between previous literature and current study.

*Participant's Characteristics, Program Features, and Program Effects*

In addition to the identification of possible program effects, another important part of this study is to evaluate how those effects are influenced or predicated by various indicators, including participant characteristics and program features. Engle & Engle (2003) found program features influence the program's outcomes, length of the program, foreign language competence, language used in course work, types of student housing, and previous program experience. To increase the power of explanations of the program's effects, the variables of gender, age, academic major, program length, residency arrangement, and local friendships were considered for survey development and data analysis in the proposed study; they were the same ones used by previous researchers (Aveni, 2005; Carlson et al., 1990; Carlson & Widman, 1989; Fraser, 2002; Hoffman-Hicks, 2000; Ritchie, 2003; Weaver & Lawton, 2003).

*Gender and Age*

Gender and age are significant indicators of the possibilities of differences in program experiences (Sirakaya & McLellan, 1997; Hsu & Sung, 1997). For example, Weaver and Lawton (2003) suggested that female tourists are more likely to be involved in learning activities during their travel experiences than are their male counterparts. Ritchie (2003) stated that socio-demographic variables such as age and gender play an important role in determining program effects across different populations. Carlson and Widaman (1988) found that in the relationship between gender and program effects, female study abroad participants tend to acquire more knowledge about the world than their male counterparts. These results are also consistent with a study completed by Useem and Useem (1967).

Also, various studies showed that age is a successful indicator of tourism market segmentation (Devlin, 1993; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1986; Weaver & Lawton, 2003). For example, while passive activities appeal to older people, younger people tend to pursue a wide range of new and active travel (Manning, 1983; Mill & Morrison, 1985).

### *Academic Major*

Sutton and Rubin (2001) suggested that students' college majors influence study abroad learning outcomes. For instance, in terms of global interdependence, education-majors score significantly lower than other majors. In contrast, business majors score significantly lower than other majors in world culture knowledge. Carlson and Widaman (1988) found that students with majors within the humanities seem to increase their attention and knowledge on foreign issues more than other students. Humanities majors care more about international politics after their trip and to pay more attention to American foreign policy. In terms of the distribution of majors going abroad, Astin (1993) discovered that most program participants major in humanities or social sciences, followed by business. The effects of academic majors on program effects will be examined in the following analyses.

### *Duration*

Program duration significantly influences students' academic learning, intercultural development, career development, and personal growth (Dwyer 2004). Year-based program participants are significantly different from short-term or semester-based counterparts in terms of effects on participants. Year-based program participants tend not only to show more progress in linguistic ability, but also demonstrate an increased interest in academic studies; they favor intercultural immersion and show an increase in personal competition on the job market, and endorsed personal growth effect. Program length mainly shapes second language development

(Carlson et al, 1990). In their comparison between year-long and summer programs, Fraser (2002) and Hoffman-Hicks (2000) acknowledged the role of program length in second language acquisition. They suggested that longer programs have more effects on language learning than short-term programs. However, even short-term programs help students advance in their pronunciation (Stevens, 2001), listening (Allen, 2002; Campbell, 1996), and speaking (Campbell, 1996; Woodman, 1999). Nevertheless, the length of the program was not the only predictor of the outcomes of study abroad programs. For example, as Hoffman-Hicks (2000) indicated students in year-long programs may not develop a positive relationship with their local hosts, which may lessen their ability to gain language skills. The present study employed program length as one indicator for program effects despite the diverse findings on the relationships between program duration and perceived program effects

#### *Living Arrangement*

The living arrangement or residency options also significantly impact program effects (Laubscher, 1994). Non-academic activities, such as homestays and social activities facilitate intercultural exposures during the program (Cluett, 2002) and they have a longer lasting effect than formal activities. Hull and Lemke (1978) stated that the homestay residency options significantly contribute to out-of-class learning experiences. Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) stated that the host family not only supplies food and shelter, but they are also the linguistic and cultural teachers or tutors (Law, 2003). However, Rivers (1998) did a study of 2500 American college students in Russia and found that those students who lived in a dorm outperform those who lived in homestay family in speaking skills since there were intensive language learning program for students who lived in dormitories. Therefore, as Sutton and Rubin

(2001) suggested, the context factor, such as residency arrangement, may not serve as an effective indicator for foreign language proficiency.

### *Local Friendships*

Study abroad programs are unique because travelers have chance to develop friendships with local hosts. Mass tourists have fewer encounters or contacts with local people than study abroad participants. Mass tourists mostly stay in an isolated tourism infrastructure and follow a fixed itinerary, which does not offer opportunities to interact with and understand local people in any depth (Anastasopoulous, 1992; deKadt, 1979). McIntosh, Goeldner, and Ritchie (1995) found that mass tourists who stay in a “bubble” do not even attempt to develop interactions with locals. Intensive contacts or interactions with local hosts might offer an opportunity to increase friendship levels, which could have influence on many program effects. Based on a social network between local friends and students, Isabelli-Garcia (2005) suggested interactions with locals would contribute to students’ foreign language acquisition. Such informal and out-of-class conversations with local friends would increase students’ linguistic competency (Freed, 1995).

In sum, as previous literature suggested, six indicators have been previously employed to examine whether they were able to influence program effects or not, including gender, age, academic major, program length, residency arrangement and local friendships. The reviews served as the base for the analysis in this study.

## Research Methods

### *Research Design*

In this study, I utilized the quantitative survey research method to collect a description and explanation of the effects of the study abroad program. The survey served as an effective tool to explain the orientations or describe the effects in a large population while other

independent factors were considered (Babbie, 2006). Three features - versatility, efficiency, and generalizability - make the survey research design an effective and feasible tool in this study. Therefore, the cross-sectional survey research method was used to measure participants' responses. The questionnaire was published on the university network at the end of the summer of 2004. I also paid close attention to sampling bias and the representation of population by ensuring that potential survey participants had access to this internet-based survey (Nahm et al, 2004; Schutt, 2001). This study utilized the campus computer system to publish and collect information from participants since all students had full access to this online questionnaire via a valid identification number and password. Therefore, representation should not be a critical sampling issue in this study.

Due to its proven advantages, including lower distribution and publication costs, (Belcher, 2004; Evans & Mathur & Nahm, 2005; Preece, & Resnick, 2004), convenient access to the survey (Schutt, 2001), and anonymity (Chiasson, Parsons, Tesoriero, & Carballo, 2006; Fowler, 2002), I utilized an internet-based survey for data collection. I also utilized a convenience sampling strategy since no access to a sampling frame for the target population was granted that would permit randomly sampling for participants in this study. In order to recruit more participants, the survey package was posted on campus website for ten consecutive days (Duffy, 2002). In addition, at my request, the study program office sent out an e-mail advertisement announcing the research study. In order to increase the validity of study, some challenges should be considered so as to avoid sampling bias. In online survey research, survey access and multiple response issues should be considered (Belcher, 2004). For example, insufficient internet access may result in the underrepresentation of the population, which will influence the study's external validity (Babbie, 2001; Schutt, 2001).

Also, multiple responses from the same participants may increase the probability of wrongly rejecting the accepted hypotheses and influence the validity of the findings (Gosling, Vazire, Srirastara, & John, 2004; Evans & Mathur, 2005). Through the setup of the survey function, the server system rejected multiple responses from a participant by scanning user identification numbers. Such processes decreased the possibility of inaccurate information and response bias for data analysis. In sum, in order to enhance the validity of results and to avoid survey research disadvantages, this study used current university students as informants, all of whom had equal access to the internet-based survey. Hence, this study did not have the representation and biased-response problems in sampling.

#### *Research Questions*

There were two research questions in this study (see Appendix B). First, this study was concerned with whether university study abroad programs would generate six hypothesized program effects. The second research question was whether six indicators, including gender (Carlson et al., 1990), year in school, academic majors, program duration, residency arrangements, and local friendships influence program effects or not. A series of data analyses were conducted based on these two research questions.

#### *Instrumentation*

In order to develop the questionnaire for this study, a pilot study (see Appendix C) was conducted in the spring of 2004. Thirteen program alumni participated in the semi-structured interviews and answered questions regarding their perceived program effects, which helped me clarify and refine items on the questionnaire. To increase the validity of study, I also examined findings from previous studies (Carlson et al., 1990; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Coelho, 1962) for questionnaire development. Twenty four questions were generated based on the intensive

reviews of relevant literature and the results of the pilot study (see Appendix II). In order to ensure the validity of the survey instrument, the survey was evaluated for face validity by a panel of experts<sup>1</sup> (Babbie, 2001). The six independent variables, gender, year in school, academic major, program duration, residency option, and local friendship, were considered in order to understand whether student characteristics and program features yielded different program effects as the pilot study and previous literature suggested.

### *Measures*

#### *Independent Variables*

To identify the characteristics of the program and participants, subjects were asked to self-specify their gender (Carlson & Wideman, 1988; Useem & Useem, 1967, Weaver & Lawton, 2003), year in college (Hsu & Sung, 1997; Sirakaya & McLellan, 1997), academic major (Sutton & Rubin, 2001), program duration (Dwyer, 2004), residency situation (Hull & Lemke, 1978; King & Schmid-Rinehart, 2002), and local friendships (Anastasopoulous, 1992; deKadt, 1979).

Students' majors were categorized as arts, business, liberal arts, and science. The program duration was classified into long-term, summer, and short-term programs. A long-term program was defined as at least a semester (ranging from thirteen to fifty two weeks) . Summer programs were between one to three months (ranging from four weeks to twelve weeks) and short-term programs were less than a month (ranging from one to four weeks). Residency status was measured by three categories including on-campus residency hall, off-campus apartment, and local homestay. Students were also asked to indicate whether they had local friends or not.

### *Dependent Variables*

The twenty five program effects items and their responding scales were developed based on reviews of relevant literature and the results of the pilot study. All questionnaire items were derived from perceived program effects constructs, including academic learning (Coleman, 1976; Laubscher, 1994; Steinberg, 2002), language learning (Carlson & Yachimowicz, 1987; Prater, Barutia, Larkin, & Weaver, 1980; Jackson, 2006), cultural immersion/learning (Carlson et al., 1990; Hill, 1987; Laubscher, 1994; Milleret, 1991; Opper et al., 1990; Riedel, 1989; Roberts, 1994; Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 2000; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995), personal development (Gmelch, 1997; Gwynne, 1981; Hadis, 2005; Laubscher, 1994; Nash, 1976; Papatsiba, 2006; Pyle, 1981; Rose, 1969), foreign connection (Astin, 1993; Burnett & Gardern, 2006; Pearson-Evans, 2006), and career development (Carson et al., 1990; Hadis, 2005; Opper, 1991, Pearce & Foster, 2007). Participants were asked to assess to the degree to which they agreed with questions related to these six program effects. Responses were measured on five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1= “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”.

### *Procedures*

With approval from the Institutional Review Board, I collected the data and analyzed the results. Data were collected from participants of study abroad programs in a northeastern university in the United States. The web-based survey link and recruiting letter were sent to all program participants by the university study abroad program office. To participate in this survey, students were required to complete and submit the consent form (see Appendix D) electronically before they took the survey. After their consent was received, the participants were granted access to the online survey. They could return it via the on-line survey drop-box. The results were stored in university secure database storage for analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

Since the questionnaire was developed based on the five program effects derived from the literature, confirmatory factor analysis was carried out as the first step. However, there are problems in factor loading and item distribution. To solve problems in confirmatory factor analysis, EFA was utilized for data reduction and generated the acceptable latent constructs or dimensions from the data set for further comparisons. As Fabrigar, Visser, and Browne (1997) suggested, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) serves to locate the latent factors within a set of items. Next, the constructs derived from EFA provided the basic analysis units for comparisons with the independent variables via analysis of variance. Later, multivariate statistical techniques were utilized to understand whether any changes in socio-demographic variables have significant effects on the six program effects or not. Specifically, the six program effects would be examined at the same time in an omnibus test instead of examining them individually. For that, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was utilized to improve the probability of discovering the actual changes by controlling the possibilities of Type I error inflation (falsely rejecting the right hypotheses) due to separate ANOVAs (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In addition, MANOVA also take the correlation among dependent variables into account (Weinfurt, 1995). In this study, six separate MANOVA analyses were carried out to examine the relationships of independent predictors to the combined program effect factors. In order to provide unbiased parameters estimates, cases with missing values were deleted in the pre-analysis screening as such listwise deletion is the most conservative missing data process (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002).

Each MANOVA analysis involves three steps:

1) An omnibus  $F$ -test determined whether or not there were different combined mean scores for program effects associated with the six predictors. I utilized Wilkes Lambda to identify overall significance between indicator groups (gender, years in school, academic majors, program length, program residency arrangement, and local friendships) in a multivariate context as the equality of covariance matrices across groups was assumed (Hair et al., 2006; Mertler & Vannatta, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Pillai's Trace statistic was used to interpret the multivariate results if the group-wise equal variance on the dependent variables could not be assumed in Box's M tests (Hair et al., 2006). The Box's M statistic was used to test for the homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrices of the dependent variables across the groups (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). If the dataset could not meet the homogeneity assumption, i.e., significant statistical results for Box's M statistics, Coombs and Algina (1996) suggested that Pillai's Trace serves as an alternative criterion since it is a robust test statistic to deal with the assumption of violation situations in the MANOVA. If the omnibus tests fail to find significant differences, no additional tests were carried out.

2) When significant overall  $F$ -test values were identified in each MANOVA, discriminant analysis was the next step to investigate how the groups differed from one another. In other words, discriminant analysis identifies the program effects that best separate the indicator group across different levels as the results from MANOVA  $F$ -test could not specify which specific dependent variable(s) generated significant mean difference(s). Since significant results for a MANOVA reflect overall differences across group levels for the dependent variables, a specific difference for one of the dependent variables could not be detected during analysis. Also, descriptive discriminant analysis has an advantage for follow-up tests after MANOVA since it employs a multivariate approach to identify which dependent variables could best separate group

levels, rather than the univariate approach of separate ANOVA (Enders, 2003; Huberty & Petoskey, 2000; Maxwell 1992). Keselman and his colleagues (Keselman, Huberty, Lix, Olejnik, Cribbie, Donahue, Kowalchuk, Lowman, Petoskey, Keselman, & Levin, 1998) reviewed seventy nine recent MANOVA studies and found only four studies used descriptive discriminant analysis as a follow-up test. Univariate ANOVA has prevailed as the standard follow-up test for MANOVA after Cramer and Bock (1966) recommended the MANOVA-ANOVA method as they thought that univariate ANOVA has the same function as the discriminant analysis for group comparisons and ANOVA could be utilized for follow-up tests after a multivariate analysis. However, Huberty and Smith (1982) encouraged researchers should “think multivariately” (p.429) and suggested it is not appropriate to use a series of univariate follow-up comparisons to evaluate multivariate effects derived from MANOVA. Enders (2003) did comparisons on two follow-up processes, univariate ANOVA and DDA, and he recommended DDA would be appropriate follow-up comparisons after MANOVA. Field (2005) and Sherry (2006) strongly recommend that discriminant analysis should be used right after MANOVA since discriminant analysis is a good tool to detect how dependent variables differentiate the groups while ANOVA assumes that differences exist within groups and individually explores differences in one dependent variable across various group levels. For obtaining more accurate results, this study adopted DDA as one of the follow-up procedures after MANOVA as some researchers suggested.

I followed the suggestions from Sherry’s study (2006) in counseling psychology. Accordingly, to understand the contribution of program effects to the six independent variables (factors) in this study, descriptive discriminant analysis (thereafter DDA) was employed to identify how the combined effect factors discriminate and separate the independent predictors.

Also, DDA could be utilized to realize which dependent factors would do the most contribution to significant difference on the whole model (Huberty & Olejnik , 2006). The prediction function of memberships in discriminant analysis was not used in this study as separation was the first objective for a follow-up statistic test after MANOVA. Specifically, the perceived program effect constructs (derived from exploratory factor analysis) served as independent variables and the predictor group (gender, years in school, academic majors, program length, program residency arrangement, and local friendships) became the dependent variable in a descriptive discriminant analysis. The Wilks's Lambda statistic indicates whether the combinations of independent variables (the factor(s) from exploratory factor analysis) significantly discriminate the predictor groups (gender, years in school, academic majors, program length, program residency arrangement, and local friendships) or not. The standardized canonical coefficients in discriminant analysis indicate how dependent variables contribute to the separation across group levels (Fields, 2005).

3) After the overall F test and discriminant analysis demonstrated that at least one difference exists, I conducted Scheffé's post hoc analysis to assess which group means significantly differ from others (Stevens, 1992). It is also one of the follow-up comparison procedures in this study. As the post hoc analysis repeatedly tests the multiple relationships between various indicator groups and a dependent variable, it produces a higher probability of mistakenly rejecting a correct hypothesis (Type I error) than the .05 significance level for each individual test. For example, if a statistical test is used on the same dataset eight times, the test significance levels will inflate to .4 levels (.05 multiplied by 8). Hence, it will hugely increase the probability of falsely rejecting a correct hypothesis. To avoid false inflation of test results, the significance

level is adjusted to .01 for controlling against Type I error inflation (a Bonferroni adjustment) as Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested.

## Results

### *Participants' Profiles*

The purpose of this study was to understand the program effects in terms of participants' social-economic variables and study abroad experiences. In 2005, s nearly 1000 American college students with variety of majors participated in education abroad programs at the northeastern university where this study was conducted. A total of 265 students decided to enroll in this online survey. Table 5 demonstrates the characteristics of participants in this study.

Table 5  
Characteristics of Participants in the Study of Program Effects

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender, N=265		
Male	78	29
Female	187	71
Years in School, N=264		
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3	1
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	39	15
4 <sup>th</sup> year	175	66
5 <sup>th</sup> year	47	18
College, N=263		
Arts	28	11
Business	68	26
Liberal Arts	108	41
Science	59	22
Program Period, N=265		
Short-term	42	16
Summer	131	49
Long-term	92	35
Residency Areas, N=265		
Residency Hall	104	39
Homestay	60	23
Apartment	101	38
Local friendship		
Yes	136	51
No	129	49

Most participants were females and were seniors. About 41 percent of total participants majored in liberal arts and over half of them did not have previous studying abroad experience. The homestay option was not a very common for students' residency arrangement as most lived in apartments and residence halls. As for local friendships, about half of participants in this study had local friends during their program.

#### *Indicators and Program Effects*

The first step for the data analysis was to locate the possible factors that contribute to the common variance of the set of measured variables (i.e., to discover the latent structure underlying the set of variables). Factor analysis in this study was used to examine the underlying constructs which represented the original variables and would serve as an initial step for MANOVA.

Based on this objective, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), was utilized to aim for the common variance of the whole dataset and to exclude unique and error variance from these variables for constructing theoretical structure while Principle Component Analysis (PCA) incorporated all variances including common, unique, error and analyzes how these variance distribute to all components (Hair et al, 2006; Tabachinck & Fidell, 2007). Accordingly, EFA focuses on covariance (communality), but PCA tends to extract the maximum variance from data set (Tabachinck & Fidell, 2007).

After factor analysis, a value of over .60 levels in the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measurement and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity suggested this dataset was suitable for the exploratory factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). After varimax rotation, the analysis produced a five-factor solution, which was evaluated on the basis of three criteria: eigenvalue, loading values, and scree plot.(Mertler & Vannatta, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Specifically, items with eigenvalue lower than 1, factor loading values lower than .45 (with 20% overlapping variance, Comrey & Lee, 1992), and out of the sharp descent of line would be deleted after EFA. As for cutoff levels for loading values, Comrey and Lee (1992) indicated that items' higher factor loading values indicate they are more likely to measure the same factor. They suggested that .40 levels with about 25% overlapping variance are a good value for factor loading. In this study, there were two items (I discovered that local people have opinions that differ from mine on some issue; I am more willing to interact with people with different cultural backgrounds than I was before my trip abroad) which fail to meet the above criteria. Specifically, these two items had lower than 1 eigenvalues, lower than .40 factor loading values and they were single item factors. They were deleted before the next statistic test, MANOVA. As for explained variance, about 51 percent of the total variance is explained in the analysis. Table 6 illustrates a breakdown of which item belonged with each of the five factors and their factor loading values.

Table 6  
Factor Loadings, and Cronbach's Alpha Values of Five Program Effect Model by EFA

Factor Names and Items	Loading	$\alpha$
<b>Factor 1, Language learning</b>		
▪ I think my destination language proficiency was improved after participating in the program.	.86	.84
▪ I think this program gave me a better chance to practice the destination language than the classroom alone	.85	
▪		
▪ I really enjoyed learning the destination language in this program.	.80	
▪ I could read some foreign newspaper without too much difficulty after I participated in the study abroad program.	.57	
▪ I could read some foreign newspaper without too much difficulty after I participated in the study abroad program.	.54	
<b>Factor 2, Personal development</b>		
▪ I am more independent than I was before the program.	.67	.71
▪ I feel more confident in myself after finishing the program.	.59	
▪ I have different perceptions of what my life should be since my return from the other country.	.57	
▪ I have a new outlook on the world since my study abroad experience.	.56	
▪ The program changed the perceptions about the local people at my study abroad destination.	.34	

Factor Names and Items	Loading	$\alpha$
<b>Factor 3, Foreign connection</b>		
▪ I felt that I was part of the local community during this trip.	.73	.72
▪ I felt at home during this trip.	.60	
▪ I feel I am still connected with local people even after the program was over.	.59	
▪ I will visit this destination again if possible.	.52	
<b>Factor 4, Cultural immersion</b>		
▪ Different cultural encounters enriched my study abroad program.	.75	.64
▪ The program gave me a chance to learn about a different culture.	.60	
▪ The program helped me to increase my knowledge of the local culture at my study abroad destination.	.41	
▪ To engage myself in a different cultural environment was one of my purposes for joining this program.	.40	
<b>Factor 5, Career development</b>		
▪ I will consider employment in global companies because of my experience in the study abroad program.	.68	.70
▪ The program has raised my interest in some overseas job.	.63	
▪ I have different views about my future career after trip.	.50	
▪ This program was important to me because it will someday be useful in getting a good job.	.58	
<b>Deleted Items</b>		
▪ I discovered that local people have opinions that differ from mine on some issue	.43	
▪ I am more willing to interact with people with different cultural backgrounds than I was before my trip abroad	.32	

*Note:* All items are measured on a 5 point scale of 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Later, reliability analyses were used to examine each set of items and to decide whether they measure a single latent variable or not. With exception of the fourth factor, cultural immersion, all other Cronbach's Alpha values meet the .7 criteria for ensuring their homogeneity and internal consistency of factor constructs as Nunnally (1994) suggested.

Due to the preliminary nature of this study, more liberal criteria may be applied and it is appropriate to keep the cultural immersion factor for future analyses. The extracted five program effect factors served as the dependent variables in the following tests. They were named language learning, personal development, foreign connection, cultural immersion, and career development. After the first step of program factor extractions, multiple multivariate analyses of

variance are utilized to determine mean differences among six predictors in the combined five program effects.

After MANOVA statistic tests, there was not significant evidence to suggest there was an association between students' gender (Pillai's Trace=0.03,  $F(5, 259)=1.84$ ,  $p=.11$ , partial multivariate  $\eta^2=.99$ ) and years in school (Pillai's Trace=0.18,  $F(5, 270)=0.97$ ,  $p=.54$ , partial multivariate  $\eta^2=.04$ ) with the combined five program effects. No further tests were carried out since there were not significant mean differences in the dependent variables in terms of the gender and years in school predictors. After a series of multivariate analysis of variance, students' major, program length, residency location, and local friendship were the significant predictors on the combined five program effects. The specific relationships between each indicators and program effects were discussed in the following sections after a series of statistical procedures including MANOVA, descriptive discriminant analysis, univariate ANOVA, and post-hoc analysis with Bonferroni adjustments.

#### *Academic Major and Five Perceived Program Effects*

A MANOVA was conducted to determine differences in students' majors (arts, business, liberal arts, and science) with respect to the combined program outcomes. Prior to analyzing the statistical significance of the whole model, the Box's  $M$  test showed that equal variance cannot be assumed,  $M = 66.262$ ,  $F(45, 42863.66) = 1.406$ ,  $p<.05$ . Therefore, Pillai's Trace, a more robust statistic, was utilized as the test statistic (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). MANOVA results revealed significant program effect differences in the four majors, Pillai's Trace=0.13,  $F(15, 771)=2.41$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial multivariate  $\eta^2=.05$ . In the next step, descriptive discriminant analysis was used to identify the specific contribution to separate major group (arts, business, liberal arts, and science) across four levels. For that, the five dependent variables (language learning,

personal development, foreign connection, cultural immersion, and career development) served as predictors to separate the major group (arts, business, liberal arts, and science) which become dependent variables in discriminant analysis. The statistic test revealed that one out of three generated functions was significant,  $\Lambda = 0.87$ ,  $\chi^2 (5, N=265) = 35.70$ ,  $p < .05$ , indicating that the construct differentiating majors was primarily the cultural immersion scale, with a standardized canonical coefficient of 1.055. Later, univariate ANOVA results (see Table 7) were congruent with findings from discriminant analysis and suggested that major category significantly differed for cultural immersion ( $F(3, 263) = 6.43$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .07$ ) and career development ( $F(3, 263) = 2.75$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ ). Examination of Scheffé's post hoc analysis with a Bonferroni adjustment (.01 significance levels) revealed that art majors significantly differ from business and science majors in the cultural immersion dimension.

Table 7  
Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Program Effect Factors by Majors

Program Effects	Overall Mean	Majors				F- value (df = 263)
		Arts	Business	Liberal Arts	Science	
		-----Mean Agreement Score-----				
Language learning	3.80	3.64	3.99	3.82	3.63	2.58
Personal development	4.25	4.23	4.32	4.27	4.15	1.10
Foreign connection	3.94	3.83	4.04	3.91	3.92	0.70
Cultural immersion	4.65	4.38 <sub>a, b</sub>	4.73 <sub>a</sub>	4.64	4.73 <sub>b</sub>	6.43***
Career development	3.85	3.78	4.06	3.81	3.72	2.75*

Note: Overall agreement score was measured on a 5 point scale of 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. Means sharing the same subscript differ at  $p < 0.01$  in the Scheffé comparison, two-tailed.

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

The results shown in table 6 suggest that the cultural immersion effect significantly contributed to the discrimination across students' major groups and Scheffé's post hoc test indicated how four major means significantly differed from each other in an adjusted significant level (.01 instead of .05). Namely, business majors were more likely to favor cultural immersion

effect than arts major (4.73 vs. 4.38). Science majors also had significantly higher levels in perceived cultural immersion effects than arts majors did (4.73 vs. 4.38).

#### *Program Length and Five Perceived Program Effects*

As for the program length and effects, a one-way MANOVA was conducted to determine program period category differences in the combined five outcome factors. The program length has been categorized into three categories, short-term (one to four weeks), summer (four to twelve weeks), and semester-based (thirteen to fifty two weeks). Pillai's Trace was utilized as the test statistics (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002) since the equal variance could not be assumed based on the Box's *M* test,  $M = 54.893$ ,  $F(30,57514.95) = 1.765$ ,  $p < .05$ . MANOVA results (see Table 7) revealed that a significant difference in the five overall perceived program effect factors across three program length groups, Pillai's Trace = .10,  $F(10, 518) = 2.85$ ,  $p = .002$ , partial multivariate  $\eta^2 = .052$ . Descriptive discriminant analysis was used to identify the specific contribution to separate program length group across three levels. For that, the five dependent variables served as predictors to separate the program length group which became dependent variable in discriminant analysis. Discriminant analysis suggested that foreign connection and cultural immersion serve as the best discriminators to discriminate the program length category,  $\Lambda = 0.65$ ,  $\chi^2(5, N=265) = 110.87$ ,  $p < .05$ . Specifically, differences between length group levels were discriminated by the foreign connection, with a standardized canonical coefficient of .771, and the cultural immersions, with a standardized canonical coefficient of .280.

Later, univariate ANOVA indicated that mean differences of program period category were significant for foreign connection,  $F(2, 262) = 10.331$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .073$ , cultural immersion  $F(2, 262) = 3.712$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .028$ , and career development,  $F(2, 262) = 3.207$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .024$ .

The post hoc analysis (see Table 8) revealed that semester-based- program group was significantly more likely to agree that the program helps students develop foreign connections than summer program counterparts were (4.20 vs. 3.75). However, there is no significant mean difference between long-term and summer programs with respect to cultural immersion. This is not congruent with the results the discriminant analysis suggested. The possible reason for such discrepancy could be that this study adopts Bonferoni adjustments with the more conservative statistical significant level (.01 levels instead of .05 levels) to hold off the potential inflation in post hoc analysis.

Table 8  
Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) of Program Effect Factors by Program Length

Program Effects	Overall Mean	Program Length			F- value (df = 263)
		Short	Summer	Semester	
		-----Mean Agreement Score-----			
Language learning	3.80	3.71	3.85	3.76	0.72
Personal development	4.26	4.26	4.18	4.36	2.96
Foreign connection	3.94	3.95	3.75 <sub>a</sub>	4.20 <sub>a</sub>	10.33***
Cultural immersion	4.65	4.65	4.59	4.74	3.71*
Career development	3.86	3.68	3.80	4.00	3.21*

*Note:* Overall agreement score was measured on a 5 point scale of 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. Means sharing the same subscript differ at  $p < 0.01$  in the Scheffé comparison, two-tailed.

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

#### *Residency Location and Program Effects*

MANOVA was conducted to determine the residency location differences, including homestay, dormitory, and apartment, in the combined five program outcome factors. Pillai's Trace statistic was used to evaluate the significant relationship between residency location and effects since the equal variance could not be assumed, the Box's  $M$  test,  $M = 48.944$ ,  $F(30, 134789.0) = 1.583$ ,  $p < .05$ . MANOVA results revealed the combined effect difference among three residency options, Pillai's Trace = .31,  $F(10, 518) = 9.30$ ,  $p = .002$ , partial multivariate

$\eta^2=0.15$ . Based on univariate ANOVA, residency location category differences were significant for two effect variables, including language learning,  $F(2, 262)=42.57, p<.001$ , partial  $\eta^2=0.25$ , and personal development,  $F(2, 262)=3.04, p<.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=0.02$ . The post hoc analysis (see Table 9) revealed significant group differences in the language learning variable only, however. Discriminant analysis also indicated that language learning effect (with a standardized canonical coefficient of 1.002) served as the best variable to distinguish residency group across the three levels, homestay, dormitory, and apartment,  $\Lambda= 0.70, \chi^2(5, N=265)=91.47, p<.05$ . The post hoc analysis with Bonferroni adjustments also suggested that homestay group had a significantly higher mean value than the residency hall group (4.51 vs. 3.46) and the apartment group (4.51 vs. 3.73) in terms of perceived language learning effects. The homestay group was significantly more likely to perceive a language learning effect than the apartment or the dormitory counterparts.

Table 9  
Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Program Effect Factors by Residency Location

Program Effects	Overall Mean	Residency Location			F- value (df = 263)
		Residency Hall	Homestay	Apartment	
		-----Mean Agreement Score-----			
Language learning	3.80	3.46 <sub>a</sub>	4.51 <sub>a,b</sub>	3.73 <sub>b</sub>	42.57***
Personal development	4.26	4.30	4.10	4.31	3.04*
Foreign connection	3.94	4.03	3.87	3.89	1.16
Cultural immersion	4.65	4.68	4.65	4.64	0.25
Career development	3.86	3.96	3.84	3.76	2.04

*Note:* Overall agreement score was measured on a 5 point scale of 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly agree. Means sharing the same subscript differ at  $p < 0.01$  in the Scheffé comparison, two-tailed.

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

#### *Local Friendships and Program Effects*

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine mean differences of local friendship (with local friends and without local friends) on the five

combined program effects. Pillai's Trace was utilized as the test statistics since the equal variance could not be assumed in Box's  $M$  test,  $M = 27.069$ ,  $F(15,276815.4) = 1.768$ ,  $p < .05$ . Pillai's Trace is also identical to Hotelling's Trace for two-category group characteristics (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). MANOVA results revealed a significant difference in the five overall program effects across two local friendship categories, Pillai's Trace=.104,  $F(10, 518)=2.85$ ,  $p=.002$ , partial multivariate  $\eta^2=.052$ . Discriminant analysis also confirmed that these two program effects significantly differentiate two local friendship groups,  $\Lambda = 0.63$ ,  $\chi^2(5, N=265)=69.12$ ,  $p < .05$  including foreign connection with a standardized canonical coefficient of .598 and cultural immersion with a standardized canonical coefficient of .544. Univariate ANOVA with Bonferroni adjustments also provided congruent findings and indicated program period category differences were significant for two program effect variables, including foreign connection,  $F(2, 262)=10.33$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2=.073$ , and cultural immersion  $F(2, 262)=3.71$ ,  $p < .001$ . The differences of means across local friendship group in terms of language learning and cultural immersion are shown in Table 10. Participants who had local friends tended to endorse more positive perceived program effects in two categories, foreign connection and cultural immersion than those who did not have local friends (4.11 vs. 3.76; 4.74 vs.4.57).

Table 10  
Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) of Program Effect Factors by Local Friendship

Program Effects	Overall Mean	Friendship		F- value (df = 263)
		With Local Friends	Without Local Friends	
Language learning	3.80	3.83	3.78	0.23
Personal development	4.26	4.31	4.20	2.96
Foreign connection	3.94	4.11 <sub>a</sub>	3.76 <sub>a</sub>	15.16***
Cultural immersion	4.65	4.74 <sub>b</sub>	4.57 <sub>b</sub>	12.67***
Career development	3.86	3.95	3.75	4.86*

Note: Overall agreement score was measured on a 5 point scale of 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly agree. Means sharing the same subscript differ at  $p < 0.01$  in the Scheffé comparison, two-tailed.

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

## Discussion

### *The Five Program Effects*

This study examined the study abroad program effects by students' socio-demographic variable groups, including gender, years in school, majors, length of program, local friendship, and program residency arrangement. The first step of this study identified the program effects for analysis. Five program effects were extracted from the questionnaire pools and they were named as language learning, career development, cultural immersion, foreign connection, and personal development. These five program effects were consistent with previous findings about effects of studying abroad (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Carlson & Yachimowicz, 1987; DeKeyser 1986; Freed, 1995; Gmelch, 1997; Lennon, 1990; Milton & Meara, 1995; Prater, Barutia, Larkin, & Weaver, 1980; Walsh, 1994). In addition to identify program effects, I also evaluated the relationships between program effects and six indicators, including gender, years in school, academic majors, program length, program residency arrangement, and local friendships. It is surprised me that while the findings here suggested that gender and year in school were not significant indicators for five program effects, a number of previous studies found differences between five indicators and program effects. The details of findings are discussed in the following sections.

### *Gender and Program Effects*

This study indicated that there were no significant differences between males and females on the five program effects. Hence, there was no reason to conclude that the differences of program effects varied by gender. Such findings were not the same as an earlier study (Carlson & Widaman, 1988) that demonstrated significant differences between men and women in terms of their degree of cultural cosmopolitanism after the program. In that study, the findings

suggested that women show higher interest in foreign cultures, people, and language than the men do. A similar learning-oriented tourism study (Weaver & Lawton, 2002) suggested there is a difference between male and female travel behaviors: female travelers are more interested in the hands-on learning opportunity than males. However, the present study suggested the gender is not a statistically significant predictor with respect to the five program effects. One possible explanation is a gender-biased sample in this study, where 71 percent of total participants are female and 29 percent are male. Such sample characteristics might result in the lack of significant differences between male and female participants on five perceived program effects. However, such gender distribution was also identical with the reports from previous studies (Dolby, 2004; IIE, 2005) that two third of total program participants were females.

#### *Years in School and Program Effects*

As for year in school and program effects, this study indicated there were no significant differences among four age groups with respect to program effects. One possible reason was the limited span of age variety in participant population. This study only focused on the college students and the age ranged from 18 to 23 years old, which limited the possible variance in terms of their perceptions on program effects. From broader perspectives, other tourism-related studies which focused on the larger life span suggested that age would be a significant predictor for different travel preference and perceptions (Manning, 1983). The homogenous characteristic of the population under study here did not make a “year in college” become a significant predictor for the five program effects in this study. This study results suggested that the year in school would not be a good predictor for the study abroad program because of the homogeneity in the age distribution of informants.

*Academic Major and Program Effects*

In this study, academic major was a significant predictor for five program effects. Specifically, after the program, both business and science majors were more likely than arts majors to support cultural immersion effect. The findings suggested students' academic majors played a significant role in shaping cultural immersion intentions. Students who majored in science and business tended to immerse themselves into local cultures, which facilitated cultural learning. The art majors, however, probably focused on local artistic heritage and they were not as interested in current local cultures. The business major students were interested in understanding foreign cultures and they believed such first-hand interaction with local people would help them understand cultural differences between themselves and locals, which might serve as part of their groundwork to establish their world-wide connections in the future. They also believed visitation to foreign countries would be beneficial in increasing their skills and knowledge on how to conduct business after they graduated.

As for science-major students, they also demonstrated greater inclinations to understand foreign cultures than arts major counterparts because of their proximities to local communities. Most science-major students probably need to conduct field research during the program or they thought such learning opportunities were vital for their ability to work with people from different cultural and social backgrounds. Professional knowledge was not only required in field studies, but the cross-cultural communication skills were also key issues for interactions with foreign co-workers.

As compared with previous literature, Laubscher (1994) also observed that historic civilization exhibition visitations were the main purpose for art-major students and they might not be very interested in getting involved in local life. Another study (Carlson & Widaman,

1988) also stated that humanities majors seemed to endorse higher levels of international concerns than the other majors, which was different from this study result. Sutton and Rubin (2001) indicated, however, that regardless of whether or not they have study abroad experience, education majors have lower levels of academic outcomes in global interdependence knowledge than other majors. The present study suggested that program effects may vary in terms of academic majors. Therefore, it also implies that the study abroad programs might consider differences in academic major with respect to the specific effects.

#### *Program Length and Program Effects*

The statistical results revealed that the semester-based- program group is significantly more likely to agree that there is a foreign connection effect than their summer program counterpart is. Also, the results demonstrated curvilinear relationships between program length and four program effects (except language learning effect) although only one factor, foreign connection, was significant in the statistic test. Specifically, summer-based programs (four to twelve weeks) had the highest mean for the language learning effect, but the lowest one for three effects, personal development, foreign connection, and cultural immersion. The results were not congruent with my expectations that the shortest program should be the most different from the longest. Accordingly, the linear relationship should be expected between program length and program effects.

The study results demonstrated that students have a stronger inclination to return when they stay in local communities longer. Students' foreign connection depended upon how long they stayed in the host country. This study showed the significance of the long program period on students' retentions or connections to the new environment. The longer they stayed, the

stronger the bonds were that they form with the local community. This study confirmed that the extended program period helps students build strong relationships with locals.

However, the program length did not significantly differentiate their academic performances in this study. Students believed that they are more likely to focus on experiencing new environment and having in-depth relationships with locals than to pursue academic learning in a long study abroad program. Also, language differences did not become an obstacle to their contacts with local people and it explained that the long programs did not contribute to academic-related program effects on students after the program.

In comparison to the program length indicator in the study abroad literature, most researchers suggested a positive relationship between program length and participants' academic performance. Dwyer (2004) compiled all relevant studies about duration and effects and indicated that long-term programs facilitates more academic-learning effects on participants than short-term programs do. More specifically, Fraser (2002) and Hoffman-Hicks (2000) proposed that the variety of program length influences and shapes the foreign language acquisition. Carlson et al. (1990) stated that program length influences foreign language proficiency. Long-term programs exert significantly more language learning effects than short-term programs (Allen, 2002); the present study, however, suggested that the year-based program had more effect on foreign connections than the summer counterpart. As noted earlier, foreign connections were defined as psychological attachment to foreign people and places. The students tended to report that the longer program length made them feel more a part of the local community than the short-term program. The previous studies supported that the longer program length contributes to higher levels of perceived language development; however, this study did not significantly endorse the perception of foreign language learning effect in the long-term

programs even perceived proficient foreign language would be an important variable to increase the interaction levels with local hosts (Aveni, 2005; Person-Evans, 2006).

### *Residency and Program Effects*

This study suggested that different residency arrangements have significant effects on the degree of foreign learning. The homestay group was significantly more likely to support the language learning effect than either the apartment group or the dorm residency group. In this study, there were three types of residency arrangements, including homestay with a host family, campus dormitory, and campus apartment. In homestay arrangements, students had more interactive activities with local residents than with the other options since they needed to use foreign language as a communication tool to satisfy their immediate and basic living needs. Under such a context, learning a foreign language is one of the direct and significant program effects. As for campus dormitory and apartment options, students might not have such situations to use a foreign language as a living tool since they might live with students from the same country. This study rebutted the observations made by Sutton and Rubin (2001) and suggested the context factor such as residency arrangement was a significant and positive indicator for personal perceived language learning effect.

The academically focused program, which may offer classes in English and roommates who are American, might allow students to live in an “environmental bubble.” Those students might not think language learning is the first priority in their trip. However, for those who focused on the language learning effect, the homestay arrangement with host families was a better strategy for foreign language acquisition than staying in a campus dormitory or apartment. As previous studies suggested, the hosts are not simply a food or shelter supplier, but also are linguistic and cultural teachers or tutors (Hull & Lemke, 1978; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart,

2002). Literature suggested that the native-speaking environment facilitates the progress in foreign language proficiency (Dekeyser, 1991; Law, 2003). When compared to local friendship factors on program effects, the findings suggested that living with hosts had more direct effects on foreign language learning than making friends with locals, which is identical to the previous studies. This study proposed that the residency arrangement influence students' language learning performance. Staying with foreign residents was an effective way to advance their achievements in their foreign language acquisition.

#### *Local Friendships and Program Effects*

As the data analysis indicated, local friendships had explicit influences on two program effects, foreign connection and cultural immersion. Local friends served as part of the important intervention to help students understand the local culture and experience new environment as this study demonstrated. Most participants believed that they would have an in-depth understanding of local ways of life and environment and that such a situation also suggests that locals and students did not have minimum language barrier as they communicate with each other. As students increased their levels of interaction with local hosts, they used their closer connections with local people to broaden their foreign connections during the program. They had affective relationships with local hosts and hoped to return to the country again in the future. Also, due to such close interactions with local people, students also began to better understand local cultures and ways of life.

In the current study, students reported that such friendships became the foundation for affective relationships with locals and cultural learning. Academic or language learning was not one of their main concerns in this study. Local friendships seemed to promote cultural awareness and appreciation of the foreign cultures, which made students immerse themselves into foreign

life and attach themselves to local communities. The significant relationship between local friendships and language learning effects were not substantial in this study.

Local friendships did not significantly contribute to student's academic knowledge or their language proficiency in this study. Language learning did not have significant program effects as previous studies suggested. As previous linguistic studies suggested, maintaining relationship with local hosts increases foreign language proficiency (Aveni, 2005; Jackson, 2006). Intensive conversations with local friends were a very effective way to increase foreign language skills (Segalowitz et al, 2004). However, this study suggested most participants significantly agreed that the programs increased the effects on foreign connection and cultural immersion.

In sum, this study demonstrated some results that differ from previous studies, possibly due to the population characteristics. Business and science majors had higher levels in foreign cultural learning than art majors; other studies suggested that liberal-art students were more interested in foreign cultures than other majors. Also, having local friendships and attending long-period study abroad programs contribute to broadening foreign experience. Finally, the study results suggested that homestay residency becomes the most effective way for foreign learning among three different residency options. Some previous studies assumed that friend-making is the most prominent advantage of the homestay option.

### Conclusion and Implications

Dolby (2007) stated that study abroad programs demonstrate colleges' or universities' commitments to an internationalized global education. This current study is the first step toward comprehensively understanding of study abroad effects and the differences among students in terms of six indicators, including gender, year in school, program length, program residency, and

local friendships. To some surprise, gender and year in school were not significant predictors of differences in five program effects. It may be caused by the sample characteristics and were incongruent with previous study findings. However, this might be a self-selection issue in that females are more likely to participate in a survey and share their own opinions than their male counterparts.

This study is also a response to a call from Ritchie (2003) that the study of educational tourism was disproportionately small compared with its fast growth all over the world. This study detailed how participants' characteristics and program features influence program outcomes. However, future studies with modifications might be considered in order to obtain additional information. First, a qualitative inquiry might be utilized to obtain an in-depth understanding of how program effects influence students' lives. Such inquiry might offer more insights on how programs shape students' perceptions after program. Ethnographic study might be one option for such inquiry since it can provide close observations on program influences. Secondly, an experimental research design could be applied to locate the true cause-effect relationship by controlling other factors. This study did not have a control group nor pre-and post-measurements that would permit a comparison of the difference between a study abroad group and an at-home group before and after a program. Finally, more longitudinal studies might be utilized to understand some long-term effects on participants' lives since such internationalized experience might dominate participant's future lifestyle.

As for curriculum development, college officials or program planners also might consider how to design a personalized program for students. Five perceived program effects have been identified in this study and these results will help college officials understand more precisely how these effects influence students' academic and personal development. For example, for a

language learning-oriented program, the homestay arrangement has been shown to be one of the most effective ways for foreign language acquisition. Moreover, students should be encouraged to make local friends who are willing to communicate in the home language, so that they might improve their language proficiency. In this study, with very limited language barrier, local friendships helped students increase their intercultural understanding and foreign connections. However, it would not significantly assist student's foreign language learning. My findings suggested that academic-related learning is not the main core or the most important part of the study abroad program and future programs should be designed according to students' needs. Such unique learning opportunities grant students circumstances in which to acquire knowledge which is not available in the traditional classroom. Program planners should customize the programs to maximize positive effects on students. In addition, as study abroad programs are integrated into higher education systems, college officials might be aware of their effects on students. For example, they might consider other ways to use study abroad programs to create a world classroom to bridge between abstract concepts and concrete experience.

Finally, this study has management implications for local hosts. Study abroad programs might advocate local community development. For example, Munoz and Ritchie (2003) studied the relationship between the study tour program and local economic development in England. They concluded that the study abroad program with the longer stay contributes to all-year-round economic growth and significantly promotes tourism destinations. In light of the possibility of macro local-program interactions, it might be another program effect to consider in a future study with respect to long-term economic impacts on local communities. Since the cross-sectional design used here used only a very specific subset of a population of items at a single point in time, the findings in this study have limited external validity and

findings are delimited to a northeastern university program. Therefore, caution should be taken when applying these findings to other similar study abroad programs.

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## ORIENTATION TO CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 is a stand-alone section in my dissertation and it serves as a manuscript for a future publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The purpose of chapter 4 is to examine the interrelationship among five program effects. Specifically, this chapter is guided by the following six research hypotheses:

- H1. Language learning is significantly and positively related to cultural immersion.
- H2. Cultural immersion is significantly and positively related to foreign interaction.
- H3. Language learning is significantly and positively related to foreign interaction.
- H4. Foreign interaction is significantly and positively related to personal growth.
- H5. Personal growth is significantly and positively related to career plan.
- H6. Foreign interaction is significantly and positively related to career plan.

This study is considered to be an extension of the previous study with respect to the program effects. Six hypotheses were examined to determine whether there was or was not a significant relationship between factors. Nevertheless, this study did not take the characteristics of participants and programs into consideration since the primary objective of this study was to examine the interrelationship among five program effects. I utilized exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling in order to model their relationships. I also proposed two program effect models based on these six hypotheses, an intercultural connection (hypothesis 1, 2, 3) and a personal progress (hypothesis 4, 5, 6). They were examined in this chapter, too.

## CHAPTER 4

## An Empirical Examination of the Structure of the Effects of Study Abroad Programs

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore models for program effects of studying abroad at a northeastern university. For that, I conducted an intensive literature review, empirically examined a sample of 265 participants and culminated in a proposal of two models of study abroad program effects. In order to determine the best model-of-fitness, three statistical modeling procedures including Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were utilized. Two models, intercultural connection and personal progress, were examined in this study. In the intercultural connection model, cultural immersion is a significant mediator for the linear relationships between language learning and foreign interaction. Foreign language learning orientations influence how participants learn about hosts' cultures and the degree to which they interact depends on the extent participants immerse themselves into local cultural life. In the personal progress model, personal growth effects partially mediate the relationships between foreign interactions and career plans. Being independent increases personal growth and the direction of future career life while foreign experience or interactions also affected such future career considerations. These findings suggested that study abroad program effects might be related to each other and so the proposed models verified their relationships in this study. Implications for theory and practice were provided based on the findings in this study.

## Introduction

In 2005, the Institution of International Education (IIE) listed nearly three thousand short-term study abroad programs offered by American universities and foreign institutions around the world (IIE, 2005). In the United States, the number of students who participated in study abroad programs reached 174,629, a nearly 145 percent increase in the number of study abroad programs since 1991 (IIE, 2004). The rising number of students participating in study abroad programs suggests that students want to experience different cultures firsthand. In the larger tourism industry, learning-centered activities have surpassed purely pleasure-oriented passive activities (Krippendorff, 1987). Smith and Jenner (1997) observed the trends in tourism development and suggested that leisure-education hybrid activities have recently become an important part of tourists' experience.

Travel has served as an effective way to learn for centuries. Although study abroad programs have recently become very popular, the notion of the educational benefits of travel is not a new concept. For example, the "Grand Tour" was very popular in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, where British aristocrats took this tour to France and Italy for knowledge acquisitions and family connection establishments. Nowadays, the study abroad program offers a useful platform for participants' destination language improvement, cultural knowledge, knowledge and growth (Chickering & Reisser, 1983; Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Pickert, 1992).

The growing number of study abroad participants suggests that studying abroad has become an important way for students to advance knowledge and personal growth. Studying abroad makes use of various authentic learning contexts to help people become citizens in the modern global village (Var & Ap, 1998). The assumption is that such exchange programs, which allow students to share thoughts and feelings with local hosts, will yield specific effects on the

students, including language learning, personal development, cultural understanding, foreign interactions, and career plans.

Since studying abroad has become a topic for tourism research, the claimed effects should be examined and justified, so that programs may even more effectively meet college students' development. Additionally, it was worthwhile to investigate the dynamic connections and relationships among program effects in order to determine how the program effects influence each other since previous studies have only focused on substantial program effects on students.

### Literature Review

#### *Program Effects*

Gonsalves (as cited in Macleod, 1998, p.151) suggested that tourism could serve as a “means of education, cross-cultural communication and the development of meaningful relationships”. Pearce and Foster (2007) proposed the “University of Travel” concept as they surveyed backpackers and they concluded that traveling out of one’s hometown serves as an alternative and effective way for knowledge inquiry. The effects of studying abroad have been examined from different disciplinary approaches. For example, studies have demonstrated that significant effects of studying abroad included an increase in world-mindedness, sympathy with people in the world, and personal development of autonomy and self-esteem (Gwynne, 1981; Nash, 1976; Pyle, 1981; Rose, 1969). Jackson (2006) observed students from Hong Kong studying abroad in England and reported that six evident benefits from the programming include: linguistic improvement, cultural connection, appreciation of cultural differences, sense of independence, sense of adventure, and openness to a new world. Kauffman, Martin, Furthermore, Weaver and Weaver (1992) stated educational abroad program advance intellectual/academic development, expand international perspectives, and heighten personal

development. Talburt and Stuart (1999) have suggested that students show significant gains after participating in programs. More specifically, programs help students increase their knowledge of foreign cultures and local societies, improve second language proficiency, and increase their social competence. Some studies claimed that after participating in a study abroad program, students increase their cultural knowledge, advance their destination language proficiency, and enhance their personal social skills (Carlson, Burn, Ussem and Yachimowicz, 1990; Opper, Teichler, Carlson, 1990). Most recently, Black and Duhon (2006) conducted a quasi-experimental study on the study abroad program effects and suggested that post-program students have significantly higher levels of tolerance, self-confidence, sense of independence, and openness. The following section explored the previous studies and summarized the most updated developments of the effects of study abroad programs in terms of five perspectives, academic/language learning, cultural immersion, personal growth, foreign interaction, and career development. Also, I reviewed some alternative comments and conclusions in order to offer a big picture for all possible effects.

#### *Study Abroad and Academic/Language Learning*

From an academic learning perspective, study abroad programs offer an opportunity to link classroom theory to out-of-classroom reality. The learning model researchers have utilized in the study abroad context has been identical to the learning strategies of experiential learning. Experiential learning allows students to construct their own knowledge structure via their first-hand experience. Coincidentally, experiential learning is popular in college geography, history, biology and management programs (Ritchie, 2003). Coleman (1976) and Steinberg (2002) affirmed the findings of experiential learning theorists and practitioners (Dewey, 1963; Freire 1971) when they suggested that experiential learning helps students integrate their educational

experiences into their lives. Experiential learning theory has been widely applied to study abroad programs, field trips, and the development of international curricula (Laubscher, 1994). This theory explains how students learn abstract concepts from their concrete out-of-class experience (Laubscher, 1994). More specifically, Sutton and Rubin (2001) conducted a comparison of the learning effects of study abroad programs on participants and non-participants and suggested that the study abroad group have higher academic achievement than the at-home group in four learning areas, including functional knowledge, knowledge of world geography, knowledge of global interdependence, and knowledge of cultural relativism. However, such results might be confounded by personal self-selection. More specifically, it may be that higher achieving students are more likely to choose to study abroad.

As for foreign language development, scholars rank it as the first priority for studying abroad and scholars believe that the authentic language learning environment is a significant factor for successful second language acquisition (Carlson & Yachimowicz, 1987; Prater, Barutia, Larkin, & Weaver, 1980). It is assumed that the study abroad context increases students' second language acquisition (Jackson, 2006). Linguistic studies have shown that study abroad learning contexts help participants to increase their vocabulary (DeKeyser, 1986; Lennon, 1990; Milton & Meara, 1995; Walsh, 1994) and oral proficiency (Freed, 1995; Lafford, 1995).

Carlson, Burn, Ussem and Yachimowicz (1990) suggested that American college students who previously studied in Europe demonstrate substantial language gains after they return from abroad. However, it is uncertain whether students who study in non-European areas achieved similar results or not. As for the language learning effect, it is an important part of study abroad programs because it facilitates an authentic foreign language environment and enables participants to converse with local hosts (Laubscher 1994). Segalowitz, Freed,

Collentine, Lafford, Lazar, and Diaz-Canpos (2004) compared two different learning contexts for Spanish second language acquisition, a domestic classroom and a study abroad program, and concluded that study abroad students made significant progress in terms of oral proficiency and communication skills. The at-home group, however, had more significant gains in their ability to analyze grammar than the study abroad group. As previous findings suggested, academic and language learning effects are significant program effects and are the main reason for participating study abroad program.

#### *Travel Abroad and Cultural Immersion*

Goodenough (1957) claimed that “A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them (p. 167).” Through study abroad programs, such inter-group interactions are one effective way to learn about different cultures or ways of life. Liu et al. (1987) reported that over 50 percent of those surveyed agree that tourism could boost cultural exchange and learning and thereby effectively foster cross-cultural appreciation and challenge stereotypes. The study abroad participants learn to understand the different culture through the information exchange platform, tourism. Such intensive interactions with local residents make program participants become intimately familiar with the host culture. (Carlson et al., 1990; Hill, 1987; Laubscher, 1994; Milleret, 1991; Opper, Teicheler, & Carlson, 1990; Riedel, 1989; Roberts, 1994; Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 2000; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995). Abrams (1979) argued that intimate interaction in travel increases inter-cultural understandings as diverse people try to get along with each other.

Carlson and Widaman (1988) conducted experimental studies and compared the program effects of study abroad and at-home groups. They suggested that study abroad programs help students increase cross-cultural interests and senses. Through experiential learning and cross-cultural contact, studying abroad facilitates personal growth and understanding of culture, life, and self (Gmelch, 1997). In addition, the study abroad evaluation project (SAEP) study (Carlson et al., 1990) showed that participants increase their knowledge of the host country's cultural life, customs and traditions, and social structure.

The levels of global cultural awareness and intercultural understanding will gradually increase as study abroad programs create opportunities for intercultural contact (Lutterman-Aguillar & Gingerich, 2002). The students also increase their levels of cultural sensitivity by interacting with local hosts. Through contacts, students become aware of how local people live and immersed themselves in local culture. It also makes students take a more critical view of themselves. For example, Armstrong (1984) found that American college students changed their stereotypes of Mexico and Mexicans and increased their cross-cultural knowledge.

Overwhelmingly, previous literature and current research validates the presence of cultural learning effects.

#### *Study Abroad and Personal Growth*

One of the supported program effects on students is significant personal growth in terms of an increase in autonomy and self-esteem (Gwynne, 198; Nash, 1976; Pyle, 1981; Rose, 1969). Hadis (2005) studied the effects of study abroad programs and concluded that the programs help students be independent and open to world cultures. Students indicate that personal growth ranks as the most important gain during study abroad (Ehrenreich, 2006). Program participants tend to have higher levels of self-confidence, maturation, and tolerance of ambiguity than their

counterparts (Dwyer, 2004). An increasing sense of independence is a direct result of students' experiences dealing with challenges and difficulties during the program.

Studies of the relationship between study abroad programs and their impact on personal development demonstrate that these programs increase participants' autonomy, independence, self-confidence, and tolerance of differences (Laubscher, 1994). Gmelch (1997) concluded that since students learn how to solve problems and cope with psychological and environmental changes, the personal growth is even more prominent than academic or professional growth. Students gain a sense of self-independence and adapt themselves into a new environment. Other studies (Hansel, 1988; Stitsworth, 1988) also found that studying abroad increases a student's self-confidence and helps them become familiar with an international environment. As literature suggests, experience in studying abroad helps participants increase their personal growth. However, self-selection may play a significant role; participants may have a high level of self-independence even before they join the program.

#### *Foreign Interactions and Program Effects*

Close relationships or psychological attachments with local hosts are an interesting part of the studying abroad experience and such interactions also contribute to intercultural understanding and stereotype reduction (Allport, 1954; Carlson & Widaman, 1998; Cook, 1984; Gareis, 2000; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Stangor, Klaus, Stroebe & Hewstone, 1996). Since study abroad students have intensive interactions with host peers, it increases their opportunities for in-depth understandings of local culture. For instance, Gardner and Burnett (2006), who analyzed how Chinese study abroad students adapted themselves into university life in England, suggested that participants had different program perceptions depending on how they interacted with local people. The foreign interactions may trigger other program effects, for example, social

interactions with local residents which yield a chance for cultural awareness between students and hosts during the program (Astin, 1993). Pearson-Evans (2006) even suggested that a social network with local friends or companion may help students ease the transition from their home culture into their host culture during program. The loss of their immediate family ties or friends at home is made significantly easier through building networks with local host families.

However, some studies show less optimistic results and caution that some students only develop superficial relationship with local hosts because they prefer to make friends with program companions instead (McKinlay, Pattinson, & Cross., 1996; Nesdale & Todd, 1993).

#### *Study Abroad and Career Development*

Study abroad programs also help students obtain career advantages. Carlson et al. (1990) suggested that overseas learning experiences might increase students' success on the job market, and provide students with a chance to consider overseas employment. Also, studying abroad experiences might change students' values or attitudes, which may influence their short and long-term career objectives (Hadis, 2005). As for the long-term effects, Kauffman, Martin, Weaver, and Weaver (1992) suggested that after being exposed to foreign cultures and societies, program participants are more likely to apply for jobs in transnational corporations. Some international businesses also emphasize overseas experience as a desired qualification on their job announcements (Hannigan, 2001). Additionally, after studying abroad, students also often demonstrate an increase in their interest in an internship in foreign countries (Dwyer 2004). The pilot study results also supported that career consideration is one of the most prominent program effects. Students stated that the international experience significantly influences how they view their future career and such experience can not be obtained at their home environment.

*Other Alternative Points and Comments*

While many researchers recognize that study abroad programs have various effects in enhancing academic/language learning, cultural understanding, career development, personal growth, and foreign interaction, others had different opinions and questioned the salience of the effects of cultural and knowledge learning in study abroad programs. Wilkinson (1998) stated that the unexpected language barrier and the short-length of a study abroad program did not contribute to cultural knowledge and mutual understanding in her study of a program in France. Furthermore, Pickert (1992) and Milleret (1991) suggested that the effects of language and cultural learning are hard to identify for the short-term programs.

In addition, from a general tourism perspective, Bruner (1991) also suggested that, ideally, tourism fosters cultural understanding and personal growth, but it is hard to support this possibility with actual travelers' experiences. Askjellerud (2003) and Litvin (2003) doubted that tourism or travel eases stereotypes or increases cultural understanding. Gartner and Bachti (as cited in Litvin, 1994) also stated that tourism does not promote intercultural understanding. In Pizam's four studies (1996) on the effects of travel contact, little empirical evidence justifies the contact's function in fostering cultural or mutual understanding.

Tomljenovic and Faulkner (2001) compared the Croatian and Australian cases and suggested that a study tour may increase foreign cultural understanding, but it can also have negative effects if itineraries and programs are not well-designed. Despite questions about the program's effects, some researchers still recognized that study abroad programs contribute to students' language competency, cultural knowledge development and personal growth as they affirm what students learn during programs and studying abroad arouse students' interests in that

area (Hill, 1987; Laubscher, 1994; Milleret, 1991; Riedel, 1989; Roberts, 1994; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995).

Based on the previous literature review, most studies suggested that studying abroad programs facilitates five program effects: learning, cultural immersion, personal growth, foreign interactions, and career development. The study tends to identify all possible results as the first step to establish a solid basis for future literature reviews on the interrelationships among these five program effects.

### *Interrelations of Program Effects*

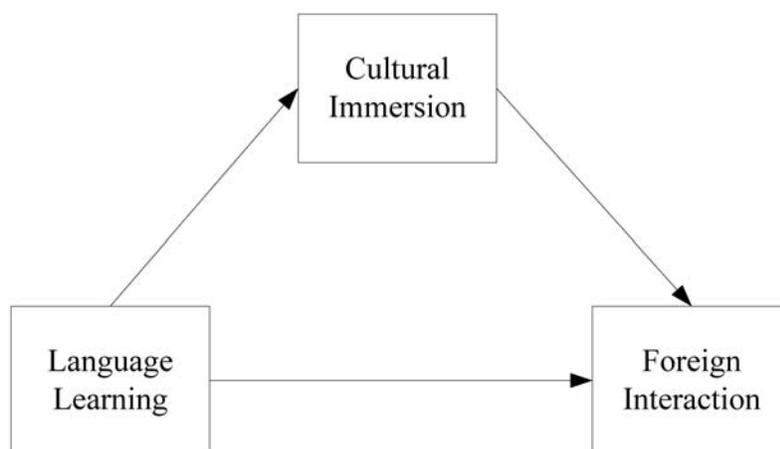
As the previous literature review suggested, studying abroad programs facilitate five program effects: learning, cultural immersion, personal growth, foreign interactions, and career development. Unfortunately, few of these studies discussed the interrelationships among program effects. Some researchers, however, argued that there are some relationships among program effects and the following section reviewed the relevant literature. Since this study focused on conceptualizing the interrelationships among program effects, I substantiated the degree to which the components of each model were present in the current literature and I proposed two types of interrelation models in the following section. The first model, the intercultural connection model, demonstrates how students' personal advancement in language skills and their cultural knowledge influence their relationships with local hosts. The second model, the personal progress relation model, proposes how students' interactions with locals contribute to their personal growth and career development. In these two models, foreign interaction is a common factor for both models since foreign interaction is a prevailing phenomenon in study abroad context (Astin, 1993; Cluett, 2002; Pearson-Evans, 2006). Also, these two models also suggested that some factors contributed to foreign interaction and foreign

interaction would be one of the contributors for specific factor. That is, foreign interaction is a common aspect of the two proposed models. As discussed in this section, previous findings substantiated the two models I propose.

### *Intercultural Connection Model*

In the program effect model, it is assumed that there is relationship between language learning, cultural immersion, and foreign interaction. Figure 2 illustrates the relationships among these three program effects. The Intercultural connection model suggests that language learning and cultural immersion have a direct relationship to foreign interaction, and that language learning is also the determinant for cultural immersion. The following section discusses the relationships among these three program effects.

Figure 2  
Proposed Model 1: Intercultural Connection Model



### *Language learning and cultural immersion*

In this model, there is positive relationship between language learning and cultural immersion. Language learning is the antecedent to cultural immersion. Var and Ap (1998) conducted studies on travelers from six countries and suggested that foreign language skills facilitate cultural learning. They observed that people with higher language skills seem to

endorse learning in foreign cultures. Foreign language skills have been documented to contribute to cultural understanding for a long time (Kim, 1988). The results from other studies also suggested that the cultural immersion effect is dependent on participants' foreign language skills (Pearson-Evans, 2006). Jackson (2006) suggested that an authentic language learning environment is the critical factor for intercultural learning and helps students become immersed into local life.

In contrast, in a study on an exchange program in France, Wilkinson (1998) discovered that certain factors including a short-length of stay and unexpected language barriers interfere with the development of cultural knowledge and mutual understanding. Such result suggested that foreign language skills are an effective determinant for cultural immersion. The results from the pilot study also confirmed that the proficiency level of foreign language had a positive relationship with the level of cultural immersion, which helped students get involved into local life.

#### *Cultural immersion and foreign interaction*

As for the relationship between cultural immersion and foreign interactions, previous literature indicated that their relationship is reciprocal instead of one way. In-depth cultural learning and immersion influences participants' relationships with local hosts (Pearson-Evans, 2006). As Pearson-Evans showed in their study of Irish students who studied abroad in Japan, students tended to immerse themselves into some Japanese cultural customs first. Later, local people might treat them as part of their community and then participants could establish relationships with locals. Cultural immersion was the antecedent for the foreign interaction as the pilot study suggested. Some participants indicated that cultural learning helped them to shorten distances to local hosts and it deepened their relationships with locals. Such cultural learning or

immersion helped them to build social networks and close relationships with hosts. The homestay residency option was an example for such relationships (Cluett, 2002).

As previous literature suggested, there was a close relationship between cultural immersion and foreign interactions. In sum, arguments about the relationship between cultural immersion and foreign interaction will be settled by statistical validation procedures in the data analysis part of this study.

#### *Language learning and foreign interaction*

Language learning and advancement play a critical role in foreign interactions. Jackson (2006) stated that students' linguistic improvements are motivated by their intentions of interacting with local people and establishing relationships with local hosts. Students try to establish relationships with local people or host family members by conversing with these native speakers. Through such occasions, students learn how to start a conversation with hosts in their daily life. Interacting with locals would grant students opportunities to make progress in their oral expression and listening skills both in informal and casual occasions.

When students become more and more proficient in their foreign language, they may also feel comfortable enough to establish friendships with locals. Moreover, foreign language proficiency is the key for successful social activities and foreign interactions. Furthermore, it also helps students move from the sense of being a stranger to a feeling of similarity between themselves and their hosts (Papatsiba, 2006). As study abroad program participants increase their exposure to local culture, they create the close social networks and close relationship necessary to fully advance their second language skills (Campell, 1996; Isabelli-Garcia, 2006; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Levin, 2001).

On the contrary, the unsophisticated foreign language learner may be discouraged from interacting with locals. Aveni (2005) did observations on such situations and indicated that students have negative attitudes towards local hosts if there are misunderstandings or misconceptions caused by their own incompetent foreign language skills. As Person-Evans (2006) suggested, foreign language skills are an important way to help students build and maintain their own social networks with locals.

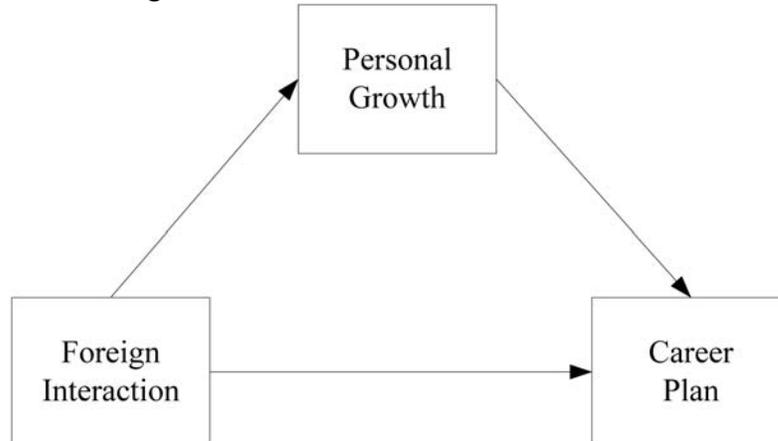
In sum, I integrated the current literature and proposed the first model for the future statistical tests and it is named as intercultural connection, which elucidated the interrelationships among language learning, cultural immersion, and foreign interaction.

#### *Personal Progress Relationship Model*

Later, I proposed another model to describe the interrelationships among foreign interaction, personal growth, and career plans. As for the relationships among foreign interaction, personal growth, and career plans, the current literature barely located such relationships. However, some researchers examined certain of these relationships in this model and suggested the degree to which the relationships among three variables are present in the current literature. Such findings evidently served as basis for establishing the personal progress effect model. The theoretical model I proposed is shown in figure 3 and it aims to illustrate how three program effects may be related to each other.

In addition, the foreign interaction is a part of both models but these two models are distinct in this study since they focus on different topics, intercultural connection and personal progress. The following section discusses the relationships among foreign action, personal growth, and career plans.

Figure 3  
Proposed Model 2: Personal Progress Model



*Foreign interactions and personal growth*

Gray, Murdock, and Stebbins (2002) examined study abroad effects and suggested that interaction with foreign hosts contributes to personal growth such as perceived independence and self-confidence. Students stated that they achieve an increased sense of independence, which comes from their experience dealing with challenges and difficulties during program. Furthermore, students believe such international experience helps them increase their advantage in the current internationalized career market. Gmelch (1997) observed that students who had previously studied in Austria had indicated that living in a foreign environment helps students to learn how to cope with psychological and physical changes. This kind of experience facilitates personal growth during program. Students show higher levels of independence than before as they adapt themselves into the unfamiliar living environment in some cases (Hansel, 1988; Stitsworth, 1988). Kauffman et al. (1992) also indicated that personal advancement is related to intercultural adaptation levels. Calvin (1999) conducted a study of second language acquisition in Wales and concluded that the ability to communicate with local hosts increases students' self-confidence and positive attitude toward language learning.

In addition, Hensley and Sell (1979) found close contacts with local people contribute to higher levels of students' self-esteem, an important part of personal development. Such growth effects are also confirmed in Wilkinson's study (1998) which showed that living with local people increases students' independence since students must live on their own. Jackson (2006) found that students gain a sense of confidence in intercultural encounters and independence in their life even though they feel anxious and disappointed at the very beginning of the program. Such out-of-classroom experiences contribute to the increased sense of autonomy, independence, and self-confidence as Laubscher (1994) observed program participants in a northeastern university. Papatsiba (2006) confirmed that studying abroad is a possible way to achieve a sense of autonomy and independence.

#### *Personal growth and career plan*

As for the relationship between personal growth and career plan, there is little study abroad literature that has discussed whether personal growth such as independence and confidence would contribute to students' future career options or not. However, from a labor or work force management perspective, personal characteristics or attitude would be an indicator of possible career choices. In this study, career plan effects not only refer to objective career opportunities but also subjective internal sense of working life (Suutari & Taka, 2004). Arthur and Roussen (1999) stated that career plans or choices depend on people's perceptions and their personal characteristics. In the career anchor theory, Schein (1996) explained how working preferences influence personal work and work environment and argued such anchor or personal characteristics are the internal force that helps people to decide their personal future career.

Self-perceived talents, such as professional knowledge or personal values, are part of personal career anchors for future working life (Barth 1993; Feldman & Bolino, 2000). Sense of

autonomy and independence makes people move to different career options such as overseas positions. As Schein (1990) stated, people with an independence anchor like to work at their own pace and therefore try to work at institutions or agencies that allow maximum freedom. Also, their international experience increases their own professional competencies and increases their adaptation levels to a multicultural working environment. In the qualitative study conducted by Suutari and Taka (2004), they also concluded that in a global context, internationalism is an important career anchor that provides key employment advantages. Such literature supported the idea that personal growth effects have a relationship with career plans and such career plans simultaneously consider tangible employment opportunities and personal career preferences.

#### *Foreign interactions and career plan*

As for other possible relationships between foreign interaction and career plans, some literature suggested that such relationships exist in the studying abroad context. Carlson et al. (1990) argued that career development is a significant reason for why students participate in study abroad programs. Experience interacting with local hosts might change students' values or attitudes and might influence career objectives or orientations (Hadis, 2005). Research also confirmed that due to their exposure to foreign cultures and programs program participants tend to have the career orientation toward international corporations (Hannigan, 2001). Students who have studied abroad before are more likely to consider opportunities in the global market. Theoretically, such relationships between foreign interaction and career plans exist. However, the empirical examination procedures will validate program effect relationships in this model through structural equation modeling.

Based on the literature review, I proposed the second model to illustrate the relationships among foreign interaction, personal growth, and career development. It is a personal progress

model which focuses on whether foreign interactions during programs will contribute to personal growth and personal career development or not.

### Research Purpose

Researchers (Bywater, 1993; Smith & Jenner, 1997) suggested that research on study abroad programs has been disproportionately low as compared to the fast growth of educational tourism. The fast growth in study abroad program may grant more opportunities for empirical examinations on program effects. The purpose of this study was to establish models for the educational abroad program effects. The literature suggested that studying abroad may produce various program effects including learning a language, learning academic subjects, growing personally or professionally, immersing oneself in the culture and interacting with hosts.

However, the previous studies did not sufficiently justify and substantiate the relationships among the possible program effects. Specifically, the antecedents or determinants of program effects have not been examined empirically and the reviewed literature does not sufficiently identify the relationship among the effects. The education abroad literature suggested that language learning and culture learning are the most prominent effects of studying abroad and they might influence other program outcomes such as foreign interaction, personal growth, and career plans. This purpose of study was to investigate the interrelationships among five program effects and justify two proposed 3-dimension models in a study abroad context: intercultural connection model and personal progress model. The following hypotheses guide this study:

Intercultural connection model:

Hypothesis 1: Language learning is significantly and positively related to cultural immersion.

Hypothesis 2: Cultural immersion is significantly and positively related to foreign interaction.

Hypothesis 3: Language learning is significantly and positively related to foreign interaction.

Personal progress model:

Hypothesis 4: Foreign interaction is significantly and positively related to personal growth

Hypothesis 5: Personal growth is significantly and positively related to career plan

Hypothesis 6: Foreign interaction is significantly and positively related to career plan.

### Study Abroad Programs

Bodger (1992) defined the educational travel or a study tour as “a program in which participants travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location” (p. 28). Smith (1997; 2001) stated that traveling is a kind of behavior in which one leaves home for the purpose of experiencing a change. In this way, one can gain knowledge about exotic ways of life and mentally and physically experience different sights and sounds (Wyllie, 2001). In the past, the “Grand Tour” of Europe, a trend among educated English people from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Gartner, 1996). The Grand Tour is the harbinger of current educational abroad programs and it exposes participants to diverse languages, arts, and cultures for their knowledge needs (Kalinowski & Weiler, 1992; Nash, 1979) through their interactions with the local peoples of different cultures. Moreover, such education tours also have their byproducts; the British aristocrats can expand their connections and establish formal relationship with other European royal families during their trip (Towner, 1985).

The Grand Tour has become the protocol of the modern study abroad program in modern colleges or universities. In earlier times, people participated in study abroad programs not only for their personal knowledge advancement, but also to benefit their career, health, and political interests (Towner, 1985). They expected to be educated during their trip to historical European cities, to learn knowledge from the foreign people and places, to experience their history, and to

gain firsthand and vivid insights (Harrison, 2003). Those elites treated the Grand Tour as a tool to enhance their knowledge, to establish their connections abroad, to present their family's reputation and to prepare their future career (Brown, 1997; Stagl, 1995).

Specifically, the typical education tour itinerary consisted of a circuited trip around France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland and such a tour was considered to be the proof of a high quality education (Gunn, 1997). The tour began in Britain, followed by a visit to Paris and the court at Versailles, and then to the antiquities of the lower Rhone valley followed by a tour of cities of northern Italy, including Turin, Milan, and Venice (Towner, 1985). Florence, Rome, and Naples were three of the most popular and important locations for grand tour participants about three hundred years ago.

Nowadays, the aristocratic educational travel or study abroad program has evolved into a sophisticated competitive industry and it is also independent of modern mass tourism. The rapid increase in the demand side illustrates how the study abroad program is so important to the current higher education and travel system. Travel becomes an alternative way for learning new knowledge and increasing personal growth experience in modern times (Laubscher, 1994).

## Research Methods

### *Research Design*

In this study, the quantitative survey research method was utilized to identify the program effects and establish models to illustrate the relationships among effect items. The survey served as an effective tool to conduct investigations within a large population (Babbie, 2001). The three features - versatility, efficiency, and generalizability -- make the survey research design an effective and feasible tool in this preliminary study (Dooley, 1990). As for survey distribution, a web-based survey was employed to collect participants' responses due to its proven advantages

in lower distribution and publication costs, (Belcher, 2004; Nahm et al., 2004), convenient access to the survey ( Kim, Jogaratnam, & Noh, 2006; Schutt, 2001), and anonymity (Chiasson, Parsons, Tesoriero, & Carballo, 2006; Fowler, 2002).

This study used convenience sampling strategy since I did not have access to a sampling frame for the target population to randomize participants for sample selection. The survey package was distributed via a campus website for ten consecutive days to recruit more participants for this study (Duffy, 2002). The web-based survey has been proven to be an effective way to collect data from a large population in an efficient and effective manner (Litvin & Kar, 2001). However, based on previous studies, precautions were taken in order to avoid a sampling bias in on-line survey research, including survey access and multiple response issues (Belcher, 2001; Cole, 2005; Litvin & Kar, 2001). Unfortunately, insufficient internet access by certain potential study populations may mean that certain populations are underrepresented in the study and this might influence a study's external validity (Babbie, 2001; Schutt, 2001). However, this is less an issue for a study of college study abroad programs because college students typically have easy access to a personal or campus computer. Also, multiple responses from the same participants may inflate the results and influence the accuracy of findings. However, such multiple responses were not very likely as the survey program was set up in such a way as to prevent multiple submissions from a single participant.

To decrease sampling bias and to lessen on-line survey research disadvantages, this study used current university students as informants and they all had equal access to the internet-based survey as they could log themselves in the survey system either by their own computers or campus computers. Therefore, this study ensured that all potential participants had the same access to the online survey in order to avoid the under-presentation issue. Also, through the setup

of the survey server, only a single response from each participant will be accepted by the system, which eliminated the possibility of multiple responses or inaccurate information.

### *Instrumentation*

This study employed the self-administrated survey (see Appendix B) for data collection. In order to develop the questionnaire for this study, a pilot study (see Appendix C) with open-ended questions was held in the spring of 2004 to collect relevant data. Thirteen program alumni participated in the semi-structured interviews, which primarily served to help me clarify and refine the items in the questionnaire. The questions for this survey were based on the content analysis of the answers from a northeastern university study abroad alumni in pilot study and modifications of the previous study instruments (Carlson et al., 1990; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Coelho, 1962). A questionnaire with 25 program effect questions and three socio-economic variables (gender, years in school, and academic majors) was developed to examine the program effects. Furthermore, the questionnaire was utilized to examine two proposed model as discussed above, intercultural connection and personal progress.

### *Data Analysis*

Three statistical analysis procedures were utilized to validate models for study abroad program effects, including exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structure equation modeling (SEM). Specifically, two hypothesized models in this study were designed to measure two sets of interrelationships among effects and these two models were based on previous empirical examination and studies. The SEM procedure is appropriate solution for justifying two proposed models.

For that, EFA served as the first statistical procedure (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006) to identify the underlying dimensionality of two models. Researchers (Chi & Qu,

2008; Hou, Lin & Morais, 2005; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007; Sparks, 2007) utilized EFA as their first step for modeling structure equations prior to SEM process since EFA is the most appropriate process to determine factor items for SEM (Garson, cited from Sparks, 2007). In this study, EFA was conducted twice as there were two models in the survey. Specifically, two EFAs would examine different parts of survey with relevant items, respectively.

Wegener and Fabrigar (2004) indicated EFA uncovers the underlying latent factor(s) and suggested it can serve as a useful tool to construct measures. It can also decrease error variances of construct correlations (Bollen, 1989; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) and assess the uni-dimensionality of each item in the potential constructs (Hair et al., 2006). Items were evaluated in the EFAs with a series of criteria: eigenvalues, factor loadings, and scree plots, in order to obtain optimal factor solutions. For example, items with lower than 1 eigenvalue (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002), with lower factor loadings than .45 (Comrey & Lee, 1992) or they were single item in one factor were considered to take out of a factor construct. I used EFA to discover underlying dimension(s); then I used CFA to specify the proposed relationships of the observed variables to latent dimensions in two preconceived model; and finally, I used LISREL 8.0 to evaluate the goodness of fit for two proposed model with study abroad data set.

After the EFA procedures, CFA and SEM were utilized to specify program effect models as Anderson and Gerbing (1988) suggested two-step modeling procedures, measurement and structural modeling. All model identifications were based on the covariance matrix and maximum likelihood estimation (ML) was used to find good fit model via a series indexes offered by LISREL 8 program (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). Thus, ML was used to test the six hypotheses in the following statistical analyses and identify the best fitting models based on the

current data set. The re-specified or modified models would serve as structural theory to explain relationships between constructs and variables as well as between constructs and constructs.

For accuracy in model specifications, varied statistical measurements were utilized to secure reliability and validity, including Cronbach's alpha (Nunnally, 1978) and construct and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2006). Additionally, prior to theoretical testing, face validity was also assessed by subject matter experts<sup>1</sup> as the methodology literature suggested (Babbie, 2001; Wegener & Fabrigar, 2004). As for the cross-group validation between female and male groups, the split sample size in this study did not have enough power of inference: the male group has a lower number than the minimum sample size requirements. It was not fully supported by methodological suggestions from Hair et al. (2006). To improve this deficiency, reliability and validity tests and goodness of fit indexes were used to validate the structural models. More specifically, Cronbach's alpha was utilized for the internal consistency test and coefficients of .70 were used as an acceptable value (Nunnally, 1978). For validity tests in the confirmatory analysis, two different validity statistic tests were employed to examine the construct's validity, including convergent validity and discriminant validity. The convergent validity interprets that the items in a specific construct share a high proportion of variance in common (Hair et al. 2006). It is named as variance-extracted estimate and computed as "the total of all squared standardized factor loadings divided by the number of items" (Hair et al., 2006, p. 777). As for the discriminant validity, it refers to a construct that is distinguished from other constructs. For obtaining discriminant validity, the value of variance-extracted estimate should be greater than the corresponding inter-construct squared correlation estimates. In order to observe the differences between the estimated and actual observed covariance matrices, some goodness of fit indexes were employed to measure whether the two models fit well or not,

including Chi-square statistic, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Nonnormed Fit Index (NNFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The significance of Chi-square test offered the base for other goodness-of-fit measures. For CFI an NNFI, Hair et al. (2006) suggested .90 as a critical number for good-fitting models. RMSEA is thought of as badness of fit statistic and the acceptable value should be between .03 and .08. However, as Hair et al. (2006) suggested, there is no single value for the goodness-of-fit standard and all indexes were utilized to judge whether the model is good or poor goodness-of-fit.

### *Procedures*

With approval from the Pennsylvania State University Institutional Review Board, data were collected from participants of study abroad programs at a northeastern university in the United States. The questionnaire was published in the university network at the end of summer, 2004. The web-based survey package was distributed to the program alumni along with the institute's own survey.

After their consent (see the form in Appendix D), participants finished the survey and returned it via the on-line survey server system. The results were stored in the investigator's secure database storage for analysis

## Results

### *Participants' Profiles*

In 2005, nearly 1000 American college students participated in education abroad programs at a northeastern university. A total of 265 students decided to enroll in this online study. Table 11 illustrates the program participants' characteristics. Most participants were female and they were in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of school. Liberal arts was the leading major in this study, followed by business majors.

Table 11  
 Characteristics of Participants in Effect Modeling Study

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender, N=265		
Male	78	29
Female	187	71
Years in School, N=264		
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3	1
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	39	15
4 <sup>th</sup> year	175	66
5 <sup>th</sup> year	47	18
College, N=263		
Arts	28	11
Business	68	26
Liberal Arts	108	41
Science	59	22

### *Factor Analysis*

In the survey data, two EFAs were initially utilized to examine the potential latent constructs in the data. EFA served as the first step to locate the latent factor underlying a set of program effect variables. Later, the constructs derived from EFA will be the basic analysis units for future modeling procedures. Specifically, the personal growth and career plan items (8 items) were not included for the EFA on the intercultural connection model. Therefore, there were 17 items for the EFA analysis for intercultural connection model. Next, the EFA was conducted again to locate the possible latent constructs in personal progress model. The language learning and cultural immersion items (10 items) were not included in this analysis, leaving 15 items for EFA on the intercultural connection model. The results from two EFAs were utilized for the basis of modeling procedures in the next step.

As noted early, EFA served as the first statistical procedure to locate the latent factors within a set of items and decrease variance error of latent constructs prior to the CFA (Chi & Qu, 2008; Hair et al, 2006; Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007; Sparks,

2007; Wegener & Fabrigar, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2003). Two EFAs were conducted by utilizing a principal axis factoring to determine what, if any, underlying structures exist for measures on the twenty five program effects. Principal axis factoring is recommended for developing factors for structural equation modeling (Garson, cited in Sparks, 2007).

As Kim and Muller (1978) suggested, factor loadings over .4 levels were retained in their respective factors. Using these criteria resulted in the retention of three factors (language learning, cultural immersion, and foreign interaction) in the intercultural connection model, and another three factors (foreign interaction, personal growth, and career plan) in the personal process model. In addition, Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency of six factors in two models. As for reasonable consistency in each factor, .6 levels or higher were set as the acceptable level. Cortina (1993) suggested that such levels are adequate for factors with six or less items. All factors in the two models had acceptable levels. Specifically, for the intercultural connection model, there were 17 items for the first EFA analysis and five items were deleted based on the criteria described above including eigenvalue, scree plot, factor loadings, and the values of Cronbach's alpha in the reliability test.

Table 12 illustrates the distribution of 12 items in three factors, language learning, foreign interaction, and cultural immersion in the intercultural connection model. Next, a second EFA was conducted to locate the possible items in latent constructs of personal progress model. One item was deleted based on the same criteria for factor identification. Table 13 demonstrates the distribution of 11 items in three factors, career development, foreign interaction, and personal growth. The final results of EFA suggested that about 48 percent of total variance would be explained in the intercultural connection model and 44 percent of explained variance would be explained in the personal progress model, respectively.

Table 12  
The Results of Exploratory Factor Analyses in Intercultural Connection Model

Scale item <sup>a</sup>	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Explained Variance
<b>Language learning</b>		.84	22.68%
▪ I think my destination language proficiency was improved after participating in the program.	.86		
▪ I think this program gave me a better chance to practice the destination language than the classroom alone.	.84		
▪ I really enjoyed learning the destination language in this program.	.80		
▪ I could read some foreign newspaper without too much difficulty after I participated in the study abroad program.	.56		
▪ I feel more confident in communicating with foreign people than I did before my trip.	.53		
<b>Foreign interaction</b>		.73	14.02%
▪ I felt that I was part of the local community during this trip.	.74		
▪ I feel I am still connected with local people even after the program was over.	.61		
▪ I felt at home during this trip.	.58		
▪ I will visit this destination again if possible.	.54		
<b>Cultural immersion</b>		.64	11.17%
▪ Different cultural encounters enriched my study abroad program.	.75		
▪ The study abroad gave me a chance to learn about a different culture.	.62		
▪ The study abroad helped me to increase my knowledge of the local culture at my study abroad destination.	.41		
<b>Deleted items</b>			
▪ I discovered that local people have opinions that different from mine on some issues.	.40		
▪ I am more willing to interact with people with different cultural backgrounds than I was before my trip abroad.	.33		
▪ The study abroad program changed the perceptions about the local people at my study abroad destinations.	.35		
▪ To engage myself in a different cultural environment was one of my purposes for joining this program.	.34		
▪ The knowledge I learned from this program is helpful for my academic program.	.31		
Total explained variance			48.05%

Table 13  
The Results of Exploratory Factor Analyses in Personal Progress Model

Scale Item <sup>a</sup>	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Explained Variance
<b>Personal growth</b>		.73	17.12%
▪ I am more independent than I was before the program.	.72		
▪ I have different perceptions of what my life should be since my return from the other country.	.60		
▪ I feel more confident in myself after finishing the program.	.56		
▪ I have a new outlook on the world since my study abroad experience.	.55		
<b>Foreign interactions</b>		.73	14.52%
▪ I felt that I was part of the local community during this trip.	.72		
▪ I feel I am still connected with local people even after the program was over.	.63		
▪ I felt at home during this trip.	.55		
▪ I will visit this destination again if possible.	.55		
<b>Career plan</b>		.62	12.01%
▪ I will consider employment in global companies because of my experience in the study abroad program.	.86		
▪ The program has raised my interest in some overseas job.	.44		
▪ I have different views about my future career after trip.	.43		
<b>Deleted items</b>			
▪ The program was important to me because it will someday be useful in getting a good job	.41		
Total explained variance			43.65%

<sup>a</sup> Individuals were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 5= strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree.

#### *Measurement model of Intercultural Connection*

After the EFA procedures, the findings suggested a total of three factors with 12 items in the first measurement model (intercultural connections), including language learning, cultural immersion, and foreign interaction factors. Such findings were examined by the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test possible latent constructs (i.e., language learning, foreign

interaction, and cultural immersion) in the second step. Also, the evaluation of reliability and validity was conducted to identify the factor structure in the measurement model.

LISREL program was used for CFA to identify the measurement model as Hair et al. (2006) suggested. To increase the goodness of fit in the modified measurement model, three items, including “I feel more confident in communicating with foreign people than I did before my trip”, “I could read some foreign newspaper without too much difficulty after I participated in the study abroad program” and “I feel I am still connected with local people even after the program was over” were deleted because their standardized residual absolute values are great than four (Hair et al., 2006). The rest of for 9 items in three factors were utilized for the goodness-of-fit analysis in the next step, test of structural model.

As for the assessment of the fitness on the modified model, testing results revealed that it reasonably fit the data ( $\chi^2 = 41.38$ ,  $df = 24$ ,  $p = .02$ , NNFI = .96, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05). The significant  $\chi^2$  statistics suggested that the observed sample and estimated covariance matrices are not equal, which indicates the observed and estimated models are not quite the same. To continue to justify the adequacy of the observed model, alternative goodness-of-fit measures were considered to evaluate the observed model, i.e. modified measurement model. The incremental fit index, CFI, is over .9 and indicates that the model was acceptable (Hair et al, 2006). In addition, the value for RMSEA was lower than the badness of fit guideline for a model with 12 measured items and a sample size of 265 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 1999). CFI and RMSEA, goodness-of-fit and badness-of-fit indexes, were evaluated and results suggested that this modified model fit reasonably well.

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for all items in model 1 are presented in Table 14. In order to obtain an acceptable measurement model, constructs' reliability and validity were assessed by the following measurements.

Table 14  
Overall CFA for Intercultural Connection Measurement Model

Construct	Loading Estimate	Standardized Factor Loading	t-Values
<b>Language learning</b> (CR = 0.97, VE =73.6% )			
I think this program gave me a better chance to practice the destination language than the classroom alone.	0.97	0.88	17.30*
I think my destination language proficiency was improved after participating in the program.	1.01	0.90	17.75*
I really enjoyed learning the destination language in this program.	0.78	0.79	14.83*
<b>Foreign interactions</b> (CR = 0.71 , VE = 35.8%)			
I felt at home during this trip.	0.76	0.71	7.99*
I felt that I was part of the local community during this trip.	0.59	0.59	7.22*
I will visit this destination again if possible.	0.25	0.47	6.26*
<b>Cultural immersion</b> (CR = 0.76, VE = 39.8%)			
Different cultural encounters enriched my study abroad program.	0.31	0.66	8.83*
The study abroad gave me a chance to learn about a different culture.	0.23	0.64	8.63*
The study abroad helped me to increase my knowledge of the local culture at my study abroad destination.	0.29	0.59	8.04*

Note: CR = construct reliability; VE = variance extracted.

For reliability, the t-values of each item exceeded the critical values of 1.96 ( $p < .05$ ) (Hatcher, 1994) and all construct reliability exceeded .7 levels. As for convergent validity of measurement model, although four loading estimates were below .5 (see Table 14), the rest of factor loadings seemed not to significantly influence model fit or internal consistency (Hair et al., 2006). Also, in light of the preliminary nature of the study, more liberal criteria for good model

fit than the common indices of goodness of fit (Hair et al., 2006) were set. Therefore, all items were retained and convergent validity was supported.

Table 15  
Intercultural Connection Model Descriptive Statistics and Construct Intercorrelations (N= 265)

	1	2	3
1. Culture immersion	1.00		
2. Language learning	.16*	1.00	
3. Foreign interactions	.19*	.01	1.00
<i>M</i>	4.70	3.82	4.05
<i>SD</i>	0.40	0.95	0.74

\*  $p < .05$

Finally, discriminant validity was also supported since all variance-extracted variance from Table 16 had greater values than the corresponding squared construct interrelation estimates from Table 15 (Hair et al., 2006). The three latent constructs with nine indicators were identified and confirmed in the second stage, the modified measurement stage. The revised models were utilized to examine the relationships among three constructs in the next step, structurally modeling procedures.

Table 16  
Discriminant Validity for the Modified Measurement of Intercultural Connection Model

Parameter	Covariance Estimates	Standard Error	Discriminant Validity
Language and culture	.05	.02	Supported
Language and foreign	.01	.06	Supported
Culture and foreign	.05	.15	Supported

### *Structural Model of Intercultural Connection*

To evaluate the extent to which the observed matrix fits the estimated matrix, some goodness-of-fit indices were utilized to justify the appropriateness of the observed (measurement) model. Except .90 cutoff values for incremental fit indices (like CFI and NNFI) and model fitness absolute indices (i.e. RMSEA below .10 levels) as discussed above, another

index of model fit is the ratio of Chi-square value to degrees of freedom (Bentler 1995). Bentler (1995) indicated that the closer fit index value is to 1.00 and low ratio values means good model fit. Other researchers, however, believe that values between 2 to 5 are critical for good model fit (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Hoyle & Panter, 1995). Based on the above criteria, the results of goodness-of-fit and badness-of-fit indices suggested that the structural model had an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 = 41.58$ ,  $df = 25$ ,  $p = .02$ , NNFI = .96, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05) after deleting the non-significant path between the language learning factor and the foreign interaction factor. The rest of the two path coefficients were positive and statistically significant. Given the suggestions on critical fit values, this structural model was an acceptable protocol since its ratio of chi-square to degree of freedom is 1.6 in this study as literature suggested.

To confirm the good fitness of the model, the Chi-square differences between the modified measurement model and structural model were utilized to examine the adequacy of the structural model (Hatcher, 1994). Table 17 illustrates the fit of the modified measurement model does not significantly differ from the fit of structural model,  $\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = .20$ ,  $p > .05$ . Based on all findings from fitness of model examinations, this structural model should be accepted as parsimonious (Hull et al., 1991).

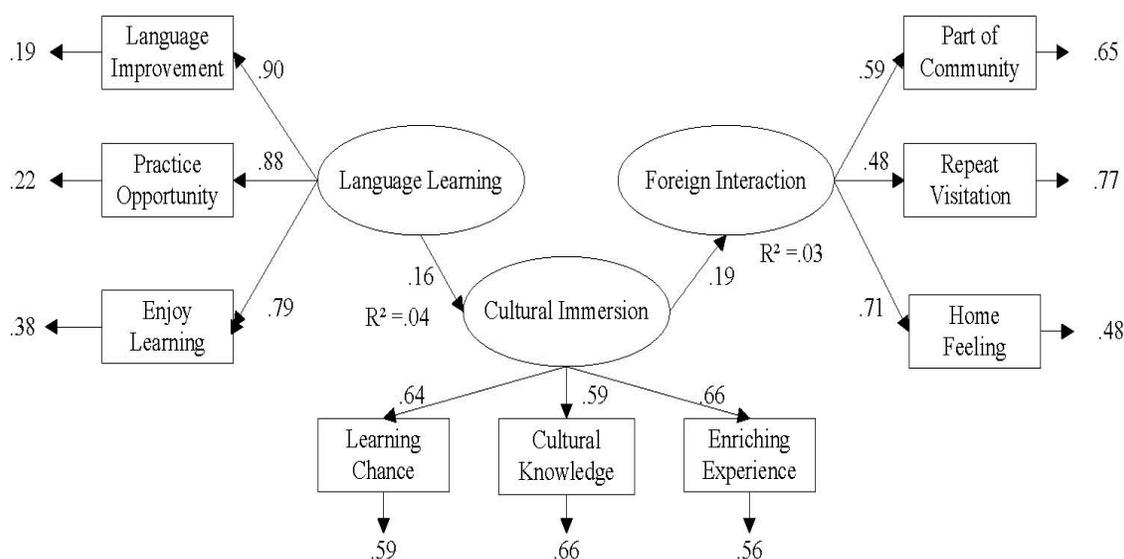
Table 17  
Chi-square Difference Test of the Adequacy of the Theoretical Model for Intercultural Connection

Model	$\chi^2$	$df$	$p$	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	$p$
Modified model	41.38	24	.02	.96	.97	.05			
Structural model	41.58	25	.02	.96	.97	.05			
Modified measurement model versus structural model							.20	1	>.05

The final model (see Figure 4) indicated that it is a full mediation model and hypothesis 3a, the assumed relationship of program effects between language learning and foreign interaction, were not supported by it.

The other two hypotheses were confirmed including the relationships between language learning and cultural immersion as well as the relationships between cultural immersion and foreign interactions. As the model suggests, language learning is positively related to cultural immersion ( $\beta = .16, p < .05$ , hypothesis 1a) and cultural immersion is positively related to foreign interaction ( $\beta = .19, p < .05$ , hypothesis 1b). Due to the initial features in this study, smaller values in standardized coefficients in both relationships were accepted at this point.

Figure 4  
Relationships among Language Learning, Cultural Immersion, and Foreign Interaction for the Intercultural Connection Model



*Note: **Language Improvement:** I think my destination language proficiency was improved after participating in the program.*

***Practice Opportunity:** I think this program gave me a better chance to practice the destination language than the classroom alone.*

***Enjoy Learning:** I really enjoy learning the destination language in this program*

***Learning Chance:** The study abroad program gave me a chance to learn about a different culture.*

***Cultural Knowledge:** The study abroad program helped me to increase my knowledge of the local culture at my study abroad destination.*

***Enriching Feeling:** Different cultural encounters enriched my study abroad program.*

***Part of Community:** I felt I was part of local community during this trip*

***Repeat visitation:** I will visit this destination again if possible.*

***Home feeling:** I felt at home during this trip*

*Measurement Model of Personal Progress*

As for the personal progress model, EFA suggested that a total of three factors with 11 items in the second measurement model (personal progress) have been uncovered, including foreign interaction, personal growth, and career plan factors (see Table 12 for details). Later, CFA was utilized to identify potential latent constructs for the structural modeling shown below. In addition, the reliability and validity of constructs were also evaluated in this step.

LISREL program was utilized for CFA in order to identify and confirm the factor structure in the measurement model. To increase the goodness of fit in the modified measurement model, two items were deleted because their standardized residual absolute values are greater than four (Hair et al., 2006), including “I have different perceptions of what my life should be since my return from the other country” and “I feel I am still connected with local people even after the program was over.”

As for the assessment of the fitness on the modified model, testing results revealed that it fit the data reasonably well ( $\chi^2 = 69.90$ ,  $df = 24$ ,  $p = .00$ , NNFI = .86, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .08). The incremental fit index, CFI, is not over .9 levels and RMSEA was at the .8 cut-off point, which might not meet the standard of a good fit model. Some researchers, however, argued that more liberal criteria might apply to the introductory nature of research, like this study (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Hoyle & Panter, 1995).

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for all items in the personal progress model are presented in Table 18. Next, Constructs' reliability and validity were assessed to validate the model it. For reliability, all  $t$ -values of each items exceed the critical values of 1.96 ( $p < .05$ ) (Hatcher, 1994) and all construct reliability exceed .7 levels. As for convergent validity of measurement model derived from CFA, although three loading estimates were below .6 levels,

which were the accepted level for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2006), the rest of six factor loadings in the personal progress model did not seem to significantly influence model fit or internal consistency (see Table 18).

Table 18  
Overall CFA for personal progress model

Construct	Factor Loading	t-Values
Personal (CR = 0.76, VE = 39.9%)		
I am more independent than I was before the program.	0.68	9.75*
I feel more confident in myself after finishing the program.	0.57	8.27*
I have a new outlook on the world since my study abroad experience.	0.64	9.19*
Career (CR = 0.86, VE = 50.5%)		
The program has raised my interest in some overseas job.	0.73	11.74*
I will consider employment in global companies because of my experience in the study abroad program.	0.72	11.51*
I have different views about my future career after trip.	0.68	10.51*
Foreign (CR = 0.71, VE = 37.1%)		
I felt at home during this trip.	0.79	10.33*
I felt that I was part of the local community during this trip.	0.55	7.74*
I will visit this destination again if possible.	0.43	6.13*

Note: CR = construct reliability; VE = variance extracted.

Based on these evaluations, the convergent validity was supported in this modified model. Finally, discriminant validity was also supported since all variance-extracted variance from Table 20 had greater values than the corresponding squared construct interrelation estimates from Table 19 (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 19  
Personal Progress Descriptive Statistics and Construct Intercorrelations (N= 265)

	1	2	3
1. Personal development	1.00		
2. Career plan	.50*	1.00	
3. Foreign interactions	.52*	.48*	1.00
<i>M</i>	4.34	3.89	4.05
<i>SD</i>	0.63	0.82	0.74

\*  $p < .05$

Table 20  
Discriminant Validity for the Modified Measurement Personal Progress Model

Parameter	Covariance Estimates	Standard Error	Discriminant Validity
Personal and career	.20	.04	Supported
Personal and foreign	.27	.05	Supported
Career and foreign	.27	.05	Supported

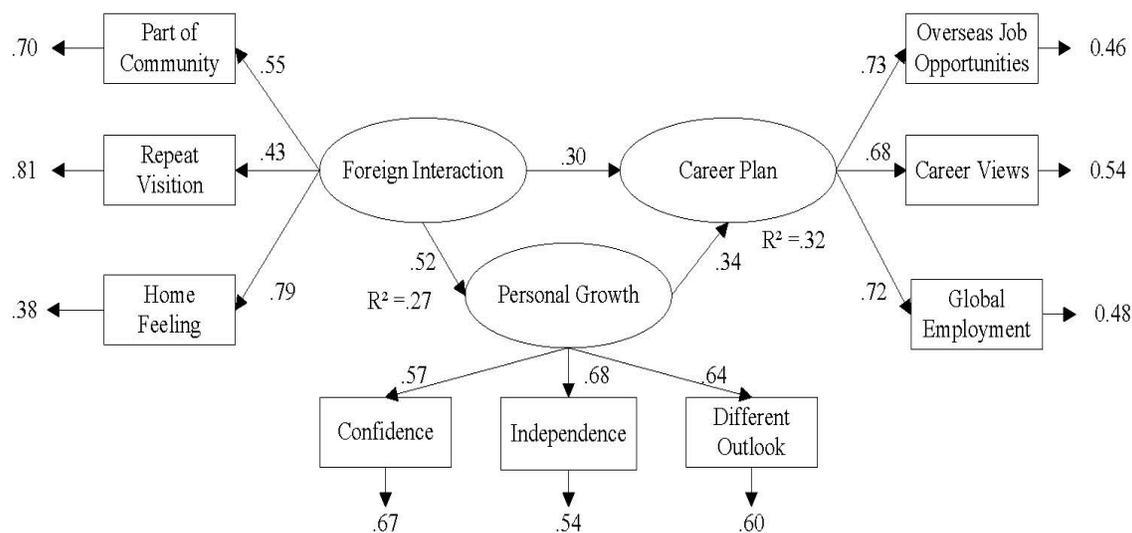
Overall, all items were retained and the modified measurement model with 3 latent constructs and 9 indicators was retained after a series evaluations, including indices of goodness-of-fit and badness-of-fit, construct's *t*-test, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

#### *Structural Model of Personal Progress*

In the final process, the modified measurement model derived from the initial EFA with three factors and nine items derived from CFA process served as the basis to verify structural theory and test the proposed hypotheses. First, goodness of structural model fit suggested it is a saturated theoretical model, which indicated that the modified measurement model and structural model were identical and might not provide more insight than the CFA model. Statistics of goodness-of-fit and badness-of-fit indices suggested that the structural model had moderately acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 = 69.90$ ,  $df = 24$ ,  $p = .00$ , NNFI = .86, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .08) according to the criteria of some researchers (see Figure 4). In light of the preliminary nature of this study, more liberal criteria might be applied to the standard of good model fit, rather than the regular .90 level, such as .85 levels for CFI (Hoyle & Panter, 1995; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). As they suggested, another fit index, the ratio of Chi-square to degree of freedom, was 3 and it fit the critical values between 2 to 5 for good model fit. Based on these findings, the proposed structural model was acceptable for explaining the relationships among latent constructs and testing the hypotheses.

The final model showed all path coefficients to be positive and statistically significant (see Figure 5) and indicated that personal progress is a partial mediation model as it satisfied three requirements for mediation effects suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The partial mediation model indicated that a third variable existed between the independent and dependent variables and mediated the relationship between the two variables. All three hypotheses were supported based on the results of three-phase modeling procedures. Specifically, foreign interaction was positively related to personal growth ( $\beta = .52, p < .01$ , hypothesis 2a). Personal growth was positively related to career plan ( $\beta = .34, p < .01$ , hypothesis 2b). Finally, foreign interaction was also positively related to career plan ( $\beta = .30, p < .01$ , hypothesis 2c).

Figure 5  
Relationships among Foreign Interaction, Personal Growth, and Career Plan in Personal Progress Model



*Note: Part of Community: I felt that I was part of the local community during this trip.  
Repeat Visitation: I will visit this destination again if possible.  
Home Feeling: I felt home during this trip.  
Confidence: I feel more confident in myself after finishing the program.  
Independence: I am more independent than I was before the program.  
Different Outlook: I have a new outlook on the world since my study abroad experience.  
Overseas Job Opportunity: The program has raised my interest in some overseas job.  
Career Views: I have different views about my future career after trip  
Global Employment: I will consider employment in global companies because of my experience in the study abroad program.*

Table 21 illustrates the direct, indirect, and total effects of all endogenous and exogenous latent variables in the structural model. As can be seen, the indirect effect of personal growth to career plan increased significantly due to the contribution of positive indirect effects.

Table 21  
Summary of Structural Model of Personal Progress

Antecedent Constructs	Affected Constructs	
	Personal growth	Career plan
Foreign interaction		
Direct effect	0.52	0.30
Indirect effect	-	0.18
Total effect	0.52	0.48

As all data analyses revealed, two models were derived from two three-stage model formations and the relationships among constructs in each model were identified at the final stage of model construction. The intercultural connection model suggested the direct and linear relationships between language learning and cultural immersion as well as cultural immersion and foreign interaction. In the personal progress model, however, a partial mediation model illustrated the relationships among foreign connection, personal growth, and career plan. During data analysis, a three-phase strategy was employed for modeling purposes. EFA served as the first step to locate the latent construct while the measurement stage would consolidate and re-examine the adequacy of the two models. In the second step, CFA was used to validate the model derive from EFA and a modified model was based on the results from LISREL program if the existing model could not fit all criteria for factor analysis. Finally, the third step, the structural modeling, justified the possible relation paths among constructs and classified the best model based on the goodness-of-fit indices.

Based on the findings, in the intercultural connection model, the cultural immersion construct served as the variable to mediate the relationship between language learning and foreign interaction constructs. In the personal progress model, even though personal growth

partially mediated the relationship between foreign interaction and career plan constructs, i.e. there still was a direct relationship between language learning and career plan. Such relationship would increase the effects of foreign interaction on career plan from statistical perspective. Compared two models in terms of their power of explanation, second model, model of personal progress, had higher levels in explained variance (61% vs. 7%) than the first model, model of intercultural connection. The second model (personal progress), with higher explained variance (61%), was more impressive than the first model (intercultural connection), with lower explained variance (7%), as Thompson (1998) suggested that effect size of statistical test is more important than statistical significance. However, the first model also validated the relationships among three constructs.

### Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to establish program effect models both for intercultural connection and personal progress for study abroad program participants at a northeastern university. After statistical analyses, each model was organized with three constructs and their structural theories explicitly and significantly explained the rational relationships among the constructs. In the intercultural connection model, hypothesis 1 and 2 were supported. Language learning is an antecedent of cultural immersion and cultural immersion serves as an antecedent of foreign interactions. In other words, the relationships between language learning and foreign interactions are fully mediated by cultural immersion. The hypothesis about the relationship between language learning and foreign interaction (Hypothesis 3) was not supported by the statistical analysis, however. As for the personal progress model, the results suggested that all three hypotheses (Hypothesis 4, 5, and 6) were supported in this study. Specifically, foreign interactions and personal growth were the two antecedents of career plans, and foreign

interactions had a significant indirect effect on career plans through personal growth. In other words, personal growth partially mediates the relationships between foreign interactions and career plans. The two models make significant contributions towards establishing structural theories for program effects after a series of statistical analyses. Cross group validation between male and female groups, however, could not be verified since the characteristics of sampling data set limited such validation procedures in this study. The following sections discuss how these findings can be applied to theoretical and management issues.

### *Theoretical Implication*

EFA suggested five overall program effects on participants in two models, including language learning, cultural immersion, and foreign interactions in an intercultural connection model and foreign interaction, personal growth, and career plans in a personal progress model (foreign interactions serve as one of program effects in both models). This study focused on two separate and different models, intercultural connection and personal progress, even foreign interaction could be a mediator to link two proposed models. However, such a model with all five program effects was not fully supported by previous literature. To justify the interrelationships among two or three constructs was one of purpose for this study. A model with all possible program effects could be explored in a future study if possible.

The findings confirmed the effects described in previous literature and they also served as a basis for future structural modeling. First, in the intercultural connection model, this study confirmed three factors in the model after the CFA procedure, including language learning, cultural immersion, and foreign interactions. These findings were similar to those in previous literature, which suggested that there are program effects in language learning (Jackson, 2006; Segalowitz et al., 2004; Sutton & Rubin, 2001), cultural immersions (Abrams, 1979; Carlson &

Widaman, 1988; Dwyer, 2004; Laubscher, 1994), and foreign interactions (Gardner & Burnett, 2006; Mckinlay et al., 1996; Pearson-Evans, 2006). In the personal progress model, foreign interaction effects, personal growth (Enremrich, 2006; Hadis, 2005; Ritchie, 2003; Rose, 1969) and career plans (Carlson et al., 1990; Kauffman et al., 1992) organized the structural theory as the findings suggest. Current education or tourism literature has been focused on individual program effects that result from studying abroad and detail how the authentic foreign environment influences participants' cultural knowledge, language skills, and personal advancement. Little in the literature, however, could verify how those proven programs were related to each other and developed models to specify their relationships. Such fragmented information might not help practitioners understand how programs exert effects on participants and how they interrelate with each other. The findings in this study partially supported the structural theories from intensive reviews of literature.

The intercultural connection model explains how participants learn their foreign language and culture and engage themselves in a foreign community. Even though some of the previous literature stated that one or two relationships linked among three constructs, foreign language learning, cultural immersion, and foreign connection, past research could not offer very solid foundations to verify interrelationships among these three constructs. The modified structure for constructs' interrelationships suggested that it is a full mediation model. The relationship between language learning and foreign interaction was fully mediated or intervened by cultural immersion as data analysis suggested. There was not a direct relationship between language learning and foreign interaction. Cultural immersion served as the mediator to clarify the nature of the relationship between language learning and foreign interaction. However, the literature revealed a partial mediation model may exist, where the extra direct relationship between

language learning and foreign interaction should be present and cultural immersion is assumed to serve as a third intervening variables between language learning and foreign interaction. As the findings suggested, the full mediation model indicates that the relationship between language learning and foreign interaction is fully dependent on the degree of cultural immersion. That is, the incongruence between the proposed hypotheses and modified structural theory is an unsupported relationship between language learning and foreign interactions. However, such a relationship was evident from previous studies and many linguistic experts proposed and supported the fact that foreign language learning contributes to interactions with local hosts even without cultural immersion catalyst (Campell, 1996; Isabelli-Garcia, 2006; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Levin, 2001; Papatsiba, 2006; Person-Evans, 2006).

The current findings might suggest that maintaining social networks or close relationships with local hosts would depend on foreign cultural understanding and immersions while foreign language skills influence the degrees of cultural immersion. Students might believe that cultural immersion or understanding would benefit from their foreign language skills. This study demonstrated the hierarchy of relationships from language learning through cultural immersion to foreign interaction. Such hierarchical relationships suggested that interaction with local host was best begun with sophisticated foreign language skills, followed by cultural immersion/ understanding. In such order, cultural immersion was a catalyst for relationships between language learning and foreign interactions. Namely, foreign language skills directly influenced cultural understanding, which connected with foreign interactions. To establish close relationships with foreign hosts, this study suggested that participants should first learn the foreign language and then develop a fuller understanding of the host's culture.

As for the personal progress model, the individual relationship paths in the proposed structural theory were identical to current literature findings about studying abroad program effects (Calvin, 1999; Carlson et al., 1990; Gray et al., 2002; Hannigan, 2001; Schein, 1996; Suutari & Taka, 2004). The findings revealed that there were three different relationships between foreign interactions; personal growth, and career plans have been supported by structural equation procedures in this study. Personal growth was a mediator in this model as it mediated the direct relationships between foreign interactions and career plans. The size of total relation effects between foreign interactions and career plan increased due to contributions of personal growth in the model. From statistical perspective, such results could refer to the partial mediation model as statistical literature suggested (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Cohen & Cohen, 1983). In retrospect, the partial mediation model made sense because in addition to increased levels in being independent or self-confident, participants' experience in interacting with local hosts influenced their future career considerations. In addition, the findings suggested that participants' who increased their competence of independence would be more likely to become a qualified candidate in the local market since their overseas experience in living on their own and adapting themselves to a foreign environment.

Like other social studies, readers should be advised about the inappropriateness of generalizing the study results into different contexts. The study findings were delimited to a northeastern university program and the results should be applied cautiously to other programs since the characteristics of the samples may be different.

#### *Management Implications*

Overall, the findings suggested the ways in which study abroad programs effected participants and how those effects connected or related to each other. Specifically, in order to

make predictions on intercultural connections and personal progress, this study tried to establish effect models. The findings suggested that college officials or private organization administrators should customize their own programs to meet students' individual needs in intercultural competency or personal advancements. Specifically, language learning effects would not be the only significant results after program. On the contrary, attention should be paid to the other program effects derived from foreign language learning effects, such as cultural immersion and foreign language learning in this study. The program might offer a platform for program developers to help students understand what happens in a real world, a world that is totally different from their hometown. Meanwhile, study abroad programs served as a catalyst of a life transition for the students, especially once they return to the United States as this study suggests. For instance, the SAEP project (Carlson et al., 1990) exemplified the different levels of change in international concerns and personal life planning. As the present study suggested, language learning and foreign interactions are the originators of a series of program effects and program designers might take all possible effects into account for students with different foci on their studying abroad experience.

Studying abroad, one of the most popular travel patterns for college students (Ritchie, 2003), was thought to be an alternative way of learning (Laubscher 1994). It is also one of the educational tourism types and Rodger (1988, p.28) defined it as a "program in which participants travel to a location as a group with primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location". Based on this definition, learning is an essential part of cultural tourism, ecotourism, heritage tourism and study abroad and they are sub-type of education tourism. Specifically, these different types of tourism are similar to study abroad programs, but they have different focuses. For example, cultural and heritage tourism emphasize a travel to human built

environment but ecotourism would focus on the appreciation of natural environment. Currently, study abroad programs mostly focus on foreign language acquisition and academic learning.

Studying abroad programs have different itineraries than other learning-oriented tourism. In this respect, the findings derived from this study might only refer to study abroad programs.

Applying the findings into different types of education tourism has limitations.

Krippendorff (1987) stated that people are more fascinated than ever with learning effects during their travel. They suggested personal advancements in knowledge and growth would be beneficial for such experiential learning and it also helped people connect with current internationalized situations. Therefore, high quality studying abroad programs should be designed to satisfy the needs for both personal knowledge and for gaining academic credit to fulfill college requirements.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

In light of the preliminary nature of this study, some suggestions in research methods might be considered for future research of study abroad program. First, this study proposed two models but further tests should be performed to verify the legitimacy of these models and how they relate to each other. As Bollen (1989) and Byrne (1994) suggested, invariance examinations should be performed to examine whether the theoretical structures are applicable across different populations (e.g., male and female participants; previously experienced and non-previously experienced participants). Future studies might be used to test and confirm its cross-group validation and increase the model's reliability levels. Secondly, tourism or education researchers might consider using this model to examine similar learning-based tourism programs in order to test whether similar contexts influence model structures or not. Finally, it would be worthwhile to facilitate cross-cultural approaches to examine whether the same model could apply to

program participants with different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Each year many students come to the United States to study because it has one of the leading higher education systems in the world, and it is important to know whether the model explains program effects for these students. Furthermore, future research should respond to the call from Ritchie (2003), and examine program effects through an interdisciplinary lens.

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## CHAPTER 5

### Summary and Conclusions

#### *Results*

This section of the dissertation is organized in terms of the research questions and hypotheses posed in each of the separate articles.

RQ1. What are the motivations for studying abroad?

Based on the results of the motivation statements, six main motivation categories were identified via qualitative content analysis. They were: 1) cultural learning, 2) academic learning, 3) foreign experience, 4) personal development, 5) pleasure, and 6) social interactions. Also, in select main categories, there were two or more themes. For instance, cultural learning was composed of “cultural learning” and “cultural learning about self”. Additionally, three themes in academic learning were “classes abroad”, “chance to learn”, and “language learning”. “Escape from routine” and “living abroad” were themes in the foreign experience category. Personal development themes included “be independent” and “career consideration”. After counting the frequencies of themes in all coded texts, cultural learning (77 %), foreign experience (62%) and academic learning (48%) ranked as the top three prominent motivations for studying abroad. The findings were a little different from the travel motivations in the tourism literature; in the tourism literature, escape was the most evident motivation for travel. However, study abroad program participants believed travel was a way to promote learning and they were motivated to travel in order to advance their knowledge beyond the college classroom. The results also suggested that academic learning was not the main motivation for participants and instead they focus on learning about foreign cultures and interaction with local people. Such motivations were part of the benefits of studying abroad and students were motivated to join in the program on account of

these salient advantages. The results were congruent with the expectancy-valence theory that individuals are motivated to participate in the specific activities because they are aware of their benefits in advance. Therefore, this study suggested that the expectancy-valence theory is a valid alternative approach to the micro psychological and macro social psychological approach to understand the motivations for studying abroad. As for the coding quality in this study, the .85 level in the Cohen Kappa statistics indicated the study had a reliable coding process and overall quality of this study is at an acceptable level.

RQ2. How many reliable and interpretable components are there among the 25 variables derived from my review of literature?

Based on a series of criteria for factor identification, including eigenvalue, variance, and scree plot, five program effects were extracted from the questionnaire and they were identified as: academic learning, language learning, foreign connection, cultural immersion, and career development. About 51% of the total variance was explained in the analysis and four items failed to meet the factor identification criteria. Reliability analyses were used to examine each set of items whether they consistently measured a single latent concept or not. With the exception of the fourth factor, cultural immersion, all other values of Cronbach's Alpha met the .7 criterion to ensure their homogeneity of factor constructs. The second research question also served as the unit of analysis in the third research question.

RQ3. Are there significant mean differences in five proposed program effects for individuals of different gender, years in school, academic majors, program duration, and residency arrangement?

Based on the results of the second research question, the five extracted program effects served as a unit of analysis in identifying the relationships, if any, between participants'

characteristics and these five program effects. After a series of statistical procedures (MANOVA, Discriminant analysis, Post Hoc analysis), the findings suggested that gender and years in school are not significant indicators for the differences in five program effects. Academic major, program duration, local friendships, and residency arrangements were significant indicators for program effect differences in means, however. Specifically, students who majored in science or business were more likely to endorse the cultural immersion effects than art majors. For the mean differences in program duration, semester-based program participants had significantly higher scores in foreign connections than summer program participants. For local friendships, participants who had local friends significantly tended to endorse more positive program effects in two categories, foreign connection and cultural immersion than those who did not have local friends. Finally, those who lived with local people through a homestay were more likely to endorse the language learning effects than students living in apartments and campus dormitories.

H1. Language learning is significantly and positively related to cultural immersion.

H2. Cultural immersion is significantly and positively related to foreign interaction.

H3. Language learning is significantly and positively related to foreign interaction.

H4. Foreign interaction is significantly and positively related to personal growth.

H5. Personal growth is significantly and positively related to career plans.

H6. Foreign interaction is significantly and positively related to career plan.

A three-phase modeling procedure with EFA, CFA and SEM (exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling) was utilized to determine whether the following proposed hypotheses were substantiated or not. The first hypothesis held that language learning was significantly, and positively, related to cultural immersion. The analysis

supported the first hypothesis that the degree of foreign language development was associated with cultural immersion.

For the second hypothesis, the results of SEM indicated that there was a significant relationship between cultural immersion and foreign interaction. The path coefficient was positive and the hypothesis was supported by the statistical analysis. The result suggested that a higher degree in cultural immersion would contribute to a higher degree of foreign interaction.

As for the third hypothesis, in the relationship between language learning and foreign interaction, I could not conclude language learning significantly influenced foreign interaction based on the statistic tests. The results of the statistical analysis indicated that a significant relationship does not exist between language learning and foreign interaction although previous literature suggested that such a relationship exists. Based on the results derived from first three hypotheses, I corroborated an intercultural connection model and suggested that it was a full mediation model with cultural immersion a mediator between language learning and foreign connection.

Analyses indicated that foreign interaction was significantly associated with personal growth. The statistic results supported the fourth hypothesis that the positive path coefficient indicated that the degree of foreign interaction significantly influenced students' personal growth.

As for the fifth hypothesis, the statistic analysis supported personal growth was significantly related to career plans in this study. Personal growth contributed to career plans for students after the program.

For the final hypothesis, the statistical analysis supported the hypothesized relationship between foreign interaction and career plan. Namely, the results of SEM indicated positive and significant relationships between foreign interaction and career plans.

As for justifications of the two proposed model, according to the hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, the statistic tests partially supported the first proposed model of intercultural connection. Hypothesis 3 was not evident in this study and suggested the intercultural connection is a fully mediation model. Namely, the relationship between language learning and foreign interaction were mediated by cultural immersion. As for the second model (personal progress), based on the hypotheses 4, 5 and 6, I confirmed the personal progress model with foreign interaction, personal growth and career plans constructs. Specifically, this is a partial mediation model, where personal growth partially mediated the relationship between foreign interaction and career plan effects.

#### *Summary of Overall Findings*

1. This study identified six main motives for studying abroad: cultural learning, academic learning, personal development, foreign experience, pleasure and social interactions. Cultural learning was one of the three most prominent reasons for student participation in study abroad programs. Participants also indicated that these programs have granted them a better opportunity to obtain an in-depth understanding of local people and culture than before. Also, comparing motivations for general tourism with study abroad programs, academic learning and personal development were unique two motivations for study abroad program participants, where cultural learning, foreign experience, social interactions and pleasure are common motivations both for program participants and general tourists. However, academic learning was not the most important reason for

studying abroad in this study. In fact, personal development and foreign experience were part of reasons for students to study abroad—not very common motivations for general tourism. Studying abroad offered unique contexts for these two motivations, such as longer individual stay in a foreign country than other travel programs. The findings also supported the expectancy-valence theory (Lawler, 1973; Vroom, 1964) as an alternative approach to study motivations for studying abroad. As this theory suggested, human behaviors are driven by the specific outcomes as the eight motivations might be treated as the desired benefits. This study served as a first, but essential, step in initiating a new line of motivation research in edu-tourism field and the tourism field.

2. The second purpose of this study was to consider the participants' characteristics and program features as indicators to evaluate how they exert influence on the program effects. After an exploratory factor analysis, five program effects were identified including language learning, cultural immersion, foreign connection, personal growth, and career development. Later, a series of statistical procedures were utilized to understand how six independent indicators influence the five program outcomes. Based on the statistical tests, gender and years in college were not significant indicators for differences in program effect means. The findings were not congruent with other studies (Carlson et al., 1990; Carlson and Widman, 1988) that gender and age were the significant predictors for program effects. This study also indicated that program length significantly influences students' degree of foreign connection (other than the language learning effect as linguistic literature suggested). Moreover, residency arrangements also influenced students' foreign language acquisition. Friendships with locals also contributed to foreign connection and cultural immersion effects. The difference in

participants' characteristics might be the main reason for the incongruence in the findings between this study and previous literature. For example, most participants in the first motivation study indicated they are motivated by cultural learning, foreign connection, and academic learning, which suggested that cultural immersion and foreign connection became the most significant program effects in this study.

3. Finally, two program models, intercultural connection and personal progress, have been substantiated via a series of statistical analyses on the dataset of 2005 study abroad program survey. In the intercultural connection model, cultural immersion was a significant mediator for the relationships between language learning and foreign interaction. The results suggested that foreign language learning orientations influence how participants learn about hosts' cultures. The degree to which they interacted with local residents depended on the extent to which participants immerse themselves into local cultural life. In the personal progress model, personal growth effects partially mediated the relationships between foreign interactions and career plans. That is, being independent increased personal growth and the direction of one's future career while foreign experience or interactions also affected future career considerations. These findings suggested that the study abroad program effects are related each other. This study has been the only one to integrate all possible program effects into two effect models and observe how these program effects interrelate. The two models were the original work in edu-tourism field and they have been validated by a series of statistical procedures in this study.

### *Implications*

Based on the findings, there were two major implications for college or institution program developers, customized programs and incentives for more participation.

1. Specifically, the findings suggested that college officials or private organization administrators should customize their own programs to meet students' individual needs in intercultural competency or personal advancements. Specifically, language or academic learning effects should not be the only significant results after program. On the contrary, attention should be placed to the other program effects derived from foreign language learning effects, such as cultural immersion and personal growth as this study suggested. The findings, from motivation exploration to identification of program effects, provided college officials an opportunity to observe how abroad programs affected students' abilities and perceptions. Study abroad programs would serve as a catalyst responsible for students' turning points in their life after program. Therefore, understanding program effects would be the first step for administrators or program developers who desire to design student-friendly programs.
2. Based on the findings, the study confirmed the positive effects on students and concluded study abroad programs would contribute to students' knowledge learning and personal development. As for the second implication, it should be to motivate more students to join the study abroad programs. As Davidson (2005) suggested, less than 3 per cent of college students actually studied abroad; however. About 45 per cent of college freshmen claimed they will participate in study abroad program before they graduate. For that, the program benefits or outcomes should be intensively promoted in different communication media to encourage students' participation. Students might decide to join

the program as they perceive and understand the expected program outcomes in the promotion literature. Moreover, to increase participation in study abroad program, college officials might have effective policy to encourage all college students to take at least one study abroad program before they graduate. For that, university administrators or federal government should consider offering more scholarships or financial aid to those students who have economic hardships that would exclude them from participating. Such financial assistance policies would prevent studying abroad from becoming a privilege for specific student groups; all students deserve a chance to change their life through participation in a program. It is noted that globalized education is one of the essential goals of higher education and studying abroad programs provide one of the best chances to make students more competent and compatible in the modern global village.

#### *Future Research Suggestions*

There are six suggestions for future research on the topic of study abroad program effects. First, in the future, such program effect study could utilize the experimental research design to justify program effects. Specifically, an experimental research design with control and experimental groups, would adjust other irrelevant factors and more precisely capture all program. That is, a control group would be needed to identify the true program effects on students by comparing the results from the experiment group. Also, the casual relationships could be obtained through such research design and it would increase the power of explanation.

Second, a qualitative inquiry might be utilized to obtain an in-depth understanding on how program effects influence students' lives. Such inquiries might offer more insights on how programs shape students' perceptions after the program. An ethnographic study might be an option for such an inquiry since it can provide close observations on the programs' influences.

Also, a longitudinal study might be utilized to understand some long-term effects on participants' lives since such internationalized experience might dominate participant's future lifestyle. A time-wise study would grant researchers to have a chance to observe the program effects from a long-term perspective. For example, the second survey or interview could be administrated again after 10 years to understand whether taking study abroad programs influence participants' life or change their values or not.

Third, the expectancy-valence theory would be tested in the study abroad context in the future. The expectancy theory has been used to interpret the results from the motivation study and it could explain benefit-oriented motivations in this study. However, the results suggested future study would be needed to justify whether it could explain the decision-making process in studying abroad or even in tourism context. The future study might be needed to identify the construct(s) in Expectancy-valence theory and how they are associated with student's intention to participate in study abroad programs. Furthermore, the different research method, like quantitative approach, might be used to justify its power of explanation of benefited-oriented motivation in studying abroad or tourism context. In addition, the self-determined theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000 & 2002) might be used to understand the motivation for studying abroad in the future as it focuses on the relationship between the level of the self-determination and the desired goal.

Fourth, this study explored the motivations for studying abroad and suggested there are six motivations to study abroad. However, as Davidson (2005) claimed there is about 41 per cent of American college students decided not to participate in study abroad program. It would be important issues to understand why these students decided against participation in the program. Furthermore, in applied linguistic field, Ellis (2004) suggested that the anxiety and motivation

for foreign language acquisition is negative correlation in oversea language learning programs. Namely, it might conclude sense of anxiety might be negative motivation for students who do not participate in study abroad program. The empirical examination on negative motivation for studying abroad would be needed for a comprehensive picture to understand motivation to study abroad.

Fifth, this study is an introductory step to explore the possibility of building a new model to represent program effects. I proposed two models, but further examinations or tests should be performed to verify the legitimacy of these models because of the limitation of sample characteristics. As for the third suggestions, to increase a higher validity in the program effect model, the cross-group validation progress should be implemented as literature suggested such validation is an effective procedure for two-step model establishments (Hair et al., 2006; Yoon and Uysal; 2005). That is, the invariance examinations should be performed to examine whether the theoretical structures are applicable across different populations (e.g., male and female participants; previous experienced and non-previous experienced participants). Future studies might be used to test and confirm its cross-group validation and increase the model's reliability levels. For that, different sampling strategies such as stratified sampling skill should be needed to obtain the qualified sample size for cross-group validation in structural equation modeling analysis. In addition, Tourism or education researchers might consider using this model to examine similar learning-based tourism programs in order to test whether similar contexts influence model structures or not.

Finally, it would be worthwhile to facilitate cross-cultural approaches to examine whether the same model applies to program participants with different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Each year many students come to the United States to study because it has one of the leading

higher education systems in the world, and it is important to know whether the model explains program effects for these students. Furthermore, given the importance of the significant findings pertaining to studying abroad effects, future research should examine program effects through an interdisciplinary lens.

*Note:*

<sup>1</sup>The subject matter experts in this study included three senior faculty in Leisure Studies program and one education faculty at a research university.

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## Appendix A

### 2005 Study Abroad Program Survey

#### Part I

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. We need you to help in understanding your motivations for studying abroad. We deeply appreciate the time you are taking to answer each question.

There are three points you need to know before you begin answering our questions. There is no right or wrong answer for each question.

- All information you provide will remain confidential and will not be associated with your identity.
- You must be 18 years of age or more and participated in study abroad program before.
- Please feel free to e-mail us any question during the survey. You may stop participating at any time and you may leave questions unanswered.

Part I.

Please tell us about yourself and your program by checking appropriate statements or filling the information in blanks

Gender:

Years in school:

Major:

Part II. Please answer the question about your motivations for study abroad

Please list the reasons and explain why you participate in the 2005 college study abroad program

## Appendix B

**2005 Study Abroad Program Survey****Part II**

**I.** Please give the appropriate rating for each following question from 1= Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree.

1. I discovered that local people have opinions that differ from mine on some issue.
2. I am more willing to interact with people with different cultural backgrounds than I was before my trip abroad.
3. The PSSAP gave me a chance to learn about a different culture.
4. The PSSAP changed the perceptions about the local people at my study abroad destination.
5. The PSSAP helped me to increase my knowledge of the local culture at my study abroad destination.
6. Different cultural encounters enriched my study abroad program.
7. To engage myself in a different cultural environment was one of my purposes for joining this program.
8. The knowledge I learned from this program is helpful for my academic program.
9. I feel more confident in myself after finishing the program.
10. I have different perceptions of what my life should be since my return from the other country.
11. I am more independent than I was before the program.
12. I have a new outlook on the world since my study abroad experience.
13. The program has raised my interest in some overseas job.
14. I have different views about my future career after trip.
15. This program was important to me because it will someday be useful in getting a good job.
16. I will consider employment in global companies because of my experience in the study abroad program.
17. I think my destination language proficiency was improved after participating in the program.
18. I feel more confident in communicating with foreign people than I did before my trip.
19. I think this program gave me a better chance to practice the destination language than the classroom alone.
20. I could read some foreign newspaper without too much difficulty after I participated in the study abroad program.
21. I really enjoyed learning the destination language in this program.
22. I felt that I was part of the local community during this trip.
23. I will visit this destination again if possible.
24. I feel I am still connected with local people even after the program was over.
25. I felt at home during this trip.

**II.** Please describe yourself and personal experience.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. What is your current semester standing?

3. In what college are you currently enrolled? Please check the following options
  - A. Liberal Arts
  - B. Arts
  - C. Science
  - D. Business
4. What is the location of your PSSAP?
5. What is your program duration?
6. Did you have local friends in this study abroad destination? Yes No
7. What was your accommodation option for the 2005 PSSAP? \_\_\_ Resident Hall \_\_\_ Home-Stay \_\_\_ Others

## Appendix C

**The Pilot Survey for the 2004 Study Abroad Program**

Dear Students:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. We need you to help in understanding the impacts of the 2004 study abroad program. We deeply appreciate the time you are taking to answer each question.

There are three points you need to know before you begin answering our questions. There is no right or wrong answer for each question.

- Please remember to write your e-mail address below in the part 1. The e-mail address will be used to mail a copy of the consent form.
- All information you provide will remain confidential and will not be associated with your identity.
- Please feel free to e-mail us any question during the survey. You may stop participating at any time and you may leave questions unanswered

Part 1

*Please tell us about yourself and your program*

Your E-mail Address:

Gender: Male Female

Year in College: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

Your program full name and its location:

How many days did you stay abroad (2004):      Days

Part 2

*Please write the short essay for those following questions:*

1. Why did you join in this study abroad program? Are you satisfied with your decision?  
Why?
2. Did you learn something new during the program? How will it contribute to your future academic life or personal development?
3. Do you feel that your study abroad program has changed your attitude, values or behavior in any way? If so, how?
4. Do you think the study abroad program could increase mutual understandings between yourself and the local people? If so, how?
5. Anything else about your study abroad experience you want to tell us?

We appreciate your help again and please click the submit button when you finish the on-line survey. Thank you very much!

## Appendix D

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

The Pennsylvania State University

**Title of Project:** An Examination of the Effects of Participation in the Penn State Study Abroad Program**Principal Investigator:** HungChih Yu, Graduate Student  
201 Mateer Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814) 865-1851; huy100@psu.edu**Advisor:** Dr. Garry Chick  
122 Mateer Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814) 865-1851; gchick@psu.edu

1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore the associated effects of a 2005 Penn State Study Abroad Program on its participants. Also of interest is how the program influences their views on the current world.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** An on-line survey developed by Mr. Yu will be used to gather information. Mr. Yu will analyze the data collected with Dr. Chick assistance and supervision.
3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life; that is, you will not experience risks to your physical or mental health.
4. **Benefits:** You might learn more about the program effects by participating in this study. You might have a better understanding of how the program promotes mutual understanding and personal growth. You might realize that this program might influence your view on the world.
5. **Duration:** It will take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete this on-line survey.
6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is strictly confidential. Only Mr. Yu will have the access to your identity. The data will be stored and secured at Mateer Building in a password protected electrical file. The Office for Research Protections and the Social Science Institutional Review Board may review records related to this project.

In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

7. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact Mr. Yu or Dr. Chick at 865-1851 or email us with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775, or email [ORProtections@psu.edu](mailto:ORProtections@psu.edu).
8. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

The information collected in this study will potentially be used to re-evaluate the impacts of the study abroad program and better program design in the future.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please type your e-mail address in the top of the survey to indicate that you are consenting to participate in this study.

You will be given a copy of consent form from Mr. Yu via e-mail for your records

**Vita**

Alvin HungChih Yu  
 Ph. D. Candidate of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management  
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 University Park, PA 16802

**EDUCATION**

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- 2003- 2008**      **Ph. D. Candidate, Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management**  
 The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania
- 2003- 2008**      **Minor in Instructional Systems /Learning Performance**  
 The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania
- 2003**              M. S., Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management  
 The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania
- 1995**              B. A., Elementary Education, Educational Administration Concentration  
 National Hualien University of Education, Taiwan

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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- 9/2003 – 5/2008**      **Graduate Research/Teaching Assistant**  
 Department of Recreation, Park Tourism Management  
 The Pennsylvania State University  
 University Park, Pennsylvania
- 8/2004 – 12/2005**      **Department Faculty/Student Technology Seminar, Graduate  
 Lecturer/Instructor**  
 Department of Recreation, Park Tourism Management  
 The Pennsylvania State University  
 University Park, Pennsylvania
- 8/2004 – Present**      **Department On-line Advisor Evaluation Editor/Reporter**  
 Department of Recreation, Park Tourism Management  
 The Pennsylvania State University  
 University Park, Pennsylvania
- 9/2004 – 12/2004**      **Instructor**  
 Department of Recreation, Park Tourism Management  
 The Pennsylvania State University  
 University Park, Pennsylvania
- 5/2002 – 8/2002**      **Graduate Researcher/Research Assistant**  
 United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service  
 Pacific Southwest Research Station  
 Albany, California