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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP OUTCOMES IN SHORT-
TERM STUDY ABROAD

by

Jeanette L. Milius

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

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Major: Human Sciences

(Leadership Studies)

Under the Supervision of Professor Nathan W. Conner

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP OUTCOMES IN SHORT-
TERM STUDY ABROAD

Jeanette L. Milius, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2019

Advisor: Nathan W. Conner

The impact of global citizenship is far-reaching and encompasses skills and outcomes beyond simple economic and business success. Enhancing all students' knowledge and ability to navigate a global community is not just of interest to governmental units, policymakers, and global organizations, but also to universities who wish to adhere to accreditation standards. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to identify characteristics related to an individuals' motivation to complete a short-term study abroad (one to three weeks in duration) and the impact that experience had on their personal and leadership growth. Eighteen self-identified leaders enrolled in a college degree or certification program from across the United States agreed to participate in this qualitative study, sharing experiences on overcoming short-term study abroad barriers, as well as the personal and leadership growth attained from completing the short-term study abroad program.

Overall, findings indicated that regardless of a participants age, degree/certification, geographical location or level of past or current leadership, by overcoming potential barriers connected to a short-term study abroad experience, the first-hand knowledge attained from his or her participation provided value and benefits personally, as well as informing and influencing his or her current leadership as well as the impact toward future leadership. Specifically, participants shared their personal growth, which included an increase in self-efficacy, knowledge and appreciation for other

people and cultures, being more mindful and open-minded, and greater cultural awareness attained through first-hand experiences that mitigated stereotypes and preconceived biases. Leadership was informed and influenced by the increase of knowledge and awareness of being inclusive, open-minded to global perspectives and differing viewpoints, as well as building teams, empowering others, and sharing leadership. This paper contributes to an existing body of knowledge concerning barriers of participating in short-term study abroad experiences, but by being motivated to overcome those barriers, personal growth occurred. This study provides new knowledge regarding the impact short-term study abroad has on influencing and informing leadership, a topic underrepresented current literature. The impact this study will have is value for all stakeholders working in a global context.

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“You are the wind beneath my wings”

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DEDICATION

To my daughter, Heather

Your unwavering caring and love has propelled me forward

To my son, Eric

Your encouragement and cheerleading has pushed me to finish what I started

To my deceased father, Howard

You left this earth too soon. Even though you cannot see the culmination of my work
here on earth, I hope you are proud from your heavenly home

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
What is Study Abroad?	8
Problem Statement	10
Purpose.....	18
Research Question	20
Definition of Terms.....	21
Significance of the study.....	23
Assumptions.....	27
Limitations and Delimitations.....	28
Importance of the study	28
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	30
Teacher as role model and part of a social network.....	31
Importance of Institutional Internationalization	35
Faculty-led program effects	39
Long-term versus short-term study abroad	41
Students’ need for transferable skills.....	44
How long is long enough?	46
College graduate requirements in job placement.....	47
Personal growth and confidence	48
Transformative learning.....	50
Growth of leadership skills	51
Theoretical Approaches	53
Social cognitive theory	53
Experiential Learning.....	58
Transformative Learning	61
Transformational Leadership.....	63
Full-range Leadership with Transformational Leadership and the Four I's.....	64
Summary.....	67
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	69
Qualitative Method: Phenomenology	69
Research questions.....	69
Rationale for qualitative study	70
Rationale for use of Phenomenology as the Qualitative Methodology for this study. .	73
Transcendental Phenomenology	75
Research Paradigm.....	78
Reflexivity Statement.....	83
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval.....	85
Specifics of study sample.....	87
Trustworthiness.....	99
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	102
SUB-QUESTION 1	102
Barriers/challenges.....	104
Financial/Cost	104

Communication.....	108
Missing responsibilities	110
SUB-QUESTION 2	111
Experiential learning.....	113
Personal Growth.....	114
Global perspective	118
SUB-QUESTION 3	121
Impact/Influence on leadership.....	121
Growth and learning	124
Openness to differences	127
Teaming/Group Dynamics.....	129
Leadership roles	132
Summary	135
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	138
Barriers/challenges.....	139
Personal value/benefits gained from the experience.....	147
Personal growth (Social Cognitive Theory)	148
Global perspective	153
Informing/Influencing Leadership	158
Growth and learning	159
Openness to differences	163
Group dynamics	166
Leadership roles	169
Importance of findings.....	173
Recommendations.....	175
Limitations	177
Future Research	178
Concluding remarks.....	179
REFERENCES.....	181
APPENDICES	210
Appendix A: Informed Consent	210
Appendix B: Solicitation Email	213
Appendix C: Semi-structured questions.....	214

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1. CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization.....</i>	36
<i>Figure 2. Social Cognitive Theory</i>	54
<i>Figure 3. Theoretical Framework.....</i>	57
<i>Figure 5. Full Range of Leadership Model</i>	66
<i>Figure 6. Qualitative Methodology</i>	75
<i>Figure 7. Philosophical Assumptions.....</i>	79

List of Tables

<i>Table 1.</i> Databases	89
<i>Table 2.</i> Participant demographics.....	91
<i>Table 3.</i> Geographic Regions.....	92
<i>Table 4.</i> Countries of visit.....	92
<i>Table 5.</i> Data Analysis	99
<i>Table 6.</i> Barriers.....	104
<i>Table 7.</i> Value/Benefit of overcoming barriers	112
<i>Table 8.</i> Informing/Influencing Leadership	122

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. — John Quincy Adams

If you never go, you will never know. Anonymous

Learning, living, and leading in the 21st century, a time where global interconnectedness has grown exponentially, requires prudence by American businesses, organizations, and citizens to be vigilant to continuous worldwide changes if they wish to prosper and maintain a competitive advantage in a world-wide context (Chen, Chang, & Hus, 2017; Stewart, 2012). Globalization of the world is not a new phenomenon, however, interactions between and among countries and their citizens continue to proliferate. As Thomas Friedman (2005) wrote in his book, *“The World is Flat”*, barriers and boundaries previously encountered in history have given way to the pervasiveness of today’s interrelated and interconnected world. Significant historical events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, liberalization of China, and democracy in South Korea have increased commerce internationally. Perhaps even more significant to this global interconnectedness was the advent of the Information Age. Creation of the Internet and World Wide Web broke down barriers related to communication and interaction between and amongst people, organizations, and businesses (Tucker, Gullekson, & McCambridge, 2011). In a 2013 report completed by Matthew Slaughter for The Business Roundtable, a group of chief executive business officers working with the United States Council for International Business, Slaughter noted, “Increasingly, successful companies in America are deeply global as well” (p. 21). Slaughter (2013) adds that for companies to continue to be successful in the United States, they must “venture abroad to meet the growth in global demand that, over the past generation, has been much faster than that in the United

States and thus presents vast new markets with billions of new customers” (p. 3).

However, with these augmented opportunities comes a responsibility for the development of a society that is culturally competent as a consequence of exchanges with a multicultural, diverse workforce and marketplace. Co-operation of transnational business is vital for “building a virtuous chain of organizational sustainability” (Witte, 2013, p. 357). While the United States relies on global connectivity for efficient economic growth, in 2016, president-elect Donald Trump promoted “America First”, as a part of his election campaign, which included an agenda that attacked foreign policy and immigration laws. With the subsequent election of President Trump and the campaign agenda of “America First”, a shifting dynamic has resulted concerning globalization, international trade, and country dominance. As noted in an article in the *Harvard Business Review*, (Ghemawati, 2017), “As the political environment shifts, business leaders need to keep a careful eye on how their home countries are realigning their international ties, and engage in their own corporate diplomacy” (p. 10). For organizations and companies who participate in activities beyond domestic borders, President Trump’s stance of “America First”, toward globalization demonstrates increased importance of building greater intercultural and leadership skills as related to an interconnected world and the trade that ensues from these relationships. President Trump’s global attitude also provides the impetus for American students and leaders to gain an increased knowledge of working with and amongst diverse groups. While proximity may have hindered global exchanges in the past, technological advancements have eliminated barriers of communication and interaction. Additionally, while unsettledness in international trade currently exists, leaders with cultural competence will

become more important for new and changing relationships that are evolving in the global society.

Therefore, the attainment of global skills and knowledge, along with global experiences gained from visiting, living, and interacting in a different country provide a profound impact on an individual's ability to collaborate with persons around the world and ultimately create a citizenry that is more culturally informed (Heffron & Maresco, 2014; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Jain, Chaudhary, & Jain, 2016). According to Colby and Ortman (2015), the world's population is changing, including the demographics of the United States. Colby and Ortman (2015) summarized information provided in the 2014 United States Census Bureau National projections. The Census Bureau estimates that by 2044, "more than half of all Americans are projected to belong to a minority group (any group other than non-Hispanic White alone); and by 2060, nearly one in five of the nation's total population is projected to be foreign born" (Colby & Ortman, 2015, p. 1). Shrestha (2011) stated, "The U.S. population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse" (p. 26). Zhai and Scheer (2004) state, "To be successful in this diverse society, Americans must have cross-cultural skills, knowledge, and sensitivity" (p. 40). Jayakumar (2008) quotes Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's statement from a Supreme Court ruling (*Grutter v Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 330 [2003]), "Diversity promotes learning outcomes and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce, for society, and for the legal profession. Major American businesses have made it clear that the skills needed in today's increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints" (p. 616). From research based on Thomas Friedman's (2005) book, *The World is Flat*, Howe

and Strauss (2007) concluded, “The pressure to compete globally will be a new reality in the professional lives of today’s graduates” (p. 196).

Over time, the importance of a globally competent workforce has not escaped the concerns of the United States government. As far back as 2005, President Bush, along with members of Congress, through the development of a bipartisan federal commission, set a goal of one million U. S. students annually participating in a Study Abroad experience by 2017 (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009; Durbin, 2006; Lincoln Commission, 2005; Stroud, 2010). However, according to NAFSA data from the 2016-2017 school year, nationally, only 1.6 percent of U.S. students enrolled in institutions of higher education complete a study abroad experience (NAFSA, para. 1). Durbin (2006) noted, “Despite our strong position in the global market and our efforts to promote peace and democracy around the world, the United States lags woefully behind many countries in the number of students that study abroad each year” (p. 5). As noted by Stroud (2010), “The Simon Act focuses attention on the fact that the biggest obstacles to study abroad for American students are not solely financial ones” (p. 493). Stroud validates this assertion by noting that reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1992 allowed students to use Federal aid for completion of a study abroad experience if the experience was related to a program the home institution approved (p. 493). Research conducted by Smith and Mrozek (2016) noted the following other obstacles (other than monetary resources) contributing to low study abroad participation: “students with low social and cultural capital prior to college or have fewer resources (Pope, et al., 2014; Salisbury, et al., 2009); are older (Pope, et al., 2014); have social anxiety about, for instance, participating without their friends (Heffron & Maresco, 2014); have parents who have not

traveled abroad (Pope, et al., 2014); or majored in STEM, business or education (Salisbury, et al., 2009)” (p. 11).

Former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan said, “In the 21st century, a quality education is an international education” (Farmer, 2017, para. 1). Senator Paul Simon agreed and in an interview with IIE (Institute of International Education) he said, “We owe it to the future of our country-we owe it to our students. Study abroad should be an integral part of the education of all students” (p. 6). As a result of concerns voiced by policymakers, educational institutions have been entrusted with the task of properly preparing future leaders and workers. To achieve this goal, it becomes crucial for higher education institutions to develop and cultivate requisite skills and tools to assist future graduates in communicating effectively and appropriately in diverse contexts (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Czerwionka, Artamonova, & Barbosa, 2015; Heinert & Roberts, 2012). Friedman (2005) professed that as technology continues to advance, developing nations would increasingly become viable competitors economically, and as noted by Miller and Slocombe (2012), with increased global competition, students will need to “understand the challenges they will face and (educators should) motivate them to prepare for those challenges” (p. 18). One invaluable tool available to college students to grow and increase knowledge of global diversity is participation in a study abroad experience. As noted in a report by IIE (2017), a students’ ability to navigate and thrive in a multicultural, competitive world workforce is enhanced through a study abroad experience. Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2014) state that the benefits of study abroad are ‘many and varied’. Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2014) suggest the following two fundamental outcomes: (1) increased external connections, which includes sensitivity,

understanding, and connection to another culture; and (2) internal redirection, manifested in a deepened sense of identity and self-awareness (p. 78). Smith and Mrozek (2016) state, “[study abroad] gives students opportunities to experience unfamiliar settings that promote inclusivity and reduce ethnocentrism” (p. 9). According to Cai and Sankaran (2015),

students in modern times have to become proficient in understanding the process of globalization, and yet have the openness of understanding different perspectives, and readiness to utilize some of the principles and practices of other cultures. Such an ongoing effort in their educational journey is facilitated by experiences that immerse them in cultures different from their own allowing for their understanding the world through a horizontal rather than vertical perspective (p. 39).

While rates of study abroad participation continue to increase, overall rates of participation by college students continue to be low, falling far short of expectations set forth by former President Bush (2005). In a NAFSA (National Association for Foreign Study Advisors) report released for 2016-2017, data collected found that nationally, 325,339 college students completed study abroad for credit, an increase of 2.3% from the prior year, however, this is a number far below President Bush’s (2005) goal of 1 million students completing a study abroad experience. For the 2016-2017 reporting period, “IIE estimates that about 16 percent of bachelor’s students, and 10.9 percent of all undergraduate students (including those earning associate degrees), now participate in a study abroad experience during their degree program” (Redden, 2018, para. 3). Therefore, despite a noted increase in participation rates, nationally, this still represents

only 1.6 percent of enrolled U.S. students in institutions of higher education who complete a study abroad experience (NAFSA, para. 1).

Not only is it necessary for students to experience and embrace a rapidly changing economic world, but also as future leaders, there is a necessity to possess a greater knowledge, appreciation, sensitivity, and first-hand exposure to diverse individuals, cultures, and countries. Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated, “from an economic perspective the world is boundaryless-and the implications for leadership extend beyond pure economics” (p. II). Global economics includes a global workforce and one in which many executives are not prepared for, and despite the world being connected through electronic capabilities, the world is far from being a community (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In an article by Kouzes and Posner (2017) the following is noted, “The work of leaders is change. The most significant contribution leaders make is not to today’s bottom line; it is the long-term development of people and institutions so they can adapt, change, prosper, and grow” (p. xiv). One potential option for individuals to gain an increased knowledge and sensitivity to different perspectives as related to individuals, groups, and cultures, especially for those who are involved in leadership roles, is through participation in a study abroad experience. Study abroad experiences provide first-hand exposure to other individuals and cultures as well as varying perspectives, including participants finding themselves in environments where they are subjected to being the minority. By placing participants in environments where they lack feelings of comfort and familiarity, an opportunity exists for a transforming experience to ensue, which can provide personal growth, broaden global perspectives, and increase sensitivity and awareness of cultural diversity in an interconnected world.

What is Study Abroad?

There exists a cornucopia of definitions for study abroad, including duration of time away from one's homeland, and its relationship to globalization and internationalization, which challenges researchers to derive a consensual definition for each of these terms. The Institution of International Education (IIE) conceptualizes study abroad, in general terms, as a study in a foreign country where the student receives college credit for their participation in the experience upon their return to their home country (IIE, 2004a). Study abroad programs are typically denoted by three common experiences: (1) short-term, (2) long-term, and (3) semester-long. A program of out-of-country experience that lasts less than 8 weeks, with a common duration of 2 to 3 weeks (but can be as short as one week) is considered short-term (Eckert, Luqmani, Newell, Quareshi, & Wagner, 2013; IIE, 2012; Kehl & Morris, 2008). To be characterized as a semester experience, the out-of-country duration is for the entire college semester, from 16 to 17 weeks (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). Long-term experiences range from 8 weeks and longer and will encompass a semester-long experience (NAFSA), however, for definition purposes of this paper, long-term study abroad will be defined as an experience that is longer than a typical semester (12 to 17 weeks).

Long-term Study Abroad. Students completing a long-term study abroad experience will be away from their home country for a time period of 8 weeks or longer (defined by NAFSA length of time away standards). Many of these experiences will result in the student completing the experience on their own with no faculty mentor or adult companionship. Some of these experiences will involve the student living with a host family rather than a cooperating college dormitory. Dwyer (2004) noted that longer-

term study abroad experiences can result in lasting effects in terms of academic attainment, career impact, intercultural development, and personal growth, potentially lasting well into a person's late 50's. In research conducted by Norris and Gillespie (2008), data collected by IIE from study abroad alumni over a 50-year period (1950 to 1999) was analyzed for long-term outcomes as a result of participation in a study abroad experience. When respondents were asked about the impact study abroad had on their career, a majority of responses indicated the study abroad experience allowed them to, "gain skills that influenced their career path, foreign language ability that they used at work, and interest in a career direction that they pursued" (p. 386). Individuals who completed a long-term study abroad indicated they did not specifically participate to pursue a career in the global arena, however, the study abroad experience "opened the global career door" (Norris & Gillespie, 2008, p. 389).

Semester Long Study Abroad. Semester-long experiences are typically 12 to 17 weeks (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). Students choosing to engage in a semester-long out-of-country experience will often reside in a dormitory and will complete the experience through an exchange program with a cooperating institution. According to the website, Study Abroad (www.studyabroad.com/worldwide/spring-semester), students completing a semester-long experience live, study, and potentially work in the country of choice, allowing for greater immersion into that country's culture. As noted by Vande Berg, Paige, and Hemming Lou (2012), students participating in semester-long or longer study abroad experiences will encounter a different academic learning context than what they would encounter in their home institution, providing new perspectives of course content and the country they are studying in. Additionally,

semester-long experiences provide participants additional time to explore and assimilate in the host countries' culture. Semester-long or longer programs hold more appeal to single students, whereas married students preferred month-long or shorter study abroad opportunities (Hernández-Díaz, Fernández-Morales, Vega-Vilca, and Córdova-Claudio, 2016). Albers-Miller, Prenshaw, and Straughan (1999) noted students who attend large or public institutions were more apt to engage in a long-term experience (semester-long or longer) than students attending small to medium-sized colleges.

Short-Term Study Abroad. Students wishing to gain international exposure without significant time constraints typically imposed by either a long-term or semester-long experience will often choose to participate in short-term study abroad experiences. Short-term study abroad experiences can be as short as one week (often labeled study tours) up to eight weeks in duration (Eckert, et al., 2013; IIE, 2012; Kehl & Morris, 2008). Typical short-term experiences are two to three weeks in duration. Often short-term study abroad experiences are faculty-led. Short-term study abroad experiences can provide an opportunity to community college students who are often unable to complete either a semester-long or longer program due to constraints of time, money, and family/home responsibilities, conditions common within community college populations (Blum, 2006).

Problem Statement

Opportunities abound for individuals wishing to participate in a study abroad experience, regardless if they choose to do so for college credit or not. For individuals in college institutions, there is an increasing prevalence of study abroad offices on campus, as well as the growing incorporation of study abroad curriculum in today's coursework,

encouraging even greater numbers of students from all disciplines to study abroad. Additionally, programs such as LEAD (Leadership Education and Development), a cooperative partnership commitment between U.S. corporations, higher education institutions, government agencies, and not-for-profits, understand and recognize the need for “an inclusive pipeline to ensure leadership roles in the global economy” (<https://www.leadprogram.org>, para. 4), offering opportunities for individual growth and education as related to a hands-on experience in an out-of-country destination.

However, even with an abundance of choices in out-of-country destinations, and often, opportunities for funding in forms of study abroad scholarships and grants, the number of students who complete a study abroad experience is disappointing. Low participation rates exhibited by individuals who will engage in business relationships are especially unfortunate and disheartening given that a global, interconnected business world is today’s norm (Jayakumar, 2008). Jayakumar (2008) states, “In keeping with the times, universities will need to produce cross-culturally competent citizens who can lead and compete in a diverse and global marketplace” (p. 617). Hallows, Porter Wolf, and Marks (2011) stated, “Owing to the growing interdependence of the world’s economies, preparing business students with the skills necessary to succeed in the global economy becomes vitally important” (p. 89). Bikson and Law (1994) conducted interviews with corporate partners, and from those discussions, corporate leaders noted that for organizations to have a solid global strategy, human resource departments are needing to hire graduates with cross-cultural competence, including social and personal skills along with knowledge and sensitivity to diversity. PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted a study in 2002 and found “75% of firms surveyed expected an increase in the number of

employees on international assignments” (Peppas, 2005, p. 143). Peppas (2005) also noted that even in situations where the employee may not physically travel to a foreign land, diverse work environments require employees to possess requisite skills to manage global business relationships. Several key skills include valuing cultural diversity, as well as possessing intercultural competence and emotional intelligence (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Bikson & Law, 1994; Khoreva & Vaiman, 2013; Tulega, 2014). Klaus Schwab (2016) in his book titled, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, noted that current rapid advances in technology will not only provide greater capabilities but will change the way “we live, work and relate to one another” (p. vii). This research highlights the necessity for individuals who will interact and lead in a rich growing interconnected world have an international acumen. Zhai and Scheer (2004) found in their research, “the students who had more contact with people from other countries had a higher level of global perspective and a more positive attitude toward cultural diversity” (p. 49). Tuleja (2014) states, “Global leaders are required to readily adapt to change and deal with the complexity of interpersonal relationships to flourish in an environment of ambiguity comprised of cultural differences in values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors” (p. 5). Given these compelling reasons for a culturally diverse background, it would appear that an out-of-country experience would provide both short and long-term benefits to today’s college students as well as those individuals who interact in some type of leadership role. Oguntoyinbo (2015) noted that in the last 15 years, study abroad numbers are greater for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) than other discipline fields, with IIE (2012-2013) calculating the number of STEM study abroad participants at 23 percent of all study abroad students. Oguntoyinbo (2015) attributed this growth in STEM

field study abroad numbers to an increased awareness by college administrators and faculty of the potential career benefits, recognizing engineering students design products and services for global markets, not just their homeland. Through a study abroad program, STEM students are finding the value of putting their learning to use in local and international contexts (Oguntoyinbo, 2015). In 2007, the initiative PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education) was formed by the United Nations as a platform to increase global, corporate sustainability, and provide responsible leadership with an ability to create change in the world.

For business organizations, it is dispiriting knowing business student participation numbers remain low considering the augmented awareness, sensitivity, and interconnectedness of the global economy. If business students are aware of the importance of global connections, it would appear their incentive and desire to obtain a global experience, where the potential exists for the attainment of a heightened sensitivity and an increase in cultural knowledge, would inspire them to seek opportunities where they can cultivate and grow global competencies through a contextual experience in a place other than their homeland. The need for cultural diversity is not for just future business leaders, but for any individual who will be working in a business context. As noted by Orahood, Woolf, and Kruze (2008), “the U.S. struggles to find cross-culturally competent employees prepared to handle society’s growing needs in Friedman’s ‘flat world’” (p. 133). Harrell, Stemer, Alter, and Lonie (2017) state, “As the global community establishes more connections across borders and nationalities, international education becomes an invaluable resource for undergraduate students in navigating professional careers and personal lives” (p. 57). Even with the current political shift away

from a borderless society, for organizations and companies to retain relationships with global partners as the world becomes more international and multicultural, it becomes increasingly important to educate and train leaders for interaction with individuals of diverse backgrounds (Wright & Lee, 2014). Without strong interpersonal and cultural skills, it will become ever more difficult for companies to retain solid working relationships with highly integrated multinational organizations, ties that are fundamental for long-term organizational success both domestically and internationally.

Participation rates in study abroad opportunities vary not only among colleges and type of college, but also among degree programs. According to an Open Doors report from 2008, larger institutions, primarily large research institutions that can capitalize on the 'economies of scale' concerning costs of study abroad programs, show higher participation rates (McKenzie, Lopez, & Bowes, 2010). In community college institutions, study abroad rates are even more dismal than rates from other types of four-year institutions. Blum (2006) noted, "a smattering of study-abroad options for community colleges has been available for decades", however, the number of students who participate is "a drop in the bucket when compared to the millions who attend community colleges each year" (p. 10). Paus and Robinson (2008) found that encouragement from faculty impacted student participation, noting the following, "Three quarter of students in foreign language classes reported to have received 'much' or 'some' information about study abroad programs from their faculty members, compared to 20 percent of students in non-language classes" (p. 36).

To understand and explore potential reasons for low rates of participation in study abroad opportunities in college and certificate-seeking students, this study will first

explore what barriers/challenges students/individuals encountered in their intent to participate in an out-of-country experience. The outcomes of this portion of the research study can be vital to a variety of academic institutions where student study abroad rates are low. As noted by the 2012 ASHE (Association for the Study of Higher Education) Higher Education Report, one of the gaps in study abroad research is a focus on the barriers students encounter as a hindrance to their participation in a study abroad experience. The information attained from this study can also be used to improve existing study abroad programs where low participation rates are prevalent. Additionally, this study will provide insights regarding how participants who did complete a short-term study abroad experience view their short-term study abroad experience as related first, to the benefits and value in their personal lives, and then secondly, to determine how the experience helped inform or influence the leadership roles they have assumed. As noted on a variety of college website pages, many higher education institutions promote and encourage study abroad with some colleges expressing rates of study abroad participation as a recruiting tool for their institution (McKeown, 2009). Pucciarelli and Kaplan (2016) noted that in the past, higher education was considered a public good and today “it is becoming a global service delivered by quasi-companies in an ever-more complex and competitive knowledge marketplace” (p. 311). In a study of over 3,000 students, conducted over a period of 16-years at San Diego State University, “solid evidence supports the contention that students with an experiential international education complete more successfully than their peers in today’s global workforce” (Adler, Loughrin-Sacco, & Moffatt, 2010, p. 15). Redden (2016) notes that far greater numbers of foreign students study in the U.S. than U.S. students completing a study abroad

experience in another country. According to Open Doors annual survey, conducted through the Institute of International Education (IIE, 2018), the number of foreign students studying in the United States in 2016 to 2017 topped one million. This can be contrasted to Open Doors (IIE, 2018) findings for 2016-2017, which indicated the number of students from the United States who studied abroad was 332,727. As noted by Senator Richard Durbin (2006), “despite our strong position in the global market and our efforts to promote peace and democracy around the world, the United States lags woefully behind many countries in the number of students that study abroad each year” (p. 5).

An abundance of research exists for perceived reasons related to why students fail to complete a study abroad experience, primarily related to semester-long or long-term study abroad, and can be broken into two interrelated factors: (1) personal-based reasons such as costs, time away from home and family, along with the potential delay in graduation time, and (2) institutional-based factors/internationalization of study abroad on the campus (Dessoiff, 2006; NAFSA, 2004; Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009; Voges, 2015). One plausible solution to the personal-based factors of cost, time away from home, and delayed graduation, is differences resulting from participation in a short-term program abroad (less than eight weeks in duration) versus a semester-long or longer experience. However, while costs may not be entirely controlled by a short-term study abroad experience, time away from home and delayed graduation may be diminished by participation in a short-term study abroad experience. Despite growing concerns and controversial research in regard to the value gained from a short-term versus a long-term study abroad experience, McKeown (2009) challenges skeptics of

short-term experiences, noting from his research that any experience away from one's homeland can provide benefit to the event goer, especially for those students who have never had prior out-of-country exposure. Chieffo (2004) concluded that a short-term study abroad, even as short as a month, provides significant, worthwhile benefits in both intellectual and personal growth. To mitigate institution/internationalization factors, building study abroad into the curriculum, along with the formation of articulation agreements ensuring students receive college credit for their study abroad experience, may increase student interest and participation. Further evidence indicates that participation in a study abroad increases personal attributes in regard to mindfulness and empathy, which in turn impacts individual, group, and leadership attributes. This study will contribute to a body of research related to the impact of personal value and benefit gained from a short-term study abroad, as well as the ability of a short-term study abroad experience to inform and/or influence leadership engagement and activities. Unique to this study is the use of a broad age range, where the only discriminating factor is being a minimum of 19 years old, with no upper age limit, being geographically diverse, with respondents being from across the contiguous United States, and non-discriminatory in degree type or major. Participation in the study also required individuals to have either held a previous leadership position or currently be in a leadership role. For purposes of this study, leadership will be defined as: "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2018, p. 5), therefore, in this study, leadership was defined as being in a position of influence over others, not necessarily associated with a formal leadership title. To date, a fewer number of research

studies have been conducted regarding the impact a short-term study abroad may have on a former participants' leadership engagement or activities.

Purpose

The purpose of this instrumental phenomenological study is to explore what motivates students to complete a short-term study abroad experience in a degree or certificate-seeking college program. To better understand this phenomenon, the following three sub-questions were used to capture participant perceptions as related to their experience: (1) What are the barriers/challenges students need to overcome to participate in a short-term study abroad program?, (2) What benefits did students experience by participating in a short-term study abroad experience?, and (3) In what ways did students' participation in a short-term study abroad experience further inform or influence their ability as leaders?

Barriers and challenges as related to short-term study abroad can extinguish the desire to complete the experience, but if those can be overcome, "it is clear that students find short-term study abroad experiences valuable and beneficial" (Geyer, Putz, & Misra, 2017, p. 1044). Participants were asked how their participation in a short-term study abroad has provided value and/or benefits to his or her daily interactions. Additionally, the study explored, through recorded participant comments, the impact a short-term study abroad experience can have, or has had, on leadership roles they currently have or may have in their future careers. As the world continues to become more interconnected and reliant on interconnectedness to other countries and economies, as well as the mobility of individuals to relocate to homes outside their country of birth, there is a necessity of those in leadership roles gain an awareness and empathy, as well as cultivate appropriate

responses to others with diverse cultural backgrounds and characteristics. In a study of short-term study abroad with a leadership component embedded in the program Earnest (2003) noted, “students also reported that participation in this study-abroad program allowed them to learn their own strengths and weaknesses during a period of personal leadership growth” (p. 47).

This study was conducted to better understand how motivation to overcome barriers of completing a study-abroad experience can provide a life-changing experience that will benefit not only personal growth, but also growth in their leadership roles. While a number of studies, both qualitative and quantitative, exist in regard to student experiences (participation) from study abroad, the importance of this study is to gain insight into perceived, and/or actual barriers that contribute to low participation rates, and how innate motivation incited the completion of the short-term study abroad experience. From completion of this experience, participant perceptions were obtained regarding what he or she felt concerning the benefits and value gained in both their personal lives, as well as in their leadership roles from experiencing individuals, groups, and cultures other than their homeland. This study was conducted using a nationwide search in order to acquire a cross-sectional data set encompassing a variety college majors, diverse levels of college degree or college certificate attainment, broad-based geographical homeland location, as well as finding what, if any differences might be present when a wide age range was captured in the research data set. By attaining various education levels as well as a wide variety areas of domicile, the information gained from the study provides additional understanding of challenges faced by all types of students, from a variety of locales, in regard to participation in study abroad opportunities and the perceptions of

benefits derived from the completion of a short-term study abroad experience. Findings also serve as a tool to grow and/or develop short-term study abroad participation in higher education institutions where participation rates fall short of desired outcomes. As noted by Zhai and Scheer (2004), even those college students not anticipating a global career path need to possess “cross-cultural skills, knowledge, and sensitivity” (p. 40), qualities that can be developed through a study abroad experience.

Research Question

Moustakas (1994) noted, “Phenomena are the building blocks of human science and the basis of all knowledge” (p. 26). van Kaam (1969) stated, “Relevant research is that which explores, describes, and empirically tests human behavior while preserving a “lived” relationship with it in the reality of life” (p. 27).

This phenomenological study was conducted to answer the following overarching research question: **What motivates students to participate in a short-term study abroad experience?** Interview questions for this study were framed for the articulation of student perceptions in how, by overcoming perceived or actual barriers, their motivation resulted in positive personal and leadership benefits.

This study is driven by the following three sub-research questions to gain an enhanced understanding of the motivation for study abroad participation:

SQ 1: What are the barriers/challenges students need to overcome to participate in a short-term study abroad program?

SQ 2: What benefits did students experience by participating in a short-term study abroad experience?

SQ 3: In what ways did students' participation in a short-term study abroad experience further inform or influence their ability as leaders?

Definition of Terms

In study experiences away from one's homeland, the terms study abroad and education abroad are used interchangeably. To operationalize the content of this study, the following terms and definitions will be used:

Study Abroad: Any experience where the student is engaged in an activity that is away from their home country for the purpose of learning and immersing themselves in another country, as sanctioned by their college institution (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2011, p. 12).

Short-Term Study Abroad: (STSA). NAFSA (National Association of Foreign Study Abroad) defines short-term study abroad as any experience of one to eight weeks in duration away from one's homeland (land of domicile). For purposes of this study, short-term study abroad will be participants who have spent one to three weeks in an out-of-country experience.

Long-Term Study Abroad (LTSA): Any experience greater than eight weeks in duration where the student is away from their homeland (land of domicile), including semester-long experiences.

Globalization: A students' dedication to possess globally-minded attitudes where events are viewed from a worldly perspective, along with regarding solutions to problems that benefit not only the individual, but also a broader world.

Global Citizenship: As used in a study abroad context, Morias and Ogden (2011), define a global experience that an experience that entails three key dimensions

including: (1) social responsibility (concern for others, society, and the environment); (2) global awareness (appreciation and understanding of an individual within the world and world issues); and (3) civic engagement (actively engaging in local, regional, national, and global issues).

Internationalization: As stated by Van der Wende (1997), “any systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies, economies and labour markets” (p. 23). This includes increasing the quality of higher education and higher standards in teaching and research. For the purposes of this paper, internationalization will be defined as an academic institution espousing students’ interest and participation in an out-of-country experience.

Leadership: For purposes of this study, leadership will be defined as: “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2018, p. 5). Specifically, this means that no formal leadership title is necessary to attain leadership status for this study. Therefore, sample participants who are in positions of influence, not necessarily holding a formal administrative title such as President, CEO, or similar designation, will be qualified to participate as long as they meet the additional second criterion of having participated in a short-term study abroad (out-of-country) experience either during their college studies in an undergraduate, graduate, or certificate program.

Faculty-led Educational Study Abroad: Any out-of-country experience where a member of the home institutions’ faculty accompanies students.

LEAD: Leadership Education and Development: Leader development program certificate program provided by higher educational institutions where participants, through completion of a 2-year program, will receive designation of “LEAD fellows”. The 2-year program requires participants to complete courses in self-awareness and leadership development, as well as international travel for a 2-week study abroad experience (<https://cardi.cals.cornell.edu/programs/lead-ny/current-class/>).

Significance of the study

Learning to live, work, and navigate an interconnected global world as a responsible global citizen is one of the challenges students face today (Bellamy & Weinberg, 2006). Organizations cannot afford to act as passive bystanders if they wish to remain competitive and viable in a global economy and if we wish to create responsible global citizens, cognizant of their role in the dynamic world in which we live. One of the best places to encourage global citizenship is in our institutions of higher education. The impact of global citizenship is far-reaching and encompasses skills and outcomes beyond simple economic and business success. Therefore, enhancing all students’ knowledge and ability to navigate a global community is not just of interest to governmental units, policymakers, and global organizations, but also to universities who wish to adhere to accreditation standards. Many Colleges of Business wish to attain accreditation to recruit the brightest and most gifted students. As noted in AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International) standards, for a business college to attain eligibility of accreditation,

The school must demonstrate a commitment to address, engage, and respond to current and emerging corporate social responsibility issues

(e.g., diversity, sustainable development, environmental sustainability, and globalization of economic activity across cultures) through its policies, procedures, curricula, research, and/or outreach activities (p. 7).

The AACSB clarifies this standard by indicating graduates should be able to pursue a business career in a global context, with the expectation that “Students should be exposed to cultural practices different than their own” (p. 7). While college courses may be offered in international topics, the standards board wording implies an expectation for global learning beyond the classroom. Mazzarol and Soutar (2012) noted how “university business schools have adapted to market changes” (p. 722). They continue, noting that schools such as John Hopkins University’s Carey Business School, MIT Sloan School of Management, and Wharton, at the University of Pennsylvania have enriched programs to include either out-of-country experiences or curriculum that engages students in skills related to the uncertainty and complexity of today’s world (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2012). As stated in a study completed by Meier and Smith (2016), the accounting profession, which is directly impacted by international business and IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards), has been extending efforts to keep pace with AACSB standard requirements concerning international education. Not only have the AACSB standards been of concern to accounting departments within business colleges, but in 2011, the Pathways Commission, as well as the American Accounting Association, recommended colleges place emphasis on international opportunities (Meier & Smith, 2016). Joining in the concern as related to accounting students need for international exposure was the AICPA (American Association of Certified Accountants), who wrote in their 2012 report in a separate action item, the need to “transform learning experiences to develop a global

mind-set for all students” (p. 74). The AICPA continued, stating it will be necessary for educators to provide students the ability to work with clients from different cultures, industries, points of view, and different life and work experiences.

In a study conducted by Daniel, Xie, and Kedia (2014), it was noted from the findings of their *2014 U.S. Business Needs for Employees with International Expertise* survey that “Eighty percent of the companies believe their overall business would increase if more their staff had more international expertise” (p. 35). Respondents to their research survey also indicated that “U. S. universities should have a stronger emphasis on integrating international and cross-cultural topics into all curricula, since these skills seem to be universally needed by business, even at the entry level” (Daniel, Xie, & Kedia, 2014, p. 5). They added, “At the very least, all business graduates needed an appreciation for cross-cultural differences and a global perspective” (Daniel, et al., 2014, p. 5). They suggest one option to obtain these vital skills is through international business programs, particularly focused on Asia.

Not only will diverse skill sets be requisites for navigating and competing in the global economy, but as noted by Society for Human Resource Managements’ (SHRM’s) Workplace Forecast survey (2011), global competition for jobs, an understanding and appreciation of various cultures and backgrounds, along with the ability to lead diverse workforces will be imperative for managers in the 21st century (Daniel, et al., 2014).

As noted in the JAEE (Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension), sharing and caring resourcefully for the immense amount of scarce resources in the world implores global citizens to be cognizant of the requirements of these resources needed to continue to efficiently and effectively feed the growing world population (Heinert &

Roberts, 2016). As a greater number of natural events occur, such as hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes, access to many natural resources is being jeopardized, further highlighting the need to cooperatively work toward protection and conservation of what cannot often be replicated or reproduced by humans. Therefore, exposure, cooperation, and understanding amongst and between individuals and countries can be enhanced through study abroad opportunities.

Research completed by Petzold and Peter (2015), found that not only did students participating in study abroad have a newly found appreciation of the benefits and long-term impacts of a study abroad experience, but employers, educators, and the American society in general, are realizing the necessity for cultural diversity and awareness as the world's interconnectedness increases exponentially.

As the world enters into what has been 'labeled' the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the ability for exponential connections beyond what has been already seen is at the fingertips of organizations. In a book titled, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, by Klaus Schwab (2016), the author explores the growth of access to technology in areas where current developing nations will be able to compete on a more level playing field. Using increased technological advances will also allow for better appropriation of resources.

Whether the study abroad experience is long or short-term, research indicates there are lasting benefits from a study abroad experience (NAFSA, 2006). Haines (2013) found in his qualitative study that, "interviewees almost unanimously indicated they had experienced profound personal change" (p. 30). In a study by Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic, and Jon (2009), participants perceived their study abroad experience was influential in future global activities such as civic engagement (domestic and internationally),

philanthropy (monetary donations and volunteerism), and social entrepreneurship (commitments in organizations to benefit the community). Students also noted their consideration of living a simpler lifestyle after observing living conditions of locations outside the United States.

Given these compelling reasons for the importance and value of a study abroad experience, universities who wish to remain competitive in the industry, along with providing college graduates a widely applicable degree and invaluable global skills, are urged to increase their support and encouragement of study abroad to students. Despite options and access to study abroad education, nationally, the number of college students who participate in a study abroad experience remains a low number. In higher education institutions where study abroad rates remain low in programs such as business, there is both an impetus and opportunity to grow and diversify business program student populations with the expansion of study abroad in the curriculum. Promotion and support for short-term abroad experiences can provide additional incentives for students to reconsider initial perceptions of negative impacts from the commitment to a study abroad experience. Specifically, Redden (2018) noted that when considering all study abroad programs, “64.4 percent of all students who studied abroad in 2016-2017 did so on summer programs or those that were eight weeks or fewer in length” (para. 8). The increased numbers of participants engaging in short-term experiences provides a testament to the attractiveness of short-term study abroad programs.

Assumptions

While the intent of this study is to not make generalizations as related to motivations for completion of short-term study abroad, it is worthy to make note of

several assumptions within this study. While research supports positive impacts for study abroad experiences, it must be noted that not all participants will acquire similar positive outcomes, with the potential for some experiences to be negative in nature. It must also be recognized that each participant brings a unique perspective to the study.

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitation of this design is that by accessing only two listserv databases, the type of participant is limited to individuals registered with those two databases.

Additionally, due to participants responding to an email request, it is possible that the only participants responding to complete the study had positive experiences from their short-term study abroad. Qualitative studies are based on perceptions of participants, which means there is a high level of subjectivity in responses.

The delimitations of this study include the fact that the use of a phenomenological design limits the number of participants used in the study. Additionally, the use of a qualitative method lends itself to the potential that results are not generalizable amongst all populations. To gain deep, rich textual descriptions, hour-long, one-on-one interviews were conducted and member checking was completed to obtain a greater understanding of the perspectives shared by participants. Finally, for participation, potential interviewees were required to self-identify their participation in a leadership role, leading to the potential of a variety of levels of leadership within the study.

Importance of the study

In an ever-growing globally connected world, it is not only educational institutions as stakeholders in efforts to cultivate a more culturally aware global citizen, but all parties in all realms of organizations have a need to grow competence and skills in

working with and among diverse populations. Study abroad has been of interest to researchers for some time, with a focused interest in undergraduate college students. This study ignores boundaries of age to view motivations of any college or certificate-seeking participant and using the experience to seek perceptions of the impact/influence the experience had on leadership, as well as the values perceived in their personal lives. This study connects motivation to complete short-term study abroad irrespective of age, education level or degree, and leadership level, which is a topic that is underrepresented in current short-term study abroad literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of a phenomenological study is to understand a shared common experience between participants, from their perspectives. To ascertain what previous research exists regarding the topic of interest, a comprehensive literature review of existing research has been conducted. From this review, existing theories and conceptual frameworks can be determined, which can guide current research in the topic of interest, **what motivates students to participate in a short-term study abroad experience?**

Additionally, a marginal amount of research has been conducted and reported concerning the potential influence and impact a short-term study abroad experience can provide for individuals who enter into leadership roles in their careers. This literature review is not intended to bias researcher views, rather to provide background information on the research topic.

Study abroad experiences have gained interest in many contexts including business and education. The globalization of the world has implored businesses to gain or improve cultural acumens to compete in the borderless world, in addition to educational institutions being requested to include international exposure in their curriculum, which will assist businesses and organizations as college graduates enter into their careers. Arum and Roksa (2011) stated, “In an increasingly globalized and competitive world system, the quality and quantity of outcomes of a country’s education system are arguably related to a nation’s future trajectory and international economic position” (p. 124). Additionally, as noted in Mars and Torres (2018), it has become increasingly important that college graduates, in interdisciplinary areas and professions, embrace innovation and entrepreneurship, serving as leaders of change, transforming followers.

This literature review will specifically address several topics pertinent to the research topic including: teacher as role model to college or certificate-seeking students and their part in the students social network and the decision to complete a short-term study abroad experience, the importance and role of internationalization in educational institutions to promote increased student participation in study abroad, potential impact on participation in a study abroad as related to faculty-led study abroad experiences, long-term versus short-term study abroad experiences, individual personal growth and confidence as a result of participation in study abroad experiences, and the potential impact of study abroad experiences on future leadership.

Teacher as role model and part of a social network

Traveling alone to a foreign country, where you know no one, cannot fluently speak the language, and are unprepared and sometimes unaware of cultural customs, can be daunting for anyone, but for a college student who is still navigating through adult independence of their college experience, it is hard to envision their desire to add more ambiguity to their daily life. Long-term, semester-long or longer study abroad opportunities, take a college student far from any physical or emotional support from family or friends for a period extended of time (Deviney, Vrba, Mills, & Ball, 2014; Heffron & Maresco, 2014). As research has indicated, today, more than ever in history, a greater number of students of traditional college age are far less independent and ready for living and being on their own (Espinoza (2012). In his book, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*, Alsop (2008) notes the ‘trophy kids’ whom he defines as those kids who grew up with lavish praise, “have generally enjoyed financial and emotional security in their close, comfortable relationships with their families” (p. 9). Research also suggests that

this is a generation that is considered one of the most loved and wanted (Bonner II, Marbley, & Howard-Hamilton, 2011) and as a result of that, perhaps has become the most overprotected. Howe and Strauss (2007) note, “Millennials feel a specialness that started with the devotion of parents and families and has since worked its way out into our national civic life” (p. 85). Many of these students are entering college classrooms often unprepared in not only academics but also lacking direction/goals (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Tabachnick, Miller, & Relyea, 2008) and the skills necessary to ‘help themselves’ navigate/function in a college environment where parents are absent. Tinto (2012) noted in his research that today’s students often incur difficulty making the transition from home residence to college living. According to Dr. Renae D. Mayes from Ball State University, “work ethic is suffering and students require more ‘hand-holding’ than past students have demanded” (Arnett, 2014, p. 15). Luo and Jamieson-Drake (2015) contend that students lack volition to study abroad, and often do so only as a result of imposed expectations from family or society. Smith, et al. (2015) noted parental resistance as one of the factors for a students’ non-participation in study abroad, especially an experience abroad of an extended length. The thought of taking the risk of traveling overseas for a semester-long international experience may be seen as overwhelming. Heffron and Maresco (2014) posited from their research that social anxiety (being without friends and family) played a larger part in a students’ hesitancy to study abroad than did intercultural factors such as language and culture. One student in their study who had participated in a study abroad experience reiterated, “I met so many people here and the only problem I didn’t like was it was hard for me to get in touch with my parents, I couldn’t call them

and I wish I was able to” (Heffron & Maresco, 2014, p. 356). For adult learners, leaving behind family and work commitments hinders participation in study abroad opportunities.

An important dynamic in college success is a students’ ability to adapt to different values and norms of college life versus home life. This includes a students’ ability to interact and develop relationships with not only newly acquired peers, but also college faculty and staff (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006). As noted by Baker and Griffin (2010), “Interaction between faculty and students has long been lauded by practitioners and researchers as critically important to college learning and development” (p. 2). Faculty mentors provide not only academic and career support, but also emotional and social support that increase self-exploration, augmenting academic and personal outcomes for students (Howe, & Strauss, 2007; Jain, et al., 2016; Tinto, 2012). Komarraju, Musulkin, and Bhattacharya (2010), identified the importance of student-faculty relationships stating, “Whereas previously they may have relied on parents or other family members for professional guidance, they now have another resource they can draw on, their faculty members” (p. 340). As noted in Kuh, et al. (2006), student-faculty contact is one of several central educational practices contributing to student learning and adding to a student’s overall feelings toward the quality of their educational experience. In general, greater interaction between student and faculty results in better overall college outcomes for students (Kuh, et al., 2006; Tinto, 2012). Arum and Roksa (2011) stated: “It is faculty, within classrooms and beyond, who shape not only students’ overall development, but also their commitment to continuing their education” (p. 60). Pascarella and Terenzi (2005), completed a meta-analysis of prior research on student-faculty interaction and concluded, “In all these studies, the effect of student-faculty

interaction persists even in the presence of controlling for confounding influences such as pre-college academic ability, student demographic characteristics, and institutional selectivity” (p. 189-190). Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates (2005), state, “Meaningful interactions between students and their teachers are essential to high-quality learning experiences” (p. 207). Included in this interaction are students working with faculty on projects and activities outside the classroom environment. Kuh, et al. (2005) completed research on a project labeled DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practice) through Indiana University that revealed students’ considered the ability to work closely with faculty on an investigative project, “gave students a better understanding of their teachers, deepened their learning, and in more than a few instances opened new opportunities beyond college, such as graduate school” (p. 215). Arum and Roksa (2011) noted, “What faculty members do, and in particular whether they facilitate academic integration of students, is crucial for student development and persistence” (p. 60). Tinto (2012) concurred stating, “a high quality, caring, and concerned faculty and staff” is critical to student retention (p. 201). The impact and importance of fostering faculty-student relationships have the potential to increase short-term study abroad participation as students gain trust and respect in their teachers, especially in instances where a short-term study abroad experience is faculty-led and the student has had a hesitancy to travel alone. As a part of research on exemplary college environments, Arum and Roksa (2011) noted from an interview with a student that their participation in a study abroad was affected by “direct, positive interaction with their professors both within and outside the classroom” (p. 62).

Importance of Institutional Internationalization

Khoreva and Vaiman (2014) state, “The global economy generates a competitive environment that is becoming progressively more complex, dynamic and uncertain for multinational enterprises (MEs)” (p. 200). They continue, stating that not only have businesses and organizations been influenced by international organizational exposure, but also a need for recruiting and retaining talented employees and leaders is necessary for long-term organizational success. Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2014) determined “the goal of colleges and universities has focused on the importance of internationalization, globalization, or efforts to develop skills” for the global marketplace (p. 78). As noted by Albers-Miller, et al. (1999), “The AACSB requires that business schools emphasize a global perspective” (p. 29). The AACSB states, “Graduates should be prepared to pursue accounting, business, or management career in a global context. Students should be exposed to cultural practices different than their own” (AACSB, p. 6). Regrettably, business schools have fallen behind other colleges in their efforts to provide opportunities to internationalize business programs (Meier & Smith, 2016). This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, as noted by Meier and Smith, (2016), “One type of program often included in internationalization efforts is a study abroad program” (p. 29). Gordon, Patterson, and Cherry (2014) noted from their research on study abroad that “institutional support for study abroad must be a priority” (p. 85). In research conducted by the Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE), working through the American Council on Education (ACE), it was found that institutions that adopt and encourage study abroad opportunities have overall greater numbers of student

participants. CIGE suggests the following model for overall study abroad success (Helms, 2015):



Figure 1. CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization

This advocates, among several variables, the need for a clearly articulated commitment from the institution to support and encourage study abroad experiences for their students. GII (global, international, and intercultural) competencies have been identified by the business industry as valuable knowledge and skills to possess as an individual enters their working career. As noted by the AACSB, for business school accreditation, it is imperative business colleges incorporate some type of cultural education in their curriculum. According to Hernández-Díaz, Fernández-Morales, Vega-Vilca, and Córdova-Claudio (2016), “Accrediting agencies have been key in promoting internationalization and study abroad in higher education institutions” (p. 159). While the AACSB does acknowledge students can read and study pertinent information within a classroom environment related to other countries, the wording of the AACSB implies an expectation of contextual learning (AACSB). The necessity for GII extends beyond the business world. As noted in research conducted by Turos and Strange (2018), “Especially in an increasingly complex world economy, employers also expect skills that are

particularly applicable in the global marketplace” (p. 96). Not only are schools of business interested and concerned in regard to potential impacts of study abroad experiences, but within a rapidly changing world, a need exists for continued awareness of global developments as well as an understanding of how countries affect each other within cultural values and traditions (Turos & Strange, 2018).

GII is comprised of three components: global competency, international competency, and intercultural competency. It is essential to note differences in the components of GII. Often the terms globalization and internationalization are used interchangeably, however, Altbach and Knight (2007) state it is vital to delineate between globalization and internationalization. Globalization is the result of a greater interconnectedness of the world through social, economic, and political forces. Globalization breaks down previous economic, political, and social barriers to form a more cohesive, interconnected world. Due to globalization and the growing interconnectedness of the world, educational institutions need to better prepare graduates with knowledge and skills to work and compete in a global context (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Tarrant, et al., 2014). Altbach and Knight (2007) posit, “Globalization tends to concentrate wealth, knowledge, and power in those already possessing these elements” (p. 291). However, it is through internationalization, or the understanding of the importance of international relationships, that students can attain the ability to mobilize themselves for competition in the globalized society. McCabe (2001) notes that there exists a direct relationship of these terms to each other: globalization is a worldwide process where technology, education, and migration are dispersed around the world to achieve a greater sense of sameness, and internationalization involves the knowledge of

bi- or multi-lateral processes in other countries that is used to develop “business, educational, social, and cultural relationships” (McCabe, 2001, p. 141). Individuals tasked with planning and implementing study abroad within educational institutions must maintain cognizance of the impact the programs provide. This includes writing into the curriculum outcomes and measurement tools to assess study abroad experiences. Lewin (2009) reaffirms the American Council on Education belief that in colleges and universities senior administrators must promote internationalization to prepare their students for challenges of globalization.

As noted in the model, the necessity for faculty involvement is a critical component of the model and the achievement of a comprehensive internationalization of study abroad. Institutions, where a strong commitment is held by administration toward study abroad, results in greater numbers of students participating in an out-of-country experience. Kuh, et al. (2005), reported in their research findings that some colleges, such as CSUMB, (California State University, Monterey Bay) “not only espouses multiculturalism and globalism as academic values, but students must demonstrate competency in these areas to graduate” (p. 222). It is also crucial for administration to support faculty interest in leading study abroad experiences. Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2014) found that recently, more colleges and universities are focusing on the importance and value of internationalization, globalization, and efforts to help students develop skills that are vital to complete in today’s global marketplace or to assist in discovering and implementing solutions to global problems. Howe and Strauss (2007) state, “As was true in Roosevelt’s time, educators will play an important role in forming young people for whatever they may encounter” (p. 215). They continue, noting the importance of

expectations this generation will confront “society, the nation, and the world” (Howe & Strauss, 2007, p. 215). Durbin (2006) summarizes the importance of a global and international community by stating, “Our national security, international economic competitiveness, and diplomatic efforts in working towards a peaceful society rest on our global competence and ability to appreciate languages and cultures throughout the world” (p. 5).

Faculty-led program effects

As noted in research, the influence of faculty on students is powerful (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; Kuh et al., 2005; Meier & Smith, 2016; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The interaction and trust built by relationships between faculty and students creates powerful bonds that can procure not only short-term positive outcomes in students’ college experience but additional long-term benefits that extend into the students’ career. In many instances, trusted faculty is vital to college students’ success both in and outside the classroom. According to Groves, Sellars, Smith, and Barber (2015), “there is a strong pattern in the literature, which suggests that student-teacher interactions are a crucial factor in encouraging student engagement” (p. 29). Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) noted that teacher-student interactions are perhaps the most important factor for student learning. Komarraju, et al. (2010) reiterated the work of Rosenthal, et al. (2000), in regard to the evidence that students who know even one faculty member well are more apt to be more satisfied with their college life and yearn to go further in their careers (p. 332). Jain, et al. (2016), have also noted that the more interaction between faculty and students leads to higher levels of self-efficacy in students.

However, if students were allowed to travel with not only other students but also a trusted faculty member, would they be more willing to participate in this valuable experience? Many times students are hesitant to participate in opportunities away from their homeland due to their isolation from any support group (Doyle, et al., 2010; Netz, 2015; Petzold & Moog, 2018). Having the support and leadership of a trusted faculty member can increase the willingness of a student to venture into an out-of-country experience. Many college students have never left their home country. Given the unrest and violence in many parts of the world, the fear of being in a country where they know no one and may not be able to speak the native language, in addition to not knowing how to navigate country systems and customs, can leave students far from enthusiastic about participating in an out-of-country experience (Howe & Strauss, 2007). Howe and Strauss (2007) noted, “After the 9/11 attacks, students became significantly more reluctant to travel far from home. Now, five years later, the proportion of freshmen that enter colleges within fifty miles of their parents’ home remains considerably higher than it was before (p. 99). Many colleges have increased their security measures for study abroad participants, however, “dramatic global events may overwhelm their efforts” (Howe & Strauss, 2007, p. 99). As reported by *Inside Higher Ed*, “if colleges want to expand their study abroad capacity, faculty-led programs are an essential component” (para. 13). Faculty-led programs can also alleviate parents’ hesitancy to encourage their child’s study abroad participation (Smith, et al., 2015). As noted by *Inside Higher Ed*, a critical variable to push the number of American students to complete a study abroad experience is short-term, faculty-led programs (para. 7).

Long-term versus short-term study abroad

As students demonstrate an increased interest in study abroad, institutions, organizations and the government, are observing an increase in research being conducted on what comprises a beneficial study abroad experience. Considerable debate has ensued in regard to designations of long-term versus short-term experiences and ultimately, how that length of stay impacts overall student growth. Little consensus has been found in defining long-term versus short-term study abroad, therefore, for the purposes of this study, long-term will be noted as any time away from one's homeland longer than 8 weeks (inclusive of semester-long experiences), whereas short-term study abroad will be any time away from ones' homeland less than 8 weeks with a common short-term study abroad being 2 to 3 weeks in duration.

Long-term Study Abroad. Long-term study abroad (LTSA) is defined by Wright and Clarke III (2010) as an out-of-country experience that is one or more semesters in length. Students may choose to participate in an experience for a semester or a year (or longer), as an out-of-country experience that is considered long-term.

Dwyer (2004) notes the following as some of the benefits from long-term study abroad: (1) LTSA participants are more apt to live with a host family which allows for greater immersion in the culture of the host country, (2) LTSA participants are more likely to take a foreign course in the host country which can lead to an increase in confidence and fluency in host country language, and (3) LTSA participants expand their academic major which influences their decision to increase their education toward advanced degrees. Open Doors (IIE) note that participation in long-term study abroad participation continues to decline. Dwyer (2004) states, "During the past 16 years, due to

a variety of academic, social, college policy and economic reasons, national study abroad enrollment trends have been moving toward significantly fewer students studying abroad for a full year” (p. 151). A few specific reasons noted for LTSA decreased numbers include: (1) cost, (2) delayed graduation, (3) family and personal commitments, and (4) lack of support/encouragement from family, faculty, and college.

Short-term Study Abroad. Dwyer (2004) asserts that ‘more is better’, however, growing research suggests international exposure, regardless of length, can benefit participants. Many students are unable to participate in long-term study abroad experiences for various reasons including costs, time away from home which can impact their ability to hold a job, and not wanting to be away from the comforts of home in terms of friends and family. Short-term study abroad (STSA) opportunities can mitigate some of these reasons. Slotkin, Vamosi, Perez, Durie, and Eisenberg (2015) found that “Of the students who participated in a study abroad program in 2013-2014, about 62 percent chose a short-term study abroad program, while only 3.0 percent of students participated in a long-term study abroad program” (p. 71). These statistics were taken from the IIE site (2015). Short-term study abroad benefits are their accessibility, being affordable and expedited, and better reflecting a growing need of non-traditional adult learners to participate (Slotkin, et al., 2015; Tarrant, et al., 2014). Ludlum, Ice, and Nguyen (2013) augment these benefits by adding, “[short-term abroad programs are] ... an excellent value for the school: a transformative experience for the student for a fraction of the price” (p. 4). Tarrant, et al. (2014), found that short-term programs may be a realistic alternative for study abroad and therefore, “short-term programs may be viewed as

crucial for achieving broad and more egalitarian access to study abroad for U.S. undergraduates” (p. 142).

Popularity for Short-term study abroad experiences. For many years colleges have recognized the value and importance of students completing an experience away from their homeland. As noted in this literature review, many previous studies have been conducted as related to a student’s hesitancy to complete a study abroad experience, with a variety of factors impacting student participation. One of the most common comments was students’ concern in regard to graduating on time. For a student to participate in a study abroad experience means time away from their home college where they may be taking courses that will not fill their course requirements (failure to have college credit hours transfer back to their home institution) for graduation (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2014). Gordon, et al. (2014) noted that growth in study abroad overall is at a standstill, however, “more students are opting for less intense short-term travel programs” (p. 78).

Being unable to work either in one’s homeland or the country in which they will be studying is another viable concern for students when considering a study abroad option. Many students work throughout their college career, therefore, being away from their homeland limits their ability to fund not only their college courses, but also the funds necessary for a study abroad experience (Nguyen-Voges, 2015; Salisbury, et al., 2009; Ramakrishna, Sarkar, & Vijayaraman, 2016).

Being away from family and friends for an extended period of time is challenging for many students, especially those who grew up in comfortable home environments where they were constantly coddled. Whalen (1996) discovered that homesickness is a typical reaction to a new culture. McKeown (2009) posits that when participants are

engaged in a study abroad experience, nearly everything they encounter is new which presents challenging learning opportunities. McKeown (2009) states, “Regardless of the structure of the study abroad experience, its duration, or its quality, an American student placed in a foreign environment must navigate through new customs and practices to accomplish everyday tasks, both basic and complex” (p. 16). In research conducted by Oguntoyinbo (2015) with faculty at the University of Alabama’s College of Engineering, one faculty member noted the value of short stints of study abroad being able to mold participants’ minds and significantly altering their perspectives, compelling participants to see both the world and America in a different perspective. Ludlum, et al. (2013) asserts, “the eye-opening, first day experience in another country is the same for a student, whether the trip is for two weeks or two semesters” (p. 3). In a study by Geyer, Putz, and Misra (2017), findings suggest, “Overall, it is clear that students find short-term study abroad experiences valuable and beneficial”.

Students’ need for transferable skills

Students today who are enrolled in college for a degree in higher education have an increased potential to encounter working with or among a diverse multicultural workforce. Lyons, Buddie, and Purcell (2018), found that “Education abroad is a central experience that promotes understanding of different cultures” (p. 99). Trooboff, Vande Berg, and Rayman (2008) posit, “Common wisdom has it that undergraduates who study abroad have an advantage over those who stay at home” (p. 17). Yates (2002) interviewed Charles Baquet, a former U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti and in this interview, Baquet noted that the more students *or* faculty become world citizens, the better. Globalization of the economy amplifies the need for knowledge and competencies in

cultural diversity and as noted by Hallows, et al. (2011), “the globalization of our economy has created an urgent need to better prepare business school graduates with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives to enable them develop, conduct, and manage international business operations” (p. 88). As noted by Miller and Slocombe (2012), with increased global competition, students will need to “understand the challenges they will face and (educators should) motivate them to prepare for those challenges” (p. 18). As noted on NAFSA’s website, “a recent survey found that almost 40% of companies surveyed missed international business opportunities because of a lack of internationally competent personnel” (para. 1). In a study completed by Jayakumar (2008) in regard to the need for higher education to provide a culturally diverse workforce, he quotes the U.S. Department of Labor (2001), who indicated that “one in every two U.S. residents will be a designated racial/ethnic “minority” by 2050” (p. 615). Jayakumar (2008) continues, noting that businesses are voicing concerns in regard to whether college graduates are being prepared to meet these changing demographic statistics.

Moore, Boyd, Rosser, and Elbert (2009) noted, “international experience will be necessary if they are to help the United States remain competitive in a global market” (p. 120). “When 95% of consumers live outside of the United States, we cannot afford to ignore this essential aspect of higher education” (NAFSA, para. 1). Both educators and policymakers are cognizant of the ever-growing need for those entering the workplace to be able to navigate diversity, a need that is mitigated by college attendance (Astin, 1997; Engberg, 2007; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996). Mason and Thier (2018) stated, “Globalization’s economic, environmental, and social impacts have made universities keen on developing ways to increase students’ competency,

compassion, and knowledge of global topics” (p. 405). Global interconnectedness is not just U.S. companies expanding into foreign areas where natural resources have the propensity to be less costly, but the interconnectedness of global citizens migrating to the United States as they seek opportunities for improved standards of living and viable work opportunities. Additionally, individuals aspiring to future leadership positions will be required to ascertain both cultural and emotional intelligence for global success (Alon, 2005). Social capital, a behavior where individuals participate with other groups, networks, and organizations, can provide a competitive edge when companies, businesses, and organizations are working to capture new customers (Earnest, 2003; Lou & Jamison-Drake, 2014; Witte, 2013). Individuals who develop and cultivate high social capital are better able to achieve higher salaries and more career opportunities and additional job recruitment prospects (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Heffron & Maresco, 2014). Schmoll (2007) noted students participating in study abroad found greater satisfaction in their educational experience, and Trooboff, et al., (2008) noted that students completing a study abroad experience “are making a decision that can have a very positive impact on their employability” (p. 31).

How long is long enough?

Many debates cluster around the most effective time period for a constructive study abroad experience. However, research conducted by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) noted, “most research on study abroad finds increases in students’ intercultural awareness and tolerance despite wide programmatic variations in kind, duration, and location” (p. 316). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) continue, noting that study abroad experiences create positive attitudes related to pluralism and world-mindedness. There is

also an increase in acceptance and tolerance of others, increased objectivity of minorities, decreased stereotypes, increased empathy, and in general, an increased appreciation for 'being different' (p. 316). Stewart and Tuma (2002) posit, "Study abroad of any length can immerse students in global problems" (p. 4). They continue, noting that many theories are abstract, linking cause and consequence, but these theories can be made real by providing opportunities for students to experience the world through human intervention (Spencer & Tuma, 2002). Tarrant, et al. (2014) note, "Recent evidence suggests that the duration of the international experience may be only weakly related to student-learning outcomes" (p. 146). McKeown (2009) found that study abroad experiences that lasted for as little as two weeks resulted in student participants demonstrating intellectual development similar to peers who were abroad for longer periods of time. The impact of a short-term study abroad as related to development of leadership skills was also encouraging, as noted in a study by Geyer, et al. (2017), "It is notable that long-term study abroad does not have any significant impact on leadership, but short-term study does have" (p 1051).

College graduate requirements in job placement

Study abroad can provide a multitude of applicable skills including a competitive edge in the job-hunting process, and the ability to build a better resume (Peacock, 2005; Toncar & Cudmore, 2000). Today, a student graduating with a degree in higher education no longer competes for jobs with only their American peers, but also with millions of graduates worldwide (Orahood, et al., 2008). Study abroad can also grow a useful career, personal, and social skills, in addition to students experiencing personal growth and transformation (Dolby, 2007; Dwyer, 2004; Heftron & Maresco, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005;

Oguntoyinbo, 2015). Lokkesmoe, Kuchinke, and Ardichvili (2016) state, “In a globalized economy, the job responsibilities of university graduates in fields like business, agriculture and education are likely to require the ability to form effective working relationships with individuals, groups and institutions from other cultural backgrounds” (p. 156). Intercultural encounters, once uncommon, are now commonplace in daily organizational activities including customers, suppliers, and stakeholders, along with colleagues (Lokkesmoe, et al., 2016). According to the National Research Council (2009), employers are in search of employees who have a “global perspective and relevant competencies”. Yates (2002) also noted that global experience is highly desirable to global companies and makes an applicant ‘stick out’. In the study conducted by Daniel, et al. (2014), businesses reported they are seeking employees with characteristics and traits that correlate with 21st-century skills such as cultural intelligence, cultural awareness, cultural understanding, and global thinking. Smith, et al. (2015) concur, stating, “Students who study abroad exhibit personal and professional attributes that are critical to success in the 21st-century workplace” (p. 15).

Personal growth and confidence

Personal development, in terms of self-efficacy and a newfound global mindedness, are indirect outcomes of participation in a study abroad experience (Bates, 1997; Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2014; Williams, 2012; Xu, de Silva, Neufeldt, & Dane, 2013). In testimonials from students engaging in a study abroad experience, emotional growth and confidence were common attributes reiterated (Haines, 2013; Orahod, et al., 2008; Williams, 2012). Dwyer and Peters (2004) discovered in their research on study abroad that participants exhibited an increase in self-confidence and maturity, which had

a lasting effect on their worldview and desires to seek diversity. In his book, *The first time effect: The impact of study abroad on college student intellectual development*, McKeown (2009), noted the following from a student interview upon the return to the United States, “This study abroad experience has taught me a great deal about myself as a learner and as a person” (p. 12). The participant added,

I have learned a great deal about how the world views the United States, and the everyday decisions it makes as a world leader. I have been forced to become a more open and accepting individual (a characteristic I value greatly) and I am pleased to say that I know more about the world, but also found out how little I did know before this experience (McKeown, 2009, p. 19).

Not only do students believe a study abroad experience can provide learning opportunities not available at home, but a growing number of Americans also believe study abroad can provide opportunities that prepare students for future careers amalgamated to a “global, knowledge-based economy” (Goodman, 2013; Hannigan, 2001; Marcum & Roochnik, 2001). As noted by Dr. Robert Miles (2002), future employers view a prospective employee who has traveled abroad as an individual who is not fearful of uncertainty, especially in instances where the individual has traveled to a developing country. Carley, Stuart, and Daily (2011) completed a study on STSA with findings indicating that cultural gains were the most significant outcome of the student’s experience and “direct exposure to other cultures is a positive learning outcome” (p. 51). In a study conducted by Olson and Lalley (2012), a business student who completed a STSA in Chile said, “It helped me understand that small differences in cultures can be

very important” (p. 330). Spencer and Tuma (2013) state, “the ultimate goal is gaining an understanding of ourselves and of our self” (p. 4), in other words, ‘know thyself’. Dwyer and Peters (2004) posited, “Few other experiences in life have proven to net such a positive and sustainable impact” (p. 57).

Transformative learning

The dissonance and discomfort of being in a foreign land where participants are far from close support, in addition to being in an unfamiliar environment hinder many students’ enthusiasm for a study abroad experience but are important variables in transformative learning (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009). Mezirow’s (1997) theory of transformative learning is based on the premise that “each individual has a particular view of the world” (Christie, Carey, Robertson, & Grainger, 2015, p. 11). This view helps the individual understand experiences based on the paradigmatic assumptions that were formed by how they were raised, their life experiences, education, and culture. When a student ventures into an environment that is not their homeland, such as often encountered in a study abroad, they reassess previously ‘taken-for-granted’ and question the incongruence with familiar or natural states (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009). Olson and Lalley (2012) researched business and engineering students who completed a short-term study abroad, reporting student comments in regard to their attainment of a new perspective of what it means to be a U.S. citizen, along with a previously unidentified awareness of how U.S. citizens ‘come across’ to other cultures. In interviews conducted with participants upon their return home from another country, Haines (2013) found reoccurring statements of the individuals’ identification of the importance of American power, along with its limitations, in addition to the benefits of other cultures AND their

own culture. The Pathways Commission (2011) recommended that ample opportunities are provided to students to transform learning experiences into a pervasive global mindset in students (Meier & Smith, 2016). Olson and Lalley (2012) reported the following response from a participant in their return from the study abroad experience,

I'm much less naïve now. I'm from a very small, very xenophobic town.... Now I think I really empathize with all cultures and stick up for them when ignorant people from my hometown talk down on anyone for having a different culture (p. 330).

Experiencing the world through a different culture challenges study abroad participants to question and critically contemplate their assumptions (Cunningham & Grossman, 2009). It is through self-reflection and experiences that transformative learning can occur, resulting in transformative change.

Growth of leadership skills

As participants of STSA attain personal growth and development from their experience and grow in their confidence and self-efficacy, long-term outcomes include an increase in composure and inspired students to utilize newly discovered leadership skills. Hallows, et al. (2011) noted, “our analysis of perceived impact from students attending a STSA indicates this experience seemed to be a transformational (paradigm-shifting) event for most students” (p. 105). Smith and Mrozek (2016) conducted research with students who had completed a study abroad program as a part of a TAG (Travel Abroad Grant) program. Findings from this study, when specifically analyzing the impact of study abroad and personal growth indicated, “98.1% of students agreed that they had experienced growth in Leadership Development” (Smith & Mrozek, 2016, p. 20). In a

study by Earnest (2003), students reported participation in a study abroad program “allowed them to learn their own strengths and weaknesses during a period of leadership growth” (p. 47). Attaining this growth is important as noted by Goodman (2013) due to the fact there is a growing need for cultivating global leaders who own the knowledge, skills, and cultural understanding to achieve inclusive and prosperous communities. In an interview conducted by NAFSA (2006) with a student who participated in a STSA in Ethiopia in 2005, the student reiterated the following, “when you remove yourself from your comfortable, protected bubble, you learn a lot about what is important to you” (p. 49). As noted in an article by Whalen (2001), students who experience another culture where they become the ‘others’, leads to growth and maturation within themselves to reflect on who they are in their homeland. Geyer, et al. (2017) referenced the fact that due to the newness of STSA programs in leadership research, both quantitative and qualitative data is limited. In a qualitative study conducted by Carley, Stuart, and Daily, (2011) students indicated positive outcomes in areas such as academic achievement, increased cultural appreciation, personal development, and international perspective. Geyer, et al. (2017) also found evidence of long-term effects from short-term study abroad experiences. To validate this evidence, Geyer, et al. (2017) completed an online study survey, which included 970 participants who had previously completed a short-term study abroad experience. Logistics regression models were run with a focus of correlation of the dependent variables of GPA, career aspiration, age, education, study abroad, short-term study abroad, long-term study abroad, multilingual, diversity and gender, to the independent variable, leadership. Findings indicated that GPA, diversity, and short-term study abroad have a statistically significant impact on leadership skills.

Interestingly, long-term study abroad experiences did not have any significant impact on potential leadership. Geyer, et al. (2017) concluded, “Overall, it is clear that students find short-term study abroad experiences valuable and beneficial” (p. 1044). Research has indicated the first several weeks of an away from homeland experience can be the most impactful to new study abroad participants. Additionally, in a study completed by Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus (2011) where students were contacted a year following their short-term study abroad, it was discovered that when students ‘made meaning’ of the short-term study abroad by integrating it into their daily lives, long-term impacts were noted. In an interview conducted by McKeown (2009) with a veteran study abroad administrator, the administrator stated the following, “Like Road Less Traveled, the study abroad experience makes all the difference as it continues to affect students’ lives far into their adulthood” (p. 22).

Theoretical Approaches

Social cognitive theory

This study is grounded in Albert Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory of motivation. The construct of self-efficacy, as operationalized within social cognitive theory, provides additional support in regard to student perceptions and intentions toward whether they choose to participate in a study abroad experience. Albert Bandura (1986) is well known for his work in brain research. Bandura (1986) posited that humans are agents of their experiences, not simply onlookers of events, and it is through these experiences that humans construct and make meaning of their experiences. Bandura (1986) states, “The human mind is generative, creative, proactive, and reflective, not just reactive” (p. 4). The identification and inclusion of the importance of self-beliefs later led

to Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986), creating the triad of the relationship and reciprocity of personal factors, behavioral factors, and the environmental factors.

Using Bandura's social cognitive framework (1986), the following diagram indicates the methodological processes for this study.

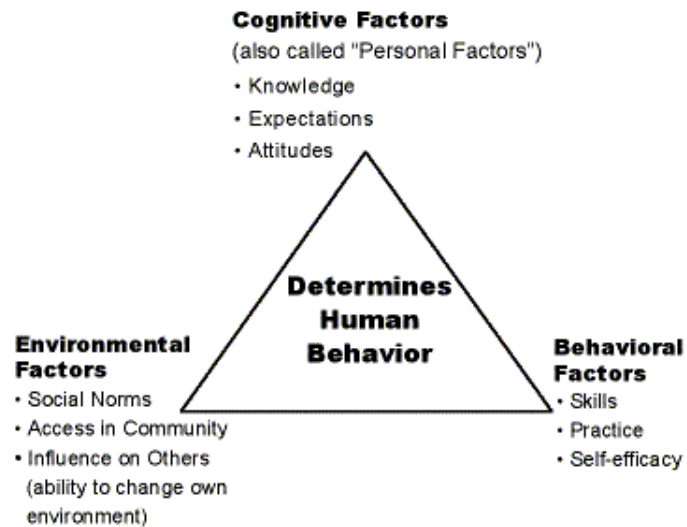


Figure 2. Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) (2001a) posits that "behavior is both determined by and affects environment consequences, which in turn affect the person's conscious intentions or goals, and vice versa" (Latham, 2012, p. 73). Social cognitive theory is deeply rooted in beliefs an individual possesses in regard to not only their ability to achieve a positive outcome (while disregarding those activities that have the potential to result in punishment or unrewarded results), but also considers an individuals' beliefs in regard to what they expect to receive from completion of the activity, and hence, whether it is worth the effort to pursue it (Jung, 2013). SCT contains no fixed pattern in the reciprocal interactions between factors, rather a "dynamic interplay between and among personal determinates, behavior and environmental influences" (Bandura, p. 7). These reciprocal transactions can be described as such:

cognitively (cognitive factors), what one believes and aspires to and intends will affect behavior and the effects of the behavior will impact thoughts and reactions; environmentally (environmental factors), the social environment including perceptions, social norms, and influence will activate reactions derived from preconceived biases that will influence the recipients' idea of themselves and others; behaviorally (behavior factors) is best viewed as how behavior affects the environment and how the environment affects behavior, which engages cognitive thinking in reactions of from environmental and behavioral factors. Each of these factors "function as an important constituent in the transactional system" (Bandura, 1986, p. 9). The interplay of self-efficacy, the belief of capability (cognitive), reactions (behavior), acceptance (environmental), will influence decisions individuals' form toward effort and action. SCT theory has found merit and purpose in many environments including education. In an effort to better understand why few college students participate in short-term study abroad opportunities, social cognitive theory will serve as a framework for this study.

Self-Efficacy. The power of individual thought, whether it is 'I can' or 'I can't', is imperative to individual outcomes. Self-efficacy is embedded in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT), which ties behavior and cognition together to help explain motivation and "the likelihood that people will act on the outcomes they expect prospective performances to produce depends on their beliefs about whether or not they can produce those performances" (Latham, 2012, p. 74). Regardless of external influences, the absence of self-efficacy is an important construct when analyzing student motivation. Bandura (1986) states, "An outcome is the consequence of any act, not the act itself" (p. 391). According to Ning and Downing (2012) "much research has shown

that self-efficacy beliefs influence students' academic motivation and aspirations, academic goal persistence, learning and achievements, etc." (p. 232). Bandura (1986) also posited, "The stronger their perceived self-efficacy, the more vigorous and persistent are their efforts" (p. 394). Personal (cognitive), behavioral, and environmental factors of this triad are relational, interactive, and bidirectional (Stripling & Roberts, 2014). However, as noted by Bandura (1986), the dominance of one over the others may occur (Stripling & Roberts, 2014). Social cognitive theory, as applied to students, asserts a focus on the strength of self-efficacy (personal factor) and its' influence over behavioral and environmental factors and how self-efficacy impacts a student's hesitancy to engage in a STSA. Specifically, self-efficacy relates to an individual's belief in their ability and self-confidence in goal attainment. Bandura (1986) states, "The choices people make during formative periods that influence the direction of their development shape the course of their lives" (p. 431). Personal factors ultimately impact behavior, including motivation and affective processes that encourage persistence/engagement in a particular activity. Jain, et al. (2016) noted Bandura (1997) asserted, "It has been highlighted that perceived self-efficacy is related to business knowledge and career success" (p. 686). Personal factors (cognitive factors) influence individual thoughts and actions. Knowledge is pivotal in this dimension of Bandura's model (Bandura, 2001a). Attitudes, including interest and skills, personal standards and values, along with emotional ties are factors included in the cognitive domain. Behavioral factors (behavioral dimension), including essential skills of problem-solving ability, resourcefulness, self-reliance, analytic skills, behavioral adaptability, and self-efficacy are paramount to whether an individual engages and persists in chosen actions. The third dimension, environmental factors, including

flexibility, open-mindedness, adaptability, respect, and the ability to navigate through ambiguity are key environmental traits (Williams, 2009). The interconnectedness and reciprocity of each of these dimensions impact the individual's self-efficacy and therefore, their willingness to participate in an out-of-country experience. Wright and Clarke III (2010) expressed findings that students completing a study abroad gain not just cognitive knowledge, but also effective and behavioral knowledge and experiences as well (p. 156). The triadic gains as correlated to Bandura's (2001a) model include: the experience of a new culture where empathy and understanding were amplified and integrated between differing worldviews, greater cultural pluralism, appreciation of value systems different from their own, and the ability to communicate better within and between diverse cultures (p. 156).

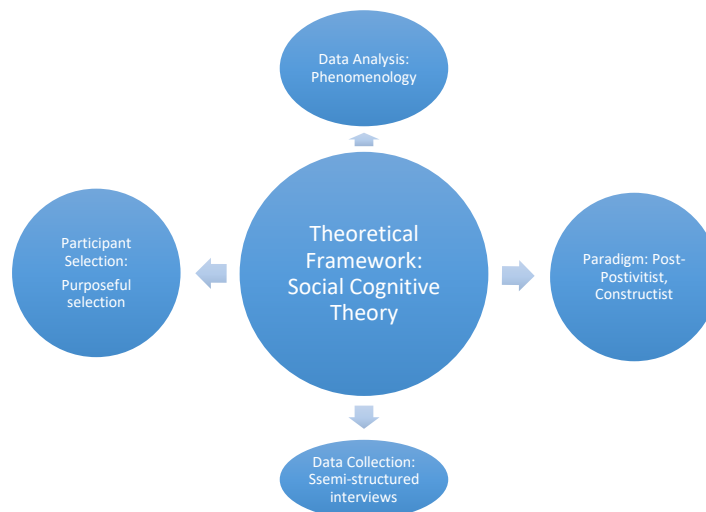


Figure 3. Theoretical Framework

In addition to social cognitive theory, three other theoretical frameworks supply supporting evidence of the impact of study abroad experiences. Experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1975) posits an individual's experiences foster personal growth,

transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1996) identified the importance of self-reflection and the personal transformations as a result of participating in catalytic experiences, and transformational leadership theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994) espouses the value and significance of relationships and experiences toward greater self-awareness, leading to competencies necessary for the global community in which we all live and work.

Experiential Learning

Dewey (1938) is known for his research related to the *process* of how learning occurs from experiences (Roberts, 2006). As reiterated by Roberts (2006) in his research on experiential learning and its application to agricultural educators, “John Dewey is arguably the father of experiential learning” (p. 19). Dewey (1938) concentrated his research on ascertaining “how people make sense of the world around them” (Roberts, 2006, p. 19). Experiential learning advocates applying knowledge and skills to real-world situations to better grasp the meaning of learning. Dewey (1938) contends that human interaction occurs in a social environment and through human interaction, knowledge is obtained. The application of experiential learning is widespread and Ghose (2010) notes, “Experiential learning is not restricted to a particular field of study” (p. 1). Mason and Thier (2018) stated, “Seeking a way to develop global citizens, many universities have turned to experiential learning techniques and opportunities” (p. 406).

Since Dewey’s (1938) initial identification of ‘learning by experiencing’ as specifically identified in educational environments, David Kolb (1975) has refined and enhanced the impacts of experiential learning. As used by Kolb (1975), experiential learning is conceptualized as a process whereby the individual has an experience, they

reflect on that experience and by analyzing the reflective thoughts, they formulate new ideas. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) is pictured below:

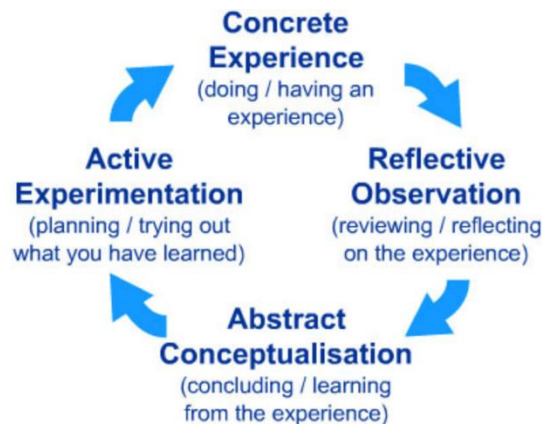


Figure 4. Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is continual, and over time becomes more complex as additional experiences are encountered. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) posits four stages that function in a cycle starting with, (1) a concrete experience, the participant will completes, (2) observations and reflections, moving the participant to the (3) formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, to (4) testing the implications of concepts in new situations (Kolb, 1984, p. 21). As noted in Meier and Smith (2016), from a study abroad perspective, Kolb's (1984) model can be viewed in the following sequence: the student participates in a real-life experience (1st stage), where they make observations and reflect on the experience in Stage 1 (2nd stage). From there, students conceptualize and generalize what they learned from the experience (3rd stage) which then allows them to test the concepts learned in a new situation (4th stage). Slotkin, Vamosi, Perez, Durie, and Eisenberg, et al. (2015) state, "From a pedagogical perspective, experiential learning in a foreign setting is a direct recognition of current economic and political changes which emphasize the importance of both global

awareness and cross-cultural literacy” (p. 71). In a study conducted by Ghose (2010) it was noted,

research suggests that experiential learning can help a student develop a positive attitude towards life, encourage acceptance of responsibility, promote community involvement, develop power of thought and help them understand their strengths and weaknesses in the real world context, thereby inspiring personal growth through the development of global competencies (p. 1).

Braskamp (2008) posits “students like experiential learning such as service learning, internships, community research, and education abroad; they favor the ‘pedagogy of active engagement’” (p. 3). Peppas (2005) noted research conducted by Henthorne, et al. (2001) proposed that traditional classroom teaching of international business was not as effective as a hands-on, action-oriented program where a student studied abroad (p. 145). In a study conducted by Adler, Loughrin-Sacco, and Moffatt (2010) at San Diego State University, it was determined that students with experiential international education will be more successful when competing for jobs in the workforce (p. 15). Kidwai (2011) completed an interview with a student participating in a study abroad program in India, and from that study, the following testimonial was given by the student, “I am a firm believer that you can learn more by doing something rather than reading about it” (p. 34). Kidwai (2011) noted that following this student’s study abroad experience, the student has become an advocate and campaigner for other students to participate in a study abroad. To summarize, the central tenet of experiential learning is

the creation of knowledge that leads to transformative learning (Cunningham & Grossman, 2009).

Transformative Learning

Mezirow (1996) believes learning is not just securing knowledge but involves processes much more complex that makes learning a personal change brought about from the newly gained information. According to Mezirow (1996), learning is a process where prior information is used to interpret or modify new information to add meaning to the experience and guide future action. Transformative learning attempts to explain how individuals acquire and use crucial self-reflecting to contemplate their experiences and beliefs and how these underlying assumptions, which Mezirow refers to as *frames of reference*, change over time (Maiese, 2017). Mezirow (1997) noted that *frames of reference* are two-dimensional and contains both a 'rational' domain, which encompasses mental and cognitive thinking, as well as a 'conative' domain, which entails emotional elements including impulses and desires. Mezirow (1997) posits that *frames of reference* are about beliefs as much as they are about facts, therefore, a vital characteristic of transformative learning is 'personal transformation'. It is not just a matter of obtaining the information, rather it is using the newly gained information to alter perspectives, responses, and interpretations in regard to the way the person feels about their surroundings and themselves (meaning making) (Hallows, et al., 2011). For a paradigm shift to occur there must be an experience, followed by critical reflection, then rational discourse (Mezirow, 1996). In research conducted by Sammut (2014), common to transformative learning was the fact that a catalyst must be present. This is the learner's experience. Mezirow (1996) used the term 'disorienting dilemma' to describe an

experience that did not *fit* in an individual's current beliefs. Cunningham and Grossman (2009) posited these "disorienting dilemmas create dissonance when what students are seeing, hearing, and feeling is unfamiliar and incongruent with their present frame of reference" (p. 1). Kiely (2005) stated the following in regard to disorienting dilemmas:

a critical incident or event that acts as a trigger that can, *under certain conditions* (i.e. opportunities for reflection and dialogue, openness to change, etc.), lead people to engage in a transformative learning processes whereby previously taken-for-granted assumptions, values, beliefs, and lifestyle habits are assessed and, in some cases, radically transformed (p. 7).

Through the experience of a disorienting dilemma, individuals must reconsider their beliefs and determine how new experiences correspond to their worldviews. Lange (2004) views transformative learning as more than an epistemological change in world view, but also an ontological change that reflects the need to act on this new perspective. Taylor (2008) notes, "These studies along with others suggest that it is important for educators to create opportunities for learners within and outside the classroom to act on new insights in the process of transformative learning" (p. 10). Taylor (2008) adds that without the experience, full transformations may not occur. Study abroad experiences are a type of 'disorienting dilemma'. Students are exposed to a multitude of new experiences, and through reflection and rational thinking, a paradigm shift will have the opportunity to occur. As noted in research by Cunningham and Grossman (2009), during a student interview, the student stated the following when speaking of their study abroad experience:

I saw our culture, not necessarily as right but just as this is the way things are-this is what life is and even though there are lots of other cultures out there, they're more like deviations from ours. But as soon as you go on a study abroad, you realize that their culture isn't a deviation from ours, and ours isn't from theirs, but they're just different ways of living in the world. That's something that I didn't get from looking at books or learning about cultures but living in the culture. (p. 7).

Transformational Leadership

Leadership can best be thought of as a mosaic; there are many concepts, theories, perspectives, and themes to encapsulate a definition of leadership. Leadership, in its broadest sense, is proposed to be 'person-centric'. Murphy (1941) stated that leadership is not something in a person, but it a part of the entire situation. This enlarged definition of leadership opened doors to a broader exploration of what leadership is and the impact other variables play on the leadership activity. Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) explored how the 'social climate' played into a leader role, followed by Jennings (1943) interest in leader-follower relationships. These early leadership research studies focused on the relationship between a leader and the follower (Pierce & Newstrom, 2011). Early studies focused on leadership as a set of transactions between the leader and the follower that eventually gave way to theories that leadership is the result of 'the effect' a leader has on the follower. James Burns (1978) first introduced the construct of transformational leadership, the relationship between leader and follower, in 1978 (Pierce & Newstrom, 2011). To distinguish between transactional and transformational leadership, Pepper (2010), defined transactional leadership as a focus on management, whereas

transformational leadership a focus on change. Transformational leadership respects and expounds on the importance of the follower. Sanford (1950) challenges researchers to consider the importance of the followers' role in the relationship. Hollander (1993) confirmed this relationship, indicating that when there is no follower, there is neither a 'leader' nor 'leadership'. It is evident from past research, organizational success is contingent on the role of the follower, not just the leader.

Bass and Avolio (1994) expounded on Burns' (1978) work on transformational leadership, resulting in the development of the full-range leadership model. The full-range model is a more comprehensive model of leadership ranging from laissez-faire to the four I's, and is gaining applicability specifically for use to study leadership in educational settings (Stewart, 2006).

Full-range Leadership with Transformational Leadership and the Four I's

Transformational leadership gained momentum when Bass (1985) challenged Burns (1978) tenet that effective leadership was the result of some type of exchange resulting from followers' behaviors. Bass (1985) posits that effective leadership was more than a system of reward/punishment, rather characteristics of leader/leadership style influenced by follower behavior. Bass (1985) contended that while the 'transactions' of leader/follower are important, for effective outcomes, the self-worth and commitment of the follower must be a viable part of the transaction. Transformational leadership aids this exchange process. According to Bass (1995), "Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performance" (p. 4).

Bass and Avolio (1994) expanded this definition into a larger encompassing model, which was termed the Full-Range Leadership Model. This model includes attributes of transactional leadership including contingent reward, management-by-exception (MBE) and laissez-faire, along with transformational characteristics including the four I's: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual motivation, and individualized consideration. With this model, Bass and Avolio (1994) theorize the most effective leadership occurs in the quadrant where the four I's are situated. Through the use of each dynamic of the four I's, interactions between leader and follower becomes more than just 'transactions', but relationships that result in exceptional outcomes. Transformational leaders practice individualized consideration by listening to followers, while encouraging growth and additional success, and only intervening when prompted to do so. Through intellectual stimulation, creativity by the followers is encouraged, leading to new ways to accomplish shared goals. Inspirational motivation by the leader encourages followers to work toward goals by the leader providing clear expectations and goals, enhancing a team effort toward a shared vision and encouraging followers to achieve high expectations. Finally, idealized influence recognizes the perception that followers identify with the leader and followers thus have trust and confidence in the leader. Power is not used for the leaders gain but used sparingly when necessary. This is often viewed as the charismatic domain of leadership. Bass and Avolio's (1993) full-range model is pictured below.

Full Range of Leadership Model

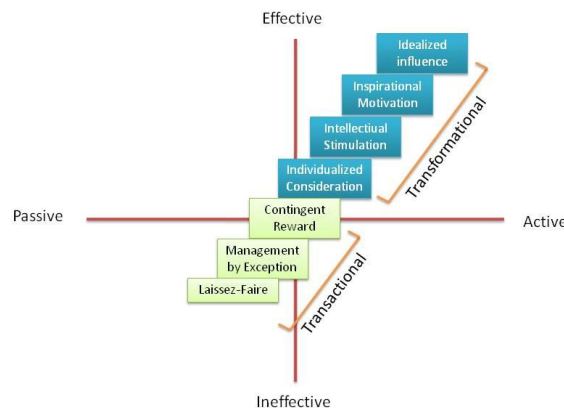


Figure 5. Full Range of Leadership Model

Transformational leadership is unique in that followers are provided a strategic vision, necessary resources and empowerment to reach shared goals (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Transformational leadership also has value and merit as college students find their purpose and path in life, including careers. As a college graduate, new opportunities for future careers are infinite, especially given the dynamics of the current global world and workplace. While a graduate may not actively pursue a global career, as the world continues to ‘flatten’ they may find themselves amid of a diverse workforce. As noted by Wibbeke (2009), “Although U.S. corporations have been expanding across international boundaries for decades, the rapid global advance of technology, especially the Internet, as well as changes in investment processes and trade relationships, has eliminated previous barriers, thus opening markets and necessitating an even greater level of competence” (p. 1). As noted by Ludlum, et al. (2013), “In the past, relocating for a job might mean moving across the state. Now it could mean moving across the globe” (p. 1). These opportunities may necessitate leadership skills from a contrasting perspective. Hofstede and Hofstede (2004) noted that society has become increasingly globalized therefore

effective leadership necessitates an understanding of other cultures to interact efficaciously. Geyer, et al. (2016) noted that students with a study abroad experience had an increased probability of “holding a leadership position” in their career (p. 1048). Despite controversy in regard to the length of time needed to be in an out-of-country experience for positive leadership outcomes, Geyer, et al. (2016) stated, “It is notable that long-term study abroad does not have any significant impact on leadership, but short-term study does have” (p. 1051). NAFSA (2003) suggests that a study abroad experience provides participants a greater awareness of themselves, others around them, and a larger global society. As noted in an article by Rosch and Haber-Curran (2013) when individuals study abroad, “students have the opportunity to build reciprocal relationships across cultures and gain exposure to the larger global society” (p. 149). This increased exposure provides participants an opportunity to see leadership from a global perspective.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the past and current literature as related to the value and importance of study abroad experiences for college students. As noted in the literature, benefits from an out-of-country experience are many and varied. While early research contended that long-term study abroad experiences provided greater benefits, just as the world has changed, so to must the way benefits are measured and viewed by research. As noted in this review, short-term experiences provide an excellent alternative for participants who are unable to participate in a long-term study abroad experience. Providing students an opportunity to integrate themselves with another culture and country, through the security of a faculty-led program, can advance global awareness and diversity to the next generation of workers and leaders. Students become

retentive learners through active participation. As noted by and through both experiential and transformative learning theories, students can experience, reflect, and act upon attained new knowledge and information. Many of these new exposures can provide valuable future knowledge as college graduates accept future leadership roles.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Method: Phenomenology

As interconnectedness and global interactions continue to proliferate, not only do organizations acknowledge the significance and necessity of global citizenship, but also there exists a continued prioritization within educational institutions for providing students knowledge, skills, and tools to be globally competent (Mason & Thier, 2018). A multitude of opportunities exist for participation in various types and lengths of out-of-country experiences, however, rates of participation continue to be low. As work environments continue to grow in cultural diversity, those in leadership roles are further compelled to adapt current leadership styles to become more congruent with a cross-cultural workforce (Solomon & Steyn, 2017). The purpose of this study was to determine aspects related to an individual's motivation to complete a short-term study abroad experience. To better answer this question, the study questions focused on potential barriers as related to participation, both real and perceived, ascertaining if participation in a short-term study abroad experience has provided value or benefits in the participants individual life, as well as if the experience influenced or informed participants' leadership.

The central research question for this study is: **“What motivates students to participate in a short-term study abroad experience?”**

Research questions

To discover factors affecting a participants' decision to complete a short-term study abroad, as well as determining whether an individuals' self-efficacy and leadership attributes are intervening constructs, the following three research sub-questions will be

explored: (1) What are the barriers/challenges students need to overcome to participate in a short-term study abroad program?, (2) What benefits did students experience by participating in a short-term study abroad experience?, and (3) In what ways did students' participation in a short-term study abroad experience further inform or influence their ability as leaders?

This chapter outlines the rationale for use of a qualitative study, and specifically a phenomenological study, the research paradigm, the specifics of the study sample including a description of the study participants and procedures in the collection of data, specific details in regard to data analysis as related to the purpose of the study, and validation strategies.

Rationale for qualitative study

Student perceptions are paramount to capturing the essence of the research question, therefore the use of a qualitative methodology will best fit this study. As noted in a study by Engle (2012), "Unlike quantitative data, qualitative evaluations solicit judgment or conclusions about the value or merit of whatever performance, places, or events are targeted for review" (p. 115). What defines qualitative research as separate and distinct from other types of research is that qualitative research is conducted to "understand the world from the perspectives of those living in it" (Hatch, 2002, p. 7).

Rational for phenomenological study. The purpose of this study is to capture participant perceptions, therefore the use of phenomenological method will best answer the research question. It is important to recognize that the choice of method serves as a tool utilized to "answer the research questions with ingenuity and incisiveness" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 26). The goal of phenomenological research is to discern what a

particular experience means for individuals who have experienced it. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research *empowers* individuals to share their stories and Marshall and Rossman (2016), concur, stating, “the researcher seeks to explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of individual lived experience” (p. 17). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) state, “[qualitative research] study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual” (p. xvi). Qualitative research is heavily embedded in the belief that each social setting is unique, complex, and in constant change. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) note, “qualitative research confronts a changing historical world, new intellectual positions, and its own institutional and academic conditions” (p. 8).

Qualitative research involves the study of subjects in their natural settings and the qualitative researcher positions themselves in that world in order to gain knowledge of that environment, using that information to not only to interpret and bring meaning to the phenomenon, but to also use this newly found knowledge to transform the world (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Litchman, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The use of a qualitative method requires “data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns and themes” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 43), constantly cognizant of the perspectives of the participants, not the researcher. Qualitative research does not begin with the researcher possessing a hypothesis, rather the research is the result of a question of interest, a passion for knowledge in regard to an intellectual curiosity, or a question with an unknown answer (Agee, 2009). The qualitative researcher possesses an interest in what is not only visible but also what is invisible in the phenomenon of interest. Phenomenological studies involve “thick description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how

meaning is created through embodied perception” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1373). Phenomenological studies explore deeper understandings of individual experiences to acquire meaning and essences of experiences or events (Sokolowski, 2000; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Lichtman (2013) describes phenomenological studies as both a philosophy and an approach, and the interconnectedness of the two makes it difficult to understand one without the other. Philosophy is the lived experiences, phenomenology is the study of those lived experiences.

A number of characteristics exist between various qualitative research methodologies. First, the qualitative research being conducted takes place in its natural setting. Data is collected where it occurs, not in a laboratory or controlled environment. According to Patton (1985), the purpose of qualitative research is “an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as a part of a particular context and the interactions there” (p. 1).

Second, the researcher is a key component in the data collection process through data collection methods, data analysis, and interaction with study participants.

Finally, qualitative research involves both inductive and deductive reasoning. Inductively, patterns, categories, and themes are built from the bottom up, while deductively, there is a constant process of checking and rechecking findings to ensure the focus is retained on the participants’ meanings, not those of the researcher. As stated in Bogdan and Biklen (2007), “You are not putting together a puzzle whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture that takes shape as you collect and examine the parts” (p. 6).

Rationale for use of Phenomenology as the Qualitative Methodology for this study.

It is imperative when conducting qualitative research that the research method matches the research question of interest. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) note, “the qualitative researchers’ goal is to better understand human behavior and experience” (p. 43). This involves determining processes used for individuals to construct meaning, then describing those meanings (Richards & Morse, 2013). For this particular study, where participant *perceptions* are of primary importance in answering the research question, a phenomenological study best fits the topic to delve deeply into participants’ experiences of the shared central phenomenon, engagement in a short-term study abroad. Moustakas (1994) writes, “phenomena are the building blocks of human science and the basis for all knowledge” (p. 26). As noted in Merriam and Tisdell (2016), “Phenomenology is a study of people’s conscious experience of their life-world” (p. 26). Phenomenology investigates the social action in everyday life. Richards and Morse (2013), view phenomenology as being concerned with not as we think the world exists, rather how the experience is actually lived. Phenomenology takes the position that we should not assume we know what our participants perceive, rather the inquiry of phenomenology originates with silence (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Phenomenology emphasizes *verstehen*, “the interpretive understanding of human interaction” (Bodgan & Biklen, 2007, p. 25). As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative researchers pursue answers regarding “*how* social experience is created and given meaning” (p. 8), rather than seeking to measure outcomes in terms of mathematical terms such as frequency, quantity, or amount. Moustakas (1994) believes there are common bonds in qualitative research that

are separate and distinct from quantitative research. These include the following: (1) not all human experiences can be understood through quantitative approaches, (2) a recognition and focus on the ‘whole’ rather than parts of an experience, (3) a desire to find the essence and meaning of experiences, rather than trying to measure the experience in numbers, (4) use of descriptions gathered from first-person accounts derived from interviews and conversations, (5) the expectation that data about and from the experience captures understanding, (6) forming questions reflecting the personal commitment of the researcher-their interest and involvement, and (7) the recognizing the experience and behavior is an integral, inseparable relationship formed from subject and object, and parts and whole (p. 21).

Moustakas (1994) notes, “the aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it” (p. 13). Phenomenological research provides empirical evidence from relevant people who provide first-person life experiences (Denscombe, 2014). Through purposeful sampling, phenomenological research provides answers to the essence of the experience through the participants’ eyes.

Phenomenological research can be viewed conceptually as a funnel (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). It begins with a general phenomenon, which can be narrowed to a specific focus of the study. A qualitative study begins with learning what the important question is, then narrows the study through the funnel to derive the directed and specifics of the phenomenon of interest. It is through the use of systematic, qualitative methodology processes a common, universal essence is obtained (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

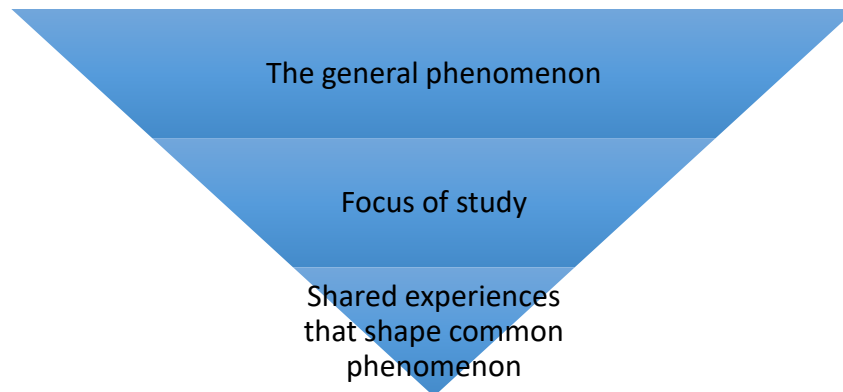


Figure 6. Qualitative Methodology

The essence of this study is to obtain perspectives and consciousness obtained from students as related to their motivation in participating in a short-term study abroad experience, therefore, a qualitative research project employing a phenomenological method will best accomplish this goal. Use of phenomenology for this study provides “methodological congruence” (Richards & Morse, 2002, p. 23). Methodological congruence, as noted by Richards and Morse (2002), posits the inseparable union between the goals of the research and the method chosen for the research project. By interconnecting and interrelating the purpose, questions, and methods, the study is a cohesive whole rather than fragmented parts (Richards & Morse, 2002).

Transcendental Phenomenology

Husserl (1938) is well known for his refinement of ‘transcendental phenomenology’ in the early 20th century. Transcendental phenomenology emphasizes the need for objectivity to discover the essences of the experiences, doing so through the use of a systematic, disciplined methodology in order to obtain the knowledge being sought. Phenomenology utilizes conscious data, while transcendental phenomenology refers to the ability to find knowledge from reflection. Reflection allows the participant to construct extensive descriptions of their lived experiences. These rich descriptions are

termed 'textual' descriptions and include examples, thoughts, feelings, and situations that encompass the whole experience. Husserl (1938) terms transcendental phenomenology as 'the science of science' as it investigates what other sciences take for granted (p. 46). Transcendental phenomenology also includes intentionality. Intentionality merges real content with ideal content, making sense of our words and providing rational justification (Sokolowski, 2000).

The use of phenomenology as a research approach requires the researcher to bracket their own feelings to allow the unbiased perceptions of the study participants to be clearly identified (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Richards & Morse, 2013). The use of *epoche*, a deliberate deferral of judgment, aides the researcher in their ability to search each possible meaning of the phenomenon in the topic of interest (Lichtman, 2013; Richards & Morse, 2013). Moustakas (1994) noted, "The value of the *epoche* principle is that it inspires one to examine biases and enhances one's openness even if a perfect and pure state is not achieved" (p. 61). Once preconceived notions held by the researcher are 'bracketed', and *epoche*, the clearing of the mind of the researcher is complete, horizontalization, a process "in which specific statements are identified in the transcripts that provide information about the experiences of the participants" (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p. 23) can be conducted. Through horizontalization, non-overlapping and non-repetitive significant statements are identified. This process allows the researcher to begin to understand the 'character' of the phenomenon. Each extrapolated statement is of equal weight as the next step of analysis occurs, where irrelevant and overlapping statements are eliminated from the significant statements and analogous statements are grouped together. It is at this juncture that codes can be

identified and themes will begin to emerge from the data. Textural and structural descriptions appear that provide information of ‘what’ was experienced (textural) and ‘how’ it was experienced (structural). This leads to the discovery of the ‘essence’ of the participants’ experience (phenomenon).

Moustakas’ (1994) transcendental phenomenology secures a systematic approach for the researcher to complete analysis about lived experiences. As noted by Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004), this method is useful when a phenomenon has been identified that a researcher wishes to understand and the researcher can find participants who can describe those experiences.

Within phenomenological research, inherent problems can arise. Finding a connecting element between significant statements, codes, and essence descriptions can create challenges for the researcher (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). It is also important to note that ‘essences’ are never completely exhausted. The essence of any experience is only for a particular time, place, and the particular individual being interviewed.

By choosing to complete a phenomenological research method, I understand my need to admit and acknowledge my preconceived assumptions. I realize that I am unable to completely remove my past experiences and established worldly views. To minimize any impact this may have on my research findings, I have bracketed my viewpoints as well as taking notes during the interview processes to better understand and objectively view the findings of the collected data. I have also included in this document my personal paradigm in regard to my philosophies and worldviews.

Research Paradigm

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) describe a paradigm as “a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research” (p. 24). Theoretical perspectives are the ways an individual looks at the world, how they believe the world works, and the assumptions they have about what is important in the world. Guba (1990) posits that a paradigm is best defined as an interpretative framework containing, “a basic set of beliefs that guides action” (p. 17). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) concur with Guba’s (1990) paradigm definition, adding the importance of the researchers’ worldviews. Guba (1990) further contends that no clear definition of *paradigm* has been determined, which is beneficial to intellectual study as this abstractness provides the user an ability to reshape the definition as clearer understandings of its implication become known. According to Guba (1990), variables vital to conducting research include the researchers’ awareness of their ontology and epistemology as these two factors are crucial to the research process and the method selected for conducting the research study. This awareness provides critical information that ensures the researcher is using the correct theoretical perspective and methodology. Guba (1990) conjectures that paradigms are starting points “that determine what inquiry is and how it is to be practiced (p. 18). Paradigms help describe a worldview about philosophical assumptions through the researchers’ ontology, the individuals’ belief about the way nature exists, and their epistemology, which expresses “how do we know what we know” (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012, p. 1). There remains a necessity to be cognizant that paradigms are human constructions, which may contain errors or foibles that are inherent in human endeavors. Maxwell (2013) notes the importance of explicitly

stating ones' paradigm as this will add clarity, justification, and explanations to design decisions. Use of an interpretative phenomenological analysis approach requires me to put myself in 'the shoes' of the participants in order to fully capture a true and deep understanding of the participants 'lived experiences'.

Philosophical Assumptions. Philosophical assumptions “are stances taken by the researcher that provide direction for the study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 18).

Philosophical assumptions include ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. Together, a researchers' ontology and epistemology create a holistic view and lead the researcher to choose an appropriate methodology by which to discover the answer to the question of interest.

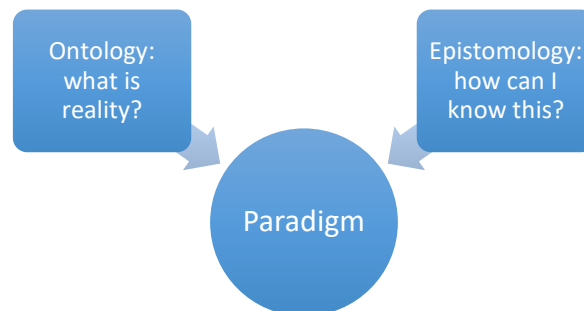


Figure 7. Philosophical Assumptions

Ontology. Ontology implores the researcher to ask, ‘what is reality?’ Creswell and Poth (2018) define ontology as relating to “the nature of reality and its characteristics” (p. 20). Ontology seeks answers in reference to ‘what kind of being is the human being’?, as well as, ‘what is the nature of reality?’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). As noted by Killiam (2013), “In philosophical terms, it refers to the study of our existence and the fundamental nature of reality or being” (p. 7). Ontological beliefs *drive* the research epistemology and methodology. As a qualitative researcher with a constructivist

stance, I embrace the concept of multiple realities that are conceptual in nature. Social interactions are complex and therefore there is not one truth, however, while participants expressed different individual experiences of the phenomena studied, they shared a common experience of a short-term out-of-country engagement and had previously served in a self-defined leadership role.

Epistemology. Epistemology challenges the researcher to think about how one can know this exists, requiring the researcher to be cognizant of their own theory of knowledge, which will influence how the phenomena will be investigated. Epistemology asks, ‘what and how can I know this?’ Epistemology is the relationship between the researcher and the knowledge and how a researcher knows that knowledge (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Maintaining neutrality within interactions with participants in addition to asserting known biases to the reader is imperative when conducting qualitative research. As a post-positivist and constructionist, I believe that while there is a reality, that reality is subject to change and we must be open to constant review and understanding of the changing world. Creswell and Poth (2018) term postpositivism as research that does not believe in ‘strict cause and effect’ and that there is a realism and probability that an event or outcome may or may not occur. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state, “Postpositivism recognizes that knowledge is relative rather than absolute” (p. 9). Postpositivism researchers approach the study as logical sequences, “espousing rigorous methods of data collection and analysis” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 23). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), “postpositivism relies on multiple methods as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible” (p. 8). As a constructionist, often termed interpretivism, I believe the world is constructed by our individual perceptions, seeking to discover and

understand the experience from the participants' perspective. There is no perfect world, nor one correct answer. Merriman and Tisdell (2016) note, "Researchers do not "find" knowledge; they construct it" (p. 9). The amalgamation of postpositivism and constructivism can add clarity to findings. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state, "qualitative researchers deploy a wide-range of interconnected interpretative methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience that have been studied" (p. 12).

Axiology. According to Killam (2013), "in research, axiology refers to what the researcher believes is valuable and ethical" (p. 6). The term axiology is of Greek origin, *axios*, which means value. Through their personal paradigms, researchers bring a set of values and ethical beliefs that guide decision-making within each research study. Creswell (2013) states, "All researchers bring values to a study, but qualitative researchers make their values known in a study" (p. 20). As a researcher I realize I will bring my biases and values into the study, therefore it will be necessary to bracket these as I collect and analyze the data (Creswell, 2013).

Methodology. As a qualitative researcher, maintaining a stance that social worlds are both holistic and complex, it is imperative that while conducting my research I seek a logical and methodical sequence to data collection and analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) contend that each research design requires a clear focus on the research questions, the purpose of the study, and what information must be collected to concisely answer those specific questions. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) refer to 'a strategy of inquiry', defining it as "a bundle of skills, assumptions, and practices that researcher employ as they move from their paradigm to the empirical world" (p. 14). This strategy will guide

my research choice of methodology, data collection, and analysis. It is vital I maintain sensitivity to my personal social identity as well as being reflective of this personal social and biological identity. Use of systematic processes is necessary, and as noted by Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers must “rely on complex reasoning that moves dialectically between deduction and induction” (p. 2).

Data collection in qualitative research is typically completed in the field, with ‘field’ being defined as the setting of the study such as an organization, community, or area shared by the participants of study interest (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Patton, 2002). Richards and Morse (2013) state,

Two major assumptions underlie phenomenology. The first is that perceptions present us with evidence of the world-not as it is thought to be but as it is lived.

The second assumption is that human existence is meaningful and of interest in the sense that we are always conscious of something (p. 68).

People can only be understood in *their* context. This understanding in one’s context aligns with a postpostivist stance. While there is reality, that reality is conditional to the person and the context and a single reality does not exist. As a constructionist, to understand an individual experience, it is necessary to *construct* that experience through their lived world. Creswell (2013) notes, “In the entire qualitative process, the researchers keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research of writers from the literature” (p. 47). Phenomenology starts with detailed statements of the phenomenon that will ultimately allow the researcher to move to the *essence* of the phenomenon (Lichtman, 2013). However, the researcher must be receptive to allowing the design to

emerge through the research process, realizing that changes or shifts may occur as the data collection process ensues, which will allow for 'best practices' in obtaining the problem or issue information (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Reflexivity Statement

A vital component of conducting qualitative research is reflexivity. Creswell (2013) states, "Researchers "position themselves" in a qualitative research study" (p. 47). This *position* conveys information about their background, including work, cultural and historical experiences and how these background familiarities inform interpretations of study information. Marshall and Rossman (2015) caution researchers to be cognizant of their personal reasons for their interest in conducting the study, which ultimately impacts trustworthiness. Watt (2007) agrees, stating, "If design decisions and data analysis are based on personal desires without a careful assessment of the implications of these methods and conclusions, they risk creating a flawed study" (p. 85). Reflexivity of the researcher, the act of providing participants' knowledge of their background and interpretation of the information, aids in the retention of unbiased findings. My current work with business students in a small, Liberal Arts College finds me concerned about higher educational institutions' responsibility to properly prepare our graduates for the global world. While I was unable to complete a study abroad as a college student, my belief in the value and long-term impact of a global experience found me traveling three different times to foreign countries in my adult life. This is evidenced in my role as a parent where I took both of my children overseas upon their college graduation, in addition to a recent trip overseas with friends. Each of these experiences would be classified as short-term, and within each experience, I attained a collection of knowledge

that has continued to influence me to this day. While traveling is something I personally enjoy, I also appreciate that many students have an apprehension to travel to foreign areas, especially if the experience is affected by their individual volition engage in the experience. Regardless of the hesitancy of many students' to study abroad, exposure to other cultures and their ways of living and functioning in their native environment can provide permanent long-term benefits. Given my strong awareness of study abroad benefits, I will need to be cognizant of these beliefs when interacting with my study participants. It is also due to these strong beliefs that I feel the need to ascertain why students choose not to study abroad if given the opportunity, as well as determining what were the motivating variables in participants who *did* complete a short-term study abroad, including the impacts/influences that experience has had on their lives and leadership.

As a full-time member of the faculty in a college of higher education, I realize the findings from this study can potentially benefit myself and other interested faculty members. Overall, my current institution of employment has desired to increase student participation in study abroad opportunities. Specifically, within the business department, there is a desire to capture means to increase interest and participation in study abroad opportunities. Presently, the majority of business majors at the institution who participate in a study abroad experience is limited to those students who are international business majors and as such, are required to participate in study abroad for degree attainment. As a department, this is a discouraging statistic.

I also realize my personal beliefs regarding the value of an out-of-country experience may bias my research. These views include my attitude of the lasting benefits of personal growth and development, along with a sense of increased confidence and

newfound poise in regard to future career advancement and leadership roles. The attained personal growth from an experience of first-hand exposure to another land and culture where an individual is beyond the comfort of 'familiarity' can provide the participant confidence and inspiration to seek additional out-of-country travel as well as having an impact on future career opportunities where situations where uncertainty exists.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

In order to conduct research on human subjects, it is necessary to receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). As noted by Lichtman (2013), "any individual participating in a research study has a reasonable expectation that information provided to the researcher will be treated in a confidential manner" (p. 53). In order for participants to maintain trust in the researcher, 'do no harm' as an ethical consideration will be followed. In order to ensure my sensitivity to student information, I have completed Consortium for IRB Training Initiative in Human Subjects (CITI) training and will use the knowledge obtained from that training to guide trustworthiness and ethical considerations during the study. In addition to this certification, IRB approval was obtained through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Through IRB approval it was determined this research would not be harmful to participants, physically or psychologically.

Ethical considerations

As noted by Lichtman (2013), "Ethical behavior represents a set of moral principles, rules, or standards governing a person or profession" (p. 51). Several vital principles related to completing research on human subjects include: (1) doing no harm, (2) ensuring the protection of participants privacy and anonymity, (3) retaining

confidentiality, (4) acquiring informed consent, (5) cognizance of participants time (intrusiveness), (6) safeguarding against inappropriate behavior, and (7) maintaining a responsibility to analyze data free of misstatement, fraud, or misinterpretation (Lichtman, 2013). Lichtman (2013) concludes, “Ultimately, we are our own monitors and judges of appropriate behavior. Guidelines are helpful; they remind us of the areas to concentrate on” (p. 65). Patton (2015) believed the following in regard to ethics in qualitative research: “ultimately, for better or worse, the trustworthiness of the data is tied directly to the trustworthiness of those who collect and analyze the data—and their demonstrated competence” (p. 706). This includes maintaining rigor; rigor necessitated by rigorous thinking. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state, “In qualitative studies, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings” (p. 261). Creswell and Poth (2018) also address this issue reminding researchers that it is necessary to anticipate and plan for ethical issues.

Each participant was provided and required to voluntarily sign and return a consent form to me, stating their agreement to participate in the research study (Appendix A). Participants were asked to complete and return this form at least three days prior to the interview to allow them time to make an informed decision in regard to participating in the study. Participants were also made aware of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussion. All participants were given a \$10 Amazon e-certificate at the conclusion of the interview process to show my appreciation for the time they spent participating in the study.

To maintain confidentiality and for protection of all information and personal data of study participants, all audio recordings and transcribed data is kept in a password

protected computer as well being as stored in the UNL Box storage system, which is also password protected. All physical documents are kept in a locked file cabinet, with names and any other identifiers redacted by use of only an identifier number on the hardcopy transcripts. This level of protection correlates to the requirements of IRB approval.

Specifics of study sample

Sampling technique. In qualitative research, there is widespread use of purposeful sampling. Qualitative researchers are not interested in quantitative outcomes such as central tendencies, rather the interest is in why an individual perceives the topic of interest in a certain way. Purposeful sampling, as defined by Palys (2008) is, “a series of strategic choices about with whom, where, and how one does one’s research” (p. 697). As noted by Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016), “the idea behind purposive sampling is to concentrate on people with particular characteristics who will better be able to assist with the relevant research” (p. 3). Gaining perspective in regard to decisions relating to participation in a short-term study abroad experience, as well as outcomes obtained from that experience in relationship to personal growth and leadership impact/influence is the essence of this study.

As noted by Dooley (2007), “deciding where, when, who, and how are critical to any study design. The “who” dimension in qualitative research is a nonprobabilistic sample, often called purposive or purposeful” (p. 35). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state, “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 96). Patton (2015) posits the sample must contain ‘information-rich cases’ for the researcher to capture a large body of valuable information. One of the more

common types of purposeful sampling is a ‘typical’ sample (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Typical samples are conducted on a population that would exemplify the average “person, situation, or instance of the phenomenon of interest” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 97) at a site that is ‘typical’.

Recruitment strategies. The target population for this study was individuals who had participated in a short-term study abroad (one to three weeks in an out-of-country experience) and who had self-identified having had or currently holding a leadership position (role where they influenced others to complete a common goal). The sample population included those who had attained at least the age of 19, with no upper age limit. Participants also were completing the study abroad experience for either college credit in a degree (undergraduate or graduate level) or certificate-seeking program through an institution of higher education. In an attempt to capture a cross-section of qualified participants, with varying perspectives, a goal of interviewing 20 participants was set. Only 19 participants completed the interview, with 18 interviews meeting all 3 criteria, and therefore, data from those 18 interviews were used to complete the data analysis and findings of the study.

Solicitation of participants. Participants for this study were solicited via two nationwide Listserv databases, American Association of Agricultural Education (AAAE) and Association of Leadership Education (ALE). Due to the primary researchers’ limited contact with either Listserv, Dr. Nathan Conner (secondary researcher) forwarded the solicitation email to participants of AAAE, while Dr. Barbara Altman (President ALE) forwarded the email to Listserv members of ALE. Potential participants responded directly to me to express their interest in participating in the study.

Table 1

*Databases***Listserv databases**

 American Association of Agricultural Education (AAAE)

 Association of Leadership Educators (ALE)

To obtain maximum views from a variety of participant perspectives, this specific study was conducted using two national Listserv databases allowing for the participant selection to be diverse in age, geographical location, and degree/certification background. As noted by Yukl (2012), an importance exists in regard to obtaining multiple perspectives from a diverse group of stakeholders. Though the use of the two national Listserv's, qualified potential participants had the potential to be diverse in their background, degree/certificate program, and be of a variety of ages providing the potential to provide better overall research findings.

As previously noted above, initial solicitation emails were sent through two national Listserv databases (Appendix A) and interested participants were asked to respond directly to me via email to express their interest in participating in the study. After their initial contact with me, I responded via email, corresponding directly with the potential participant, verifying their eligibility to complete the study. Qualifying participants were then sent a consent form that they were asked to electronically complete by signing, dating, and emailing it back to me (Appendix B). Upon receipt of the completed consent form, a follow-up email was sent to establish a date and time for a one-on-one Zoom interview to be conducted.

Participant characteristics. As noted above, participants selected had three qualifying characteristics: (1) were a participant in a short-term (one to three weeks) out-of-country experience, (2) completed this experience through an institute of higher education (degree or certificate program), and (3) have served or currently serve in a leadership role (defined as a role where the individual has influence over other individuals). Participants were obtained through a nationwide search, therefore a diverse, cross-sectional participant base was obtained with participants' being located across the contiguous United States and short-term travel destinations including a wide variety of countries. The makeup of the study was the following: nine participants who participated during his or her undergraduate college experience; five participants who participated during his or her Master's level (graduate school) experience; and four participants who participated during his or her LEAD certification experience. Of these participants, twelve were female and six were male. These statistics confirm findings reported by Redden (2018) that about 67.3 percent of individuals participating in study abroad are women. Additionally, 11 participants were completing their first out-of-country experience, four were completing their second out of homeland experience, and three participants had already completed three or more out of homeland experiences. For those participants who were completing multiple experiences, as noted by those participants (and discussed in the results section), their first STSA encouraged them to think of engaging in another international experience.

Table 2

*Participant demographics***Level of education when STSA was completed:**

- 22.2 % were for completed for a certification program
- 27.7 % were completed for a graduate level course
- 50.0 % were completed during an undergraduate level program

Gender

Female	66.7 %
Male	33.3 %

International trip experience in general:

- 61.1 % were completing their first study abroad experience (for any length of time)
- 22.2 % were completing their second study abroad experience (for any length of time)
- 16.7 % were completing their third or more study abroad experience (for any length of time)

From the use of two national Listserv databases, it was noted a wide cross-section of geographical area of the United States was acquired in those responding to be a part of the study. As noted in Table 3, four of the five geographical regions (as defined by National Geographic, 2012) are represented in the study.

Table 3

Geographic Regions

Area	Number of Participants	Percentage
West	3	16.7%
Southwest	0	0.0%
Midwest	7	38.8%
Southeast	3	16.7%
Northeast	5	27.8%

Study participants visited a wide range of countries outside the United States. Only four countries were duplicated in the study with two participants attending each of the following countries: Haiti, China, The Czech Republic, and South Africa. Other countries of experience include: East Timor, Vietnam, Italy, Brazil, Chile, Ireland/Scotland, England, Egypt, Kenya, and the Netherlands, with a total of 14 different countries visited by study participants. Of the countries visited, only one country was primarily English speaking, which was England. However, it should be noted that two other European countries (The Netherlands and Ireland) have a number of English speaking natives. Of the countries visited, only three participants spoke the native language of the country visited, and their level of speaking the language was conversationally or less, therefore, a significant number (n=15) of short-term experiences in this study were completed in countries that were primarily non-English speaking. As noted in Table 4, five participants (33.4%) were fluent in the language of the country visited, while eleven (61.1%) of the participants visited a country where they had no fluency of the native language.

Table 4

Countries of visit

Countries visited

- Only 3 countries were visited by the same participants which were the countries of: The Czech Republic, China, and South Africa
- Only 3 countries visited are considered predominately English speaking: The Netherlands, Ireland, and England
- Other countries visited were: Vietnam, Chile, Belgium, Kenya, Peru, Haiti, East Timor/Panama, Brazil, Italy, and Egypt

Language fluency of countries visited by participants:

- 61.1 % of the participants had no fluency in the native language of the country visited
 - 5.5 % of the participants had minimal speaking skills of the native language of the country visited
 - 33.4 % of the participants were fluent in the native language of the country visited
-

While the participants' occupation was not a factor in this study, participants disclosed a variety of occupations and current educational backgrounds in their introductory information at the onset of the interview. Noted were careers in business, the military, educational institutions, agriculture, lobbying, extension, non-profit organizations, as well as students still completing degree programs. All participants have had or are currently in positions of leadership, defined as a position where the participant is influencing others, not necessarily a position where the leadership includes a formal title.

Data collection. In order to secure the perceptions of students participating in a short-term study abroad experience and using that experience to inform and/or influence their leadership role, data collection was completed using Zoom to conduct and audio record approximately one hour, one-on-one interviews with each participant. Participants were also asked to agree to a shorter follow-up interview of approximately one-half hour in duration if necessary in addition to agreeing to respond to any emails from the researcher to clarify or elucidate additional information in regard to the recorded information. During the interview process, the researcher also took detailed notes of the information being relayed by the participants. Finally, all participants were asked to review transcribed hard copies of their recorded interview.

Sample size. Determination of the ‘appropriate’ number of participants to reach saturation is a point of ambiguity. As noted by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the sample size of any research study is contingent on what questions are being asked, what data is being gathered, analysis progress, and what resources are available to support the study. Creswell and Poth (2018) note that the intent of qualitative research is not to generalize findings, rather to elucidate research specifics. Creswell and Poth (2018) also note for a phenomenological study, a population size of 3 to 10 can provide adequate information for the researcher to reach saturation. The goal of this study was to interview 10 to 20 qualifying participants, with the study concluding with 18 participants. It is noted this study used purposeful sampling, which will best answer the research question. Heterogeneous sampling (purposeful sampling) “involves selecting candidates across a broad spectrum relating to the topic of study” (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2015, p. 3). Use of deliberate participant selection provides the researcher individuals who are willing

and able to give information, knowledge, and experiences that relate to the phenomenon of interest.

As noted previously, once participant eligibility was established, a Zoom session was set up for each individual participant, asking for approximately one hour of his or her time. Reciprocity, giving back to participants for their time and effort, is important in qualitative studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As an incentive and compensation for participants' time, each interviewee was provided a \$10.00 Amazon e-certificate. To maintain confidentiality and protect participant information, interviews were completed on the researcher's password-protected personal computer and all identifying information redacted. Participants were also asked to complete the process in a room where their privacy could be controlled. Completed audio interviews, as well as transcribed documents, are stored on the UNL Box database, which is password protected. Hard copy documents are kept in a locked file cabinet protected by the primary researcher and identified only by participant number with no names recorded on the documents.

Data collection protocol. Use of semi-structured, open-ended questions provides an environment where new ideas or thoughts can be invoked in the interview process, allowing for an enriched understanding of the topic at hand. As noted by Klenke (2016), "Before the interviewer asks the first question, he or she has to establish rapport with the interviewee" (p. 126). Mutual trust is a requisite for obtaining rich information from the study. In order to develop a rapport with the interviewee, as well as to obtain basic information about each individual interviewee, each interview began with a question asking the interviewee to provide an introduction of themselves, a description of their study abroad experience, and some information in regard to their leadership role(s), either

past or current. Listening with interest, empathy, understanding, and a nonjudgmental view provides an environment for discovering significant insight of interview data. Once a general rapport was obtained with each participant, a structured interview protocol was followed which consisted of 15 semi-structured, open-ended questions around the topic of interest, posed to each participant (Appendix C). Use of semi-structured, open-ended questions allows for the research to evolve over time and as such, provide rich, thick descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to answer the research question. All interviews were recorded using Zoom as the collection platform. In addition to recording each interview, comprehensive notes were also taken by the interviewer. While no video recording was completed, by listening to tone inflection, additional essence of the participants' experience could be obtained or confirmed. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posit the key to good quality quantitative research is the 'reaching' of redundancy or saturation in collected data. After the initial data collection process was completed, participants were asked to respond to either a second, shorter interview and/or email follow-up to confirm findings.

Once interviews were completed, through the use of an online transcription program, Temi.com., all recorded interviews were transcribed. Temi uses automatic speech recognition to convert audio recordings to text. I then reviewed the transcribed interview documents for accuracy and grammar by combining reading transcripts while listening to each interview again, correcting any errors from the transcription process. Once transcriptions were reviewed and corrected, each participant was emailed their individual transcribed document and asked to review and correct any errors still noted in the document, checking for accuracy in data recorded and subsequently transcribed. Use

of member checking is utilized to attest to validity, creditability, and accuracy of collected data. Member checking also helps ensure ‘triangulation’ of the data. As noted in Patton (1999), triangulation pushes the researcher to think and acknowledge that by deriving the same conclusion by more than one method of data collection and analysis shows an increased rigor and additional confirmation for resultant findings. Once participants confirmed data accuracy, I reread the documents again and emailed follow-up questions to specific participants to elucidate additional information for my clarity and understanding of the participant’s perspective.

Data Analysis. As noted in Merriam and Tisdell (2016), “qualitative data analysis is primarily *inductive* and *comparative*” (p. 201). When utilizing a phenomenological approach, processing of collected data involves a systematic process to derive textural and structural descriptions. Textural descriptions relate ‘what’ participants experienced while structural descriptions provide the ‘how’ of the experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Textural and structural descriptions provide the amalgamated essence of the phenomenon.

Data analysis was completed using inductive thematic analysis, which allows for themes to emerge as data is read. The first step in the data analysis process was completed by the interviewer relistening to Zoom session recordings. As the recordings were being listened to, a hard copy of the interview was read and edited for any transcription errors. Next, the edited, transcribed interviews were read several times and margin notes of key perceptions for each interview question were noted. Where necessary, follow-up emails were sent to each interviewee where unclear information was obtained to elucidate or clarify comments.

Once I felt edited transcriptions were accurate, transcripts were reread and sentences containing significant information describing the participants' perceptions of the experience were copied into an excel spreadsheet. Key sentences for each interview question were categorized on the excel spreadsheet, and sentences were reread for key words and short phrases, which were manually coded and memoed on a physical copy of the excel spreadsheet margin. These were counted and placed in categories, by question, looking for reoccurring themes in the words and phrases. Using 'in vivo' codes of words or short phrases aided in retaining true descriptions of the information as well as providing for making sense of the phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2015).

Reoccurring themes were then placed in categories. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe coding as, "*nothing more than assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data*" (p. 199). Thorough reading of the data will allow for the identification of thick, rich descriptions that will lead to patterns, themes, and categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The process of categorization is exhaustive (ability to place collected data into relevant categories/subcategories), sensitive to the data (placement in a particular category is self-evident), and conceptually congruent (every category has identical levels of abstraction), retaining responsiveness to the research question (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through phenomenological reduction (relentlessly return to the essence of the phenomenon) and horizontalization (viewing all pieces of data as equivalent), clusters/categories will emerge. There is no particular set number of categories, but the fewer the categories the greater the ease for three to five themes to emerge from the collected data. Creswell and Poth, (2018) recommend 25-30 categories due to the fact that the larger the number of

categories, the more difficulty the researcher will have in reducing collected data to three to five main themes. When using purposeful sampling, for trustworthiness and authenticity it is paramount in the data analysis process ‘saturation’ is reached (Ekitan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2015).

Table 5

Data Analysis

Task	Process
Epoche’ (bracketing)	Researcher recognizes and sets aside personal experiences of the phenomenon being studied
Horizontalization	Researcher creates a list of key, non-repetitive statements of key participant sentences, each of equal weight
Clustering of key words	Identification of repetitive words (in vivo coding), put into groups of similarity, synthesizing the collected data
Textural description	Development of themes explaining the ‘what’ of the phenomenon
Structural description	Analysis of themes from different perspectives to understand the ‘how’ of the phenomenon
Essence	Synthesizing textural and structural descriptions into a universal whole (description of the group experience)

Once themes emerged for the 3 sub-questions, data was again reread and ‘in vivo’ coding was completed to discover sub-themes within the themes by locating reoccurring words or phrases.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1984) provide four key criteria for trustworthiness of qualitative research. These are creditability, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability. Dooley (2007) states, “Trustworthiness relates to the degree of confidence that the findings of the study represent the respondents and their context” (p. 38). Dooley (2007) also notes that in qualitative research, *truth value*, or creditability is achieved by ensuring the multiple realities are adequately represented. Triangulation is a one creditability strategy, along with employing multiple and different methods, persons, and/or theories in an effort to find corroborating evidence (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Triangulation involves comparing and crosschecking collected data, which increases credibility and internal validity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), for the constructivist, there are two main sets of criteria for judging goodness or quality in an inquiry. The first is trustworthiness, which includes creditability, dependability, and confirmability. The second is authenticity, which encompasses “fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity” (p. 114). According to Maxwell (1996), researchers must be cognizant of their personal reasons to complete a study (i.e. subjective motives), as those will result in consequences toward the trustworthiness of the project.

Validation

Creswell and Poth (2018) list nine strategies for the validation of qualitative research. In this study, two of the listed validation strategies of Creswell and Poth (2018) were employed in this study.

Thick, rich descriptions. First, through the use of thick, rich descriptions from the phenomenological study are one method of validation. Through the process of relating detailed examples to the themes, the reader can place him or herself in the place

of the interviewee. This results in transferability, a process where the reader can determine if the experiences being read can be transferred to their experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that the attainment of thick descriptions serves as a means to achieve external validity in qualitative research.

Member Checking. As an added safeguard to ensure trustworthiness of the findings, member checking was completed for each participant. Copies of transcribed interviews were sent to each participant to read and verify the findings as accurate and authentic, and descriptions and direct quotes are precise. Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that member checking is paramount for the establishment of credibility in qualitative research.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to research motivations related to individuals who complete a short-term study abroad experience. The central research question for this study was, **‘What motivates students to complete a short-term study abroad?’** To better answer this question, three sub-questions were posed: (1) What are the barriers/challenges students need to overcome to participate in a short-term study abroad program?, (2) What benefits value did students experience by participating in a short-term study abroad experience?, and (3) In what ways did students’ participation in a short-term study abroad experience further inform or influence their ability as leaders?

The findings from this study will be presented in three sections: (1) barriers related to completing a short-term study abroad (and overcoming those barriers), (2) value and benefits of completing the short-term study abroad experience, and (3) participants’ leadership skills being informed and/or influenced from the short-term study abroad experience. Through thematic analysis, textural descriptions of the ‘what’ was experienced will be examined, while the ‘how’ of the experience will be answered by structural descriptions. Inductive thematic coding was used to analyze collected data. From the 18 one-on-one interviews, as well as follow-up emails to individual participants, the following findings were derived.

SUB-QUESTION 1

The first sub-question asked was, **what are the barriers/challenges students need to overcome to participate in a short-term study abroad program?**

To derive thick, detail-rich descriptions, four interview questions were posed in regard to this sub-question. In vivo coding was used which identified 20 main codes that could be

placed in four themes. Main themes represent categories of perceptions as related to barriers encountered when deciding to participate in a study abroad, with subthemes scaffolding detailed codes of perceptions of the participants within each theme. The four main themes related to barriers are: (1) financial/cost, (2) safety, (3) communication, and (4) missing responsibilities.

Deciding to study abroad means additional cost, a concern expressed by 17 of the 18 study participants. Finding resources for obtaining these funds was not the only concern, but also an apprehension of whether using the funds for the purpose of a study abroad experience was a wise use of money. In addition to financial concerns, of the 18 participants, 15 participants completed their short-term study abroad in non-European countries, where safety and fears of being able to communicate added to not only personal concerns but also concerns of family and friends. The last subtheme, missing job/school/family responsibilities was apparent, regardless of the age of the participant when completing their short-term study abroad.

A variety of challenges were present when participants decide to complete a study abroad experience, even when the study abroad is short-term in nature. Table 6 summarizes the main theme, subthemes, and representative statements regarding this theme.

Barriers/challenges

Table 6

Barriers

Theme	Subtheme	Representative statement
Financial/Cost	Federal aid, scholarships, loans	“I think that if I wouldn’t have had the scholarships, that would be a bit discouraging because it is so expensive” (P1)
Safety	Family/friend concerns for physical safety	“My mother, being a mom, was not excited. To be the one to always push study abroad, but she was just so concerned about the safety piece of it, especially given the border with Somalia and that people have heard regarding terrorism.” (P12)
	Family/friends concerns for health safety	“I think it terrified my parents” (P5)
Communication	Unknown language	“The language barrier as I was afraid of not being able to communicate with people.” (P5)
Missing responsibilities	Missing job/school/family responsibilities	“I was working full time and I have a family” (P14)

Financial/Cost

Financial concerns regarding cost and how to obtain the funds for the experience were reiterated by 16 of the 18 participants. Participant 5 shared their thoughts in regard to the consideration of completing the experience, “I almost didn’t go because of the cost, and really, looking back, the cost was pretty minimal for the travel and what we did while we were there”. The ability to use financial aid as well as securing scholarships or other forms of monetary resources to help pay for the study abroad experience was crucial. As

noted by Participant 11, “It’s got to be financially feasible”, which can be alleviated by an ability to apply and receive scholarships. Participant 7 added, “One was cost, it certainly it wasn’t cheap even to go for three weeks, so part of my experience was a little bit contingent on receiving at least some scholarship support, so once that was secured, it made the decision a little bit easier.” For some participants, a scholarship was automatically awarded especially in institutions that greatly support study abroad programs (institutionalized program). However, in other institutions, scholarships had an application process of a competitive nature. Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 16, and 18 used scholarship opportunities to help defer the costs of their trip. Participant 9 stated that “the finances was a little discouraging because I didn’t know how I’d have to, like, I knew there were scholarships, but I just didn’t know how it was going to work out”. Other sources of funding reiterated by participants included family or personal resources (P8, P10, P11, P12, and P17) and monies obtained from financial aid or loans (P4, P5, and P14). Participant 8 shared that “the price was very justifiable with my family and so we didn’t really have to reach out”, and Participant 14 indicated, “there are your student loan proceeds that can be applied to that cost because it is a travel study abroad”. For 10 out of the 18 participants, financial aid could be used toward paying for the trip due to the fact the participant was taking a course for college credit. Participant 4 stated, “the fact that it was a ... course and it was still a part of my financial aid package helped”. In some instances, finding monetary resources was more complex, and as participant 16 stated, “I had to figure out how to fund it”. For some individuals, the motivation to go was intense enough that they took out additional loans (P5), however, Participant 14 added, “so some people don’t go because they can’t afford it”. While a study abroad experience,

regardless of time length away from home, carries a cost, short-term study abroad provides an added benefit due to reduced time away. As Participant 18 stated, “the fact that it was shorter and the price was affordable was an influential factor as well”, and Participant 9 said, “I couldn’t go abroad for a whole semester”. An inability to be gone for an extended period time was also noted by Participant 5 who said, “So the factors that influenced, I mean as far as picking a short-term over a long-term: cost and credit were big ones”, adding that it was not possible financially to be gone for a whole semester. Participants 3, 4, 11, and 14 also indicated the ability to complete a study abroad was contingent on being able to have an experience of short duration or they would be unable to participate at all.

Safety

Subtheme two was focused around safety concerns, an apprehension expressed by both participants and family and friends. Participant 2 shared the following, “I always knew I really wanted to go abroad. My parents were not supportive at all, so I didn’t really tell my dad until a couple of weeks before I left that I was planning on going”. This subtheme can be broken into two subthemes: (1) physical safety, and (2) health safety.

Physical safety. Visiting a developing nation accentuates differences in physical safety for not only visitors to that country, but also safety as related to tourists/foreign visitors. As stated by Participant 8, “So my roommate at the time, she’s also at K-State, and so we discussed it quite a bit and she kind of wanted to go and then she ended up not going, but she was a little bit discouraging just because it was, it’s a different country and maybe the safety factors aren’t the best or it’s not as good as the United States, it’s kind of close to Russia is something she said”. Participant 12 concurred in that there is often a

“concern with a countries stability”. Participant 17 conveyed his colleagues’ concerns, “I had white colleagues who cautioned me against the terror attacks even though it wasn’t as big of a deal as 9/11, but the threat was still there to some degree”. Participant 3 told of their experience in Haiti where their bus was stopped “and the people claimed we owed them to use the road and basically try to take money and so that made me feel a little uneasy”. As another type of physical safety can be the result of gender. Participant 2 voiced a concern of being a woman in a country such as South Africa, a country where inequality and violence against women is prevalent (Rasool, 2012). Participant 12 indicated two individuals dropped out of the program due to safety concerns, sharing that the following questions entered into their decision-making process before going: “Will we be safe? Will we have a target on our back?” Participant 10 commented there was never a direct fear, but “there was however a fear kind of secondarily”, adding that host guides inform participants of overt areas or actions to avoid, but that is in the opinion of that person. “You listen to that and abide by that due to the fact you are an individual in a foreign country, however, there is a question of whether this one opinion provides a full perspective” (P10). Participant 10 expressed a desire to return to the country of the visit to vet these concerns out individually. Going out in a group mitigated safety concerns as Participant 2 disclosed, “we did not go out by ourselves outside of the group. I felt safe with the group and would have been intimidated to venture out by myself”. Participant 15 summed up safety concerns with the following statement, “I kept reminding myself, a good trip is when everybody gets home safely.”

Health safety. The second subtheme as related to safety was health safety of participants. In situations where the country of the visit was a developing nation (such as

Vietnam, Haiti, and Kenya) additional fears of illness (safety for health) while away due to less sanitary conditions, risk of exposure to disease as well as the availability of quality resources were trepidations expressed by participants. For participants visiting developing nations, to alleviate some risks of illness and potential disease exposure, extra immunizations were required, as well as packing pills for common diseases such malaria. As reiterated by Participant 1, the explicit concerns were evident when observing country customary practices such as the following:

Watching people do their laundry in the river that runs next to their house, but then they're also getting their drinking water out of that and they're also putting their sewage and household waste in that rotted water, and so all of it coming from the same place was disturbing.

Participant 3 added, "sometimes when we eat food I would be like a little uneasy just because we were warned a lot about the water there and different health risks". Not only were food and water of concern to participants, but as Participant 12 remarked, "Just noting that around the world there are bigger risks of disease and things like that".

Comfort concerning safety was alleviated for participants and their families when the trip included faculty-led experiences, as noted by Participant 4, "I remember my parents being concerned about my wellbeing with them feeling better about this experience because I wasn't going by myself. I was going with other ... students and with ... instructors".

Communication

Each of the 18 participants reflected on their concerns regarding being able to effectively communicate in a place where few spoke the native tongue of the country of

visit. Eleven of the 18 participants had no fluency in the language of the country of the visit, therefore, apprehension concerning navigating and interacting with natives in the country of visit was expressed by many of the study participants. Participant 2 found differences in interpersonal communication, “they didn’t give as many physical cues of affirmation as I was talking to her as I was doing something, and I couldn’t quite understand why I wasn’t feeling fulfilled in my interpersonal interactions”. Participant 15 stated, “Even though I didn’t speak the language, we used sign language to communicate”, which helped facilitate communication. Participant 4 added how the clerk laughed at me and so there was discomfort and “feeling dumb” as a foreigner in that country. Participant 17 told of an experience when being sick and needing to find a pharmacy and medication for the particular ailment, with the medication having a different name and use of hand gestures to navigate through the process of obtaining the necessary item. Participant 5 was both appreciative and thankful for pictures on a menu when trying to dine in a restaurant in the country of visit, not knowing how to read meal offerings in a foreign language. Participant 15 noted, “feelings of discomfort included not speaking the language, not reading the language, getting lost, not knowing how to ask for direction; feelings of being judged and evaluated by others in a foreign country”. Being in a country where different exchange systems are used was also troubling as noted by Participant 4, “I didn’t understand enough of the currency system and being unable to communicate with the person behind the counter, and so I just felt like an idiot and I just put all the money and all the change I had on the table to pay for it”.

Missing responsibilities

When participants engaged in their short-term study abroad, there were concerns regarding who would be ‘picking up the slack’ in their absence, whether those responsibilities were for school, a job, or family duties. This was true for both traditional college-age participants, who worried about organizational duties left to another person or job duties that other co-workers had to fill in for, as well as a concern for non-traditional students who worried about missing job duties as well as family responsibilities. As shared by Participant 11,

I was appointed interim executive director so figuring out how people could access me if they needed to, and in getting the backup in place so that I can be away from the organization that I was leading was challenging.

Participant 1 shared, “I think a lot of times as student leaders we feel like we would be like taking away from our campus by like not being here to serve it”. Not only were concerns related to the potential burden falling on those left to cover for the study abroad participant, but also the concerns related to lost wages. Some participants delayed obtaining full-time work until their return from their short-term study abroad, while several students completed their experience during a school break. Participant 6 noted, “this was kind of in between spring and summer and so you had to delay starting your summer job by a week or so, but again, so it wasn’t a huge factor”. Participant 6 noted, “I had to figure out the money piece”, adding that not only is there a cost to travel, but there is also a ‘cost’ when one must lose out on wages that could have been earned at a job while away from home. To participate at all, LEAD certificate program participants were required to obtain signatures from not only employers, but also their families for approval

to take part in the out of homeland experience (P10, P11, P12, and P13). Participant 10 commented, “they actually have a spouse sign that they understand what the commitment is and also your places of employment”.

SUB-QUESTION 2

Sub-question 2 posed to participants asked, **what benefits value did students experience by participating in a short-term study abroad experience?**

Once initial barriers were surmounted, participants shared a multitude of comments in regard to their experience, expressing accolades of the value and benefits personally acquired from their experience. Again, to derive thick, detail-rich descriptions, four interview questions were posed concerning this sub-question. In vivo coding was used which identified 23 codes that could be placed in three themes. Main themes represent categories of perceptions as related to value/benefits encountered when deciding to participate in a study abroad, with subthemes scaffolding detailed codes of perceptions of participants within each theme. Table 7 summarizes the three main themes, related subthemes, and representative statements. The three main themes are: (1) experiential learning (2) personal growth; and (3) global perspective.

Table 7

Value/Benefit of overcoming barriers

Theme	Subtheme	Representative statement
Experiential learning	First-hand experience	“I was expecting those study abroad experiences to provide me with real-life experience that I could apply to what I have been learning in the classroom to how it actually gets into the real world.” (P18)
Personal growth (SCT)	Self-efficacy	“The one thing I really took away from it was some self-efficacy in that I could come into a new place knowing nobody and have a positive and successful experience there” (P 7)
	Appreciation/understanding	“..driving by a little protest where people were burning stuff to block the entrance to this road because they didn’t have water that they were promised by the local government, so it gave me a greater appreciation for some of the things I have and that we’re able to have in general in the United States” (P13)

	Open-minded/mindfulness/awareness	“I think it helps you really expand your mindset whether you go there with that intention or not” (P1)
	Discomfort	“First of all, I hoped that I would be pushed out of my comfort zone” (P12)
Global perspective	Removal of stereotypes/preconceived notions/biases	“It’s just kind of funny how conversation, or movies or certain things in your own culture can help frame what you view of something else” (P10)
	Global citizen	“I didn’t know what I didn’t know” (P15)
	Cultural competency/diversity	“Just having that diversity of experiences and backgrounds because we all focus on and have a strength in a different area” (P12)

Experiential learning

As noted in the representative sentence above, the expectation of many participants was application of textbook/classroom learning to real-world environments. Participant 18 indicated, “I was expecting to have hands-on experience and be able to apply what I’ve been learning in communities and to meet people”. The sentiment of ‘real examples’ and ‘first-hand exposure’ was also expressed by Participants 1, 4, 5, 6, 7,

8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 14. Participant 16 added, “not just the reading about things and looking at slideshows, but going and really encountering different cultures, different ideas, different ways of living and being, to understand how we interact with people better”. Participant 12 shared “as my parents always said, the biggest way to try and figure problems here is to go and experience them across the world, better solutions somewhere else compared to what we have locally here”. Participant 2 added, “[I] just wanted to go have the opportunity to both meet people and experience their culture, or at least be able to try it on for a very short period of time.”

Personal Growth

Personal growth, the ability to understand and develop oneself, is necessary in order for an individual to reach their fullest potential. As noted by the sub-themes identified from the results of the interviews for this short-term study abroad research, themes of self-efficacy (self-awareness), understanding, open-mindedness, and discomfort (leaving environments of familiarity). As related to the overarching research question of this study, motivation is highly correlated to personal growth.

Self-Efficacy. Self-efficacy is entrenched in a persons’ belief of capability as they perform tasks in their daily activities. Self-efficacy helps individuals navigate through difficult times, preserving thoughts of positive well-being to reach success, which in turn influences whether the individual will choose to pursue the activity or event. When participants of this study were asked about their reason to complete a short-term study abroad, as well as what their expectations from completion of the experience might be, self-efficacy was reflected in many responses. As noted by Participant 3, “I think it was valuable for me because it helped improve myself as a person”. Participant 7 disclosed,

“the one thing that I really took away from it was some self-efficacy in that I could come to a new place knowing nobody and be able to have a positive and successful experience there”. Participant 1 shared “it fundamentally altered the trajectory of my college experience. I don’t know that I necessarily would have been as motivated to pursue the minor that I did, which changed my major ultimately”, which was the same reaction Participant 7 revealed in the interview, “I completely changed majors and career trajectories about a year after that experience”.

Appreciation/understanding. Appreciation for and the understanding toward others were key words identified from the one-on-one interviews. From the ‘voices’ of participants, it was noted that in the United States we have the ability to obtain many desired products and services without excessive effort and it is often not until those items are unattainable, or a person witnesses first-hand the realization of how much Americans truly have and how little others have when living in developing nations, how fortunate our citizenry is for the abundance of products and services, in addition to decent living conditions. Participant 4 communicated the following observation in regard to ‘having or not having’ goods and/or services, “Growing up in a middle class family, just seeing them, the favelas in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, the filth and amount of people that live in the city of Rio was pretty eye-opening for me”. Participants also spoke of the lack of electricity (including air conditioning) and/or internet access (P1 and P3), while other participants noted lack of basic resources such as water (drinking and showering), food (limited portion sizes), paper products (including toilet paper), and clothing (P2, P9, P13, P14). Not only did participants gain a greater appreciation for what one has, but a revelation in regard to being understanding of individuals living and working in very

different areas of the world. Participant 7 added, “The appreciation also led to a realization of capturing a better understanding of other people and other places”. Participant 9 stated, “[when you] go to a completely new place, I feel like you get such a better understanding of how others work. You are just more open to understanding, to learning, to appreciating the different kinds of cultures and perspectives others provide”. Participant 3 commented on their short-term study abroad in Haiti, “there’s no simple answer to their problems; it’s just an ongoing struggle and there’s no clear solution”, adding that it is only possible to provide information. At some point during the interview process with each individual, 11 of the 18 participants used the words appreciation and understanding to describe their feelings of what they experienced in their short-term study abroad. Specifically, appreciation was mentioned by Participants 1, 5, 9, 13, 14, 16, and 18 and understanding was articulated by Participants 5, 6, 7, 11, and 12.

Open-minded/mindfulness/awareness. Being open-minded, possessing receptiveness to new and different ideas, as well as being mindful and having an awareness of where an individual is focused in the moment, were characteristics participants communicated in their interviews. The word, open-minded was spoken by Participants 2, 9, 10, 13, and 18, while mindful and mindfulness were verbalized by Participants 1, 4, 10, 12, 13, and 14. Finally, the word ‘awareness’ was spoken by Participants 4, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 17 in their interview comments. Participant 8 expressed the importance of being open-minded, “I asked a lot of questions and just having to adapt to be ready and willing to learn, keeping an open mind”. Being open-minded and mindful Participant 15 said, “I think because of my experience in the study abroad, getting genuinely and authentically curious about someone else and listening to

them; everyone has a story and if you take time to listen to that, it's incredible".

Participants 1, 2, 10, 12, 13, and 14 echoed thoughts of being mindful and proactively inclusive in connecting with others. Participant 16 reflected on being more aware of other people and places and learning to 'filter' what is provided to individuals in terms of information, stating,

it pushed me to look outside my typical sphere of awareness, to look at different news sources from different countries and different languages... of experiencing things and trying things that I never done before, also adding, it influenced me to be more open.

A heightened awareness of differences was also noted in terms of standards of living and socioeconomic status. As noted by Participant 8, "So it definitely has made me more aware of how different people live, especially compared to us".

Discomforts. Personal growth is often a result of moving from the known/comfortable to a place of being the unknown or the 'outsider'. When asked about feelings of discomfort, Participant 15 shared,

All the time [I was uncomfortable]. Not speaking the language, not reading the language, getting lost, not knowing how to ask for direction, feelings of being judged and evaluated by others in a foreign country and conversely, feelings of being accepted and welcomed in other countries; feelings of unease.

The same feelings of being uncomfortable with language barriers and the ability to navigate different systems were also expressed by Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, and 18. Participant 4 said, "you're in uncomfortable situations where you don't know the language, you don't know where you're at, you don't know the transportation system,

you don't know-you're out of your normal routine". Participant 4 expressed that being on a short-term study abroad, "it just taught me of being comfortable with the uncomfortable". Uncomfortable feelings extended beyond language and infrastructure in other countries. As Participant 13 said, "I think one of the things in South Africa that's interesting is you immediately know when you get off the airplane that you're a minority".

Global perspective

Theme three related to a global perspective attained by the short-term study abroad participants. All 18 participants indicated the value and importance of having exposure to, and experience of, a different global culture, which they perceived would provide evidence of vast differences between and amongst various countries, differences that would be especially prevalent in travel to developing nations. Participant 3 shared the following, "the effects it [short-term study abroad] had on me as a person was that it increased my awareness of what poverty looks like and increased my awareness of the challenges that a country like Haiti faces and how there's no simple answer to their problems". Interestingly, participants also noted that many issues encountered in other countries are the same or similar to what is encountered in the United States. Participant 4 indicated,

other similarities were just the racial issues that blacks or Africans have faced in a country like Brazil are very similar to what they have faced living in the United States and issues with civil rights and all because of that slave trade process into the western hemisphere.

Not all findings were from differences as participant 3 discovered when reflecting on conversations and observations of young individuals in their country of visit, “I noticed the value the young people our age put in education. They saw it as the key to their future success and that’s kind of how we do it here”.

Removal of stereotypes/preconceived notions/biases. Participants 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 15 articulated how stereotypes, biases, and preconceived notions become engrained in our mind and our thinking. Participant 4 said, “I definitely stereotyped people from Brazil prior to going, so just keeping an open mind as you look at other countries, trying not to fall and assume certain things about certain cultures”. Participant 15 stated, “The other thing I learned was how to study my own biases and the things that don’t always serve me”. Participant 10 shared, “I think people come in with, you know, you hear these things, you hear about Africa and the Lion King frames everything they experience in Africa. And you know, you talked to people over there and they don’t care about Puma”. Participant 5 said, “I had a lot of stereotypes in my head. You know from history books about the Great Wall. Other than that I had very little to draw on. I mean, I pictured like big paper dragons parading in the streets and lanterns and eating with chopsticks”. However, by participating in a short-term study abroad, these differences can be mitigated as noted by Participant 12, “So I think that what the trip did was reconfirm, hey, we’re not as different as we think we are”.

Global citizen. Given the interconnected world in which we live, being a global citizen becomes ever more important. Eleven of the 18 participants spoke of a new consciousness in regard to a broader perspective of the world and the people who inhabit it. Participant 15 shared the following,

You know, everybody has opinions whether you agree with them or not. People are passionate, they're proud of their countries; they're critical of their countries. But much like a family, I can criticize my own, but I can't criticize others, and so you don't go into a country and criticize their country.

Through their short-term study abroad, Participant 3 noted it, "helped me become more aware of how United States citizens are viewed from a third world country". Participant 18 indicated the need to get a better understanding of the world due to today's interconnectedness by sharing the following, "and so being able to put my frame of life into a global context was the biggest takeaway for me". Participant 15 spoke of the need for travelers to other countries to think of themselves as 'ambassadors' for the United States when they are in another country and the value and importance of reading and researching about the area of visit prior to arrival. As disclosed in the interview, Participant 15 stated,

I do believe that in a lot of countries, people are much better educated on systems outside their own, and in the United States we tend to be more focused on our country and not nearly as well informed as other countries are from a global perspective.

Cultural competency/diversity. Being in another country (away from homeland) often provides a backdrop for participants to view a different way of viewing their world, the global world, and igniting a perspective of how those differences are impactful. Participants 10 and 13 spoke of the immediate recognition of cultural differences, with Participant 13 saying, "I've never been on the side where I've been discriminated against and I think it's easier to close your eyes to it". Participant 5 came away from the

experience with a new understanding of life in another country, “Life isn’t the same for everybody as it is in the U. S. and there are certainly other languages and other perspectives and other ways of seeing the world”. A changed perspective related to more than just how different other locations are, but the lesson learned from seeing vast differences in individuals, cultures, and places, provided a new broadened consciousness encapsulated in the following statement from Participant 1, “It [short-term study abroad] helped me see people in my community in a different way and really just understand why other cultures are the way that they are”. Participant 17 shared the ‘emotive force’ felt toward their sense of leadership, culture and diversity,

it [short-term study abroad] provided a sense of an open mind in that I might not otherwise have had, even from the point of view of other African American experiences, so it opened my sense of connectedness to folks that practice other paradigms and perspectives religiously and otherwise in a way that I might not have been so open to before I left there. And so it gave me a tremendous sense of calling. I would say I have a better appreciation for diversity within the white community in America than I had before.

SUB-QUESTION 3

Impact/Influence on leadership

Participation in a study abroad has varying impacts on those who complete the experience. This includes changes in their personal lives, as well as changes in their interactions with others. The third sub-question for this study was related to leadership and short-term study abroad, **in what ways did students’ participation in a short-term study abroad experience further inform or influence their ability as leaders? An**

integral part of this study was to determine what, if any, impact participation in a short-term study abroad influenced/informed the leadership of the participants. All participants in the study had self-identified that they had experienced a current or past leadership role. Seven questions were related to the influence/impact the short-term study abroad experience had on participants' leadership role. Four main themes emerged from the 27 identified codes. The overall impact of the short-term study abroad experience had a variety of different outcomes for participants. These outcomes ranged from significant changes in their leadership style or methodology, to minor modifications or a rethinking of how they lead. Regardless of the degree of change noted by the participants, all 18 participants indicated there was a 'transforming' or modifying rectification of how they led, how they thought about leading, or how they grew and learned in their leadership role. These themes, related sub-themes and representative statements as related specifically to participant leadership are listed in Table 8.

Table 8

Informing/Influencing Leadership

Themes	Subthemes	Representative statement
Growth and learning	Increased knowledge	"I think that it's really important as a leader to be able to have an appreciation for growth and learning" (P1)
	Inclusiveness/connection	"Having a study abroad experience, being able to like see from the perspective of others and knowing that they might know something that you don't" (P1)

	Mindfulness/varied perspectives	“I was working in the soap organization (P & G) and one of my bosses at the time was explaining to me that I needed to be more open-minded about how people process things rather than assuming that they needed to do it the way I wanted it to be done” (P17)
Openness to differences	Creativity/innovation	“You just are more open to understanding, to learning, to appreciating the different kinds of cultures and perspectives others provide” (P9)
	Global perspective/’big picture’	“Anyone in a leadership role it behooves them to get some of those experiences just so you know, they can understand how big the world is, but yet how small it is” (P6)
	Empowerment	“I think I’ve changed how open I am to new ideas because maybe that idea could work better for us” (P8)
Group Dynamics	Effective communication	“One of the big ones had been just learning how to interact with different people” (P18)
	Team/group building	“And that’s what being a leader is about. It’s not just about you anymore, it’s about the team and what’s best for the team” (P12)
	Shared leadership	“Learning how to take a step back and letting others lead was something I learned” (P3)
Leadership roles	Navigating leadership	“Because unfortunately, when you’re a leader, that’s what you are

		(doing), you're putting out fires, I think, a lot of the time as well as developing others. So I think when you study abroad, that's what it shows people is that you're willing to learn by going abroad" (P12)
	Cross-cultural awareness	"It enhanced with just the openness to learn about a culture before making any judgments" (P13)
	Mutuality	"We have more in common than more that we don't have in common if that makes sense. So I think that what the trip did was reconfirm, hey, we're not as different as we think we are" (P12)

Growth and learning

Theme one from the questions related to leadership focused around the growth in leadership experienced during and after their short-term study abroad program. As noted by Participant 1, "I think that it's really important as a leader to be able to have an appreciation for growth and learning". Participant 9 indicated a new awareness for leadership and effects of leadership style by watching the differences in leading as exhibited by the two faculty members accompanying the group on the study abroad program.

Increased knowledge. The most common subtheme in this area was the increased knowledge and learning participants reiterated in their interviews. Every participant (n=18) left their experience with an increased basis of knowledge in some aspect from their short-term study abroad. Participant 4 noted, "My sphere was expanded, my

willingness to learn and respect other cultures was expanded. My understanding of other cultures was strengthened”. Participant 5 summed up the experience wonderfully in these words, “I feel like it’s a little bit of a license to learn, like you’re expected to learn and grow and do these things and meet new people”. Participant 10 noted that while the experience was short term in nature, “There was more growth in learning there than I expected”. In some situations, participants (P2, P3, P4, P10, P11, P12, P14, and P15) noted through their interactions they felt they were ‘getting’, rather than ‘giving’, in terms of knowledge which was encapsulated in the following statement by Participant 18, “I felt like I came out of the experience having taken away a lot more knowledge and learned a lot more from the people I met than what I was able to teach them”. As Participant 1 noted the following about the short-term study abroad to Peru, “I would say (it was) a defining area of leadership throughout my undergrad experience”.

Inclusiveness and connections. Subtheme two in growth and learning is related to the inclusiveness and connections participants achieved from their short-term study abroad. As Participant 2 noted, “All of my international experience continues to reiterate the value of connection and the power of knowing other humans and using those opportunities to connect for ‘tremendous learning’”. Participants 1, 3, 4, and 5 recognized the need and value of working not only with those individuals from other countries but even those in our own country. Participant 5 remarked, “It didn’t cross my mind before I studied abroad that there would be a lot of growth and challenge that came with being around people of my own nationality”. Participant 15 spoke of how the short-term study abroad impacted their role today, “I’m taking time to connect with leaders to understand

their cultures, to adapt style, to ask forgiveness, to invite people to come in”. Participant 1 noted,

We can talk about being inclusive all day long, but to actually do it and to actually know how to do it is something really valuable and I think that in my experience as a leader, I’ve grown a lot more in being able to accomplish that because of my study abroad experience.

Seeking to find commonalities rather than differences was expressed by Participant 6, “*People are people*, and I think by and large, have a lot more in common than they have different”.

Mindfulness/varied perspectives. Subtheme three, mindfulness and attainment of open-mindedness in leadership roles, in addition to being receptive to varied perspectives, was a subtheme each of the participants (n=18) referred to in their interview when addressing questions related to leadership. Participant 11 shared, “I think one thing is always being mindful of what comes out of your mouth before it comes out of your mouth. I think that study abroad tour making me think even more about that”. Many participants spoke of their need and desire to be more patient and understanding, as well as being more open-minded of those around them (P2, P4, P6, P8, P9, P13, P14, P17, and P18). Participant 6 shared, “It’s grown over time to just understand that being more welcoming and inclusive to people allows *you* to learn a whole lot more and to get a lot more out of life in general”. Participant 12 talked about the short-term study abroad experience as related to the global environment in which we live and work and how there is importance in “being mindful of who you have at your decision table and why that diversity is important”.

Openness to differences

Openness to differences was identified as theme two as related to informing/influencing leadership. Three subthemes emerged from the leadership interview questions. These are creativity/innovation, global perspectives/'big picture', and empowerment.

Creativity and innovation. The first of these subthemes is related to creativity and innovation. Participant 15 told the following story in regard to their short-term study abroad in Costa Rica:

We did some work in a slum and the creativity and the innovation that happened in this slum community. It was a slum of probably 25,000 people and to this day, you know, I always tell groups that I work with, if you want creativity and innovation, don't always go look to the high tech firms, but look for those who are economically disadvantaged because we saw roads being built in this one slum and all they got was \$1,000 a year, but their slum was between the city and the dump and so they charged trucking companies \$1,000 for the year to drive through the slum. And then what they did with that money is they built infrastructure, they built roads, they built a sense of community.

Being able to recognize that differences in cultures, customs, and values help spawn innovation and creativity. Participant 1 shared, "having a study abroad experience, being able to like see from the perspective of others and know that they might know something you don't [is valuable]". The value of diverse perspectives and appreciation for and acceptance of other people's ideas was also voiced by Participants 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18. Participant 13 added, "I think individuals need to complete some type

of short-term study abroad during their college years because as we become more globally connected, the issues and solutions to those issues are going to have to come across borders”. Participant 11 stated, “The fastest way to get perspective is to travel”.

Global perspective/’big picture’. Global perspective is the comprehensive lens an individual possesses in regard to how we view the world and its inhabitants, which in turn shapes our individual identity as well as the identity of the people around you.

Participant 12 shared a reshaped global view after completing a short-term study abroad, remarking the need to ‘get out of your own head’, and articulating the following,

it’s very hard to realize because we think what we all do as an individual is so important and groundbreaking, life-changing in our part of the world, and then once you visit somewhere else, you get that perspective of like, wow, I am one person of 7 billion.

Participant 5 added, “I think it makes your world smaller and helps you relate to people”.

All 18 participants recognized an augmented awareness of the immensity of the world in which we live and interact. Participant 15 added, “First and foremost, expand your view, learn about other cultures, learn about other people. It’ll broaden your perspective when you have, you know, personal experience”. Participant 1 indicated their growth in a global perspective by sharing, “I think that being able to learn from other cultures will always help you improve your cultural competence, especially whenever you’re traveling to ones that are extremely different than your own”. Participant 11 shared,

I think this experience has given me sort of, well--don’t forget to think about that broader world perspective. Don’t just be thinking nationally, think beyond that

and what's going on in the rest of the world that might have an impact on the situation as well as what's happening right outside your door.

Empowerment. Having the ability to empower others is key in effective leadership. As retold by Participant 1,

One student in particular that I work with is an international student and he came to me with an idea for a presentation that he had. This is something that I thought was really cool opportunity for him, I didn't see it as him wanting to take over my job, but I had a really strong appreciation for him, willing to reach out to me and say like, here's something that I think we should do, and to empower him to take on that project.

For other participants, they felt empowerment in their own lives by compelling the individual to see their own environment in a different lens (P2). Participant 5 described their experience as an 'empowered immersion'. As Participant 15 shared, "Looking beyond your own 'lens' is huge". Participant 2 shared, "I think I came back from that trip more empowered to connect the different aspects of my life", and not being afraid to make those connections.

Teaming/Group Dynamics

The importance and necessity to have clear communication even in one's homeland cannot be overemphasized, but communication differences become magnified when one is exposed to an out-of-country experience. Every participant (n=18) had some type of comment in regard to the role communication played in their out of homeland experience.

Effective communication. Participant 16 shared, “Building structure for an effective team and the environment where you’re in multiple cultures with language barriers and misunderstandings, you learn to step back and try to really listen to people cause the same miscommunications to happen between native speakers of a single culture all the time, and most of them, we just assume everybody understands what we’re saying.” Participant 12 added, “Why a lot of things don’t get solved is because the right person isn’t stating their opinion, and so I think for me now, if I’m going to lead a group discussion, just being mindful of certain people aren’t as comfortable being the first speaker at something”, so providing time for the evolution of the conversation and discussion to develop. Every participant (n=18) shared communication concerns in their narrative during the interview. Participant 3 spoke of the challenges and frustrations when a communication barrier is present,

being able to communicate with others was kind of frustrating as we had to deal with the difficulty of communicating with a lot of Haitians who did not speak English, so I had to get better at communicating clearly because a lot of things could get lost in communication over there so that helped me become a more clear communicator.

Participant 18 indicated the need of “just learning how to interact with different people. I was able to enhance my communication skills and just having more patience and more respect for the people around me”.

Team/group building. To remain competitive in the 21st century requires organizations to build and maintain synergies resultant from strong, focused teams and groups. As Participant 2 noted, building strong group/teams can help leverage resources

to get things done. Participant 13 summed the value of teams and groups across countries as such, “I think that as you look at production agriculture or whatever the business might be or in the education or research world, you’re going to have to build collaborations”. Participants 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, and 18 spoke of the need to create an environment for teams to succeed and the organization to thrive by being a team player and working well in a team. Participant 2 added, “we actually worked collaboratively with Haitian students and I think that also highlighted differences and similarities between our expectations for teaming and work production flow”. Participant 16 spoke of the leadership challenges of building teams across geographic areas as well as through virtual workspaces, noting, “the thing you really see in a multicultural environment is how many assumptions we make when we communicate with people based on our own mental models of the world”.

Shared leadership. The third subtheme, shared leadership, is best described by Participant 3, who divulged the following,

I had an assistant chair who was a freshman and I needed to make sure I was kind of grooming him too, make sure he was prepared and not just doing everything for him so I kind of backed off and then let him kind of lead some of the events and get some experience and leading discussions amongst our members, things like that and that kind of stems from my experience and learning how to share leadership.

Participant 8 shared a renewed perspective in sharing leadership, “I think it kind of reflects to my leadership style as being more open to everybody’s idea and how we can get those things to work.” Participant 2 summed up shared leadership in the following statement, “I learned to describe the value of that connection and to be able to loop others

in and help them understand too”. Participant 5 indicated, “I think it was probably a little bit of a turning point for me in terms of being able to lead from behind”. Participant 18 was able to witness shared leadership between the faculty advisors on the trip, which helped define their leadership style, “being able to see the different leadership styles and people that I looked up to has helped me pick and choose what kind of leader I want to be moving forward”. Participant 15 disclosed the following,

part of our study abroad, because we were a cohort group, we all had to take turns leading in different forms, it made it abundantly clear what I care about and what I don't, and you know, usually if you invite people to correct you, you'll get correction and you learn from that, and I think that's a sense and sign of leadership. Gently advocating for my beliefs, or to be able to have a discussion with somebody where we have contrary opinions and contrary beliefs, that's okay, and I wouldn't have known that nearly as deeply and I probably would have fallen in a lot more pits had I not had that abroad experience.

Leadership roles

Roles of leadership have been redefined and reconceptualized as an increasing body of research and knowledge has been shared to guide leaders in the diverse, interconnected global world of the 21st century. Former generalizations in regard to singular leadership roles have given way to redefined shared roles and responsibilities. The fourth theme as related to informing/influencing leadership from a short-term study abroad resulted in three sub-themes: (1) navigating leadership; (2) cross-cultural models; and (3) mutuality.

Navigating leadership. When participants were queried about their perceptions as related to how the experiences attained from short-term study abroad could be used in their leadership, Participant 7 articulated the following,

they could certainly take advantage of a short-term study abroad, especially for an undergraduate student, working like a lab for them to be really mindful about their leadership skills and their leadership strengths and be able to put those to work and look for opportunities to use those in a different setting.

According to Participant 7, this would provide a situational context for the individual to try out different influence tactics to see how they work. Participant 14 spoke of a short-term study abroad being an immersive experience that challenges a person to reflect on their own personal values, and by doing so, “you might understand issues and problems from a different frame other than your own”. Navigating leadership through self-reflection of values and perspectives was noted by Participants 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 16, with Participant 18 stating, “it [short-term study abroad] was absolutely full of opportunities for people to be emergent leaders”. Participant 15 shared their concerns for loss of the humanistic side of leading due to the fourth industrial revolution, stating, “so as artificial intelligence becomes more prevalent in our societies, we have to pay attention to the humanistic side of the world. If we live our lives in a world without connecting with others, then we’re limited to that world and so travel for pleasure or work or school, is all the more important so that we can continue to connect in a humanistic way”.

Cross-cultural models. Gaining understanding through curiosity, empathy, and humility, leading greater respect for differences was indicated by Participants 1, 2, 3, 6, 7,

8, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 18. Participant 4 said, “I think it [short-term study abroad] helps teach empathy and the ability to empathize with others who don’t look or have similar backgrounds as them”. Participant 5 added, “recognizing that the differences are not scary, they’re not inherently bad, they’re just differences”. Participant 8 stated, “I’m able to be more accepting to cultures”. As Participant 1 spoke of their program, which included short stops in several other countries outside the country of experience, it was noted, “even though some of those stops were for only a day, being able to just glimpse of what it’s like somewhere other than your home it’s constantly moving you toward being a better learner, a better listener, and being a better leader because of those opportunities”. Participant 15 shared, “stepping into someone else’s shoes, stepping in massive discomfort at so that when you get into a corporate environment, whether that’s domestic or international, I think it builds empathy in leaders and maybe curiosity and an ability to connect with people that are different from yourself”. Three participants spoke of being humbled by meeting and connecting with individuals who spoke several languages beyond their native language, increasing participant admiration and respect for the interest individuals in other countries have to find means to better connect globally. Participant 17 shared, “my study abroad fortified my view that all humanity was valuable”.

Mutuality. Participant 17 shared that “my trips abroad gave me a powerful sense of leadership for equity for the purpose of framing an equitable society” as short-term study abroad can be an exploration into the ‘breadth of human existence’ (P17). Participants 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, and 18 spoke of the need to respect and be cognizant of the mutual dependence of today’s global society. Participant 1 added,

“having a study abroad experience and being able to see from the perspective of others and know that they might know something that you don’t”. Participant 3 offered the following, “kind of just know that everyone has something different to offer and contribute, so as a leader I feel like that’s really important to allow others to contribute the value they have”. Participant 13 shared comments in the need for cooperation across borders and how short-term study abroad can contribute to mutuality,

as we become more globally connected, the issues and solutions to those issues are going to have to come across borders and I think a good leader in the 21st century needs to have that understanding and appreciation of being in a different country.

Participant 13 shared that regardless of organization, agriculture, business or education, there is a need for collaboration across borders.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to research motivations related to individuals who complete a short-term study abroad experience. The central research question for this study was, **‘What motivates students to complete a short-term study abroad?’** The three sub-research questions are: (1) What are the barriers/challenges students need to overcome to participate in a short-term study abroad program?, (2) What benefits value did students experience by participating in a short-term study abroad experience?, and (3) In what ways did students’ participation in a short-term study abroad experience further inform or influence their ability as leaders?

The goal of phenomenological research is to discern what a particular experience means for individuals who have experienced it. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018),

qualitative research *empowers* individuals to share their stories and Marshall and Rossman (2016), concur, stating, “the researcher seeks to explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of individual lived experience” (p. 17). Through thematic analysis, textural descriptions of the ‘what’ was experienced by the participants in their short-term study abroad were examined. Analysis of the data discovered that by overcoming common barriers to completing a short-term study abroad, participants were able to experience personal growth (Bandura, 1999) as well as growth from experiential learning (Kolb, 1975) resulting in transformation in their personal lives (Mezirow, 1996) as well as transformative changes in their leadership roles (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Participants shared how through first-hand exposure of another culture and country textbook/classroom knowledge could be applied in real-world contexts to increase learning and meaning, as well as increasing self-confidence in their capabilities. Transformation in both personal and leadership attributes was reiterated by participants though the direct exposure of diverse people and places.

The ‘how’ of the short-term study abroad experience was answered using structural descriptions. By overcoming barriers to complete a short-term study abroad and being able to complete an out-of-country experience, participants ‘lived’ through moments of discomfort, uneasiness, and unknowns to capture new perspectives regarding diverse individuals’, cultures, and countries, perspectives that can be used to inform and influence their leadership roles in the future. Short-term study abroad interviews captured participants’ narratives as related to leadership around themes of growth and learning, openness to differences, group dynamics, and leadership roles, using what was learned from the experience to enlighten and guide leadership into the future.

The essence of the phenomenon, *the motivation to study abroad*, was captured through queries using 16 semi-structured questions focusing on barriers and overcoming those challenges to enable participants to broaden their global perspectives and knowledge. As related in findings from the narratives, once barriers were surmounted, they related value from the experience in their personal lives, as well as being exposed to significant knowledge that will benefit them in leadership roles.

All the participants indicated their appreciation and thankfulness for having the opportunity to complete the experience, with many indicating their desire to complete additional study abroad trips. Participant 1 concluded the interview with the following words, “There’s so many different things that I can take away from that experience and so many different ways that it continues to benefit me and continues to help me see the value of short-term study abroad”.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to determine what motivates individuals to participate in a short-term study abroad experience. As noted by Turos and Strange (2018), employees today need to possess a wide variety of attributes, “especially in an increasingly complex world economy, employers also expect skills that are particularly applicable in the global marketplace” (p. 96). Not only are globally competent employees needed in the workplace, but also as noted by Earnest (2003) that due to ever-increasing globalization, “leaders will find themselves dealing with different cultures and languages almost on a daily basis” (p. 46). Many studies have been conducted on study abroad, and specifically short-term study abroad, however, the focus of many previous studies have been primarily on impacts and effects on undergraduate students, a population demographic where it is believed there is the most opportunity, as well this being a time of life for achieving the best learning outcomes from participating in a short-term study abroad. The context of this study was to take a unique examination of motivation to complete a short-term study abroad where no constraints were imposed as far as an upper age limit (minimum age of 19), type or level of college degree/certificate pursued, or geographic location in the contiguous United States. In an endeavor to determine overall motivational variables and answer the primary research question, **what motivated students to complete a short-term study abroad experience?**, self-identified leaders shared in their narratives answers to three sub-questions related to: (1) barriers/challenges related to completion of a short-term study abroad, (2) personal benefits/value gained, and (3) information/knowledge gained that influenced/informed participant leadership currently and/or into the future. Vetted out in

this study were the barriers to participating in a short-term study abroad as well as the impetus to overcome those barriers, and the cogitative and transformational growth through which experiential learning does not discriminate amongst age, career path/college degree type, or geographic location of the participants, which can be used inform/influence leadership. As reported in the findings of the sub-questions while some overlap and intersection of themes occur, analysis of the sub-questions finds unique outcomes in each respective theme as intersected sub-themes are circumscribed into the specific related theme.

Covered in this chapter is a comprehensive discussion of the findings from the one-on-one interviews as related to the three sub-questions: (1) barriers/challenges encountered, (2) perceived personal value/benefits from participating in the experience, and, (3) potential impacts resultant from the experience that informed/influenced leadership, which collectively provide insight in answering the overarching research question of an individual motivation to complete a short-term study abroad. Each of these themes and subthemes will be addressed individually in this section in the order they were presented in the Chapter 4 findings. This chapter also provides a summary, information regarding the importance and implications of the research findings, recommendations, limitations, and ideas for future research.

Barriers/challenges

The first sub-question and theme from the study pertained to overcoming barriers and/or challenges (perceived or real) encountered when an individual considers participating in a study abroad experience. Regardless of age, geographical location, occupation/career path or level of education, completing a study abroad was fraught with

challenges, even in circumstances when the study abroad experience was a short-term commitment. Overall, in reviewing the findings from the interviews with the participants of this study, the importance and influence of faculty and institutional internationalization were critical variables in participants' volition and desire to overcome perceived barriers/challenges in their decision to participate in a short-term study abroad experience, which adds to a current body of research in regard to the importance and impact both faculty engagement as well as institutional internationalization has on study abroad participation. Findings from Groves, Sellars, Smith, and Barber (2015) confirms the importance of student-teacher interaction as a critical component for student engagement, and Gordon, Patterson, and Cherry (2014) note that for student participation in a short-term study abroad it is imperative to have institutional internationalization, which encompasses the institutions commitment of writing study abroad into the curriculum, supporting faculty-led programs, as well as various forms of financial support. Participants shared that the enthusiasm and encouragement provided in conversation with faculty who were leading the study trip contributed to their increased motivation to join the group, as well as providing a sense of security related to safety factor apprehensions by both the participants and their families (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; Kuh et al., 2005; Meier & Smith, 2016; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). A finding not noted in previous research was the formation of a closer relationship between the participants and the faculty member(s) leading the trip. Participants shared the value of this newly formed bond as beneficial when needing a contact person or reference for future career paths.

From this theme, four subthemes were revealed: (1) financial/cost factors, (2) safety factors, both physical and overall health risk, (3) communication, and (4) missing job, school, and/or family responsibilities.

Financial/monetary factors. The first sub-theme of barriers/challenges of short-term study abroad participation was related to financial and monetary aspects. As noted in the results section, 16 of the 18 participants expressed concerns related to securing the funds necessary for their participation in a short-term study abroad, a finding previously documented in research related to study abroad, stating that cost is a major reason for an individual to refrain from completing a study abroad experience (de Jong, Schnusenber, & Goel, 2010; Gordon, 2014; He & Banham, 2011; Lukosius & Festervad, 2013; Smith & Mrozek, 2016). Participants reported that support from their home institution in the form of grants and scholarships, in addition to the ability to use student loan proceeds toward the trip, augmented study abroad participation when a student felt the cost was burdensome. Attaining college credit for the experience also alleviated some concerns of spending scarce resources. These findings would indicate the value and importance of institutional support, a fact that should not be overlooked when reviewing participation in a study abroad experience given the importance a global experience has for future careers. As noted in the literature review of this study, research conducted by the Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE), working through the American Council on Education (ACE), found that institutions who adopt and encourage study abroad opportunities have overall greater numbers of student participants, which is important to ensure future employees and leaders are competent to work and lead in the global environment of the 21st century. Tuross and Strange (2018) conducted research on

the importance of study abroad and noted, “Especially in an increasingly complex world economy, employers also expect skills that are particularly applicable in the global marketplace” (p. 96). Participants also reiterated the pivotal role a short-term experience had in their decision to participate. All of the 18 participants agreed that the ability to achieve an out-of-country experience in a shorter time frame (short-term study abroad) made the trip much more attractive and affordable. For many participants, if it were not for the short duration of the trip, they would not have been able to complete the experience. Previous research has noted that short-term programs appeal to individuals who have no prior international travel experience and lack time and money to engage in an extensive (semester or longer) program (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Long, Akande, Purdy, & Nakano, 2010; Mills, Deviney, & Ball, 2010; Tarrant, 2010), a similar finding in this study. Participant 5 elucidated, “there’s going to be some associated costs as far as cost goes, but I don’t think you can put a price tag on that perspective and that experience and that added richness” with participant 8 adding, “I think the time that we were there was just a perfect amount”.

Safety. The second sub-theme related to barriers/challenges was participant concern as related to their safety, which was further broken down into two categories, physical safety and health safety. Being in a foreign land where not all rules and regulations are known and where areas of unrest and political volatility exist created another point of apprehension related to participants’ decision on whether or not to complete the experience. However, as noted in participant reflections, venturing into a country vastly different from the United States created a ‘personal transformation’ and served as a catalyst for obtaining new perspectives of worldviews (Mezirow, 1996). In

this particular study, seven participants completed their experience in developing nations, where not only was physical safety for their well-being was a concern, but also health safety as related to the food they ate, the water they drank, as well as accessibility to medical care should they need it. Previous studies have indicated that a notable shift has occurred in destination choices for study abroad participant due to safety concerns (Redden, 2018). As noted in the results section of this study, safety concerns could be broken into two primary domains, physical safety and health safety.

Physical safety. Being in a foreign land with no support system should problems arise was a concern for participants. For the 15 participants who were in a country where little English was spoken, fears in regard to being able to get to various locations (use of transportation systems), being able to make purchases of goods/services in another country, as well as being able to protect themselves should the need arise were all comments by participants. Adding to the uncertainty of being in a foreign place, participants were apprehensive about their surroundings and determining ‘what is’ versus ‘what might be’ unsafe. The findings of this study support previous work on study abroad that indicate safety is a concern for participants who engage in a study abroad experience. According to research completed by Vernon, Moos, and Loncarich (2017) when addressing concerns related to completion of a study abroad experience, “about one-third (32.9%) of the respondents at least “somewhat agree” that they would be concerned about their personal safety” (p. 4). Participant 15 shared their experience in China where local police were accosting a homeless/drunken resident. Not thinking of potential consequences, Participant 15 reached to get out a camera for a picture, which was noticed

by the police, who immediately attempted to detain the participant. The participant was able to get away, however, Participant 15 shared,

I realized in that moment I could have been jailed and I really didn't think about that as an American because we can protest, we can take pictures, we can have a counter opinion. It was probably the most terrified I was.

Individual experiences such as reiterated by this participant demonstrates the transformational learning and change that results from an out-of-country experience (Mezirow, 1996). Participants also shared the satisfaction of finding a newly formed self-confidence (self-efficacy) from successfully navigating unfamiliar surroundings that resulted in a positive experience (Bandura, 2001a). The findings from previous research indicate study abroad participants experience a transformed view of other people and places as well as an increased self-confidence from having to navigate through unknown and diverse environments.

Health Safety. Not only was personal safety a concern, but also of the 18 participants, eight expressed concern for safety as related to their health. Concerns of health safety centered around required immunizations for travel to under/undeveloped countries, medications that had to be taken with them from the United States in travel locations where a potentially fatal disease may be contracted and necessary medication would be unavailable, as well as concerns related to special dietary needs that may not be able to be met in another country. Previous research has indicated that travel to other countries can create exposure to harmful health concerns such as communicable diseases, however, few studies have placed focus on special dietary needs for travel participants, an under-researched area of barriers/challenges of short-term study abroad.

Communication. The third sub-theme of barriers/challenges for the participant's short-term study abroad experience related to an apprehension for effective communication in the country of visit. As noted in the sample population information, over 60% of the participants traveled to a country where they had no, or minimal fluency, of the language in the country of visit. Narratives shared by each of the participants indicated their overriding anxiousness in regard to navigating and exploring a country that is unknown and foreign to them, especially in situations where the native language is not known and English is not readily spoken in the country of visit. Participant 18 shared the two most significant factors of apprehension about engaging in the short-term study abroad: (1) cost, and (2) language barrier. "I was afraid of not being able to communicate with people" (P18). While participants confirmed their feelings of 'dumbness' as related to adapting to a diverse cultural experience where language, monetary transactions, transportation, and customs were immensely different, all shared their appreciation for having had the opportunity to attain additional knowledge about an area greatly different than the United States. As supported by study abroad research, nearly everything encountered is new, which creates a challenging learning opportunity (McKeown, 2009). Despite participants concerns and discomfort in regard to their ability to engage in active, effective communication with those in their country of visit, participants were not deterred to engage in the experience, which is supported by the growth of self-efficacy, a component of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001a).

Missing job/school/family responsibilities. The last sub-theme of barriers/challenges was a prevalent concern amongst participants of leaving their assigned duties and responsibilities for someone else to complete. As noted in the sample

population, what made this study unique was the broad participant base, where participants were at a variety of junctures in life. This study contributes to the basis of existing basis of knowledge as the findings indicate that regardless of ‘life-stage’, concerns for leaving behind responsibilities and ‘missing out’ on activities at home during their absence (study abroad time away) was consistent amongst those participating in their particular study abroad program. Participants indicated that the attraction to a short-term experience, among other factors, was the need to minimize time away from responsibilities they were leaving behind, such as school, work, and family responsibilities. In research conducted by Donnelly-Smith (2009) short-term study abroad has appeal for a variety of types of students including those who do not have the time or resources for a long-term experience as well as for non-traditional students who have numerous other responsibilities beyond education such as families and work-related responsibilities. Heffron and Maresco (2014) contend that ‘social anxiety’, being without family and friends, plays a role in a students’ hesitancy to participate in a study abroad experience. Participants in this study shared their concern over missing events during their absence, but stated that due to the shorter duration of the trip, those concerns were not a major influencing factor of whether to participate or not. Previous research confirms that potential study abroad participants worry in regard to missing events while away, however, a short-term experience minimizes the time away, which increases the attractiveness of a short-term over a long-term experience (Gordon, Patterson, & Cherry, 2014). Participant 1 summed up the benefit and mitigating impact of a short-term over a long-term program as related to missing ‘at home’ responsibilities in the following statement, “I think the perk of the two-week program is that you’re able to spend enough

time there to get those experiences, but without feeling like you're missing something at home".

Personal value/benefits gained from the experience

Sub-question two asked participants to relate their perceptions of the benefits and/or personal value they gained from going on their respective study abroad. Nine of the 18 participants used the words 'first-hand' in their narrative of what the experience brought to them, and the other nine indirectly related in their narrative reference to 'first-hand' experience by expressing their desire and satisfaction from directly being in a country different than their homeland. Through this first-hand experience, participants shared stories of personal growth as well as a heightened awareness of differing global perspectives (Goodman, 2013; Hannigan, 2001; Marcum & Roochnik, 2001). From the questions related to personal value/benefits gained from the experience, three themes were found: experiential learning, personal growth, and global perspective. Each of these will be discussed along with the resultant sub-themes related to each respective theme.

Experiential learning. The first theme revealed related to personal growth was experiential learning. The sub-theme related to experiential learning connects first-hand experiences to learning. As noted by Kolb (1984), first-hand experiences are a significant factor in creating meaningful and lasting learning. All 18 participants shared the need to put 'textbook learning into reality' and view similarities and differences in individuals, cultures, and diverse perspectives through direct exposure in an out-of-country trip. This finding adds to the research by Geyer, Putz, and Misra (2017) who noted, "Overall, it is clear that students find short-term study abroad experiences valuable and beneficial" (p. 1044). Participants used in this study came from a diverse dataset, making the study

unique and adding to the current body of research in regard to the implication first-hand experiences have on study abroad participants. Findings of this study indicate that regardless of participant age, level or type of degree/certificate attained, or where they live in the United States (geographical location), all participants shared they felt an increased knowledge about real world occurrences. Dewey (1938), in his research of how people make sense of the world, posited that through application of skills and knowledge in real world environments, greater meaning ensues. Participants shared through their personal stories how seeing similarities and differences first-hand of another place and people, they left the study abroad experience with greater knowledge and meaning in their own lives as well as their worldly views, regardless of their diverse personal attributes. Their common bond of being an American in a foreign country anchored their overall perception as a research dataset in regard to visiting for a short time, a place and a culture very different than their homeland and bringing back new found meaning from having that exposure. Participant 2 noted an immediate change in daily actions once returning home as result of their experience in a short-term study abroad, “[it] guided and gave intentionality to questions that led to future exploration that might not have happened”, while Participant 1 stated, “to be able to see it first-hand was an amazing experience because it just brought things full circle”.

Personal growth (Social Cognitive Theory)

The second theme in personal value/benefits was an individual growth by each respective participant, captured in four sub-themes: (1) growth in self-efficacy, (2) growth in appreciation and understanding of others, (3) a new sense of open-

mindedness/mindfulness/awareness, and (4) a feeling of discomfort that generated personal growth.

Self-efficacy. Participant reiteration related to the growth in their self-efficacy was the first sub-theme of personal growth. To establish rapport at the beginning of the interview process, participants were asked to provide personal information about themselves, as well as their interest and expected outcomes from their short-term study abroad experience. Growth in self-efficacy, attainment of confidence, and personal improvement and growth was cited by 10 of the 18 participants as a reason for completing the short-term study abroad. Stretching one's experiences beyond what is 'familiar' implores individuals to increase confidence in their ability to navigate a rapidly evolving world, work with individuals very different than themselves, as well as taking on roles of leadership in groups and organizations (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy is a part of social cognitive theory and serves to interconnect behavior factors, to cognitive factors (first-hand experiences), and to environmental factors. Eirilch & Russ-Eft (2011) stated, "Self-efficacy beliefs constitute one major part of social cognitive theory and refer to one's confidence for engaging in specific activities that would lead to fulfillment of specific goals" (p. 7). Participants shared a variety of stories that related to being out of their comfort zone and in an environment that was very different, compelling them to seek fortitude to overcome challenges during their out-of-country experience. When reflecting back on their individual experience, participants shared that the obscurity experienced during their short-term study abroad provided growth in their behaviors, which impacted their environmental and cognitive learning. Participant 15 shared that if they were to revisit the journals written during the experience that they believe the person

they are today is “someone more confident and less self-critical” than what they were at the time they completed their short-term study abroad. Two participants indicated their short-term study abroad experience provided the confidence to run for leadership positions in organizations they were affiliated with upon their return home. These findings would confirm and add to previous research on study abroad completed by Wright and Clarke III (2010) that indicated study abroad has a triadic impact when related to social cognitive theory.

Appreciation/Understanding. In sub-theme two of personal growth, participants voiced their discovery of a newfound appreciation and understanding for others different than themselves. Alexis, et al. (2017) noted that in order to function efficiently and effectively in diverse cultural environments, individuals are required to possess skills to recognize and know how to respond appropriately within that culture. In the findings from this study, appreciation and understanding were frequently verbalized in the one-on-one interviews about the individual’s short-term study abroad experience with participants recognizing the need to identify how to appropriately respond within that particular context. This confirms that appreciation and understanding are imperative for effective encounters with diverse individuals. Findings from this study add to previous research, noting that through their first-hand experience (Kolb, 1984), participants achieved a heightened ability to appreciate diverse viewpoints as well as obtaining an awakened understanding of those views. Participants who visited developing nations shared in their stories of witnessing the lack of basic resources in these countries, the different ways of doing things, as well as discovering divergent worldviews. Participants indicated that to fully understand differences, it is imperative one puts themselves ‘in the

shoes' of that person. Participant 2 shared that while feelings toward the individuals and culture of the country of visit were not changed, "my understanding most certainly deepened", both academically and practically. Gaining a new perspective concerning what one has as compared to what others may have to do without, given their current economic standard of living, provided the backdrop for participants to appreciate and better understand their life in the United States. Participant 12 related the following,

we met with a farmer and he's like, yeah, we just got running water in our house for the first time last month, that's a game-changer, so I think coming back from the trip, you just came back so grateful for where you are and then also realizing that people, they don't want you to feel sorry for them because they live in a drought-stricken area or something like that; they don't want charity; they want the opportunity to help themselves and prefer there not be money thrown at them to provide a short-term fix for a long-term problem.

Open-mindedness/mindfulness/awareness. Study participants voiced a newly revealed sense of open-mindedness/mindfulness/awareness from their short-term study abroad experience, which is the third sub-theme of personal growth. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) noted in their research a need for awareness and world-mindedness and Daniel, et al. (2014), stated a need for cultural awareness and global thinking. One way to achieve open-mindedness and awareness is through disparate opportunities. *Curiosity* was a word mentioned often by participants when relating their reason for and subsequent involvement in a short-term study abroad experience. To never venture to a place where tremendous differences exist in living conditions, opportunities, resources, and education attainment, to name a few, limits the perspective of working with and amongst diverse

individuals, a state that is typical in today's globalized world. As reiterated by participants (n=7), that curiosity and innate desire to witness first-hand differences in other places led them to engage in the short-term study abroad experience, and by that exposure, in visiting people and places that are vastly different, a new sense of mindfulness was awakened in their lives. Participants provided testimony in regard to the necessity of asking questions, authentically listening to others, having a willingness to learn and adapt with an open mind to different ways and means of doing things opens pathways for greater inclusiveness in culturally diverse environments. Participant 8 shared an awakened sense of "having more of an open mind is something that I'll definitely carry with me". The responses from this study have brought attention to mindfulness and inclusiveness as topics that are attracting greater attention as the world becomes flatter and boundaries continue to become more transparent creating the potential to expand the current body of knowledge related to open-mindedness/mindfulness/awareness as related to short-term study abroad experiences. While Dwyer (2004) asserts that 'more is better', international exposure of any length can benefit participants and cultivate mindfulness and inclusiveness in a global environment (Mason and Their, 2018) and as such, an area for further exploration.

Discomfort. Attainment of personal growth from feelings of discomfort during the participant's short-term study abroad was the fourth sub-theme of personal growth. Previous research studies provide supporting evidence that there are greater benefits and breadth in experiential learning when individuals are exposed to new and unfamiliar environments (Coker, Heiser, Taylor, & Book, 2017). Study participants expressed their feelings of discomfort from being away from familiar surroundings. Participant 3 shared

the following, “I got to experience another culture. I got to be in an environment that made me uncomfortable and so I thought that would better myself”. As expressed participants in this study, a desire existed to experience a country unfamiliar to them where they were forced to move out of their comfort zone to achieve personal growth. This was evidenced when reviewing the diverse locations participants traveled to, with 15 of the 18 participants traveling to countries where English was not a prevalent language. Participant 5 stated, “find something you’re not already comfortable with. You don’t learn inside that space where you know what’s happening and where you’re comfortable, you learn where things don’t make sense and you have to recompute and you have to adapt”.

Global perspective

The third theme related to personal value/benefits from the short-term study abroad experience related to a changed global perspective by the participants. Three sub-themes were promulgated from the participant voices, which include the following: (1) removal of stereotypes/preconceived notions/biases, (2) a new sense of being a global citizen, and (3) increased consciousness of cultural competency and diversity.

Removal of stereotypes/preconceived notions/biases. The first sub-theme of global perspective was participant narratives indicating an elimination of previously held stereotypes/preconceived notions/biases regarding other individuals and cultures. In a study conducted by Carley, Stuart, and Dailey (2011), findings indicated a growth of intercultural awareness “led to a breakdown in cultural stereotyping” (p. 46). Through personal experiences, opinions and biases are formed, often before personal exposure to the environment or situation. As was noted by participants who traveled to countries

immensely different than the United States, stereotypes, prejudices, preconceived notions, and biases were often eradicated when arriving at the host country. Participant 15 shared their stereotyped view of Africa, sharing their expectation of Africa being desert-like and dry and instantly realizing upon arrival to the country how inaccurate their knowledge of the African topography was. Participants noted that their stereotypes, preconceived notions, and biases were primarily the result of what exposure they had from books, movies, and the media, adding that the information shared by media sources contains its own bias, favoritism, and at times pernicious information, which can influence perceptions of the reader of the information. Participants conveyed a need to 'look beyond the surface' and scrutinize what is reported in the media and use that information to formulate knowledgeable judgments. Participants who visited developing countries found a remarkable difference in what they assumed individuals in that country set for future expectations and what those persons aspired to for their future. As participants visited with inhabitants of the areas of visit they were astonished to hear young children speak about wanting a good education to make their lives better and aspiring to an occupation in the airline industry as a pilot, which would seem insurmountable given their living conditions, and limited resources and opportunities. Participant 1 shared their exposure to working with college students from the country of visit and finding that "college students are college students regardless of where they live". Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) previously stated a need for study abroad experiences in order to decrease stereotypes, embrace differences, and increase empathy. The findings from this study accentuate the fact that what Pascarella and Terenzini

(2005) discovered 14 years ago in regard to stereotyping and biases, remains a continued concern when examining relationships between people and places in a global world.

Global citizen. The second sub-theme of global perspective was participant disclosures of an increased sensitivity to their role as a global citizen. Global citizenship encompasses an ability to not only be aware of the ‘bigger world’ picture and where a person ‘fits’ in but also it requires a person to take action to make a difference in the world. Research conducted by Olson and Lalley (2012) reported that through a short-term study abroad, students attained a new perspective of the meaning of being a U. S. citizen, as well as how U. S. citizens are viewed in other cultures. In the findings of this study, participants shared their respect and admiration for the amount of knowledge citizens in the country of their visit knew about the United States as compared to the lack of worldly knowledge many Americans have about other countries. Interestingly, participants were also astonished at the number of individuals in the countries of visit that spoke several languages (n=5). All 18 participants indicated their aspiration for engaging in a short-term study abroad was to increase their knowledge of another country, its inhabitants, and that countries’ ways of doing things. For some participants the desire for the experience was due to their current interactions with global citizens, such as international students and international workers, while for other participants there was a longing to gain their own broader view of the world, bringing that knowledge back to share with others for greater understanding. Participant 13 shared that their experience took them to a country where parts of that country were first-world, but yet there were still parts of the country that were in developing nation status, leading the participant to ponder how those parts of that country will develop given the constraints that surround them, as well as what role

the United States will play in aiding that development. The findings from the study add to previous research in that engaging in a short-term study abroad creates an awareness of global citizenry that leads to transformative learning to create transformational change in the world.

Cultural competency/diversity. The necessity of being culturally competent and embracing diversity was the third sub-theme related to global perspective. Petzold and Moog (2018) stated, “A greater understanding of other cultures, the discovery of a foreign culture and language, trying out if one can work abroad, and thus getting to know one’s own person are often perceived as a reward [of study abroad]” (p. 38). As noted by Hammer (2008), “without systematic efforts at developing intercultural competence, our world community may well devolve into increased conflict and violence, fulfilling Samuel Huntington’s (1996) observation that human conflict and violence in the new millennium will not be primarily generated from economic or ideological grounds but rather, from the divide of cultural differences” (p. 246). Participants shared the need to possess the ability to effectively interact, communicate, and understand different viewpoints and customs of individuals across cultures as imperative in today’s interconnected world. This also includes differences and diversity that makes each of us unique in physical, mental, and environmental attributes. To really ‘see’ other worldly perspectives, is vital for an individual to reflect upon and be conscious of their worldview first. Bennett (2004) noted, “As people became more interculturally competent it seemed that there was a major change in the quality of their experience, which I called the move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism” (p. 62). The move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism encapsulates a shift from a denial of cultural differences to an

acceptance, adaptation, and potential integration of cultural differences. As shared by Participant 1, seeing the river where drinking water is obtained being used as a repository for the disposal of waste was horrifying, but in the country and culture of visit, that was a norm. Through self-reflection this participant attained a cognizance that what constituted normalcy for a U. S. citizen was greatly different than what is normal within many developing countries, leading to the realization that it would not be appropriate to impose that view on a culture where daily living conditions were greatly different than what is experienced by citizens in the United States. Participant 2 shared that through sharing meals with others during their short-term study abroad it became apparent that “culture is not a monolith and that it varies according to socioeconomic status regardless of where you are”. Regardless of the place of visit, each participant (n=18) shared a renewed sense of viewing those different from themselves with respect and admiration and finding channels that allowed them to connect ‘dots’ that captured similarities in cultures despite stark differences, as well as recognizing diversity between countries. Participant 6 reflected, “the reality is that the problems faced in many other parts of the world are the same, it’s just that the landscape is different”. Cunningham and Grossman (2009) noted in their research that study abroad in a different culture challenges participants to critically contemplate and question individual assumptions. This study adds to a body of research related to cultural awareness, noting that participants shared their need to reflect and gain a consciousness of their worldly views and how those influence their worldly perspectives.

Informing/Influencing Leadership

Sub-question three focused on how a short-term study abroad experience informed and/or influenced the participants' leadership. As noted in an article by Morrison (2000) as early as the start of the 21st century,

The rise of globalization has already engulfed a wide range of industries. While technology industries are intensively global, even traditional industries such as retailing, banking, consumer products, or insurance-globalization pressures have become much more prevalent. These pressures have brought profound changes to the ways companies compete and the ways leaders lead (p. 118).

Through analysis of narratives from participant interviews of their short-term study abroad, findings suggest the Full Range Leadership Model of Bass and Avolio (1993) can serve as a theoretical model to operationalize the themes of leadership in this study. Responses from the study participants suggested transformational leadership was at work for participants as noted in the themes and related subthemes below. As noted by Participant 7, "I would say, in general, all of my international experience continues to reiterate the value of connection and the power of knowing other humans and using those opportunities to connect for tremendous learning". Participant 9 shared, "I mean I can't pinpoint an exact like trigger event. I can't be like, this is the exact moment that I knew my leadership qualities we're going to be changed, but I'm more open and willing to understand". It should be noted that research related to the relationship between short-term study abroad and the impact/influence to leadership is still limited. From the third sub-question, four themes were derived as related to leadership being

informed/influenced by a short-term study abroad. Each of these is discussed below with related sub-themes.

Growth and learning

The first theme related to a short-term study abroad influencing/informing leadership resulted in the following sub-themes: (1) increased knowledge, (2) a feeling of inclusiveness and connection, and (3) the achievement of mindfulness and varied perspectives, all characteristics of individualized consideration within the Full Range Leadership Model. As noted in the subthemes below, participants felt what they experienced in their short-term study abroad experience can be used in their leadership roles currently or in the future.

Increased knowledge. Attainment of an increased knowledge toward leadership was the first sub-theme of growth and learning in leadership. Prior research by Goodman (2013) noted that there is a growing need for global leaders who possess knowledge, skills, and cultural understanding. In findings from the one-on-one interviews, eight participants revealed that they felt they were ‘getting’ rather than ‘giving’ knowledge while in their country of visit. One participant stated that they took away a lot more knowledge and learned a lot more from the people in the country of visit than what the participant taught them. For five participants, their short-term study abroad was related to a specific field of investigation, however, the exposure to the country of visit provided much more information and education beyond their study field. All participants (n=18) addressed their learning included a new and better educated impression of the people and their culture, the government, as well as socioeconomic conditions of the country of visit. Participant 15 shared, “If people can find a way and a means to study abroad, it will

enrich their lives in ways they don't even know. I think it makes for, in our case, better Americans, and better-educated Americans". As noted by narratives in this study, it is not an unexpected discovery that there is a shared, strong voice, by participants to advocate for all individuals' to participate in a short-term study abroad, as well as an intensified desire to continue to seek additional opportunities for themselves. Participant 12 shared how highly they regarded their study abroad experience and the impact in their current leadership role, "when I review resumes for internships, those [study abroad experiences] are things that I look for because I just think that it shows me that they're willing to learn". The findings from this study add confirmatory value to prior research studies and the value of knowledge attainment from the study abroad experience.

Participant 2 talked about realizing what was experienced in the short-term study abroad by saying,

I would say I came away from it with not quite the understanding of that I had anticipated, but I appreciated that I was using that as a frame and a vehicle through which to engage with people. It gave me an objective and a purpose to my interactions with whomever it was that I was talking to.

As participants shared in their narratives about their short-term study abroad, they found a new purpose to many of their daily interactions, using 'intentionality' as a defining word for approaching situations after their short-term study abroad experience.

Participant 6 stated,

I think when I was younger I will say that I thought I had the answers, and as I've learned more and traveled more, I've realized that I really don't have most of the

answers and that you need to take a step back from some of that and really take that in.

Inclusiveness/connection. The second sub-theme of growth and learning voiced by participants was a heightened awareness of a need for inclusiveness/connection in their leadership roles. As early as 2006, Bellany and Weinberg drew attention to the need for educational institutions to encourage students to participate in study abroad experiences to gain exposure to requisites needed to live as a global citizen in the increasingly interconnected world. The inclusion of those with diverse thinking as well as connecting the role of the United States to other countries is necessary for a sustainable, peaceful, inclusive world (Tichnor-Wagner, 2016). Participants of this study reported growth and learning as related to inclusiveness and connection, attributes necessary for effective and synergistic leadership to occur. For some participants, inclusiveness and connection was found as they were leading in a work environment, using diverse individuals and perspectives to find comprehensive solutions, while for other participants, inclusiveness and connection was used in a classroom setting. The optimal distinctiveness model by Brewer (1991) states that in group settings there are two identity needs: (1) inclusion/assimilation and (2) differentiation/distinctness. Brewer (1991) proposes, “that social identities are selected and activated to the extent that they help to achieve a balance between needs for inclusion and for differentiation in a given social context” (p. 90). Participant 9 shared their anticipation of being able to indirectly connect to future students to the requisite of being inclusive and connected to those they collaborate with currently and in the future, both here at home (U. S.) as well as in a global context. Participant 12 shared the need to include diverse individuals at ‘the table’ saying, stating

that often those making decisions for the developing world don't have any skin in the game, per se, if that makes sense. Findings of this study add to the existing body of knowledge on the importance and value of being inclusive and making connections as a leader in the global economy.

Mindfulness/varied perspectives. The third sub-theme from growth and learning was voiced by participants who expressed a mindfulness and varied perspective being achieved from their experience. Bellamy and Weinberg (2006), noted, "Study abroad programs teach important intercultural and language skills, but the true success of a program occurs with a student, when she realizes that she can see the world from a different cultural viewpoint" (p. 20). Previous research by Hallows, et al. (2011) noted the need for preparing students for knowledge, skills, and perspectives that will allow them to engage in business with international operations. Participant 11 shared the need to be mindful of what comes out of your mouth prior to saying it, as a result of their experience in a short-term study abroad. Participant 11 stated, "that's something that I continually work on and I think that study tour made me think even more about that. Let's not just jump to our first thought. Let's make sure we thoroughly understand this". The previous statement by this participant identifies with cognition of the stages of intercultural development as noted by Hammer (2008). The IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) identifies five stages of intercultural development on a continuum ranging from denial to adaptation. Hammer (2008) states, "The capability of shifting cultural perspective and adapting behavior to cultural context represents an intercultural mindset" (p. 247). Participants shared a need to be cognizant of the many perspectives of diverse cultures, which not only has the potential to bring dissonance

between parties at the discussion table, but also the potential to bring new and unique perspectives in ways to solve problems or find different ways of doing things, using scarce resources more efficiently and effectively. Participants noted the need, as a leader, to be more open to varying ideas and how to make those work. Participants also shared an increased awareness to sub-cultures within a culture and the impact that potentially has on leadership. The findings from the current study add to the previous limited research on leadership and mindfulness/varied perspectives within the confines of short-term study abroad impacts.

Openness to differences

Theme two in informing/influencing leadership from a short-term study abroad, openness to differences can be related to Full Range Leadership Model as focused around intellectual stimulation. The following three sub-themes were identified in this theme: (1) creativity/innovation, (2) global awareness, and (3) empowerment of followers. Transformational leaders challenge followers to find new directions and avenues to do things better and more efficiently, preserving resources in the process.

Creativity/innovation. The first sub-theme of openness to differences is centered on the creativity and innovation participants observed in their short-term study abroad experience and how that can relate to their leadership role. Previous research indicated that students who are multi-skilled would compete better for jobs when facing equally skilled worldwide graduates (Orahod, 2008). Participants visiting a developing country noted the ingenuity, resourcefulness, and creativity of the residents of very poor areas in their short-term study abroad. Even in countries that were not third world status, participants attained an awareness of scarce resources, a perspective that many had not

previously considered as a citizen of the United States where an abundance of resources is available. Participants shared various stories related to limited resources from land used for farming, to clean water, to lack of sanitary living conditions, and despite the challenges presented in each of these environments, residents created unique and inventive ideas to overcome their inferior situation. In countries where there is limited access to natural resources, a need exists to find practical solutions to sometimes, complex problems. Innovation and creativity were addressed by participant 5 when speaking of being in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. As noted by the participant, ‘if you want to see innovation, go to places where they have little to work with, learning to stretch and do with what little they have’. While most participants witnessed creativity and innovation in stark conditions, one participant shared their country of visit exceeded the United States in the use of robotics in a vendor environment. From several of these exposures participants achieved an amplified awareness of gains that are possible through global collaboration where followers are allowed to use creativity and innovation to solve problems. The impact of creativity and innovation on leadership as well as followership is underrepresented in current short-term study abroad literature.

Global perspective/’big picture’. A global perspective and ability to see the ‘big picture’ was the second sub-theme in openness to differences. In an article written by Tichnor-Wagner (2016), it was noted that “The need for students to be able to empathize with others, value diverse perspective and culture, understand how events around the world are interconnected, and solve problems that transcends borders has never been greater” (para. 1). As boundaries have gotten more transparent, and reliance on information and resources from global sources has increased, the need for competence in

working with diverse populations and organizations continues to increase exponentially. Participants shared narratives relating the need to capture a view larger than just one's own country, noting that if an individual has never left the United States, they will only have one perspective on how the world works and by participating in a short-term study abroad, a better understanding can be captured on how others work. Leaders need to share and expound on information and ideas to most efficiently use scarce natural resources. From the narratives of the current study, participants noted the need for Americans to witness first-hand the immense differences between countries and seek opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding of the value and benefit of interconnectedness. Lokkesmoe, Kuchinke, and Ardichvili (2016) stated the need for globalized economy to be able to build effective working relationships with diverse cultural backgrounds. Findings from this study add to the existing body of research related to the necessity of attainment of a global perspective and 'big picture' thinking.

Empowerment. The last sub-theme related to openness to differences was the participant's awareness of the impact empowerment can have as related to leadership. Transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978) is embedded with a focus on importance of the follower. Bass (1985) posited that when a leader has a commitment to their followers, it can in turn motivate followers to achieve even higher performance. Participants shared their feelings of personal empowerment while on the trip, achieving personal growth in navigating and functioning on their own in a foreign and unknown environment, and then using that experience upon the return home to encourage others to find their own strength to engage in a similar enriching experience. Providing opportunities for individuals to grow and share leadership adds value and benefits to the

entire organization. Four participants spoke specifically of having experiences while on their short-term study abroad where their fear during an unfamiliar encounter required them to respond with maturity and poise, translating to a new found self-assurance they had not previously perceived they possessed providing a personal lesson on the value of empowerment. Participants also shared the need that as a leader, you must look beyond their own lens to connect and view your own environment through a different lens. Short-term study abroad increases awareness of empowerment and its role in leadership as evidenced in this study.

Group dynamics

The third theme as related to informing and influencing leadership considered the impact of group dynamics in achieving organizational goals. Inspirational motivation, encouraging members of teams and groups to work cooperatively and cohesively toward a common goal is the 3rd 'I' of the Full Range Leadership Model. This includes an environment where effective communication, team/group building occurs, and leadership is shared resulting in greater outcomes. From this theme three sub-themes emerged: (1) effective communication, (2) team/group building, and (3) shared leadership.

Effective communication. The first sub-theme is related to effective communication in leadership roles. As noted by Leonard, et al. (2011), "If we are not communicating the messages we intend, then our method of communicating may be efficient, but it is certainly not effective" (p. 84). Participants shared stories of working with diverse populations and individuals in teams within and across geographical boundaries, which necessitates efficiency in relationships. Effective communication involves not just active listening to ensure the message is accurately delivered, but also

intentionally listening to ensure the message was correctly understood, which includes being cognizant of tone, expression, delivery mode, and wording to alleviate any potential misunderstanding. Participant 1, who came from an area of the United States where there is a high level of dialect in speaking, recognized the need to be particularly conscious of pronunciation and ‘how you say it’. Participants shared that when in a space where communication is already a challenge due to language barriers, it was necessary to quickly find commonalities as one could not ‘go through’ typical English pleasantries to start a conversation. This study contributes to an existing body of knowledge of leadership and effective communication by contributing impacts of effective communication as related to short-term study abroad.

Team/group building. The second sub-theme of group dynamics reiterated the need to for team and group building. Building strong teams is crucial for organizations and attaining the behavior where individuals participate with other groups, networks, and organizations, can provide a competitive edge when companies, businesses, and organizations are working to capture new customers (Earnest, 2003; Lou & Jamison-Drake, 2014; Witte, 2013). Participants shared the importance of group dynamics for success of teams in organizations in addition to observing differences in ‘ways of doing’ in the various countries of their study abroad experience. Participants expressed the importance of forming rapport with diverse cultures to build a sense of ‘team player’ mentality for collaboration and effective workflow. “Finding a commonality in our humanity allowed us to enter into a deeper business discussion, building trust and credibility” (P15). When working with diverse cultures, there is a need and necessity to determine what customs and traditions are usual in other cultures. Participant 16 summed

working in and creating teams eloquently, “in a multicultural environment, how many assumptions do we make when we communicate with people based on our own mental models of the world”. The findings related to team/group building for effective leadership as related to short-term study abroad add to findings of prior research in the necessity of a need to form cohesive groups and teams for organizational success.

Shared leadership. The last sub-theme discovered in the theme ‘group dynamics’ was participant’s recognition of the need to share leadership roles, rather than viewing leadership as a vertical hierarchical process. In research conducted by Ramthun and Matkin (2012), “Shared leadership has the potential to enable organizations employing teams, even in a hierarchical structure, to be effective” (p. 307). Transformational leaders embrace an organizational culture where followers are provided a strategic vision, necessary resources, and empowerment to reach shared goals (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). To lead in the diverse organizations of the 21st century, it is important to acknowledge and respect that individuals who lead often come from different backgrounds as well as having varied past experiences on which to draw their leadership. Participants shared a need and better understanding for leaders, at times, to follow rather than lead and from that experience found an increased leadership confidence that they could retain their leadership role from the ‘backseat’. This ‘backseat’ view of leadership also provided them a window to observe the value and benefits of a variety of leadership styles. One participant shared that having two faculty-leaders on the study abroad trip, who were very diverse in their leadership style, presented an example of how dissimilar leadership styles can be impactful in various situations. Being more open, understanding, and willing to listen to other ideas were beliefs and shared outcomes all participants considered as

valuable in leadership positions (n=18). What participants shared demonstrates transformational leadership, and adds to an existing body of knowledge regarding transformational leadership.

Leadership roles

The last theme revealed from participant voices was the importance of the leader as they navigate various leadership roles. The last 'I' of the Full Range Leadership Model is idealized influence, which focuses on the leader serving as a role model with the followers having trust and confidence in the leader and his position, which in turn facilitates successful organizational outcomes. Three sub-themes were discovered as related to leadership roles: (1) navigating leadership, (2) cross-cultural awareness, and (3) mutuality.

Navigating leadership. The first sub-theme pertained to the impact the short-term study abroad experience had on their ability to navigate their leadership roles. In a study by Earnest (2003), students reported participation in a study abroad program “allowed them to learn their own strengths and weaknesses during a period of leadership growth” (p. 47). Participants shared in their narratives the challenges they have witnessed as a leader in the 21st century, reflecting on the fact that people approach situations differently, including different thought processes that can be the result of having diverse backgrounds. When addressing the benefit of a short-term study abroad in a leadership context, Participant 14 stated, “I think even with the short-term study abroad, so like a week or two weeks, that it is extremely valuable for leaders, partly because of working with different sets of values, especially in a culture that really different than your own”. Participants noted that short-term study abroad provided a situational context to ‘try out’

different influence tactics, which allowed for ‘emergent leadership’. Participants also noted the need and value of self-reflection and an examination of personal values. The remarks shared by participants in regard to navigating leadership provides additional knowledge that experiences attained from a short-term study abroad can provide a natural setting to apply and experiment with leadership skills for the 21st century.

Cross-cultural awareness. A second sub-theme identified in the narratives of the participants was the need for cross-cultural awareness in their leadership role. Hofstede and Hofstede (2004) noted that society has become increasingly globalized, therefore effective leadership necessitates an understanding of other cultures to interact efficaciously. As noted by Ludlum, et al. (2013), “In the past, relocating for a job might mean moving across the state. Now it could mean moving across the globe” (p. 1). Conducting business in diverse environments requires not just an awareness, but also an openness to differences in customary practices. Three participants shared personal stories of the lack of knowledge in traditional business practices hindered, and almost cost their companies a business relationship, from not being familiar with a countries custom. Participant 13 shared the following statement when speaking of how a study abroad experience emphasized the need for global cultural awareness, “it enhanced [the need] with just openness, to learn about a culture before making any judgments”. After engaging in their short-term study abroad experience, all participants (n=18) shared their enhanced appreciation for other cultures and the need to view situations from that context. When asked if the short-term study abroad altered the interviewees’ leadership skills, Participant 14 shared, “I do think that it altered it in the sense that I am more aware of my own cultural biases and so I am aware of what I carry around with me and so I try

to compensate for that”. Participant 15 stated, “I think it builds empathy in leaders and maybe curiosity, and an ability to connect with people that are different from yourself”. From the narratives shared by participants, it is vital that leaders today understand, through self-education, the customs and traditions of diverse countries and the individuals who live in them, in order to ensure successful interactions. As noted earlier, not just awareness, but also an openness to differences is vital for productive outcomes in leading the 21st century global workforce. As noted through the participant comments of this study, the findings contribute to prior literature on cross-cultural awareness. As noted by Bennett (2004), organizations must not only understand various cultures, but also embrace a climate that respects diversity. This can be achieved by providing resources within organizations to train and educate leaders with skills appropriate for leading in the 21st century and beyond.

Mutuality. The final sub-theme related to leadership roles was a need for mutuality and respect as worldly interconnectedness continues to proliferate. Geyer, et al. (2016) noted that students with a study abroad experience had an increased probability of “holding a leadership position” in their career (p. 1048). Global interconnectedness, despite current tensions between many countries, continues to proliferate and grow, therefore, the need to enhance relationships that provide interdependence and mutual respect is imperative. Participants shared the need to be cognizant of a mutual dependence of today’s global society and that through this mutuality, recognize that someone across a border may know something you don’t, which will be valuable in solving a current problem. Participant 10 provided a resounding testimonial for the value,

importance, and necessity of individuals, especially those in leadership positions to complete a short-term study abroad,

Given what's happening today and given my understanding of immigration in this country [the U. S.] and how there seems to be change as far as how we view the rest of the world and how we're involved in that world, it's really frustrating for me, somebody who values through diversity, and not only just diversity of people and cultures but the diversity, you know, of people and different perspectives. It's been a tough few years for somebody like me, that really values other people and understanding that people have come from different backgrounds and that, you know, to understand how lucky we are in the U. S., but that doesn't diminish somebody's else's value. I feel like we lost that a little bit in the last couple of years. So the study trips like this and gaining that perspective, the more people that can do it and understand that [the better]. I want everybody to go to Soweto and understand the amount of community and culture they have and things that are there, given all the privilege that we have-it really makes you kind of rethink what's important".

Engagement in a short-term study abroad provides participants an awareness of the interdependence all of us have on the world and when perspective of our 'sector' of the world is put in perspective by viewing different sectors, there is an increased consciousness of the need to be open to multiple ways of doing things. Often the 'hard' part is letting go of 'my way', and allowing a different approach to be used.

Transformational leadership embraces follower empowerment, as noted previously in this discussion. As indicated in the results of the study, capturing multiple perspectives of a

variety of cultures through a short-term study abroad provides a foundation for positive mutual outcomes across the globe. “I think that leaders who can expose themselves to different cultures will be better leaders. I don’t think that, I actually firmly believe that” (P15). Findings from this study confirm and add to the existing knowledge that effective leadership is the result of shared goals and mutual efforts.

Importance of findings

Findings from this study provide supporting evidence that short-term study abroad experiences can provide benefits to participants far beyond the time of study, impacting not only personal growth, but growth and knowledge in leadership roles. As noted previously in research conducted by Geyer, Putz, and Misra (2017), “A significant finding is that study abroad participants hold more leadership positions than people who have not studied abroad” (p. 1045). As retold in the narratives of participants, the ability to see first-hand differences in other people, cultures, and countries ‘brought to life’ learning from the classroom. This study will add to the existing body of knowledge in the area of short-term study abroad and the potential impacts participation in a short-term study abroad may produce in personal and leadership roles. The study was conducted using a diverse group of participants who volunteered from across the contiguous United States. A plethora of research has previously been conducted on the potential impact of short-term study abroad with college undergraduates as the participant group, but the uniqueness of this study is the result of using a variety of educational levels, including undergraduates, graduates, and graduates who are seeking leadership certification, to determine if barriers and outcomes related to personal value from the experience as well as impacts to leadership are non-discriminatory according to age or location. Participants

were a minimum of 19 years old, but no upper age limit was imposed, providing a greater basis of perspectives in regard to motivation to complete a short-term study abroad, along with reasons for hesitancy to complete the experience. This study also adds to the body of knowledge in regard to how leadership may be informed or influenced by an individuals' participation in a short-term study abroad experience.

Overall, when linking together the theories that guided this study, an integrated message was derived from the narratives of the participants. Participants shared that overcoming challenges and/or barriers encountered prior to the experience was insignificant when weighed against the benefits as a result of overcoming those barriers. Participant 2 stated,

I think by having an international exposure and international perspective it is a part of who I am and part of how I present myself to potential employers. I think it all goes together to create a comprehensive package and a comprehensive story that makes you a more interesting person. They care if you work well with others and they care if you're interesting and I think that most certainly short-term experiences play a role in helping to build that kind of skillset.

When competing for career paths or even entrance into other collegiate programs, a study abroad experience on an application or resume can provide additional information about the applicant without having a personal interaction by "Making yourself as different from your peers as possible, set yourself apart from your peers" (P3) as well as a short-term study abroad providing an experience to draw upon to "describe how you developed and improved as a person" (P3). Participant 12 added, "You never know what doors it might open up", but a greater testimonial was reiterated when asked, *'would you do it again,*

knowing what you know now’? with a response of, “A million times over. I would do another and another and another. I think it’s a productive way to learn about your world and those around you”. Finally, Participant 15 summed up their passion and concerns for why individuals should complete a study abroad,

so we’re in what they call the 4th Industrial Revolution and so as you know, artificial intelligence becomes prevalent in our societies we have to pay attention to the humanistic side of the world. If we live our lives in a world without connecting with others, then we’re limited to that world, and I think that makes travel, whether it’s for pleasure, work, or school, all the more important so that we can continue to connect in a humanistic way.

Recommendations

An individuals’ motivation to study abroad is impacted by a variety of innate intervening variables which can be linked to Bandura’s (1984) Social Cognitive Theory, however, often other outside factors can override that motivation where the individual will fail to complete the experience. In higher education institutions, there exists an opportunity to encourage and grow study abroad participation rates. This process begins with institutional internationalization and a clearly articulated commitment for study abroad programs.

Institutional internationalization is a comprehensive program where support for study abroad begins with adoption/commitment at the administrative level ending with partnerships and collaboration, therefore, for the process of increasing participation numbers, it is imperative higher educational institutions not only adopt, but also support study abroad programs. This support must include helping students’ secure monetary

resources to mitigate the overriding discouraging factor of inadequate financial/monetary resources.

Writing study abroad into the curriculum as a part of a comprehensive educational experience is important. Policymakers and institutions of higher learning both recognize the necessity of an out of home country experience, and as noted in the research “the goal of colleges and universities has focused on the importance of internationalization, globalization, or efforts to develop skills” for the global marketplace (Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2014, p. 78). As noted in this study, when college credit is given for the study abroad experience, there existed an additional incentive for participating in the experience.

Venturing into a foreign country alone is unsettling, regardless of age, as noted in the findings of this study, however, it was also noted that having a faculty-led experience mitigated some of those fears. To increase the number of study abroad participants, additional incentives need to be provided for faculty to participate in and lead study abroad experiences with students.

Finally, these findings suggest that the number of short-term study abroad programs needs to continue to grow. While much research has been conducted on the benefits of having a longer experience, research has also shown that any experience out of one’s homeland provides lasting benefits and transformational learning.

As noted by NAFSA, 95% of consumers today live outside the United States, and “international experience will be necessary if they [companies] are to help the United States remain competitive in a global market” (Moore, Boyd, Rosser, & Elber, 2009, p. 120). Not only is it imperative the United States recognize the importance of the global

market, but as noted previously in this paper, as expansion into other countries continues to occur, individuals aspiring to future leadership will be required to possess cultural and emotional intelligence for global success (Alon, 2005).

Limitations

The nature of phenomenological research is exploring a phenomenon (shared experience) through personal experiences of participants, with this dissertation being completed to find the motivational factors for individuals to complete a short-term study abroad experience. The results reported in this study were based on the 18 individuals who responded to an email from two Listserv databases, therefore it is possible that only students who had a positive short-term study abroad experience responded to the email to participate. Due to the limited number of participants, the qualitative nature of this study, and the study being conducted using only two Listserv databases, results of this study cannot be generalized to other populations. It can be anticipated that participants outside this particular study would report different experiences, with potential differences in themes and categories. This study only considered short-term study abroad (one to three weeks in duration). Given the number of different types of study abroad experiences, it must be recognized that ‘one size does not fit all’ in study abroad experiences and results from the various types of study abroad would result in several different outcomes.

It must be also recognized that the participants of this study were not forced into a situation where the immersion was overwhelming due to the majority of participants (n=17) having a faculty/college sponsored immersion experience, which was recognized by some participants in their narrative. While the immersion allowed exposure to a

differing environment than is customary for them, participants also recognized being ‘sheltered’ from a majority of potentially harmful experiences.

The findings from this study are also self-reported as well these findings containing a self-selection bias from individuals who may already have self-motivation to complete a short-term study abroad experience. This may cause information from the semi-structured questions to not represent true student feelings due to a hesitancy of participants to be fully transparent.

Finally, self-selection also occurred for the leadership component of the study. Participants were asked in the initial screening to self-identify their leadership role, therefore responses may be skewed due to levels and types of leadership roles of study participants.

Future Research

Study abroad experiences continue to be an area of interest when considering the current economic conditions and our global world. There continues to be limited research on impacts of a study-abroad experience for several populations such as graduate students or those seeking certification in leadership development, areas of education that could also benefit from an out-of-country experience.

When examining ‘who’ is participating in short-term study abroad experiences, the ratio of female to male students continues to be a split of two-thirds to one-third. With the increase in short-term study abroad programs currently being offered, it is hoped that a corresponding increase in participation rates would occur for all genders, but also it is hoped that a short-term experience would appeal to more male participants. Future research opportunities exist for what factors are specifically related to low participant

rates in males and what steps could be taken to encourage more male students to engage in a short-term study abroad.

A multitude of studies exist concerning completion of a short-term study abroad with positive benefits, however, few studies exist about those experiences that resulted in students feeling they had a less satisfactory outcome from the trip. Research is needed to determine what factors contributed to negative short-term study abroad experiences, which can be used to design future programs to minimize potential negative outcomes.

Few longitudinal studies exist where short-term study abroad students provide feedback concerning the impact their experience had on their career trajectory. To encourage additional participants in short-term study abroad, providing information on long-term gains from the experience may inspire additional future participants.

Finally, future research may be valuable in regard to the impact of participation in a short-term study abroad as related to growth in leadership and citizenship at home. Questions could be focused around former short-term study abroad participant involvement in issues and solutions in their home communities and the leadership opportunities they became involved in as a result of having participated in a short-term study abroad experience.

Concluding remarks

Growth in short-term study abroad participation has grown rapidly, with “64.6 percent of all students who studied abroad in 2016-2017 did so on summer programs or those that were eight weeks or fewer in length” (Redden, 2018, para. 8). By creating additional opportunities for a shorter time commitment, the ability for underrepresented groups such as community college students, students of color and students who study in a

variety of different degree fields will have increased opportunities to participate given reduced costs and time. Participant 14 stated, “I think everybody should have to do it, and especially if it’s a short term, it’s not a huge commitment. It certainly is, it’s time and money and effort and short-term relocation but the value added is so important.”

Preparing future leaders for the 21st century global world is crucial to overall organizational success. Participant 7 commented that the “biggest way to go and try to figure problems here is to go and experience them across the world”, noting that one must open their mind to the fact that there might be better solutions somewhere else.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent

IRB Number # 19272

Study Title:

Overcoming Barriers of Studying Abroad: A Phenomenological Study

Invitation

Dear Study Participant,

My name is Jeanette Milius. I am conducting a study on short-term study abroad and it's relationship to leadership. If you are 19 years of age or older, you may participate in this research.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

This is a research project that focuses on short-term study abroad experiences and informed leadership. In order to participate you must be 19 years of age or older and have satisfied the following two criterion: (1) completed a short-term (1 to 3 weeks in duration) out of home country experience, and (2) have had or currently serve in a leadership position (position where you influence an individual/group of individuals to work toward a common goal).

In 2016, president-elect Donald Trump promoted “America First”, as a part of his election campaign, which included an agenda that attacked foreign policy and immigration laws. With the subsequent election of President Trump and the campaign agenda of “America First”, a shifting dynamic has resulted in regard to globalization, international trade, and country dominance. As noted in an article in the *Harvard Business Review*, (Ghemawati, 2017), “As the political environment shifts, business leaders need to keep a careful eye on how their home countries are realigning their international ties, and engage in their own corporate diplomacy” (p. 10). For organizations and companies who participate in activities beyond domestic borders, President Trump’s stance toward globalization demonstrates an increased importance of building greater leadership skills as related to an interconnected world and the trade that ensues from these relationships.

What will be done during this research study?

Participation in this study will require approximately 45-60 minutes for an initial one-on-one interview. You will be asked to describe your personal experiences as related to study abroad participation, including the barriers you may have encountered prior to your participation, as well as your leadership has been impacted by your experiences from your out-of-home country experience. Participation will take place via Zoom, which will be audio recorded for transcription. Follow-up interviews will be conducted via Zoom (audio recorded) to clarify information. These should last no longer than 30 minutes. At

the completion of transcription, participants will be asked to review transcribed interviews for accuracy.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

What are the possible benefits to you?

The results of this study will be used to inform readers of the barriers of engaging in a short-term study abroad experience as well as leadership outcomes resultant from an out of country experience.

How will information about you be protected?

Your responses to interview questions in this study will be kept confidential. An assigned number will identify participants and all recordings will be maintained on UNL's Box storage system. Any transcribed information will be stored on UNL Box Storage.

What are your rights as a research subject?

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s):

PI: Jeanette Milius, s-jmilius1@unl.edu

SI: Nathan Conner, nconner2@unl.edu

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

- Phone: 1(402)472-6965
- Email: irb@unl.edu

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw") at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Documentation of Informed Consent You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By signing and emailing this this document back to me, your consent to participate is implied. Please download the document, sign and date it, and email it back to me at: s-jmilius1@unl.edu. You should print a copy of this page for your records.

Signature of Participant

Date

Name and phone number of principle investigator

Jeanette L. Milius, 402-239-6167

Appendix B: Solicitation Email

Recruitment Script for email participants

Hello Everyone. My name is Jeanette Milius and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am conducting research in regard to short-term study abroad experiences and it's relationship to leadership and I am inviting you to participate in this study. If you are 19 years old or older, you are eligible to participate in this study. The overall purpose of this research is to explore overcoming barriers of short-term study abroad participation, as well as the impact a short-term study abroad experience has had in informing your leadership.

Participants for this study will need to have completed a short-term (1-3 weeks in duration) out of home country experience. In addition to having completed a short-term study abroad experience, participants will need to have had, or are currently, in a leadership position. A leadership position for this study is defined as a position where the individual influences other individuals or groups to work toward achievement of a common goal. This does not require participants to be in a formal titled leadership role. This research will benefit both those involved in study abroad, as well as individuals who serve in leadership positions. The one-on-one audio taped interviews via Zoom should take no more than 45 to 60 minutes of your time. Follow-up interviews (audio taped via Zoom) should take no more than 30 minutes. After all data transcription is complete, participants will be asked to review their personal interviews for accuracy.

For your agreement to participate in this research, participants completing the study will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will be confidential during and after the study. All participants will be assigned a number for confidentiality. Recordings will be stored on UNL's Box storage system.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact me at [s-
jmilius1@unl.edu](mailto:sjmilius1@unl.edu)

Appendix C: Semi-structured questions

- Interview Topic: Motivation to complete a short-term study abroad
- Introduction of myself
- Overview of the purpose of the study:
- “Thank for agreeing to participate in my study. As indicated in my email and through our conversation in regard to your eligibility, for this study I was looking for individuals who had completed a short-term study abroad, meaning one to three weeks long, in their college degree program. The purpose was to find what motivated an individual to complete a short-term study abroad. In order to answer that question, three sub-questions have been developed, (1) what were the barriers you encountered when thinking of completing a short-term study abroad; (2) what was the personal value/benefit of overcoming those barriers, and (3) how did completion of that experience influence/inform your leadership?”
- Reminder of consent and ability to withdraw.
- Inform/remind participants of audio-recording and add that I will be taking notes throughout the interview
- Interview process: Inform participants that this interview should last approximately 45-60 minutes and if a follow-up interview is necessary, it should take approximately 30 minutes. State that follow-up emails will also be used for clarification if necessary.
- Ask if the participant has any questions.
- Introductory question:
 - “Please provide me an introduction of yourself, your study abroad experience and what you currently do in your leadership role.”
- Semi-structured interview questions:

Sub-question topic	Questions
Introduction	Tell me about your decision(s) to complete a short-term study abroad. What did you believe the experience would involve and were your expectations met?
Barriers	Describe the factors/variables that encouraged/influenced you to complete a short-term study abroad experience. Were there additional steps necessary to complete the short-term study abroad?

	Please describe the factors/variables that discouraged your participation in a short-term study abroad.
	Can you describe any feelings of discomfort or uneasiness you faced from being in a country other than your homeland?
	What if any adaptations did you have to make during your short-term study abroad experience?
Personal value/benefits	Please describe why you believe a short-term study abroad experience was valuable for you.
	Please explain how participation in a short-term study abroad influence/impacted you as a person.
	Please describe any similarities and differences you experienced in other individuals, groups, or cultures you felt as a part of your short-term study abroad.
	What were your feelings toward other diverse groups or different cultures prior to your short-term study abroad compared to your feelings today toward those same individuals/groups/cultures?
Informed/influenced leadership	Do you feel your leadership qualities have been influenced by your short-term study abroad experience? If so, how, please elaborate. If not, why not?
	Describe a time when you feel your experience in a short-term study abroad was beneficial as you served in a leadership role.
	Please describe how you believe short-term study abroad can be utilized by other individuals who serve or may serve in a leadership role in the future.
	Do you believe your cultural competence changed due to your participation in a short-term study abroad experience? If so, how? If not, why not?
	Do you believe you have altered your leadership skills as a result of your experience? If so, how? If not, why not?
	What/how did you feel upon your return home from your short-term study abroad?

	Do you believe a short-term study abroad can have an impact on future jobs/careers? If so, how? If not, why not?
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- Closing: “Do you have any other thoughts that might add to my study that I have not previously addressed in my interview questions?”
 - Thank the individual for their time and remind them of e-certificate from Amazon for their participation
 - Remind participants of follow-up emails and potential additional Zoom session.
 - Remind participants of ‘member checking’ of transcribed Zoom recording. “Once all the recording are complete, I will have the interviews transcribe and once I review them for obvious errors and correct those if necessary, I will send the entire transcribed interview to you to review for accuracy.