

Differences in Global-Mindedness between Short-Term and Semester-Long Study Abroad Participants at Selected Private Universities

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One concern that merits the attention of the educational research community is the growing trend toward shorter study abroad programs. Study abroad offerings in which students have traditionally enrolled for academic credit were primarily either a semester or a year in length. The recent Open Doors (2005) report reveals that the growth of study abroad can be attributed, in part, to the increase in programs involving sessions of eight weeks or less. Recent growth in participation in short-term study abroad programs warrants research on the effectiveness of these programs and raises important questions about the differences in student outcomes between short-term and semester-long study abroad participants.

Stake holders and constituents in higher education must be convinced of the value of study abroad by having objective means to evaluate its' worth. In addition, they must also consider students who study abroad for different periods of time achieve different outcomes. Careful evaluation of specific student outcomes may direct educational leaders in planning more appropriate program objectives according to differing program lengths. Moreover, this research will assist educators in maximizing institutional resources.

The purpose of this study is to help bolster existing study abroad research by comparing the global-mindedness of student participants at three private universities' study abroad programs. This study seeks to examine the differences between students who have participated in a short-term program, consisting of eight weeks or less and students who have participated in a semester-long program in one particular study abroad model known as an "island program." The study will also establish the baseline levels of global-

mindfulness of students who have applied and been accepted into a future study abroad program, but as yet have no study abroad experience. Recommendations generated from this study are geared primarily toward administrators of study abroad programs.

Review of Relevant Literature

The number of American students who participate in study abroad programs continues to increase. During the 2003/04 year, a record 191,321 U.S. students studied abroad (Open Doors, 2005). This number is an increase of 9.6 percent over the previous year and a growth of approximately 130 percent since the early 1990's. Almost 50 percent of the total number of participants during the 2003/04 academic year took part in short-term study abroad programs (Open Doors, 2005). According to the Institute of International Education (Open Doors, 2003), short-term programs have grown more than any other type of program in the last ten years.

Types of Study Abroad Programs

An important part of understanding student outcomes must include recognition that different types of study abroad programs exist, sometimes even within institutions. According to Hanouille and Leuner (2001), three primary models are used by post-secondary institutions in the U.S. These models include the following: 1) Direct enrollment: This type of program entails direct placement of U.S. students into the host country's post secondary educational system. This type of study abroad program may include either one-way or a more traditional two-way exchange of students and/or faculty. Faculty from the host institution teach the courses and students are housed independently or with students from the host institution; 2) Hybrid program: This type of study abroad program includes opportunities for students to be enrolled directly in courses of the host institution, as well as in courses taught by faculty from the home university. Housing options may include home stays, hostels, or housing leased or owned by either the home or host countries; and 3) Island program: This type of study abroad program is often thought of as a self-contained academic program. Students take courses alongside other students from the US institution. Faculty may be employed by and travel from the home institution, or be hired locally. Typically, classrooms are outside any local host university, with English as the language of instruction — with the exception of foreign language courses. This study focuses specifically on island programs.

Global-Mindedness

Most educators agree that students need to be equipped with the skills to interact and compete effectively in a global environment. At the postsecondary level, this can best be seen in the mission statements and goals of most traditional liberal arts colleges and universities. These statements often include some reference to gaining knowledge and understanding other cultures (Hopkins, 1999). According to Tye (1991), some educators aim to provide students with a “global education” to assist them in understanding the history and current events of the United States in a broader context. Sharma and Klasek (1986) suggest that making international education available to students through study abroad programs is one way to facilitate diversity on home campuses. Others insist that the need for students to gain valuable exposure to different cultures is crucial to being competitive in the job market. One way to gain this knowledge and understanding is through participation in study abroad programs (Henthorne, Miller, and Hudson, 2001).

Sampson and Smith (1957) described world-mindedness as “a value orientation, or frame of reference, apart from knowledge about, or interest in, international relations. We identify as highly world-minded the individual who favors a world-view of the problems of humanity, whose primary reference group is mankind, rather than American, English, Chinese.” Similarly, Hett (1993) uses the term global-mindedness to denote a worldview in which an individual perceives his or herself as connected to the world community and is aware of his or her responsibility for its members.

In an effort to understand the impact of a study abroad experience on students, the following studies have examined outcomes involving cross-cultural competency and global-mindedness. Marion (1980) investigated ninety students who had participated in year-long or semester-long study abroad programs at a variety of international sites. Student participants were asked to complete a series of instruments including an Antecedents Questionnaire and a Transactions Questionnaire, as well as scales measuring dogmatism, internationalism, radicalism-conservatism, perceptions of the host and home countries, and perception of the United States before going abroad. Several relationships were found between student characteristics and attitude change resulting from a year or semester in a study abroad program. Students who visited fewer countries, lived with a host family, had fewer friends from the host country, and more American friends, became more conservative. Conversely, students who visited a greater number of countries became more tolerant. Accordingly, this would lend credence to the assertion that international travel leads to a more open-minded and global perspective.

In a study (Stephenson, 1999) involving 52 American students studying for a semester in Chile, participants indicated differences between their anticipated or expected adjustments and their actual experiences. Items such as “keeping an open mind about Chilean culture,” “maintaining a clear concept of your personal beliefs,” and “changing personal beliefs as a result of your experience,” were all considered significantly more difficult than anticipated. Overall, even as positive changes took place as a result of the experiences, actual difficulty in adjustment was greater than anticipated and may have even adversely affected the way students viewed themselves.

English (1996) sought to test the reliability and validity of a concept known as intercultural competence. McCabe (1994) sought to determine the impact of a semester study abroad at sea experience on students’ global perspectives. Qualitative results indicate students experienced an increased degree of openness towards other countries and cultures, as well as development of a more global-centric view of the world that was less ethnocentric.

Douglas and Jones-Rikken (2001) administered Sampson and Smith’s (1957) Scale to Measure World-Minded Attitudes to an experimental group of students who had participated in a study abroad program, as well as to a control group who completed the scale as a part of an in-class assignment. Students who participated in a study abroad program showed a greater sense of world-mindedness than the control group who had no international travel experience. Additionally, these findings indicate the more significant the cultural differences between the host and home culture, the greater the increase in world-mindedness. This study also suggested that as study abroad participants move away from their comfort zones to explore new cultures by becoming more involved and more successful in developing new relationships, they will be more likely to enter other situations involving people of different cultures in the future.

In a survey of 145 undergraduate students at Ohio State University, Zhai and Sheer (2004) found that students who had more contact with people from other countries increased their level of global perspective significantly. Student attitudes toward cultural diversity were also found to be more positive. In this study, results did not indicate any relationship between students’ prior overseas experiences, age, classification, or national origin and their levels of global perspective. However, study findings did indicate a high correlation between a student’s grade point average and his/her attitudes toward diversity. Additionally, females were found to be more positive toward cultural diversity than males.

In an attempt to develop an instrument to measure the construct of global-mindedness, Hett (1993) sought to understand the extent to which university students develop a worldview in which they see themselves as connected and responsible to the global community and reflect that worldview in their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. A total of 396 undergraduate students at the University of California, San Diego, completed the Global-mindedness Scale. Significant differences among students were noted; females scored significantly higher than males. Other students reporting statistically significant scores on the Global-mindedness Scale included those taking five or more global studies courses, those who were regular participants in internationally-oriented programs and activities, and those who reported stronger political interests and more liberal political views.

Deng and Boatler (1993) administered the Sampson and Smith World-mindedness Questionnaire to 203 undergraduate business students enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan. While those surveyed had not attended a study abroad program, the questionnaire found female students were significantly more world-minded than male students. It also reported students with annual family incomes of \$100,000 or more were significantly less world-minded than students from lower-income families. No evidence was found in this study that previous international travel, foreign language ability, university class or age were related to increased levels of world-mindedness.

Using retrospective questions, Hadis (2005) found alumni of the New Jersey State Consortium for International Studies who studied abroad between fall 1997 and summer 2003 reported their experience had significant impact in several areas. These alumni indicated they came back from their experiences more interested in international affairs, read more newspapers, increased second language fluency, and felt friendlier toward people from other cultures.

Outcomes of Short-term versus Long-term Study Abroad Participation

Many studies have examined student outcomes after participation in both short-term (Kitsantas and Meyers 2001; Lewis and Niesenbaum, 2005; Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004) and long-term (Saghafi 2001; Hett 1993) study abroad offerings. In addition, other researchers have examined study abroad duration and student outcomes based on intercultural competencies (Dwyer, 2004; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; and Zorn, 1996). Dwyer (2004) utilized longitudinal data collected over 50 years by the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES). In her study, she examined the longitudinal correlations between specific

study abroad program features (i.e. program duration) and a variety of student outcomes. Dwyer (2004) concluded that full academic year study abroad experiences had a more significant and longer lasting effect on student participants. However, she did point out that, “In some categories of factors, summer students were as likely or more likely to achieve sustainable benefit from studying abroad in comparison with semester students” (p. 161). This author also called for future research on student outcomes based on the program model used.

Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) conducted a study focusing on the link between the development of intercultural sensitivity and program duration. She (2004) utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess 28 student participants — 18 were participating in a long-term program, while 10 were participants in a short-term program. Findings suggested that duration did significantly impact intercultural sensitivity. Furthermore, the author indicated that qualitative data revealed higher levels of intercultural sensitivity development than the quantitative data.

Zorn (1996) found that the most impressive impact of study abroad experiences on nursing students was the growth of their international or global perspective and personal development. Questionnaires were administered to alumni of the bachelor’s of nursing program who had participated in an international education program during their studies. Results indicated a significant correlation between the length of the international program and global perspective. This study found nursing students who completed programs of sixteen weeks or longer reported greater effects than those who completed programs of four weeks or less.

This current study attempts to build on the work of Dwyer (2004), Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004), Zorn (1996), and others by comparing the differences in global-mindedness of student participants at three private universities’ study abroad programs. This study is unique because of its quantitative focus that utilizes a large sample size to examine specifically program duration and global-mindedness in island programs. An effort was also made to minimize differences between groups that could be attributed to a pre-disposition toward global-mindedness prior to studying abroad. This was accomplished by measuring the global-mindedness of students who had applied and been accepted into a future study abroad program.

Research Questions

The methodology used in this study answers the following questions:

1. How do the demographic characteristics of students who have applied to and been accepted into a future study abroad program, those who have completed a study abroad experience of 8 weeks or less, and those who have completed a study abroad of a semester differ from one another?
2. Are there differences in the global-mindedness of students who have completed a study abroad program of eight weeks or less and those on the home campus who have applied and been accepted into a future study abroad program?
3. Are there differences in the global-mindedness of students who study abroad for a semester and those on the home campus who have applied and been accepted into a future study abroad program?
4. Are there differences in the global-mindedness of students who study abroad for eight weeks or less and those who study abroad for a semester?

Methodology

A non-equivalent control group design using convenience sampling was employed. One instrument was used to gather selected demographic information as well as information about participants' global-mindedness. This single questionnaire was administered to those intending to study abroad, while those groups who had attended the short-term and semester-long programs were administered the questionnaire upon completion of their respective programs. In this way, the control group consisting of students who intended to but had yet to study abroad were used to control for predispositions that study abroad alumni might have had prior to the study abroad experience.

Measure

The Global-Mindedness Scale, including a demographic profile, were combined into one questionnaire and given to three comparison groups via an internet-based delivery system. Students were asked to read and agree to the terms of the consent form before completing the survey; only those students who agreed to the terms completed the survey.

The Global-Mindedness Scale used in this study was developed by E. Jane Hett, and used with permission of Hett's estate. The Global-Mindedness Scale

is comprised of 30 statements. Participants are asked to choose one answer for each statement. This instrument uses a five-point Likert scale for each statement; with response choices ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' The internal reliability, using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, was .90 for the overall tool and alphas for the subscales ranged from .70–.79 (Hett, 1993). A Content Validity Index (CVI) was established by a panel of four content judges with an overall CVI of .88 (Hett, 1993).

Sample Population

While all three institutions offer several types of study abroad models and opportunities for their students, an effort was made to ensure the maximum comparability of groups. In addition to sharing similar mission statements, only those students who studied abroad who planned to participate in their respective institutions "island" programs were chosen to participate in the study. A total of 992 students currently enrolled in each institution at the time of this study were asked to participate. A total of 520 responses were received for a 52% response rate.

Results

Research Question 1

How do the demographic characteristics of students who have applied and been accepted into a future study abroad program, those who have completed a study abroad experience of 8 weeks or less, and those who have completed a study abroad of a semester differ from one another?

Demographic data collected for this study are summarized in Table 1, which displays differences between all participants in gender, age, university classification, ethnicity, citizenship, previous travel and parental income.

The data collected through demographic questions reveals that the gender distribution of students who study abroad is consistent with national trends as reported in the latest *Open Doors* report (2005). Differences in the categories of both age and classification were noted as significant, but can be accounted for by the normal progression of students toward completion of an undergraduate degree program.

Analysis of global-mindedness by demographic variables and length of study revealed that only gender and parental income merited further examination. Males reported higher levels of global-mindedness than female participants. However, additional analysis using Scheffe's post-hoc test did not reveal any significant differences or interactions between groups.

It was also noted that among all groups, participants who reported their parents' annual income to be above \$100,000 indicated significantly lower levels of global-mindedness. Additional analysis using Scheffe's post-hoc test did not reveal any significant differences or interactions between groups.

Table 1. Demographic Table: All Groups

	Totals	Control	Short-term	Semester	p-value
Sample size	520	183 (35%)	144 (28%)	193 (37%)	
Gender					0.05
Male	150 (29%)	50 (27%)	33 (23%)	67 (35%)	
Female	369 (71%)	132 (73%)	111 (77%)	126 (65%)	
Age					0.0001
17-20	325 (63%)	158 (86%)	65 (45%)	102 (53%)	
21-23	189 (36%)	22 (12%)	78 (54%)	89(46%)	
24+	6 (1%)	3 (2%)	1 (<1%)	2 (1%)	
Classification					0.0001
Freshman	57 (11%)	56 (31%)	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Sophomore	141 (27%)	77 (42%)	14 (10%)	50(26%)	
Junior	171(33%)	43 (24%)	57 (40%)	71 (37%)	
Senior	145 (28%)	7 (4%)	68 (47%)	70 (36%)	
Graduate	6 (1%)	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	1 (<1%)	
Ethnicity					0.89
African American	6 (1%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	
Caucasian	445 (86%)	155 (85%)	124 (86%)	166 (87%)	
Hispanic	29 (6%)	8 (4%)	7 (5%)	14 (7%)	
Asian	18 (3%)	4 (2%)	10 (7%)	4 (2%)	
Other	19 (4%)	11 (6%)	3 (2%)	5 (3%)	
Citizenship					0.81
US	508 (98%)	180(98%)	140 (97%)	188 (97%)	
Non US	12 (2%)	3 (2%)	4 (3%)	5 (3%)	
Previous Travel					0.023
0-4 weeks	288 (55%)	103 (56%)	87 (60%)	98 (51%)	
5-16 weeks	150 (29%)	49 (27%)	43 (30%)	58 (30%)	
17-52	30 (6%)	13 (7%)	3 (2%)	14 (7%)	
> 1 year	52 (10%)	18 (10%)	11 (8%)	23 (12%)	
Parental Income					0.01
Below \$50,000	86 (17%)	22 (12%)	31 (22%)	33 (17%)	
\$50,000-\$100,000	218 (43%)	67 (38%)	53 (38%)	98 (51%)	
Above \$100,000	203 (40%)	89 (50%)	54 (40%)	60 (31%)	

Research Question 2

Are there differences in global-mindedness in students who have completed a study abroad program of eight weeks or less and those on the home campus who plan to study abroad in the future?

Statistical analysis indicates insufficient evidence to conclude that significant differences exist in the global-mindedness of students who study abroad for eight weeks or less and those who plan to study abroad in the future. The mean of scores for the global-mindedness measure comparing those intending to study abroad with those who have completed a short-term program are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Global-mindedness: Total Scores for Intending to Study, Short-term and Semester-long Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Intending to Study Abroad	183	114.07	10.78
Short-term	144	112.57	13.05
Semester-long	193	118.50	12.13

p. <value .0001

Research Question 3

Are there differences in global-mindedness in students who study abroad for a semester and those on the home campus who plan to study abroad in the future?

Statistically significant differences between the semester-long group and the group planning to study abroad were noted. Differences were analyzed using ANOVA with Scheffe’s post-hoc test. Responses in Table 2 indicate the mean of the global-mindedness scores of students who completed a semester-long program is higher than those students who plan to study abroad.

Research Question 4

Are there differences in global-mindedness in students who study abroad for eight weeks or less and those who study abroad for a semester?

Statistically significant differences between the semester-long group and the short-term group were noted. Differences were analyzed using ANOVA with Scheffe’s post-hoc test. Responses in Table 2 indicate the mean of the global-mindedness scores of students who completed a short-term study abroad program of eight weeks or less and those who completed a semester-long program.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Limitations

As with any research investigation, certain factors limit the findings of this study. One limitation concerns the nature of study abroad programs. Study abroad programs conducted through the three private universities chosen for

this study will be unlike any other study-abroad programs because of the particular missions of the schools and the specific makeup of their students, faculty and administrators. Therefore, application of these results must be applied to other study abroad programs with caution.

A second limitation of this study was that the participants who completed a study abroad program varied in the amount of time between their participation and the time they completed the survey. The differences in the window of time between the student experience and the completion of the survey dictate that the application of results to other study abroad programs should be made with caution.

Suggestions for Future Research

More studies are needed to look at differences in global-mindedness among participants of other types of programs, such as direct enrollment, hybrid, and exchange programs. It might be argued that students from the United States who have more direct exposure to the host culture will gain greater levels of global-mindedness than those who sit in classrooms with fellow Americans. Do those students who attend classes and study and travel with host country nationals have greater levels of global-mindedness than their counterparts enrolled in these other types of programs?

In addition, it could be argued that the effects of global-mindedness diminish with time of participation in a study abroad program. Longitudinal studies are needed to understand the effects of time on levels of global-mindedness.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations for practice can be made. First, if educators and administrators determine that a study abroad experience is a vital part of a college education, leaders must be ready to justify this importance with research, which can provide increased transparency in the promotion and design of programs. Administrators responsible for the allocation of budget dollars must be accountable to themselves, as well as to all of their constituents, and study abroad programs must be held to the same standard as other academic programs. Regular assessment, including both pre- and post-testing, is needed to help measure and document the changes occurring as a result of these experiences.

Regarding the promotion of programs according to their lengths, at least two implications appear to be relevant from the results of this study. First, if colleges and universities have as an objective student growth in global-mindedness, they should promote semester-long programs. If this is, in fact, a characteristic

or quality potential employers are seeking or is considered necessary for an educated person, then students should be urged to plan for a semester of study abroad. Second, academic majors that consider such an experience crucial should consider making it a requirement of their particular degree plans.

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