Global Journal of Human-Social Science: C
Sociology & Culture
Volume 19 Issue 3 Version 1.0 Year 2019
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

The Impact of Two Different Styles of Excursions during a Short-Term Undergraduate Study Abroad Experience

By Jim Tanoos

Introduction- Traditional Study Abroad (SA) programs offered by universities have a profound impact on the cultural awareness and adaptability of students who participate in these experiences. However, recently increased opportunities to engage in short-term SA experiences have prompted shifts in the planning and structuring of these trips to achieve the most impact on student development. SA's are particularly valuable for Americans due to the relative lack of global traveling by American students compared to students from other countries. Not coincidentally, the likelihood of an American failing in a future expatriate assignment is also comparatively high versus additional nationalities, although millennial Americans are more likely than any other group to receive such a position. This makes prior intercultural experiences through activities such as SAs all the more important to this generation of Americans as a steppingstone to their careers. This study will analyze the impact of two different styles and structures of trip tours and excursions on American SA students during a short-term experience.

GJHSS-C Classification: FOR Code: 370199p

The Impact of Two Different Styles of Excursions during a Short-Term Undergraduate Study Abroad Experience

Jim Tanoos

I. Introduction

Traditional Study Abroad (SA) programs offered by universities have a profound impact on the cultural awareness and adaptability of students who participate in these experiences. However, recently increased opportunities to engage in short-term SA experiences have prompted shifts in the planning and structuring of these trips to achieve the most impact on student development. SA's are particularly valuable for Americans due to the relative lack of global traveling by American students compared to students from other countries. Not coincidentally, the likelihood of an American failing in a future expatriate assignment is also comparatively high versus additional nationalities, although millennial Americans are more likely than any other group to receive such a position. This makes prior intercultural experiences through activities such as SAs all the more important to this generation of Americans as a steppingstone to their careers. This study will analyze the impact of two different styles and structures of trip tours and excursions on American SA students during a short-term experience.

II. Literature Review and Background

Studying abroad has had a positive impact on the lives of many college students (Andrade et al., 2019; Malveaux & Raby, 2019). One student skillseton which SA programs have had the most profound effect is cultural awareness. Badstübner and Ecke (2009, p. 41) noted that "cultural understanding is acquired most effectively" while being immersed in a SA environment. American students are even more likely to benefit from the cultural awareness gained during a SA because of America's comparative isolation from the rest of the world. Medina-López Portillo (2004) found that intercultural sensitivity, which is "an individual's psychological ability to deal with cultural differences", is an important outcome of a SA for American students and surmised that, "given the growing emphasis on internationalizing higher education and the rapidly increasing number of students embarking on study abroad programs each year, research on…cultural learning is assuming greater value and relevance" (p. 179-180). Universities in the US are increasingly attempting to make SA programs more available to remedy this lack of experience in immersion into new cultures.

The duration of traditional American SAs has been at least one semester (16 weeks). During this time, students live on campus or in a host home and become immersed in the local culture not only on their college campuses but also in the surrounding community. This traditional model of a SA fully integrates the student into the local culture outside of the regularly scheduled activities and SA classroom responsibilities. These traditional SAs offer American students a great deal of experiential learning because of the free time students can use to explore. Roberts et al. (2013) found that this type of non-structured acquiring of knowledge is the best way students can to gain cultural awareness during a SA.

Not coincidentally, cultural misunderstanding and the inability to integrate into a new culture cause many American expatriate workers to fail at organizational assignments abroad. More Americans than ever are working abroad, but they often face major challenges in adjusting to the new culture (Lowe, 2005). Much has been written about how to best integrate American expatriates into a different culture (Moore & Mehlenbacher, 2009; Tang & Chao, 2010; Reish, 2011; Charles & McNulty; 2014; Klekowski Von Koppenfels, 2014; Deardorff, 2015; McNulty & Selmer, 2017). Most American expatriate failures result from the employee's inability to adjust to the new culture, and a lack of organizational focus on cultural adjustments has been commonly indicated as a key reason (Selmer, 1995; Harris, 2012; Weber, 2013). American multinational companies have historically done a poor job of anticipating these difficulties and training workers to enter another culture when assigned abroad (Brewster & Pickard, 1994). Tung (1982) stated that in 1982, 69% of European companies provided cultural training of any sort versus only 32% of US organizations. Brewster and Pickard (1994, p. 18) confirmed that "cross-cultural training has long been advocated as a means of facilitating adjustment to the expatriate environment". Lowe (2005) suggested that the job performance of American expatriates often suffers as a result of not feeling comfortable in their new

Author: e-mail: jtanoos@purdue.edu

environment, while Breiden et al. (2004) found that expatriates who adjust well tend to be more committed to the organization. Harris (2012, p. 184) stated that the key to success in a typical expatriate assignment is "extra-cultural" openness. The most successful American expatriates are happy in both their jobs and their private lives while abroad.

The desire to remedy this failure to effectively integrate into international assignments has contributed to the growing number of SA opportunities that US universities now offer, as well as the increased emphasis on the pedagogy of structuring a SA for American students. Calahan (2017) found that changes in attitudes about intercultural openness allow American students to feel comfortable interacting with those from other cultures and consequently to initiate and develop relationships with them. Partially due to the comparably more difficult adjustments for Americans working abroad, past studies on SAs have focused on areas related to culture such as appropriate student preparation for the trip (Kruse & Brubaker, 2007). Bacon (2002) examined how to structure student pre-trip assignments to best ease the cultural adjustment process during SAs, and Hammer (2012) stated that building intercultural competence should be a "core mission" of an American SA (p. 116).

The youngest working generation of Americans, the "millennial" generation, or those born between 1980-2000 (Rainer & Rainer, 2011), has been said to be the most important generation affecting overall American economic interests (New Strategist Publications, 2015). However, American millennials may be having a more difficult time with expatriate assignments than previous generations even though they "are likely to be acutely affected by globalization" (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010, p. 235), and are more likely to travel internationally than previous American generations (Rainer & Rainer, 2011). Because American millennials want to "work abroad at some point in their career" (Ubl et al., 2017, p. 53), gaining a solid understanding of how to integrate into new cultures while they are in college is essential for their career development (Ng et al., 2010; Cahn & Cahn, 2016; Taylor, 2016).

Global positions are often assigned to younger members of the organization because of the lower costs associated with moving younger people compared to older employees who may have larger families. Nevertheless, American millennials differ from prior generations in the way they successfully integrate into an organization after college. For instance, achieving a work-life balance is a key organizational issue that American millennials greatly value, and one that has caused unsuccessful integration into organizations after college. Furthermore, millennials' ability to integrate with other generations of coworkers even within their home culture remains "widespread concern" (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010, p. 225). Further, millennials expect rapid advancement in addition to a satisfying life outside of work (Ng et al., 2010), which often hinges on their ability to adjust to new assignments in different geographic regions.

The number of American students participating in SA programs has nearly doubled since 2000 (Ubl et al., 2017). One reason for this is the increased availability and feasibility of short-term SA's (those lasting less than a full semester) (Brubaker, 2007). In fact, the percentage of Americans choosing a short-term SA increased from 48% in 1998 to 56% in 2004 (Hulstrand, 2006) and surpassed the number of traditional SA's in 2006 (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2010). American students are most likely to sign-up for a short-term SA versus a traditional SA as compared to students from other countries (Gibson et al., 2012; Martinsen 2011; Deardorff, 2015). Medina-López Portillo (2004) confirmed that the duration of the programs does indeed significantly impact the development of student intercultural sensitivity, so the structure of short-term SA's has become more important because these programs give students less time for experiential learning compared to traditional SA's. Therefore, as the popularity of these programs has grown, scholars have started studying the best practices to ensure that students achieve the most cultural learning in the limited amount of time they have.

Teichler and Steube (1991) found that the planned logistics of a SA trip will make or break students' experiences. Barkley and Barkley (2013) reported that cultural encounters are an important ingredient of a short-term SA if administered appropriately, and Brubaker (2007, p. 118) pointed out that "cultural learning should become an integral and explicit component of short-term study abroad". Scholars have pointed out that if a short-term SA is planned and coordinated appropriately, true cultural awareness and insight can be adequately gained (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004; Martinsen, 2011; Vande Berg et al., 2012). Brubaker (2007, p.118) commented that that it is the responsibility of the SA leader to "support the need for integrating culture learning into short term study abroad" during the planning stages of the trip. During these planning stages, structural immersions in the SA program are the best means of allowing students to gain an understanding of culture.

Gibson et al. (2012) found that students showed greater interest in their discipline-specific area (agriculture in their study) during their short-term SA. They proposed that the leader must ensure two essential elements during the planning process to ensure adequate learning in a short-term SA: 1) a focus on technical discipline-specific content that is more often inherent in short-term SA's, and 2) cultural content areas that may be more inherent in traditional SA programs.

III. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This analysis utilized a predictive study based on Gibson et al.'s (2012) suggestion that technical and cultural content are the two key learning components of short-term SAs. A predictive study is a type of experimental design which is utilized when aiming to ascertain when and in what situations an event will occur. In this case, the goal was to discover which of two types of tours and excursions prompted students to desire to learn more about both the local culture and/or the local industries/economy. This study will attempt to predict a relational hypothesis or a causal hypothesis, or if a type of tour prompted a specific positive reaction.

This study assessed 30 undergraduate students from a public higher education institution (which is a member of the Association of American Colleges & Universities) during a 3-credit SA trip that took place over the course of 14 days in May 2018. All the students were majoring in a technology-related field. This trip covered four cities in three Central European countries, all of which were listed among the top 32 European cities for millennials to live (Bloom, 2017).Surveys were distributed (see appendix A) immediately after the official trip tours in order to determine which types of activities stimulated an appetite for subsequent learning. To specifically address the concepts raised by Gibson et al. (2012), students were surveyed about what types of excursions prompted them to want to learn more about 1) local culture and 2) local industries/economy.

To ensure that only the millennial students were sampled, students were asked their year of birth on the survey. Following Rainer & Rainer's (2011) definition of a millennial as one born after 1980, 21 students of the 30 students were classified as millennials and were used as the sample set in the study. A total of 19 official excursions were planned during the trip. 13 were labeled as cultural and 6 were labeled as technical based on their content. Survey questions were developed in light of Gibson et al.'s (2012) definitions of "cultural content" and "technical content" and included the following: 1) As a result of this tour do you want to learn more about their culture? (Do you want to take holidays there, spend money on entertainment there, etc.?) and 2) As a result of this tour do you want to learn more about their industries/economy? (Do you want to work there, want to engage in business with a partner there, etc.?) (see appendix A). Moderating variables are believed to have a noteworthy contingent effect on the independent variable/dependent variable relationship. As such, the moderating variables in this survey were 1) the tour guide/activity leaders, which students would rate from 1-5, and 2) the length of the activity, which students would rate from 1-5 (too long, a bit too long, just about right, a bit too short, too short).

IV. RESULTS

The official tours were structured and organized based on two clear themes: cultural and technical, and to investigate which type of tour prompted students to want to learn more about local culture or local industries/economy, weighted regression models were assigned separately with tour characteristics (C for cultural vs T for technical), tour guide rating, tour length, and the interaction between tour guide and length explanatory variables. To better visualize the distribution of cultural scores and industrial scores, box plots are included below.

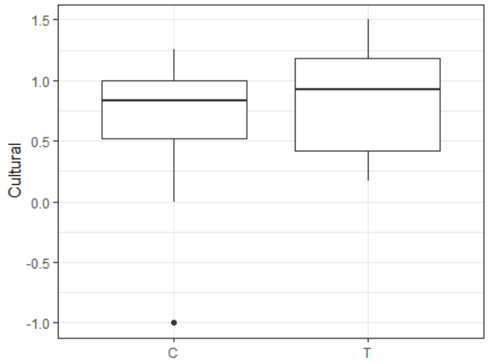

Figure 1: Boxplot of Cultural Score versus Tour Type

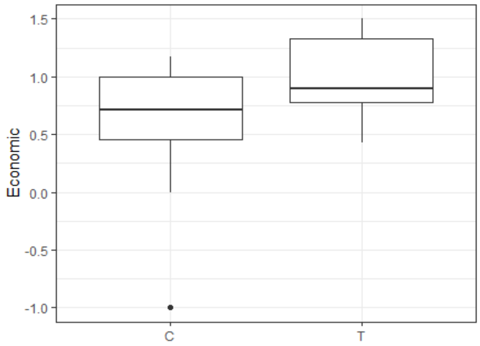

Figure 2: Boxplot of Economic Score versus Tour Type

Table 1 summarizes the regression results for local culture scores, and Table 2 shows the industry/economy test results. According to the data, the characteristic of a tour (C or T) does not have a significant effect on determining a student's interest in learning about the local culture ($p=0.0747$). However, tour characteristic (C vs T) is significant in influencing a student's inclination to subsequently explore the economic and industrial facets of a city ($p< 0.0001$). More specifically, the technical-related tour (labeled as "Char T") has a positive estimated coefficient (0.3708), indicating that as the value of the independent variable (technical tour rating) increased, the mean of the dependent variable (the willingness to want to learn more about that city's industries/economy, want to work there, etc.) also tended to increase compared with a culture-related tour.

Table 1: Test Result for Cultural Score

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)	
(Intercept)	-0.3325	0.3353	-0.992	0.3312	
CharT	0.1692	0.0908	1.864	0.0747	
Rating	0.1454	0.03651	3.983	0.0001	***
Length	0.5891	0.25436	2.316	0.0294	*

Table 2: Test Result for Industry/Economy Score

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)	
(Intercept)	-0.8343	0.2782	-2.999	0.0062	**
CharT	0.3708	0.0753	4.923	0.0000	***
Rating	0.2046	0.0303	6.754	0.0000	***
Length	0.3922	0.2110	1.859	0.0753	

V. Reactions/Future Studies

The data depicted in Tables 1 and 2 suggest that a technical-related tour will motivate students to learn more about local industry. As such, a causal hypothesis, which is an assertion that describes a relationship between two variables whereas one variable leads to a definitive effect on the other variable, may be inferred. That is, since the tours for this SA were associated with the student majors, technical-related tours that promoted and showcased local successful manufacturing and industry motivated students to want to learn more about the local economy, want to work there, etc.

This study might also be replicated with other types of SA experimental designs. For instance, future studies may analyze SA's based in different areas of the world, other generations of Americans on SA's, or SA students from other majors. For example, a SA for art majors could focus on and include museum content, while a program for agriculture majors could involve excursions based on farm/rural content.

This study might be additionally helpful for international organizations that aim to ease the cultural adjustment process for new expatriate American workers. As such, the expenses lost to failed assignments may be saved by training and preparation that are specific to their careers, such as the planning of technical-related activities in advance of their work duties and/or during the early stages of their tenure at the new position. While cultural activities as a potential build-up to an international assignment may be appealing on the surface, technical-specific tours may have a better likelihood of predicting the success of the expatriate in the international assignment.

References Références Referencias

1. Andrade, L., Dittloff, S., & Nath, L. (2019). *A Guide to Faculty-Led Study Abroad: How to create a transformative experience.* New York, NY: Routledge Publishing.
2. Bacon, S. (2002, November). Learning the Rules: Language development and cultural adjustment during Study Abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 35*(6), p. 637-646.
3. Badstübner, T., & Ecke, P. (2009, Spring). Student Expectations, Motivations, Target Language Use and Perceived Learning Progress in a Summer Study Abroad Program in Germany. *Die Unterrichts-praxis/Teaching German, 42*(1), p. 41-49.
4. Barkley, A., & Barkley, M. (2013, September). Long Term Knowledge from Short Term Study Abroad in Brazil and South Africa: Facilitating effective international experiences. *NACTA Journal, 57*(3a), p. 146-152.
5. Bhandari, R., & Blumenthal, P. (2010). *International Students and Global Mobility in Higher Education: National Trends and New Directions.* New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan Publishing.
6. Bloom, L. (2017, April). Ranked: The 50 Best Cities for Millennials to Live Right Now. *Forbes.* Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurabegleybloom/2017/04/24/ranked-the-50-best-cities-for-millennials-to-live-right-now/#3a4d01855692
7. Breiden, O., Mirza, H., & Mohr, A. (2004, Fall). Coping with the Job Abroad: A Correspondence model of expatriate work adjustment. *International Studies of Management & Organization: Expatriation in the new millennium, 34*(3), p. 5-26.
8. Brewster, C., & Pickard, J. (1994, Fall). Evaluating Expatriate Training. *International*
9. *Studies of Management & Organization: Current issues in expatriation*, *24*(3), p. 18-35.
10. Brubaker, C. (2007, Fall). Six Weeks in the Eifel: A case for culture learning during short-term Study Abroad. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German, 40*(2), p. 118-123.
11. Cahn, D., & Cahn, J. (2016). *When Millennials Rule: The reshaping of America.* Brentwood, TN: Post Hill Press.
12. Calahan, C. (2017). *Intercultural Openness Assignment: Attitude of intercultural openness.* West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University.

13. Charles M., & McNulty, Y. (2014, July 1). Why and How Women and Men Acquire Global Career Experience: A study of American expatriates in Europe. *International Studies of Management & Organization, 44*(2), p. 34-54.
14. Chieffo, L., &Griffiths, L. (2004, Fall). Large-scale assessment of student attitudes after a short-term study abroad program. *Frontiers Journal: The interdisciplinary journal of Study Abroad*, *10*, p. 165-177.
15. Deardorff, D. (2015). *Demystifying Outcomes Assessment for International Educators: A practical approach.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing LLC.
16. Gibson, K., Benjamin, T., Oseto, C., & Adams, M. (2012, March). A Short-Term Study Abroad Course in Costa Rica. *NACTA Journal, 56*(1), p. 23-27.
17. Hammer, M. (2012). The Intercultural Development Inventory: A new frontier in assessment and development of intercultural competence. In M. Vande Berg, R.M. Paige, & K.H. Lou (Eds.), *Student Learning Abroad, Ch. 5*, pp. 115-136. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
18. Harris, M. (2012). *Handbook of Research in International Human Resource Management.* London, U.K.: Psychology Press.
19. Hulstrand, J. (2006, June). Education: Short-term Programs are an Ever-increasing Part of International Education, but How Do They Fit into the Overall Picture for Education Abroad. *International Educator, 15*(3), p. 46-55.
20. Koppenfels, A. (2014). Socio-Economic Transnationalism and Integration.*Migrants or Expatriates?: Americans in Europe* (p. 75-126). Brussels, Belgium: Palgrave Macmillan U.K.
21. Kruse, J., & Brubaker, C. (2007, Fall). Successful Study Abroad: Tips for student preparation, immersion, and post processing. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German, 40*(2), p. 147-152.
22. 22. Lowe, D. (2005). Employment Rights of American Workers Abroad. Rudy, Exelrod & Zieff, LLP. Retrieved from: https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/labor_law/meetings/2008/ac2008/112.pdf
23. Malveaux, G., & Raby, L. (2019). *Study Abroad Opportunities for Community College Students and Strategies for Global Learning.* Hershey, PA: IGI Global Publishing.
24. Martinsen, R. (2011, March). Predicting Changes in Cultural Sensitivity among Students of Spanish during Short-term Study Abroad. *Hispania, 94*(1), p. 121-141.
25. McNulty, Y., & Selmer, J. (2017). *Research Handbook of Expatriates.* Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
26. Medina-López-Portillo, A. (2004, November 20). Intercultural Learning Assessment: The link between program duration and the development of intercultural sensitivity. *Frontiers Journal: Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 10,* p. 179-199.
27. Moore, T. (2009, April 21). *The Sojourner's Truth: Exploring bicultural identity as a predictor of assignment success in American expatriates.* (Doctorate Dissertation). Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University via Pro Quest.
28. Myers, K., & Sadaghiani, K. (2010, June). Millennials in the Workplace: A communication perspective on millennials' organizational relationships and performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology: Special Issue: Millennials and the World of Work: What you didn't know you didn't know, 25*(2), p. 225-238.
29. New Strategist Publications. (2015). *The Millennials: Americans born 1977 to 1994.* East Patchogue, NY: New Strategist Press, LLC.
30. Ng, E., Schweitzer, L., & Lyons, S. (2010, June). New Generation, Great Expectations: A field study of the millennial generation. *Journal of Business and Psychology: Special Issue: Millennials and the World of Work: What you didn't know you didn't know, 25*(2), p. 281-292.
31. Rainer, T., & Rainer, J. (2011). *The Millennials: Connecting to America's largest generation.* Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group.
32. Reish, A. (2011, March 29).*Issues and Values Affecting the Integration of American Expatriates in Emerging Economies.* (Master Thesis). Washington D.C.: Georgetown University via Pro Quest.
33. Roberts, T., Conner, N., & Jones, B. (2013, September). An Experiential Learning Framework for Engaging Learners during Study Abroad Experiences. *NACTA Journal: Globalization: Implications for Teaching and Learning in Postsecondary Agricultural Education*, *57*(3a), p. 28-35.
34. Selmer, J. (1995).*Expatriate Management: New ideas for international business.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
35. Tang, Q., & Chao, C. (2010, December 1). Foreigners' Archive: Contemporary China in the blogs of American expatriates. *Chinese Journal of Communication, 3*(4), p. 384-401.
36. Taylor, P. (2016). *The Next America: Boomers, millennials, and the looming generational showdown.* New York, NY: Public Affairs.
37. Teichler, U., & Steube, W. (1991, April). The Logics of Study Abroad Programs and Their Impacts. *Higher Education and the Flow of Foreign Students, 21*(3), p. 325-349.
38. Tung, R. (1981, Spring). Selection and Training of Personnel for Overseas Assignments. (Paper presented at: *The International Meetings of the Academy of International Business, 1978*). *Columbia Journal of World Business, 16*(1), p. 68-78.

39. Ubl, H., Walden, L., & Arbit, D. (2017). *Managing Millennials for Dummies.* Hoboken, N J: John Wiley & Sons.
40. Vande Berg, M., Paige, R., & Hemming, K. (2012). *Student Learning Abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
41. Weber, T. (2013). *What Are the Critical Success Factors in Expatriate Assignments?* (Bachelor Dissertation). Oxford, U.K.: Oxford Brookes University via GRIN Verlag.

Appendix A

Student Survey Distributed After Each Tour

Tour/Excursion: __________

Age:	Born before 1980	____
	Born after 1980	____

Gender:	M	____
	F	____

(Check one that applies: I think the length of this tour was…

Much too long	____
A bit too long	____
Just about right	____
A bit too short	____
Much too short	____

On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being best, rate the tour guide:

1-2	____
3-4	____
5-6	____
7-8	____
9-10	____

As a result of this tour *do you want to learn more about their **culture***? (Do you want to take holidays there, spend money on entertainment there, etc.?)

_______**much less** apt to want to learn more about their culture
_______**somewhat less** apt to want to learn more about their culture
_______**the same** in wanting to learn more about their culture
_______**somewhat more** apt to want to learn more about their culture
_______**much more** apt to want to learn more about their culture

As a result of this tour *do you want to learn more about their **industries/economy***? (Do you want to work there, want to engage in business with a partner there, etc.?)

_______**much less** apt to want to learn more about their industries/economy
_______**somewhat less** apt to want to learn more about their industries/economy
_______**the same** in wanting to learn more about their industries/economy
_______**somewhat more** apt to want to learn more about their industries/economy
_______**much more** apt to want to learn more about their industries/economy