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THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND COMPANIONS DURING A STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

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THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND COMPANIONS
DURING A STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management

by
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Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to create rigorous study abroad programs, international educators frequently debate the design of study abroad programs. Design elements include intercultural contact, level of immersion and the balance of structured and unstructured activities (Sutton, Miller, & Rubin, 2007). International education researchers have found that unstructured free time, or leisure, during study abroad programming gives students opportunities to connect with the host culture and leads to attitude changes in how students feel about themselves as well as how they perceive the host country and its citizens (McCabe, 1994; Meyer-Lee & Warfield, 2006; Nyaupane, Teye & Paris, 2008). However, no research has explored students' use of free time during their study abroad program and its contribution to development from a leisure perspective.

The purpose of this study was to examine study abroad participants' reflections on their leisure activities and companions during study abroad. Semi-structured interviews, supported by personal photographs from the students' time abroad, were carried out approximately a month after the students returned home from a semester-long residential program in the European Union. Findings determined that the amount of cross-cultural contact between the American students and the host nationals was low due to student motivations and program design features. Additionally, the little contact Americans did have with host nationals was influenced by the conditions of contact theory. Students spent the majority of their leisure time with other American students or visiting friends

and family engaging in travel to other European countries or observing the local culture.

The implications for study abroad programming are discussed.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my friends and family—the ultimate leisure companions.

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Completing this thesis and my graduate studies would have not been possible without three main support systems. First, I would like to thank my committee for their selfless support and their ability to challenge me during this process. I especially appreciate the guidance I have received from Dr. Denise Anderson, my committee chair and advisor. From Day 1, she has always had my best interest in mind and has encouraged me to strive for excellence. Her ability to achieve so much while supporting others in their achievements is something that I aspire to do in my future work. I would also like to thank my other committee members: Dr. Dorothy Schmalz and Dr. Gregory Ramshaw. Their willingness to share their time and expertise has been invaluable in this research process. Next, I would like to thank my friends. My graduate studies have been a wonderful experience because of their encouragement, humor and love of leisure. Lastly, I want to thank my ultimate support system: my parents. Their support, in forms of friendship, reassurance and “tough love”, has been a key factor in the completion of this thesis. I am constantly amazed by their love and generosity and am indebted to them for teaching me how to “work hard and play harder.”

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Each year, thousands of university students choose to participate in a study abroad experience, an educational program taking place outside of the geographical borders of one's country of origin (Carlson, Bum, Useem & Yachimocicz, 1991). Students have a variety of programs to choose from with regard to length and type of program. Types of programs include faculty-led programs, third party provider programs, student exchange programs, internships and international work experience. Lengths of study abroad programming include short term programs, which are eight weeks or less, medium length programs, which are eight weeks up to one semester, and long term programs, which are one academic year or more (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2010).

In the 2007-2008 academic year, 260,000 students participated in a study abroad program, with about 45%, or 115,000, participating in medium or long term programs (Institute of International Education, 2009). Two-thirds of study abroad participants were female. Eighty-two percent of study abroad participants were white while 7% of participants were Asian, 6% Hispanic and 4% African American. The choice to study abroad was correlated with higher socioeconomic status, pre-college social capital and social capital acquired during the first year of college (Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009). Constraints to studying abroad include financial limitations, lack of awareness of study abroad programming and family and social constraints (Sanchez,

Fornierino, & Zhang, 2006).

Participation in a study abroad program has been found to be highly influential on a university student (Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic & Jon, 2009). Students participating in study abroad programming are in the emerging adulthood phase, a time when committing to specific values concerning love, work and worldviews is not necessary (Arnett, 2000). This life stage is one where individuals are afforded time to explore and experiment with different personal identities, social identities and worldviews (Arnett, 2000). Self-explorations, specifically through opportunities such as study abroad, are likely to influence an emerging adult's intercultural maturity, or how students grow cognitively, interpersonally and intrapersonally in new social and cultural settings (King & Mogolda, 2005). Thus, study abroad programming and outcomes should be researched in terms of the study abroad programs' influences on students' identities in terms of cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal impacts (Sutton, Miller, & Rubin, 2007).

Administrators working with international education programs emphasize the importance of international education (i.e., study abroad) because of the necessity for students to work in diverse environments and in a global economy following their post-secondary education (Lincoln Commission, 2005; Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act, 2007). Therefore, they have determined learning outcomes that are important when working in a global community that include intellectual development, communication and language skills development, cognitive growth, interpersonal growth and intrapersonal growth (King & Magolda, 2005; The IES Map for Study Abroad Programs, 2008). However, while professionals agree that learning outcomes must be

assessed, there is much debate on how to assess them (Sutton, Miller, & Rubin, 2007). Because there are numerous variables associated with the characteristics of a study abroad program design as well as the participant and the host culture, the process of assessing the learning outcomes of participants who have studied abroad is complex (Sutton, Miller, & Rubin, 2007). It is necessary to assess specific aspects of study abroad programming in order to understand the moderating factors of students' learning while abroad (Sutton, Miller, & Rubin, 2007).

One specific aspect of study abroad programming that is debated by administrators of international education programs is the study abroad program design in terms of the balance between structured and unstructured activities, level of immersion and intercultural interaction. While structured activities have been found to be more effective than unstructured free time for student language learning (Vande Berg, Balkcum, Scheid & Whalen, 2004), a preliminary study has found that higher levels of contact, cultural immersion and intercultural interaction, particularly through leisure activities, have created positive attitudes in students about themselves and others (Meyer-Lee & Warfield, 2006). Additionally, direct contact is most likely to lead to intercultural learning (Engle & Engle, 2004).

The inclusion of organized leisure as a part of a study abroad program is not a unique concept (Vande Berg, Balkcum, Schied & Whalen, 2004). Some study abroad programs design their courses to include a required personal interest component (e.g., pursuit of hobby, membership and regular participation in a club, organization, team, choir) but have seen somewhat negative results in that students may be unprepared for the

activity, misplaced in an activity or may experience cultural differences that take the fun out of a typical leisure activity (Engle & Engle, 1999). Other study abroad programs support learning through leisure activities by offering a variety of non-credit activities that could potentially lead to experiential learning in the host culture (Steinberg, 2002).

Because of the relatively low level of success of organized leisure in study abroad programming, it is important to understand how students are using their unstructured free time, or leisure, in the host culture (Sutton, Miller, & Rubin, 2007). The limited amounts of research regarding leisure activities pursued out of the classroom have solely focused on risk behaviors, such as alcohol use or sexual encounters (Hummer, Pedersen, Mirza & LaBrie, 2010). In addition, most leisure activities have been viewed from the educational perspective. This study seeks to determine the role leisure activities and companions have during study abroad programming and if participation in those leisure activities with certain companions assisted students in their identity formation and their intercultural maturity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine study abroad participants' reflections on their leisure activities and companions. Additionally, this research explored students' reflections on these leisure activities and companions and how they contributed to their intercultural maturity in cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal domains.

Research Questions

1. What leisure activities did students engage in while abroad?
2. What leisure activities and companions were most memorable to students during their study abroad program?
3. How do students' leisure experiences during a study abroad program impact identity development?
4. How do students' leisure experiences during a study abroad program impact intercultural maturity?
 - a. How did specific leisure activities and accompanying leisure companions impact students' perceptions of their cognitive development?
 - b. How did specific leisure activities and accompanying leisure companions impact students' perceptions of their interpersonal development?
 - c. How did specific leisure activities and accompanying leisure companions impact students' perceptions of intrapersonal development?

Significance

Leisure can be a context in which international interaction and communication can occur and should be understood by both leisure and international educators. "Cross cultural interaction, learning and sharing may be more naturally facilitated in a leisure context (than in non-leisure contexts) due to the informal, less structured nature of leisure compared to other activities such as work and classroom activities (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009). As a result, cross-cultural leisure activities can provide a unique opportunity for individuals of different cultures to

relate and develop connections in a multicultural community (Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Yuen, Pedlar, & Mannell, 2005).

Leisure is also a context in which individuals develop cognitively, intrapersonally and interpersonally while studying abroad. Kleiber (2001) proposed that leisure provides an environment where individuals adjust to developmental challenges in terms of learning and human growth. He suggested that leisure provides opportunities for individuals to feel capable, define themselves in relation to others, connect with those people and find their own way to contribute to others and the society in which they live.

Finally, leisure is a context in which individuals overcome stress and adversity and enhance their well-being (Iwasaki, 2008). Students may use leisure as a tool for coping during intercultural adjustment, a “series of ups and downs usually experienced in any transition” but intensified by living in a culture that is different from which students are accustomed (Peterson et al., 2007, p. 184). Often, individuals rely on their leisure friendships for social support during stressful situations (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000). Glover and Parry (2008) found that friendships lead to emotional support and instrumental support, or potential information and resources, for the individual. While leisure has been researched in terms of its role in adaptation for immigrants and international students living in the United States (Heo & Lee, 2007; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009), little research based on the leisure perspective has analyzed American students’ leisure experiences, and how leisure specifically contributes to adapting, learning and socializing in an international environment during a study abroad program.

Definition of Terms

The following section includes definitions of terms used in this document. All definitions are found in *A Guide to Outcomes Assessment in Education Abroad* (Peterson et al., 2007).

Student exchange: “An exchange whose participants are students. Most typically when at the post-secondary level, student exchanges are facilitated on a person-to-person basis (e.g., one US student spends time at an overseas university while a student from that university is enrolled at the US university)” (p. 192).

Faculty-led program: “A study abroad program directed by a faculty member from the home campus who accompanies students abroad” (p. 190).

Home institution: “The educational institution in the US where an education abroad student is a continuing student, usually working toward the completion of a degree” (p. 198).

Homestay: “Private housing hosted by a local family, which often includes private bedroom, meals, laundry, etc.” (p. 202).

Host national: “An individual of the population that is host to the education abroad participant” (p. 182).

Host institution: “The institution that the education abroad student is attending while abroad” (p. 198).

Program characteristics: “Descriptors of an education abroad program of any on a wide variety of dimensions, such as location, length, sponsorship, eligibility, content, format, and pedagogical approach” (p. 189).

Program design: “The basic structure of an education abroad program. Combines such considerations as length, timing, level, phases (e.g., 1-week orientation followed by 14 weeks of classroom study), and pedagogical model (e.g., role of field study, role of integrated university courses), etc.” (p. 190).

Study abroad: “Education abroad that results in progress toward an academic degree at a student’s home institution” (p. 176).

Study tour: “An academic program built around relatively continuous travel” (p. 191).

Delimitations

The focus of this study was to understand the leisure activities and companions of students participating in study abroad programs and the impact of these leisure experiences on the students’ development. The study population was delimited to students who had participated in a semester-long, residential programs located in the European Union. Thus, this study did not intend to produce encompassing generalizations

that are applicable to all study abroad situations. Instead, this study aimed to provide a deeper understanding of students' leisure, the facilitation and constraints to the leisure and the impact of that leisure in a cross-cultural context occurring during programs located in the European Union.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Study abroad programming, as part of the larger higher education system, affords students opportunities to develop cognitively, interpersonally and intrapersonally while living and studying in another culture. Students participating in study abroad have various opportunities to learn about the culture in which they are living and reflect on the impact of these opportunities on their development in terms of their personal identities and social identities. Study abroad programming includes classroom lectures, museum and local heritage site tours and service learning opportunities. However, a great deal of time is spent outside of the classroom and formal learning (Laubscher, 1994). Thus, it is important to understand students' learning and development opportunities during leisure time as these interactions with the host culture, traditions and environment will likely have a strong influence on students' development, more specifically, their identity development (Smith, 2006).

Identity

University students are typically in late adolescence and thus in the midst of identity development. Identity is "an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs and individual history as well as a sociopolitical stance" (Marcia, 1980, p.159). Individuals who have a strong sense of identity are more likely to recognize their similarities and differences from others whereas those with less developed identities

are likely to recognize only their distinctiveness from others (Marcia, 1980).

Identity is categorized in two ways: personal identity and social identity (Baron & Bryne, 1997). An individual's personal identity is based on biographical and personal information as well as interpersonal similarities and differences with others (Baron & Byrne). Interpersonal characteristics of a personal identity carry across roles, settings and situations in an individual's life (Stets & Burke, 2000).

An individual's social identity is linked to the idea that individuals use their personal identities to relate to the shared characteristics of a social group and its memberships (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). The categories of social identities include, but are not limited to, gender, political affiliation, ethnicity and nationality. Social identity plays a large part in how students choose to interact with groups that are different than their own, particularly in international settings (DuFon & Churchill, 2006). For example, a student with a strong American national identity may have a difficult time engaging in activities or interactions that require him or her to compromise his or her social identity. Both personal and social identities are heavily explored during adolescence through relationships, interactions and activities.

Psychosocial Moratorium

Adolescence is a time when the individual enters the period of identity versus role confusion where there is exploration of social groups, relationships and career options (Erikson, 1968). Erikson dubbed this stage the psychosocial moratorium, a delay from permanent adult responsibilities and commitments. It is a normative event where individuals experiment with different identity roles without obligation or accountability

(Erikson, 1950; 1968). University students have been found to enter the psychosocial moratorium phase after 9-12 months of university attendance (Waterman & Waterman, 1971; Fitch & Adams, 1983). During these 9-12 months of university attendance, students have encountered a diverse array of experiences and people and forced to make important decisions, such as choosing a major, exploring new social groups and contemplating their worldviews (Kroger, 2003). Cognitively, individuals in moratorium analyze information from various perspectives, question knowing anything for certain and focus on their experiences on gaining knowledge about themselves and those around them. Interpersonally, they have close friendships which are based on respect and integrity but have not yet committed to a partner. In addition, they are open and non-defensive in their approach to relationships (Kroger, 2003).

Erikson initially suggested that, in certain cultures, an individual will enter the phase of psychosocial moratorium after adolescence (Erikson, 1968). He considered those continuing identity formations after adolescence to be the exception to the norm. However, the industrialization and post-industrialization of first-world countries have afforded individuals opportunities to continue their identity exploration well into their college years and beyond. Thus, the present normative perspective for identity development is that psychosocial moratorium and identity formation continues beyond adolescence into a developmental phase labeled as emerging adulthood (Arnett & Tanner, 2006).

Emerging Adulthood

Identity development is a primary characteristic of late adolescence (Erikson, 1968). Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood specifically focuses on individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 who are immersed in a unique developmental stage occurring between adolescence and young adulthood in which individuals explore and experiment with love, work and worldviews (Arnett, 2000). This phase is a result of the prolonged period of identity exploration that the current trends of industrialized and post-industrialized societies afford individuals.

The addition of emerging adulthood as a development phase to theory is to changes in societal-based norms that have required a new perspective on Erikson's psychosocial development stage (Arnett, 2000). Human development professionals and researchers once considered marriage, the completion of education and the launch of a full-time career to be indicators of adulthood (e.g., Greene, Wheatley, & Aldava, 1992). However, adults and emerging adults no longer consider these milestones to be indicators of adulthood because of the changes in the demographics of those entering marriage, parenthood and education (Nelson & Barry, 2005; Arnett & Tanner, 2006). In the past 50 years, the average age of marriage has increased five years for males and females (Arnett, 2004). Parenthood is also experienced at a later age, following trends similar to those of marriage. Because many pursue parenthood about a year after marriage, the average age of parenthood has risen to the late twenties (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). An important factor as to why marriage and parenthood are being postponed is due to the increase in participation in higher education by both sexes (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). Other factors

such as the social acceptance of co-habitation and birth control may also contribute to further delays of marriage and parenthood (Arnett, 2004).

With such great variability in the demographics of marriage, parenthood and education, there has been a change in what are now identified as the markers of adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adults and adults report that individualism is the greatest marker of adulthood. The characteristics of individualism include accepting responsibility for one's own actions, deciding on personal beliefs and values without the influences of others, having a relationship with parents on equal ground, being financially independent and living outside of the parents' home (Arnett, 2001). Individualism is attained through the process of emerging adulthood, where independent exploration is encouraged and delaying taking on full responsibilities of being an adult is acceptable (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood is an age of identity, instability, self-focus and feeling "in between" (Arnett, 2006). Individuals participate in the process of identity formation when they try out different identities in love, work and living in itself (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adulthood is a time of "roleless roles" during which emerging adults are able to participate in self-exploration because they are free from parental influences, marriage and responsibilities of long term work (Arnett, 2000). The development of relative maturity in preparation for married and family life is said to take place during emerging adulthood (Carroll et al., 2009). Whereas these adolescents once made their decisions about love based on impulses, emerging adults now look for "deeper intimacy" by searching for a partner who would best fit their identity and someone to whom they can make a commitment (Arnett, 2004, Arnett & Tanner, 2006). While emerging adults

explore their identities in love, they may be dating more, engaging in sexual intercourse and cohabitating (Arnett 2000).

Emerging adults also focus their attention on choices related to education and work as the identity formation process continues (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). As adolescents, many individuals work part-time in service jobs to pay for leisure activities and gain skills in time and financial management (Arnett, 2000). In emerging adulthood, they will be more likely to test out different employment paths through limited term work, such as internships, or educational experiences, such as study abroad, in order to find what matches their personality and preferences (Arnett, 2000). Students are also prone to change majors when attending college as a way to find careers that they may enjoy in the future (Arnett, 2000). Through these activities, individuals are forming their identities by analyzing their own abilities and interests (Arnett & Tanner, 2006).

Emerging adults are also likely to be more open to exploration and reconsideration of their worldviews now that they are not living with their parents (Arnett, 2000). Value systems and religious beliefs are often questioned in the process of deciding whether their worldviews are different than their parents (Arnett & Tanner, 2006).

As emerging adults pursue different experiences and identities, the instability that they experience is different than that of adolescents and young adults. Adults are frequently making stressful decisions related to their family and their spouse and are slightly limited in their choices due to these commitments. Adolescents report that their instability is most often a product of peer pressure. Emerging adults report that they experience instability in what they consider more severe and legitimate ways compared to

adolescents and adults as there are harder decisions to make due to the lack of commitment and consequentially an overwhelming number of choices (Arnett, 2004). Other examples of instability can be seen in changes in work, social relationships and worldviews. Change in employment, educational institutions and majors can cause disruption in an individual's life balance. The addition of unstable social networks, which individuals often are associated with due to experimentation in identity formation, can also cause instability (White and Jackson, 2004). Moreover, changes in values and belief systems can also cause feelings of instability through anxiety and guilt as emerging adults move out from under their parents' belief systems to their own.

With little commitment to a job or other people, emerging adulthood becomes a time for self-focus in both enjoyable and serious ways (Arnett, 2004). Individuals are able to focus on their own identity without having to answer to anyone (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). The pleasurable side of self-focus often occurs through social, adventure and novel activities. On a more serious note, emerging adults move from dependency on family to a life of self-sufficiency in which they must ask themselves the "who am I?" question (Arnett, 2000). While emerging adults are contemplating self-meaning and sorting through the many decisions they face, they encounter a great deal of time alone. In fact, Americans ages 19-29 spend more of their leisure time alone than any other age group except the elderly (Larson, 1999). During this phase of life when there is a large amount of unstructured time, depression can peak (Arnett, 2007). Rejection, disillusion, disappointment and feelings of not being satisfied may be products of continued self-focus of the individual and experimentation with identities (Arnett, 2000). However, the

opportunity to be self-focused gives emerging adults the time they need to develop skills for healthy adult lifestyles by forming their identity and finding what they want for their future (Arnett, 2004).

The phase of self-focus is not a permanent one, but one where self-sufficiency takes precedence as an essential step in creating strong relationships (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). When looking back at emerging adulthood, individuals perceive this phase as an important step in their development (Arnett, 2007). In the meantime, higher education provides individuals with opportunities, such as study abroad programming, to explore and experience options before committing to certain worldviews or beliefs that will be the foundation for the important decisions they make (Arnett & Tanner, 2006).

Intercultural Maturity

A large portion of identity development occurs during the college years. According to Kegan (1994), development entails three major domains: cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal (Kegan, 1994). King and Magolda (2005) built on this idea by describing these three domains as part of the social-cultural development and adjustment of a college student through a framework called “intercultural maturity.” According to Tseng (2002), socio-cultural development and adjustment includes dealing with a new culture in terms of shock, fatigue or discrimination, adjusting to new social and cultural norms and activities and dealing with conflicts between one’s home culture and the new culture in which students are living. While studying abroad, individuals are likely to encounter many socio-cultural aspects which will impact the cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal domains of their intercultural maturity.

The cognitive domain of the intercultural maturity framework addresses the impact of knowledge on how individuals know and understand cultural issues (King & Magolda, 2005). Epistemology, awareness and knowledge affect how individuals process information as it relates to truth. Cognitively mature individuals move from taking information from authorities as truth towards an epistemology of cultural relativism. The cognitive domain forces individuals to ask “how do I know?” (Braskamp et al, 2009). International educators have begun assessing study abroad participants’ cognitive growth by examining opportunities for students to participate and to reflect on activities that increase their abilities to recognize, appreciate and respect cultural difference (The IES Map for Study Abroad Programs, 2008).

The intrapersonal domain of the intercultural maturity framework addresses how individuals integrate their personal strengths and values into their identities (Braskamp et al, 2009). Identity, attitudes and emotions come into play as an individual acts in intercultural situations. Intrapersonally mature individuals consider their own social identities (race, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, etc.) as part of the global and national context and integrate these aspects into their own identities (King & Magolda, 2005). The intrapersonal domain challenges an individual to question one’s views and beliefs as they ask “who am I?” (Braskamp et al, 2009). International educators have begun assessing study abroad participants’ intrapersonal growth by examining curricular and extracurricular opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own decisions, gain understanding of their own unique abilities and qualities and develop attitudes and skills which will lead to life-long learning (The IES Map for Study Abroad Programs,

2008).

The interpersonal domain addresses an individual's capacity to engage in relationships and function interdependently with diverse individuals and groups (King & Magolda, 2005). Social responsibility and sensitivity to others affect how individuals relate to others. Interpersonally mature individuals are able to engage in meaningful relationships with diverse individuals, appreciate differences among the human population and work to understand how individual and community relationships understand social systems (King & Magolda, 2005). The interpersonal domain challenges students to ask "how do I relate to others?" (Braskamp, et al, 2009). International educators have begun assessing study abroad participants' intrapersonal growth by examining opportunities for students to adapt to their host culture, interact with individuals from the host culture and develop skills which can be transferred to future situations of living in a foreign culture (The IES Map for Study Abroad Programs, 2008)

Higher Education

The general purpose of higher education is to assist individuals in becoming skilled professionals and creative leaders who can contribute to the development of healthy communities (Arnold & King, 1997). According to Arnold and King (1997), the main purpose of higher education is identity development and integrity development. The development of individual purpose occurs through clear vocational goals, focused and rewarding activities and strong interpersonal and family commitments while the development of individual integrity occurs through the humanization, clarification and affirmation of values while respecting others' values, becoming socially responsible and

developing congruence between values and actions (Arnold & King).

Higher education leaders are implementing pedagogies that support the development of holistic individuals in their intellectual, moral, social, physical and spiritual capacities (American Council on Education, 1995). This holistic approach is sought by higher education and business leaders because of its ability to foster student learning in civic, intercultural and ethical contexts as students develop their critical thinking skills, engage in relationships with those not like themselves and gain a better understanding of their own identity (Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU), 2009; Braskamp et al, 2009). One aspect of the holistic learning process is the development of intercultural competency and global learning (American Council on Education, 1995). Study abroad programming is an educational experience where the holistic learning process as it relates to intercultural competency and global learning can be applied.

Study Abroad

Study abroad is the daily exposure to diverse cultural values that can contribute to changes in a student's global understanding. Study abroad programming occurs in conjunction with higher education curriculums. First, it is important to understand institutions' support for study abroad programming.

Institutional Goals for Study abroad

Support for study abroad programming comes from government, foundation, nonprofit and educational entities. These institutions recognize the importance of

individual experience in diverse cultural experience to ensure the safety and prosperity of the global world in regards to economic, security and leadership concerns (Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act, 2007). The goal of study abroad for American institutions is to expose individuals to active engagement in the international community and create ambassadors of goodwill and international cooperation (Lincoln Commission, 2005).

Student Motivations to Study Abroad

International educators have researched the motivations of students who choose to participate in a study abroad program. Across the academic fields of education, travel and tourism and international business, student motivations to participate in study abroad programming were found to be similar (Kisantas, 2004; Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2010; Sanchez, Fornerino, & Zhang, 2006). Students' primary motivations to study abroad include opportunities for international travel, academic gain, social gain and escape. Students choosing to study abroad are motivated by the opportunity to experience and interact with a new culture and its people through international travel. Students also express the desire to view the world from a different perspective. The opportunity to travel to several different countries while participating in a study abroad program was also associated with the motivation of international travel.

Students are also motivated to participate in study abroad programming because of the academic gain. Students feel the study abroad experience not only is an opportunity to earn academic credit towards their degrees but also increases their marketability in applying for jobs and enhances comprehension of information

encountered in the experiential learning setting (Toncar, Reid & Anderson, 2005). Other academic motivations were related to networking, learning creative ways of doing business and mastering a foreign language (Sanchez, Fornerino, & Zhang, 2006).

Students are also socially motivated to participate in study abroad programming. Study abroad programming gives students opportunities to travel with friends and explore their family heritage. Students may be motivated to participate because of the “bragging rights” they have when they return home to friends and family. However, students who have strictly social motivations for participating in study abroad programming have been found to have less cross-cultural learning than those who had international travel or academic goals (Kitsantas, 2004).

Students often view the opportunity to study abroad as a chance to escape from the social boundaries or stressful situations of daily student life and late adolescence in the United States. Students with this type of goal look at study abroad participation as a chance for freedom and fun (Nyaupane, Teye & Paris, 2010). Other student motivations to study abroad were related to personal social habits in that individuals with high amounts of social and cultural capital prior to study abroad were more likely to study abroad (Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2009).

Student-based Outcomes of Study Abroad

The measurement of student outcomes is essential for the justification of the existence of study abroad programming. Therefore, institutions and professionals have begun assessing immediate and long-term outcomes. Immediate outcomes are those that are measured upon completion of the program while long-term outcomes are those

measured five years or more after the completion of the program (Paige et al., 2009).

Students report immediate outcomes of participating in study abroad in that they develop a global perspective, or a new way to look at the world (McCabe, 1994), and often change their views of the world (Carlson & Widaman, 1988). They also develop awareness of their own national identity as well as discover how they view people from other nationalities (Dolby, 2004). Students have shown increases in cross-cultural competence and the subject matter of interest (Kitsantas, 2004) and an increased interest in the arts, architecture, foreign language and history (Carsello & Creaser, 1976). In one study, participants reported both interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes in that their study program led to a deeper interest in the well-being of others, increased self-awareness, increased understanding of cultural and economic issues and an increased capacity for reflective and cognitive abilities (Kuh, 1995).

Studies that have measured long term outcomes of study abroad five years after the program ended found that individuals who studied abroad reported that their experience strongly influenced their participation in civic engagement, volunteer work, desire for further knowledge and/or education, social entrepreneurship and philanthropy work (Paige et al., 2009).

Tourism

The similarities between the study abroad programming and tourism are evident in that both experiences culminate with the individuals returning home. For the purpose of this study, tourism is “the activities of people traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment” (Russell, 2009, p.305). Tourism researchers are similar to that of international educators because they both focus on the outcomes of experiences.

There are also historical similarities between the connotations of a student who is participating in a study abroad program and those of a tourist. The concept of the Grand Tour emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries when affluent and educated individuals would pursue adventures through travel as a capstone to their educational pursuits (Cohen, 1973). In the past 20 years, the term “tourist” has taken on negative connotations because of the tendencies of the individual to aimlessly sightsee without an understanding of the history or cultural significance of the site they are visiting (Hunt, 1990). The motivations of the individuals to sightsee may be explained by their search for existential authenticity instead of understanding of the culture in which they are visiting.

Existential Authenticity during a Tourism Experience

The motivations for participating in tourism experiences have been researched widely. One motivation that has been discussed throughout tourism literature is the search for existential authenticity. Wang (1999) stated that an “existential experience involves personal or intersubjective feelings activated by the liminal process of tourist activities” (p. 351). The finite nature of tourism experiences allows tourists to escape from the daily demands of life in terms of work, family obligations and social roles in

order to enjoy both intrapersonal and interpersonal authenticity.

Intrapersonal authenticity involves individuals pursuing tourism for bodily pleasures and in order to realize their authentic selves. Bodily pleasures involve “sensual pleasures, feelings, and other bodily impulses [and] are to a relatively large extent released and consumed and the bodily desires (for natural amenities, sexual freedom and spontaneity) are gratified intensively” (Wang, 1999). Tourists may engage in tourist activities that satisfy these bodily pleasures. Another form of intrapersonal authenticity involves an individual’s search for their authentic selves. Because individuals may be bored or unhappy with their lives at home, they pursue tourist activities that are challenging or involve risk in order to achieve a greater sense of authentic self (Wang, 1999).

Tourism can also lead to experiences of interpersonal authenticity where individuals develop a *communitas* with fellow tourists while participating in tourist activities (Wang, 1999). First, tourists can develop a sense of interpersonal authenticity in their family ties during tourist experiences. Tourism is often used as a time for families to escape daily life and bond during tourist activities. In these activities, a sense of togetherness is re-established. A sense of *communitas* also develops among tourists through their sharing of the sites and attractions together. This *communitas* negates typical divisions found in social groups at home in terms of social class or status. The *communitas* bonds tourists together through their experiences even beyond the tourist event itself. Those individuals who are members of the *communitas* are likely to maintain their relationships when returning home from their tourist experience (Wang, 1999).

Tourism and the search for existential authenticity may be a large portion of a study abroad experience in terms of students' chosen leisure activities and companions. The amount and success of cross-cultural contact may also be highly influential. The following section describes the theory of successful cross-cultural contact.

Contact Theory

Leisure during a study abroad program gives students opportunities to increase their understanding of a culture and its people through direct and indirect contact. Contact theory is one lens through which to view students' leisure while abroad as the theory is based in social psychology and analyzes individuals' interactions and subsequent attitudes with regard to the culture or group of people they are interacting with. According to Allport (1954), outcomes between two different groups can be favorable if the interactions promote equal status between the individuals and they work together toward a common goal or out of a common interest. Furthermore, interactions that prioritize cooperation over competition and that are supported by relevant authorities, custom or law can also enhance positive interaction (Allport, 1954). Pettigrew (1998) suggested that a friendship between individuals requires the four conditions above and that the presence of these conditions is likely to lead to reduction of prejudice. Allport found that "contacts that bring knowledge and acquaintance are likely to engender sounder beliefs concerning minority groups, and for this reason contribute to the reduction of prejudice" (1954, p.255).

Amir (1969) emphasized the importance of the conditions of contact rather than the contact itself. Contact that is favorable in that it is pleasant or rewarding will reduce

prejudice while contact that is unpleasant or forced may contribute to increased prejudice (Amir, 1969). Cook (1962) noted the importance of denoting the kinds of contact individuals are having, namely the characteristics of the contact, the individuals involved and the subsequent attitude or behavioral changes.

Leisure Contact While Studying Abroad

Allport (1954) has explored various types of contact through casual contacts, acquaintance, residential, occupational and goodwill contacts, but has never specifically explored leisure as a context for the reduction of prejudice or growth in cross-cultural awareness. Leisure activities, however, are correlated with positive adjustment to a new culture (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002), new friendships (Wulff, 1995) and reduction of prejudice (Wagner, Hewstone & Machleit, 1989).

Out-of-classroom activities during study abroad are influential for study abroad participants (Langley & Breese, 2005; Luabscher, 1994, Meyer-Lee & Warfield, 2006). Laubscher (1994) found that students learned about family interactions and social roles through day-to-day activities and participant observation and were able to interact with key informants and casual acquaintances during their study abroad program. Study abroad participants also participated in autonomous travel in which directed travel enhanced specific subject interest and unplanned travel led to greater growth in confidence and flexibility.

Meyer-Lee and Warfield (2006) found that students who reported participating in a high frequency of intercultural engagements noted their development in how they felt about themselves (interpersonal attitude) and how they felt toward the host culture in

which they were living (intrapersonal attitude). These informal interactions of students with the local residents of a country were also shown to be a large contributor to students' attitude changes toward the destination and resident population while studying abroad (McCabe, 1994; Nyaupane, Teye & Paris, 2008). Interactions included shopping in local markets, enjoying movies and entertainment geared toward the local culture, enjoying restaurants or pubs geared toward the locals, visiting with local families/friends in their homes or engaging in informal conversations, participating in worship services, participating in extra-curricular activities (clubs and intramurals) and organized events sponsored by the study abroad program, and volunteering or interning at a local organization or agency (Meyer-Lee & Warfield, 2006). Student interaction with the general public of the host country, their experiences with how the general public perceives the United States and Americans and their experiences with police and custom officials also influenced their overall experience (Nyaupane, Teye, & Paris, 2008).

Individuals living and studying in international settings also find different groups of people with whom they pursue leisure activities. For example, international students studying in the United States were found to have three unique social networks: 1) co-national associations in which they could express their home culture through cooking, shopping and sports, 2) bi-national associations with individuals from the host country in which they could access for language and academic assistance, and 3) multi-cultural associations with individuals of various countries with whom they could pursue recreational activities (Bochner, McLeod, & Lin, 1977) . Students who find themselves without a trusted mentor or interpreter who can help explain the host culture are likely to

separate from the host culture and seek comfort in a social group of their own co-nationals. This social group is called a third culture retreat (Peterson et al., 2007).

Allen and Herron (2003) found that a quarter of study abroad participants were disappointed that they did not interact with those in the host culture. They also stated that they preferred to spend their out-of-classroom time with Americans and individuals from the host culture in interactive settings instead of non-interactive contact like reading host culture's newspapers, watching television programs and listening to the radio. Allen and Herron (2003) suggested that for optimal cross-cultural understanding and linguistic gain, students should be advised to participate in leisure activities (social pursuits, sports, religious activities, other hobbies) they enjoy at home.

The level of interaction of students with the host culture individuals and co-national peers may be influenced by the level of comfort the student has when living in a new culture. Culture adjustment usually includes three phases: the honeymoon phase, the culture shock phase and the recovery phase (Peterson et al., 2007). The honeymoon phase is a period of positive emotions towards the culture in which the student is living, studying and exploring. The culture shock phase is characterized by anxiety, disorientation and confusion when a student is unsure of how to assimilate to the new culture in which they are studying (Peterson et al., 2007). The recovery phase follows the culture shock phase and is a period of time when students are able to function in the new culture in which they are living (Oberg, 1960).

Students may choose to use their leisure time to engage in behaviors that may be considered diverging from the goals of study abroad programming. For instance, students

identify that their alcohol use while abroad resulted in general and sexual alcohol-related consequences (Hummer, Pedersen, Mirza & LaBrie, 2010). Individuals who have higher preconceived notions about alcohol use while abroad increase their own drinking behavior while abroad (Pedersen, LaBrie, & Hummer, 2009). Individuals intending to study abroad are found to have exhibited higher of levels of alcohol use before going abroad than those who do not intend to study abroad (Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer, & Lee, 2010).

Conclusion

A large portion of international education research has focused on the motivations and outcomes of study abroad programming. However, little attention has been paid to students' leisure during study abroad from a leisure perspective. Leisure time affords students opportunities to develop relationships with the individuals in the host culture and participate in culturally relative activities. Interactions are likely to heavily influence an individual's cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal development during their emerging adulthood phase. The purpose of this study is to address is the characteristics of these leisure relationships and activities are and how they are influential on a student's overall experience, identity development and intercultural maturity.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study explored students' leisure activities and companions while studying abroad during a semester-long program as well as the students' perceptions of their development through these activities and companions. Students participated in a semester-long study abroad program and were interviewed shortly after their return. Additionally, students provided photographs of their leisure activities and companions to help the researcher understand their perceptions of their study abroad experience. The interview transcriptions and photographs were analyzed to address the research questions of the study. This chapter will outline the process that was followed to collect the data.

Population and Sample

The population for this study were students from a mid-sized public, land-grant university who had completed a semester-long, residential study abroad program in the Spring of 2011. This length of program was chosen because a semester-long program is designated as the appropriate length for optimal engagement (Paige, Cohen & Shively, 2004) as a steep learning curve occurs during the first 4-6 months of a study abroad program (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). A residential study abroad program was chosen because students are more likely to become accustomed to and incorporated into daily living whereas non-residential study tour programs do not allow time for students to integrate themselves into the daily lifestyle of the culture due to continuous travel. Study

participants had completed only one study abroad program and ranged in age from 18-25 in accordance with the emerging adulthood framework.

Recruitment

Participants were asked to volunteer to participate in the study via an email sent through the university's study abroad office. Interested participants responded by completing a Survey Monkey questionnaire that was included in the initial email from the study abroad office. The survey asked students to confirm the study criterion (program length, location, etc.) and was used to collect educational and contact information. See Appendices A and B for the email and questionnaire.

The researcher invited students who had participated in programs that occurred in the European Union to participate in the study. The European Union was chosen in an effort to delimit the population. Although eight students committed to participate in the study, the total number of participants fulfilling the interview portion was six. Despite the low number of participants, data saturation was attained.

Phenomenological Research Strategy

Gaps in the research of a particular phenomenon often require clarification and description through a phenomenological approach (Henderson, 2006). A phenomenology is the reflection on a lived experience that helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of that lived experience (Van Manen, 1990). More specifically, the implementation of a transcendental phenomenology approach requires the researcher to focus more on the descriptions from the individual's experiences than her own

interpretations or biases (Moustakas, 1994). Following the gathering of individual experiences, the researcher condenses the accounts down to a shared meaning of the particular phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2007).

Interviews Using Photo-Elicitation

Data collection occurred approximately one month after each participant returned home from his or her study abroad program which took place in spring of 2011. The timeline was set in an attempt to interview participants before their memories or emotions were suppressed by time or other obligations and experiences. Two students participated in face-to-face interviews on the university campus in a safe, well-known place. The setting was selected to help establish rapport between the researcher and the participants. The other four participants were interviewed by phone as they were living at home for the summer and face-to-face interviews would have been unrealistic due to distance.

Photo-elicitation was used as an additional data collection tool. Each participant was asked to submit 3-5 photographs which best represented their leisure activities and companions while abroad. No specific definition of leisure was given to the students and no limitations or requirements were set on the content of the photographs each research participant was allowed to submit. The use of photo-elicitation during the interview provided the researcher with a frame of reference from which to view the participant's experience, thereby increasing the understanding of the phenomenon of leisure during a study abroad experience (Harper, 2002). The method also helped participants communicate their memories to the researcher because images and objects utilize different parts of the memory than do words (Harper, 2002). Therefore, the emotions

stirred up by the photographs gave the researcher greater insight to the participant's experience (Carlsson, 2001).

Images have been used actively as part of the research process along with other methods such as interviews (Rose, 2007) as they are a supportive method in that they are analyzed as "evidence to answer a research question" (Rose, 2007, p. 239). However, the photographs and artifacts cannot be reproduced in this or future manuscripts or reports due to IRB protection issues. Blinn and Harrist (1991) did not reproduce any of their participants' photos in their research. Instead, they communicated the photos impact through the researcher's analysis of the photos, the interpretation of the participant's reflections and a table showing the result of the content analysis of the photos (Rose, 2007). The researcher collected this same information for this study.

The researcher used a semi-structured interview style and asked questions based on the literature. Sample questions included "How would you describe your study abroad experience to others?," "How did you spend your free time while abroad?," and "While abroad, who or what influenced how you reflect on your experience and your identity?" See Appendix C for the complete list of interview questions. The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and stored in password accessible computer data files. Also, the researcher kept field notes regarding the process and content of the interviews and photographs.

Data Analysis

Data were transcribed verbatim from digital voice recordings of the interviews. Following transcription, the researcher analyzed the data according to a modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen procedure proposed by Moustakas (1994), which is described as follows.

The researcher first recorded a description of her personal experience with the phenomenon of leisure during a study abroad program. This process helped the researcher reduce prior judgments, knowledge and understandings of the study abroad experience by participating in *epoche*, a process in which the researcher brackets his or her own experiences in an attempt to set those experiences aside for the duration of the research process (Moustakas, 1994). This intentional and ongoing process was vital for data collection and analysis in that the researcher reduced biases and personal experiences of study abroad from skewing the validity of the data. The researcher found significant statements in her personal testament. This process is performed in order to set aside the researcher's biases, knowledge and experiences (Creswell, 2007).

Having identified biases, the next step was to focus on the transcribed interviews and photos from the study participants. The researcher found significant statements in students' experiences of leisure during study abroad. These significant statements were listed in a process called horizontalization in which each of these statements were considered to have equal worth. A list of these significant statements was developed, without repetitive or overlapping statements. The researcher then grouped the significant statements into themes (Moustakas, 1994).

Following the development of themes, the researcher wrote the textual descriptions of the experiences of the phenomenon, using significant verbatim examples from the data. The textual descriptions described what was experienced during the phenomenon. The researcher then wrote the structural descriptions of the experiences of the phenomenon in that the researcher focused on the context in which the experience occurred. These descriptions also explained how the experience happened. Finally, the researcher wrote the essence of the experience, which combined the textual and structural descriptions and is the peak of the phenomenological study.

Reliability was addressed in several ways for this qualitative method. Before performing interviews, a protocol was set regarding the procedure for conducting interviews. This procedure included confidentiality information, the benefits and risks to participation, future plans for the research and the interview questions. The interview protocol enabled the researcher to take notes while interviewing (Creswell, 2007) and helped minimize inconsistencies in interviewing procedures.

The researcher worked to ensure reliability in the findings through intercoder agreement. Also called intercoder reliability, this process involved two coders separately coding the data and then comparing codes for the transcripts (Creswell, 2007). The coders continued refining the coding definitions and recoding process until there was an accepted percentage of 80% coding agreement (Creswell, 2007).

Creswell (2007) suggests that validity is the “attempt to assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings as best described by the researcher and the participants” (pp. 206-207). Thus, multiple techniques are used to ensure validity in qualitative research. The researcher

used two of these techniques. First, the researcher used two sources of data. The interviews coupled with the photos were used to substantiate the themes and essence found in the study of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The researcher confirmed the findings and interpretations of the study with the participants in a technique known as member checking (Creswell, 2007).

Anticipated Ethical Issues and Solutions

Qualitative research has many ethical issues that may arise throughout data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007). These include confidentiality issues, benefits and risks for individuals participating in the research and other ethical issues that arise throughout the research process. Approval from the human subjects review board was obtained. Also, the researcher developed consent forms that informed participants of confidentiality matters, benefits and risks to participating and right of withdrawal. See Appendix D for the consent form. The researcher also protected the participants' anonymities by changing their names in the presentation of the data (Creswell, 2007).

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore students' leisure activities and companions while studying abroad and their reflections on the impact of that leisure on their experience. This chapter describes the findings of the analysis of the interviews with the participants and the photos they chose to represent their experience. First, a description of the participants and their respective programs is given. Next, a summary of each individual's experience is provided to provide a holistic picture of how each student spent his or her time abroad. Finally, general themes, which represent leisure activities and companions while abroad, are presented. The findings are discussed both in the context of the students' leisure experiences as it relates to pleasure and as it relates to the aforementioned intended educational outcomes (cross-cultural communication, language gain, etc.) of international education as put forth by universities and governmental agencies.

Description of Participants

Approximately 100 students from a midsize university in the southeast participated in a semester long study abroad program during the spring of 2011. Students were sent an email through the university study abroad office containing a survey that asked them about their program location, date and type and some demographic informations concerning their level of education and major. It also asked for their

willingness to participate in the study. From those students, 15 students who had participated in a program in the European Union agreed to participate. The researcher was able to interview six of these students. The remaining nine participants were either spending the summer abroad following their program or were unable to be contacted by the researcher. Table 1 describes the participants and gives an overview of their respective programs. The names displayed are pseudonyms which were chosen by the researcher.

Table 1. Participants and their Study Abroad Program

Pseudonym	Program Type	Housing	Language	Program City	Program Country
Ryan	Faculty-Led	Hotel	French	Brussels	Belgium
Jenny ¹	Provider	Homestay	Spanish	Bilbao	Spain
Hannah	Faculty-Led	Hotel	French	Brussels	Belgium
Erin	Provider	Apartment	Italian	Torino	Italy
Grace	Provider	Homestay	Spanish	Alicante	Spain
Adam	Provider	Apartment	Czech	Prague	Czech Republic

¹Required to participate in a study abroad program for her major.

Individual Abstracts of Participants' Study Abroad Experiences

To better understand the leisure activities and companions of American students participating in study abroad programs and preserve a comprehensive representation of that experience, an abstract of each student's experience while abroad is necessary. In this section, the six participants' motivations to participate in study abroad and in their respective program, the general design of that program, a summary of the student's leisure while abroad and the photographs submitted by each student is presented. The data for this qualitative study was compiled using interview and survey data and a photo-

elicitation procedure.

Ryan

Ryan, a sophomore psychology major, participated in a faculty-led program in Brussels, Belgium. Ryan's motivations to study abroad included the ability to earn a business minor and the opportunity to visit multiple countries while abroad. Also, while a study abroad experience is not a requirement for Ryan's major, he did feel obligated to study abroad because his brother had set aside money so that he could study abroad. Ryan chose Brussels because of its central location in Europe, which made extensive travel possible. Ryan had no knowledge of the French language, one of the major languages in Brussels, but did know Spanish. He also commented that he felt fairly well-traveled before participating in this study abroad program.

Ryan chose a program that included classes offered only in English to students from his American university. Ryan's classes were held Monday through Thursday from 9:30am-12:00pm, while optional excursions to nearby cities or local organizations were frequently offered on Fridays. No other activities or clubs were offered. Ryan and his fellow classmates lived in a long-term business hotel across town from the building where his classes were held. His American faculty members and Belgian program advisor encouraged students to travel on the weekends.

While studying abroad, Ryan spent most of his time outside of the classroom. His daily dedication to school and homework during the weekdays was 4 to 4 ½ hours per day. Ryan spent his daily leisure playing sports, going to parks, exploring local bars and cooking with his American friends. Ryan spent nine weekends of his semester long

program traveling outside of Brussels with his American friends and visiting family members. During these travels, Ryan toured historical and cultural sites and used his English and Spanish language abilities in his travels more easily than in his host city, thereby leading to more international contact outside of Brussels.

Ryan provided five photographs to discuss during his interview. A summary is provided in Table 2. All photographs were taken outside of his host city of Brussels and included various combinations of his American friends partaking in various tourist and cultural activities.

Table 2. Photographs Submitted by Ryan

Setting and Location of Photograph	Activity Displayed	Person(s) Displayed
Playground in Luxemburg	n/a	n/a
Coliseum in Rome, Italy	Posing with costumed gladiators	American friend
Parc de la Ciutadella in Barcelona, Spain	Posing in front of building	Ryan and two American friends
Camp Nou in Barcelona, Spain	Posing at soccer game	Three American friends
Beach in Morocco	Posing on camels	Ryan and two American friends

Jenny

Even though Jenny’s study abroad experience was required for her language and international trade major, Jenny stated that she was motivated to study abroad anyway due to her sense of adventure, her desire to see other countries and her expectation of a great experience in living and learning another culture. Jenny chose to study abroad in Bilbao, Spain through a provider company because of the national language and her

previous travel there. Jenny had between an intermediate and advanced level of Spanish knowledge before her study abroad program.

Jenny's program was held at a local university in Bilbao where Jenny attended one class in English with Spanish students. She took her remaining classes, which were in English and Spanish, with other American students Monday through Thursday. Jenny also had a language conversation partner with whom she met three times during the semester. This partnership was short-lived due to a lack of common interests and connection. Although offered, Jenny did not participate in any of the clubs or student activities offered by the university. She did, however, attend bi-monthly excursions to local restaurants and a weekend trip to Rome, which were both offered by the provider. Housing options included living with local Spanish university students or a local Spanish family (homestay). Jenny chose the latter because she thought the exposure would help her improve her Spanish and give further insight into the Spanish culture.

Jenny's leisure was a balance between spending time with her homestay and her American friends in Bilbao and traveling to other European countries. With her host family, Jenny made local recipes, ate at family meals, watched TV and practiced her language skills during conversations. Outside of her homestay, Jenny would visit with her American friends while exploring Bilbao, playing cards at the park and going out to local bars. Outside of the city, Jenny traveled to seven countries with her American friends from her program, her dad and her friends from her home university who were also studying abroad in Europe.

Jenny submitted three photographs to be discussed during her interview. These photos, which are described in Table 3, display a mix of locations, activities and settings.

Table 3: Photographs Submitted by Jenny

Setting and Location of Photograph	Activity Displayed	Person(s) Displayed
Homestay in Bilbao, Spain	Posing with host family	Jenny and her host mom and host grandmother
Boat	Posing with friends	Jenny and the American friends from her program
Soccer Game in Bilbao, Spain	n/a	n/a

Hannah

Hannah participated in a faculty-led program to Brussels, Belgium, during the spring of her sophomore year. Hannah participated in this program because it fulfilled several course requirements and kept her on track in her curriculum for her marketing major. Hannah had always had an interest in traveling and thought that a European program would offer her greater access to travel. Despite her lack of knowledge about Brussels before the program, Hannah chose to study there because of the aforementioned motivations. Hannah had no previous knowledge of the French language but did know some Spanish.

The faculty-led program Hannah chose was offered only to her and her fellow home university students. Her classes were held Monday through Thursday with fellow university students and were taught by her home university's faculty members in English. Hannah also took online classes that were through her home university in America. Optional excursions were offered on Friday but no other activities or clubs were offered.

Hannah and her fellow university classmates lived in a long-term business hotel that was located across town from where her classes were held.

During the first half of Hannah's time abroad, she traveled frequently out of Brussels to European countries with her American friends or her boyfriend or her dad who both visited during her time abroad. During these travels, she would enjoy the nightlife, historical sites and art museums, a personal interest for Hannah. This leisure also gave her time to bond with her father as well as her boyfriend, who proposed on top of the Eifel Tower. In Brussels, Hannah enjoyed excursions offered by her faculty members, cooking, going to parks and exploring the city and local bars with her American friends, and enjoying time alone when time allowed near the second half of the semester. Hannah chose to spend more time in Brussels near the end of the semester due to constraints of finances and fatigue from traveling as well as the improved weather in Brussels and the ability to be alone while her roommates were traveling.

Hannah submitted five photographs that represented her leisure activities and companions while abroad. The majority of the photographs were taken outside of Brussels but show a variety of activities and companions. The photographs are described in Table 4.

Table 4: Photographs Submitted by Hannah

Setting and Location of Photograph	Activity Displayed	Person(s) Displayed
Street in Brussels, Belgium	Posing on a statue	Hannah and four American friends
Breakfast and View in Santorini, Greece	n/a	n/a
Metro in Berlin, Germany	Posing	Hannah and three international friends
The Louvre in Paris, France	n/a	n/a
The Eiffel Tower in Paris, France	Posing	Hannah and her fiancé

Erin

Erin chose to study abroad over staying at her home campus because of her love of travel and her ability to finish all of her remaining classes abroad. She specifically chose a provider program in Torino because it was a place she had never been, had good reviews and had hosted high profile events like the winter Olympics. The program was located in a centralized location for traveling to other European countries yet did not cost as much as other Italian programs.

Erin chose a provider program that offered classes in English and only to American students participating in the program or to European students who were studying abroad from other parts of Europe. She had no knowledge of Italian before studying abroad but found the six-week language crash course required by the provider to be extremely helpful, especially because Torino has fewer English speakers compared to other larger Italian cities. Erin participated in the small get-togethers and activities offered by the provider but was unaware and unconcerned with extracurricular activities because of her desire to spend her time traveling instead. Erin lived with other American

students from her program in an apartment across town from the university she attended in Torino.

Erin spent her leisure time in Torino exploring the city, cooking, enjoying the park and downtown area with her American friends and attending an English-speaking international church. She often played American sports and took day trips to places outside the city with her church friends. She also enjoyed the activities that her provider offered. Outside of Torino, Erin enjoyed historical and geographical attractions as well as exploring the cities she was visiting.

Erin submitted five photographs that were discussed during the interview. Her photographs were a mixture of location and activity but mostly involved American friends. These photographs are described in Table 5.

Table 5. Photographs Submitted by Erin

Setting and Location of Photograph	Activity Displayed	Person(s) Displayed
Street in Barcelona, Spain	Posing with bicycles	Erin and her three American friends
Agadir, Morocco	Posing on camels	Erin and her friend from church
Trail in Cinque Terre, Italy	Posing on path	Erin and her American friends
Street in Ivrea, Italy	Posing with oranges during carnival festival	Erin
Apartment in Torino, Italy	Posing	Erin and American friends

Grace

Grace was motivated to study abroad because she felt like it would give her an opportunity to improve her Spanish. She chose Europe over studying in Latin America because of the multitude of places to see while there. She felt this study abroad experience would provide her with opportunities to see more of the world than she had in previous short trips and vacations outside of the United States.

Grace participated in a provider program in Alicante, Spain. The classes she took through the program were held Monday through Thursday and were only for American students in English. She did, however, choose to add six credit hours of internship for which she taught English as a second language. The program offered housing with homestays, living with Spanish or other international students and living with other Americans in apartments. Grace chose to live in a homestay though it was not as successful as she had hoped because of differences in personalities and age between her and her host mom, a middle aged woman living alone.

The program provider publicized extracurricular activities that were hosted by the international student association at the university. Grace rarely chose to participate in these due to disinterest, expense and lack of time. She spent her daily leisure exploring the city and enjoying the labeled 'American bar' with her American friends. Outside of the city, Grace traveled to several countries in Europe with her American friends to see the local tourist sites or to visit friends living there.

Table 6 describes the photographs that Grace submitted. Her pictures displayed a mixture of locations and activities but mostly featured her and her friends from the program she was attending.

Table 6. Photographs Submitted by Grace

Setting and Location of Photograph	Activity Displayed	Person(s) Displayed
Alicante, Spain	Posing at scenic lookout	Grace and three friends from her home university
Alcoy, Spain	Posing at scenic lookout	Grace, two American friend and one Canadian friend
The Cliffs of Moher, Ireland	Posing with university memorabilia	Grace and three Americans from another study abroad program, one of which was from home university
Street in Alicante, Spain	Station of the Cross procession	n/a
Bridge in Florence, Italy	Posing by river	Grace and two American friends

Adam

Adam was motivated to study abroad in order to experience a different part of the world, live outside of the United States and enjoy the ability to travel around Europe. He considered studying abroad in Spain but did not feel that the culture was different enough when compared to the American culture. He began to look to Eastern Europe for more cultural differences and chose Prague.

Adam took classes that were Americans-only and mixed between Czech and Americans. The requirements for Adam's classes were not as demanding as he had in his classes in his home university. Adam lived in apartments with other American students

in his program which his provider had arranged. The provider also offered daytrips to nearby towns, a weekend trip to Krakow, Poland and other events around Prague. Other activities were also publicized at Adam's university from other universities across Prague.

Because of the structure of his classes, Adam was not required to work much on his school work until the last few weeks of the semester. He used this free time during his time in Prague to explore local culture and events going on in the city. He also befriended the program directors and spent his leisure time with them. Outside of the city, Adam traveled to various countries across Europe, which included accompanying his roommate to visit family in Poland, observing cultural and political events and visiting historical sites like Auschwitz. Adam spent most of his travel time with two American friends of Polish descent who were attending the program but he also enjoyed traveling on his own as well.

Adam submitted five photographs to be discussed during the interview. These photos were a mix of locations, settings and companions that Adam used to represent his leisure. These photographs are described in Table 7.

Table 7. Photographs Submitted by Adam

Setting and Location of Photograph	Activity Displayed	Person(s) Displayed
Orchestra Performance in Prague, Czech Republic	n/a	n/a
Easter Morning Sunrise, Prague, Czech Republic	n/a	n/a
Protest in Munich, Germany	Protest against nuclear energy	German man
Chateau in Strasburg, France	Posing	Adam and his boyfriend
Countryside outside of Dublin, Ireland	Posing in front of lake	Adam and two American friends

General Themes

In order to understand students' leisure activities and companions while studying abroad, all of the interviews were compiled and analyzed to determine if there were overarching themes. This section discusses the five themes that emerged from the data. These themes include the impact of individual identity on the choice to study abroad, the impact of individual identity on leisure, the impact of program choice on leisure, leisure while studying abroad as well as the impact of that leisure on individual identity development.

Theme 1: Impact of Individual Identity

on the Choice to Study Abroad & Program Choice

The first theme that emerged was the impact of the student's individual identity on the choice to study abroad and the program they chose. As mentioned previously, identity consists of "an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives,

abilities, beliefs and individual history as well as a sociopolitical stance” (Marcia, 1980, p.159). Two main aspects of identity emerged that contributed to the decision to study abroad or the eventual program choice. One aspect was the individual’s motivations while the other was the individual’s pre-existing skills and abilities. The students listed several motivations, ranging from academic to travel to cultural motivations, for the reason to study abroad and eventual program choice. Existing skills, such as language abilities, were also a factor in the choice of program.

Motivations

Students had motivations that influenced their choice to study abroad as well as their program choice. These motivations were academically, travel and culturally oriented. Most students were initially attracted to study abroad because of academic gain through course credits and language experience, but the choice of program which includes location as key variable was based on travel and cultural motivations.

Academic/Career Motivations

Students were academically motivated to participate in study abroad programming. Study abroad programming offers the opportunity to earn academic credit that will fulfill requirements for a degree. When asked why they chose to study abroad, the students offered the following comments regarding academic and career motivations:

We were offered the ability to get a business minor in a semester. So that was my main thing (Ryan, Brussels).

I really wanted to improve my Spanish which I think I did because I felt like I’ve

learned it all along but I really never used it all too much and so I thought that this would be a great opportunity to do that (Grace, Alicante).

I always wanted to study abroad. Originally, I wanted to do a Spanish language program but I transferred schools and switched majors and this program was everything I needed and it wasn't going to set me behind or anything (Hannah, Brussels).

These motivations are concerned with academic gain (i.e., required courses, language gain) without the costs of non-transferable credits or delay in graduating. The importance of academic benefit from participating in study abroad is apparent in these motivations.

Travel Motivations

Study abroad, particularly in the European Union, affords students with opportunities to travel throughout the continent with relatively low cost and ease. Students also listed travel motivations as impacting their choice to study abroad and their motivation for the experience itself.

I've always been really into traveling and I thought this was a really great opportunity because when you are in Europe it's a lot easier access to travel (Hannah, Brussels).

Brussels seemed like a good opportunity since it was a central location and I can visit the rest of Europe from there (Ryan, Brussels).

While Hannah and Ryan explained that their decisions to study abroad in Europe, particularly Brussels, were based on the ability to travel easily because of its centralized location, Erin expanded on the idea that a centralized location also reduced the costs of

traveling.

Because I tried actually to go to Athens, Greece and my major didn't work with that and it wouldn't have worked out as well anyway because it's not as central to Europe and traveling from there is usually more expensive than traveling from Italy because it's basically in the middle of Europe (Erin, Torino).

Grace also listed that extensive travel, particularly to a location where multiple historical and cultural sites are easily accessible, was a strong motivation for her picking Europe over another program location.

And then between Latin America and Europe, I was thinking once you got to Europe, there's so much you can see in Europe so it was an awesome experience to travel as well because I had never been...I had only been out of the country, you know, on vacations and short trips and so I thought it would be awesome to get to see a little bit more of the world because I hadn't ever done it before (Grace, Alicante).

Travel motivations influenced these students' choice of program. Students chose their programs because of centralized location which leads to accessibility to the rest of the European continent where multiple cultural and historical attractions are present.

Students also chose a centralized location to reduce the costs of traveling while abroad.

These travel motivations influenced one student's choice of program so much that the student picked a program in one continent over another program in another less travel-friendly continent.

Motivations to Experience Culture

Students were also motivated to study abroad in order to have a cultural experience. Motivations to experience culture impact the student's choice to study abroad, their program choice as well as their choice of housing while abroad. Jenny described her choice to study abroad in the following way:

I felt like it would be a great experience to learn about another culture and live there (Jenny, Bilbao).

Adam stated that his choice of program was based on how different the culture was from what he knew at home or had already experienced in other travels. He said:

I wanted to just experience a different part of the world. I was seriously thinking about going to Barcelona but I knew a lot about Spain and I knew Spanish, or know Spanish, so I didn't feel like it was quite different enough. But I looked elsewhere in Europe and farther east and found Prague and started to like it so I chose there. And then just study abroad in general: I wanted the experience of living out of the country (Adam, Prague).

While Adam chose a particular program because of his motivations to experience culture, Jenny chose a particular program design in which a homestay was possible.

I thought it would be better to be around Spanish more. I really wanted to learn the culture more (Jenny, Bilbao).

Students were motivated by culture in their choice to study abroad, their chosen program location and design. This motivation may be based on existing experience with cultural difference. Students who were motivated by culture were more likely to choose program

locations and designs that would expose them to the local culture, including living deeper into Eastern Europe or living in a homestay with a host family.

Skills

Existing skills were also found to be a moderating factor in the choice of study abroad programs. Grace reflected on her choice of one program over another and the influence of her existing language skills.

I think that it was a much better choice for me personally because my other option for me was Barcelona and they speak Castellano there and it's much, much more prominent than the Valenciano. So I think that made the right choice for the learning portion of learning Spanish, and using Spanish I know, and not changing to a different dialect because I don't know if I would have been able to handle that. I'm not that good at Spanish (Grace, Alicante).

Grace chose to participate in a study abroad program whose host language matched with her existing Spanish skills. Her choice was based on her comfort with her existing language skills and her unwillingness to switch to a different dialect of the language she knew.

Summary of Impact of Individual Identity on Choice to Study Abroad & Program Choice

For students, the choice to study abroad and the eventual program choice was based on the motivations and existing skills of each individual. The motivations are based on academic gain, the ability to travel and the ability to experience culture. Existing skills, such as language ability, also influenced program choice. The combination of the

motivations and skills created several push and pull factors that led to the ultimate decision to study abroad and the eventual program choice.

Theme 2: Impact of Program Choice on Leisure Activities and Companions

The second theme that emerged from the interview data was the impact of the chosen program on the students' leisure activities and companions. Programs are set up by universities or providers and consist of several features that influence students' experiences. The features included location, host city size, academic characteristics, program excursions and program housing. These features influenced students' leisure behavior and companions while abroad.

Location

As mentioned in the "Impact of Individual Identity on Choice to Study Abroad & Program Choice" theme, program choice was largely due to student's motivation for travel. Therefore, each student's program location was convenient for those types of leisure activities that they are not able to do in the United States.

I really would never have that same opportunity again just to be in Europe and have traveling around Europe be so easy. So it was awesome. I couldn't even believe how many places I had gone that I wanted to see and now looking back it's amazing to me that I could just go away for the weekend to a different country (Grace, Alicante).

The program location facilitated ease of travel while abroad and led to leisure experiences of convenient travel that students cannot easily attain when living at home in

the United States.

Size of Host City

The size of the city in which the students were living also facilitated different types of leisure. For instance, small cities were easy to navigate after a short amount of time living in the city.

I mean to navigate the city of Alicante, it only takes like two days to figure out the lay of the land. So, so easy (Grace, Alicante).

Grace later commented that the size of city produced some advantages and disadvantages:

It was definitely farther removed from larger touristy areas and from big things that you look forward to abroad or in a different country that you would find in most cities but I like the smallness of it and that it's a little more personal and you didn't have to use public transportation everyday just to walk around the city. It was very manageable for me (Grace, Alicante).

Despite the fact that its small size limited attractions and features of larger cities, Grace found that the small city of Alicante was easy to develop a personal connection to while Jenny found that her neighborhood provided her with a place to escape from urban areas.

The area I lived in was actually a small neighborhood area but it was nice to have that smaller getaway instead of being right in the middle of the big city. Bilbao is not that big but the more urban area, I guess I should say (Jenny, Bilbao).

Still, the larger cities provided an environment for exposure to a large amount of international influences and culture.

We met a lot of people and it wasn't just Belgians because Brussels is such a large city. It draws a lot of people. And so we met people from Africa, people from all over Europe and we even met some people from the US and everything (Hannah, Brussels).

Still, Hannah commented that the size of Brussels, coupled with her lack of French knowledge, made navigating the city difficult.

So we were just walking across town in the middle of the night, having no clue where we were going. But that describes a lot of what the trip was ...we had no idea where we were half of the time and between maps and asking other people for directions, that's the only way to figure it out (Hannah, Brussels).

The students indicated that the size of the host city in which a program is held influenced their leisure activities and companions. Students living in small cities developed a sense of comfort due to its ease of navigability and familiarity but were offered fewer opportunities for exposure to an international community. While a program hosted in a large city offered these opportunities, it was harder to navigate which often lead to frustration in pursuing leisure activities.

Academic Characteristics of the Program

The academic components of study abroad vary among providers as well as the international universities with which they partner. The components include the weekly class schedule and the demand of class requirements. These components influence the amount of leisure time that students had during their study abroad experience.

Weekly Class Schedule

The ability to schedule classes as desired led to leisure opportunities for each student. Most students attended classes Monday through Thursday, although a few students reduced their time in class to as little as one day per week in order to pursue leisure activities while abroad. When asked why he scheduled his classes only for Tuesday through Thursday, Adam replied, “I was intending to have more time to travel so I would have four day weekends” (Adam, Prague). Erin, who had class only on Tuesdays, explained her reasoning for loading all of her classes into one day:

It was great for traveling...A lot of the time I spent traveling because it's cheaper for RyanAir. It's the low cost airline over there. It's easier to take flights on Wednesday or Thursday than it is the rest of the week (Erin, Torino).

The ability to schedule class as desired allowed students to pursue their desired leisure activities, such as travel. Ryan, who participated in a university-led program, described his professors' willingness to work around the students' schedule so that they could pursue leisure activities:

We had Professor _____ actually reschedule his class from Thursday afternoon to Thursday morning so we could fly out better. The second semester ...the semester is divided into halves... the Belgian professor who was teaching didn't do that but he didn't care. He said if you have to leave, leave. And so they just let us do whatever we want (Ryan, Brussels).

This flexibility and understanding by professors led to an environment where academics were trumped by travel pursuits.

Academics--like I said, the teachers were there for your benefit. They wanted to work around your schedule which was really nice. It's not to say we didn't learn anything. The courses were difficult and the professors we had were arguably the best in their fields. So that was fantastic. But we spent more time traveling than we did on studying (Ryan, Brussels).

Demand of Class Requirements

In addition to flexibility in class schedule, the general demand of classes created an environment where leisure accounted for the majority of a student's day. When asked about the daily demand of class and its associated work compared to time spent on leisure, Adam responded:

It was mostly leisure--mostly leisure for the majority of the semester. But right around midterms, it was the week of midterms and then probably the last two and a half weeks, there was a lot of time spent writing papers, studying, doing research in the library, just when the times were concentrated. There was very little daily homework. I had one class that had homework a couple of times a week (Adam, Prague).

Adam also commented on the general structure of his courses allowing for more leisure time during the beginning of his program.

There would be some time for studying but the way most of the professors structure their semester, they would put a lot of the work in the last couple weeks. So there wasn't too much actual work to do at home in the first few months (Adam, Prague).

Even when students had work to complete, they used free time between classes to complete it. Therefore, class work during evening hours was not necessary. Grace commented on the daily requirements of her schoolwork:

I spent two hours on schoolwork and it was all between my breaks. I never really took home homework or anything to do at night for a class. It was totally different than classes I took in _____. The load was so much lighter but I was also just taking...I was taking classes in Spanish. I don't know...the prep work just wasn't the same as it had been for me in _____. So I would say probably two hours a day (Grace, Alicante).

Adam also commented on the requirements of his classes in comparison to his home university in the United States. Classes that were similar to those in American universities were found to be more difficult and more engaging. He also commented on the usefulness of the language course in his communication with the host nationals outside of the classroom.

I thought the requirements were overall a whole lot easier than _____ in terms of the number of assignments and, for the most part, the difficulty of the assignments. My East Central politics class was probably the most like a class I would take at _____. There's a lot of material. It was difficult. The professor, I thought, seemed most like an American professor that I've had here. The other classes, they were more laid back and didn't have many assignments at all. They weren't all that engaging. My Czech class, I thought was difficult just because I thought the language was difficult. But it really enhanced my time there in Prague

because we learned about the culture and it helped learning the language so we could communicate better with people there (Adam, Prague).

Erin agreed that her required language crash course was helpful when initiating communication in leisure settings.

[The provider] requires six weeks of Italian to begin...you had to learn to speak it, write it and all that.... it was just really helpful for us because we didn't have any other way to communicate up until then (Erin, Torino).

The low demand of classwork coupled with the flexibility of class scheduling led to time when leisure activities could be carried out. The main program design feature that was helpful was language instruction as it helped students communicate with the host nationals.

Program Housing

Participants commented that different forms of housing led to different leisure activities. The participants of this study had different living arrangements, from those living together in one building, to those living with other Americans in apartments to those living on their own with a host family. The housing arrangements were a moderator of what type of leisure companions students had access to as well as some of the leisure activities they would pursue.

Hannah commented on the lack of exposure to the city because she and her fellow program members lived in the same building:

We were all based in the same hotel in the same part of town so it was hard to go out and figure out where to go and what to do (Hannah, Brussels).

Erin suggested that living in her apartment with her American friends was similar to that of her situation at her host institution. She also commented that living in separate apartments across town afforded opportunities to visit her American friends or meet with them in the city in which she was studying.

I mean it wasn't a lot different in terms of what we did because we would just get home from school and make dinner together and hang out, go see other people that were in our program that lived close by or go hang out downtown (Erin, Torino).

While Jenny enjoyed similar daily leisure activities as the other participants, her choice of a homestay provided her with opportunities to pursue leisure activities with her host family in addition to her American friends.

It was kind a mix of both. Sometimes I would see some friends throughout the day and they would be like 'You want to go to here or there or do you want to go walk around the streets or...?' Whatever there was to do. And then, other nights I would just go straight home and just kind of hang out with my host family and talk with them at night (Jenny, Bilbao).

It was apparent that the student's choice of housing made an impact on the leisure companions that students pursued. Those in programs where all students were housed in the same place were afforded little exposure to areas of the city because they had no knowledge or experience with other portions of the city. Even those students who lived in apartments with other American students were exposed to other parts of the city by visiting their friends' apartments. Still, students who lived with other Americans were

limited in their companions because they developed connections with their roommates and did little to step outside of those relationships. Students who had successful homestays had the most variety in leisure companions because they met and developed meaningful relationships with a wider variety of people.

Host Culture

Cultural difference, as a result of program choice, also impacted leisure activities and companions while abroad. Students were able to observe the cultural and social norms of the country in which they are living. Observations often lead to clashing leisure behavior between the two cultures or to Americans changing their leisure behavior.

It's just the differences between the cultures that, you know, just basic stuff, like space, personal space. They think it's rude if we back away from them if they get too close to us because they are used to standing much closer when having conversations...They just get so close. And it was just funny to be able to watch and experience it. You know, they would get so close and we would back away or something like that. And they just thought it was the strangest thing that we were just so mean (Erin, Torino).

Czech tend to be very, very quiet. It was sort of strange. It took me a while to get used to...they tended to be really quiet and don't really interact with strangers very much so I think that kind of clashes with Americans who generally talk a lot and are louder and interact with people (Adam, Prague).

Adam later commented that his acceptance of the social differences between American and Czech people led to great appreciation of his leisure time in Prague:

The people there are very friendly. They're different, like I was saying, they don't really interact with strangers much and aren't very loud but you sort of accept that and don't take that as being unfriendly. They're very friendly people, very open to foreigners and it was just a neat experience spending a lot of my time in Prague instead of traveling (Adam, Prague).

Erin also commented that the culture in which she lived affected her choice of leisure behavior in terms of alcohol consumption. When asked if alcohol was a big part of her experience, she replied:

Not as much because the Italians don't drink to get drunk...it's just there for them.

I think that rubbed off on a lot of people in our program (Erin, Torino).

Summary of Impact of Program Choice on Leisure Activities and Companions

Students' program choices were found to impact opportunities for leisure activities and companions in the form of time, amount of contact and the success of that contact. Class structure, scheduling and demand were relatively stress-free for students and afforded time to travel during extended weekends while enjoying daily leisure in the host city during the week. Students cited that the most helpful portion of their academic experience was language instruction because it enabled them to communicate with the host nationals. The living arrangement was also influential on a student's leisure companions. Students who pursued housing with a homestay still enjoyed leisure time with their American friends but also had opportunities to enjoy leisure activities with their host family. The host culture in which the program was held also impacted student leisure. The social interaction between individuals of different cultures was moderated by

cultural differences. The success of the leisure experience depended on how the student adjusted to cultural differences in forms of understanding, flexibility and patience.

Theme 3: Impact of Individual Identity on Leisure Activities and Companions

The third theme that emerged was the impact of the students' identities on their chosen leisure activities and companions. Students' individual identities influence their leisure choices because of their individual interests, attitudes, motivations and skills. The components of the identity found to be related to students' choices of leisure activities and companions include their motivations for studying abroad as well as the existing skills that they had in the form of language, planning and intercultural communication skills. The combination of these motivations and skills led to different leisure experiences for the students.

Motivations

The types of motivations that influenced leisure activities and companions were academic, travel and cultural.

Academic Motivations

Grace chose to participate in an activity set up by the International Student Club at her university in which she was partnered with a Spanish student to practice her Spanish through leisurely conversations.

There was another thing that the International Student Club offered. It was called Intercambio...it basically set up English speaking students with Spanish speaking students so that you had a language partner...and I met with mine three times... it

was cool to have that experience definitely and get to practice my Spanish with a Spaniard and have him practice his English with an American (Grace, Alicante). Initially, Grace participated in the language partner program in order to improve her Spanish, but she enjoyed the conversations because of her partner's interest in America and her natural inclination to be able to talk about her home country. Therefore it was a leisurely experience. Jenny, on the other hand, initially had the same academic motivations to learn Spanish and joined a program similar to Grace's. The leisure experience, however, were not the same.

I was paired up with someone who was very different from me... He was much older and he was a psychology doctorate student. It was sometimes awkward because I didn't know what to talk about and I could tell he felt the same way.

The conversations ended up being all the same, all the time (Jenny, Bilbao). Despite similar motivations, Grace and Jenny had different leisure experiences. A successful language partner has similar interests as their partner and there is progression in the partnership in content and language ability.

Travel Motivations

Differences among travel motivations resulted in different types of leisure activities and companions while students were abroad. Students had different travel goals, interests and styles which consequently affected who students surrounded themselves with while traveling.

Grace explained that her travel motivations were based around the popular tourist sites and attractions. She also admitted to being embarrassed of her and her group's goal

to take pictures of the sites.

We were usually on a mission to take a picture of everything that was touristy which is so embarrassing (Grace, Alicante).

Adam and his companions, on the other hand, were motivated to experience other portions of cities beyond the touristy areas.

So a lot of my travel time and time in Prague was spent with them. They just sort of had similar mindsets and willingness to step outside the touristy areas and things like that and traveling (Adam, Prague).

Similar mindsets and interests were a large determinant of students' traveling companions. Erin explained:

There was one girl that I had met that goes to University of Alabama actually. We became pretty close and had similar travel styles so we ended up traveling to most of these places together (Erin, Torino).

Hannah agreed that her fiancé who visited during her time abroad was a good traveling partner:

He's definitely the easiest person to travel with because he knows me so well and I know him so well. And we had similar interests (Hannah, Brussels).

Often, different travel motivations and interests affected the group dynamics when traveling:

There [were] so many more people to please and so many more people wanting to do different things, which is fine, which is great, if you want to do different things. But it's the type of thing where if you do want to do something different,

just go and do it... You can go ahead and do what you want if you want to but if you're not going to do it alone or if you don't find someone to do it with you, then go back to the hostel if you want to but complaining the whole time is just going to make it worse (Grace, Alicante).

Adam explained that it was sometimes easier to travel on his own to avoid differences in travel motivations.

I kind of liked traveling on my own because I could just sort of go wherever I wanted to. I wasn't really accountable to anyone else and I didn't have to worry about someone else enjoying something (Adam, Prague).

Motivations to Experience Culture

Students' leisure activities were influenced by motivations to experience and learn about the culture they were visiting. Students who had motivations to experience culture pursued activities that would allow insight into the history and society of the culture in which they were living.

There were some people that would like to travel and all they would do when they get there would be to go out to bars and stuff. But I really like to actually see the sites and see what's there and learn about the area...when I went to different places, I always made sure I did at least a couple of different things like that (Jenny, Bilbao).

Adam commented that because of his motivation to experience culture, he avoided certain places during his leisure.

A lot of people went to the American bars, yeah. I didn't...I didn't really want to

because all you do is spend time with other Americans. I would go to more of the Czech places and the local places (Adam, Prague).

Skills

Students possessing language skills, planning skills and intercultural communication skills were more likely to have successful leisure experiences. Those who did not possess these skills found leisure activities to be less successful.

Language Skills

Knowledge of language led to successful leisure experiences and shared social interaction between different cultures.

We played soccer with a bunch of Moroccan kids. I speak a fair amount of Spanish so I was communicating with them. They were really nice. One of the kids even told us that one of the guys we were playing soccer with was a thief. Watch your stuff. We were like 'okay'. So we watched our stuff and that was fine (Ryan, Brussels).

On the other hand, lack of language skills led to poor, and often contested, leisure experiences.

We were sharing the court [with some host nationals] and we would play half-court basketball and we would leave them to play soccer on their end and if they decided they wanted to use the whole court, instead of asking us with sign language, they would kick our ball away (Ryan, Brussels).

Ryan's perception was that the ability to speak the host country's language may have led to improved communication and ultimately a better leisure experience. Other factors, such as prejudice or discrimination on the part of both parties, may have been at play. Still, the students perceive there to be differences in cross-cultural interaction between those students who possessed language skills and those who did not.

My Italian was not good enough to understand or they couldn't understand me and their English was not good enough for me to understand. Several of the students...were in...the intermediate and advanced Italian classes...They didn't really have that many problems because they had enough knowledge of different ways to say things that they could get their point across and be understood (Erin, Torino).

Students would often use their friends' language skills to their advantage during interaction in order to navigate and locate sites or inquire about events during their travels.

Polish is similar to Czech and Slovak as well. So they could sometimes communicate using their Polish if someone did not speak English (Adam, Prague).

Planning Skills

Planning skills were also important for successful leisure experiences. Students who had planned early in the semester had more travel experiences. Also, students who were aware of the yearly tourist seasons were able to spend less on travel expenses by planning around those times.

Jenny mentioned that not having travel plans affected her leisure during the first half of the semester.

I really just stayed in Bilbao for the weekend mostly because I didn't really have any travels planned and it took a while to make those plans (Jenny, Bilbao). Other students began their planning early in the semester and planned in collaboration with their American friends.

Most of these trips were done planning in January...so you would sit down one night, pick trip. Next night, another trip. By mid-February, you're entire semester is planned out (Ryan, Brussels).

We all talked about different places we wanted to go and if someone presented an idea that everyone liked then we would say sure, let's try to plan that and then the person who suggested it would usually sort of take on planning that trip. But for the most part we planned things together (Adam, Prague).

Highlighting the importance of planning early in the semester, Grace admitted that it took one detailed-oriented friend to encourage planning ahead in order to avoid poor leisure experiences.

I met a girl who was very very...she was a planner. She took all of that which was great because I think our trip wouldn't...I think our trip would have had a couple more bumps in the road if we hadn't taken care of it so early (Grace, Alicante).

Intercultural Communication Skills

Finally, students possessing intercultural communication skills were more likely to feel less threatened by cultural differences and therefore enjoyed learning about differences of cultural experiences.

Students who approached differences in culture as moments for learning felt less threatened.

The Anglican Church there is almost identical to the Episcopal church here...It was interesting. It was probably a more liberal church than a lot of churches in the south. It was interesting talking to people there and hearing their perspective on the church in the US in general is sort of viewed as fairly radical and evangelical in the sense that most Americans or a lot of Americans they think of evangelical (Adam, Prague).

Other students who viewed cultural differences as threatening did not reach out to understand why those differences existed.

Our school is a private school in Torino. The private business school that all of the business owners and wealthy people in Torino send their kids to and they ... a lot of the girls didn't really, I guess, like us at first. I had one girl tell me to my face that I was a rich, snobby, American bitch. And, you know, we didn't ever really get to be friends (Erin, Torino).

The importance of having established intercultural communication skills is evident. Students often encounter differences of opinion during their leisure time abroad and

established intercultural communication skills helped students adjust to these environments and understand the perspectives of other cultures.

Summary of the Impact of Individual Identity on Leisure Activities and Companions

Students' leisure activities and companions while abroad were impacted by their individual identity, which included their motivations and skills. Students who possessed motivations to experience culture and language and intercultural communication skills appeared to have more successful cross-cultural interactions in leisure. Those lacking these motivations and skills appeared to have poorer leisure experiences due to lack of communication or understanding of cultural differences.

Theme 4: Leisure Activities and Companions during Study Abroad

The fourth theme that emerged was focused on the common activities that students pursued with certain companions during their leisure time. Most students traveled at least eight or nine weeks out of a 12 to 13 week semester. They also enjoyed leisure activities that were typical of their leisure at home in the United States or would spectate the culture in which they were living with little integration into the actual culture. Students were most likely to pursue these leisure activities with American classmates or visiting family and friends. The little leisure time that was spent with host nationals was during time at the home stay or at the language partner program.

Activities

Students pursued a variety of leisure activities while abroad. The most prominent leisure activity was travel outside of the host city in which students were living. While in

the city, students enjoyed typical American leisure activities as well as spectating and enjoying the local culture in which they were living.

Travel

Traveling to other places outside of the host city was a large portion of the students' study abroad experience.

We spent more time traveling than we did on studying (Ryan, Brussels).

We mostly travelled. I think that...it feels like we were out of the city more than we were in. (Grace, Alicante).

American leisure interests

Students pursued daily leisure activities that they typically participate in while at home in the US.

It wasn't a lot different in terms of what we did because we would just get home from school and make dinner together and hang out. Go see other people that were in our program that lived close by or go hang out downtown...And as roommates, we would just go run or hang out in the park (Erin, Torino).

Hannah also said that cooking as a group was a frequent leisure activity for her and her American classmates. She explained she would wake up, go to class...

Then, cook dinner with my roommates and some of our other friends. We would switch off who would cook dinner. A lot of nights we would go out and enjoy some of the Belgian beers, come back and then do it again (Hannah, Brussels).

Additionally, socializing with American friends was a frequent leisure activity. Erin explained her frequent experience with daily leisure began with the following invitation:

We can have dinner at my house and hang out and then go out afterwards....So there were a lot of nights where we would just have 15+ people in somebody's apartment and just like have dinner and hang out and enjoy each other's company (Erin, Torino).

In their host cities, students would often go to bars that were popular among Americans and other tourists visiting the city.

There were some that were distinctly the ones that Americans go to or the ones that the foreigners go to. That's the ones that we really were at (Grace, Alicante).

Spectating and experiencing local culture

Students also mentioned that they spent a large amount of their daily leisure exploring the city and spectating local culture during their travels.

We would, you know, plan a spot and time to meet up either on the main shopping street or by the water and just walk...we would just spend hours and hours walking around the city, just looking for new things that we hadn't seen before or sitting down at the parks or going to little shops (Grace, Alicante).

Ryan explained that his travel experiences afforded opportunities to understand cultural norms.

We were just sitting there and Barcelona, nobody cares, they're just 'live and let live' there, so not three seats down, some guy just lights up a joint in the middle of the game and starts smoking away and we were just kind of like, that's a little

strange, but as the semester progressed we found that to be common throughout all of Europe. It was a unique learning experience (Ryan, Brussels).

Enjoying host city

Despite the fact that students enjoyed traveling, they began to recognize the importance of experiencing the city that they were living in.

You live there during the week and go to classes and stuff but if you don't spend time during the weekend and take time off when the people there take time off then I feel like you miss out on a lot in the places you're staying. And I'm glad that I did that (Adam, Prague).

Toward the end, I was just begging to be there for the weekend and hang out in Alicante. I was regretting my travel plans...I had been in school during the week and then during the weekend I would go someplace and so I felt like I wanted to get as much Alicante as I could before I [left] (Grace, Alicante).

Companions

For the most part, students enjoyed the company of their American classmates and visiting friends or family members while abroad. Students also developed relationships with their program directors and other international travelers. Students often used them for language knowledge or introduction to the attractions of the city in which they were living or visiting. Contact with the host nationals was infrequent and the outcomes from these experiences may have been richer with if further contact had occurred.

American classmates

Students commented that their leisure time was spent with “mostly American students” (Jenny, Bilbao). This comment was further solidified by students’ constant use of the pronoun “we” when describing their leisure activities. The size of the group of American classmates depended on the activity, with gatherings in apartments ranging from 7-15 people while traveling groups could range from 3-7 people.##

Friends and family members

The majority of students mentioned spending time with visiting family members or going to visit friends who were studying abroad in other locations in Europe. Jenny said:

I got to do a lot of awesome stuff in London with my dad and it was a really nice time to spend with my dad in London. I’m really glad I got to experience that (Jenny, Bilbao).

Hannah explained that it was nice to learn where her dad worked and it gave her an understanding of things she had not understood about his work before.

We’ve always been pretty close but it was different to be able to travel with him and see where he works when he goes abroad (Hannah, Brussels).

Several students met up with other friends from her home university who were studying abroad in different locations in Europe. Grace met up with a sorority sister while traveling and was also introduced to two other students from her home university that she had not met before. She explained her excitement of meeting them:

I was really excited to meet other _____ students and it’s one thing to hear

English and meet an American and you're so excited because you haven't in so long and then to meet _____ students you're like 'I'm so happy'! We're basically from the same place and you can talk about all of the great things in _____. It feels like you are back home which is great (Grace, Alicante).

International travelers

Students met international travelers during their trips and would often participate in leisure activities with them. Hannah explained that hostels were a good way to meet and interact with international travelers.

So these are just people that I met in the hostel. One of them is from around Germany, he's from Ireland but he was working in Paris, and he's from Chile, he's a grad student from Chile. So you just meet a lot of different people when you stay at the hostels and this was one of the few times I was able to meet people because I was traveling in a group of 4 instead of a group of 7. When you have 7, you take up most of the hostel room so you don't really get the chance to interact with other people. But this trip, we really did and it was nice (Hannah, Brussels).

Adam seconded that traveling in smaller groups, or in his case as a solo traveler, enabled him to engage in more leisure activities with international travelers.

It was also a different experience meeting people in the hostel. As a solo traveler, I think that people sort of have a different reaction to people who are traveling by themselves... I think people reach out to people traveling on their own more. And I felt that on the other side of the coin, too, like when we were traveling as a group and there was a solo person, I feel like we talked to them more because

they didn't have anyone else to talk to so they were more willing to talk. And meeting up...doing activities and things with other people (Adam, Prague).

Program directors

Students also developed friendships with the program directors. These program directors, who were in their late twenties to early thirties, would often accompany students to local attractions or places of business.

It got to the point where the directors of the program became pretty good friends with some of us so we were hanging out with them and they would show us around the city (Adam, Prague).

Adam mentioned that he will be keeping in touch with these program directors in the future.

Host nationals

For the most part, students had relationships and interactions with host nationals that could have benefitted from greater amounts of contact and richer conversations. Students came into contact with host nationals through social interactions during daily leisure, during language partner programs and at home with the host family. The success of that leisure depended on the amount of time spent together and the presence of common interests.

For most of the participants, leisure with the host nationals was limited. Hannah explained a typical example of American students' leisure with the host nationals.

One of the guys knew somebody, one of the Brussels students came over here to [my home university], and so he knew him from that. He was involved in some activity here. So, we would hang out with him a little bit but that was for the most part the extent of our dealing with Belgians (Hannah, Brussels).

Grace explained that her language partner program was successful because her partner was interested in the same things as her.

I think he was the equivalent of a political science major at [my home university]. He was really, really interested in the politics of America and how the country works and how our government functions, all of this stuff. It was kind of embarrassing all of the things I didn't know about my own country to tell him about. He was really very interested in the American way which was fun for me because it's so natural to talk about America (Grace, Alicante).

As mentioned previously, Jenny spoke about her leisure time with her host family.

I really enjoyed simple things, spending time with them like being in the kitchen with my host mom, learning different recipes with her, and then at night, sitting around the table for lunch and dinner, or whatever. Or sitting around the TV and talking and watching the silly shows they watch and then having them ask me questions about America and them telling me about Spain. Talking about the differences. You know, just our lives in general (Jenny, Bilbao).

These relationships with host nationals suggest that extended amounts of time with host nationals that have the same interests as the American students, and vice versa, were helpful in creating successful leisure experiences, thereby leading to the possibility of

further development in cross-cultural communication skills.

Alone

Students spent some of their leisure time on their own due to their desire to participate in different leisure activities than their American classmates or in order to have a sense of escape.

Adam was the participant who mentioned spending the most time on his own. When asked whether he enjoyed being on his own, Adam replied:

I did. A lot of people would stay out...a lot of people did that several times a week and then they would just sleep through the whole day. So I don't really enjoy doing that that often, especially when I could just do that here. So I enjoyed spending a lot of time by myself and finding new experiences and things (Adam, Prague).

Hannah also enjoyed having leisure time alone due to the conditions of her housing.

I was really thankful when I have the apartment to myself because it was really cramped...So I would just get out by myself and have me time because it was so cramped and you just couldn't get away from anybody (Hannah, Brussels).

Summary of the Leisure Activities and Companions Theme

Students spent a large amount of their time traveling or spending time with their American classmates, friends and family members. For the most part, students were always accompanied by another American and would observe the local culture but rarely participate in it. Only students who were willing to spend time alone or away from their

American classmates were exposed to culturally-relative leisure activities through language partners and homestays or through daily leisure pursuits.

Theme 5: Impact of Leisure Activities and Companions on Individual Identity Development

The final theme focused on students' testimonies of cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal growth through their leisure activities and companions while abroad. Students were able to improve their language skills and their knowledge of the culture while abroad. Students expressed intrapersonal gain in that they gained confidence in their traveling skills. They also found that their time abroad gave them time to contemplate future plans in terms of future education and life goals. Finally, students expressed interpersonal gain in the way they communicated with other Americans or in the way they approached their views of other cultures. Students said they became more flexible and patient with their American classmates and gained respect for cultures that were not their own.

Cognitive development

Students gained cognitive knowledge of the language and culture in which they were living through daily interactions while abroad.

Language

Students developed knowledge of the local language abroad through their classes and through use of it during their leisure time. Those who had language skills previously improved on their skills during their leisure time.

I'm definitely not fluent but I got a lot closer to being fluent while I was over there (Grace, Alicante).

Jenny agreed:

Living in Spain, I know my Spanish improved a lot. I learned a lot by being there (Jenny, Bilbao).

Cultural norms

Students said that they will also take the cultural information that they learned during their study abroad experience and use it during class discussions back in the United States.

In the Spanish classes I have left to take, I'm sure I'll end up talking about it a lot. And I'm an anthropology minor and that's a lot about culture and whatnot so I'm sure I'm going to end up talking about that a lot there too (Jenny, Bilbao).

Intrapersonal development

While abroad, students developed intrapersonal skills that that helped them feel confident in future travels and plans for their futures.

Confidence in traveling

Students said that they became well-informed of the travel planning process. Some students had struggles during their travels that contributed to more informed knowledge of the planning process.

Ryan said that the idea of planning trips to other countries was overwhelming at first:

We get in there and thought it was really daunting...And it was daunting to get 8 people to Italy, find a hostel, figure out the public transportation. It was our first major trip. At the beginning, you're nerve racked the entire time. And by the end, Morocco was one of our last ones, cake walk. Nothing, nothing can phase you. I felt like we could literally plan a trip to the other side of the world and be fine (Ryan, Brussels).

Ryan expressed his boost in self-efficacy as it applies to planning trips.

But we took nine flights in total. Nine different countries. Yeah, by the end, you're feeling pretty good about yourself (Ryan, Brussels).

Planning for the future: life goals, future travels, grad school

Students expressed that their time abroad, specifically their leisure time and companions, allowed for contemplation for their future plans in terms of their goals, careers and approach to life.

Grace admitted that she now has a thirst to experience more places through travel. I think that now that I have seen so many great things that it makes me want to go more (Grace, Alicante).

I have the desire to see because I have seen cool things and I know what it's like to travel and I feel like you learn a lot while you travel (Grace, Alicante).

Jenny said that her time abroad made her more confident and independent.

I also do think that the independence and the growing socially and becoming more self-confident definitely a huge improvement and gain that I value a lot (Jenny, Bilbao).

Although unsure of his future plans, Adam expressed interest in attending graduate school abroad.

This study abroad has made me start looking at grad school in Europe but I don't know if that will work out or not (Adam, Prague)

Erin, too, expressed interest in working abroad.

I guess there were just different things that I thought really I wanted to do and that now I just don't have as much of a desire to do, or like, I wouldn't mind living abroad for a job for a little while (Erin, Torino).

She also said that her time abroad allowed time for contemplation of her future path in life.

It was just really such a great experience like meeting all of those people and growing up so much and realizing what's important and what's not important...I guess what I really want to do with my life. Just big life goals like that ... that a lot of us ... because I got so close with a lot of people there that we spent a lot of time discussing stuff like that (Erin, Torino).

Students expressed their intrapersonal development in evaluating their goals in travels, education, careers and approach to life. The opportunities to discuss these goals with others while abroad and away from other pressures of life also lead to further contemplation.

Interpersonal development

Adapting and communicating with their American classmates

The experience of being abroad required students to be patient, flexible and adaptable. Hannah spoke of making the choice to get along, even when it was difficult:

It was definitely one of the experiences where these are the people I'm with. You have to suck it up. If you had a disagreement, you just had to get over it because you're in the same hotel, in the same classes with the same people every day. It's like being with family because you have to deal with it. You have to suck it up and move on (Hannah, Brussels).

Erin also cited that her roommates helped her develop her patience. The students discussed how traveling required them to adapt to new or unexpected situations.

Communicating with other cultures

Students' leisure experiences also afforded students opportunities to compare the culture in which they were living to their own. These experiences allowed them to develop an understanding of other cultures and be able to communicate with people from that culture in an effective manner.

Students were able to view culture in action and gained knowledge concerning that culture. They also were able to learn about communication in a cross-cultural setting and adjust their communication styles to meet those cultural attributes.

So they had a very different view of that whole process whereas I think most Americans would be complacent, if they are unhappy they just say it and I respect that (Ryan, Brussels).

They don't really interact with strangers much and aren't very loud but you sort of accept that and don't take that as being unfriendly. They're very friendly people, very open to foreigners and it was just a neat experience spending a lot of my time in Prague (Adam, Prague).

Students learned about intercultural communication through their leisure activities and companions while abroad. Often, communication styles were different than what the American students expected but those students who were flexible in their attitudes found it easier to adjust and live in an environment with different cultural norms.

Developing a communitas

The students explained that their leisure time while abroad led to a communitas among the Americans and among their traveling groups. First, students spent a large amount of time together.

The four of us really bonded. I guess you could say we're like best friends now after living together for four months (Erin, Torino).

Travel experiences also allowed for experiences that brought students together as a group.

I mean they really ... you become close with, when you travel with somebody (Hannah, Brussels).

Because students spent a large amount of time together, they developed bonds that will likely carry over to their lives at home.

We've talked about getting together like every week or two and making a dinner together again because we really enjoyed it. It was a nice experience (Hannah, Brussels).

The American *communitas* appeared to be large experience for students while abroad. These relationships affected their leisure opportunities and experiences, often decreasing opportunities for students to move beyond their American friendships to those of a cross-cultural nature.

Summary of the Impact of Leisure Activities and Companions on Individual Identity

Development Theme

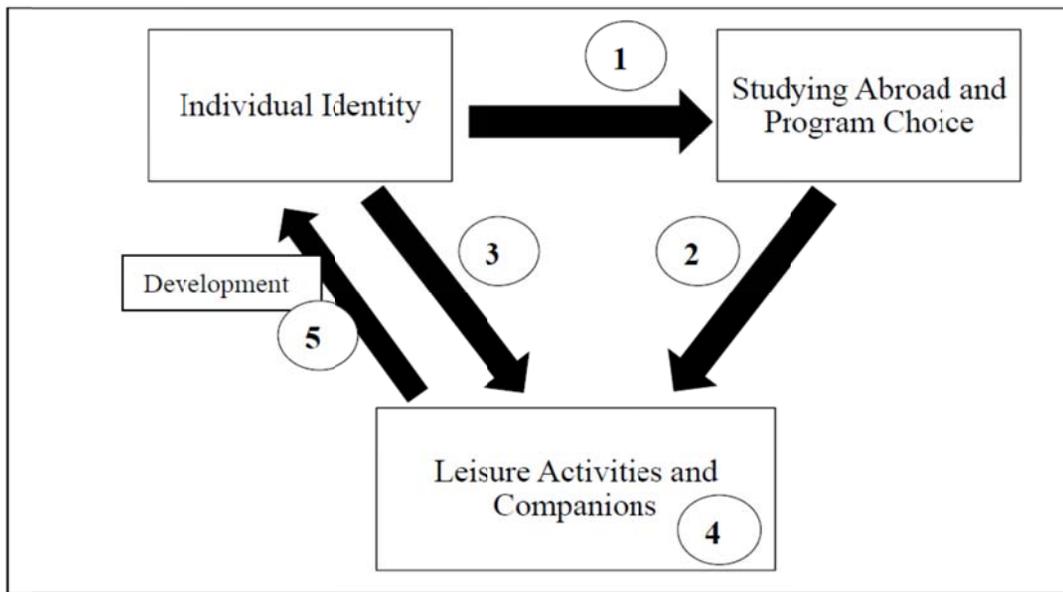
Although cognitive gains were expressed by students, a large amount of individual development occurred in the intrapersonal and interpersonal domains. Students used their time with other Americans through the *communitas* to explore future opportunities in terms of educational, career and life goals. Students were required to be flexible and adapt in situations that involved cultural differences of the host nationals or in their interactions with their fellow American classmates. While development was present, the lack of contact with the host nationals suggests that development was not optimal.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine students' leisure activities and companions while studying abroad and the reflection on individual development after returning from their time abroad. Analysis of the interview data, coupled with the

description of the photographs submitted, suggest the five themes concerning students' leisure while studying abroad. The relationships among these themes can be seen in Figure 1. First, students choose to study abroad and choose their respective programs because of their identity, which includes their motivations, skills and attitudes. Second, this choice of studying abroad and the design features of the chosen program moderate students' leisure activities and companions. Third, students' individual identities, which include their existing motivations and skills, influence students' leisure activities and companions while abroad. The combination of the students' identities and their program choice and its design features influence what the students do for their leisure activities and companions, as seen in theme four. Finally, the subsequent leisure activities and companions led to development in cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal forms.

Figure 1. General Themes from Interview Data



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore students' reflections on their leisure time while abroad and development of intercultural maturity, including cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal growth, as a result of their time abroad. The findings of this study suggest that very little leisure time was spent in contact with the host nationals when students were studying abroad. Instead, students pursued other leisure interests while abroad which largely included travel and socializing with other Americans or visiting friends and family. The findings also suggest that leisure choices were moderated by individual identity and program design. Individual identity included personal motivations, skills and interests, while the program design included factors such as location, size of city, academic requirements, housing and host culture. Thus, the outcomes of a student's experience abroad are dependent on the interdependence of identity, program design and leisure activities and companions.

The influence of identity, particularly those influences related to motivations, lead students to pursue certain leisure activities with specific companions. These conclusions concerning motivations mirror those found in the outcomes of second-language learning for students during a study abroad program. Isabelli-Garcia (2006) addressed the complexity of a student's motivations, acculturation and social networks in addressing second-language learning while abroad. Motivations for language learners to engage in

social networks were integrative, instructional, intrinsic and extrinsic. Dornyei (2001) explained these motivations for language learning. Motivation that is integrative is the desire to learn the language to satisfy need for belonging or affection. Instructional motivation is the desire to learn the language to benefit in future educational or career pursuits. Intrinsic motivation to learn a language is one that spawns from curiosity and extrinsic motivation to learn the language is one that comes from the avoidance of punishment or in order to receive an external reward.

Likewise, students' motivations can be used to explain why students pursue certain leisure activities and companions over others during their study abroad experience. All students were interested in and motivated to travel to other countries. Students were not motivated to use their leisure time participating in activities that would integrate them into the local culture or give them a sense of belonging to that culture because they had already easily fulfilled that need with their American classmates. One student, Grace, had instructional motivations to participate in leisure activities with her hosts because she desired to learn the language for future employment as a teacher. Only two students, Adam and Jenny, pursued leisure activities that would lead to integration into the culture and subsequent learning about their host countries and culture. These motivations were mostly out of curiosity and interest in other cultures.

Language skills also contributed to forming and reinforcing motivation. Students who had little language skills had little communication with their hosts during leisure. When they did, their efforts were often met with perceived impatience from their hosts. Those students who had language knowledge found successful leisure experiences,

although these leisure experiences often occurred during travels outside of the country in which students were living. Thus, students were reinforced in their behavior to either only communicate with Americans or communicate with those who had the same language skills.

Program design steered students towards leisure activities and companions. Because these students were surrounded by their American classmates on a regular basis, possessed the conveniences of internet and cell phones, and mostly participated in typical leisure activities they would in America while in their host city, these students were not put into a cultural environment that would invoke any form of cultural shock or create a need to integrate and participate in culturally relative leisure. With little exposure to other cultures outside of their own, the question must be asked as to whether or not students are ever really “abroad” during their experience.

Program design and characteristics also influenced the amount of time and attention students paid to their academic learning. Students were directly and indirectly encouraged to travel by the flexibility of class schedules and professors. Students were also able to schedule long weekends to accommodate travel from country to country while faculty at the host institutions scheduled the majority of the assignments and projects to be due at the end of the semester which further encouraged students to travel during the majority of the semester. The combination of students’ desires to travel and the lack of academic demand contributed to more leisure time spent out of the students’ host cities.

Students spent the majority of their time traveling with other Americans and visiting with family and friends. They were not in search of another culture but were in search of themselves and their own identities through the experience of tourism. Wang (1999) described the search for interpersonal authenticity in the relationships that is formed during a tourism event. In the findings of this study, the search for interpersonal authenticity occurred as the majority of students met with family members or close friends while abroad to travel together. Students contributed to their interpersonal development with their friends and family by spending time together and even taking relationships to next levels, as in the case of Hannah who was proposed to during her then boyfriend's visit. It is in this "recreational tourism one not only gains pleasant experiences from seeing sights, events, or performances, but also simultaneously experiences intensely authentic, natural and emotional bonds, and a real intimacy in a family relationship" (Wang, 1999, p. 364).

Students also developed a touristic *communitas*, or an "interpersonal relationship among pilgrims who confront one another as social equals based on their common humanity" with their American classmates while abroad (Wang, 1999, p. 364). Students only discussed impact of differences in socioeconomic statuses when reflecting on travel experiences with groups other than their normal traveling group. Otherwise, students were able to easily develop a group of friends through their American classmates and expressed their interest in keeping in touch with each other when they return to their home university. These students not only experienced historical and cultural sights, but also had pleasure in seeing them with those in their *communitas*.

With the little contact between the American students and host nationals that was made, the success of that contact was dependent on how similar the conditions of the leisure experience were with the conditions of contact theory. Poor cross-cultural leisure experiences were due to lack of common goals, common skills and common attitudes. Ryan provided one example of a perceived poor leisure experience where he and his American friends were in competition for a leisure space with a group of host nationals. Both parties lacked the language skills or the willingness to negotiate the situation and ultimately led to a confrontation and consequential sabotage of the leisure experience. Also, the encouragement from faculty members to travel instead of engaging in culturally-relative leisure with the host culture may have contributed to the lack of motivation of any sort (intrinsic, extrinsic, etc.) in participating in cross-cultural leisure. Successful cross-cultural leisure experience occurred when common beliefs and/or common understanding for different ideas were present. For example, Adam enjoyed his church experience because it was similar to his church at home. However, he also enjoyed the perspectives of Czech congregation on American churches because it helped him learn more about the culture in which he was living. Common language skills also supported positive contact during leisure experiences. Ryan's ability to speak Spanish led to his perceived positive leisure experience while playing soccer in Barcelona. He was also able to avoid potentially being robbed because he was able to communicate with the host nationals.

Despite the lack of contact with host nationals, the students acknowledged that their time abroad was a time that helped them determine plans for the future, consistent

with the framework of emerging adulthood. This suggests that a study abroad experience helps contribute to identity by exposing students to different possibilities for their futures that they were not aware of before. Additionally, students were able to develop a sense of independence by living without parents while abroad but negotiate that independence with the help of their peers, as suggested by the emerging adulthood framework. Peer influence was also found to influence leisure activities, especially when encouraging travel. Students also said that they observed their fellow students engaging in excessive alcohol use in order to keep up with their peers. Lastly, students who were in emerging adulthood, particularly in psychosocial moratorium, were able to recognize and appreciate the cultural differences between the culture that they were studying in and their home culture in both their interactions with the host nationals and their observations of the culture from afar.

Implications

Although this study had a small number of participants who participated in programs only in the European Union, the findings of this study provide some implications for study abroad advisors, on-site program directors and administrators that can be implemented into any international education program.

First, study abroad advisors can use the findings of this study when advising students in their initial research on the choice to study abroad. Advisors should encourage students to plan ahead when studying abroad in order to maximize their study abroad experience. Planning ahead will also help students plan courses to take while abroad and will allow time for students to take language courses prior to going abroad. Language

knowledge will also help students communicate with host nationals during leisure time and other times. Language skills may also improve students' confidence and comfort in interacting in cross-cultural environments. The importance of planning ahead for a study abroad experience further emphasizes the importance of speaking about study abroad to incoming students early in their college experience during new student orientations and other events where freshmen and sophomores are present.

Additionally, advisors should continue advising with the motivations of the student in mind. Motivations include academic, cultural and travel motivations and will ultimately influence a student's program choice. When advising students, the fit of the program in terms of its location, size of the host city, academic characteristics, program excursions, housing and cultural differences needs to be determined. Following the choice of program, pre-departure sessions should feature information on safety, financial management and maximizing the program features. Creating contact through meet-and-greets between American exchange students going abroad in the near future and those visiting exchange students could prove to be advantageous in developing contact while abroad.

Next, on-site directors working with provider companies should focus on creating local opportunities and events, such as intercultural social and recreational events, in order for students to connect with host nationals. These leisure opportunities with the host nationals may help students connect to and engage as part of the local community. Still, they should be consider the frequency of these events as students still will be traveling outside of the city on the weekends. These activities should also not require costs in

addition to the program fee. Students' leisure motivations to travel can also be turned into learning opportunities to experience local history and culture as evident in this study. Lastly, improvements in the matching of students with home stays and tandem partners should be improved in order to create positive contact through a culturally-sensitive environment.

For study abroad program administrators and policy makers, actions to help foster environments where students can best use their study abroad experience must be taken. These environments occur not only when a student is abroad but also prior to departure and upon returning. Prior to departure, consideration must be made on a student's cultural preparedness, which may include their language skills, intercultural communication skills and their motivations to study abroad. Administrators should contemplate the goals of international education in that they should be concerned not only about the number of students who are sent abroad, but also about the quality of those students sent abroad as those students represent their host university as well as the United States.

Administrators should also reconsider the general design of study abroad programs. While a large component of the study abroad experience occurs outside of the classroom, attention must be paid to the quality and the demands of the classes, including the faculty expectations and the quality of the educational credit transferred to the home institutions. Also, provider programs allow mass-enrollment and housing that lead to a large number of Americans in one place with little exposure to culture. For this reason, exchange programs may prove more influential on cultural learning because those students participating in exchange programs may experience a lack of access to the

American culture since they are studying at a host institution without a large group of American companions. These exchange students may also experience the need to integrate and develop a sense of belonging with the host culture since they do not have American students with whom to fulfill this need. Students returning to the United States should participate in re-entry courses in order to maximize learning during the transition back to their home culture. Re-entry courses may help students reflect on the potential changes in perspectives they had as a result of studying abroad. These courses may also shed light on issues that students had while abroad and lead to further improvement in preparing students to go abroad in the future.

Limitations

The limitations to this research study have been recognized. First, although the breakdown of the male to female ratio (1:3) for this study was consistent with the national average, the sample size of six was relatively small. Thus, the results of this study should be confirmed with larger sample sizes before any implications are applied to study abroad programming. Second, the participants had only attended semester-long programs located in the European Union. Research performed outside of the European Union may yield different results due to political, social or cultural difference. At the same time, the notion that students participating in programs occurring in countries in the European Union would experience politically, socially and culturally similar leisure is a limitation in itself. Also, students participating in programs that vary in duration may experience different leisure due to their motivations for studying abroad or because of their time spent in the host city. Third, the interviews were only one-hour reflective

interviews. This small amount of time limited the researcher in her ability to make conclusions on longitudinal cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal gains. Additionally, the reflective interviews may not portray what happened during students' leisure abroad because time or other experiences have distorted the way they remember the experience. Finally, despite the researcher's bracketing and field notes, the researcher's experience with study abroad may have produced bias that may have played a role in the collection and analysis of the data.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research could expand on this study's objective to understand student's leisure activities and companions while abroad. Research should delve deeper into the social environments of leisure while studying abroad. Ryan and Deci (2000) emphasized "the dramatic power of social contexts to enhance or hinder the organism tendency to integrate ambient social values and responsibilities." Thus, in order to understand the facilitators of well-being, engagement and achievement in a study abroad context, the social environment in which students are placed must be understood. In the case of study abroad, we should understand the differences between the environments in which Americans form an exclusive *communitas* versus the environments where Americans form an inclusive *communitas* with their hosts in the host culture needs.

A large portion of understanding students' leisure choices and lack of contact with host nationals in a leisure environment may be explained by understanding the motivational climate. Again, Ryan and Deci (2000) suggested that a social context, which in this case is leisure, could lead to assimilation and integration if the psychological needs

of self-determination theory are met. Self-determination theory is a psychological approach to “people’s inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration, as well as for the conditions that foster those positive processes” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). These conditions are competence, relatedness and autonomy and can be explored in the context of motivational climate during study abroad. Are students competent to enter a cross-cultural environment? Do they have the intercultural maturity and the language skills to successfully navigate a different culture? Do students feel relatedness that would encourage them to take cross-cultural leisure? Do students have the authority and peer support necessary to interact in a cross-cultural environment? Do students have other peers that engage in similar types of cross-cultural activities and are they are encouraged by faculty members and program directors to pursue those activities? Finally, do students feel autonomy in the decisions that they make while abroad? Is there peer pressure or some extrinsic factor that causes them to interact with Americans exclusively and not engage in cross-cultural leisure?

Additionally, in the process of researching the components of self-determination theory as it relates to motivational climate, further research should investigate leisure in various combinations of program design (length, type, location, housing) in an effort to understand the different leisure experiences associated with different cultural and environmental factors while students are abroad. An understanding of the motivational climate, leisure activities and leisure companions while abroad may lead to knowledge that helps professionals improve the design and facilitation of study abroad programming.

Different approaches to research would be advantageous in growing the body of literature on this subject. Leisure while studying abroad should also be explored through other qualitative methods, such as participant observation, which will offer another form of data collection besides reflective interviews which may produce partial data that has been influenced by an individual's time and experiences after returning home. Additionally, quantitative research regarding motivational climate, language gain and intercultural communication gains could also be useful when comparing leisure behaviors and companions with development. These quantitative measures may be useful in empirically supporting the rich data found in qualitative studies.

Conclusion

This study aimed to provide a greater understanding of students' leisure activities and companions while studying abroad. Interviews, supported by photographs of leisure time while abroad, provided a rich description of the students' leisure experiences while abroad. Five major themes were found in the data: the influence of students' identities on the choice to study abroad and program choice, the influence of program choice on leisure while abroad, the influence of identity on leisure while abroad, the leisure activities and companions while abroad and the impact of that leisure on cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal development. The findings suggest that students spend most of their time with other Americans traveling and participating in typical American activities with little time spent participating in the leisure of the local culture. Although the leisure activities and companions led to development in cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal forms, the opportunities for development in intercultural maturity were left

untapped due to students' motivations, their chosen program and their chosen leisure activities and companions.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Email

**Did you study abroad in the past year?
Come tell us what you did while you were abroad!
Click on the following to complete the survey and
be considered as a participant in a research study
about your study abroad experience. If you
choose to participate in the research survey and
interview, you will be given a gift card to
Starbucks.**

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8DH23YR>

Thank you in advance.

Appendix B

Survey

1.Directions

You have been selected to participate in this survey because you have completed a study abroad program in conjunction with your degree at Clemson University. We hope you have had a unique, safe and interesting study abroad experience and we are very excited to hear about it!

Research regarding study abroad programming is a vital resource in improving international education programming for future students. This survey is divided into 3 sections and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. At the end of this survey, you will be asked if you would like to continue participating in this research study by engaging in a one-hour interview with the researcher. If you should be chosen to participate in the interview and complete the interview session, you will receive a \$10 gift card to Starbucks for your participate.

2. Demographics

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female

2. Ethnicity:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Black/Non-Hispanic
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- White/Non-Hispanic
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

3. What was your class standing during your study abroad program?

- Freshmen (0-30 credits)
- Sophomore (31-60 credits)
- Junior (61-90 credits)
- Senior (91-120 credits)
- Other (Over 120 credits)
- Graduate student

4. Major:

3. Program Information

1. Location of Study Abroad Program

City

Country

2. Name of host institution (i.e. Universidad de Salamanca, London Metropolitan University):

3. Study abroad program sponsor (i.e. CIEE, USAC, Australearn):

4. When did you study abroad?

Term

Year

Length of program

This was
my first
time
studying
abroad.

Answer

4. Willingness to Participate in Interview

You are invited to participate in an interview regarding your study abroad experience. Please read the following information regarding this research study and respond to the questions below.

1. Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study

Clemson University

Students' Leisure Activities and Relationships while Studying Abroad

Description of the Research and Your Participation

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Cindy Hartman under the supervision of Dr. Denise Anderson, both of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management Department at Clemson University. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of how study abroad participants use their leisure time when participating in a study abroad program. We want to know who you spent time with, what you did and how it influenced your study abroad experience.

Your participation will involve a recorded one-hour, in-person interview with Cindy Hartman. These interviews will take place on campus at Clemson University and will be scheduled at the participant's convenience.

If necessary, the researcher may follow up with each participant if she needs further information or clarification regarding the interviewee's answers. These follow-up sessions will be in the form of email or phone call.

Risks and Discomforts

The risks associated with this proposed study are minimal. As with most interview situations, participants may experience minimal psychological discomfort speaking about past, current and future experiences. The researcher will make every effort to ensure the comfort of the participant during the interview process.

Potential Benefits

There are no known benefits to participants that would result from participation in this research. However, this research may help us understand if and how leisure during study abroad affects a student's overall experience as well as their cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal development.

Incentives

Participants completing both the survey and interview portions of this research study will receive a \$10 gift card to Starbucks.

Protection of Confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular.

The records of this study will be kept confidential. Participants will be asked to provide a pseudonym that will be used for the duration of this study. Only the researcher will have access to the list of pseudonyms and information regarding the research.

Data will be collected on digital recorders and then destroyed after the data has been transcribed. These transcriptions will be kept on a password protected computer to which only the researcher has access. Any report or publication that is made public will not include information by which to identify the research participants.

In rare cases, a research study will be evaluated by an oversight agency, such as the Clemson University Institutional Review Board or the federal Office for Human Research Protections, that would require that we share the information we collect from you. If this happens, the information would only be used to determine if we conducted this study properly and adequately protected your rights as a participant.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

You may choose to stop taking part in this study after today. If you do, we will not collect any more information from you. However, we would keep and use the information we had already collected from you.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Denise Anderson at Clemson University at 864-656-5679. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside

- Yes, I would like to participate in an interview regarding my study abroad experience
- No, I do not want to continue with this research study.

2. Please provide your contact details below if you would like to continue participating in this research study about your study abroad experience by completing a one hour-long interview. The researcher will contact you by April 30, 2011 if you are selected to participate in the interview process.

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

5. Thank you!

Your input is appreciated. We will be contacting you before April 30, 2011 if you volunteered to be a part of the interview process and are selected to participate in the interview.

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Confirm the dates, program location and program provider.

Why did you want to study abroad? What did you want out of the experience?

Outside of the formal portions of your study abroad program (class lectures, assignments), what was a typical day for you during your study abroad experience?

How much time did you spend on school work versus time spent out of the classroom?

What was your most memorable part of your study abroad experience? Can you show me a photo from that experience?

How did you spend free time, nights and weekends? With whom?

What kinds of extracurricular activities did you get involved in? How did you find out about these?

Were these activities different or similar to what you typically do here at Clemson during a regular school year? Why did you choose to participate in these activities?

Did these activities help you learn about culture in which you were living and studying?

Did these activities help you learn anything about yourself?

How much contact did you have with the local people?

Overall, were the leisure activities you participated in and the people you spent time with important to your entire study abroad experience? Why or why not?

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study Clemson University

Students' Leisure Activities and Relationships while Studying Abroad

Description of the Research and Your Participation

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Cindy Hartman under the supervision of Dr. Denise Anderson, both of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management Department at Clemson University. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of how study abroad participants use their leisure time when participating in a study abroad program. We want to know who you spent time with, what you did and how it influenced your study abroad experience.

Your participation will involve a recorded one-hour, in-person interview with Cindy Hartman. These interviews will take place on campus at Clemson University and will be scheduled at the participant's convenience. Each participant will also be asked to provide basic demographic information (age, sex, major, etc.).

If necessary, the researcher may follow up with each participant if she needs further information or clarification regarding the interviewee's answers. These follow-up sessions will be in the form of email or phone call.

Risks and Discomforts

The risks associated with this proposed study are minimal. As with most interview situations, participants may experience minimal psychological discomfort speaking about past, current and future experiences. The researcher will make every effort to ensure the comfort of the participant during the interview process.

Potential Benefits

There are no known benefits to participants that would result from participation in this research. However, this research may help us understand if and how leisure during study abroad affects a student's overall experience as well as their cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal development.

Incentives

Participants will receive a \$10 gift card to Starbucks.

Protection of Confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular.

The records of this study will be kept confidential. Participants will be asked to provide a pseudonym that will be used for the duration of this study. Only the researcher will have access to the list of pseudonyms and information regarding the research.

Data will be collected on digital recorders and then destroyed after the data has been transcribed. These transcriptions will be kept on a password protected computer to which only the researcher has access. Any report or publication that is made public will not include information by which to identify the research participants.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Denise Anderson at Clemson University at 864-656-5679. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC's toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

Consent

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

I give my consent to the researcher to record this interview.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

A copy of this consent form will be given to you.

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