

U.S. STUDENTS AS ACTIVE GLOBAL CITIZENS:
INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION AND COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION IN
SHORT-TERM ABROAD PROGRAMS

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“Not all those who wander are lost.”
– J. R. R. Tolkien

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”
– Mark Twain

‘The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.’
– St. Augustine

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As you may be able to tell by the title, I am passionate about cultures and traveling. I love to travel, to learn about and embrace new cultures, and to meet diverse people. I have been fortunate enough to experience many different cultures, and I want to spread this knowledge now and in the future. Even though I have a lot more to learn and see one piece of advice that all people should realize is that, while the human race does have differences, there are just as many similarities, and you should look for them.

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ABSTRACT

U.S. STUDENTS AS ACTIVE GLOBAL CITIZENS: INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION AND COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION IN SHORT-TERM ABROAD PROGRAMS

by Catherine A. Franklin

With globalization on the rise, U.S. universities are creating more and more opportunities and abroad programs for students to get exposed to foreign countries and foreign cultures. It is imperative that youth of the United States become more accustomed to life in a global society, so the question arises as to whether the abroad experience works. This thesis was primarily about the outcomes for United States students participating in short-term abroad programs.

The purpose of this study was to examine the possibility of a gap between the expectations of international education professionals and the actual adaptation and growth outcomes for U.S. undergraduate students participating in short-term abroad programs, specifically. Recent articles had mentioned or alluded to this rising gap (e.g., Loenhoff, 2003, Rathje 2007) but the issue had not been sufficiently researched, especially regarding short-term programs.

Participants included 95 students with varying student statuses, ranging from freshmen to doctoral students. Out of the 95 students, 77 were women and 18 were men. Each student participated in one of the 2011 summer abroad programs through a large, liberal arts university in Midwest United States. Students completed three surveys, which included demographics and measures of Intercultural Communication Apprehension and Adaptation, either before and/or after their summer abroad program. Questions were developed from past research, and responses were measured using 5-point Likert-type scales.

Based on the results of this study, lower apprehension did predict an increased level of adaptation in short-term programs. While results for the independent data were inconclusive based on the post-hoc analysis, the results for the repeated measures data suggested that short-term abroad programs had a positive influence on students' intercultural adaptability. There were specific aspects of adaptability that were more significant than others, which may mean students are only partially adapting. The data revealed no support for significantly lower apprehension after participating in an abroad program. However, the pre-test and post-test scores revealed equally low apprehension, suggesting that students were already less apprehensive to begin with, therefore giving students less room to improve.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With globalization on the rise, U.S. universities are creating more and more opportunities and abroad programs for students to get exposed to foreign countries and foreign cultures. It is imperative that youth of the United States become more accustomed to life in a global society, so the question arises as to whether the abroad experience works. This thesis is primarily about the outcomes for United States students participating in short-term abroad programs.

The purpose of this study is to examine the possibility of a gap between the expectations of international education professionals and the actual adaptation and growth outcomes for U.S. undergraduate students participating in short-term abroad programs, specifically. Recent articles have mentioned or alluded to this rising gap (e.g., Loenhoff, 2003, Rathje 2007) but the issue has not been sufficiently researched, especially regarding short-term programs.

The first chapter of this thesis begins with the development of the problem, next the importance of the research, and then the predictions and hypotheses. The development of the problem and the importance of the research moves from globalization and study abroad programs to past and current research of intercultural competence, adaptability, and apprehension, and how that relates to the growing problem of globalization and the need for study abroad programs within universities and colleges. The last few sections, then, cover the gap in the literature, as well as the predictions and hypotheses for the current study.

Development of the Problem

Globalization

According to Friedman (2007) the world is getting flatter: “we are now connecting all the knowledge centers on the planet together into a single global network, which [...] could usher in an amazing era of prosperity, innovation, and collaboration, by companies, communities, and individuals” (p. 19). Hurst (2006) argues that globalization is occurring on a numbers of fronts including the economic, industrial, financial, and political. Global economic activities are on the rise, which means the ability to deal with people from other countries and to understand cultural diversity is essential for success in almost any organization (Aycan, 2000; Matveev & Nelson, 2004).

The United States has long been a political force and influence in the world because of its wealth, resources, economy, and stability (Hurst, 2006). However, the U.S. is rapidly facing competition from other economies throughout the world, such as China and India. Competition from these and many other developing countries is imminent. At the current economic growth rate of these countries, the United States could lose its position as the top source of political power and influence in the world. For example, in 2006 alone, Nike made \$9.2 million in overseas sales compared to the \$5.7 million domestically (Spence, 2008). In 2008, Nike’s profit jumped more than 30 percent due to sales overseas (Forbes, 2008). If U.S. companies, such as Nike, want to keep sales up in other countries in the future, they will need to hire people who have had cross-cultural experiences in other countries. Many companies have been sending U.S. citizens overseas to further business ventures, and those employees will need to know and function in the culture well enough to be able to build relations, sell and produce goods, and

make a positive impact. Even if technology and globalization had not made the world a smaller place, the 9/11 attacks should have provided enough incentive to convince United States citizens to gain a broader cultural understanding, as well as be more aware of how other cultures view the U.S. (Friedman, 2007).

In short, an international outlook is becoming a prerequisite for functioning effectively in a globalized society and economy (Pandit & Alderman, 2004). An individual absolutely “must be able to adapt in a new culture to survive the effects of globalization” (Munz, 2007, p. 3). In order to help United States students develop a global perspective and ability, higher educational institutions in the U.S. must provide effective global learning opportunities for its students so that they can compete for global work (especially global knowledge work) now and in the future (Friedman, 2007; Hurst, 2006). One of the main approaches that colleges and universities are using to help students gain a global perspective is selling the abroad experience.

Globalization and Study Abroad

United States students now see more and more opportunities to gain intercultural skills through study abroad programs. Many researchers and authors (e.g. Moore, 2000; Dowell & Mirsky, 2003) have made the claim that a study abroad experience is one of the most valuable opportunities that one can acquire while in college. According to a recent ten-year longitudinal study, students who participate in study abroad programs perform better in school after returning to their U.S. universities (Sutton & Rubin, 2010). The Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOSSARI) Project found a significant increase in student’s GPA after studying abroad. According to an article which summarizes the GLOSSARI findings, students’ “mean cumulative GPA prior to going overseas was 3.24 and their mean

cumulative GPA afterward was 3.30”, while the control group, those students who did not participate in a study abroad program, had a mean GPA from 3.03 to 3.06 (Redden, 2010). Study abroad programs have also been found to improve student’s graduation rates and knowledge of cultural practices and context compared to students in control groups. Even at-risk students have been found to benefit academically from studying abroad (Redden, 2010).

Generally, the hope is that study abroad experiences will help students gain interpersonal skills, linguistic ability, cultural curiosity, tolerance for uncertainty, flexibility, patience and respect. By giving more students the opportunity to study abroad, educators are hoping to provide the next generation of United States citizens more intercultural insight and awareness in order for them to successfully communicate, acculturate, and collaborate with companies, communities, and individuals throughout the world.

Actually, study abroad has long been a part of the academic response for providing students with global and intercultural experience. Since the early 1980s, study abroad programs have been growing in popularity in U.S. higher education (Goodwin and Nacht, 1988). Given the present global trends, it is no wonder that the increase in popularity has accelerated, so one can see that study abroad programs are becoming more and more prevalent with colleges and universities placing even more emphasis on the importance of developing students with global perspectives (Giddens, 1999; Levin, 1999; Marginson, 2000; Walters, 1997). According to *The New York Times*, the number of U.S. college students studying abroad has more than doubled over the last decade, sending more than 205,000 college students to universities all over the world in 2004 alone. According to the Institute of International Education, more than 260,000 students studied for credit during the academic year of 2008-2009.

“As overseas study has become a prized credential of the undergraduate experiences, a competitive, even cutthroat, industry has emerged, with an army of vendors vying for student money and universities moving to profit from the boom” (Schemo, 2007).

There are many different types of study abroad situations within the realm of international education. Students experience various types of study abroad programs, and choose from an assortment of other options. Within each of the programs, there would be options such as classes, lessons, extracurricular activities, weekend trips, and housing (i.e. apartments, home stays, or residence halls). According to Moore (2000), there are many types of abroad programs that range from faculty-led to intensive language programs. The next chapter goes over these various types of programs in more detail. Students in this study could have participated in any of these programs, but in a shorter amount of time.

With the growing number and variety of study abroad programs and participating students, a recent focus has emerged on the matter of efficacy of the programs. Vande Berg (2007) argues, “there is a widening gulf between what U.S. study abroad professionals believe their students ought to learn through studying abroad and what many programs abroad aim to provide” (p. 392). In addition to this gap between study abroad professionals and the actual experiences those programs provide, the situation is complicated by the many different goals and expectations that students bring to the experience. Tarp (2006) describes the four major elements of student expectations and goals, which are 1) to learn a foreign language; 2) to experience otherness; 3) to experience class solidarity; and 4) to develop oneself, which could include a students’ wish to develop their own awareness, knowledge, and skills. Another complication is that, “depending on their expectations, the students deal with external factors in different ways” (Tarp, 2006, p. 161), and will therefore influence the experience. Based on recent studies (e.g.,

Allen, 2010; Tarp, 2006; Vande Berg, 2007), there have been trends that show a divide between what is expected of students studying abroad and what actually happens, based on differences between expectations and the students' unique goals.

Given the increasing need for and prevalence of study abroad experiences and the concern of its outcomes, one may begin with the question, what do students expect from a study abroad experience? One could argue that if a study abroad experience did what it was supposed to do, a likely answer from the communication perspective is that an enhanced intercultural communication competence would be of paramount importance. For the purposes of this thesis, the problem to be addressed is exactly that:

Does a short-term abroad experience increase one's intercultural communication competence? The response should begin with an understanding of intercultural communication competence and its components.

Communication Competence and Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is supposed to improve after studying abroad, at least that is what educators and study abroad advocates and officials probably hope. In a global society, this skill is a desirable commodity. Intercultural communication competence would ease and enhance acculturation as well as smooth the way to produce relationships of all kinds between persons from different cultural backgrounds.

Looking at the communication competence and intercultural competence research, one can see that work, for communication competence in particular, started as early as the 1960s and intercultural competence research showed a marked increase in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Chen, 1989; Cupach & Spitzberg, 1983; Duran, 1983; Duran & Kelly, 1985). Now, with

economic and global trends, intercultural communication competence has become a common topic for research (e.g. Arasaratnam, 2007; Munz, 2007; Rathje, 2007). This growth in research has also produced a variety of definitions, so the following section will attempt to develop a definition that can be used to determine if competence is something that can be acquired from a study abroad experience.

Ruben (1976) stated that communication competence was “the ability to function in a manner that is perceived to be relatively consistent with the needs, capacities, goals, and expectations of the individuals in one’s environment while satisfying one’s own needs, capacities, goals, and expectations” (p. 336). Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) argued that competence at the least would have to include some capacity for adaptation. They state that communicative adaptability derives essentially from fundamental competence, which would be “an individual's ability to adapt effectively to the surrounding environment over time” (p. 35). Many other authors and researchers also feel that adaptability is a universally accepted component of communication competence (Bochner & Kelly, 1974; Brunner & Phelps, 1979; Duran & Kelly, 1984; Foote & Cottrell, 1955). Therefore, fundamental competence is considered a starting point for more elaborate models of competence, which would be most “concerned with the cognitive and perceptual processes involved with the ability to adapt one's communicative behaviors across contexts” (Duran, 1992, p. 254). For Duran, to be adaptable in different contexts is to be flexible with communication style and role in specific situations, to have a wide behavioral range, and to be flexible in general.

Expanding to intercultural communication competence, one finds that Rathje (2007) has produced some of the most in depth discussion of what it means to be competent in intercultural communication. Rathje starts with the belief that there are too many inconsistent definitions of

intercultural competence. Many researchers have different, sometimes even contradictory, definitions of the concept, such as whether or not intercultural competence is universal. If students studying abroad do gain intercultural competence in one country, does this mean that they will also be competent in other countries? Would they be interculturally competent within their own country when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds? Instead of arguing for one definition over another, Rathje focuses more on the broader, interconnected and fundamental issues regarding the concept – the goal, scope, application, and foundation of intercultural competence. Naturally, there are many goals or purposes to possessing intercultural competence, which “range from economically oriented applications that emphasize efficiency to more academic or education-based perspectives that emphasize human development” (Rathje, 2007, p. 256). Each student will have their own goals for studying abroad, which may include a combination of both economic and education-based benefits. The more economic and efficient approach to the argument, according to Rathje, would seek to achieve intercultural competence as a means to more efficient interaction, which means a definition that emphasizes productivity in intercultural interactions, that is, communication. An approach that focuses on productivity would see a study abroad experience as a way for students to be more efficient and productive in their future endeavors and careers. Advocates for this perspective perceive intercultural competence as an instrument and a means to success.

While this is true, and many educators, researchers, advocates, and employers would tend to agree, it seems that most students will also seek out a study abroad program with human development and education-based benefits in mind. Another viewpoint of the concept of intercultural competence emphasizes the importance of effective human interaction with the expectation that a participant’s successful intercultural competence will grow into a noticeable

personal development. Both of these views of intercultural competence could be useful for advocates of intercultural education, study abroad programs, and internships abroad, since all of these experiences usually promise personal development of some kind and success in students' futures. However, according to Rathje (2007), since specific goals for the personal development approach are for the most part left ambiguous, the approach is vulnerable to criticism for being too idealistic, never mind hard to explicate.

This difference in opinion among researchers could be one reason for the gap between perceptions of international educators and the expectations and actual experiences of students participating in abroad programs. This is to say that what one is expecting from the study abroad experience could produce different sorts of concerns about the outcome. Generally, it seems that students would think more about their personal development in a study abroad program, while international educators will think more about the students' future successes. Students and international education professionals may have very different perceptions and definitions of intercultural competence and study abroad programs. Therefore, in order to be of any practical use, a definition that utilizes the human development approach should probably consider including specific goals, such as personal or economic gains (Rathje, 2007).

Another issue surrounding the definition is that of scope: whether or not intercultural competence is a universal concept or a culture-specific one. Rathje (2007) claims that by using approaches that associate intercultural competence with a specific cultural competence, one "immediately render[s] the term obsolete and enforce[s] narrow categories of competence such as 'USA competence' or 'Switzerland competence'" (p. 257). This would obviously not support the observation that some individuals with a level of experience in certain foreign environments and interactions are more adept at navigating through other unfamiliar situations. Advocates and

educators would tend to believe that students who gain intercultural competence while abroad should be able to apply these skills in future intercultural interactions as well, whether they are in one country or another. In other words, intercultural competence is, in itself, a universal concept. While both approaches do have merit, generally educators and employers want to know how able someone is to cope in *multiple* cultures, not just one. Thus, instead of being culture-specific, the scope should be defined as a culture-generic skill.

The argument of universality fluctuates between “two extreme positions that identify either ‘inter-national’ or ‘inter-collective’ interaction” (p. 259). Rathje argues that one should look at intercultural communication as an inter-collective interaction, which would include “the interaction between individual members of specific collectives with their own distinctive culture” (p. 260). However, while the inter-collective model would be more of a broader life-world understanding of culture, it might create the opposite problem; where would one draw the line between a ‘normal’ and ‘intercultural’ interaction? In order to keep from using either extreme position of interaction, researchers should consider students’ personal interpretations and limit the definition of intercultural communication to situations in which the students attribute the characteristics of this process and the problems and conflicts that arise to cultural differences (Loenhoff, 2003). In short, the definition should be focused on the situation and personal interpretations of an individual. Again, this points to the gap between expectations of international educators, professors, and advocates of international education and the outcomes that students experience following their study abroad. The students will gain intercultural competence based on their own terms, their own interactions, and their own experiences. However, because it is difficult to differentiate between all of these different contexts, advocates, researchers, and educators will for the most part focus solely on the culture of another country.

A final issue of debate centers on the foundation and understanding of the term ‘culture’ when used in the context of intercultural competence. After looking at the two main positions, Rathje (2007) comes to the conclusion that a definition of culture suitable for the examination of intercultural competence has to “take into account the internal differentiation of culture but also cannot ignore its apparent cohesion” (p. 261). In other words, all cultures will have differences between groups of people within a culture, but those groups will still be interconnected. Therefore, the definition of intercultural competence would not be glorified as a promise of success nor written off as an instrument of manipulation. After the layout of criticism of intercultural competence, Rathje (2007) creates an elaborate and tentative definition which states that intercultural communication competence “can be defined as a culture-generic skill which is required in interactions between individuals from different human groups who are experiencing foreignness as a consequence of their mutual ignorance of the spectra of differences between them” which will help to create “familiarity and thus cohesion amongst the individuals involved, allowing them to pursue their interactional goals” (p. 264). Simply put, intercultural competence is a skill that individuals need when experiencing foreignness in any context, in order to effectively pursue their interactional goals. With this definition of intercultural competence, a study abroad program becomes even more useful in our global society. By sending students abroad, universities and colleges are gaining globally trained members of our society, who can pursue interactional goals in foreign contexts.

Given this purposefully general definition, one might then proceed to wonder, what are the specific, and perhaps measurable, skills that would be most important for people in order to pursue interaction goals? In this thesis, drawing on long standing precepts in the field of communication, the proposal is that lower apprehension and heightened adaptability are two

such basic and essential skills in the repertoire of the interculturally competent communicator. Both of these skills are discussed below.

Communication Apprehension/ICA

A substantial amount of research has been collected regarding the nature and prevalence of communication apprehension (CA). McCroskey coined and defined CA as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (McCroskey, 1982, 1984). People with high communication apprehension are more likely to avoid communication because of this fear or anxiety, which means they are less likely to assert themselves or approach others (Neuliep & Ryan, 1998). McCroskey (1977) identified four types of communication apprehension: trait, receiver-based, situational, and context-based. Trait CA mainly concerns oral communication and refers to a relatively stable and long-term tendency of an individual toward experiencing fear and/or anxiety across a wide range of communication contexts. Receiver-based CA will depend on the person or group engaging in communication, which may be in a public, interpersonal, or small group setting. Situational CA depends on changes in the environment in which communication takes place (e.g. status differences, boundaries of acceptable behavior). Context-based CA refers to enduring apprehension an individual may experience in a specific context, which depends on the type of communication, such as small group or intercultural communication (McCroskey, 1977).

High communication apprehension is likely to have an impact on a person’s behavior, relationships, the perceptions of others, occupational choice, employment opportunities and education (McCroskey & Richmond, 1988; Neuliep & Ryan, 1998). Individuals with high communication apprehension are also perceived as being less productive, less competent, and

needing more training than individuals with low communication apprehension (McCroskey & Richmond, 1988). In fact, “high communication apprehension [CA] is seen as a potential inhibitor of the development of both communication competence and communication skill, and as a direct sign of negative communication affect” (McCroskey & Richmond, 1988, p. 411). Ultimately, high communication apprehension has a very negative influence on communication and behavior. Symptoms can range from feeling hopeless, frustrated, crazy, and stupid to being less assertive, overly sensitive to criticism, and having low self-esteem; all of which could lead to depression if not treated (McCroskey, 1977).

Based on all of these studies, it seems people with high CA would have a difficult time conforming to their own society’s culture, let alone conforming to another country’s culture. Those who have high CA would have a level of “fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people of different groups, especially cultural and ethnic and/or racial groups” (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997, p. 145). It is not very difficult to suppose that fear of being misunderstood or mistaken can lead to higher intercultural communication apprehension (ICA) in a foreign country or culture. ICA has been described as a situation-specific anxiety arising from the uniqueness of the formal learning of a foreign language, specifically from students’ low self-appraisal of their communicative abilities in that language (Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003). In fact, intercultural communication apprehension has actually been found to be the highest among different types of communication apprehension (Anarbaeva, 2006).

Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) developed the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension in order to measure communication apprehension in intercultural contexts, between people from different cultures. Intercultural communication apprehension and degrees of uncertainty may emerge as a result of the high amount of strangeness and low degree

of familiarity that cross-cultural interactions may generate (Neuliep & Ryan, 1998; Wang, 2004). As expected, the more two cultures differ the more anxiety tends to exist between students. A number of factors can influence the amount of uncertainty experienced during an interaction between individuals from different backgrounds. Factors that may influence uncertainty reduction are expectations, social identities, degree of similarity between interactants and shared communication networks (Gudykunst, 1995). When students are in a foreign country, they will most likely have some form of apprehension and uncertainty due to the high amount of strangeness and low familiarity. Naturally, the more the two cultures differ, the more apprehensive and uncertain one would be. However, the students' reactions will be based largely on the individual and their previous experience and background.

When a person knows the communication style of the other culture, he or she is less likely to be apprehensive when engaging in dialogue (Olaniran & Williams, 1995). Also, if a person knows what the other culture values in communication style, he or she is less likely to experience intercultural communication apprehension. Conversely, fear of being misunderstood or mistaken led to higher communication apprehension in a second language (Anarbaeva, 2006). Additionally, if a student was already apprehensive in the foreign language to begin with, then apprehension when speaking a second language was even higher (Jung & McCroskey, 2004). Clearly, there seems to be a relationship between communication apprehension and ICA. Communication apprehension and intercultural communication apprehension are both components of successful communication when apprehension is managed effectively. One would hope that students studying abroad would develop some control over apprehension in the other culture, thus they would have developed a skill that would reasonably help them to grow as competent intercultural communicators.

Communication Adaptability and Intercultural Adaptability

A second communication skill being proposed in this thesis as a basic and essential component of intercultural communication competence is communication adaptability. Regardless of the situation, appropriate adaptation to a situation is needed to successfully pursue interaction goals. Duran (1992) states that “adaptability is one of the essential characteristics that enables a person to interact effectively with others [and] is one component that aids in the effective and appropriate management of social interactions” (p. 255).

In previous intercultural communication research, many definitions of adaptability have emerged. The conceptual definition of communication adaptability, according to Duran (1983) refers “to the ability to perceive socio-interpersonal relationships and adapt one's interaction goals and behavior accordingly” (p. 320). Delving deeper into this definition, Duran (1983) argues that there are four aspects of communicative adaptability, which include: 1) the requirement of both cognitive (ability to perceive) and behavioral (ability to adapt) skills; 2) adaptation of behaviors and interaction goals; 3) the ability to perceive and adapt to the requirements posed by different communication contexts; and 4) the assumption that perceptions of communicative competence reside in the dyad. All of these aspects point to the complexities of successfully adapting to a culture, and in any communication context, as well as defining the concept validly.

According to Chen (1992), the concept of communicative adaptability also includes “the ability of behavioral flexibility in the process of communication with a variety of people in different situations” (p. 34). Communicative adaptability is “the ability to perceive socio-interpersonal relationships and adapt one's interaction goals and behaviors accordingly” (Duran, 1983, p. 320), and is conceptualized as a dispositional ability and measured at a cognitive level

(Cupach & Spitzberg, 1983), exploring the participant's conceptions and conceptual framework. Therefore, students studying abroad should be able to gain flexibility and adapt to culturally different communication patterns and situations, to some degree.

Communicative adaptability is found within the seven broad approaches of communication competence, which were listed in the competence section, but specifically the fundamental and social competence approaches (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). The other five approaches are social skills, interpersonal competence, linguistic competence, communication competence, and relational competence. The fundamental approach focuses on "an individual's ability to adapt effectively to the surrounding environment over time", which is mostly "concerned with the cognitive and perceptual processes involved with the ability to adapt one's communicative behaviors across contexts" (p. 35). The social competence approach is concerned with "identify[ing] traits that enhance communicative performance, resulting in a number of different characteristics, related to competence" (Duran, 1992, p. 254), such as cognitive complexity, empathy, role-taking, and interaction involvement.

As stated above, adaptability is a key feature of communication competence for Cupach and Spitzberg (1984), and they argue that many of the different approaches that scholars use to understand competence repeatedly imply adaptability as an essential feature. Adaptable communicators can take on roles, show interaction involvement, show empathy and basically draw on a higher capacity for cognitive complexity. Indeed, for Delia and Clark (1977) it is the more cognitively complex communicator who is more sensitive to inconsistencies and intricacies, such as between speakers' verbal and nonverbal channels (Domangue, 1978), and who is also able to manage those disparate parts. Such communicators are more able to predict others' motives and adapt message strategies based upon those perceptions.

In terms of extending adaptability to the intercultural setting, Chen (1992) found that the results about the relationships between communication adaptability and sojourners' ability to cope with social difficulties was consistent with many other researchers' notions of adaptability (i.e., Hawes & Kealey, 1979, 1981; Lundstedt, 1963; Ruben, 1976). These various researchers understood "that communication flexibility is one of the key elements of communication skills for individuals to reach a successful adjustment in a new culture" (Chen, 1992, p. 38). Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) note that the key components of adaptability are the possession of a diverse behavioral repertoire and the ability to adapt to the physical, social, and relational context in different cultures. Therefore, students who have experienced another or various cultures are more able to possess a diverse behavioral range. Those students would be able to readily adapt to different contexts by pulling from their previous interactions within different contexts.

It seems reasonable to conclude that with the ability to cope with social difficulties and adjust to new cultures, students and others who develop or possess these skills will most likely function more competently in a global society, where there are widespread social, political and economic difficulties every day. Combine that with a lower level of apprehension, and those who have studied abroad seem well positioned for competence in their intercultural communication and interactions.

With the idea that the study abroad experience might produce more adaptability and less apprehension, one may wonder how the experience would do that. The argument that follows holds that it is because students have successfully undergone the process of acculturation, where they will have had to develop or enhance these very basic skills.

The Acculturation Process

When a student sets foot in another country, he or she begins a potentially stressful process known as acculturation. Even though some students will participate in orientations and may research the intended country before making the trip abroad, it is difficult to fully prepare for the full impact of living, working, and/or studying in a very different place.

Successful acculturation implies that students have to achieve a certain degree of integration, if not total assimilation into the host culture, which may include adapting to the host country's cultural values and educational system. Cross-cultural acculturation will require psychological adjustment as well as behavioral acculturation through contact with the individuals from the host culture (Cui, Berg, & Jiang, 1998; Jun, Gentry, & Hyun, 2001; Lee & Chen, 2000).

There are three broad dimensions that make up cross-cultural adjustment: interaction effectiveness, psychological adaptation, and culture shock (Ruben & Kealey, 1979). Interaction effectiveness would refer to the behaviors of a sojourner when interacting with people from the host culture, and how effective they are with their social, communication skills (Chen, 1992, p. 33). Psychological adaptation would refer "to the psychological process of acclimating to a new culture" (Chen, 1992, p. 33). Culture shock has many definitions, all of which center on stress (both emotional and physical) and anxiety, as well as feelings of loss, confusion, impotence, and foreignness in a different culture. According to Chen (1992), the only way to "reduce the problem of culture shock [is to] show the ability to cope with social difficulties in the host culture" (p. 34). Sojourners, and therefore students, will go through a process of intercultural adjustment until they are finally comfortable in their new environment (Kim, 2001). However, while feeling comfortable is an indication of successful adjustment, encountering and coping with culture shock characterizes most of the adjustment process (Lin, 2006).

Within the acculturation process, there are two forms of adaptation. Searle and Ward (1990) make a distinction between psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation. Psychological adaptation refers to a set of internal psychological outcomes, which include sojourners having a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health, and achieving personal satisfaction in the new cultural context. A psychological process within an intercultural setting, such as a study abroad, would focus on students' cognitive advances during and after an abroad experience. Sociocultural acculturation, on the other hand, refers to a set of external psychological outcomes that link individuals to their new context. This might include students' ability to deal with daily problems, such as their family life, work, and school.

Therefore, a sociocultural process would be more about the development of students' abilities to cope with everyday situations, as well as their abilities to interact with individuals in an intercultural setting. The more competent one is with their social skills (i.e. interaction effectiveness), the better the sociocultural acculturation (Furnham & Bochner, 1982). However, if students are not being given the opportunity to interact with people from another culture, they will have a difficult time adapting to the culture.

From a psychological point of view, students should have a relatively easy acculturation due to their voluntary and goal-oriented contact (Myambo & O'Cuneen, 1988). However, due to the temporary nature of their stay and their intention to return home, some students may underplay the importance of various moderating factors, such as acquiring language competence and establishing interpersonal relationships, which are known to enhance positive acculturation (Berry & Sam, 1997). In fact, previous acculturation studies (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988; Kim, 1988; Nishida, 1985; Ting-Toomey & Gao, 1988) have identified second language competence as critical to intercultural effectiveness and the intercultural acculturation process. In other

studies, effective and successful acculturation is more than just acquiring a second language. Successful acculturation would also include achieving psychological well being, satisfaction, and social competence by way of a social cognitive process of reducing uncertainty and an affective process of reducing anxiety (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992).

Given the research on acculturation and the acculturation process, it has become apparent that cross-cultural acculturation is a communication process, an interaction between the sojourner and the host nationals. That being said, communication can either ease the way or block the path to one's development. Acculturation starts with, continues through, and ends with a certain level of communication competence and satisfaction, which is realized before, during and after a program abroad. Many factors may influence the process and outcome of acculturation for U.S. students. For the purpose of this thesis, the assumption is that successfully managing acculturation can be predicted in part based on one's original communication competence, specifically low apprehension and higher adaptability. However, another likely outcome of going through acculturation will be the development of an even lower intercultural communication apprehension and a heightened ability and appreciation for adaptation. Being faced with the stress and difficulties of the new culture give one an improved capacity for successfully pursuing interaction goals in the foreign place.

Can one expect that the proposed process occurs or works as hoped? Does study abroad provide a platform for acculturation which does improve apprehension and adaptability, thus intercultural communication competence? If one turns to the extant literature on the outcomes of study abroad experiences, one may have reason to wonder.

Gap in the Literature

In the 1980s, even though U.S. citizens were mostly interested in or able to pursue short-term experiences abroad – 67% stayed overseas for less than three months and 41% stayed within three months –, it was still a decade of popularity for study abroad programs (Study of US Students, 1985). In recent years, this trend has made a comeback. More students are participating in study abroad programs but due to a variety of reasons, a big one being cost, they only choose the shorter stays. Although there has been this sharp increase in short-term stays, students will admit that length matters in being able to understand completely and adapt to a culture (Brewer and Cunningham, 2009). According to these authors, many students report just beginning to ‘get it’ when it is time to return after even a semester-long stay. Therefore, students who participate in shorter stays during the summer or through faculty-led programs are assimilating even less, perhaps not adapting at all. Furthermore, these students – especially those who participate in faculty-led programs – normally are not given adequate preparation, specifically cultural preparation (Goode, 2008). As Brewer and Cunningham (2009) aptly state: “Unless students are ready for the experience, the tremendous potential for intercultural development and transformative learning embedded in the study abroad experience is not likely to be realized” (p. 3). If students do not realize or experience the intent of study abroad programs, then why participate in them at all? How will they efficiently adapt without the preparation and length needed for this process?

As the second decade in the new millennium begins, it has become necessary to ensure that international education also focuses on the intercultural communication aspect. Although much has been written on intercultural competence, there is a rapidly growing need to discuss the best practices and strategies for its development within international and intercultural education.

The objective of many recent conferences and forums within the field of international education has been to open a global dialogue on intercultural studies. It only seems natural that intercultural communication should become an interest within international education. Because of this growing concern for intercultural education and the widespread circulation of students abroad, it has become essential to examine whether short-term abroad programs are reaching their potential in regards to developing intercultural communication competence, which includes adaptability and lowering student's apprehension. The ideal abroad program, therefore, should give students the opportunity to start and finish the acculturation process of discovering a new culture. The overall objective of an abroad program would be to develop intercultural competence and adaptability, which will allow students to function as a global citizen. A student may then be capable of interacting with different cultures throughout the course of his or her lifetime with awareness and sensitivity.

Predictions and Hypotheses

Given the increasing globalization of the world, it has become extremely important to be able to adapt to other cultures, recover from the acculturation process, and effectively manage intercultural communication apprehension. Perhaps people, in general, are becoming more flexible and adaptable and less culturally apprehensive in this ever-changing, globalized planet, or perhaps not. Either way, the importance of adapting to and understanding other countries and cultures has become an essential component to the success and growth for U.S. citizens in the present day. With globalization, then, comes the need for more support and research about gaining competence within the realm of intercultural education and study abroad programs. This type of knowledge and experience prepares U.S. students for the global economy of the future.

While communication competence, communication adaptability, and communication apprehension research has been plentiful, intercultural communication and education research seems to be lacking, especially with respect to U.S. short-term abroad programs. The lack of research, as well as the arguments made in the previous sections, point to three hypotheses stated below:

- H₁: As students' intercultural communication apprehension decreases adaptation will increase.
- H₂: Students who participate in short-term abroad programs will have significantly higher intercultural adaptability.
- H₃: Students who participate in short-term abroad programs will have significantly lower intercultural communication apprehension.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Introduction

Chapter II outlines the methods for testing the hypotheses. The chapter describes the research participants and variables, the various study abroad experiences, the methods for measuring both the dependent and independent variables, and the procedures for collecting data from the participants.

Participants

For the purpose of this study, the researcher obtained a subject pool of United States students who have participated abroad, through convenience sampling from a large, liberal arts university in Midwest United States. The demographics were a mix of male and female, with varying student statuses. The students participated in various short-term abroad programs, experiencing a variety of cultures. This sample population fits well with the study since the main focus will be about abroad program expectations and outcomes. The on-campus student population of the university is over 20,000, and every year, about 500 students travel to more than 30 different countries through the university's study abroad programs. The researcher recruited a sample of students by utilizing connections with the university's study abroad office.

Variables and Measures

There were three variables in this study, one independent variable and two dependent variables. The independent variable for the study was the student's demographics and study abroad situation and experience. The dependent variables were intercultural adaptability and intercultural communication apprehension. Intercultural adaptability was measured by an

adaptability scale, modified and combined from Anarbaeva's (2006) Adaptation Scale, Wheelless and Duran's (1982) Communicative Adaptability Scale, and Furnham and Bochner's (1982) Social Situations Questionnaire. Intercultural communication apprehension was measured by Neuliep and McCroskey's (1997) Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA) scale.

Study Abroad Experiences

There are many different types of study abroad situations within the realm of international education. Students experience various types of study abroad programs, and choose from an assortment of other options. Within each of the programs, there would be options such as classes, lessons, extracurricular activities, weekend trips, and housing (e.g. apartments, home stays, or residence halls). According to Moore (2000), the main types of study abroad programs are U.S. Sponsor/University Enrollment, International Sponsor/ University Enrollment, U.S. Sponsor/Island Program, International Sponsor/Island Program, Intensive Language Programs, Studio Programs, and Non-Credit Programs, with numerous other programs mentioned and more appearing each year. Students in this study could have participated in any of these programs, but in a shorter amount of time.

U.S. sponsor/university enrollment. For the most part, students enrolled in a university abroad with the help of a U.S. sponsor will take classes with regular degree-seeking students at the foreign university with the regular university professor. This means that, generally, students will be required to know the official language of the country. However, English is still widely used in university classes in some countries even when it is not the official language. When taking classes abroad in a foreign institution, students will receive a grade just like the other

students, and will in theory receive no special treatment but will probably be provided advice and assistance from the professor or university.

International sponsor/university enrollment. Many prestigious universities in other countries encourage United States citizens to apply directly to them without going through a sponsoring U.S. institution. Generally, U.S. professors and study abroad advisors will recommend this for students with a strong academic background, as well as a good grasp of the language of the foreign country. This program offers students the best opportunity to further their language learning, make foreign friends, and learn about the host country from their perspective. Normally, these types of universities will provide guidance culturally and academically. However, with this program one runs the risk of the host university not being ready to provide this assistance to visiting international students, and thus having to adjust to the teaching style, expectations, credit system, and a different culture all without the help of the international office staff. Another program subtype is the U.S. university abroad. There are a number of these programs with accreditation that often emphasize international affairs, business, and other similar subjects, as well as give aid to United States citizens with cultural adjustments. Some of the courses are in the foreign language, but for the most part they will be in English.

U.S. sponsor/island program. While island programs are becoming less prevalent in general, with programs abroad that offer the same experience, U.S. universities still offer these types of programs. An Island Program sponsored by U.S. universities or organizations would be primarily for visiting U.S. students who want to take courses abroad for just a semester or year at a university that may not have the staff to provide assistance or to arrange special language courses for international students. They are called island programs because the classes are

specifically made for U.S. students, with little contact with students from the host country. The classes are also geared toward introductory and required classes so that students are encouraged to experience another culture, while also earning credits applicable to their degree and/or majors.

Most of these classes overseas will have a familiar format and similar requirements to those at your home university or organization, so this would be an easier adjustment than the previous type of study abroad program. In a U.S. Sponsored Island Program, your professors will vary between specialists in teaching language and culture, professors from the sponsoring U.S. university, and special guest lecturers. The only obvious disadvantage to this program is that students could end up spending too much time with students from their own culture, either in the classroom or while on planned trips. While students might appreciate and enjoy the safety of interactions and the camaraderie with U.S. students, this also suggests that students may primarily speak English and have fewer interactions with natives from the community. Ultimately, this means fewer opportunities to learn about a new country and understand the culture, and improve their language skills. Obviously if students make a concerted effort to explore the community and use the language, then they will be able to make more progress in this type of island program.

International sponsor/island program. This type of program is an Island Program, similar to the previous type except that it is operated by an International Sponsor, a university or institute in the host country. In this program, international (i.e. from the U.S.) students enroll directly in regular university courses, and are often provided with one-month to six-week intensive orientations. There may also be support available at the university for international

students struggling with the language, one of which could be intensive language instruction. As in previous programs, there are some universities that administer some or all courses in English.

Intensive language programs. Generally, intensive language courses and programs can fall into any of the previous four programs. However, there are some programs that focus only on language acquisition. As soon as students arrive at a host university or special language institute, they complete a placement test to determine their level of proficiency in the specific language. Students will then enroll in the classes appropriate to their proficiency. U.S. sponsors offer the majority of intensive language programs for U.S. students, which could happen during the summer, a semester, or for an entire year.

Other programs. Since many students want to have unique experiences abroad, there are a plethora of other types of opportunities abroad. Again, Moore (2000) outlines other programs such as Studio Programs and Non-Credit Programs, which include Summer Home Stays, Study Tours, Internships, Volunteer Programs, Service Learning Programs, Short-Term Work Abroad, and Teaching Abroad. Moore (2000) also goes over more specific programs in various universities around the world.

Studio programs. This type of program would be for those students who would like to study music, fine arts, or theater. Most of these programs are found in European countries. However some programs offer an abroad experience in Ghana and Indonesia, for instance. They can be for academic credit or simply to practice and develop your skills in a new setting and education model.

Non-credit programs. In addition to these numerous programs that provide academic credit, there are also opportunities for students to experience another culture for practical or learning experience without earning credit. Moore (2000) briefly discusses these non-credit programs, which include Summer Home Stays (summer of cultural, linguistic immersion), Study Tours (guided visits to multiple locations of historical or natural interest), Internships (internships abroad for practical experience), Volunteer and Service Learning Programs (volunteering or doing service abroad), Short-Term Work Abroad (paid jobs abroad), and Teaching Abroad (teaching placement overseas).

Intercultural Communication Apprehension (ICA)

A substantial amount of research has been collected regarding the nature and prevalence of communication apprehension (CA). McCroskey (1977) defines CA as the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with others. Furthermore, a sub-category of communication apprehension, intercultural communication apprehension (ICA), is an individual's level of "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people of different groups, especially cultural and ethnic and/or racial groups" (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997, p. 145). Fear of being misunderstood or mistaken can lead to higher ICA in a host country. When students participate in a foreign language program, ICA can be described as a situation-specific anxiety arising from the uniqueness of the formal learning of a foreign language, specifically from students' low self-appraisal of their communicative abilities in that language (Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003). When communicating with people from different cultures, students may be afraid of not understanding the speaker, even if it is just a different accent, and therefore can become communicatively apprehensive.

The Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA, 14) instrument was developed by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997). This scale was developed to measure CA in intercultural contexts. Each item on the PRICA scale deals with communication between people from different cultures. According to Neuliep and McCroskey (1997), the PRICA retains validity and reliability. Reliability for the original scale, which included 16 items, had a Cronbach's alpha of .942. PRICA was also significantly correlated with the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA, 24), $r(196) = .58, p < .01$, a well-known scale utilized for measuring communication apprehension. The factor analysis produced a two-factor solution with 14 items loading on the first factor and the two other items loading on the second factor. However, a Scree test indicated that a one-factor solution was the most parsimonious interpretation of the factor structure. In this solution, the first factor had an eigenvalue of 8.23 and accounted for 51.5% of the variance. The second factor had an eigenvalue of .69 and accounted for 4.3% of the variance. In the process of development, the PRICA was shown to predict the frequency of contact with persons from a different country, with emphasis on the actual communicative behavior.

Sample items from the scale included statements such as, "Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different cultures", "Communicating with people from different cultures makes me feel uncomfortable" and "I am afraid to speak up in conversations with a person from a different culture". Students indicated how much they tended to agree with these statements by marking a number representing their response to each statement using the following choices: Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; and Strongly Agree=5. The scores of the PRICA scale were evaluated differently than the PRCA scale. The higher a participant scores on the PRICA scale the less apprehensive. Consequently, the

lower a participant scores on the PRICA, the more apprehensive in cultural situations. This 14-item questionnaire, which the authors encouraged communication scholars to use, could be useful in a range of contexts. The scale can be administered to professors, administrators, and all types of students at universities, especially for those people who have experienced a fair amount of cultural interaction and travel. Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) also encouraged the use of this questionnaire in international organizations to predict potential problems in culturally diverse work settings. That being said, an international organization that focuses on study and internship abroad programs would greatly benefit from the PRICA scale. The questionnaire is believed to be useful to communication scholars, as well as government workers and managers at multinational organizations.

Intercultural Adaptation (IA)

While previous research had been done on both intercultural adaptation and apprehension, there were few studies that related the two. One exception was a study by researchers Long and Anarbaeva (2008), who found that results which indicated an increase in adaptability was related to a decrease in intercultural communication apprehension.

As intercultural communication apprehension declines, one would hope that intercultural adaptation develops. Fundamental competence is “the most basic form of communication competence” (p. 35), and is defined as “an individual's ability to adapt effectively to the surrounding environment over time” (p. 35), as well as “the ability to adapt one’s communicative behaviors across contexts” (Duran, 1992, p. 254). The key word in this definition is *adapt* which shows that adaptability “is a universally accepted component of communication competence” (Bochner & Kelly, 1974; Brunner & Phelps, 1979; Duran & Kelly, 1984; Foote & Cottrell,

1955), an expectation for students who participate in an abroad program. For the purpose of this study, the conceptual definition of communication adaptability refers “to the ability to perceive socio-interpersonal relationships and adapt one's interaction goals and behavior accordingly”, and “focuses on the ability of behavioral flexibility in the process of communication with a variety of people in different situations” (Chen, 1992, p. 34). The researcher modified Anarbaeva’s (2006) Intercultural Adaptation scale to include 33 items (Appendix C), which were comprised of questions that measured dimensions of social composure and experience, social conformation, appropriate disclosure, articulation, other adaptation levels, and outcomes of the process of participating in an abroad program. Some of the statements from Anarbaeva’s (2006) scale adapted from Duran (1983) include, “I enjoy learning about other cultures”, “I feel comfortable expressing myself to my foreign friends”, and “I usually feel homesick”.

In this study, students were required to choose their answer on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree, with an additional ‘not applicable’ choice for those students who felt that the statement did not apply to their abroad experience. As found in the results and discussion of Duran (1983), the reliabilities of these factors of the Communicative Adaptability Scale ranged from .70 to .89 with a total variance of 55%. The two umbrella terms for these dimensions are adaptability, which refers to the students experience and ability “to be flexible and feel comfortable with a variety of people”; and rewarding impression, which refers to “the themes of being other-oriented, sensitive to others, and providing positive feelings towards others” (Wheless & Duran, 1982, p. 55). The concept, adaptability was a latent variable since it was not directly observable. The concept was also constituted as a continuous variable, which means a Likert-type scale was a good option for measuring before and after the summer short-term abroad programs.

Procedures

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to data collection. There were minimal risks for students who completed the surveys and the study was confidential. The researcher was able to conceal the emails and names of the students who participated in the online survey. However, the researcher could not promise complete anonymity. Instructions directed students to think of their most recent summer short-term abroad experience.

Students were asked to complete three online pre- and post- surveys – before and after their short-term abroad program – in order to measure the components of their study abroad experience, intercultural communication apprehension, and intercultural communication adaptability. The surveys were created through surveymonkey.com so that the three surveys could be linked together, but filled out separately. The first survey was a short survey to acquire demographics and abroad program information (Appendix A). Then the students filled out both the Intercultural Communication Apprehension Scale (Appendix B), and the Communicative Adaptability Scale (Appendix C). If subjects completed the first survey, then a second screen appeared with the Communicative Adaptability Scale. If this survey was completed in full, then the Communication Apprehension Scale appeared. The link to the three surveys was emailed to students who participated in an abroad program during summer 2011, before and after the summer. The university's study abroad office sent out the surveys for the study (Appendix F). In the email and before the survey, there was a short explanation of the general guidelines, the importance of reading and filling out each questionnaire thoroughly, as well as its confidential and voluntary nature (Appendix E). Before the survey, students were required to read and understand the terms of the study by filling out a consent form (Appendix D). Consent was also assumed if they completed and submitted all three surveys. The researcher thanked students for

their participation after all the surveys and gave them contact information if they had any questions or concerns.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Overview

This study was designed to analyze whether abroad programs had a positive effect on students' Intercultural Adaptability and Intercultural Communication Apprehension. The following presentation of results is divided into four sections. The first section provides the demographics of the students. The second section presents the descriptive results of the study, which includes means, standard deviations, and reliabilities. The third section is the analysis of each hypothesis. The last section closes with an overall summary of the results.

Participant Demographics

Out of the 316 students who studied abroad in summer 2011, which included faculty-led programs, 95 completed the pre- and post-surveys. Forty-five students completed the pre-survey and 50 completed the post-survey. Of these, there were 14 students who were confirmed as completing both the pre- and post-surveys, hereafter called the repeated measures group or data. Each student participated in an abroad program in at least one of 21 different countries listed in Table 1. Some students traveled to more than one country because of the specific program. For the repeated measures group, 4 students went to Mexico, 2 went to England, one of each student went to The Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Germany, and Belize, and three students went to two different countries during their program: Germany and Czech Republic, Italy and France, Italy and Switzerland.

Table 1. *Countries and Number of Students*

England	13	The Netherlands	4
France	10	Costa Rica	3
Switzerland	10	Ghana	3

Mexico	9	Argentina	2
Italy	8	Dominican Republic	2
Germany	6	Ecuador	2
China	5	Japan	2
Czech Republic	5	Australia	1
Spain	5	Bolivia	1
Belize	4	Chile	1
Ireland	4		

There were 77 women and 18 men in the sample with a varying range of student statuses, which are represented in Table 2 below. The repeated measures data ranged from one freshman, one sophomore, 3 juniors, 5 seniors, one 5th year senior, 2 graduate students, and one doctoral student.

Table 2. *Number of Students by Grade Level Completing the Pre-test and Post-test Surveys*

Survey	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	5 th Yr.	Graduate	PhD	Other*
Pre-test	4	5	17	6	5	6	2	1
Post-test	-	2	7	16	12	11	1	-

Note: *indicates non-degree seeking student

There was also a wide range of time that students spent abroad. Table 3 shows the number of weeks students spent abroad and the amount of students in each category. For the repeated measures data, one student spent a week abroad, three students spent 2 weeks, five spent 3 weeks, one student each spent 5, 6, and 7 weeks abroad, and two students spent 12 weeks abroad.

Table 3. *Time Spent Abroad*

Weeks abroad	1-3 Weeks	4-6 Weeks	7-10 Weeks	11-16 Weeks	17-24 Weeks	25+ Weeks
Pre-test	24	14	5	2	-	-
Post-test	24	10	5	6	4	1

There were also varying study abroad experiences, both academic and living conditions.

In the pre-survey, there were 22 students who participated in a faculty-led program. Fourteen

students took classes at an abroad university, and there were two students who participated in an internship. There was one student each for a mid-tier experience, a seminar, and a teaching/observing experience. As for living conditions for the pre-survey students, 15 participated in homestays, 13 stayed in a hotel and/or hostel, 8 students lived in an apartment, and 6 stayed in dorms.

In the post-survey, there were 28 students who participated in a faculty-led program. Twenty students took classes at an abroad university, and there were 2 students who participated in an internship. Five students attended a professional lecture while abroad, and one student participated in a service learning program. The post-survey students had similar living conditions: 17 participated in a homestay, 14 stayed in hotels and/or hostels, 6 lived in dorms, 2 in apartments, and one student listed couch surfing as a temporary living condition.

For the repeated measures students, 8 students participated in faculty-led programs, four students had classes abroad, one student attended a professional lecture, and one student participated in an internship. As for living conditions, there were four homestays, six stayed in a hotel or hostel, two stayed in apartments, and one stayed in a dorm.

Descriptive Results

Besides the demographics and open-ended questions, there were also two different scales used in the study: Intercultural Adaptability and Intercultural Communication Apprehension (ICA), both of which were self-reports. Each showed a wide range of scores and reliabilities, which are shown in Tables 4 and 5 on the next couple pages.

Intercultural Adaptability

The reliability for this 33-item scale for all of the students was .874. Students reported an

average adaptability of 3.77 (SD=.71) where scores could range from 1 to 5, with a minimum of 1.98 and a maximum of 4.84.

For the 14 students who completed both the pre-test and post-test surveys, there was an average adaptability of 3.40 (SD=.92) in the pre-test, and 3.77 (SD=.84) in the post-test. The reliabilities for the pre-test and post-test were .896 and .935, respectively.

Intercultural Communication Apprehension

The ICA scale consisted of 14 items. For the independent data, the mean score for this scale was 4.07 (SD=.12), with a minimum of 3.77 and a maximum of 4.28 where scores could vary between 1 and 5. In this case the higher scores indicated lower apprehension. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .944.

Looking at just the 14 students who answered both the pre-test and post-test surveys, the mean score for ICA for the pre-test survey was 4.08 (SD=.16) and the post-test survey was 4.26 (SD=.19). The Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities for the pre-test and post-test were .905 and .948, respectively.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for Self Report Scales for All Students*

Scale	Reliability	Mean (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Adaptability	.874	3.77 (.92)	1.98	4.84
ICA	.944	4.07 (.76)	3.77	4.28

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics for Self Report Scales for Pre-Post Survey Students*

Scale	Reliability		Mean (SD)	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test

Adaptability	.896	.935	3.40 (.92)	3.77 (.84)
ICA	.905	.948	4.08 (.16)	4.26 (.19)

Analyses of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 predicted that students with lower intercultural communication apprehension would report higher intercultural adaptability. A Pearson product-moment correlation was used for the combined independent and repeated measures data in order to test this hypothesis. Adaptation and apprehension for all data ($r=.517$, $df=95$, $p=.00$) were significantly correlated. In this case, since higher apprehension scale scores indicated less apprehension, the positive correlation serves to support Hypothesis 1. Therefore, students reporting lower apprehension did report an increased level of adaptation.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 predicted that students who participate in short-term abroad programs will have significantly higher intercultural adaptability. This hypothesis was tested by using an independent samples t-test for the independent data and a paired samples t-test for the repeated measures data.

Independent Data

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the independent pre-test and post-test adaptability surveys. There was a significant difference in the scores for the pre-test ($M=3.63$, $SD=.35$) and post-test ($M=3.83$, $SD=.51$) surveys; $t(66) = -1.84$, $p=.04$ (1-tail). These

results suggest that study abroad programs may have a positive effect on students' intercultural adaptability. In this case, the statistical significance serves to support Hypothesis 2.

In addition to the previous t-test, an independent samples t-test was again conducted but instead compared the pre-test and post-test independent adaptation data in five different subcategories of adaptation. It was possible through factor analysis to identify five subgroups in the 33-item adaptability scale: language (8 items), culture (5 items), relationships (6 items), talking (5 items), and comfort (9 items). As one can see in Table 6, there was a significant difference in the scores for the pre- and post-test for language, $t(66) = -1.91, p=.03$, and talking, $t(66) = -1.72, p=.05$. All other categories were not significantly different.

Table 6. *Independent Data for Five Subcategories of Adaptability*

	Mean (SD)		t (df)	p (1-tail)
	Pre-test	Post-test		
Language	2.84 (.73)	3.21 (.82)	-1.91 (66)	.03
Culture	3.81 (.49)	3.97 (.60)	-1.20 (66)	.12
Relationships	3.68 (.52)	3.85 (.57)	-1.22 (66)	.11
Talking	3.91 (.53)	4.16 (.63)	-1.72 (66)	.05
Comfort	3.96 (.41)	4.15 (.57)	-1.58 (66)	.06

Post-Hoc Analysis

On further analysis of the data, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the independent samples data but without the students who studied for more than 14 weeks, the longest length of time students could have studied abroad during the summer. Based on this specific computation, there was not a significant difference in the scores for the pre-test (M=3.63, SD=.35) and post-test (M=3.74, SD=.48) adaptation surveys; $t(58) = -1.00, p= .16$ (1-tail). These results suggest that short-term abroad programs specifically may not have a

significant effect on students' intercultural adaptability.

The same t-test was conducted to compare the independent data in five subcategories but without the students who studied for more than 14 weeks. As displayed in Table 7, there was no significant difference in the scores for any of the pre- and post-test surveys. The 2 categories with the closest significance were talking, $t(58) = -1.23$, $p=.11$; and comfort, $t(58) = -1.21$, $p=.12$.

Table 7. *Independent Data without Long-term Stays for Five Subcategories of Adaptability*

	Mean (SD)		t (df)	p (1-tail)
	Pre-test	Post-test		
Language	2.84 (.73)	3.02 (.82)	-.902 (58)	.19
Culture	3.81 (.49)	3.91 (.60)	-.724 (58)	.24
Relationships	3.68 (.52)	3.81 (.58)	-.870 (58)	.19
Talking	3.91 (.53)	4.09 (.61)	-1.23 (58)	.11
Comfort	3.96 (.41)	4.12 (.57)	-1.21 (58)	.12

Repeated Measures Data

For the repeated measures data, a paired samples t-test was conducted to compare the pre- and post-test adaptability surveys of the 14 students who completed both surveys. There was a significant difference in the scores for the pre- ($M=3.60$, $SD=.48$) and post- ($M=3.78$, $SD=.45$) adaptation surveys completed by the same student; $t(13) = -3.65$, $p=.00$ (1-tail).

The same paired samples t-test was conducted but again compared in five subcategories, i.e. language, culture, relationships, talking, and comfort. As seen in Table 8, there was a significant difference in the scores for three of the subcategories; language, $t(13) = -3.43$, $p=.00$ (1-tail); talking, $t(13) = -1.84$, $p=.04$ (1-tail); and comfort, $t(13) = -2.59$, $p=.01$ (1-tail). Neither of the subcategories of culture and relationships showed a significance difference.

Table 8. *Repeated Measures Data for Five Subcategories of Adaptability*

	Mean (SD)		t (df)	p (1-tail)
	Pre-test	Post-test		
Language	2.71 (.74)	2.96 (.85)	-3.43 (13)	.00
Culture	3.83 (.46)	3.83 (.47)	-.016 (13)	.49
Relationships	3.57 (.75)	3.66 (.61)	-.706 (13)	.25
Talking	3.94 (.72)	4.21 (.56)	-1.84 (13)	.04
Comfort	4.13 (.40)	4.38 (.37)	-2.59 (13)	.01

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 predicted that students who participate in a short-term abroad program would have significantly lower intercultural communication apprehension (in this case higher scores on the scale). This hypothesis was also tested by using an independent samples t-test for the independent data and a paired samples t-test for the repeated measures data.

Independent Data

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores on pre-test and post-test ICA surveys. There was no significant difference in the scores for the pre- (M=3.99, SD=.50) and post- (M=4.02, SD=.70) ICA surveys; $t(65) = -.198$, $p=.42$ (1-tail). Even after the same t-test was conducted in the post-hoc analysis without the students who studied for more than 14 weeks, there was no significant difference; $t(57) = .154$, $p=.44$ (1-tail).

Repeated Measures Data

A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare pre- and post- ICA for the 14 students who completed both surveys. There was no significant difference in the scores for the pre-test (M=4.08, SD=.59) and post-test (M=4.26, SD=.45) ICA surveys completed by the same student;

$t(13) = -1.22, p = .12$ (1-tail).

Summary of Results

The presentation of data in this chapter reveals full support for Hypothesis 1. Higher scores for adaptation predicted higher scores for apprehension (indicating lower level of apprehension). The data also revealed support for Hypothesis 2. While results for the independent data were inconclusive based on the post-hoc analysis, the results for the repeated measures data, which were the cleanest and strongest data, suggested that short-term abroad programs had a positive influence on students' intercultural adaptability. Lastly, the data revealed no support for Hypothesis 3. Apprehension scores after studying abroad were the same as apprehension scores before studying abroad. These findings, their implications, and future research will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section is the summary of the results. The second is the implications from the study. The third section illustrates some limitations and problems in conducting the study. In the fourth section, suggestions for future research are presented. The chapter closes with a summary and conclusion of the study.

Summary of Results

The results revealed full support for Hypothesis 1, support for Hypothesis 2, and no support for Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 1 predicted that higher scores for adaptation would predict higher scores for apprehension (indicating lower level of apprehension). The results showed that students reporting lower apprehension did report an increased level of adaptation, thus supporting the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that students who participate in short-term abroad programs would have significantly higher intercultural adaptability. The results did reveal support for Hypothesis 2. While results for the independent data were inconclusive based on the post-hoc analysis, the results for the repeated measures data suggested that abroad programs have a positive influence on students' intercultural adaptability.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that students who participate in short-term abroad programs would have significantly lower intercultural communication apprehension, in this case higher scores of apprehension. The results revealed no support for this hypothesis, since apprehension scores from before and after a short-term abroad program were both fairly high.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the outcomes for United States students participating in short-term abroad programs. Recent articles and research have shown that there is a possibility of a gap between the expectations of international education professionals and the actual adaptation, apprehension, and growth outcomes for U.S. students participating in short-term abroad programs specifically. With globalization, U.S. universities have been creating more opportunities for students to experience foreign cultures. International educators attest to the long-term abroad experience, but the question arises as to whether the short-term study abroad experience works in the same way. This study was designed to address these questions. The results revealed that students' adaptation does appear to be significantly related to Intercultural Communication Apprehension (ICA). Also, while there was no significant difference between pre- and post-scores for ICA, this may be due to the finding that students participating in short-term abroad programs were already less apprehensive of intercultural communication before they set out on their short sojourn. The other major significant finding was that short-term abroad programs may, in fact, enhance students' intercultural adaptability.

Researchers have hinted at a relationship between ICA and adaptation for at least part of the acculturation process (Wang, 2004; Neuliep & Ryan, 1998), but there had been a marked lack of statistical evidence that tested this relationship, especially for short-term programs. Therefore, it is telling that this study revealed that students' adaptation does appear to be related to ICA. McCroskey and Richmond (1988) do indicate that high communication apprehension is a potential inhibitor of communication competence and skill, so it is reasonable to assume, likewise, that intercultural communication apprehension would be an inhibitor of intercultural competence and adaptability. According to the results of this study, students reporting lower apprehension reported an increased level of adaptation. As previous scholars have proposed,

reduced intercultural communication apprehension could increase the likelihood of successful intercultural adaptation.

While there was no significant difference between pre- and post- ICA scores for before and after an abroad program, thus signifying no support for Hypothesis 3, the results did reveal that students participating in short-term abroad programs were already less apprehensive. If students are less apprehensive to begin with, perhaps there was simply less room to improve.

One possible reason for the similar ICA pre- and post-scores may be due in part to the pre-orientation. Since all of the students participated in the pre-orientation, it may be assumed that this was the reason for lower apprehension before participating in an abroad program. The pre-orientation seemed to help students feel prepared. As stated in the previous chapter, students reported an average score of 4.08 and 4.16 in the pre- and post-survey, respectively. Given these high feelings of preparedness, one may be able to assume that the pre-orientation helped students feel less apprehensive with participating in their specific abroad program. In addition to the pre-orientation, students were also given the opportunity to speak with peer advisors who have had similar experiences abroad which may have also quelled their fears and apprehension before the program. Naturally feeling prepared and less apprehensive does not necessarily mean the students were truly prepared for living in a new country and participating in a new culture, but attending a pre-orientation could predict a heightened level of confidence.

Another factor for students feeling less apprehensive before traveling overseas could be the ever-increasing use of technology. With new technology and the Internet, it can be very difficult to fully disconnect from your life back at home. A majority of students are on Facebook, where they share their thoughts, experiences, and pictures to friends and family. Skype gives students the ability to communicate with family and friends for free, when in the past it was very

costly to speak across great distances. Add to this the ability for students to watch videos and check out websites about the specific country they are traveling to, and it seems very possible that students are becoming less and less apprehensive about traveling to a foreign country. It is simply less of an 'unknown' if they have so many examples and advice at their fingertips, which means less apprehension beforehand and a greater possibility of adapting quicker, perhaps even within a shorter amount of time.

Another likely reason for the similar ICA pre- and post-scores may be due to the specific type of student who participates in an abroad program. As outlined in Chapter I, high communication apprehension is likely to have an impact on a person's behavior, relationships, the perceptions of others, occupational choice, employment opportunities and education (McCroskey & Richmond, 1988; Neuliep & Ryan, 1998). Individuals with high communication apprehension are also perceived as being less productive, less competent, and needing more training than individuals with low communication apprehension (McCroskey & Richmond, 1988). The results of this study might imply that there is a gap in the type of students universities are recruiting to participate in abroad programs. Neuliep and Ryan (1998) found that people with high communication apprehension were more likely to avoid communication because of this fear or anxiety; in this case, students with high apprehension would be less likely to assert themselves and even want to participate in an abroad program. If ICA was based on personality traits, apprehension could easily be resistant to any change over a mere three-month sojourn. Therefore, universities should begin to recruit those students who avoid an experience abroad because of their apprehension. For the most part, an international office will not be able to recruit those students with trait communication apprehension (CA). However, those students who have receiver-based, situational, and context-based CA can be persuaded, depending on the setting

and changes in the environment, such as status differences and boundaries of acceptable behavior (McCroskey, 1977). While it may prove to be a difficult task at first, nervous, anxious, and apprehensive students are the ones who could profit the most through an abroad experience to grow out of their apprehension and to succeed in the globalized world. Symptoms of apprehension can range from feeling hopeless, frustrated, crazy, and stupid to being less assertive, overly sensitive to criticism, and having low self-esteem; all of which could lead to depression if not treated (McCroskey, 1977). While many international offices try to avoid students who may not fit or succeed in an abroad program, it could be those exact students who would benefit the most from the experience.

However, recruiting apprehensive students would probably mean that universities would need longer, more intensive training during the pre-orientation. Because more intensive programs may not be feasible, one idea that some universities are starting to implement is an at-home international experience for those students who might not have the initiative or funds to participate in an abroad program. The idea of an at-home international experience is that students who are U.S. citizens would have the opportunity to interact with and/or tutor international students at the university. Factors that may influence uncertainty reduction, and therefore creating lower apprehension, are expectations, social identities, degree of similarity between interactants and shared communication networks (Gudykunst, 1995). When a person knows the communication style of the other culture, he or she is less likely to be apprehensive when engaging in dialogue (Olaniran & Williams, 1995). With an at-home abroad experience, U.S. students could become less apprehensive of intercultural communication, as they develop communication ease and discover some degree of similarity, resulting in a decreased level of fear or anxiety of interaction with people of different cultural, ethnic and racial groups, and the

possibility of a decision to participate in an abroad program. Thus a student with context-based intercultural communication apprehension, for instance, would be less apprehensive in an at-home abroad experience. The benefits could also be twofold since it may help the international students assimilate to U.S. culture and give them the opportunity to speak with U.S. students.

Another important point, mentioned briefly in Chapter I, is that when any student is in a foreign country, he or she will most likely have some form of apprehension and uncertainty due to the high amount of strangeness and low amount of familiarity. However, those students who participate in short-term faculty-led programs, which were most of the students in this study, will not have the same amount of apprehension, especially if they only interact within their own group. If the student knows going into the program that they will not need to communicate daily with international people, they may not feel as apprehensive as would, for instance, a student living abroad with foreign students for a long period of time in a country where English is not the first language. Naturally, the more the new culture differs, the more apprehensive and uncertain a student could be. However, if those students do not experience the culture, and stay within their own group instead, they will not experience the same apprehension and growth as students who are immersed in the culture for a longer amount of time.

The results suggest that students who normally choose to participate in abroad programs may already have lower apprehension. Based on the relationship between apprehension and adaptability, it seems reasonable to assume that students will report higher adaptability. Indeed, a major finding in this study was that short-term abroad programs could have a positive effect on students' intercultural adaptability, which supports the second hypothesis. This finding seems like great news for international educators. As is outlined in the pre-orientation through the Midwest university's study abroad office, the primary objective of any abroad program is to gain

intercultural competence: the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that lead to effective and appropriate behavior, communication, and interactions in cultural settings. Adaptability is widely accepted as a component of communication competence (Bochner & Kelly, 1974; Brunner & Phelps, 1979; Duran & Kelly, 1984; Foote & Cottrell, 1955). Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) also argue that competence includes some capacity for adaptation, which may provide an individual with the “ability to adapt effectively to the surrounding environment over time” (p. 35).

Naturally any study abroad office would state that intercultural competence, specifically adaptability, is supposed to improve after participation in an abroad program. In a global society, this skill is a desirable commodity. Intercultural communication competence would ease and enhance acculturation and adaptability as well as smooth the way to produce relationships of all kinds between persons from different backgrounds. As most international educators know, more students every year are participating in short-term programs instead of long-term programs. What this means is that students are being given less time to adapt to a culture and move through the acculturation process. A majority of students are participating in faculty-led programs, which give them even less of a chance to experience the culture. For most faculty-led programs, professors and other classmates are the only contacts students have in another country, and in the present study, more than half of the students participated in faculty-led programs. How could the majority of students adapt to the culture, as revealed in the results, when most students are not given the appropriate time to adapt?

There may be a few reasons why adaptability significantly increased. Looking at the independent group data only, there was a significant difference in the score for the pre-test and post-test. These results suggest that study abroad programs may in fact have a positive effect on students’ intercultural adaptability. However, some of the data included students who

participated in abroad programs for longer than a summer program would allow, i.e. longer than 14 weeks. When these students' data were taken out of the equation in the post-hoc analysis, there was not a significant difference in the scores. These results suggest that short-term abroad programs, specifically, may not have a significant effect on students' intercultural adaptability. However, again, there is a caveat in this assumption especially when looking at the repeated measures data.

To reiterate, the repeated measures data is the data that came from students who completed the survey before and after their abroad experience. The results for the repeated measures (all 14 individuals here were part of short-term abroad programs) were the most significant in this study. It was definitely apparent that there was a change of adaptation between the pre- and post-tests when looking at the same student. Interestingly, when the scale was divided into factors, there were only certain aspects of adaptability that reached significance. The three sub-categories that were most significant were language, talking, and comfort; in other words, language acquisition, intercultural communication, and comfort level. The two sub-categories that were not significant were culture and relations; in other words, short-term abroad programs were not as effective for adapting to cultural lifestyles and gaining interpersonal relationships while abroad. While intercultural communication and comfort level may be reached within a short period of time, it seems suspect that these students could reach a significantly higher level of language skill in that short amount of time. At least what the results do reveal is a feeling of confidence in language use, if not real positive language acquisition. Taking into consideration the low level of apprehension that most students had before participating in the abroad program, which is a signifier of apprehension when speaking a second language (Jung & McCroskey, 2004), it seems reasonable that language acquisition could be higher. Previous

acculturation studies (Ting-Toomey & Gao, 1988; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988; Kim, 1988; Nishida, 1985) have identified second language competence as critical to intercultural effectiveness and the intercultural acculturation process. However, the acculturation process usually takes a longer amount of time (and the repeated measures students participated abroad between 1 to 12 weeks) with a majority of students spending only 1 to 3 weeks in another country, sometimes two different countries. As Rodriguez and Abreu (2003) point out, students will normally have a low self-appraisal of their communicative abilities in another language. Why, then, was the language subcategory significantly higher?

One possibility of the higher level of language confidence might be that students who participated in faculty-led programs only spoke English or spoke it often. Out of the 14 repeated measures students, there were two who went to a country where English was predominantly spoken. However, even within a faculty-led program, students predominantly stay within the same group for the entire program, thus speaking English regardless of the country's primary language. Naturally, these students would 'feel confident in completing written assignments' and would be 'confident participating in classroom discussions' if the classes were only with their fellow U.S. classmates. Also, another statement in the language group that would have aided in the higher score was 'I used English in the foreign country everyday', which would have meant less use of the foreign language and a lower possibility of adaptation.

From a psychological point of view, students participating in abroad programs should have a relatively easy acculturation due to their voluntary and goal-oriented contact (Myambo & O'Cuneen, 1988). On the other hand, a sociocultural process would be more about the development of students' abilities to cope with everyday situations, as well as their abilities to interact with individuals in an intercultural setting. The more competent one is with his or her

social skills, the better the sociocultural acculturation (Furnham & Bochner, 1982). However, due to the temporary nature of their stay and their intention to return home, students participating in these abroad programs may underplay the importance of various moderating factors, such as acquiring language competence and establishing interpersonal relationships which are both known to enhance positive acculturation (Berry & Sam, 1997). While students did show some development in the new language, the results also suggested that short-term abroad programs were not as effective for adapting to cultural lifestyles and gaining interpersonal relationships while abroad. Thus, language acquisition may be the reason why adaptability was significant.

Students studying between 1 and 3 weeks may not realize the importance of spending time with international people and making international friends, nor (more importantly) would they have enough time. Likewise, students would not have an adequate amount of time to ‘understand most of the traditions of the foreign culture’ or ‘celebrate the foreign country’s holidays’, thus not fully acculturating. Both of these subcategories may have been significant if students had participated in longer programs and gone through the entire acculturation process. Successful acculturation implies that students have to achieve a certain degree of integration and assimilation into the host culture, which may include adapting to the host country’s cultural values and educational system. Cross-cultural acculturation will also require psychological adjustment and behavioral acculturation through contact with the individuals from the host culture (Jun, Gentry, & Hyun, 2001; Lee & Chen, 2000; Cui, Berg, & Jiang, 1998). Most, if not all, faculty-led programs cannot offer this opportunity to students.

In other studies, effective and successful acculturation is more than just acquiring a second language. Successful acculturation would also include achieving psychological well being, satisfaction, and social competence by way of a social cognitive process of reducing

uncertainty and an affective process of reducing anxiety (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992). As previously stated, there were two other subcategories within the repeated measures data that were significant, namely intercultural communication and comfort level. Both of the means in the pre-test were already high at 3.94 and 4.13, respectively, and then jumped to 4.21 and 4.38 after participating in an abroad program. Because of the already high levels of comfort level and intercultural communication before going abroad, it seems reasonable that students would be more comfortable with the culture and communicating with international people. The high comfort levels and openness to intercultural communication may be in part due to the pre-orientation, which most students said helped them feel prepared both before and after their abroad programs. Indeed, most sojourners will go through a process of intercultural adjustment until they are finally comfortable in their new environment (Kim, 2001). However, while feeling comfortable is an indication of successful adjustment, encountering and coping with culture shock characterizes most of the adjustment process (Lin, 2006). Therefore, one can assume that students did encounter culture shock and coped with it to some degree.

Based on the adaptation results, there seems to be room for some improvement for short-term abroad programs. Based on the results of the non-significant subcategories, it seems that U.S. students who participate in short-term abroad programs do not have an adequate amount of knowledge about the culture and lifestyles of a foreign country. This is definitely needed if students are seeking an accelerated acculturation process, translating into a similar experience to those students who spend a longer amount of time abroad. Practicing communication skills, specifically intercultural communication skills, and learning about the country beforehand might, therefore, help students adapt to a culture and go through the acculturation process more quickly.

Since a large amount of students participate in faculty-led programs during the summer,

the university might offer specific pre-orientations for these students to get them ready for their specific experience. If a university requires short-term abroad program students to participate in a pre-orientation that is mainly geared toward semester-long programs, which is the case in this study's university, it may create false hope for a different type of experience or the student may downplay the entire orientation. In addition to the pre-orientation, most students at this university do not have the opportunity to take semester or half-semester classes to get them ready for a specific study abroad program, especially for short-term programs. If students do take a class to prepare for the short-term program, the main subject of the course focuses not on the culture and intercultural communication style of the country but on their specific subject, such as mathematics, psychology, medicine, or history. Therefore having classes available that simply focus on the culture and intercultural communication of the program's country, or making them a requirement before the abroad program, which some universities have implemented, would greatly improve the experience for students participating in short-term abroad programs.

Another suggestion would be to have an intercultural communication expert help with organizing and carrying out pre-orientations. For faculty-led programs specifically, it might also help to meet with or bring along someone who is from the country and knows the culture. For most faculty-led programs, professors and other classmates are the primary, if not only, contacts students have in another country. If an international coordinator or guide is within the group, students would learn more about the culture and even have the opportunity to speak in the foreign language, making them less apprehensive and having a higher possibility of adapting to the culture and country.

As stated in the first chapter, Tarp (2006) described the four major elements of student

expectations and goals, namely to learn a foreign language; to experience otherness; to experience class solidarity; and to develop oneself. Based on the results, at the very least some of these goals may have been realized. While all of the students may not have learned a second language in full, they most likely have more confidence in the foreign language. Students certainly experienced a degree of otherness, as well as varying degrees of solidarity. Moreover, as with any experience, the students were bound to develop themselves in some way, whether that was developing their own awareness, their knowledge of a country and its people, or their skills in a certain field.

To recap, the results revealed that students' adaptation does appear to be significantly related to Intercultural Communication Apprehension (ICA). According to the results of this study, students reporting lower apprehension reported an increased level of adaptation. As previous scholars have proposed, reduced intercultural communication apprehension could increase the likelihood of successful intercultural adaptation. Also, while there was no significant difference between pre- and post-scores for ICA, this may be due to the finding that students participating in short-term abroad programs were already less apprehensive of intercultural communication before they set out on their short sojourn. Some possibilities for this similarity were the positive effects of the pre-orientation, the type of students who participate in abroad programs, and that most students would not be as apprehensive if they stayed within their own group. The other major significant finding was that short-term abroad programs may, in fact, enhance students' intercultural adaptability. The results for the repeated measures were the most significant in this study, and it was definitely apparent that there was a change of adaptation between the pre- and post-tests. When divided into subcategories, language acquisition was found to be a big factor in higher adaptability. This may be due to students using English often,

but effective and successful acculturation is more than just acquiring a second language. Some suggestions made were for students to take culture and intercultural communication classes beforehand and to have an international coordinator or guide with the students, especially in faculty-led programs. Based on the results and implications of this study, there seems to be room for some improvement.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. First, this study only included data for summer abroad programs. While a majority of short-term programs are in the summer, there are some during the fall and spring semester as well. It may have been strengthened the data to include these students as well.

Second, the surveys could have been tracked better. Although there were more than enough students in the independent data, there were not as many in the repeated measures data. In all, there were 95 students but only 14 students who completed both the pre- and post-test survey. Even though there were significant results from the repeated measures, an increase in the repeated measures data would have enhanced the results.

Third, while the method of self-report was beneficial for this study, it may have had some weaknesses. The university's study abroad office distributed the surveys which means students could have answered less honestly and more optimistically, even though both the consent form (Appendix D) and recruitment email (Appendix E) assured anonymity, confidentiality, and that it would not affect their relationship with the institution involved in the research project. Instead, the surveys could have been distributed in classrooms or sent out in a mass email by the researcher directly. This may have helped with tracking the students before and after their abroad

program as well.

Future Research

Based on the results of this study as well as the previously stated limitations, there are many opportunities for helpful future research. While the results are significant for the specific liberal arts university and may offer insight into international education, it may not be generalizable to other universities, especially since most universities will have very different students, orientations, and abroad programs. Some universities do not even require students to participate in orientation, especially those students partaking in faculty-led programs. To begin with, this study or a similar one could be tested at other universities to see if there are any differences between populations, orientations, and programs across the United States. Students will differ based on the location and size of the university. Universities across the U.S. also provide very different orientations and abroad programs, so it would be interesting to see if there were any differences in adaptation and apprehension as a result of these variables as well as other variables such as the country, number of weeks, and type of orientation.

It might also be interesting for future research to focus on surveying or interviewing students while they are abroad. Interviewing or surveying students while they are abroad might remove the tendency to answer optimistically before and after their return from the program. Students usually feel culture shock more and are a lot more apprehensive when they are actually in the foreign country, trying to use a new language or speaking with host citizens every day. If researchers were able to speak with students at this point, they might start to discover how and why they are adapting and becoming less apprehensive. By interviewing students while they are abroad, future research can add to this study by showing more steps in the acculturation process.

Future research might also include interviews before and after the abroad program. By utilizing in-depth interviews as a supplement to a quantitative study, future studies would gain richer data on perceived expectations and outcomes of study abroad experiences, intercultural adaptability, and communication apprehension. The quantitative survey could be distributed, and students would start to think about their apprehension and level of adaptability. Then, if interviewed individually, students might be more honest and open with their answers, and have more time to open up and reveal their apprehension, adaptability, and experiences. In fact, students could be required to participate in an interview as part of the post-orientation, which is currently not part of the orientation program at the large, liberal arts university in this study. Most students either have a difficult time adapting when they come back home or they do not know how to process their experience abroad. By giving them the opportunity to communicate their apprehensions, adaptability, and experiences, they might find it easier to adapt to life back at home and use their experiences for personal and academic growth.

Future studies could also focus on the difference between short-term and long-term abroad programs. Some of the independent group data findings hinted at this difference when a post-hoc analysis was conducted. If the same surveys could have been distributed to students who studied abroad for a semester or longer, results could have been compared between the two. Results might then indicate whether there was more of a change after a long-term program, and whether students sufficiently adapted and followed the acculturation process.

It might be equally interesting and beneficial for the liberal arts university in this study, and international educators in general, to create a longitudinal study of apprehension and adaptability of students who have participated in abroad programs, and whether the experience aided in their success. One of the questions in the demographic section of the survey asked

students what their plans were after graduation, but there were not many changes in their answers. If future researchers could secure a group of students in order to survey them throughout their academic and personal careers, then they would be able to see the results of participating in an abroad program. Surveys could be disseminated and interviews enacted in order to understand the value of participating in abroad programs, as opposed to students who did not participate in abroad programs or who only traveled for pleasure. Future longitudinal studies such as these could then focus on the specific traits of students who participate in abroad programs, and which ones succeed most profoundly as a result.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, lower apprehension did predict an increased level of adaptation in short-term programs. While results for the independent data were inconclusive based on the post-hoc analysis, the results for the repeated measures data confirmed that short-term abroad programs had a positive influence on students' intercultural adaptability. However, there were specific aspects of adaptability that were more significant than others, which means students are only partially adapting. The data revealed no support for significantly lower apprehension scores after participating in an abroad program. However, the pre-test and post-test scores revealed very low apprehension, suggesting that students were already less apprehensive to begin with and therefore would have less room to improve.

The results of this study seem to support the main objectives of the Midwest university's study abroad office: to gain intercultural competence and other valuable skills. It seems reasonable to conclude that students who have participated in short-term abroad programs, even if they have not fully adapted to a culture, are well positioned for competence in their

intercultural communication and interactions. This is either because they were already less apprehensive and more capable of adapting before the abroad experiences, or the orientation and abroad experience helped them become less apprehensive and more capable of adapting.

Ultimately, with the ability to cope with social difficulties and adjust to new cultures, students and others who develop or possess these skills should be able to function more competently in a global society. By sending students abroad even for a short-term program, universities and colleges are beginning to create globally trained members of our society who should be able to pursue interactional goals in any foreign context.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDY ABROAD AND DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Thank you for participating in this research study! The purpose of this survey, and the follow-up survey, is to examine students' study abroad perceptions before and after their experience. This specific survey consists of questions about your perceptions before studying abroad. The participation of this survey is completely voluntary; you have the right to not participate or to withdraw your participation at any time. All participants will be kept anonymous, and your honesty and participation is greatly appreciated.

1. In order to connect this survey to the follow-up survey, please enter a pin number that you will remember. # _____
2. What is your biological sex? (*circle one*) Male Female
3. What is your age? _____
4. What is your student status? (*circle one*) Undergraduate Graduate Other: _____
5. What is your race? (*circle all that apply*)

White/Caucasian Black/African American Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander

Arabic/Middle Eastern Native American Other: _____

6. During which semester/summer and year will you study abroad?
7. How many weeks will you study abroad? _____
8. In which country/countries will you study? _____
9. Describe your prospective study abroad situation: (*check all that apply*)

___ Homestay ___ Professional lecture

___ Apartment ___ Internship ___ Other: _____

___ Dorms ___ Faculty-led

___ Hotel/Hostel ___ Classes at a university

10. Why did you choose this specific program? (*please explain briefly*)
11. Why are you interested in studying abroad, in general? (*please explain briefly*)
12. Have you completed the required study abroad orientation? (*circle one*) Yes No
13. On the scale below, how prepared do you feel? (*circle one*)

Very Prepared Prepared Moderately Prepared Unprepared Very Unprepared

14. Have you participated in a study abroad program before? (*circle one*) Yes No
15. Have you traveled to a foreign country before? (*circle one*) Yes No
16. What are your plans after graduation?

APPENDIX B

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Important: In order to connect this survey to the follow-up survey, please enter a pin number that you will remember. # _____

The 14 statements below are comments frequently made by people with regard to communication with people from other cultures. Please indicate how much you agree with these statements by marking a number representing your response to each statement using the following choices:

Strongly Disagree=1 Disagree=2 Neutral=3 Agree=4 Strongly Agree=5

- _____ 1. Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different cultures.
- _____ 2. I am tense and nervous while interacting with people from different cultures.*
- _____ 3. I like to get involved in group discussion with others who are from different cultures.
- _____ 4. Engaging in a group discussion with people from different cultures makes me nervous.*
- _____ 5. I am calm and relaxed with interacting with a group of people who are from different cultures.
- _____ 6. While participating in a conversation with a person from a different culture, I get nervous.*
- _____ 7. I have no fear of speaking up in a conversation with a person from a different culture.
- _____ 8. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in a conversation with a person from a different culture.*
- _____ 9. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations with a person from a different culture.
- _____ 10. While conversing with a person from a different culture, I feel very relaxed.
- _____ 11. I am afraid to speak up in conversations with a person from a different culture.*
- _____ 12. I face the prospect of interacting with people from different cultures with confidence.
- _____ 13. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when interacting with people from different cultures.*
- _____ 14. Communicating with people from different cultures makes me feel uncomfortable.*

*negative statements

APPENDIX C

INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION SCALE

Important: In order to connect this survey to the follow-up survey, please enter a pin number that you will remember. # _____

The questions below will ask you about your experiences pertaining to your adaptation process in a *foreign* culture during your study abroad. Please indicate how much you agree with these statements by marking a number representing your response to each statement using the choices below. *If a specific statement is not applicable to you, please leave blank.*

Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5

1. I enjoy learning about other cultures.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

2. I am fluent in the foreign language of my study abroad country.

3. I feel confident in completing written assignments in the foreign language.

4. Communicating in the foreign language makes me nervous.*

5. I enjoy meeting new people in foreign cultures.

6. I understand foreign students speaking in classrooms.

7. I am confident participating in classroom discussions.

8. I am relaxed when talking with culturally diverse people.

9. I understand most of the traditions of the foreign culture.

10. I understand lectures in the foreign language.

11. I communicate with people of different cultures every day.

12. I find it easy to communicate with people from another culture.

13. I have a problem establishing close relationships with people from other cultures.*

14. I have international friends.

15. My best friend is from a foreign country.

16. I enjoy spending time with people from different cultures.

17. I feel comfortable expressing myself to people from different cultures.

18. I will use English in the foreign country every day.*

19. I will spend time with my American friends as often as I can.*

20. I feel nervous in culturally diverse social situations.*
21. I will probably feel homesick often.*
22. I understand most of the foreign people I have met.
23. I will be unhappy in the foreign culture.*
24. I understand most of the rules of the foreign culture.
25. I will celebrate the foreign country's holidays.
26. I will fit in with the foreign culture.
27. I can see myself living in the foreign country in the future.
28. I feel that going to a foreign country is a great decision.
29. I will prefer the foreign country's lifestyle, such as values, traditions, etc.
30. I will be happy with my life in a foreign country.
31. I will feel at home in the foreign country.
32. Overall, I think that I will adjust to the foreign country's lifestyle.
33. In general, I will be happy with the way I communicate in the foreign culture.

*negative statements

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM



*Consent Form for
Anonymous Surveys*

Study Title:

American Students as Active Global Citizens: Communication Adaptation and Apprehension in Study Abroad Programs

I am Catherine Franklin, the principal investigator for this research study and a graduate student in the Department of Communication and Dramatic Arts at Central Michigan University. The co-investigator is Dr. William Dailey, an associate professor and the Chair of the Communication and Dramatic Arts Department. We are inviting you to participate in an online anonymous survey, the purpose of which is to explore perceptions of students studying abroad before and after their experience this upcoming summer.

This research project involves changed perceptions based on your study abroad experience, and it is designed to expand knowledge for international education programs and intercultural communication research.

There are three parts to this online survey, which should only take about 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey is anonymous, and confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the Internet, and does not guarantee any beneficial results to you. The participation of this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to not participate or to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Your participation will not affect your relationship with the institution involved in this research project.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me at frank2ca@cmich.edu, 989-774-3967; or the co-investigator at daile1wo@cmich.edu, 989-774-3177. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board for any concerns at 989-774-6777, or address a letter to the Institutional Review Board, 251 Foust Hall Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

My completion of this survey implies my consent to participate in this research.

APPENDIX E

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject Title: Survey for Study Abroad Communication Adaptation and Apprehension

Dear Study Abroad students:

I am Catherine Franklin, a graduate student in the Department of Communication and Dramatic Arts, as well as a study abroad intern at the Office of International Affairs at CMU. As the principal investigator for my graduate thesis, I am inviting you to participate in an online anonymous survey, the purpose of which is to explore perceptions of students studying abroad before and after their experience this summer. Here is a link to the survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FZX37YH>

This research project involves changed perceptions based on your study abroad experience, so a similar survey will be sent to you at the end of the summer. This study is designed to expand knowledge for international education programs and intercultural communication research for our university, as well as universities throughout the United States.

There are three parts to this online survey, which takes about 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey is anonymous, and all the responses are confidential as analysis of data will be based on overall results rather than individual responses. There are no conceivable risks by participating in this study. The participation of this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time. Your participation will not affect your relationship with the institution involved in this research project. I hope you will choose to be part of this research project and I thank you in advance for participation. Again, here is the link to the survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FZX37YH>

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me at frank2ca@cmich.edu, 989-774-3967; or Dr. William Dailey, the co-investigator at daile1wo@cmich.edu, 989-774-3177. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board for any concerns at 989-774-6777, or address a letter to the Institutional Review Board, 251 Foust Hall Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Catherine A. Franklin
Graduate Student, Instructor, Communication and Dramatic Arts Department
Study Abroad Intern, Office of International Affairs
Central Michigan University

APPENDIX F

LETTER OF PERMISSION

April 25, 2011

TO: Central Michigan University Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Sponsored Programs
251 Foust Hall
Mount Pleasant, MI 48859

RE: Research by Catherine A. Franklin

Catherine A. Franklin, CMU Graduate Student, has the permission of Study Abroad Programs to access the subject population in order to conduct research for her master's thesis study, "American Students as Active Global Citizens: Communication Adaptation and Apprehension in Study Abroad Programs."

Ms. Franklin will provide us with the recruitment email and survey link and it will be sent out by the study abroad staff to the specific subject population. Her plan is to distribute a pre- and post-survey before and after this summer's study abroad programs. Ms. Franklin has agreed to provide a copy of any aggregate results.

If there are any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Dianne De Salvo
Director of Study Abroad
Study Abroad Programs
Office of International Affairs
Ronan Hall 330
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
Phone: (989) 774-4308
Fax: (989) 774-3690
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