Does Study Abroad Impact Students’ Personality?

Ashley Ann F. Marshall

University of Dayton, stander@udayton.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://ecommons.udayton.edu/stander_posters

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons, Business Commons, Education Commons, Engineering Commons, Life Sciences Commons, Medicine and Health Sciences Commons, Physical Sciences and Mathematics Commons, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons

Recommended Citation

http://ecommons.udayton.edu/stander_posters/611

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Stander Symposium at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Stander Symposium Posters by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlangen1@udayton.edu.
Does Study Abroad Impact Students’ Personality?

Ashley Ann Marshall
Advisor: Jack J. Bauer, Ph.D.
University of Dayton

Introduction:
• Study abroad is commonly viewed as an experience that fosters maturity and personal growth. Previous findings are contradictory.
• Findings supporting study abroad as a catalyst for growth find that:
  o Personal growth is a main motivation for studying abroad (Pope, Sánchez, Lehner, & Schmid, 2014).
  o Studying abroad promotes international political concern, cross-cultural interest, and self-confidence (Carlson & Widaman, 1988).
• Findings doubting the studying abroad effect on growth find that:
  o Studying abroad facilitates the creation of a third-culture, rather than promoting intercultural awareness and perspective-taking (Citron, 2002).

Method:
• Longitudinal design with data collection in 3 waves.
  • Only data from T1 and T3 analyzed for this thesis.
• Studied students who were abroad and students who were studying on campus at UD in the summer of 2014.
• Data Collection:
  o Measured perspective-taking, empathic concern, non-prejudice through questionnaires.
    • Perspective-Taking and Empathic Concern Scale.
    • Universal Orientation Scale.
  o Measured narratives through coding for themes of growth independently. Had an interrater agreement of >90%.
• At T1: 26 P in study abroad group/ 40 P in study on campus group.
• At T3: 17 P in study abroad group/ 18 P in campus group.

Results:
H1: The study abroad group did not show increases rates of these personality characteristics from T1 to T3, as compared to the study on campus group.
H2: Levels of personal growth in narratives at T1 did not predict growth at T3.
H3: The growth-orientation of participants at T1 found in narratives was not predictive of increases in the personality characteristics of interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Non-Growth</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Abroad Group</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study on Campus Group</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses:
• H1: Study abroad group will have increased levels of relevant personality characteristics than the study on campus group from T1 to T3.
• H2: Perspective-taking, empathic concern, and non-prejudice will predict increases in growth narratives from T1 to T3.
• H3: Growth narratives at T1 will predict increases in perspective-taking, empathic concern, and non-prejudice from T1 to T3.

Exploration: I will test for interactions between the two groups and each of the three characteristics at T1 in predicting increases in growth narratives from T1 to T3. Also, I will test for interactions between the two groups and growth narratives at T1 predicting changes over time in the three personality characteristics.

Significance of Narratives:
• More growth mentioned in the narratives of students studying abroad than on campus, regardless of stability in personality from T1 to T3.
• Examples of narratives:

Study Abroad Narratives
T1: “I think it will be so exciting to get to experience a new culture. I want to broaden my horizons and become more well rounded in my knowledge of the world.”
T3: “I don’t sweat the small stuff as much as a result of this experience. I had to learn to go with the flow and be flexible and adapt to unexpected situations, and I believe that this has helped me to be a more adaptable person.”

Study On Campus Narratives
T1: “I need to catch up on a few classes. Grades are important to me so getting good grades during the summer is my main priority.”
T3: “My summer study allowed me to get to know members of the math department better, which has helped me realize that I really like linear algebra as an area of study.”

Conclusions and Implications:
• Has implications for better understanding the benefits of studying abroad.
• Further research should be performed to find how the studying abroad impacts individuals and their outlooks if these benefits do not lie in the promotion of personality development.
• Currently, we are creating a round 4 containing similar questionnaires and narrative prompts to find if study abroad has an impact over a longer span of time.

References