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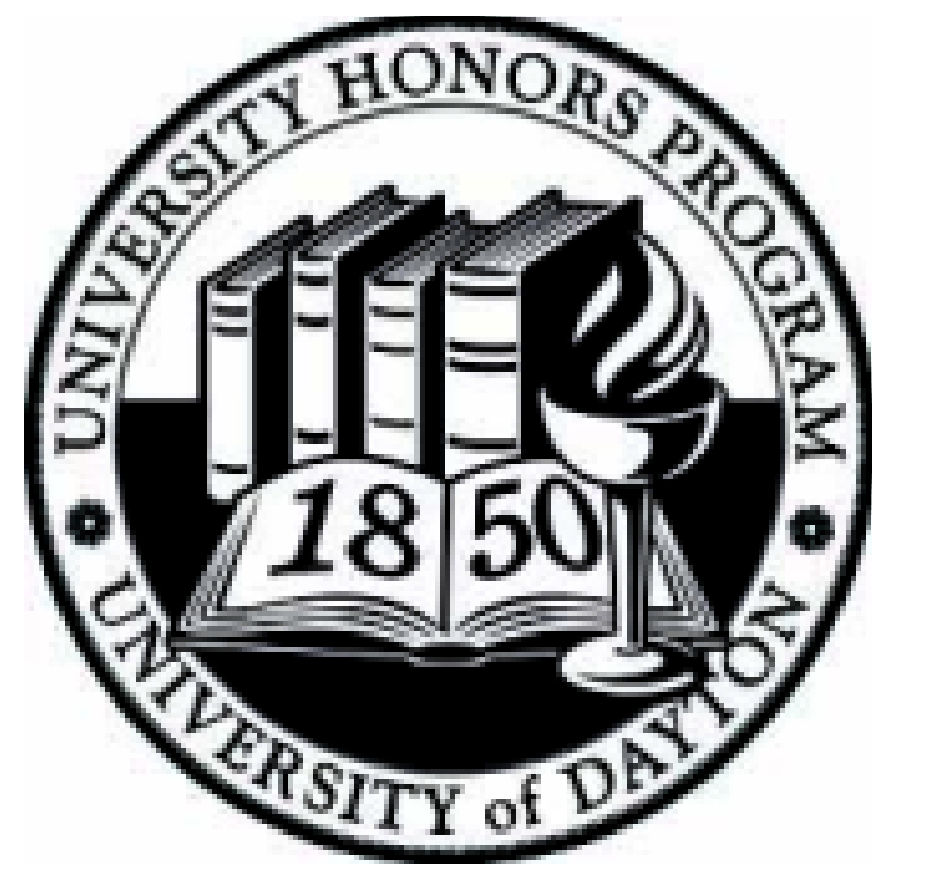
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Does Study Abroad Impact Students' Personality?

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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:
 - Personal growth is a main motivation for studying abroad (Pope, Sánchez, Lehnert, & Schmid, 2014).
 - 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:
 - Studying abroad facilitates the creation of a *third-culture*, rather than promoting intercultural awareness and perspective-taking (Citron, 2002).

Personality Characteristics of Interest

Perspective-Taking: An empathic experience where there is a merging between the self and the other (Skoe, 2010).

Empathic Concern: An other-oriented emotion that is felt when another is in need (Block-Learner, et al., 2007).

Non-Prejudice: Is "habitual open mindedness" and a diminished need to organize people within categories (Phillips & Ziller, 1997, p. 420).

Growth Narratives

- "People use narratives to try to derive some measure of unity and purpose out of what may otherwise seem to be an incomprehensible array of life events and experiences" (Bauer, McAdams, & Pals, 2008, p. 84).

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.

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:
 - Measured perspective-taking, empathic concern, non-prejudice through questionnaires.
 - Perspective-Taking and Empathic Concern Scale.
 - Universal Orientation Scale.
 - 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 increased 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.
- Growth Narratives at T1:

	Non-Growth	Growth	Total
Study Abroad Group	6	20	26
Study on Campus Group	29	3	32
Total	35	23	58

- Growth Narratives at T3:

	Non-Growth	Growth	Total
Study Abroad Group	2	16	18
Study on Campus Group	13	3	16
Total	15	19	34

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.

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