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Study Abroad and Liminality: Examining U.S. American Collegiate Undergraduate Student
Engagement in Risky Behaviors Betwixt and Between Borders

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the
Department of Public Policy and Administration

West Chester University

West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Public Administration

By

Jill Louise Creighton

May 2020

Dedication

To those love to wander, especially to our favorite place – wherever we have not yet been. Adventure awaits, let's go exploring!

Acknowledgements

A doctoral student's journey rests on the shoulders of so many that support us as we work to complete our degrees. This path from master to doctor took me a full decade, beginning with a Ph.D pathway that ended A.B.D., and transforming into this Doctorate of Public Administration. My world has evolved tremendously across that decade, and there are countless people that made this academic journey possible.

First, I thank Dr. Kristen Crossney whose unwavering advisement, guidance, encouragement, positivity, and advocacy has been exactly what I need to complete my degree. I am so thankful for all you have done to help me finally get to the finish line. Thank you to Dr. Michelle Wade who bookends my career at West Chester University as the first professor I learned from in this program and the penultimate mentor to finalize this dissertation. Special thanks to Dr. Sarah Farash, whose adept statistical advising, writing coaching, and words of continual reassurance helped to shepherd me through the final stages of this work. A huge thank you to the site-that-shall-remain-deidentified that agreed to help me to collect my data for this research. Without you, this study is not possible!

I thank my professional teammates who understood me, and who gave me space and encouragement to work full-time while earning my degree. To those I have had the privilege of serving alongside during this process, knowing you have had my professional back when I have leaned on you has been one of the most cherished gifts. To those I have had the privilege of supervising during this time, thank you for reminding me to pause, breathe, and celebrate both the little wins and the really big ones.

I thank my career supervisors across the past decade who allowed space and encouraged persistence for me to pursue doctoral education while maintaining my full-time professional

path: Larry Loften from the University of Colorado Denver, Dr. Thomas Grace from New York University, Kris Winter from the University of Oregon, and Dr. Mary Jo Gonzales from Washington State University. I started this process as a Coordinator-level professional. I am earning my terminal degree letters as an Associate Vice President & Dean of Students. That growth trajectory was made possible because you all believed I could be both a capable full-time administrator and a doctoral student.

To my cohort-mates across the multiple doctoral programs it took me to get here – I have loved learning, laughing, and commiserating with each of you. A special acknowledgment to my cohort-mate and professional colleague, (future Dr.) Erin Logan, without whom I would have never found this program – I will always remember standing with you at an airport bar counter somewhere in middle-America, discussing the woes of terminal degree programs, when your face came alight and you showed me the pathway to West Chester University of Pennsylvania.

Finally, I say thank you and send love to my family (hi Mom, Dad, JK, and Jaxon!) and to Bailey, who saw me through two cross-country moves, three academic degrees, five states, six job changes, ten homes, and countless late nights. I toast to amazing friends who encouraged me, believed in me, listened to the struggle, pushed me to persist, and kept checking in on me when I became a doctoral student hermit even when we were several states and multiple time zones apart (special shout-outs to Shawn, Colleen, and Jim!) – and especially to Luke, who helped make it possible for me to start this journey; and especially to Simon, who created a loving and joyful home, cooked hundreds of dinners, and brewed easily over a thousand cups of coffee to help make it possible for me to finish this journey.

Abstract

One of the most niche sub-arenas of public administration, higher education administration, involves preparing future leaders and scholars for global perspectives. This original research examined whether collegiate, traditionally-aged, undergraduate student risky behavioral choices rose during the study abroad experience as compared to when in the home collegiate environment. After investigating the literature an opportunity to connect the phenomena of domestic risky behavior, collegiate study abroad, and tourism materialized. The anthropological concept of liminality served as the theoretical perspective that anchored the construction of this research. This study was conducted using a post-positivist epistemology, a non-experimental design, and an original survey instrument created for this study. A single, mid-sized, public, regional university on the east coast of the United States served as the data collection origin site.

Using statistical tests, this study resulted in nine major findings that have implications for public managers in higher education. In this study's sample, students were found to have made riskier choices abroad as compared to while at home, especially if they engaged in significant alcohol-related risks prior to studying abroad. Liminal space played a positive role in identifying whether or not risky behavioral choices increased. The most novel finding connected both in that the contributing factors of experiencing liminal space in tandem with a pre-disposition for risky behaviors served as the most significant predictors of whether students will or will not take risks while studying abroad. Three recommendations for practice in higher education administration and international study abroad programs, and seven future research opportunities emerged that may help to inform how this area of the research may continue to evolve.

Keywords: higher education, college, study abroad, student, risk, alcohol, liminal, travel, tourism, public administration

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

One of the most niche sub-arenas of public administration, higher education administration, involves preparing future leaders and scholars for global perspectives. As such, U.S. higher education institutions send over 300,000 U.S. American college students to embark on a study abroad journey annually (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014). Students who sojourn abroad choose this experience with a myriad of academic and personal development goals. Their home institutions hope students gain new perspectives that lead them toward positive, global citizenship.

While often intentional and admirable, these sets of goals encompass only part of the overall study abroad experience. Holistically, students enter their new environments with varying academic, ambassador, and social lenses. In the social environment of the study abroad context, students are launched into a foreign setting, ideally to make new social connections, navigate new systems, learn cultural expectations and boundaries, and create new life experiences. Among these new life experiences, are opportunities for students to engage in risky behaviors including academic misconduct, over-consumption of alcohol, the use of illicit substances, unsafe sexual activity, and mismanagement of finances.

This research examined these risky behaviors that students choose to engage in the semester before studying abroad as compared to while studying abroad. Using a post-positivist epistemology, an exploratory non-experimental design methodology, and survey method, I focused on the experiences of U.S. American, traditionally-aged, undergraduate students studying abroad while earning their first bachelor's degree. The goal of this research was to

learn whether or not the study abroad experience explained changes in undergraduate students' engagement in risky behaviors.

Background of the Problem

The field of international education has taken recent interest in data collection and research related to U.S. American students abroad. Study abroad professional organizations like The Forum on Education Abroad and the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA): Association of International Educators have historically published on the academic and social benefits of study abroad, but have not focused on risks. Previously focusing on areas such as spring break (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez & Yu, 2002; Josiam, Hobson, Dietrich & Smeaton, 1998), alternative breaks (Bowen, 2011; Porter, 2011; Rhoads & Neururer, 1998), and the traditional study abroad experience (Savicki & Price, 2015), the fields of study abroad, international education, and U.S. American higher education have studied some of the challenges of risk and risky behavior related to travel abroad, but have only just begun to call for more research in the area of risky behavior and study abroad. Throughout the literature, researchers operationalize risk and risky behavior in different ways ranging from increased alcohol and drug use to sexual behaviors, and personal safety concerns. For the purposes of this study, risky behavior shall be operationalized as any action a participant takes outside of the boundaries of their own, self-identified comfort zone, but particularly related to substance use and abuse, unsafe sexual activity, financial mismanagement, and social misconduct whether or not criminal in nature.

Data demonstrates a steady increase in U.S. American students sojourning internationally each year. Study abroad is on the rise, increasing on average five percent in the last annum. Conversely, the academic discourse surrounding tourism by adults frequently studies risky

behaviors amongst travelers while in an abroad context (Bell, 2008; Bock, 2014; McGovern, 2002; O'Carroll, 2005). Surprisingly, the study abroad context has largely been excluded from such studies both in the higher education and tourism literature. The parallels between the study abroad and alternative spring break contexts give rise for this need for research in conjunction with the burgeoning administrator-practitioner conversations in this area. The Forum on Education Abroad has recently begun to collect critical incident statistics related to students studying abroad. The Forum's critical incident database has only piloted six months of data from voluntary programs and institutions resulting in just 311 total reports. Of those, 164 were related to risky decisions by students that resulted in a report to the study abroad provider (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015). Outside of this dataset, very little is known related to the risky behaviors of U.S. undergraduate students abroad.

A key component of current study abroad practice occurs after students are admitted to travel, but before they depart. The industry term, pre-departure programming, occurs when a study abroad private provider or an institutionally based study abroad administrator works to create succinct information that a student must know before departing. McCauslin (2015) recommends that pre-departure programming cover the elements of:

Practical concerns with passports and student visas, health and safety, and academics to cultural adjustment, intercultural learning, and diversity awareness...information on what to expect in the education abroad program, including such matters as housing, finances, transportation, and emergency contacts (McCauslin, 2015, para 1).

Beyond these elements, the specific contents of pre-departure orientation are determined by an institution by institution or agency by agency basis. While institutions and agencies share best practices in this area with one another through industry conferences and publications, the

industry tends to author the pre-departure orientation process based on common themes rather than specific, common content (Tillman, 2014). For example, while two universities might discuss health and safety in the pre-departure orientation process, one might discuss personal physical safety only whereas another might share information on the local laws that might be different than a student's home context. This can be positive for the student experience, but also inconsistent across the nation. As a result, public administration and third sector delivery of study abroad programs do not necessarily agree on the best way to mitigate and prepare for students who engage in risky behavioral choices.

Majority women from higher socioeconomic strata are the most likely demographic of student to study abroad, although they do not engage in the same levels of risky behavior as majority males who study abroad (Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer & Lee, 2010). Regardless of identity, those who do engage in risky behaviors while studying abroad have tended to do so at higher rates than their own behavior while living and studying at their domestic, home institutions. According to Pedersen et al (2010), these same students may already be predisposed to making risky behavioral choices while studying at their domestic institutions.

American students who study abroad often come from socioeconomically, socially, and culturally privileged backgrounds (Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen & Pasquerella, 2009). This social and cultural capital that students bring to the study abroad experience can manifest itself as a sense of invincibility related to social consequences. The phenomenon of social invincibility while traveling is not unique to study abroad. More commonly, U.S. Americans have viewed this social freedom through mediums of spring break trips (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez & Yu, 2002; Josiam, Hobson, Dietrich, and Smeaton, 1998), bachelor or "stag" party

travel (Bock, 2014), and the infamous “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas” mantra (Thurnell-Read, 2011). Pop-culture has explained, permitted, and perhaps even encouraged binge drinking, alcohol use, unprotected sexual behaviors, and mismanagement of finances while traveling. This invincibility and sense of limitlessness while traveling can be explained through the conceptual perspective of liminality.

Liminality, a conceptual tool to assist in explaining the penchant for risky behavior abroad, shall be defined in this study as the psychological and physical transitional space in which individuals experience a boundary-less sense of freedom from daily social rules and constraints felt in a home context (Andrews and Roberts, 2012; Van Gennep, 1960; Van Tine 2011). Liminal space is transitional in nature, in which neither the rules of home nor the rules of the new environment fully apply to the individual. Being in liminal space, or “betwixt and between” (Turner, 1967, p. 1), creates a psychological environment in which individuals are more likely to make decisions outside of their normal process. Without the day-to-day social pressures of the home environment, there is room for experimentation.

Statement and Significance of the Problem

The higher education sub-fields of study abroad, international education, health promotion, student conduct, and risk management have begun to quantify the risky decisions made by U.S. American undergraduate students both in the home, collegiate environment and during the study abroad experience (American Health Association, 2015; The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016; Leigh, 1999; Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer, & Lee, 2010; Van Tine, 2011). However, a significant gap in the literature exists to explain the context and rationale for such risky behaviors. Students seem to be engaging in riskier behaviors while

studying abroad compared to how they behave while at their home institutions (Pedersen et al, 2010).

This penchant for risky behavior and sometimes reckless behavior while abroad carries implications for the students traveling, the universities and programs sponsoring the travel, the countries and cultures hosting U.S. American students, and the very nature and value of study abroad itself. For the individual, personal safety is the primary concern, although legal implications of taking social risks abroad may be present as well. For the university or the program, there are questions of extra-territorial law, questions of duty if the student creates harm to oneself or others, questions on the application of college and university student conduct behavioral codes, and questions of risk management and liability. These areas of concern give rise to the question of both welfare and of cost for the study abroad provider. On the nature of study abroad itself, risky behavior by undergraduate participants calls into question whether the academic and global inclusion values are being experienced holistically, or if such values are being experienced only in the classroom.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to explore whether the risky behavior decisions being made by U.S. American, traditionally-aged, undergraduate students rise during their study abroad experience in comparison to their behaviors at home. This study sought to explore the types of the risky behavior decisions made by such students both during the semester before beginning their study abroad experience and then during the period of time they choose to study abroad. The study sought to apply the concept of liminality and liminal space, often found in the tourism and spring break literature, to the study abroad experience.

Importance and Scope of the Study

This study is situated in the literature in the nexus of liminal space, study abroad, risky behavior, tourism, spring break, and alternative break research. It explores the gap, and begins to fill that gap related to risky undergraduate student decision making in the study abroad context. With the goal of illuminating the behavioral choices in this environment, this research will bolster the discourse in this area of the literature (Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer, and Lee, 2010; Van Tine, 2011). Findings from this research also contribute to U.S. higher education's need to provide practitioners with more information regarding student behavior while participating in study abroad programs.

The value of these findings may be used by public administrators working in higher education administration and private study abroad provider entities who serve as government contractors to take students abroad. As a result, practitioners may be able to make more informed programmatic choices related to behavioral expectations of the students they sponsor to study abroad. Higher education administrators, specifically those working with pre-departure programs, student conduct programs, and during study abroad behavioral concerns, can use the information from this study to bolster their practices in several areas. This may include pre-departure orientation, pre-departure proactive interventions on specific risky behaviors, and student conduct adjudication programs both for the sponsoring higher education institution and for the study abroad provider. More broadly, study abroad providers may also examine their willingness to accept particular risks as they manage their programs, which ultimately affects a provider's financial investment and insurability in study abroad.

While not intentional, the likelihood of a somewhat homogeneous student participant pool remains high. With over 75% of U.S. American study abroad students identifying as White,

65% identifying as women, 95% identifying as living without a disability (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014), and most coming from middle-to-high socioeconomic strata (Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2011), I expected that the majority of participants for this study would reflect a similar demographic. The scope of this research shall be limited by the sampling criteria, defined by the higher education institution of origin, time, and participant selection. Additional information regarding limitations of the study can be found in Chapter 3.

Research Questions

This study focused on research questions that get at the heart of whether undergraduate students studying abroad engage in riskier behavioral choices than when they are in their primary, educational context across five subdomains of risky behavior: academic decisions, financial decisions, intimate relationship decisions, alcohol-based decisions, and other substances-based decisions. The questions intend to explore the impacts of demographic identity, tenets of liminality, and the role of alcohol use as they relate to the study abroad experience. The primary research questions guiding this study are as follows:

Primary Research Question 1: Do traditionally-aged, undergraduate student risky behavioral decisions change between the collegiate environment and the study abroad environment? If so, how?

Primary Research Question 2: Does age, gender, or previous alcohol use impact students' risky behavior while studying abroad?

Primary Research Question 3: With which components of liminality do students self-identify as having experienced while studying abroad?

I designed Primary Research Question 1 to explore the heart of the literature gap of whether students abroad seemingly make risky choices when in unfamiliar contexts. Through

this research question, I hope to illuminate the difference in risky decision making between the two contexts of home and abroad. Through the sub-research questions, the data will serve to explain whether differences exist in risky behavior among the same sample of students dependent on demographic identifiers. Primary Research Question 2 ties study abroad to liminality. In using liminality as a potential explanation for why students studying abroad may engage in riskier behavior, this research question mixes the theoretical with the pragmatic. It also begins to explore how the tenets of liminality can be empirically explored in public administration and higher education research. Primary Research Question 3 assumes that the home, collegiate environment lacks liminality and the abroad environment is situated in between and between.

General Study Design

A full explanation of this study's epistemology, methodology, and methods and other research design elements can be found in Chapter 3. This post-positivist, exploratory, non-experimental study used an unvalidated survey design to engage in inquiry. The survey was created specifically for this research and is intended as a starting place to examine the research questions. The instrument asked descriptive questions, Likert-scale questions, and an open-ended question to compare pre-study abroad behaviors to during-study abroad behaviors. Analysis occurred using descriptive statistics, bi-variate tests, and multiple linear regressions. Participants who were eligible to respond to the survey must have studied abroad originating from the same, large, public university. They must have completed their study abroad program between Fall, 2017 and Summer, 2019. In spanning the most recent years of study abroad, this study encompasses the most contemporary experiences and captured both existing students and recent alumni.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms shall be operationalized as follows, unless otherwise delineated:

Academic risk: Self-identified academic behavioral decisions that are outside a participant's comfort zone or normalized behavior such as skipping classes, engaging in academic misconduct, or choosing not to study

Alcohol risky behavior/Binge drinking: the act of consuming 4 or more alcoholic beverages in one drinking session; or drinking with the intent and purpose of getting drunk

Communitas: the nature of experiencing liminal space in a cohort or group

Domestic student: a student who identifies as U.S. American and who has matriculated at a U.S. based institution of higher education

Financial risk: making financial decisions such as overspending over-drafting, or taking on debt loads without thoughtful intention

Intimate relationship risk: making decisions related to sexual behaviors and intimate relationships that place the traveler at elevated concern for personal health and safety, including but not limited to unprotected sexual behaviors, contraction of STI's, or other health or physical safety concern

Liminality: the psychological and physical transitional space in which individuals experience a boundary-less sense of freedom from daily social rules and constraints felt in a home context

Mid-term study abroad: a study abroad experience which lasts for one academic term

Other substance: any drug that is considered deviant or illegal in the view of the law, culture, or individual using the substance, including prescription drugs not prescribed to the user

Risky behavior: Self-identified as non-academic behavioral decisions that are outside a participant's comfort zone or every-day behavior. Prioritizing an experience over personal safety; or putting oneself knowingly at risk.

Short-term study abroad: a study abroad experience lasting less than one academic term

Study abroad: leaving one's primary college or university to engage in an academic course of study, for any length of time, in an international environment

U.S. American student: a student who identifies, regardless of citizenship status, their primary culture as of the United States; has matriculated at a U.S. based institution for their higher education

Chapter Summary

The study abroad experience for U.S. American undergraduate students might be one of the most valuable educational experiences available. However, that experience does not come without risk and the choices that accompany student decision making while in an abroad context. This study presents an exploration the intersection of the study abroad experience with risky behavioral choices and the sociological theory of liminality. When students exist betwixt and between borders and rules, higher education administrators must seek to understand the behavioral phenomena in order to prepare students for departure and encourage safety while sojourning.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This dissertation lives in the nexus of four major areas contained within the higher education, tourism, and sociology discourses. First, a discussion on undergraduate risky behavior in a domestic context provides a sense of context for how students engage with substance use, abuse, sexual behavior, and personal safety. Second, an overview of U.S. American students who have studied abroad addresses which students study abroad, where they go, the value of the study abroad experience, and criticisms of study abroad programs. Third, the discourse travels into the annals of tourism literature, including eco and disaster tourism, poverty and slum tourism, and university alternative break tourism. Finally, a discussion of liminality and liminal space demonstrates a conceptual perspective from which the risky behaviors of students while studying abroad can be explained. The discussion on liminal space provides context for the academic discourse on alcotourism, party tourism, and university spring break travel.

Students and Risky Behavior Domestically

For the purposes of this study, the term “risky behavior” includes personal behavioral choices that involve heavy or binge drinking, whether intentional or not; alcohol overdose leading to blackout or passing out; illicit drug use, including the use of prescription drugs not for their prescribed purpose; unprotected sexual activity; intentional illegal behavior; and overspending money. Understanding these behaviors and the context in which they occur can help study abroad program providers to make informed decisions as to prevention education to reduce risk of harm, injury, or other negative consequences for students. The American College

Health Association (ACHA) conducts an annual national climate survey of U.S. American student health trends through an instrument called the National Collegiate Health Assessment II (NCHA) (American College Health Association, 2015). This instrument, a robust data source, provides extensive baseline data about student behavior related to alcohol consumption and binge drinking, drug use, and sexual behavior. The NCHA survey provides the most comprehensive dataset available related to U.S. American undergraduate behavioral choices.

The most recent survey data regarding alcohol use tells us that 47.9% of students consumed alcohol over three-to-six hours the last time they “partied” (American College Health Association, 2015). In addition, 33% of students disclosed binge drinking, or having consumed five or more alcoholic beverages in one drinking session, at least one time in the past two weeks. Accompanying this high-risk drinking behavior, over 26% of students engaged in behavior while drinking that they later regretted. Further, over 23% of respondents disclosed that they forgot either where they were, or what they did, as a result of alcohol consumption.

U.S. American students appear to use illicit substances at much lower rates than they use alcohol (Leigh, 1999). Over 18% of undergraduate students reported using cannabis during the last 30 thirty days. Fewer than 12% of undergraduate students reported using any other type of illicit substances, including prescription drugs not prescribed to them, within the last 30 days. On the topic of risky sexual behavior, the usage rate of contraceptive barrier methods, typically male condoms, sits at approximately 52% for vaginal intercourse and as low as 5% usage rates for oral intercourse. This confirms longstanding data that young adults are more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior than older adults (Leigh, 1999). This datapoint may provide an explanation for this study’s population of 18-24-year-olds’ engagement in risky sexual behavior

both at home and abroad. It is of the utmost importance to note that risky sexual behaviors assume personal, consensual choice.

When considering certain personal safety decisions as compared to substance use or abuse, most students made less risky choices during the last year (American College Health Association, 2015). Notably over 95% wore a seatbelt when in a vehicle and 80% wore a helmet when riding a motorcycle. In contrast, students overall did not choose the less risky option when riding a bicycle, about 31% chose to wear a helmet, or when roller skating, about 28%, chose to wear a helmet. These numbers suggest that students generally make behavioral choices that weigh risk per activity rather than being more or less risk averse overall. In essence, undergraduate students make daily choices that affect their health and safety, but many of these choices appear to be linked to community health-based social norms. For example, this generation of undergraduates grew up with stringent seatbelt laws and car seat requirements whereas bicycling and motorcycling without a helmet remains optional in several states.

The NCHA (American College Health Association, 2015) report relies entirely on self-reported student data. Other sources of information about student behavioral choices in the domestic context can be found through individual academic institutions' Annual Security Reports, as required by the Jeanne Clery Act (1990), or through individual institutions' student conduct annual reports which are not required by law. The Clery Act data includes campus-specific information on liquor and drug law violations, which can assist in identifying undergraduate behavioral choices, though does include the general campus population and the visiting public without distinction. Unfortunately, both the Clery Act data and the student conduct data is highly institutionally specific and does not exist in aggregate form.

U. S. American Students Abroad

This section of the literature contextualizes the current state of study abroad for U.S. American students. First, I identify who studies abroad and where those students go around the world. Then, a short discussion on the value of study abroad is presented. Finally, I review the discourse regarding criticisms of study abroad programs, including when study abroad goes awry, the nature of what we know about risky behavior and risks abroad, as well as the legal landscape for study abroad.

Who Studies Abroad and Where They Go

The Institute of International Education (2015) releases an annual comprehensive report identifying demographic and mobility trends of U.S. American students who choose to study abroad. The 2014 report provides higher education with a broad look at who currently affords and can afford to study abroad. This data sheds light on the populations that have the most opportunity to engage in risky behavioral choices while abroad. An annual cohort of approximately 300,000 students, equivalent to the size of the city of Indianapolis, Indiana, have ventured outside of U.S. American borders to experience academia internationally. Of those, nearly 87% identify as undergraduate students.

For the first time in U.S.-based study abroad recorded history, the number of students majoring in science, technology, mathematics, and engineering, or STEM fields, has overtaken the population of humanities students who study abroad. Over half of American students chose to travel to European host nations while South American and Asian destinations, combined, equaled less than 30% of study abroad destinations. Of the total cohort of the 300,000, 86.4% of students are matriculated as undergraduates.

The majority of students identify as women, 65%, compared to 35% identifying as men (note that this gender binary was present in the data reported and did not allow for reporting of other gender identities). This was supported by Stroud (2010)'s report that women who attend college more than 100 miles from their hometowns are more likely to go abroad. More telling, an overwhelming majority of students who study abroad identify as White at 76%. However, the most significant statistic telling the story of who from the United States studies abroad rests in ability status with 95% of students identifying as not living with a disability. For the 5% who study abroad who identify as living with a disability, approximately half of those students live with a learning disability. This collection of data points tells us that typically the students who study abroad enjoy identities that lean towards privilege.

While White-identified women are most likely to study abroad compared to any other identity of student, a unique cohort of White-identified men have been empirically demonstrated to self-select into study abroad programs (Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer, & Lee, 2010). This group of White-identified men who study abroad are already engaging, by the choice to study abroad itself, in both adventurous and risky behavior. Arguably, the act of traveling in itself can be identified as a risky behavior. As such, Pedersen et. al (2010) drew conclusions that majority men make riskier decisions in general, and that translates into self-selection to study abroad programs. In particular, Pedersen et. al demonstrated that men who engage in high-risk drinking behaviors are more likely to participate in study abroad programs. This data point is critical for this study as it provides a basis for demonstrating that students who study abroad do so likely with a propensity for willingness to engage in risky behavior domestically. The study was conducted using a survey method to ask questions of a random sample of students at a large, east coast university. Their survey questions asked participants about their demographic

information. It then presented a definition of alcoholic beverages followed by questions about participant's drinking behaviors and ending with their past, present, and future intentions related to study abroad.

Supplementing the traits of those who sojourn, Zimmermann and Neyer (2013) demonstrated through multivariate, latent change model that individuals who self-select into study abroad experiences generally report extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness as dominant personality traits. Those who identify with extraversion and openness tend to select long-term sojourning, whereas those who identify with extraversion and conscientiousness tend to venture on short-term sojourns.

Existing and ongoing efforts to support students of historically and currently marginalized backgrounds and those originating from lower socioeconomic strata have made strides toward diversifying the pool of students choosing to go abroad. However, financial limitations and social capital limitations have prevented many students of color or students identifying as low-income from being able to engage in the study abroad experience (McKeown, 2009; Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2011). Gieser's (2015) research revealed that students felt their national identity played a significant role in personal development while abroad, and that race and ethnicity played different roles in the abroad context than the American context. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that when study abroad is discussed both in practice and in the literature, students that identify with majority-based identities and privileged experiences dominate the conversation.

Of those who can afford the time, the financial aspect, and have the emotional support and encouragement, U.S. American students choose to go abroad to European countries with four of the five top destinations situated in Western Europe. The United Kingdom, Italy, Spain,

and France combine to receive 53% of this cohort. China ranks fifth, receiving around 5% of students, but a raw number of students on par with France (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014). The duration of study abroad can range from a few days to longer than one year.

Europe as a study abroad destination has enjoyed the privilege of being the most sought after, not only by U.S. American students, but also by European students seeking academic experiences outside of their home countries. Mobility ability plays a large role in Europe as a destination. Additionally, European higher education models often attain a more affordable status with U.S. American students due to local government support. Finally, while China continues to rise as a destination for study abroad, Europe retains an advantage in that most in academia speak English (de Wit, Ferencz, & Rumbley, 2013).

The Personal and Academic Value of the Study Abroad Experience

The study abroad experience serves as a means to global inclusion of students into various cultures, cultural contexts, and global perspectives. With an ultimate goal of internationalization, the study abroad process proves paramount to the development of reflexive and critical thinking skills (Savicki & Price, 2015). Study abroad is often viewed as a primary vehicle to develop global citizens while opening students' eyes to the ways others walk through life outside of one's home borders.

Study abroad can and should teach U.S. American students a basic but very important truth: that there are holistic and complex people beyond their own borders who offer so much to the world, and who engage in both local and global problem solving in ways that U.S. American students may have never imagined. This is not as simple a concept as it might appear at first glance. For some people, the encounter with another culture can be transformative, in both the short and the long term. If one can grasp the fact that people elsewhere can live productive,

happy, and fulfilled lives on terms other than one's own, one can also begin to imagine ways to live your own life somewhat differently. And, to paraphrase Aldous Huxley, once you get those doors of perception open, it is hard to shut them again. (Nolan, 2009).

This value of study abroad, the process of opening a student's doors and senses to the world, encompasses not only the academic value of stud abroad, but also the overall value to an individual's life. The core of the message remains that study abroad has the possibility to transform the individual through a number of dimensions, including intellectual, cognitive development, language acquisition, cultural immersion, and global citizenship (Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2011; Wycsaver, 2014)

These transformations in the various dimensions were made evident through the process of reflexive journaling, before, during, and after the study abroad experience (Savicki & Price, 2015). A sample of 36 students in a one-year abroad program composed reflective writing pieces at these three phases of the study abroad experience across three categories: academic expectations, cultural expectations, and psychological issues. The pieces were examined for cognitive and affective complexity and transformation. While the writings demonstrate both of these qualities, the cohort of students writing on the experience found it difficult to compose about the sojourn while it was occurring. Notably, the area of cultural differences continued to trouble students whereas the academic and psychological components had resolved upon return.

Criticisms of Study Abroad

Study abroad promotes individual growth and transformation for the students who are able to participate. This does not mean that study abroad is a perfect experience. Sometimes critiqued for issues ranging from lack of access for students from lower socioeconomic brackets (McKeown, 2009; Picard, Bernardino & Ehigiator, 2009; Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2011)

to struggling to develop global citizens (Nolan, 2009), to succumbing to the pitfalls of privatization (Zemach-Bersin, 2009), study abroad faces plenty of challenges. The value of the study abroad experience rests in its claims of developing more globally minded students. Notably, short-term study abroad programs tend to have less significant impact on global mindedness than long-term study abroad programs (Kehl & Morris, 2008). Long-term abroad experiences yielded higher rates of global-mindedness compared to students who had future intentions to study abroad, but had not yet done so. This was not the case for short-term abroad experiences, calling into question the effectiveness of these short-term programs on the claim of developing global-mindfulness.

When Study Abroad Goes Awry

Most germane to this research, study abroad struggles with inherent risks of the travel process and of the participants' individual choices. The value and ideals behind study abroad paint an idyllic picture of how a study abroad experience can improve a student's life, global citizenship, academic credentials, critical thinking skills, and self-worth. However, some study abroad experiences end in the student becoming incarcerated, injured, or in the very worst cases, deceased. These negative outcomes are sometimes a result of students' making poor decisions or risky decisions that they may not normally engage in while at home.

Perhaps the most infamous and still unresolved case of study abroad gone awry occurred in late 2007 [for additional information, please see Follan (2012) or Kercher (2012)]. A British student, Meredith Kercher, studying abroad shared a living space with an American student, also studying abroad, and two other local nationals. Kercher, from the University of Leeds, and the American student, from the University of Washington, both sought study abroad experiences in Perugia, Italy. Kercher was murdered after being sexually assaulted and robbed in her home.

The American student and two local men were accused of the homicide. The American student and one of the two men were also accused of engaging in illicit drug use and risky sexual behavior, all which allegedly fueled poor decision making, culminating in the murder of Kercher. After standing multiple trials, two of three parties have since been acquitted while one serves a 16-year sentence. However, the true circumstances surrounding Kercher's death remains unknown (Bagot, 2015).

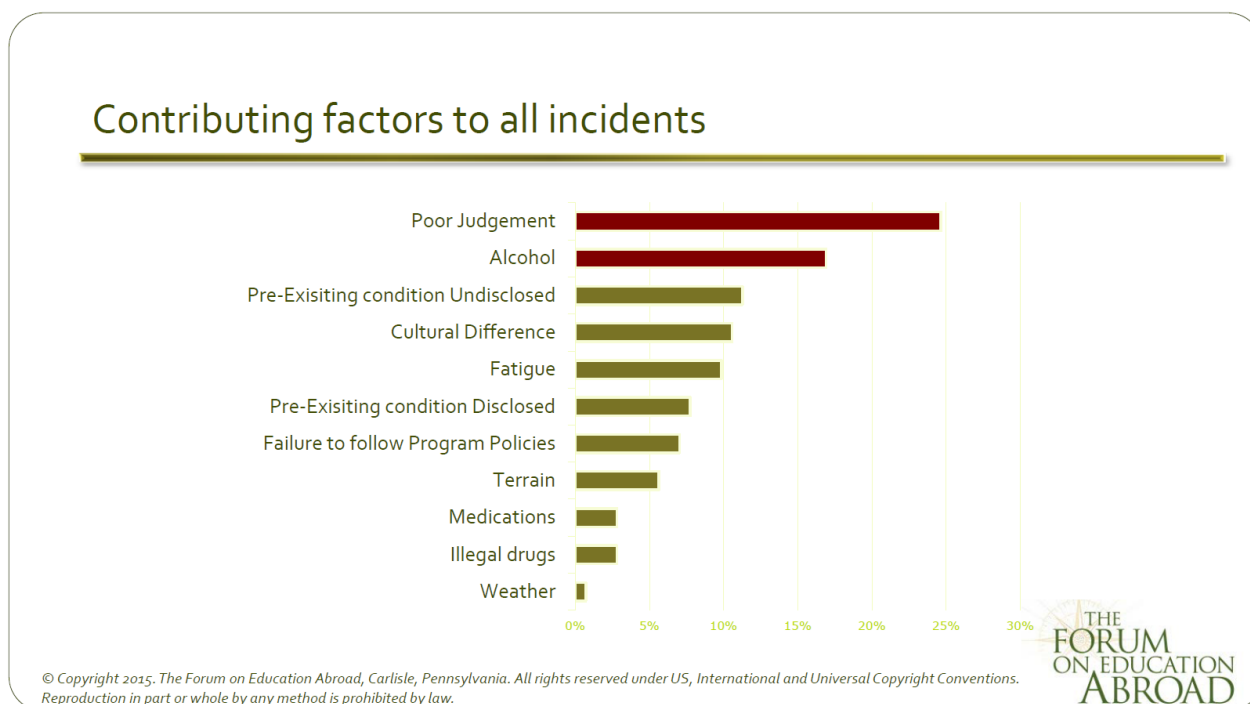
Other, less infamous incidents of study abroad gone awry have included many anecdotes in the media and in one memoir (Papa, 2013). While these accounts tend to be presented in a more sensationalized manner, they still offer valuable insight into the concerns that accompany the study abroad experience, such as accidents that lead to permanent injury or loss of life. For example, Semester at Sea, a popular study abroad experience in which students sail from destination to destination, experienced a bus accident that resulted in the deaths of four students (Marklein, 2012). This particular incident was reported in the media as the fault of the study abroad provider even though the risk associated with getting on a bus does not necessarily reside with them. Even so, critics in this situation state that students have the right to know the risks of study abroad prior to embarking on an experience.

The Forum on Education Abroad (2016) undertook the task of quantifying the risk of studying abroad to place a metric of risk next to the anecdotes of study abroad gone awry. Using insurance claims data and mortality rate, The Forum on Education Abroad determined that study abroad students live with a lower risk of death than their peers studying on U.S. American higher education campuses. However, the dataset is limited to a very small window of time, the calendar years of 2013 and 2014.

What We Know About Student Risky Decision Making Abroad

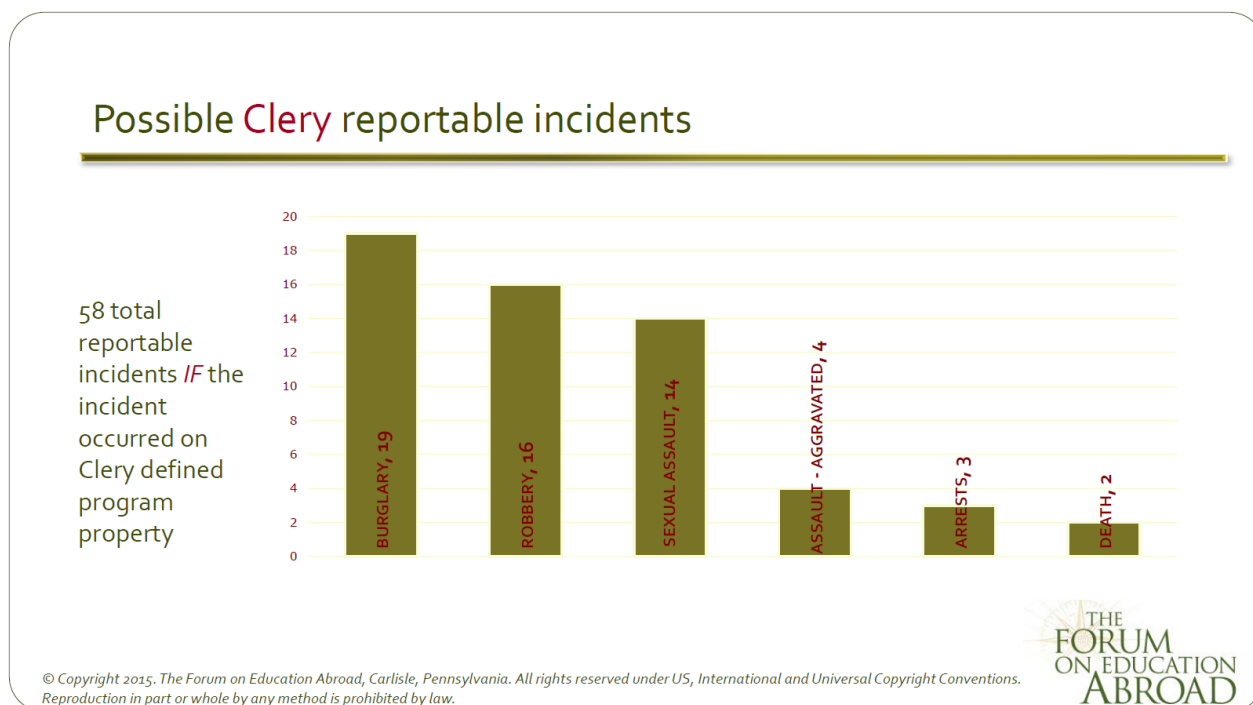
The Forum on Education Abroad (2010; 2015), a professional organization for higher education administrators who work within the field of study abroad, began a pilot project to collect international data on what types of incidents students experience during study abroad. Entitled the Critical Incident Database (CID), and the first of its kind, the CID has attempted to aggregate data from several institutions to create a picture of what situations students and administrators face when managing study abroad programs. The CID encompassed negative behavioral events, health emergencies, and psychological concerns. The behavioral concerns were captured in broad strokes, meaning that the reported data lacks specificity regarding the specifics of the behaviors. The reported concerns were quantified only by occurrence and no additional delving into the nature of the decision making behind the behaviors has been completed. Therefore, my study will help to address further not only the nature of the behaviors, but the rationale behind them using a methodology and method that has not yet been explored in this area.

Most notably, the CID pilot, collecting data for six months across 59 study abroad providers and institutions, returned 311 incidents ranging from alcohol overdose to medical emergency (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015). Of the reported incidents, 191 involved female students, placing them at higher rates of critical incident involvement than male students. However, the reported incidents are directly aligned with the overall proportion of females who study abroad. 164 of the incidents were related to students exercising poor judgment related to substances, the local culture, or their own consumer life skills. For example, engaging in theft, physical fights, overconsumption of alcohol, involvement with illegal substances, or being unaware of local laws.

Figure 1*Contributing Factors to All Incidents*

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The CID evolved and in 2015, the Forum on Education Abroad released a more robust report that detailed similar concerns for the calendar year 2014. Although only 38 entities participated in the project, they recorded over 880,000 student days in 101 countries, resulting in 313 reported incidents. Of those, over half occurred in Europe and approximately two-thirds of reported incidents were behavioral in nature. Of these, nearly 25% of these incidents involved poor judgment by the student and just over 15% involved alcohol. Unfortunately, the CID report does not provide details of the individual behaviors. However, it does break the data down into 58 potential reportable incidents in six categories for the Clery Act if the incident occurred in a campus jurisdiction and 20 possibly reportable incidents under Title IX.

Figure 2*Possible Clery Reportable Incidents*

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Beyond The Forum on Education Abroad's (2015) CID, little is known about risky undergraduate behaviors while studying abroad in aggregate form. A four-year-private institution shared their data anonymously (Personal Communication, 2015), revealing that the top concern for students abroad remains substance use and abuse, specifically related to alcohol consumption. Closely following were concerns related to students disrupting the local community due to U.S. American cultural bravado.

Smucker et al. (2019) investigated whether pre-departure education on alcohol abuse prevention and sexual violence prevention has an impact on student safety while abroad. They found that students that engaged in heavier drinking behaviors were less likely to have completed pre-departure alcohol harm reduction education. In addition, Marcantonio, Angelone, and

Swirsky (2020) noted that many study abroad programs offer general education on sexual health behaviors abroad, but do not go much further. Finally, Luethge (2004) took a business approach to studying risk domains in study abroad, but from a corporate perspective. That study framed risk domains as financial, performance, physical, and psychological.

Clery Act Data Abroad

For U.S. higher education entities receiving federal funding, the Clery Act (1990) remains the primary piece of safety legislation that tells the public what types of crimes have happened on campus. Required reporting categories include: murder/manslaughter, sexual violence offenses, robbery, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, weapons possession, drug abuse, liquor law violations, and hate crimes. When U.S. American colleges and universities expand into international borders, the government has remained clear that the institutions must continue to abide by and report Clery Act data even though the crimes did not happen in the United States (Storch, 2012). This requirement proves most stringent when a U.S. higher education institution owns, controls, or operates property abroad.

As such, higher education institutions such as Webster University, Boston University, St. Louis University Madrid, Temple University, Syracuse University, and New York University have published their annual security reports, as required by law, for their abroad locations. Webster University discloses locations in Accra, Ghana; Leiden, the Netherlands; Geneva, Switzerland; and Bangkok and Cha-am, Thailand. Across all of these locations, only one incident, a sexual offense, was reported in all of 2014 (Webster University, 2015). Boston University London reported a similar pattern of data, with only one offense recorded in the last three years, also a sexual assault (Boston University, 2015). St. Louis University Madrid (2015) reports no offenses. Keeping with the trend, Temple University (2015) Japan reports no offenses

for the same period of time. An identical pattern of reporting can be found at Syracuse University's (2015) locations in Hong Kong and Beijing, China; Florence, Italy; Istanbul, Turkey; London, England; Madrid, Spain; Santiago, Chile; and Strasbourg, France.

New York University's (2015) Clery data looks ever-so-slightly increased from the aforementioned institutions' reported statistics. New York University reports locations in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Accra, Ghana; London, England; Madrid, Spain; Paris, France; Berlin, Germany; Florence, Italy; Prague, Czech Republic; Tel Aviv, Israel; Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Shanghai, China; and Sydney Australia. These reports are lightly peppered with a mention of a few drug offenses and some burglaries. A handful of these locations report sexual offenses. Otherwise, the Clery numbers for this variety of U.S. American higher education institutions abroad paints a taciturn picture.

While the Clery Act data can tell us about on-campus crimes, it fails as a metric to demonstrate the full scope of risky behaviors while abroad for three reasons. First, it only captures incidents that occurred on-campus and were reported to a university official. Without knowing the scope of those campuses, some of which are only a single building, the data is not surprising. Second, not all risky behaviors are related to crimes, particularly those related to alcohol or drugs. In many countries, the possession of use and alcohol is not a crime for those aged 18 and over. Third, the Clery Act data only requires the reporting of a particular set of crimes as defined by the United States government, which ignores the culture and context of the study abroad branch campus. Nonetheless, it is one metric of student behavior abroad.

An Increased Risk for Non-Consensual Sexual Contact?

Already well known and documented domestically, non-consensual sexual contact has come to the forefront of higher education's concerns. One strong criticism of study abroad is

that there may be an increased risk for becoming the target or victim for unwanted, non-consensual sexual contact. This is in no way intended to place blame on any student in any context related to victimization, but purely to note that not only are the risk factors for students engaging in health-averse behavior higher, but also the risk factors for becoming victimized are potentially higher as well.

One study demonstrated that students experience an increased risk of female-identified students becoming harmed while studying abroad, specifically related to sexual assault (Kimble, Flack, & Burbridge, 2013). It is of the utmost importance to note that experiencing sexual violence in any form does not reflect on the survivor of that violence as having made any sort of decisions that cause an assault to occur. The onus of the assault rests solely on the perpetrator. The research suggests that an increased risk occurs because of the unfamiliarity of the environment, including fluency levels if a foreign language is spoken in the study abroad country. Kimble, Flack, and Burbridge (2013) found through a limited, quantitative survey that for women studying abroad for one semester, an increased risk for nonconsensual sexual contact, attempted sexual assault, and completed sexual assault exists. Most significant, the perpetrators of these offenses were largely of the host community, 86.8% non-student local residents, indicating that these perpetrators may seek out victims who may have not be familiar with the environment. Additionally, attempted sexual assaults were perpetrated by 77.8% non-student local residents and completed sexual assaults were perpetrated by 67.7% non-student local residents. While this research demonstrates a critical risk for study abroad for this small cohort of students, it leaves room for studies completed using non-survey methods.

A personal narrative from Cross (2013), a woman who studied abroad in India was reported near to the release of the aforementioned study. Albeit presented from a journalism

rather than research lens, the woman's story highlights a real student's account of experiencing sexual harassment and violence while studying abroad, sadly not a unique but a completely unacceptable paradigm for women travelers (Berg, 2013). Cross describes her attempts at engaging in cultural experiences which, instead of resulting in immersion, resulted in her and her friends' victimizations. They danced in public and were video recorded without consent; they purchased sandals and were stalked by the vendor; she traveled by bus on which she experienced unwanted sexual contact. Dancing in a group, shopping, and riding a bus are not typically risk-oriented behaviors, but these day-to-day interactions transformed into risky situations in the new cultural context. Her experiences represent just one of many negative interactions that students abroad may face. More concerning, depending on the study abroad host country, there may or may not be laws or legal recourse that protect survivors of crimes rooted in gender discrimination or sexual violence.

The legal landscape for risks in studying abroad

These criticisms from both higher education and the K-12 communities have resulted in an increasingly regulated and reactionary environment for study abroad. The impact of this regulation appears in both legislation and case law in the United States. This information remains critical for study abroad programs because the legal landscape can and does change requirements for students and institutions, particularly as it pertains to managing risk of study abroad programs.

In Minnesota, lawmakers sought to pass legislation that would have required stronger reporting for study abroad risks regardless of whether an institution operated publicly or privately (Friedrich, 2013; Redden 2014). Although this legislation did not come to fruition, it speaks to the spotty nature of available data on study abroad risks. Another proposed bill had

emerged and fallen in New York where the state wanted to require higher education institutions to disclose their financial relationships with study abroad providers in order for student consumers to discern where a conflict of interest may exist (Redden, 2008; 2014).

Whenever students travel outside of the boundaries of the institution, the institution sponsoring the abroad experience, whatever the duration, opens itself up to increased liability. The Stetson National Conference on Law and Higher Education accepted a paper that addresses the diversity of lawsuits that have arisen from study abroad. In summary, Hoye (2006) recommends an offensive strategy for combatting and managing risk in this area of higher education:

The best institutional protection against increased litigation and liability in this context seems to be improved risk assessment and management with respect to international programs. In this context, the best defense to the proliferation of student legal claims would seem to be a good offense in the form of pro-actively working to attempt to reasonably reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable injury and harm to students, faculty and staff in the first instance. For these reasons and others, colleges and universities should consider investing greater resources in preventative law, pro-active risk assessment, training, education and orientation for students, faculty and staff in the context of international study abroad programs. (Hoye, p. 20, 2006).

Although Hoye recommends a proactive approach, warning students and families of such risks may not indemnify the institution from liability.

More contemporarily, a high-school student on a study abroad trip to Japan received a tick bite which elevated concern that their student would contract Lyme disease. The geographical area from which the student received the bite was well-known to have a higher-

than-average tick population. The parents of the student sued the school for failing to disclose this information (*Munn v. Hotchkiss School*, 2015). The parents further alleged that had they known, they may not have allowed the student to attend the trip, or perhaps they would have taken additional steps to mitigate the chances of being bitten. This lawsuit, settled recently by the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals in favor of Munn, has the potential to result in significant changes for the practice of study abroad regarding proactive warnings. The Hotchkiss School is expected to appeal. If unsuccessful, institutions may be required to provide participants with a list of every possible risk. This will likely create an undue burden on institutions and begin a game of “what if” for administrators who implement these programs.

In another example, Thomas Plotkin, then a sophomore at the University of Iowa, enrolled in a study abroad experience with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in 2011. NOLS, a private study abroad provider, specializes in taking students on excursions through India. Sadly, while exploring a river in India, Plotkin slipped on a rock near the riverbank and fell into the water, where he passed away. Plotkin’s mother sued NOLS for wrongful death and negligence, but that lawsuit was later dismissed by the courts as a tragic accident (*Plotkin v. National Outdoor Leadership School*, 2014). While NOLS was not held liable, this case demonstrates the expectation of families that study abroad providers take care of student participants while abroad.

Finally, the question of the extra-territorial application of United States Law plays a role in abroad risk management and legal liability. Recently, a court decided (*Hoye*, 2006) that U.S. student studying abroad through a U.S. provider retained their rights to non-discrimination under the U.S. Education Titles regardless of geographical presence in the world. This now signals to U.S. higher education institutions that even if international laws in host countries prevail as the

law of the land while students are abroad, U.S. higher education is still expected to apply its own anti-discrimination standards even when alleged misbehavior occurs abroad.

These examples of lawsuits that have been filed against institutions and study abroad providers are just some examples of when perceived negligence may have been a factor in a student's injury, illness, or death. These lawsuits demonstrate that courts at all levels are placing liability for the well-being and risk management of the student firmly in the hands of the programs and institutions sponsoring the programs. The implications for preparation and training of administrators and faculty, and the orientation of students are significant regarding the cost of study abroad programs. This cost must either be absorbed by the institution or by the student, putting an abroad experience further out of reach for students from lower socioeconomic brackets.

Educational Travel as Academic Tourism

Study abroad can be classified as academic tourism, not to be confused with academic studies on tourism. The following criteria developed by Rodriguez, Martinez-Roget, and Pawlowska (2012) serve to delineate academic tourism from other forms of tourism:

- The objective of the stay; namely, to take part in studies organized by higher education institutions (i.e. universities).
- The duration of the stay, which is typically much longer than in other types of tourism.
- Consumer patterns, which are more akin to those of resident than those of conventional tourists.
- Type of accommodation, which is typically very different from that of a conventional tourist. Foreign students tend to stay mostly in shared apartments, dorms, with families, and in college-organized housing.

- The high capacity when it comes to generating new visits, given that the vast majority of these students receive visits from family and friends during their stay. (Rodriguez, Martinez-Roget, & Pawlowska, 2012, p.1584).

This definition serves an industry aimed at examining the effect of the economic bottom line of tourism rather than the educational goals of higher education globalization. However, this work serves as a critical reminder that undergraduate students studying abroad ultimately affect a higher education institution's economic viability. Continuing this theme, Ritchie (2003) goes on to highlight the supply and demand nature of both originating and goal destinations of tourism, both which come with economic impacts.

Eco tourism and Disaster Tourism

Eco tourism and disaster tourism tend to favor a more altruistic flavor in that the traveler seeks to improve the community in which s/he visits. Although a concrete definition is still under debate, in general it can be said that eco and disaster tourists seek to understand and improve communities in need, either the existing, static environment or immediately following a natural disaster. These types of tourism hold elements of social justice, though are often misguided from a place of privilege (Van Hoving, Wallis, Docrat, & De Vries, 2010). Those who engage in this type of tourism do so either with a low level of human interest but high environmental interest, seeking to minimize any damage caused by tourism, or with a high level of human interest, seeking to repair the community through the travel experience (Ritchie, 2003).

While these types of tourism behaviors seem altruistic on their face, they have posed significant problems for the receiving communities, particularly in the wake of natural disasters. The goal of disaster tourism is generally not to gawk at destruction; rather it is similar in nature

to cultural tourism as travelers search for identity, authenticity, and human connection in the wake of a natural disaster.

These themes have played out this century as travel experiences to New Orleans post-hurricane Katrina and Haiti post-earthquake have been met with mixed reactions. In New Orleans, disaster tourism arose immediately in the recovery efforts and was framed as an effort to energize the economy by creating jobs for Louisianans while bringing in tourism dollars to the area. Critics of this practice cited corporate greed by the multinational company that originated the tours, but participants were eager to connect with the roots of the disaster with attendance split between local New Orleanians and out-of-town guests (Gould & Lewis, 2007). Deeper than this, the New Orleans residents hired to do this work were asked to become de facto spokespeople for their local heritage and culture, a performance of their culture as described by Edensor (2000; 2007), a task never truly accomplishable (Robbie, 2008).

Critics of disaster tourism present a case that the communities that are toured are in recovery mode, not prepared with infrastructure to sustain a tourism economy. Evidenced by physicians creating more problems for Haiti than assisting locals in need of medical attention, one case study demonstrated that while noble in intention, the reality of descending into the aftermath of a natural disaster does not benefit anyone (Van Hoving, et. al, 2010).

Poverty and Slum Tourism

One of the most controversial and privileged types of tourism exists under the category of poverty and/or slum tourism. In this type of tourism, individuals of privilege journey intentionally to areas of poverty, and often extreme poverty, for the purposes of observation and sometimes to offer assistance. Criticized as socioeconomic voyeurism and exploitation from a

privileged lens, the negative connotation of this type of tourism implies that no action other than observation will occur by the tourist (Meschank, 2011).

However, most poverty tourists share that they choose to peer into the lives of those living in the local cultures because it feels like a more authentic, cultural experience than other types of tourism (Rolfes, 2010). Often, through the experience of poverty tourism, the tourist shifts perspectives from poverty as a negative to poverty as a positive and as its own culture (Meschank, 2011). In some cases, poverty tourism is accompanied by action steps by the tourist, turning the travel into volunteer tourism.

Alternative Spring Break

In a higher education context, eco, disaster, and volunteer tourism have arisen in the form of alternative break trips. Such forms of tourism create bridge between tourism and study abroad. These types of experiences were born from a need to create an educational, safer, and healthier school break option than the traditional alcohol, drug, and sex-fueled trips in tandem with a study abroad opportunity that does not require an entire academic term. The students do not take courses, and the trip can be described most accurately as co-curricular to their traditional, academic learning.

Although alternative breaks are not usually offered for academic credit and do not usually require a traditional academic component, these alternative break experiences generally expect to engage students with the local community, with themselves, with one another, and with educational goals. For example, the College of William and Mary sought to create active and educated students through the alternative break process (Porter, 2011). However, these alternative breaks can closely mirror eco and disaster tourism because of their short-term

commitment to the resolution of the problem and the focus on the participants' personal growth rather than assisting the communities that are to be served.

Rhoads and Neururer (1998) designed a qualitative case study to examine the student learning and the overall value of the case, an alternative spring break trip, using the student experience as the unit of analysis. Data collection methods included interview, participant observation, and document analysis of journals that students wrote in throughout their experience. The interviews occurred in a semi-structured form. Observation was recorded by the researchers in the form of field notes gathered daily while on site with the participants. Rhoads and Neururer did not disclose their role in the trip outside of being present as researchers. Insights from this research included students realizing that the larger world outside of their personal lenses had much to offer, however sometimes at the expense of minimizing their own life challenges. Students developed increased self-confidence and interpersonal abilities to communicate complex emotions, particularly sincerity, genuine connection with others different from themselves, and kindness.

Similar themes were found through a document analysis of student writings and presentations before, during, and after an alternative break trip over seven days while traveling internationally in Colombia (Sydnor, Sass, Adeola, & Snuggs, 2014). These immersive experiences in spaces seemingly allowed for vulnerability and intentional reflection not afforded to students in their home environments, another example of liminal space playing a role in decision making and development.

Another case study used document analysis, observation, and interview to examine the value of alternative breaks (Bowen, 2011). In document analysis, Bowen asked students to compose reflective essays about their experiences. In the observation method, Bowen relied on

informants, specifically faculty and staff supervising the alternative break, to write field notes about the participant experience while on the trip. The study found that alternative breaks fostered three main qualities of students. First, an increased sensitivity to human and social issues developed amongst participants, particularly related to social disparity. Second, students disclosed a sense of community commitment related to a longer-term desire to stay civically engaged beyond the current project. Third, personal accomplishment and pride amongst students proved a prevalent theme in the alternative break research. Most significant in tying alternative breaks to study abroad, students who participated in alternative breaks reported being more likely to study abroad as a result of their experience (Niehaus, 2012).

Alternative break research shares parallels to study abroad in that students are traveling abroad to engage in an academic experience, albeit alternative breaks are intentionally short in duration. These studies (Bowen, 2011; Rhoads and Neuerer, 1998; Sydnor, Sass, Adeola, & Snuggs, 2014) share methodological aspects with one another, contributing to the literature from a qualitative approach. As such, this study fits well in the literature both in content and in methods while bolstering the literature in its non-experimental design.

Culture Shock

Culture shock, a common term describing the adjustment period when a sojourner enters a new cultural space, provides one foundation for understanding the psychological impact of study abroad from a wide lens. The literature addressing culture shock must be noted as its own field of study, vast and deep. This literature review shall address only a small fraction as to stay within the boundaries of this study.

A variety of academic disciplines have attempted to explain and develop theoretical models through which to understand culture shock including the psychoanalytic tradition,

applied social psychology, socio-biology, clinical psychology, and social psychology (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008). Such models rationalize culture shock as a phenomenon ranging from travel as an experience of loss, through gaps in social development, to a chasm between expected experience and actual experience. Ultimately, all contemporary theories point toward how the sojourner manages stress and personal identity in the adjustment. Culture shock as a theoretical concept first appeared in the literature through the discipline of anthropology (DuBois, 1951). DuBois described an experience in which anthropologists felt disoriented when entering a new cultural environment (Paige, 1993). The original culture shock model began with a study that described, but did not illustrate, a “U Curve” (Lysgaard, 1955). Lysgaard’s model, based on a series of interviews with students studying abroad, stated:

Adjustment as a process over time seems to follow a U-shaped curve: adjustment is felt to be easy and successful to begin with; then follows a ‘crisis’ in which one feels less well adjusted, somewhat lonely and unhappy; finally one begins to feel better adjusted again, becoming more integrated into the foreign community. (Lysgaard, 1955, p. 51).

More contemporarily, Berardo and LeBrack (2007) have worked to dismantle this theory as tired, empirically unsound, and unfulfilling of its promise as a guide to understanding culture shock.

Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001), created a model, the ABC’s of Culture Shock, to delve into the complex nature of the phenomenon. The theory joins various aspects of psychology to describe comprehensively the basics of culture shock. In the theory, ABC’s stand for affect, behavior, and cognition where affect addresses stress and coping theories; behavior addresses culture learning theories; and cognitions addresses social identification theories. The ABC’s and the U-Curve (Lysgaard, 1955) have both contributed to the culture shock literature in

prolific ways, but ultimately the struggle and explanation for cultural transition has no standard approach by which to measure all sojourners' experiences abroad.

Conceptual Perspective: Liminality

In this final section of the review of the discourse, liminality and liminal space binds the nature of risky behavior to tourism and to university spring break culture, which parallels to study abroad. Liminality, an anthropological, ethnographic concept incepted by Van Gennep (1960) in 1909, describes the physical and psychological space that exists in the "in between." Not a theory and not a model, liminality exists only as a concept. It originally addressed the state of transition in social rites of passage. Van Gennep worked as an anthropological ethnographer. The core of Van Gennep's social rites of passage exists in three phases: separation, margin, and aggregation.

In separation, the individual leaves behind rituals and expectations of the social constructions in which they have previously lived. In the margin, also referred to as transition rites, a social ritual creates room for the individual involved to make substantive changes to their identity. Finally, in aggregation, the individual is reincorporated into the societal structure wearing their new identity that was assumed through the ritual. It is in the margin, or liminal space, where the experience of study abroad creates room for students to experiment with and create new elements of personal identity.

Building upon Van Gennep's work, British anthropologist Turner (1967) broadened the application of liminality from small, tribal societal rituals to a more generalizable human experience of being "Betwixt and between" (Turner, 1967, p. 1). The betwixt and between describes the nature of the period of individual development that occurs amidst the state of transition between societal constructs. Also referred to as interstructural, Turner discusses this

transition as a time in which, for the individual, the societal structures in which s/he exists more or less ceases to bind the individual.

When these boundaries cease to apply, the individual, devoid of normal structures, can make decisions for themselves in the interstructural environment that they may not make in a normal environment. Van Gennep focused on periods of transition as a critical time of change intrinsic to the individual (Thomassen, 2009). For example, both the transition of puberty and period of time leading up to marriage represent liminal, interstructural periods of time in which the individual hopes to join a familiar sect of society. With this example, the goal of entering into adulthood serves as the goal.

Contemporarily, and for the purposes of this research, liminality shall refer to the psychological and physical transitional space in which students experience study abroad. Liminality can be experienced as an individual or as a cohort. If in cohort form, the label of *communitas* is applied, meaning that groups of people, either formal or informally formed, can experience liminality together (Andrews & Roberts, 2012). When engaged in liminal space in *communitas*, individuals' risky behavioral choices can become magnified or encouraged to go farther (Thurnell-Read, 2011).

Zimmermann and Neyer (2013) examined whether undergraduate university students become different people while abroad. While they do not use the liminal language, the study scrutinizes a similar concept. This study found that both short and long-term sojourning correlated to increases in both openness and agreeableness while decreasing in neuroticism. Also notable, the study identifies new international relationships as a primary factor in the process of personality change while abroad.

Liminality and tourism

The concept of liminality has blossomed and grown to apply to the field of travel and tourism studies because of liminality's nature of being betwixt and between, wherein travel and tourism is an experience during which the traveler exists in a space and time between and betwixt their own cultures and the culture in which they visit. This liminal space provides the traveler with opportunities to venture outside of one's regular decision-making process and provides space for the consideration of ordinary consequences to fall away.

Vacations take place in bracketed time. That is to say, they are anticipated as 'time out', 'time off' ... 'free' time, and so on. This is not time to be 'spent', but time quite inflexibly marked as to its beginning and end, and also as to its recreational, deliberately non-productive content. Happy times, by and large, pass quickly and one sign of the good holiday is that its beginning is as eagerly looked out for as its end is held off as much as possible, its passage marked by little rituals, its finality given its own sad ceremony (Inglis, 2000, p. 9).

Ingliss uses the term vacation or holiday to describe a bracketed time that is simply freed from the traveler's real life, marked specifically by the anticipation of the experience's commencement and a methodical sadness at closure. The middle of the story sits squarely in liminal space, between the punches of reality. In this space, travelers are free to make decisions aimed at adventure.

In the travel and tourism literature, liminality has been applied to explain risky and/or deviant behavior exhibited by tourists. While the goals of study abroad generally explicitly exclude or are very critical of education tourism (Janes, 2008), the application of this body of literature to the study abroad experience applies easily. Although the study abroad experience has been intentionally disconnected from the tourism and travel labels, there are vestigial

elements that bleed into the study abroad experience, particularly when the experience is designed to be short-term in nature.

Tourism's Parallels to Study Abroad

Undergraduate student study abroad experiences contain elements of cultural and heritage tourism, eco and disaster tourism, alternative break, and spring break experiences. These types of travel are often culturally exploratory, short-term, adventure seeking, boundary pushing, and immersive. A tourist's adventures are likely to indicate an escape from day-to-day life with the intention of trying on a new identity (Inglis 2009). While study abroad intentionally leaves the tourism label behind, tenets of tourism still inform study abroad.

Van Tine (2011) explored the connection between the short-term study abroad experience and liminal space. She investigated a two-week study abroad guided tour to Thailand. Using a phenomenological methodology and interview and photo elicitation data collection methods, she worked with a participant group of six individuals. Findings included that study abroad experiences, in the short-term, do not achieve the goals of self-improvement and global inclusion. Instead, they much more closely align with tourism and exploration.

Liminality, Alcotourism, and Party Tourism

The literature on tourism discusses alcohol, party, adventure, and sex tourism as examples of risky behavior that have become primary rationales for seeking out a particular travel destination or seeking a particular activity while traveling. Travelers may venture to a particular location or pursue a particular experience while away from home specifically because it feels deviant. Additionally, some of these activities may be created as specific travel experiences or highlights of travel experiences, whether formally or informally.

Alcotourism

Alcotourism, an emerging term in tourism literature, describes research focusing on the intersection of drinking behaviors and tourism whether, “traveling to drink, drinking while traveling, or drinking to travel” (Bell, p.291, 2008). Examples of this include beer tours in France, wine tours in Napa Valley, tequila samplers in Mexico, etc. Moreover, upon return to the traveler’s home environment, s/he may intentionally seek out experiences that serve as nostalgic, often termed as re-connecting experiences, to continue the liminal experience after coming home. A traveler may seek out a themed-bar or restaurant with the intent of consuming alcohol in a way that re-connects themselves with the fond memories of drinking abroad, carrying that liminal behavior back with them (Bell, 2008, McGovern 2002, O’Carroll, 2005). These themed experiences have proved problematic in that they caricaturize the originating culture in an inauthentic and problematic way. Also known as alcoholic anthropology, the drinker may, for example, associate a shot of Raki brand spirits with fond memories of traveling through Turkey, and as a result behave in similarly risky ways as they did while traveling abroad.

The phenomenon of alcotourism has also extended recently in the United States to both Colorado and Washington where cannabis products containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) have become legalized for personal, recreational use. The result has been the birth of an entire cannabis tourism industry ranging from accommodations to transportation to publications and venue recommendations (Peterson, 2015). Such tourism again demonstrates that individuals will travel specifically to engage in a behavior that they may not be able to while at home.

Party Tourism

Documented in the annals of tourism, a clear link between party tourism and decision making in liminal space presents itself most clearly through the common phrase, “What happens

in Vegas stays in Vegas.” The slogan, perhaps a tagline for the concept of liminality itself, actively encourages decisions that may not be acceptable in a tourists’ home culture, whether that be a short drive or a long plane ride away. It does so by, “fulfill[ing] the longing for the extraordinary...stressing *untellability* [sic] as a central feature of the Las Vegas tourist experience” (Bock, 2014, p. 219-220). The Las Vegas campaign sells itself as a place where deviance equates to fun, “a site of exhilarating danger, daring potential tourists to experience it for themselves” (Bock, 2014, p. 224).

The concept applies actively in the form of bachelor or “stag” party and bachelorette party tourism. Thurnell-Read (2011) researched the phenomenon of abnormal, masculine behavior in an ethnographic, participant-observer study of eight stag trips from the United Kingdom to Poland. These trips, marketed specifically for the purposes of stag parties, resulted in what Thurnell-Read describes as performance by the men on the trips. The men performed what they perceived to be culturally expected related to behavior on a stag party. Examples include public urination, over intoxication, displays of hegemonic masculinity, and finally illness as a result of previous behavior.

Party tourism in its purist form is a label that can apply to any individual or group traveling with the intent of engaging in risky behaviors related to alcohol, drugs, sex, or money. In the environment of higher education, the most closely aligns with the traditional spring break experience. While this study does not focus on undergraduate student experiences on spring break vacations, a natural parallel can be drawn between study abroad and spring break.

Spring Break Culture and Liminal Space

Both study abroad and spring break experiences involve traveling to a new environment in which risky behavioral choices are made. Students, “appear to participate in riskier behaviors

in the spring break environment than at home” (Sönmez, Apostolopoulos, Yu, Yang, & Mattila, 2006, p. 895). The spring break ritual also provides a natural home for establishment of *communitas*, in terms of liminal space. Annually, millions of U.S. American students travel to warm locations with the intent of experiencing a partying atmosphere. Josiam, Hobson, Dietrich, and Smeaton (1998) sought to investigate sexual, alcohol, and drug related patterns of behavior of students on spring break in Florida. They found, through an empirical survey, that 20% of undergraduate men surveyed engaged in sex with a partner he just met while on spring break. Alcohol proved to be a high-risk factor in that 43.6% of women and 75% of men reported being drunk at least once per day, more than daily, or always while on spring break. Related to drug use, 50.3% of men reported more or much more illicit drug use while on spring break.

Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu (2002) sought out to investigate empirically the nature of risky U.S. American undergraduate student behavior while traveling for spring break:

Spring break...has become a North American institution, involving the annual movement of over two million young adults. Anecdotal impressions and journalistic reports, along with ethnographic and empirical studies reporting binge drinking, illicit drug use, unsafe sexual practices, fatal accidents, and even criminal violations, depict only the tip of the iceberg on spring-break hazards (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu, 2002, p. 734).

This research team used an empirical survey method to identify that study participants did engage in higher risk drinking, drug use, sex with a newly met partner, casual sex, and unprotected sex while on spring break compared to their home environments. Most notably, 33% of participants indicated they had sex with a partner they had just met while on spring break, and 75% of students identified either never or rarely using a condom on spring break. Alarming,

the same sample indicated that 74% of males and 88% of females responded that they either never or rarely worry about contracting a sexually transmitted disease.

Conversely, Maticka-Tyndale and Herold (1999) were not able to identify a similar trend in Canadian students going on spring break in Florida. Their survey data reflected a much more responsible pattern of behavior related to sexual decision making related to the use of condoms. However, 73% of participants shared that they engaged in sexual activity with a partner they had just met while on spring break.

Continuing to examine safer sexual behaviors, alcohol consumption, and drug use, a similar survey was conducted and analyzed by gender and religion (Mattila, Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, Yu, & Sasidharan, 2001). Similar to previous studies, this empirical survey identified higher risk behaviors in men than in women, including binge drinking rates, casual sex, and drug use. Casual sex is not inherently risky, but the health implications for disease transfer with new partners creates the element of risk. Religious affiliation affected only the propensity of students to engage with drugs at lower rates than non-religious peers.

Spring break's impact on risky drinking behavior was examined again in by Lee, Maggs, and Rankin (2006) using a slightly different lens. Still investigating U.S. American students, this research team added the variable of fraternity and sorority membership. This study compared the drinking behaviors of students who went on trips for spring break versus those who did not travel against baseline data that was collected the summer before the start of that academic year. They found that students who went on spring break trips drank alcohol at statistically significantly higher rates than their peers who stayed in their college environments or went to their hometowns. Additionally, membership in a fraternity or sorority correlated with higher

rates of alcohol consumption on spring break compared to students who did not affiliate with a social, Greek letter organization.

Adding another unique perspective with similar findings, an empirical study examined the differences not only between staying at school or going to one's hometown, and traveling for spring break, but also further extrapolated the differences between traveling for spring break with family members versus with friends only. When traveling with family members, students were more apt to exhibit behaviors within their every-day decision making contexts and were not found to exhibit the same levels of risky behaviors as their peers who traveled together as friend groups (Grekin, Sher, & Krull, 2007).

These studies exude themes of increased risky behavior with alcohol, drugs, and sexual activity. Targeted programming for encouraging harm reduction behaviors during this liminal period have been created and effectively implemented across several campuses under the umbrella of health promotion (NASPA, 2016). Such efforts have resulted in healthier perceptions of social norms and thereby reduced expectations for drinking, drug use, and sexual activity amongst students (Patrick, Lee, & Neighbors, 2014). In addition to these behaviors performed in a liminal context, students on spring break were more likely to make impulsive purchases of material goods as compared to students who did not take a spring break trip (George & Yaoyuneyong, 2010). This finding further demonstrates the decreased inhibitions and increased willingness for risk taking amongst college students during the spring break period.

One study challenged these findings, stating that the behavior and the expectation for behavior are disconnected, where the perception of hedonistic behavior is higher than the actual engagement of the behavior (Ribeiro & Yarnal, 2011). These researchers tended to identify

spring break behavior on a continuum of tourism-leisure, a concept identified in the tourism literature, which challenges the belief that behavioral decisions while traveling are independent from one's normal behavior (Carr, 2002). Regardless of the conceptual framework used to study the phenomenon, researchers agree that behavior on spring break is different than behavior at home.

Chapter Summary

For the purposes of this study, I have reviewed literature related to domestic student risky behavior, study abroad, liminal space, and tourism. The literature shows concern for student behavior domestically, the nature of intention to make risky decisions while traveling, the parallels to current student travel and study abroad, and how liminal space creates an emotional mindset in which riskier decisions may be made both in a group and as an individual. Through this exploration of the current discourse, I have demonstrated both a need for and a nexus where research on risky undergraduate student behavior exists.

CHAPTER 3

Study Methods

In this chapter, I discuss the epistemological paradigm, methodological orientation, and research methods used to investigate the primary research questions posed in Chapter 1. This study was conducted from a post-positivist epistemology. Employing non-experimental design methodology, I used a single institution's study abroad program as an origin site. Using a survey method and a convenience sampling method, this study focused on the risky behavior decision making of traditionally-aged undergraduate students as they have experienced study abroad.

This study was designed using an original, unvalidated survey with the intention of engaging in an exploratory investigation of the research questions. The exploratory nature of this study holds the key to its contribution to the literature. As aforementioned in this dissertation, there has been little to no engagement in this corner of the study abroad, higher education administration literature. As such, an exploratory study served as the most appropriate to open the door to potential future inquiry.

Post-Positivist Epistemology

As presented in prior chapters, I employed a post-positivist epistemological approach in designing this study. In the post-positivist tradition, the researcher seeks inductively to observe the world around them (Van de Ven, 2007). A post-positivist way of knowing positions the researcher to present objective facts and concrete data points to understand truth. There exists an accepted truth based on observed evidence, which is subject to revision with additional evidence (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). The post-positivist epistemology situates the researcher's ability to build a deductive study and seeks to create reasonable conjecture based on the results of an

experiment, quasi, experiment, or non-experiment (Johnson, 2015). Therefore, the results of this study are reported as accepted truth based on the evidence collected and analysis of the data set.

Non-Experimental Design Methodology

In non-experimental design methodology, the researcher likely does not control the variables or the treatment in the experiment (Johnson, 2015; Research Methods, 2016). This study reflects non-experimental design because while there exists a pre and post, time series design, I did not create nor control for the intervention. The intervention in this research is the act of studying abroad. There are many variables for which this study did not control, like when the study abroad experience occurred, the participants' demographic identities, and whether or not risky behavior occurred. In addition, this research contains no control group. For all of these reasons, a non-experimental design describes the structure of this study best.

Study Procedures

In this section, I describe the inclusion and exclusion criteria used to create the study sample. I explain the sampling method and recruitment strategy used in order to recruit participants for the study. The survey instrument used to collect data in this study is also articulated.

Study Inclusion Criteria

In order to have timely and fresh memories of the study abroad experience, participants included in the sample must have met several criteria:

- Students must have completed their study abroad experience within the most recent calendar years, or between 2017-2019.
- The study abroad experience must have been originated from the same, mid-sized, public, regional university on the east coast of the United States.

- The duration of the study abroad experience was short term, defined as no longer than one semester in length in order to maintain a liminal sense of the experience. Longer-term study abroad durations may have caused the participant to create a home space and exit culture shock, no longer making the study abroad experience liminal in nature.

- The study abroad experience must be considered traditional, where the student was pursuing a first bachelor's degree between the ages of 18-24, a widely accepted in higher education as the age bracket of traditionally-aged students (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014; Miller & Mei-Yan, 2012; White, Becker-Blease & Grace-Bishop, 2010). This criteria captured a majority of the population as research on who typically studies abroad, and therefore will result in a more generalizable finding. In addition, a traditionally-aged participant has navigated specific challenges in the realms of personal identity development, personal decision making, and emerging adulthood.

- Participants must have identified as U.S. American by culture, regardless of citizenship or documented student status. The sampling criterion related to national identity limited the experience to a broad, common culture or origin. While it is clear that there are a perhaps immeasurable multitude of sub-cultures within the United States, this sampling inclusion requirement allowed for more consistent data analysis in working from a moderately similar cultural lens as the students. This may also be a limitation of the study in that assumptions of cultural identity and cultural experience are unique to the individual.

Participants were identified using a non-probability convenience sampling method (Creswell, 2013). The participants were selected from the same, mid-sized, regional, public university's study abroad program, hereby referred to as "the site." The site agreed to serve as

the data collection clearinghouse for this study and had identified a list of students and their email addresses who began their study abroad experience in 2017 to the present. Since the literature reflects that most students study abroad in their junior year (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014), the assumption for the sample was that participants were either in their senior year or had graduated in the last two years.

Subject Recruitment and Data Collection Procedures

An administrator at the site, who served as the gate keeper of student contact information, provided me with a list of 943 unique alumni email addresses who had studied abroad since 2017. For feasibility reasons, the pool was not pre-filtered by the site for alignment with this research's inclusion criteria. I distributed the survey via email using the invitations as described in this chapter. Of the 943 possible participants, 260 unique respondents consent to be screened for selection and participation in this study for a response rate of 27.6%. The first component of the survey asked nine questions that identified criteria for inclusion (Appendix A). Of the responses, 56.54% of the sample and 147 in total, met all inclusion criteria and were eligible to be included in the final study sample. The central limit theorem threshold of 30 responses has been met, therefore statistical data analysis can proceed. Exactly 113 responses were excluded from the study because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. The vast majority of excluded responses self-identified as graduate students.

The survey instrument was implemented using Qualtrics, a proprietary software that supports both web-based and mobile-device user interfaces. Using the study's inclusion criteria and participant identification processes as described above, the online survey was distributed three times. The first time the survey was sent, participants saw the "Invitation Letter 1" (See Appendix B). One week later, the survey was sent as a reminder using "Invitation Letter 2" (See

Appendix B). Finally, the survey was distributed one week later using “Invitation Letter 3” (See Appendix B).

The survey needed to elicit at least 30 responses to qualify for appropriate statistical analysis as defined by the central limit theorem (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). For the open-ended question, adequate engagement in data collection speaks to the concept of saturation or experiencing little new information with added participants. In studies where data is collected in a qualitative manner, there is no set number of experiences or participants that make for adequate engagement. However, a range of participants beginning at four (Creswell, 2013) and ending near to 30 has been suggested (Mason, 2010). The mark of four cases articulated by Creswell assumes multiple data collection methods whereas the mark of 30 participants is suggested for studies in which interview is the only method of data collection. Since the open-ended question in this study was optional and designed simply to highlight the quantitative phenomena, any responses over four will provide adequate information.

This original survey was constructed based on the four tenets of creating a quality survey as described by Salant and Dillman (1994). The tenets include identifying the appropriate sampling criteria, survey a reasonably specific population, create specific questions that ask what one wants answered, and design a survey that maximizes response rate. In addition, while this survey is original, it leans on the American College Health Association’s or ACHA’s (2015) National Collegiate Health Association IIc survey, also termed NCHA IIc, for inspiration. The NCHA IIc asks a large number of specific questions about undergraduate student behavior.

Once the email eliciting participation was sent, participants were able to click on an active link that directed them to an informed consent document (See Appendix C). After they consented to participate in the study, they were redirected to a separate link to the survey. This

separation of the informed consent document and the survey itself into two unique, hosted forms resulted in de-identified survey data. As such, anything disclosed by participants was kept independently from their names.

Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected using an online survey instrument created specifically for this study (See Appendix A). The survey was reviewed for clarity, readability, intent of meaning, and technological function by two volunteers, a professional researcher and a professional administrator at the data collection site. It was then administered a single time using a post-hoc design to measure both the risky behaviors in the semester prior to study abroad departure and the risky behaviors during the study abroad experience. Beyond assuring the respondent met this study's criteria for the inclusion in the sample, the survey examined five sub-domains across a four-point Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree of risky behavior as described in the literature both before study abroad and during study abroad.

The five sub-domains included: academic decisions, financial decisions, intimate relationship decisions, alcohol-based decisions, and other substances-based decisions. The next section of the survey asked respondents to respond, using a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to questions about how strongly the tenets of liminality aligned with the respondent's experience studying abroad. In the last section of the survey, respondents were asked to share a story of a time they did something abroad that they would not have done while at home.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Considerations

The IRB protocol and approval for this study can be found in Appendix C. The survey left room for the potential for participants to disclose sensitive information related to their

personal experiences while studying abroad. Since the data was de-identified in the responses, I have no way of following-up with any participants based on their individual responses. All participants received a link to the originating study abroad site's mental health, Title IX, and general resource webpages so that they could seek support had they wanted to do so.

Participants were informed of all of these elements in the informed consent document as included in Appendix C. Other than the exceptions discussed above, there was no risk of harm to the participants outside of that experienced in everyday life.

Data Storage

Survey data was stored in multiple, password protected, digital clouds. First the Qualtrics software stored two separate sets of data. The first data set held informed consent records, which were separated from and de-identified from the second data set which held the response data, thereby minimizing exposure risk. The datasets were downloaded to both my personal computer and my cloud storage drive, which are password protected. Analysis occurred using SAS software. The passwords are known only to me. The data will be stored for 10 years before destruction; 10 years will leave enough time for dissertation analysis as well as the potential for additional analysis and journal article publication.

Variables

The survey investigated a total of 23 risk factors across the five domains of academic, financial, intimate relationships, alcohol, and other substances. Participants rated different behaviors within each risk domain on a Likert scale of 1-4 ranging from *never* to *often*. Each risk domain included between three and seven behaviors, resulting in a possible 92 total risk factors both in the semester before going abroad and during the abroad experience. For both academic and financial risk, three risk factors were included in the survey each; for intimate relationships,

four risk factors were examined; the alcohol subdomain was inclusive of seven risk factors; and the other substance domain covered six risk factors. The domain risk factors remained the same between the pre-study abroad and during study abroad questions.

To complete further analysis, a sum of scores was calculated for each risk domain both before and during study abroad by adding all scores in each domain together and dividing by the total theoretical maximum for the entire study, creating one independent variable per domain. The following table illustrates the theoretical maximum score for each subscale. Throughout the study, “P” designation preceding each variable shall indicate a pre-study abroad measurement while an “SA” designation preceding each variable shall indicate a during study abroad measurement. For example, PAcad and SAAcad indicates the pre-study abroad risk score whereas SAAcad indicates the during study abroad score.

In addition, nine ordinal variables were examined during the study abroad only to gauge level of agreement with a series of elements that represent experiencing liminality or boundarylessness during the study abroad period. Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on each item. These variables remained stand-alone because some examined engagement with liminality and others inquired into the lack of liminal experiences.

Table 1*Variable Descriptions*

Variable	Abbreviation	Risk Factor	Ordinal Scale	Theoretical Maximum	Description
Academic	Acad	3	1-4	12	Level of engagement in academic risky behaviors
Financial	Fin	3	1-4	12	Level of engagement in financial risky behaviors
Intimate Relationships	Relat	4	1-4	16	Level of engagement in intimate relationship risky behaviors
Alcohol	Alc	7	1-4	28	Level of engagement in alcohol-related risky behaviors
Other Substances	Subst	6	1-4	24	Level of engagement in other substances-related risky behaviors
Home Rules	HRules	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the rules of the home environment applied abroad
Try New Things	TryNew	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the traveler felt free to try new things while abroad
Personality Change	PerCha	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the traveler changed aspects of their personality while abroad
Physical Appearance	PhysApp	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the traveler changed their physical appearance while abroad
Friend Similarity	Friend	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the traveler's friends were similar at home and abroad
Good Decisions	Decis	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the traveler made good decisions while abroad
Pushed Boundaries	Bound	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the traveler pushed their own boundaries while abroad
One Risk Taken	OneRisk	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the traveler performed at least one risky behavior while abroad
Not at Home	NHome	1	1-5	5	Level of agreement the traveler engaged in at least one behavior they would not have while at home

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Focusing and expanding on the primary research questions presented in Chapter 1, this study sought to answer the following, specific questions.

Research Question 1: Is there a correlation between pre-study abroad and during study abroad risky behavior patterns among students?

Sub-research Question 1.1: Does the variable of age matter in identifying higher risk behavior during study abroad?

Sub-research Question 1.2: Does the variable gender matter in identifying higher risk behavior during study abroad?

Sub-research Question 1.3: Does engagement in alcohol-related pre-study abroad risky behavior matter in identifying higher risk behavior during study abroad?

Restating these questions as hypotheses stages the statistical analysis to either reject or fail to reject the null hypotheses (H_0). As such, the null hypotheses are as follows:

H_{01} : The rates of undergraduate student engagement in risky behaviors remains the same between the home environment and the study abroad environment.

$H_{0SQ1.1}$: The variable of age of has no relationship to higher risk decision-making during study abroad.

$H_{0SQ1.2}$: The variable of gender has no relationship to higher risk decision-making during study abroad.

$H_{0SQ1.3}$: Alcohol-related pre-study abroad risky behaviors have no relationship to higher risky behavior decisions during study abroad.

Research Question 2: Does a relationship exist between students reporting engaging in risky behaviors during study abroad and the tenets of liminality (boundarylessness, feeling free to try

new behaviors, feeling like the rules of everyday life did not apply, and/or the betwixt and between)?

H₀2: There is no relationship between the tenets of liminality and risky behavioral decisions while abroad.

Data Analysis

Appropriate statistical analyses were conducted to reject or fail to reject the null hypotheses as aforementioned in this chapter. The data analysis for this study examined only the 147 responses that matched criteria for this study. First, descriptive statistical analyses were run on the collected data in order to share the story of who the data set represents. Second, to test the hypotheses as aforementioned, a dependent t-test, a series of Pearson's correlations, bivariate regressions, and multivariate regressions were calculated using a Type I $\alpha=0.05$, the commonly accepted statistical significance threshold in the social sciences (Johnson, 2015).

A sum of scores for each risk domain both before and during the study abroad experience was calculated to represent each variable, and in some cases dummy variables were created. These tests included a general overview of the descriptive statistics describing the responding sample and some nominal data, t-tests, Pearson's R correlations, and multivariate regressions. Finally, the data from the open-ended question was reviewed for alignment with the discoveries resulting from the statistical analysis, but ultimately not included in the data analysis because it is beyond the scope of the parameters for this study. However, a few quotes have been selected to lead anecdotally portions of Chapter 5. This data may be revisited for future publication.

Research Question – 1 Statistical Models

Research Question 1 explores: Is there a correlation between pre-study abroad and during study abroad risky behavior patterns among students? To investigate this question via inferential

statistical tests, three types of tests were used: dependent T-test, Pearson's R correlation, and bivariate regression. The dependent T-test seeks to discover whether a statistically significant difference between means exists between two, related groups: $T = \bar{d}/SE(d)$ with $DF = n - 1$. In the dependent T-test, the null hypothesis is mathematically expressed as: $H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 \leq 0$; for this problem $H_0: \mu_{\text{pre-study abroad total risk}} - \mu_{\text{during study abroad total risk}} \leq 0$. It is expected that there will be a statistically significant difference in the overall risk scores the semester prior to study abroad and the time period during study abroad; therefore, it is expected that the null hypothesis will be rejected.

The Pearson's R correlation coefficient measures the strength of relationship between two variables assumed to be normally distributed and in which the relationship between the variables is assumed to be linear, $r = (n(\Sigma xy) - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)) / \sqrt{[n(\Sigma x^2) - (\Sigma x)^2][n(\Sigma y^2) - (\Sigma y)^2]}$, $DF = n - 2$. In this research question, the correlations were calculated for all five domains of pre-study abroad risk score and overall pre-study abroad risk score in relationship to all five domains of during study abroad risk score and overall during study abroad risk score. The five domains include academic, financial, intimate relationships, alcohol, and other substances. The null hypothesis is mathematically expressed as $H_0: \rho = 0$. It is expected that all pre-study abroad risk scores are correlated to during study abroad scores in this model, therefore the null hypothesis is expected to be rejected.

The third statistical model used in Research Question 1 is a bivariate regression, also known as a linear regression. A linear regression model attempts to predict or explain how much change in a dependent variable can be observed as a result of an independent variable. In this case, the test measures how much of total during study abroad risk (dependent variable) can be

explained by total pre-study abroad risk (independent variable), $y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i$, $DF = n-1$.

$$\text{study abroad total risk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{prestudyabroadtotalrisk}}$$

The null hypothesis for a linear regression is mathematically expressed as $H_0: \beta = 0$. It is expected that the pre-study abroad overall score will predict some of the during study abroad risk total. Therefore, it is expected that the null hypothesis will be rejected.

Sub-research Question 1.1

Sub-research Question 1 of Research Question 1 sought to explore: Does the variable of age matter in identifying higher risk behavior during study abroad? Prior to calculating statistical tests, a dummy variable for travelers aged 21-24, the legal drinking age in their home nation, was created from the sample. A second dummy variable for travelers aged 18-20 was created. When the dummy variables were created, $n=72$ for those aged 18-20 years and $n=75$ for those aged 21-25 years. This way, the model controlled for age. Two tests were run. First, a bivariate regression model controlling for the younger group on study abroad score was run, $y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i$, $DF = n-1$.

$$\text{study abroad total risk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{dummyage18to20yearsold}}$$

The null hypothesis for a linear regression is mathematically expressed as $H_0: \beta = 0$, and it is expected that the null hypothesis will be rejected. A second model, a multivariate regression, was used to control for the dummy variable of those in the sample aged 21-24 along with total pre-study abroad risk score, $y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_2$, $DF=2$.

$$\text{study abroad total risk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{prestudyabroadtotalrisk}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{dummyage21to24yearsold}}$$

The null hypothesis for a linear regression is mathematically expressed as $H_0: \beta_1 + \beta_2 = 0$. It is expected that identifying as a person of legal drinking age in one's home country will contribute

to predicting some of the study abroad total risk score, therefore it is expected that the null hypothesis will be rejected.

Sub-research Question 1.2

Sub-research Question 2 of Research Question 1 sought to examine: Does the variable gender matter in identifying higher risk behavior during study abroad? A dummy variable was created to represent all cis-gender men, and then another to represent all other reported genders. This was done to address the assumption created by previous research (Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer, & Lee, 2010) that cis-gender men who study abroad tend to engage in riskier behaviors overall as compared to other genders. When the dummy variables were created, n=35 for cis gender men and n=112 for all other genders. Two regression models were used to examine this question. First, a bivariate regression model investigating whether cis-gender man identity plays a role in predicting overall study abroad risk score was run.

$$\text{study abroad total risk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{dummycisgendermen}}$$

In this model, $H_0: \beta = 0$ and the null hypothesis is expected to be rejected.

Second, a multivariate regression was used with the dependent variable of total during study abroad risk, controlling not only for the independent dummy variable of cis-gender men, but also for the independent variable of total pre-study abroad risk. In a multivariate regression model, the change in a dependent variable is calculated when controlling for two or more independent variables. This was done to address another assumption by Pedersen, et. al (2010) that students who study abroad are already pre-disposed to making risky decisions.

$$\text{study abroad total risk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{dummycisgendermen}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{prestudyabroadtotalrisk}}$$

In a multivariate model, $H_0: \beta_1 + \beta_2 = 0$. It is expected at least one of the independent variables predicts some of the during study abroad total risk score, therefore the null hypothesis is expected to be rejected.

Sub-research Question 1.3

Sub-research Question 3 of Research Question 1 asks: Does engagement in alcohol-related pre-study abroad risky behavior matter in identifying higher risk behavior during study abroad? Various previous research demonstrated that alcohol risk played a role in risky behavior in the home context and the study abroad context (American College Health Association, 2015; The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015; Pedersen, et. al, 2010). Using the independent variable of pre-study abroad alcohol risk score, a bivariate regression model was used to explore whether this helped to predict total study abroad risk score.

$$\text{study abroad total risk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{prestudyabroadalcoholrisk}}$$

In this model, $H_0: \beta = 0$ and the null hypothesis is expected to be rejected.

Research Question 2 – Statistical Models

Research Question 2 asks: Does a relationship exist between students reporting engaging in risky behaviors during study abroad and the tenets of liminality (boundarylessness, feeling free to try new behaviors, feeling like the rules of everyday life did not apply, and/or the betwixt and between)? Pearson's R correlation coefficient models were again employed to answer this question using the variables of the tenets of liminality, the during study abroad risk domains, and the total during study abroad risk score where $H_0: \rho = 0$.

The correlations were calculated in two groups. The first group examined the during study abroad five risk domains and during study abroad total score with variables representing the presence of liminality: the participant felt free to try new things (FreeTry); the participant

changed their personality (PerCha); the participant changed their physical appearance (PhysApp); the participant pushed their own boundaries (Bound); the participant did at least one thing they thought was risky (OneRisk); and the participant did at least one thing they felt they could not do while at home (NHome). It is expected that a positive correlation will exist between these variables.

The second group examined the during study abroad five risk domains and during study abroad total score with variables representing the absence of liminality: agreeing that the rules of one's home environment (HRules) applied during the study abroad experience, agreeing that one's friends abroad were similar to one's friends at home (Friend), and agreeing that one made generally good decisions (Decis) while studying abroad. If liminal space was not experienced, it is expected that a negative correlation will exist between these variables. Regardless of the expected direction of the relationship, it is expected that the null hypothesis will be rejected.

Totality of Study Abroad Risk Model

The final statistical model in this study, a multiple regression, sought to combine elements of Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 to investigate more fully whether pre-study abroad total risk score, specific identity variables, and those who agree they experienced the core tenets of liminality, the betwixt and between, can predict overall study abroad risk score. The tenets of liminality variables of *free to try new things*, *took at least one risk while abroad*, and *did at least one thing that could not be done at home* were all transformed into dummy variables representing agreement that these tenets were experienced.

The independent variables in the model were: dummy age of 21 and older, dummy cis-gender man identity, dummy free to try new things, dummy took at least one risk, and dummy

did at least one thing that could not do at home. The multivariate regression model, DF=6, is expressed as:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{study abroad total risk} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{prestudyabroadtotalrisk}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{dummyage21andolder}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{cisgendermen}} + \\ & \beta_4 X_{\text{freetotrynewthings}} + \beta_5 X_{\text{tookonerisk}} + \beta_6 X_{\text{onethingnotathome}} \end{aligned}$$

The null hypothesis is expressed as $H_0: \beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 + \beta_4 + \beta_5 + \beta_6 = 0$. It is anticipated that these independent variables can predict change in the overall study abroad risk score. The null hypothesis is expected to be rejected.

Limitations

The nature of this exploratory, non-experimental research creates natural limitations regarding the generalizability and cause-and-effect of findings. Given the non-experimental and unvalidated survey design, the findings cannot demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship of any kind. The findings of the study are limited by the sampling criteria requirements for inclusion and exclusion: institution-of-origin, time, and population. Since the participants originated from the same institution, the findings may have applicability and transferability to other populations but are specific only to this one institution's study abroad program. Participants must have had their study abroad experience within the last two years, thereby likely limiting the applicability of findings to this generation of study abroad students.

As aforementioned, the demographics of undergraduate study abroad students tend to look a bit homogenous and skewed towards White, women, cis-gender, abled, middle-to-upper class identified students. As a result, this study is not likely to reflect the decision making and experiences of students of color, men-identified students, gender non-conforming students, transgender students, students with disabilities, and students from lower socio-economic brackets. This narrow demographic in the possible participant pool will thereby limit the study.

However, transparency of study design, adequate engagement in data collection, and the employment of proper, statistical data analysis create reliability for the study's findings. Reliability allows readers of the research to apply the study's design and findings to explain their other experiences of the same nature. Other U.S. American students' risky behavioral decisions while studying abroad may be explained, albeit not demonstrated, through this research. Finally, race and ethnicity data were not collected in this study because the scope of the study would have become unmanageable. Including race and ethnicity data would have required the application of critical race theory and an examination of the systemic role of racism globally. As such, this research does not take into account this identity data.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research paradigm, methodological perspectives, variable information, data analysis plan, statistical models, and study design limitations for this inquiry. Using a post-positivist epistemology and a non-experimental and exploratory methodology, this study used an original, unvalidated survey specifically created for this research to explore two research questions and associated sub-research questions. The next chapter presents the results of the aforementioned statistical tests including descriptive statistics, a dependent T-test, Pearson's R correlations, bi-variate regressions, and multi-variate regressions.

CHAPTER 4

Results

To begin discussion on the analysis and results of the data collected in this study, the descriptive statistics generated from the responses paint the picture of who studied abroad in the years 2017-2019 from the originating site. Just under half the respondents were aged 18-20 at the time of study abroad departure and just over half were aged 21-24. This line holds importance because of the legal drinking age in the United States is much higher than the average global drinking age (Howard, 2019). Most students were juniors, aligning with the expectation that most traditionally-aged students who study abroad do so in their junior year of undergraduate study (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014).

It was also expected that the majority of participants studying abroad would identify as cis-gender women, which aligns with the data collected in which 72.11% of study abroad participants in this sample identified as such. Participants were also asked to self-disclose their socio-economic status. Over 92% of participants identified in the band between lower middle class and upper middle class, demonstrating that the study abroad experience originating from this site have reasonable access to socio-economic resources. Only 5.44% of the survey respondents identified as living at or below the poverty line, indicating that study abroad for this group has not been attainable on the same scale as for those who originate from middle class backgrounds.

Table 2*Respondent Characteristics*

Respondent Category	Frequency	%
Age at time of study abroad departure	N=147	
18-20 years of age	72	48.98%
20-24 years of age	75	51.02%
Class standing at time of study abroad departure	N=147	%
Freshman	8	5.44%
Sophomore	27	18.37%
Junior	70	47.62%
Senior	43	29.25%
Gender identity	N=147	
Cis-gender woman	107	72.11%
Cis-gender man	33	23.81%
Transgender man	1	0.68%
Gender non-binary	2	1.36%
Another gender	3	2.04%
Self-reported socio-economic status	N=147	
Living at or below the poverty line	8	5.44%
Lower middle class	21	14.29%
Middle class	76	51.70%
Upper middle class	39	26.53%
Wealthy	3	2.04%

Pre-Study Abroad Risk Factors & During Study Abroad Risk Factors

In addition to the descriptive statistics of the sample as described in Table 2, frequency information was calculated on the Likert scale questions for pre and during study abroad risk. As reported in Table 3, measures of central tendency, variance, and maximum reported risk factors were calculated for all five domains of risky behavior during the pre-study abroad semester as well as the pre-study abroad risk total score. The five domains include academic risk (Acad), financial risk (Fin), intimate relationship risk (Relat), alcohol risk (Alc), other substance use related risk (Subst), and overall total risk score (RiskTot). Pre-study abroad variables are

preceded by “P” and during study abroad variables are preceded by “SA.” The maximum reported score represents the total raw number of risk factors as reported by the highest scoring, single observation in the dataset.

Across the five risk domains, the pre-study abroad results were as follows: academic (M=3.18, Median=3.00, SD=1.59, max=8); financial (M=3.38, Median=3.00, SD=2.27, max=9); intimate relationships (M=3.56, Median=3.00, SD=2.75, max=13); alcohol (M=4.11, Median=4.00, SD=3.22, max=13); and other substances (M=1.78, Median=1.00, SD=2.56, max=13). The overall pre-study abroad risk score was also calculated (M=16.01, Median=15, SD=9.09, max 47).

Table 3

Risk Domains Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Std Deviation	Max Score (Theoretical Max)
PAcad	3.18	3.00	1.59	8 (12)
PFin	3.38	3.00	2.27	9 (12)
PRelat	3.56	3.00	2.75	13 (16)
PAlc	4.11	4.00	3.22	15 (28)
PSubst	1.78	1.00	2.56	13 (24)
PRiskTot	16.01	15.00	9.09	47 (92)
SAAcad	1.63	1.00	1.76	8 (12)
SAFin	3.19	3.00	2.41	9 (12)
SARelat	0.93	0.00	1.59	8 (16)
SAAlc	3.11	2.00	2.99	12 (28)
SASubst	0.82	0.00	1.59	11 (24)
SARiskTot	9.69	8.00	7.45	32 (92)

Table 3 also depicts the same analysis as conducted on the during study-abroad risk factors across all five risk domains and overall study abroad risk score (M=9.69, Median=8.00, SD=7.45, max=32). For the during study abroad risk domains, the results are as follows: academic (M=1.63, Median=1.00, SD=1.76, max=8); financial (M=3.19, Median=3.00, SD=2.41, max=9); intimate relationships (M=0.93, Median=0.00, SD=1.59, max=8), alcohol

($M=3.11$, $Median=2.00$, $SD=2.99$, $max=12$), and other substance use ($M=0.83$, $Median=0.00$, $SD=1.59$, $max=11$). The overall during study abroad risk score was also calculated ($M=9.69$, $Median=8.00$, $SD=7.45$, $max=32$). Based on these descriptive statistics only, it appears that overall risk-taking activities may have declined for individual observations during study abroad, but the T-tests, correlations, and multivariate regressions tell a different story as discussed moving forward in this chapter.

Research Question 1

The first group of research questions addressed whether or not there is a relationship between pre-study abroad risky behaviors and during study abroad risky behaviors. The following section will report on the results of the analyses that address the specific research questions in this group. First a dependent T-test comparing the means of the pre-study abroad total risk score (PRiskTot) and the during study abroad total risk score (SARiskTot) was calculated. There was a highly statistically significant difference increase in means from pre-study abroad risk total ($M=16.01$, $SD=9.09$) to during study abroad risk total ($M=9.69$, $SD=7.45$), $t(146)=8.35$ $p>.001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Having demonstrated there is a significant difference between the means, additional statistical tests were run.

Next, a Pearson's correlation was run on each risk domain for the pre and during study abroad risk factors. The results of the correlations run on the academic (Acad), financial (Fin), intimate relationship (Relat), alcohol (Alc), and other substances (Subst) variables in relationship to each other and to total pre and during study abroad score (RiskTot) are presented in Table 4. The correlations for each risk variable all have statistically significant, positive correlations from pre-study abroad to during study abroad.

Table 4*Correlations of Pre-Study Abroad Risk with During Study Abroad Risk*

Variable	PAcad	PFin	PRelat	PAlc	PSubst	PRiskTot
SAAcad	0.25*					
SAFin		0.52***				
SARelat			0.19*			
SAAlc				0.48***		
SASubst					0.49***	
SARiskTo	0.26**	0.33***	0.22**	0.36***	0.27*	0.40***
t						
	* $p < .05$	** $p < .01$	*** $p < .001$			

The variables of academic and intimate relationships both hold statistical significance that support engagement in higher risky behaviors in those domains from pre-study abroad to during study abroad. The variables of financial, alcohol, and other substances show high statistical significance that support engagement in higher risky behaviors in those domains between pre and during study abroad. Every risk domain in the pre-study abroad space correlates significantly with the overall study abroad risk total. Most importantly, the correlation between the total pre-study abroad aggregated risk and the during study abroad aggregated risk demonstrates high statistical significance that risky behavior abroad is higher than behaviors in the semester pre-study abroad in the home environment. The null hypothesis is rejected.

The significance reported throughout the correlations touches the heart of this study's purpose; therefore, additional analysis was conducted to examine whether the positive rise in study abroad risk scores might be explained by the pre-study abroad total risk. In order to understand further the relationship between pre-study abroad risk score and the during study abroad risk score, a bivariate regression model was run as reported in Table 5. This model examined how much of the total study abroad risk score could be explained by pre-study abroad risk score.

Table 5

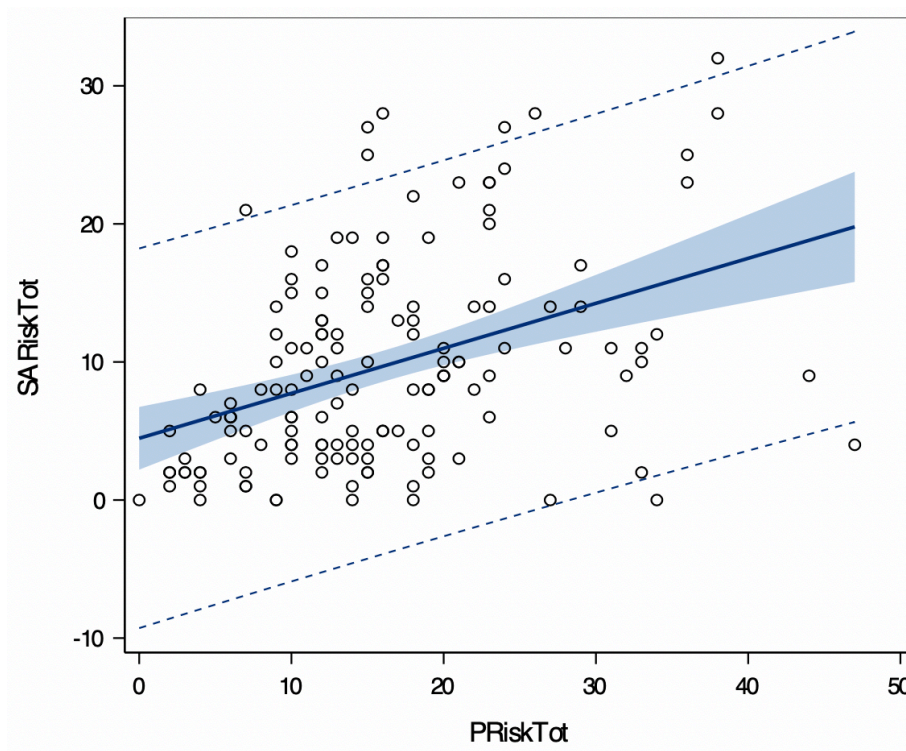
Regression: Overall During Study Abroad Risk by Pre-Study Abroad Risk

Variable	DF	F	B	SE(B)
Pre-study abroad total risk score	1	27.19	0.33***	0.06
<i>N=147, R² = 0.16, *p < .05 **p < .01 *** p < .001</i>				

There is a positive, direct relationship between the pre-study abroad total risk score and the during study abroad risk score. For every unit of increase in the pre-study abroad risk score, the during study abroad risk score increases by 0.33. This model explains just 16% of the variance in overall study abroad risk score. While this is highly statistically significant, the slope of increase is small in magnitude with the high dispersion in the data as depicted in Figure 3. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Figure 3

Total Pre-Study Abroad Risk Score Plotted with During Study Abroad Risk Score



Sub-Research Question 1.1

A bivariate regression model was run to explore whether the age of a study abroad participant can serve as a predictor for risky behavior during study abroad. Age was originally reported in the survey as a discrete number between 18 and 24. To analyze this variable, age was redefined in two dummy variables: those who were under 21 years of age at the time of departure and those who were over 21 years of age at the time of departure. This regression used only the under 21-year-old dummy variable. Departing for study abroad over the legal drinking age in the United States had a statistically significant predictive value on a lower total study abroad risk score, $N=147$, $F(1, 147)=2.68$, $p=0.10$.

This sub-research question called for further investigation into the independent variable of age's predictive value for study abroad risk as discussed in Chapter 3. Therefore, a multivariate regression model was calculated that also controlled for the variable of total pre-study abroad risk in addition to age. This time the model considered the dummy variable of 21-24-year-old subjects to determine whether controlling for older age and pre-study abroad risk might predict during study abroad total risk score. The results are below in Table 6.

Table 6

Pre-study abroad risk and age 21 to 24 multivariate regression

Variable	DF	F	B	SE(B)
SA total risk score (DV)	2	17.63***		
Pre-study abroad risk total			0.35***	0.06
Age 21 to 24			-2.96**	1.22
<i>N=147, R² = 0.13, *p < .05 **p<.01 *** p < .001</i>				

This model produced an $R^2 = 0.13$, $F(2, 147)=17.63$, $p>0.001$. Both independent variables are contributing to the significance of the model. When controlling for prior risky

behaviors, older students show lower risky behavior engagement during study abroad than those aged under 21 at the time of departures. There is a negative relationship between age and total risk score, such that older students are statistically significantly going to have lower scores. Being older is a highly statistically significant predictor of a lower total risk score during study abroad and reduces risk score compared to their aged under 21 peers overall. These results support rejecting the null hypothesis.

Sub-research Question 1.2

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, evidence exists that suggests cis-gender men are more likely to engage in riskier behaviors than people of other genders. A bivariate regression model accounting whether gender can serve as a predictor of the during study abroad risk score was run, $N=147$, $F(1, 147)=0.15$, $p=0.69$. There is no statistically significant evidence that cis-gender men make riskier behaviors than people identifying as other genders for total risk both pre and during study abroad. In this case, the statistical evidence surprisingly supports failing to reject the null hypothesis. However, as with Sub-research Question 1.1, additional analysis for gender was warranted. A multivariate model that controlled for pre-study abroad risk score in addition to gender was run and is represented in Table 7.

Table 7

Pre-Study Abroad Risk and Cis-Man Bivariate Regression

Variable	DF	F	B	SE(B)
SA total risk score (DV)	2	13.50***		
Pre-study abroad risk total			0.33***	0.06
Cis-gender man			0.01	1.34
<i>N=147, R² = 0.16, *p < .05 **p<.01 *** p < .001</i>				

This model, $R^2 = 0.16$, $F(2, 147)=13.50$, $p>0.001$, demonstrates that while the model overall shows high statistical significance, the variable of cis-gender men does not denote a statistically

significant addition to the model itself. However, the results of the whole model when controlling for pre-study abroad risk total, cis-gender men are a statistically significant predictor of increased total study abroad risky behaviors. The magnitude of the rise in risky behaviors is small at just 0.33 per unit of increase. Nonetheless, it remains highly significant in predicting total study abroad risk score. These results support rejecting the null hypothesis.

Sub-research Question 1.3

To address whether alcohol-related pre-study abroad risk can account for overall change in during study abroad risky behavior engagement, a bivariate regression model was calculated as reported in Table 8.

Table 8

Alcohol risk pre-study abroad and total study abroad risk

Variable	DF	F	B	SE(B)
Alcohol pre-study abroad risk score	1	21.12	0.82***	0.18
<i>N=147, R² = 0.13, *p < .05 **p < .01 *** p < .001</i>				

The model reported the following results: $R^2 = 0.13$, $F(1, 147) = 21.12$, $p > 0.001$. There is a highly statistically significant, positive relationship between pre-study abroad alcohol risk and overall risk during study abroad. For every unit of risky behaviors related to alcohol in pre-study abroad show an increase of 0.82 exists during study abroad risk. Pre-study abroad alcohol risk explains 13% of the overall model. Given these results, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Research Question 2

The next set of analyses provide results serving to report on Research Question 2. Survey respondents were asked to respond to a five-point ordinal scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree as they relate to tenets of experiences drawn from liminality theory during the study abroad experience only. These tenets included whether: the participant felt free to try new

things (FreeTry); the participant changed their personality (PerCha); the participant changed their physical appearance (PhysApp); the participant pushed their own boundaries (Bound); the participant did at least one thing they thought was risky (OneRisk); and the participant did at least one thing they felt they could not do while at home (NHome). Respondents reported 51.59% agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced tenets of liminality during the study abroad experience across all tenets. Respondents reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that they experienced liminality as follows: 86.39% felt free to try new things; 19.23% changed their personality; 12.24% changed their physical appearance; 67.25% pushed their own boundaries; 63.26% did at least one thing they thought was risky; and 54.42% did at least one thing abroad that they could not otherwise do at home.

Given these descriptive statistics, further inquiry was warranted. A series of correlations were calculated to examine the relationship between the various tenets of liminality as aforementioned as they compare to the overall study abroad risk score and the five subdomains of during study abroad risk: academic (SAAcad), financial (SAFin), intimate relationship (SARelat), alcohol (SAAlc), and other substances (SASubst). The results are depicted in Table 9.

Table 9

Liminality Tenets Correlations

Variable	FreeTry	PerCha	PhysApp	Bound	NHome	OneRisk
SAAcad	0.14	0.21**	0.18*	0.05	0.14	0.28***
SAFin	0.13	0.16*	0.21*	0.10	0.14	0.29***
SARelat	0.07	0.10	0.12	0.05	0.13	0.13
SAAlc	0.19*	0.26**	0.15	0.20*	0.18*	0.34***
SASubst	0.01	0.16	0.09	0.11	0.08	0.14
SARiskTot	0.17*	0.26**	0.22**	0.16	0.19*	0.37***

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

For the variable of Free to Try New Things, a positive statistically significant correlation exists between the domains of during study abroad alcohol risk ($r(145)=0.19$, $p=0.02$), and

overall during study abroad risk ($r(145)=0.17, p=0.04$). This indicates that as students studying abroad agreed that they felt free to try new things, a rise in risky behavior in the alcohol risk domain rose as did the overall engagement in risky behaviors during study abroad. For the variable of Personality Change, a statistically significant relationship was demonstrated in the domains of during study abroad academic risk ($r(145)=0.21, p=0.01$), financial risk ($r(145)=0.16, p=0.04$), alcohol risk ($r(145)=0.26, p<0.01$), and overall study abroad risk ($r(145)=0.26, p<0.01$). This shows a linear, positive relationship between these three domains and overall study abroad risk and self-reported personality change during the study abroad experience.

On the variable of physical appearance, a positive statistically significant correlation was observed in the during study abroad risk domains of academic ($r(145)=0.18, p=0.03$), financial ($r(145)=0.21, p=0.01$), and overall risk total ($r(145)=0.22, p=0.01$). As self-reported change in physical appearance rises, so does engagement in academic, financial, and overall risk taking during the study abroad experience. In the variable Boundaries, a statistically significant relationship exists only for the risk subdomain of alcohol ($r(145)=0.20, p=0.02$), indicating that as one's self-identification with pushing one's own boundaries during study abroad rises with one's engagement in risky alcohol behaviors. The variable examining level of agreement that participants did at least one thing abroad that they felt they could not do at home correlates significantly with the subdomain of alcohol ($r(145)=0.19, p=0.03$), and the overall study abroad risk score ($r(145)=0.19, p=0.02$).

The variable examining level of agreement that the traveler engaged in at least one behavior they thought was risky during their study abroad experience, highly and extremely highly statistically significant correlations were observed, indicating that this self-perception of risk taking was the most significantly related variable to all risk-taking behaviors in the study.

Across the risk domains of academics ($r(145)=0.28, p<0.001$), financial ($r(145)=0.29, p<0.001$), alcohol ($r(145)=0.34, p<0.001$), and overall study abroad score ($r(145)=0.37, p<0.001$), a positive rise in self-reporting of at least one risky behavior abroad exists.

The next series of correlations examine the inverse tenets of liminality, or lack of presence of liminal space as they relate to the five domains of study abroad risk and overall study abroad risk total. The inverse tenets representing an absence of liminal space include: agreeing that the rules of one's home environment (HRules) applied during the study abroad experience; agreeing that one's friends abroad were similar to one's friends at home (Friend); and agreeing that one made generally good decisions (Decis) while studying abroad. These correlations are reported in Table 10.

Table 10

Inverse Liminality Tenets Correlations

Variable	HRules	Friend	Decis
SAAcad	-0.30***	-0.12	-0.35***
SAFin	-0.22**	-0.10	-0.35***
SARelat	-0.08	0.02	-0.30***
SAAlc	-0.26**	-0.13	-0.40***
SASubst	-0.21*	-0.18	-0.32***
SARiskTot	-0.31***	-0.15	-0.49***

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

As expected, based on previous literature, by calculating the correlative relationships between the absence of liminality variables and the five domains of study abroad risk, the statistically significant relationships were all negative in direction. With the variable examining whether the home rules applied to the traveler during the study abroad experience, the higher levels of agreement negatively correlated to statistically significant, and in some cases highly statistically significant, self-reported risk taking behaviors in the during study abroad risk domains of academic ($r(145) = -0.30, p < 0.001$), financial ($r(145) = -0.22, p = 0.008$), alcohol

($r(145) = -0.26, p = 0.002$), other substances ($r(145) = -0.31, p = 0.01$), and overall risk score total ($r(145) = -0.31, p < .001$). For the variable inquiring as to the similarities of friends at home compared to friends during study abroad, no statistically significant correlations were observed.

The variable measuring the level of agreement that the traveler made at least generally good decisions while studying abroad correlates either highly statistically significantly or extremely statistically significantly in a negative direction across all five domains of risk and with the overall study abroad risk score. The results were as follows: academic ($r(145) = -0.35, p < .001$), financial ($r(145) = -0.35, p < .001$), relationships ($r(145) = -0.30, p < .001$), alcohol ($r(145) = -0.40, p < .001$), other substances ($r(145) = -0.32, p < .001$), and overall study abroad risk score total ($r(145) = -0.49, p < .001$). These results indicate that an increase in identifying with the absence of liminal space correlate strongly with lower risk-taking behaviors during study abroad for all domains of risk.

By examining the correlations of study abroad risk score with the tenets of liminality from both a positive agreements of the tenets of liminality theory in conjunction with the inverse, a full picture of whether or not the tenets of liminality applied in this model. Positive statistically significant relationships were observed between the tenets of liminality, the five subdomains of risk, and the overall study abroad risk score. Negative statistically significant relationships were observed between the absence of liminal space, the five subdomains of risk, and overall study abroad risk score. Given this information, the null hypothesis for Research Question 2 is rejected.

A Model Examining the Totality of Study Abroad Risk

To examine a full picture of the dataset that predicts overall study abroad risk score a more comprehensive statistical model was built. It incorporated a totality of the variables across

the five domains of risk, taking into account the level of agreement with the tenets of liminality, as well as the gender and age considerations as discussed in Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. A multivariate linear regression model was run controlling for the independent variables: pre-study abroad risk, dummy variable gender for cis men, dummy variable age for those 21 and older, dummy variable for at least one risky behavior abroad (OneRisk), dummy variable for doing at least one thing that could not be done at home (NHome), and dummy variable for free to try new things (FreeTry). The model is reported in Table 11.

Table 11

Totality of Study Abroad Risk

Variable	DF	F	B	SE(B)
SA total risk score (DV)	6	9.04***		
Pre-study abroad risk total			0.31***	0.06
Cis-gender men			-0.58	1.29
Age 21+			-2.18	1.13
OneRisk			4.16***	1.21
NHome			0.45	1.18
FreeTry			1.21	1.62
<i>N=147, R² = 0.28, *p < .05 **p < .01 *** p < .001</i>				

This model is highly statistically significant with these six independent variables explaining 28% of the total study abroad risk score, $N=147$, $F(6, 147)=9.04$, $R^2 = 0.28$. The pre-study abroad risk total accounts for the most statistically significant variable in the model, with self-identifying as engaging in at least one risky behavior abroad also significantly impacting the variation in the during study abroad total risk score. For students who reported higher risky behavior before departure for their study abroad experience, and for students who self-reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that they engaged in at least one behavior they thought was risky during study abroad, the total study abroad risk score significantly rises.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of the statistical tests calculated to answer two research questions and three sub-research questions. Statistically significant results were present across the models. For all but one model, the null hypothesis was rejected. For the tests examining Research Question 1, statistical significance occurred when comparing the total pre-study abroad risk score and the during study abroad total risk score. As reported in Table 4, significant or highly significant, positive relationships existed between all five risk domains when comparing the specific domain's pre-study abroad risk score and the during study abroad risk score. The last test in Research Question 1 demonstrated that overall pre-study abroad risk score does explain a positive change in overall study abroad risk score as reported in Table 5. Figure 3 shows the plotted relationship for these two variables.

The three sub-research questions of Research Question 1 tested for whether the variables of age, gender, or pre-study abroad alcohol risk could predict a change in overall study abroad risk score. When controlling for pre-study abroad total risk score and being aged 21 years and older, a high statistical significance that pre-study abroad total risk score positively contributed to the model (See Table 6). Being aged 21-24 years showed high statistical significance for reducing the likelihood of having participated in risky behaviors during study abroad as compared to travelers aged 18-20.

When controlling study abroad total risk score for gender, specifically cis-gender men only, the model did not hold statistical significance. However, the multivariate model controlling both for cis-gender man identity and pre-study abroad total risk score was highly statistically significant as reported in Table 7. The last sub-research question in this section

examined whether the alcohol-related pre-study abroad risk domain could explain change in the overall study abroad risk score. This model was highly statistically significant as reported in Table 8.

Research Question 2's results began with testing for a relationship between both the presence and absence of experiencing liminality with the five domains of risk plus overall during study abroad risk score. The first grouping tested the six tenets in the study that align with experiencing liminality and the during study abroad risks as reported in Table 9. Slightly under half of the of these relationships showed statistically significant, positive correlations across the domains of risk when the tenets of liminality were observed. The second grouping tested the three survey items indicating lack of liminal space against the during study abroad risks. Just over half of the negative relationships across the domains of risk and the lack of liminal space were observed to hold statistical significance (See Table 10).

In the final statistical model, study abroad total risk score was controlled for using six, independent variables: pre-study abroad total risk score; cis-gender men; age 21 and older; agreement that at least one risk was taken while studying abroad; agreement that the traveler did at least one thing they abroad they would not have done at home; and agreement that the sojourner felt free to try new things. This model was highly statistically significant as reported in Table 11. A discussion on the meaning and interpretation of these results follows in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusion

This study sought to explore U.S. American undergraduate students' engagement in risky behavioral decisions during short-term and mid-term study abroad experiences. Much research has been conducted that focuses on the academic and personal benefits of the study abroad experience, largely enriching the lives and expanding the worldview of study abroad participants (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014; Nolan, 2009; Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2011; Savicki & Price, 2015; Wycaver, 2014). However, the existing literature left room for study on the riskier aspects of the study abroad experience.

A substantial body of literature exists on the subject of domestic, collegiate, risky behaviors such as students' relationships with alcohol, other substances, risky sexual decisions, and both academic and behavioral misconduct (American College Health Association, 2015; Pedersen et. al, 2010). Another body of literature explores risky behaviors by the general public during personal leisure travel ranging from bachelor/bachelorette parties to substance-based tourism (Bell, 2008; Bock, 2014; McGovern, 2002; O'Carroll, 2005; Thurnell-Read, 2011). Some early data collection had begun by The Forum on Education Abroad (2015) that began to catalogue student critical incidents while abroad, which included risky behaviors, arrests, and other emergencies. However, a gap in the literature existed when searching for research that knit these components of study abroad, collegiate risky behaviors, and tourism risky behaviors. Three primary research questions guided this study:

Primary Research Question 1: Do traditionally-aged, undergraduate student risky behavioral decisions change between the collegiate environment and the study abroad environment? If so, how?

Primary Research Question 2: Does age, gender, or previous alcohol use impact students' risky behavior while studying abroad?

Primary Research Question 3: With which components of liminality do students self-identify as having experienced while studying abroad?

As such, this study sought to contribute to the discourse to help to fill this gap. Using the anthropological concept of liminality as an anchoring framework, the tenets of liminal space provided a conceptual perspective for the study. Liminality occurs in the space between and between borders, when one is no longer within the confines of home and when one moves through culture shock and into adventure. The core tenets of liminality include an absence of home-based social rules, a freedom to try on different identities, and a sense of boundarylessness (Andrews and Roberts, 2012; Van Gennep, 1960).

This conceptual framework had been applied to the tourism literature previously (Bock, 2014) and to study abroad in a master's degree thesis (Van Tine, 2011). It was these tenets combined with a conceptualization of collegiate risk drawn from multiple facets of the literature including spring break, alternative breaks, and prosocial health promotion activities with harm reduction components (American College Health Association, 2015; The Forum on Education Abroad, 2015; Pedersen, et. al, 2010) that an original survey instrument was constructed for this study (Appendix A). This conceptualizations of risk informed by the aforementioned areas of the literature resulted in five domains of risky behaviors: academic, financial, intimate relationships, alcohol use, and other substance use.

Major Findings

The sample for this research consisted of 147 participants, all self-identifying as U.S. American by culture between 18-25 years old, and studying abroad for one semester or less. As a product of the results reported in Chapter 4, nine findings have emerged as new contributions to the literature. The following discussion throughout this findings section applies specifically to the sample studied and do not necessarily apply in a generalizable fashion to all students who study abroad. These findings are presented through the three, primary and guiding research questions as discussed in Chapter 1 and previously in this chapter.

Findings Germane to Primary Research Question 1: Do Traditionally-Aged, Undergraduate Student Risky Behavioral Decisions Change Between the Collegiate Environment and the Study Abroad Environment? If so, How?

There are two findings as a result of this study that prove germane to Primary Research Question 1, presented as Findings 1 and 2.

Finding 1: Traditionally-Aged Undergraduate Students do Engage in Riskier Behaviors While Abroad as Compared to their Behavior in the Home Context

The data presented in Table 4 shows each, unique domain of risk correlated positively from the pre-study abroad context and to the during study abroad context, including the total risk score. The importance of this finding brings this study into alignment with the literature in the spring break and tourism areas of study (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez & Yu, 2002; Josiam, Hobson, Dietrich & Smeaton, 1998; Lee, Maggs, & Rankin, 2006). More importantly, this finding may prove helpful for study abroad administrators reporting data into The Forum on Education Abroad's (2015) critical incident database. Administrators might use this information to

conceptualize where to focus pre-departure programming efforts and during study abroad incident information.

This contribution is unique in that it compares not just risky behavior while abroad, but risky behavior abroad in direct comparison to the risk domains within the home context. Not only do undergraduates engage in risky behavior while abroad, but also, they do it at higher rates than while at home. This finding contradicts the research by Riberio and Yarnal (2011) whose work posited that collegiate risky behaviors were perceived to be higher during travel, but that the actual rates of risky behavior engagement were not elevated. Given that all of the data was collected post-hoc, it would behoove researchers to repeat a similar study but from a time-series perspective, taking measurements in real-time.

Finding 2: Students Who Engage in Risky Behaviors Prior to Studying Abroad Engage in Even Riskier Behaviors While Studying Abroad

Represented in Table 5, the regression results support the finding that higher engagement in pre-study abroad total risky behaviors predicts a higher total risk score during the study abroad experience. This demonstrates a possible penchant for students who already like to take risks to feel freer to do so in the study abroad context. This highlights the importance of identifying student behavioral trends in the admission or pre-departure stages of a study abroad experience.

Pragmatic application of this finding for real-life study abroad preparations is essential, noting that even though high statistical significance was observed, the magnitude of the positive change is small (See Figure 3). Therefore, in practice this finding may not hold as strong of real-world implications as the statistical evidence purports. This finding supports the research by Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer, and Lee (2010) who stated that students who already

engage in risky behaviors in their home environment may have a predisposition to self-select into study abroad experiences.

Findings Germane to Primary Research Question 2: Does Age, Gender, or Previous Alcohol Use Impact Students' Risky Behavior While Studying Abroad?

Three findings germane to addressing research question 2 have arisen from the results of this research, labeled as Finding 3, 4, and 5.

Finding 3: Students Aged 21-24 Make Less Risky Choices Than Those Aged 18-20 During Study Abroad

Per the information reported in Table 6, when controlling for both pre-study abroad total risk score and being aged 21-24 years, a significant and negative effect of age on study abroad score showed that these students were far less likely to engage in risky behaviors than their younger peers. While they are far less likely to engage in risky behaviors, they were not devoid of risky behaviors. This finding appears to be a unique contribution to the study abroad literature from a holistic risk perspective.

Practitioners can take note of this finding in designing pre-departure programming and during study abroad check-ins with students. Study abroad administrators should exercise caution when leaning on older students to mentor or take responsibility for younger students because to do so could deny the older students full and unimpeded access to their own experiences. However, study abroad administrators should also note that older students still take risks while abroad, just less of them.

Finding 4: Cis-Gender Men Make Riskier Behavioral Choices Than Students of Other Genders Only When Already Making Risky Behavioral Choices in The Home Context

The results from this sample do not show statistical significance that cis-gender men make riskier behavioral choices abroad when controlling only for cis-gender male identity. However, as shown in Table 7, when cis-gender men had also reported higher pre-study abroad risky behavioral choices, this gender identification proves a component of an overall statistically significant model. This echoes Finding 2 in this study in that a penchant for risky behavior correlates to even riskier behavior abroad.

This finding lends support to Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer, and Lee's (2010) conclusion that men who already engage in high risk drinking behaviors may have a predisposition to self-select into study abroad programs. This finding loosely aligns with Thurnell-Read's (2011) research which reported that men who travel abroad, specifically in a *communitas*, tend to perform bravado-based behaviors. Much remains to be learned about the effect of gender on risk in study abroad, especially from a broader based definition of gender.

Finding 5: Pre-Study Abroad Alcohol Risky Behaviors Serve as Important Predictors of Risk-Taking Behaviors During Study Abroad

Reported in Table 8, pre-study abroad alcohol risk serves as a highly significant predictor of overall engagement with risky behaviors across all risk domains during study abroad. Given the previous tests as discussed in Findings 3 and 4, the driving factor for predictive risky behavior during study abroad appears to be alcohol related. This is critical for understanding how to best prepare students for their study abroad experience.

Alcohol-related risky behaviors amongst college students weighs heavily on the minds of higher education administrators and researchers alike, and this finding contributes to the ever-

growing body of literature that worries about risk in this area (American College Health Association, 2015; Lee, 1999; Ribeiro & Yarnal, 2011). Higher education administrators working in many subfields such as health promotion, residence life, fraternity and sorority life, and student conduct have spent their careers attempting to combat and reduce alcohol risk amongst college students. Understanding this finding means that administrators should not only spend time with alcohol-related harm reduction activities with students in pre-departure, administrators should also tie that education directly to harm reduction across all risk domains. This finding contributes to the plethora of others that affirm this ongoing challenge.

Findings Germane to Primary Research Question 3: With Which Components of Liminality Do Students Self-Identify as Having Experienced While Studying Abroad?

Three findings have emerged as a result of this study that pertain to research question 3, labeled as Findings 6, 7, and 8.

Finding 6: Self-Reporting Experiences in Liminal Space Directly Relates to an Increase in Risky Behaviors During Study Abroad

This evidence, presented in Table 9, illustrates an important picture in which as the level of agreement that the sojourner felt the tenets of liminal space rose, so did the level of engagement with risky behavioral decisions during study abroad. Specifically, the tenets of changing one's personality and taking at least one self-identified risk during the study abroad experience correlated most significantly across the five domains of risk in this study. Essentially, feeling the presence of liminal space suggests more freedom for risk-taking.

Although only a small portion of the sample reported changing their personality abroad, for those who agreed that they did so, a statistically significant rise in academic, financial, alcohol-related, and total risk score was observed. A large portion of the sample agreed or

strongly agreed that they took at least one risk during the study abroad experience which in turn correlated highly statistically significantly with rises in academic, financial, alcohol, and total risk. For both of these tenets of liminality, significance was found in the same domains of risk. This supports the finding that a rise in liminality relates to a rise in risky behaviors, but only in those particular domains.

This finding aligns somewhat with Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu's (2002) work on spring break and risky behaviors. Spring break is situated differently than, but still adjacent to, study abroad because of the lack of academic intention and the presence of social risk taking as an expectation. They reported an increase in alcohol use, other substance use, and unsafe sexual behaviors in their inquiry. Echoes of those findings can be observed in this research in that alcohol use appears to rise with liminal space. However, this study did not reveal significance for the variables of intimate relationships nor other substance use when correlated to liminality whereas Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu do report these domains as significant, though without the liminal conceptual perspective.

Finding 7: Self-Reporting a Lack of Liminal Experience Correlates to a Decrease in Risky Behaviors During Study Abroad

As noted in Table 10, the negative relationship between the during study abroad risk scores and the variables associated with a lack of liminal space holds strong statistical significance. Therefore, for this sample, not only do students studying abroad demonstrate higher risk-taking behaviors when liminality is present, but also those students who self-identify as not experiencing liminal space appear to engage in less risk-taking behaviors overall during the study abroad process. In the inverse of Finding 6, this suggests that the lack of liminal space may constrict risk-taking behaviors.

This finding is unique to this research and opens the query as to why some subjects in this sample strongly identified with the tenets of liminality whereas others reported no familiarity with liminal space. Regardless of the contributing factors of why a traveler might find themselves betwixt a liminal space or not, the importance of this negative correlation calls to question whether the value of study abroad changes or looks different for participants dependent on whether they did or did not enter into a liminal mindset. Liminal space relates to whether or not a traveler engaged in risk-taking choices, and those risk-taking choices may have the power to delimit the study abroad experience for good, bad, phenomenal, or ugly.

Finding 8: Not All Choices in Liminal Space are Risky

The conceptualization of risk throughout this study centers on behaviors that typically result in negative consequences. However, risky behaviors, especially those enabled by the betwixt and between, can encourage personal growth and learning. As exhibited in Table 9, experiencing the tenets of liminality inconsistently resulted in statistically significant increases in risk taking behaviors. Nonetheless, experiences in the betwixt and between are significantly correlated to study abroad risk score for at least one element in each of the five domains of study abroad risk. Of interest, with over the significant majority of survey respondents reporting they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt free to try new things while studying abroad, and over two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed that they pushed their own boundaries. Therefore, while the experience of liminal space was salient, the reported behaviors did not always result in significance across the five domains of risk.

When examining the data reported in Table 11, feeling free to try new things was not a significant predictor in explaining a rise in total study abroad risk score. The juxtaposition of respondents clearly identifying the feelings of liminal freedom and the lack of statistical

significance of freedom in the model support the finding that not all liminal choices equate to risky ones. Instead, this may reveal that the betwixt and between may simply mean finding oneself open to new experiences. This aligns with Zimmermann and Neyer's (2013) work that identified the study abroad experience's positive relationship to feelings of general openness and agreeableness. In addition, previous research has highlighted that liminal space has played a role in constructive decision making and personal development in the study abroad context (Sydnor, Sass, Adeola, & Snuggs, 2014). The interesting misalignment between the result reported in Table 9 that self-identifying liminal experiences align with an increase in risk-taking behaviors and the data in Table 11 that liminality tenets do not significantly contribute to study abroad total risk score, the data supports that liminal choices do not necessarily mean risky choices.

Finding Germane to the Overarching Purpose of this Study

Study abroad risky behavioral choices were best explained by self-reporting engaging in at least one risky behavior in combination with pre-departure risky behavioral choices. This can be observed in Table 11. This critical component of this finding shows that the tandem contribution of pre-study abroad personal choices with the intersection of liminal space really comprise the primary ingredients for future risky behavior when the study abroad experience finally arrives. The recipe for risk is not just previous risk or the presence of liminal space. The recipe for risk, significantly, is both.

Recommendations for Practice

One of the goals of this research has been to create inquiry useful for practitioners working with students studying abroad and study abroad programs. These recommendations from this research may be particularly useful for study abroad administrators seeking to reduce adverse experiences for students abroad and focus the experience on holistic student and global

citizenry development. Based on these major findings, public administrators working within higher education can focus both practice and policy for students preparing to study abroad and with students amidst their study abroad experiences. Ranging from particular programmatic elements to focused curriculum essentials and institutionally based policy, the following recommendations can assist practitioners.

Practice Recommendation 1: Expand existing Pre-Departure Education on Harm Reduction Related to Risky Behaviors Across all Risk Domains

As described in Chapters 1 and 2, pre-departure orientation programming for students, whether originating from a higher education institution or a study abroad private provider, lacks consistency and sometimes depth across industry practice (Marcantonio, Angelone, & Swirsky, 2020; McCauslin, 2015; Tillman, 2014). By understanding the risk-taking behaviors commonly engaged in during the study abroad experience, pre-departure programming can be re-tailored towards prevention and education on the five subdomains of risk: academic, financial, relationship, alcohol, and other substances. Most study abroad administrators already present harm reduction information on sexual violence through which a student may experience victimization, but do not discuss sexual risk-taking behaviors through which a student may place their health at risk. Shifting pre-departure education towards healthy sexual behaviors and safe sexual practices could help to reduce risk-taking behaviors during the study abroad experience. This practice would align with the evidence for general harm reduction practices in higher education for these domains, detached from the study abroad experience and embedded in daily collegiate life (Patrick, Lee, & Neighbors, 2014).

Given that pre-study abroad alcohol risky behaviors emerged as the one of the most significant factors impacting increased risky behaviors during study abroad, this topic should

continue to be explored during pre-departure programming. Although alcohol harm reduction is currently covered by many pre-departure programs, the literature remains unclear as to the curriculum of that information. Study abroad administrators might consider partnering with other campus-based experts to offer education on substance use and abuse, evidence-based harm-reduction practices. This education can offer information to students that applies not only during study abroad, but also throughout the collegiate experience (Smucker et. al, 2019).

Risk factors from the other domains, academic and financial, seem inconsistent or absent from the pre-departure programming agenda across the industry. Introducing conversations on these topics to students before the study abroad experience such as managing study time, rules for academic misconduct abroad, budgeting for the experience, or managing debt could all help to mitigate risk taking in these domains while abroad. Given that this research's sample demonstrated that students aged 21-24 were less likely to engage in risky behaviors than their younger counterparts, study abroad administrators might consider tailoring pre-departure programming by age group. Pre-departure programming has been used as a best practice in the study abroad industry for a long while, and expanding its contents can help to prevent critical incidents or adverse events during the study abroad experience so that students can retain the core values of study abroad, the development into identities as global citizens.

Practice Recommendation 2: Study Abroad Administrators and Student Conduct Administrators Build Pre-Departure Communication Bridges to Engage in Risk Prevention

Within a higher education institution, the study abroad administrator often organizationally has little to no direct connection with the student conduct administrator. Student risky behaviors in pre-departure can predict do some degree the likelihood that a student

will engage in risky behaviors during the study abroad program. Colleges and universities in practice currently retain large amounts of data on individual student behaviors that have allegedly violated the institution's student conduct code. This data can become invaluable when discerning the best way to support a student or to create interventions for the student to continue to be successful in their higher education careers in their home context. The same can apply to the study abroad context.

It is important to reiterate that not all risky behaviors carry implications for misconduct nor illegal activity. Many reported risky behaviors in this study involved pushing one's own boundaries without any legal concerns. However, if a college or university has prior knowledge that a student studying abroad might have a pre-disposition for rule-breaking behaviors, the study abroad administrator and the conduct administrator may have the opportunity to engage in intentional conversation with a student prior to their departure. Since this study revealed that students who already engaged in risky behaviors pre-departure were more likely to do the same abroad, this simple connection between administrators and subsequent prevention conversations with the student could prevent risky behaviors that could lead to citation, arrest, incarceration, or deportation. As such, implementing a simple student conduct history check before a student studies abroad could create a rich opportunity for a student to be setup for success in a more personalized way as they embark on their abroad experience.

Practice Recommendation 3: Normalize Liminality and Provide Opportunities for Students to Share their Decision-Making within Liminal Space

Study abroad administrators prepare students for their abroad experiences through a myriad of topics in pre-departure programming. The experience of liminal space for sojourners existed for most of the respondents in this study, and more specifically in feeling free to try new

things, pushing one's own boundaries, and engaging in at least one risky behavior while abroad. Anecdotally, this experience has been rarely named in practice. Naming the potential for liminal space to appear for travelers may help to normalize and label the newfound boundarylessness that may lead to unhealthy risky behaviors.

Those responsible for pre-departure programming might prepare students by labeling liminal space and exploring with students a myriad of different ways to push boundaries and explore identity without serious or irreversible, negative consequences. As I was building this research, each time I shared that I wanted to study risky behaviors during the study abroad experience with a study abroad alumni, their faces would brighten and then they would proceed to tell me the story of the one thing that they did while abroad that they would have never done at home. They would also share that their peers had done something similar, and they were glad to hear this was a normalized enough phenomenon to warrant scholarly research. Since the results of the research support that risky behaviors in liminal space has emerged as fairly common, the practice of dialoguing about liminality may also need to become commonplace.

In practice, both students about to depart and students recently returning might be connected to engage in storytelling and peer mentorship. This would provide opportunities for students returning from an abroad experience to tell their story, debrief their experience, and talk about its meaning. Pragmatically, it may make sense first for a cohort of returning students to do this amongst themselves before translating that experience for others. However, administrators should exercise caution that this type of exercise does not encourage unhealthy risky behaviors, but rather reflects on the reality of liminality.

Study Limitations

As with all research, this study's limitations can constrain generalizability and application to broader contexts. First, the criteria for participation in the study limited participants to specific boundaries: aged 18-24; earning a first bachelor's degree; studying abroad between 2017-2019; study abroad experience lasting one semester or shorter; identifying culturally as a U.S. American; and originating from one, specific regional university. These boundaries created assumptions for the sample of having shared baseline, collegiate experiences which created strength for consistency in the study's design.

Simultaneously, these boundaries may make the study less generalizable than if a region-wide or country-wide sample had been used. These sample restrictions mean the results exclude the experiences of students 25 years of age and older, graduate students, students who studied abroad in 2016 or before, travelers identifying as primarily culturally from any of the other 194 recognized countries, or students from other colleges and universities across the country. The U.S. American cultural identity component of this study should be noted specifically because this study's results may not apply to students studying abroad with other national origins. This study examined students going abroad only and did not consider students studying abroad in which the United States is their study abroad destination.

This study did not explore the role of racial identity in the risky behavior during study abroad space. To include this identity-based frame, significant thoughtfulness around baseline risky behavior would have required in-depth considerations on intractable issues like systemic racism in both the United States and the countries in which students studied abroad, mass incarceration rates of people of specific racial identities, and the role of racial profiling during

travel. As such, while incorporating racial identity into the study could have added significance and meaning, the scope of this study would have become unmanageable.

Intended to open the exploration into the world of study abroad risk, the survey instrument constructed for this study used theoretical anchoring in known, collegiate risky behaviors and known tenets of liminality. However, the instrument was original and remains statistically unvalidated. This study examined both short-term and mid-term study abroad lengths as acceptable for the study. Liminality and liminal space may be more common or have a stronger effect in short-term study abroad compared to mid-term study abroad. These limitations along with the major findings of this research inform the recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research has contributed to the growing body of literature at the intersection of research surrounding collegiate student risky behaviors and study abroad. An intentional exploratory and non-experimental design created the foundation for this research. As such much room for future exploration has been left and additional questions for investigation have arisen as a result of this study. Based on the major findings and the limitations of this study, seven recommendations for future research have emerged.

Future Research Recommendation 1: Repeat this Study Using a Repeated Measures, Longitudinal Design

This study's post-hoc design left room for self-perception error in participants' recollection of their perceptions of risky behavior. Recalling one's choices up to two years after experiencing them as this study has done may have resulted in different reporting of risky behaviors than if the information had been collected as the experiences were occurring. A time-

specific, longitudinal design in which participants are surveyed about their risky behavioral choices during the actual semester prior to their study abroad program and then again at the conclusion of their study abroad experience may yield more accurate results of one's self-perception of risk. In addition, a third time series measurement upon return from study abroad, perhaps a few months after arriving home, may help to explore whether risky behavioral choices reach some sort of calibration with the pre-departure study abroad risk choices. A similar or purely repeated study risks also duplicating the limitations of the study, so perhaps future research might seek first to validate the instrument first.

Future Research Recommendation 2: Use an Experimental Design with Two Cohorts – the First with Study Abroad as the Intervention and the Second with Those Staying Home as a Control Group

This research's design did not include an experimental element. While the both social equity issues and logistics of arranging an experimental study might become overwhelming, value in being able control for who studies abroad and who does not could yield some interesting results. For example, if a researcher might design an experiment in which two groups of students take the survey on risky behaviors in a time series, but one group stays home and the other studies abroad, the data collected could be analyzed in direct comparisons for the risky behavioral differences between study abroad and staying home. This type of design might assist in eliminating factors that could bias the study such as simply being enrolled in college or aging since the cohorts could all be matriculated, and everyone would age across the same time scale. Of course, experimental design with human subjects comes with significant flaws since human behavior is complex, environments are complex, and those are likely not controllable.

Future Research Recommendation 3: Strengthen the Definition of Students'

Conceptualization of Risk and Risky Behavior

One of this study's unique contributions to the existing discourse on student behavior and study abroad comes from centering the definition of risk on self-reporting in pre-defined domains and through brief storytelling. Some of the richest data from this study has yet to be analyzed for thematic meaning. However, in even selecting quotations to lead the major findings of this study, it has become clear that students conceptualize risk much differently than the literature has traditionally conceptualized risk. The literature has tended to dictate risk from a specific health framework, whereas subjects in this study reported risk throughout the five domains which did not exclusively encapsulate physical risk. The individual contributions of each of the domains to predict overall study abroad score might be further explored through empirical inquiry.

Having a better understanding of which risk domains matter most in predicting study abroad risk-taking could be invaluable to practitioners. Some students offered stories of pushing their comfort zones whereas others offered accounts of behaviors that placed their health or safety at risk. Few other studies have conceptualized risk specifically for the overall study abroad context, they are inconsistent between themselves and this study (Luethge, 2004; Josiam, Hobson, Dietrich, & Smeaton, 1998; Pedersen et. al, 2010). Further research on how students who study abroad conceptualize risk should be conducted to understand healthy growth and boundary pushing in contrast to unhealthy risks that may place the student in danger. This may be best accomplished through a constructivist or interpretivist study using narrative inquiry or ethnography.

Future Research Recommendation 4: Investigate Further a Stronger Understanding of how to Study the Phenomenon of how People Experience Liminality and Liminal Space

As discussed in finding eight, while at least one significant statistical relationship was found within all risk domains and liminality tenets, it was not unanimous across the tenets of liminality. Some of the study abroad risk domain scores correlated with some of the tenets of liminality, but these inconsistencies leave room for future investigation. Very few research studies have framed liminal space through the perspective of the study abroad experience, and this may be the only research to do so using specifically the short-to-midterm study abroad experience.

Additional research on how to study the concept of liminality may contribute to the literature in a way that paves a pathway for future researchers to understand why and in what context the rules of a student's home environment do and do not apply. Perhaps more interestingly, an opportunity to understand what decision-making looks like in liminal space can help to uncover whether liminality results in riskier behavior, or just new behaviors. Going one step further, additional inquiry as to the factors that contribute to whether or not a sojourner experiences liminality should be investigated. The literature does not yet address why someone in the study abroad context might experience liminal space when other peers may not. There are elements of *communitas* and individual experience to be considered. Understanding this sociological phenomenon in a more meaningful way may lead to study abroad practitioners being able to promote study abroad experiences that anchor good decision making along with the spirit of exploration in the study abroad context.

Future Research Recommendation 5: Include Race Identity as a Component of the Study Abroad Experience and Apply a Critical Theory Perspective

One of the primary reasons for excluding racial identity factors from this study was because a post-positivist epistemology does not allow the research to account for the many critical and social factors that play a role in the lived experiences of students of color. One can hypothesize that the study abroad experience and the ability to engage in risky behaviors while abroad may carry different implications for students of color. Systemic oppression of people of color exists world-wide and particularly in the Western world. As such, a study that takes into account a plethora of factors affecting students of color might be approached through a critical race theory perspective.

U.S. American students of color studying abroad have the opportunity to enter other countries in which they can become the racial majority rather than the racial minority. U.S. American students of color may also choose to go abroad where they remain a racial minority, but wherein the systems of oppression have different roots, different implications for moving through the world, and therefore the risks associated with certain types of risky behaviors have different implications. The level of care necessary for this type of study must be undertaken with intentionality toward ethical and inclusive treatment for students of color in research. This type of study may be best approached through a critical theory-based ethnography by a scholar of color.

Future Research Recommendation 6: Focus Research on The Experiences of Cis-Gender Women, Transgender, Gender Non-Binary, Gender Fluid, and Other Gender Identities Through a Critical Lens

As reported in the findings section, much of the literature has focused on the risky experiences of cis-gender men even though cis-gender women study abroad at significantly higher rates than cis-gender men. Cis-gender women's' experiences could be examined through a critical feminist perspective and consider factors like personal safety or alcohol consumption that may be much different dependent on gender presentation. People identifying as transgender, non-binary, gender-fluid, gender-queer, or another gender have very rarely had their experiences represented in the study abroad literature (Bryant & Soria, 2015). Using queer theory or other critical frameworks, bringing these stories forward and studying study abroad risk with these identities at the core of the work, administrators and researchers stand to learn much about how to support and prepare students here.

Future Research Recommendation 7: Approach the Open-Ended Survey Results in this Study from a Qualitative Perspective

There were nearly 100 stories told from study participants in the short answer, open-ended survey data. These stories could contribute further to illustrating how students conceptualize risk and liminal space. This data has not yet been rigorously coded to discover themes nor has it been examined for trustworthiness. However, a cursory review of the stories told through the survey appear to have promise for aligning with the findings in this study. This was determined by scanning the individual survey observation response stories for levels of agreement with various elements risk and liminality throughout the study. The qualitative data adds a level of richness and depth to research on the intersection of study abroad and liminality.

As a person who travels abroad frequently, I have my own experiences to co-construct with participants. Perhaps an ethnographic and autoethnographic approach might serve the data best.

The following quotations, pulled from the open-ended question on the original survey, function as a starting point for further analysis in future research. They serve as a preview to nearly 100 stories shared in the data collection process for this research. These stories carry the weight of memorable, lived experiences. Stories like these have the potential to mark important or transformative moments in personal development. They are the memories that make a life, and they and deserve to be honored with space here.

“While abroad I learned a lot about myself and stepped out of my shell more.” – 19-Year-Old Cis-Gender Woman

“Being abroad I was not scared to go out of my comfort zone because all the people I met were just people that I knew I could do anything with and not feel judged. I went out of my way to talk to people and meet new people.” – 20-Year-Old Cis-gender Woman

“I went into at an HIV & AIDS testing center, helped conduct testing in a rural area in a community. Risky experience was in a learning environment, and they were things I would not have done back home.” – 24-Year-Old Cis-gender Woman

“I didn’t do anything ‘I shouldn’t do in the states’ other than maybe call my professor by their first name and develop a relationship stronger than that had within the classroom. However, there was a strong sense of maintaining respect for oneself, those around you, and the culture. This respect had long been discussed prior to the trip and it was fully understood before leaving. That said, there wasn’t much room to mess around but I also didn’t feel the need to - I felt the desire to remain respectful at all costs.” – 24-Year-Old Cis-Gender Woman

*“Well, I got punched in the face in Ireland trying to stop an argument between one of the members of our group and an Irish local. But I feel like that could have also happened at home. Maybe it was just bad timing, bad luck, and *one* too many pints of Guinness on everyone's part. Ironically, though, I was sober!” – 21-Year-Old Cis-gender Man*

“I went out to the bars almost every night while I was in China. Here in America I rarely go at all. Since drinks were cheap, I definitely drank more than I would have back home, too.” – 24-Year-Old Cis-gender Man

“At the time of my study abroad experience, I was a 23 year old woman among 17-20 year old freshman/sophomore college students. I was the oldest in the program by at least 2 years. There were times where I went to clubs and drank until I puked. I frequently played drinking games

with friends at their apartments, bars, and even in public in the city where I was living because it was fun and I wanted to fit in. That is not something that I have done since I was 19-20 years old, especially because I was planning on student teaching the semester I got back and was accustomed to putting work/my image first.” – 23-Year-Old Cis-Gender Woman

“I went to a[n] Onsen with all of my guy friends. We were all naked together in a bath. In America, I would have never done that. However, in Japan, the culture is that doing this activity is normal and relaxing. This shortly became routine with my friend group. All of us were from different countries as well.” – 22-Year-Old Cis-Gender Man

Conclusion

This original research, through its exploratory nature, has set the stage for the problem related to undergraduate risky behavioral choices during the experience. After investigating literature related to domestic risky behavior, the concept of liminality, collegiate study abroad, and the intersections of tourism, an opportunity to connect these phenomena materialized. I conducted a quantitative study to examine the nature of undergraduate risky decision making while studying abroad from a single institution of origin. The research conducted used a post-positivist, non-experimental design, survey study to investigate the phenomenon at hand. Using statistical tests to analyze the dataset, this study resulted in major findings that have implications for public managers working as higher education administrators in study abroad programs and student conduct programs.

Nine major findings emerged from this study within the context of the core research questions, of which the most novel was that both the contributing factors of experiencing liminal space in tandem with a pre-disposition for risky behaviors serve as significant predictors of whether students will or will not take risks while abroad. From the nine major findings, three recommendations for practice and seven future research opportunities were presented that may help to inform how this area of the research may continue to evolve.

Ultimately, research in this area serves to help higher education public administrators best prepare students for their abroad experiences. This research and its major findings should not be misconstrued as an argument against the important practice and rite of passage that is collegiate study abroad. Rather it should be used to investigate further study abroad risk and liminal space and to enhance higher education administration practice to offer specific preparation and support to students entering this space of intellectual and personal growth. The sojourn and the inherent risks within it can be mitigated with the right preparation, and the risks may lead to the stories that define our lives.

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Appendix A – Survey Instrument

**An asterisk answer indicates that the response invalidates the person from participating in this survey; the survey will take the participant to a “thank you” page and the survey will end.*

Qualifying questions

1. Were you a student at [mid-sized, regional, public] university the semester before you departed for your study abroad experience? [multiple choice]

Yes

No*

2. Which degree were you in the process of earning at the time of your study abroad experience?

First bachelor’s degree

Second bachelor’s degree*

Graduate degree*

I was not seeking a degree*

Other degree*

3. Year you departed for your study abroad experience? [multiple choice]

2019

2018

2017

2016 or before*

I have not departed yet*

4. Duration of your study abroad experience?

One month or less

One to two months

Two to three months

Three to four months

Four to five months

Five to six months

Six months or longer*

5. Age when you departed for your study abroad experience? [multiple choice]

17 or younger*

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25 or older*

6. Academic class standing when you departed for your study abroad experience?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate student*
- Another class standing*

7. Do you identify, regardless of citizenship status, as a U.S. American?

- Yes
- No*

Demographic questions

8. Which best describes your gender Identity? [multiple choice]

- Cis-woman
- Cis-man
- Transgender woman
- Transgender man
- Gender fluid
- Gender queer
- Gender non-binary
- Another gender not listed _____ [fill in the blank]

9. Which best describes socio-economic status?

- Living at or below the poverty line
- Lower middle class
- Middle class
- Upper middle class
- Wealthy
- Another socio-economic status _____ [fill in the blank]

Content Questions

10. In the semester before you studied abroad, how frequently did you engage in the following:
[Likert scale] Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Academic Decisions

- a. Skipped class
- b. Chose a leisure activity instead of studying
- c. Cheated on a test, plagiarized a paper, or other academic misconduct

Financial Decisions

- a. Spent money beyond your budget
- b. Bought something impulsively
- c. Made a reckless financial decision

Intimate Relationship Decisions

- a. Went on dates
- b. Used dating apps to meet potential partners
- c. Had unprotected sex
- d. Had a consensual sexual experience that you later regretted

Alcohol-use Decisions

- a. Drank 4 or more alcoholic beverages at a sitting
- b. Played drinking games
- c. Drank to the point of blacking out or passing out
- d. Drank before operating a motor vehicle
- e. Drank to the point of vomiting
- f. Missed out on something you wanted to do because you were drinking
- g. Lost memories because of drinking

Other Substance-use Decisions

- a. Smoked cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, hookah, or other tobacco product
- b. Used cannabis in any form
- c. Used a prescription drug outside of its prescribed purpose
- d. Used cocaine, ecstasy, methamphetamines, or other “party drug”
- e. Used another substance to have fun or get high
- f. Missed out on something you wanted to do because you were high

11. During your study abroad experience, how frequently did you engage in the following:
[Likert scale] Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Academic Decisions

- a. Skipped class
- b. Chose a leisure activity instead of studying
- c. Cheated on a test, plagiarized a paper, or other academic misconduct

Financial Decisions

- a. Spent money beyond your budget
- b. Bought something impulsively
- c. Made a reckless financial decision

Intimate Relationship Decisions

- a. Went on dates
- b. Used dating apps to meet potential partners
- c. Had unprotected sex
- d. Had a consensual sexual experience that you later regretted

Alcohol-use Decisions

- a. Drank 4 or more alcoholic beverages at a sitting
- b. Played drinking games

- c. Drank to the point of blacking out or passing out
- d. Drank before operating a motor vehicle
- e. Drank to the point of vomiting
- f. Missed out on something you wanted to do because you were drinking
- g. Lost memories because of drinking

Other Substance-use Decisions

- a. Smoked cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, hookah, or other tobacco product
- b. Used cannabis in any form
- c. Used a prescription drug outside of its prescribed purpose
- d. Used cocaine, ecstasy, methamphetamines, or other “party drug”
- e. Used another substance to have fun or get high
- f. Missed out on something you wanted to do because you were high

12. During your study abroad experience, please respond to the following statements:

[Likert scale] Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

- a. The rules of my home environment applied to me
- b. I felt free to try new things
- c. I changed my personality
- d. I changed my physical appearance
- e. My friends abroad were similar to my friends at home
- f. I made good decisions with my friends abroad
- g. I pushed my own boundaries
- h. I did at least one thing I thought was risky
- i. I did at least one thing I would have not felt I could do while at home

13. Please share a story about a time you did something abroad that you would not have done at home. [open ended, optional]

Appendix B – Invitation Letters to Participate in Survey

Invitation 1

Dear [Site] Study Abroad Alumni,

You are receiving this message because you have been identified by the [site's Office for Study Abroad Programs] as someone who studied abroad between 2017-2019. I'm Jill Creighton, a doctoral student in public administration, and I have partnered with [the site] to conduct my doctoral dissertation research on study abroad and its connection to possible risky behavioral decisions.

I kindly request your participation in this research. Nothing you choose to reveal in the study will be shared with [the site's] officials nor with law enforcement, so you can expect your information to remain private.

To participate, please click here to be taken to an informed consent document which will link to the research survey.

Many thanks!

- Jill Creighton

Invitation 2

Dear [Site] Study Abroad Alumni,

Last week, you received a request for your participation in doctoral research. If you have already completed the survey, thank you. If you did not, **your participation is still needed.**

You are receiving this message because you have been identified by the [site's Office for Study Abroad Programs] as someone who studied abroad between 2017-2019. I'm Jill Creighton, a doctoral student in public administration, and I have partnered with [the site] to conduct my doctoral dissertation research on study abroad and its connection to possible risky behavioral decisions.

I kindly request your participation in this research. Nothing you choose to reveal in the study will be shared with [the site's] officials nor with law enforcement, so you can expect your information to remain private.

To participate, please click here to be taken to an informed consent document which will link to the research survey.

Many thanks!

- Jill Creighton

Invitation 3

Dear [Site] Study Abroad Alumni,

This is one final reminder. You received a request for your participation in doctoral research. If you have already completed the survey, thank you. If you did not, **your participation is still needed.**

You are receiving this message because you have been identified by the [site's Office for Study Abroad Programs] as someone who studied abroad between 2017-2019. I'm Jill Creighton, a doctoral student in public administration, and I have partnered with [the site] to conduct my doctoral dissertation research on study abroad and its connection to possible risky behavioral decisions.

I kindly request your participation in this research. Nothing you choose to reveal in the study will be shared with [the site's] officials nor with law enforcement, so you can expect your information to remain private.

To participate, please click here to be taken to an informed consent document which will link to the research survey.

Many thanks!

- Jill Creighton

Appendix C – IRB Informed Consent

Project Title: Study Abroad and Liminality: Examining Undergraduate Student Engagement in Risky Behavioral Choices Betwixt and Between Borders

Investigator(s): Jill Creighton; Kristen Crossney

Project Overview:

Participation in this research project is voluntary and is being done by Jill Creighton as part of her Doctoral Dissertation to examine whether traditionally-aged, U.S. American, undergraduates who choose to study abroad engage in riskier behavioral choices while studying abroad than while in their home, collegiate environments. Your participation will take about 20 minutes to complete a questionnaire. There is a minimal risk for participants. Participants may experience minor psychological distress from recalling previous, poor decision making and/or previous negative experiences. Otherwise, no risks to the participants outside of that experienced in everyday life will be present in this study. Individual participants will not receive any direct benefits from the study. However, participants may feel like they have contributed to scholarly research and the development of the body of knowledge around study abroad. This study contributes both to the public administration and higher education scholarly literature fields. Future researchers and practitioners may be able to improve direct service delivery of study abroad programs to future students based on the results of this study.

The research project is being conducted by Jill Creighton as part of her Doctoral Dissertation to examine whether traditionally-aged, U.S. American, undergraduates who choose to study abroad engage in riskier behavioral choices while studying abroad than while in their home, collegiate environments. If you would like to take part, West Chester University requires that you agree and sign this consent form.

You may ask Jill Creighton any questions to help you understand this study. If you don't want to be a part of this study, it won't affect any services from [the site]. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

1. **What is the purpose of this study?**
 - Examine whether traditionally-aged, U.S. American, undergraduates who choose to study abroad engage in riskier behavioral choices while studying abroad than while in their home, collegiate environments.
2. **If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the following:**
 - Take a questionnaire
 - This study will take about 20 minutes of your time.
3. **Are there any experimental medical treatments?**
 - No
4. **Is there any risk to me?**
 - Possible risks or sources of discomfort include: Participants may experience minor psychological distress from recalling previous, poor decision making

and/or previous negative experiences. Otherwise, no risks to the participants outside of that experienced in everyday life will be present in this study.

- If you become upset and wish to speak with someone, you may speak with Jill Creighton, principle investigator. If you are a current [site] student, you may also access the [site's] Counseling and Psychological Services Center at no cost.
 - If you experience discomfort, you have the right to withdraw at any time.
- 5. Is there any benefit to me?**
- Benefits to you may include: Individual participants will not receive any direct benefits from the study. However, participants may feel like they have contributed to scholarly research and the development of the body of knowledge around study abroad.
 - Other benefits may include: This study contributes both to the public administration and higher education scholarly literature fields. Future researchers and practitioners may be able to improve direct service delivery of study abroad programs to future students based on the results of this study.
- 6. How will you protect my privacy?**
- The session will **not** be recorded.
 - Your records will be private. Only Jill Creighton, Kristen Crossney, and the IRB will have access to your name as having agreed to participate in the study. Your responses will be held separately without your name.
 - Your name will **not** be used in any reports.
 - Records will be stored:
 - Password Protected File/Computer
 - The survey will be issued via Qualtrics software in two separate surveys. Informed consent records will be held separately from response data to add an additional layer of protection in the unlikely event of a data breach.
 - Records will be destroyed 10 years after study completion.
- 7. Do I get paid to take part in this study?**
- No
- 8. Who do I contact in case of research related injury?**
- For any questions with this study, contact:
 - **Primary Investigator:** Jill Creighton at [phone number redacted] or [email address redacted]
 - **Faculty Sponsor:** Kristen Crossney at [phone number redacted] or [email address redacted]
- 9. What will you do with my Identifiable Information/Biospecimens?**
- Not applicable.

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at 610-436-3557.

I, _____ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

[Participants will sign electronically by checking a box in Qualtrics]

[Site] Resources

If you are a current [site] student and would like to seek support, you can visit the following:
Counseling and Psychological Services: [Web address for the site's counseling services redacted]

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual misconduct: [Web address for the site's Title IX and anti-discrimination center redacted]

For all other needs, contact the Division of Student Affairs: [Web address for student affairs redacted]

Appendix D – IRB Approval Documents



Office of Research and Sponsored Programs | West Chester University | Wayne Hall
West Chester, PA 19383 | 610-436-3557 | www.wcupa.edu

TO: Jill Creighton & Kristen Crossney

FROM: Nicole M. Cattano, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)

DATE: 8/12/2019

Protocol ID # 20190812A

This Protocol ID number must be used in all communications about this project with the IRB.

Project Title: Study Abroad and Liminality: Examining Undergraduate Student Engagement in Risky Behavioral Choices Betwixt and Between Borders
Date of Approval: 8/12/2019

Expedited Approval

This protocol has been approved under the new updated 45 CFR 46 common rule that went in to effect January 21, 2019. As a result, this project will not require continuing review. Any revisions to this protocol that are needed will require approval by the WCU IRB. Upon completion of the project, you are expected to submit appropriate closure documentation. Please see www.wcupa.edu/research/irb.aspx for more information.

Any adverse reaction by a research subject is to be reported immediately through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via email at irb@wcupa.edu.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole M. Cattano".

Co-Chair of WCU IRB

WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)
IORG#: IORG0004242
IRB#: IRB00005030
FWA#: FWA00014155

Appendix E – Permission to Reprint Figures from The Forum on Study Abroad

From: "Mello, Natalie" <[email address redacted]>
Date: Wednesday, June 19, 2019 at 10:50 AM
To: "Creighton, Jill" <[email address redacted]>
Subject: RE: FEA 2015 Critical Incident database

Hi, Jill.

[personal note redacted]

And, of course, you still have permission to use the figures from the report that I shared with you back in 2015. One thing to note, however, The Forum on Education Abroad is known as “The” Forum on Education Abroad. In other words, please include “The” (capitalized) when referring to the organization. That is our legal name.

Best wishes in the new job and in completing your dissertation!

Natalie
Natalie A. Mello
Vice President for Programs, Training and Services
The Forum on Education Abroad
cell/office telephone: [phone number redacted]
www.forumea.org
 she|her|hers

From: Creighton, Jill <[email address redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 16, 2019 9:52 PM
To: Mello, Natalie <[email address redacted]>
Subject: FEA 2015 Critical Incident database

Greetings Natalie,

I hope this message finds you well. It’s been a while since we connected! I am finishing up my doctoral work at West Chester University of Pennsylvania.

A long time ago, you had granted me permission to reprint some of the figures in my dissertation from the Critical Incident Database presentation from the Forum’s conference in New Orleans. I have managed to lose that email somewhere, and I’m wondering if you wouldn’t mind re-granting me permission in an email to use those figures in my dissertation. I have attached it so you can see what I had used. It all reads “reprinted with permission” from our previous conversation.

Please let me know if this is possible.

Warmly,
 Jill Creighton