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THE DECISION TO STUDY ABROAD: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

By

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ABSTRACT

THE DECISION TO STUDY ABROAD:
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FOR COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

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This dissertation addresses international education's need for a theoretical model and research on the student decision process for study abroad. It builds upon earlier research (Peterson, 2001) that proposed and tested the Decision to Study Abroad Model, a theoretical approach based on Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action. While the earlier work particularly focused on the intention to study abroad and its predictors, the present research investigates the opinions and experiences of study abroad participants and explores factors related to communication strategies. Data were collected from 239 participants, supplemented by two subsets of subjects from the earlier study—37 study abroad participants and 313 nonparticipants—for an overall subject count of 589. Comparisons are made between characteristics and beliefs of single and multiple study abroad participants as well as nonparticipants to better understand distinct differences and similarities among the groups.

Comparisons revealed that participants have statistically significantly higher means for attitude, subjective norm, behavioral beliefs, evaluation of outcomes, and normative beliefs about study abroad than do nonparticipants. Further, participants engage in more information seeking (both passive and active) about study abroad than do nonparticipants, who primarily engage in passive information seeking.

Students who engaged in multiple study abroad programs consider and commit to studying abroad earlier than do one-time participants.

Earlier regression analysis demonstrated that attitude toward study abroad and subjective norm successfully predicted intention to study abroad, with subjective norm being the stronger predictor. The current research tested a similar model for intention to study abroad again; however the results yielded a small regression effect, with attitude being stronger. These findings may be related to the intervention of the study abroad experience itself or overall maturation. Post/Then measures of attitude, behavioral beliefs, evaluation of outcomes, and normative beliefs showed positive increases; however, motivation to comply decreased, which contributed to overall lower measures for subjective norm.

Regarding communication issues, study abroad participants unanimously agreed that "study abroad would open my eyes to the world" was the most important reason for their decision to study abroad. They cited study abroad program faculty leaders and former participants as the most influential messengers from whom they received study abroad information.

"Financial issues" were identified as the most important information needed for the decision to study abroad. This was followed by "benefits and rewards of study abroad."

Initial investigations with new variables (satisfaction, reasons against studying abroad again, and sequencing choice) and intention to study abroad again were not productive.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Joyce and Dorland Frazier, for encouraging me to dream;

To my husband, H. Christopher Peterson, for loving, supporting and

believing in me and my dream; and

To my children, Christopher, John and Abigail, for helping me keep it all in perspective.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Study abroad is a growth market in U. S. higher education. According to the Institute of International Education (IIE) *Open Doors 2001* report, study abroad participation by American college and university students more than doubled during the past decade, growing from 70,727 in 1989-90 to 143,590 in 1999-2000.

Three recent surveys, two nation-wide and one state-wide, have found strong public support for international education. The national data, two random telephone polls in 2000, were collected as part of an American Council on Education (ACE) project, "Mapping the Landscape: A Status Report on the International Dimensions of U.S. Higher Education," which was funded by the Ford Foundation. According to the report's authors, Hayward and Siaya (2001), one sample, a survey of 500 incoming college freshmen during their senior year of high school, revealed that more than three-quarters of the respondents already had direct international experience, e.g., foreign travel or opening their home to international exchange visitors. Further, 48% planned to participate in study abroad at some point during their college career. Similarly, nearly 75% of the other group, comprised of just over 1,000 American adults, expressed the belief that college students should engage in international study, internships, or work abroad. The third poll, a survey of Michigan residents, found that 74% of the sample believed that colleges should make study abroad a recommended or even mandatory activity for undergraduates (Riedinger, Silver & Wallmo, 1999).

On April 19, 2000, President William J. Clinton issued an executive memorandum on international education policy. The missive, addressed to heads of

executive departments and agencies, and, in particular, the Secretaries of State and Education, noted:

> It is the policy of the Federal Government to support international education. We are committed to:
>
> - encouraging students from other countries to study in the United States;
> - promoting study abroad by U.S. students;
> - supporting the exchange of teachers, scholars, and citizens at all levels of society;
> - enhancing programs at U.S. institutions that build international partnerships and expertise;
> - expanding high-quality foreign language learning and in-depth knowledge of other cultures by Americans;
> - preparing and supporting teachers in their efforts to interpret other countries and cultures for their students; and
> - advancing new technologies that aid the spread of knowledge throughout the world.
>
> (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2000a, paragraph 4).

Later in that same year, NAFSA and the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange issued a white paper, "Toward an International Education Policy for the United States," for the transition team of then President-elect George W. Bush. In the area of study abroad it urged the new administration to, among other initiatives, set 20 and 50% participation goals for American college students by 2010 and 2040,

respectively (NAFSA, 2000b, p. 4). Given intervening national crises, the Bush administration has yet to act on these suggestions.

And yet, despite its rapid, continuing growth, public support, and government attention, study abroad still has a considerable distance to go to achieve broad participation. According to ACE's preliminary status report on the internationalization of U.S. higher education, "overall numbers are very low at about 3 percent of students during their undergraduate career or 0.8 percent of total enrollments in a given year . . . " (Hayward, 2000, p. 9). If U.S. higher education ever hopes to reach even the modest "20% by 2010" goal suggested by NAFSA and the Alliance (NAFSA, 2000b), dramatic action and/or changes will be required. The American Council on Education (Hayward, 2000) has issued the call to action:

> The challenge to higher education institutions is clear. We need to increase the participation of students in international programs, reshape and internationalize the curriculum and co-curriculum of our higher education institutions, and develop a comprehensive international agenda for undergraduates across the curriculum. Now is the time to begin better preparing our graduates for productive roles in a world of new and rapidly changing realities. (p. 4)

The goal for international education, specifically study abroad, is clear. The challenge lies in the selection and implementation of an appropriate strategy. How can the documented interest in participation, plus public and governmental support, be transformed into substantive numbers of undergraduates studying abroad?

To begin, there appear to be two major hurdles at the heart of the study abroad field that seriously hamper international educators from achieving this goal. First, professionals in international education in general and, more specifically, study abroad, have no theoretical model about the student decision process for study abroad. Secondly, except for this present test application of a decision model based on Theory of Reasoned Action, there is no research program focused on the decision process.

Why is there no theoretical model about the student decision process for study abroad? One reason may be the people who populate study abroad offices. Study abroad is a truly multidisciplinary field, with professionals bringing a wide-ranging variety of academic backgrounds to the table, e.g., international relations, comparative literature, history, communication, psychology, horticulture, English as a second language, foreign languages, criminal justice, and political science, to name just a few. Many are former Peace Corps volunteers and many come to the field with a focus on preparing students to thrive in a multicultural world. As Larsen, Brown, and Ansara (1997) note, "It is still generally true that individuals enter the profession by first securing a position and then developing the specific professional skills they need in their work" (p. 4). Perhaps it is the multidisciplinary nature of the membership that leads to a reluctance to push forward any particular theoretical models. On the other hand, perhaps a focus on the day-to-day demands of the job prohibits, or at least, inhibits, contemplation about, development, and testing of theories. The whole "business" of study abroad encompasses far more than simply recruiting participants. Other critical tasks of study abroad educators, just to mention a few, include program development, establishing and maintaining relationships with host countries and universities, preparing students for their sojourn and reentry,

addressing curricular issues, overseeing health and safety issues, advising students, answering parental concerns, working with faculty program leaders, evaluating program effectiveness, and handling a million and one program details.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators (NAFSA) is the field's largest professional association, with the majority of study abroad educators belonging to the Section on U.S. Students Abroad (SECUSSA) division. As such, NAFSA assumes leadership for developing professional standards for its membership and responsibility for designing and administering professional development programs and national conference workshops and sessions, facilitating communication networks, and providing a professional journal and other publications.

The SECUSSA "bible" is *NAFSA's Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators*. In its introductory chapter about professional practice, the guide identifies five main roles of education abroad professionals: (1) advocate/facilitator, (2) liaison/broker, (3) educator/consultant, (4) economic manager, and (5) legal issues advisor. According to Larsen et al. (1997), only the first role even indirectly addresses communication or marketing-related abilities:

> You are likely to be the primary promoter of study, work, and travel abroad on your campus, actively pursuing and publicizing overseas opportunities and maintaining as high a profile as possible within the institution. You must create a campus environment where opportunities for international experience are viewed as feasible, desirable, and relevant in the context of undergraduate education. (p. 6)

And while the chapter's authors claim that the education abroad field "has developed a body of knowledge and theory" (p. 4), they provide no examples to support their claim.

On the surface it would appear that two other chapters of the *Guide* would pertain to study abroad professionals who might consider looking for guidance on understanding the student decision process for study abroad or increasing participation rates. Unfortunately, "Promotion and Publicity" is only a basic "how to" list that focuses on "three simple rules to successful promotion: variety, repetition, and appropriateness" (Yarabinec & Henson, 1997, p. 127). The chapter offers no research basis for developing a marketing plan, targeting particular audiences, or selecting messengers and message delivery systems. It is simply a laundry list of promotional activities and advice on dealing with the media. The "Current Demographics" chapter is descriptive, mainly rehashing information that appears annually in the IIE *Open Doors* publication. There is no attempt to explain participation, only to portray "characteristics of U.S. students abroad," e.g., trends in participation numbers, gender, race and ethnicity, academic level, academic major, family background, length of stay, destinations, financial resources, and program sponsorship. However, the authors do note that "much work remains to be done in collecting data and studying participation, at both national and institutional levels. . . . in order to support the goal of making international education available to greater numbers and types of students . . ." (Szekely & Krane, 1997, p. 162).

Study abroad communication and marketing programs have tended to rely on anecdotes and instinct rather than building upon theoretical frameworks and engaging in research to systematically identify and study target audiences. This approach is further

explained when one examines NAFSA's journal, professional educational development program, and conference workshop and session offerings. Using three topics related to the study abroad student decision process—"decision process," "communication strategies," and "marketing"—a search of NAFSA resources for professionals proved very revealing. During the 11-year history of *International Educator*, the association's professional journal, no articles related to these topics were published. The same is true of two other study abroad-related publications, *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* and *The International Journal of Intercultural Relations*.

NAFSA's professional development program offers three study abroad training courses. The "foundations" course uses the *Guide* as its required text and covers "program promotion" and "recruiting a more diverse population of students." The "administration" workshop does not touch upon any of the three topics. However, "Marketing Study Abroad Nationally—Advanced Tactics and Strategies," does address marketing campaign planning, advertising selection, Internet use, and other related topics.

Only 2 of the 46 workshops offered at the 2002 NAFSA national conference touched on these topics and they were the above-mentioned foundations and professional practice workshops. Of 209 sessions presented at the same conference, only one, which discussed "Overcoming Obstacles to Overseas Study for Students of Color and Minorities," was even tangentially related. Workshop and session offerings on the topics of interest at the 2001 and 1998 NAFSA conference were almost identical in number and content to those made available in 2002. Averaging 2 out of 40-some workshops and only about 2 conference sessions out of more that 200, it is painfully obvious that marketing

and/or communication strategies are not high on the list of priorities for NAFSA conference planners or the profession overall.

Given the model demonstrated by the primary professional association and journals, it is not surprising that the focus of study abroad communication and marketing programs is primarily on "best practices." As long as best practices are presented in a manner that helps practitioners understand how, why, and in which situations these practices are most effective, then practitioners have the opportunity to adjust the practice to best apply in their home institutions. Good model-building and research serve to explore situations further and develop better understanding and advancement of knowledge in the field.

The research that has been conducted in study abroad generally has been unscientific and primarily focused on evaluation/satisfaction measures or impact studies of the study abroad experience. The lack of journal articles, professional seminars, and presentations underscores the absence of focused study in this area.

Why is there no theoretical model and research on the student decision process for study abroad? Perhaps it is the multidisciplinary nature of the field; perhaps it is the multiple and multitudinous tasks of running a study abroad office; perhaps it is the monocular focus on practice; perhaps it is a fear of "wasting time and money on theory building and conducting research" when person power and resources could be directed in so many other and perhaps more profitable areas. Whatever the explanations or excuses, what remains is the fact that the field currently sits at a rare intersection of opportunity and fundamental support. Simply doing what has been done in the past, however good the "best practice," will not suffice, especially when there is no evidence that "promotional

activity" is the only and most appropriate delivery mechanism. Given the events of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing months, it is even more critical that avenues to establish and nurture international understanding, such as study abroad, are undertaken by large numbers of U.S. undergraduates.

If international educators are to successfully increase participation, they need to understand how students decide to study abroad: who influences the decision; which factors, such as norms and attitudes, are most critical; what information is needed to make a positive choice; who are the most effective messengers; what are the most important messages; and why certain students are more likely to intend to study abroad than others. This dissertation addresses international education's need for a theoretical model and research on the student decision process for study abroad. It builds upon my earlier research project, which proposed and tested the Decision to Study Abroad Model, a theoretical approach based on Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action. This earlier work particularly focused on the intention to study abroad and its predictors, subjective norms and attitudes. The current research project investigates the experiences of study abroad participants and explores factors related to communication strategies, e.g., important reasons for the decision to study abroad, influential messengers about study abroad, and important information needed for making the study abroad decision. Comparisons are made between characteristics and beliefs of single and multiple study abroad participants versus non-participants to better understand distinct differences and similarities among the groups. Further, the present study looks for key factors related to participation in multiple study abroad experiences, which may offer further insights into how students approach the decision process and view the outcomes of education abroad.

The goal of this study is to use an appropriate theoretical model to guide data collection and advance the development of effective communication strategies to recruit undergraduates for study abroad through exploring how attitudes and norms impact the decision process, comparing attributes of subjects, and analyzing the relative importance of various study abroad issues, messengers, and messages. This research will help study abroad professionals to (1) develop messages that increase the salience of study abroad for students; (2) target those messages to the most appropriate audiences; (3) schedule messages for the most opportune times or stages during the decision process; and (4) select the most effective mass media and interpersonal communication channels. And all of this ultimately should help international educators take advantage of opportunity and support for increasing participation in study abroad. For the communication field, this research will demonstrate how a theoretical model and multiple perspectives, such as agenda setting, diffusion of innovations, and information seeking, can inform communication strategies.

Context

Research for this dissertation was conducted at Michigan State University (MSU), a large Midwestern, land grant, research institution. While a large national survey would have been ideal, it was not feasible for the researcher. However, given its unique characteristics, MSU offered a viable alternative. Although it is a large public university, it has several residential programs, e.g., James Madison College (international relations and political science) and Lyman Briggs School (science), which model the small, private college setting. Approximately 80% of the student body is comprised of Michigan residents; it includes urban and rural, racial and ethnic majority and minority, plus a large

number of international students. In addition, large numbers of MSU students participate in study abroad. During the 1999-2000 academic year, 143,590 American college students traveled throughout the world to study for academic credit (Institute of International Education, 2001). Of those, 1,674, or approximately 1.2% of the overall total, were students from MSU. Only Brigham Young and The Pennsylvania State University sent more, 1,967 and 1,743, respectively. Considering that approximately 2,500 higher education institutions contributed data for the Institute of International Education (IIE) *Open Doors* yearly report, it is evident that Michigan State plays a large, national role in the field of study abroad specifically and in international education in general.

Michigan State University has been involved in the development of international education opportunities, otherwise known as study abroad, for more than 40 years. According to Dressel (1987), President John A. Hannah (1941-1969) is widely acknowledged as the impetus behind the university's internationalization. While the primary thrust of internationalization was on technical assistance programs to underdeveloped and rebuilding nations during the post World War II years, Hannah also wanted the university community itself to grow in its appreciation and understanding of other cultures.

When the Office of International Programs was created in 1956, President Hannah appointed Glen L. Taggart as its first dean. In a move that foreshadowed the integral role of faculty input in international education, Taggart formed a faculty group and charged them with studying and proposing a course of action for MSU's international

involvement. According to Dressel (1987), in an effort funded by a Ford Foundation grant, the faculty decided that:

> (1) international dimension introduced early in the students' academic programs would stimulate interest and ensure that most of them acquire some knowledge of other countries and cultures; (2) students' acquaintance with another culture could serve as a base for understanding still other cultures later; (3) emphasis should be placed on expanding current offerings by using a comparative approach; (4) the study of languages should be promoted to facilitate the understanding of and communications with other people and to provide an additional avenue for obtaining new knowledge and ideas; and (5) students should be encouraged to participate in both academic and nonacademic programs to provide them better understanding and appreciation of our interdependent world. (p. 269)

Study abroad, first designated as the Office of Overseas Studies, was officially created at MSU in the early 1960s under the auspices of the Office of International Extension and its first programs were offered through the Continuing Education Service. Interestingly, the university's initial forays into international education pre-dated the organizational structure and actually began in the mid-1950s when MSU collaborated with Eurocenters to provide both students and community residents with access to foreign language and cross-cultural training opportunities in several European countries (Michigan State University Overseas Study Action Task Force, 1995). These early language programs were joined in the late 1960s and early 1970s by overseas studies

programs (developed and led by MSU faculty members) that emphasized academic disciplines and professional curricula, e.g., political science, criminal justice, the humanities and the social sciences. According to the Overseas Study Action Task Force report, it was the structure of these later programs that engineered the MSU model of study abroad: "a central university office (i.e., Division of Overseas Study) that encourages new program development by faculty in academic units, and provides start-up assistance and later logistical support for the programs" (p. 3). It was also during this time period that MSU began to assume a national leadership role in study abroad. At the individual level, Homer Higbee, then assistant dean of international programs, played a key role in establishing study abroad policy both for MSU and the nation. At the university level, MSU attracted a national spotlight when it elected to stand with Council for International Educational Exchange in supporting the value of study abroad consortium programs.

According to Office of Overseas Study enrollment records (1995), by the 1971-72 academic year, 258 students were participating in study abroad. The numbers tripled to 767 by 1981-82; however, enrollments continuously oscillated throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, ranging from a low of 703 to a high of 1140 in 1991-92. Perhaps spurred by frequent reviews and refinements to the approach in 1979, 1987, 1991, and 1993 (Michigan State University Overseas Study Action Task Force, 1995), the MSU model continued to grow MSU in both numbers of programs and student participation. During the intervening years, Overseas Studies was brought under the administrative arm of the dean for International Studies and Programs (ISP), where it continues to function today. Although once joined with the Office of International Students and Scholars in the early

1990s, by the middle of the decade it was once again independent and operating under its current moniker, Office of Study Abroad (OSA).

Arguably the most dramatic change for study abroad at MSU was initiated in 1995 when M. Peter McPherson, its recently-appointed president, endorsed a new ten-year policy goal that "by the year 2006, 40 percent—or about 2,800—of MSU's annual graduating seniors will have had a study abroad experience of some type" (Michigan State University Overseas Study Action Task Force, 1995, p. E1). In addition, President McPherson challenged OSA to increase semester or longer-term study participation by 300%; control costs to make most programs comparable in price to a semester's study on campus; diversify programming options to meet students' wide-ranging educational needs and interests; and guarantee opportunities in each study abroad program for students to become involved in the society and culture of the host country.

To date, the president's global vision for MSU has been highly successful. First, participation by MSU students has increased by almost 116%, from 776 in 1994-95 to 1698 in 1999-2000 (MSU Office of Study Abroad, internal document, 2003). (It should be noted that the actual participant numbers are even higher than reported. Each year a couple of hundred students from other U.S. colleges and universities choose to take advantage of MSU programs, but are counted with their respective home institutions for IIE reporting purposes.) This 116% increase at MSU compares with a 70% increase nationally during the same time period according to IIE data. Further, MSU's participation rate has approximately doubled from about 11 to 22% of undergraduate students.

Secondly, regarding diversity of opportunities, program offerings have more than doubled, from about 85 in 1995 to 180 in 2002. During the same time period destinations grew more than 42%, from 40 countries to 57 countries on six continents. OSA significantly increased its number and diversity of semester-length or longer offerings and continued to grow its traditionally strong faculty-developed and faculty-led short-term programs ranging in length from 2 to 10 weeks. Options currently exist for study abroad enrollment year-round and, depending on the program, students can choose living accommodations that range from tents to hotels, flats to dormitories, or home stays with host families. In addition, beyond the traditional language and culture or general education courses, students can take coursework in a variety of less traditional academic areas, e.g., engineering, nursing, packaging, food safety, agricultural economics, communication, natural science, marketing and supply chain management, women's studies, or hospitality management, plus many others.

Thirdly, the Office of Study Abroad earned a highly coveted American Council on Education award for academic excellence and cost management in 2000 (Acheson, 2000), which is reflective of its progress in making study abroad more affordable. Unfortunately, reaching the semester enrollment goal has been more difficult to achieve. While participation has increased, at this point it is not occurring at a rate that will attain the 2006 goal within the stated time span.

Despite the progress at home and recognized national leadership in the field, study abroad professionals at Michigan State, like their colleagues across the nation, face serious obstacles in the effort to maintain the momentum and meet institutional goals. In darker moments, staff members have privately expressed concerns that study abroad's

initial wave of popularity is already waning, that the reservoir of early adopters is nearly depleted, or that perhaps there is a glass ceiling for participation that has already or will soon be reached. More than ever, study abroad professionals need to be able to understand how students decide to study abroad and distinguish the differences in the process between those who have little or no intention to participate and those who have already participated one or more times and may do so again. Only through comprehension, comparison, and insight can the process then be effectively manipulated.

According to the Michigan State University Office of Planning and Budgets' figures for Fall 2001, the university enrolled 44,227 students, 34,874 of whom were undergraduates. It would be both ineffective and an inefficient use of limited budget and human resources to target all students or even all undergraduates with the study abroad message. Using the Decision to Study Abroad Model to guide data collection and interpretation should enable education abroad professionals at Michigan State and elsewhere to attack unresolved questions regarding how students go about making the decision to study abroad, e.g., what beliefs they hold about study abroad, their important referents, and how attitudes and subjective norms influence intention to study abroad. From a communication perspective, answers to these questions can help shape messages about international education, select target audiences (both who should be receiving messages and who should be sending messages), and aid in the choice of delivery systems, e.g., face-to-face or mediated. Further, research can provide insight into when students first start to think about engaging in study abroad and when they typically commit to participation—both important factors in the timing of messages and selection of target audience. Finally, exploring information-seeking behaviors can enhance

understanding of the ways that students use communication channels and messages in the decision process.

Clearly, Michigan State University is an ideal institutional subject for this research. Likewise, this research will provide MSU with a viable model to guide research and interpret data.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Literature Review

While one would expect the study abroad literature to contribute greatly toward a theoretical understanding of the student decision process, this is not the case. It is possible, however, to glean some insight into the area through an examination of study abroad research conducted over the past decade.

The primary theoretical context for the student decision process for this study is drawn from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the author's initial research on the Decision to Study Abroad Model. Public communication campaign theory supports the formative evaluation research approach and diffusion of innovations provides a secondary theoretical foundation.

Study Abroad

To date, literature about study abroad has no tested theoretical models regarding the student decision process. R. Michael Paige (1978) arrives at the same conclusion in his discussion of constraints on the development of a strong general research program in study abroad. The lack of a dominant theoretical paradigm is the first of six constraints that he notes. Other limitations include the lack of a common methodological approach; the conundrums inherent in the study abroad setting itself; study abroad professionals without research experience and researchers without adequate experience in study abroad; a not uncommon disinclination toward evaluation research and the inherent potential threat it carries for the program studied; and the plethora of variables available to explain and measure learning outcomes. Michael Laubscher (1994), reviewing the paucity of substantive study abroad research and the general focus of what has been conducted thus

far, observed, "Furthermore, until now research has focused on outcomes with little attention to the processes that produce those outcomes" (p. 8). Henry Weaver's 1989 bibliography lists more than 275 abstracts of publications and unpublished articles written about study abroad through 1987. Precious few of the articles are solid research studies and many of those listed as research or theory are actually calls-to-action or suggestions for future research. The majority falls into the categories of guides, general overviews, and impact studies. Maureen Chao completed an on-line annotated bibliography project in 2001. It updates Weaver's work with 211 entries covering 1988-2000. Again, articles fall into similar categories as listed above and none of the abstracts discuss the student decision process.

Study abroad research has tended to cluster around five general areas of inquiry: (1) who studies abroad (e.g., Cloughly, 1991; Hembroff & Rusz, 1992, 1993; Koester, 1985, 1987; Opper, Teichler & Carlson, 1990); (2) demographic differences between participants and those who remain at home institutions (e.g., Carlson, Burn, Useem & Yachimowicz, 1990; Cloughly, 1991; Hembroff & Rusz, 1992, 1993; Opper et al., 1990); (3) adjusting and coping in the study abroad experience (e.g., Klineberg & Hull, 1979); (4) evaluation of whether international experiences meet predeparture expectations (e.g., Martin, Bradford, & Rohrlich, 1995; Martin & Rohrlich, 1991; Opper et al., 1990); and (5) study abroad outcomes (e.g., Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Carlson et al., 1990; Gurman, 1989; Juhasz & Walker, 1988; Kauffmann, Martin & Weaver, 1992; Koester, 1985, 1987; Laubscher, 1994; Opper et al., 1990; Sell, 1983).

The only research to date that specifically focuses on the student decision process is Peterson (2001, unpublished), who adapted Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen &

Fishbein, 1970, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) to form and test a Decision to Study Abroad Model. (See section beginning on page 28.) Eight other studies explore students' reasons for study abroad participation, focusing on various factors affecting choice or motivations.

In a quasi-experimental study, Carlson et al. (1990) investigated "motivation to study abroad." Subjects were divided into two comparison groups based on either their participation or nonparticipation in study abroad during their junior year. In surveying approximately 300 students at four American universities the researchers found that sojourners (study abroad participants) were most influenced by opportunities to experience a new culture and learn a foreign language in the host country. These subjects also believed that study abroad would enhance their future careers. Of lesser importance to sojourners, in descending order, were opportunities to take courses that were unavailable at home, travel with friends, and make linkages with their ancestral or ethnic heritage. Although comparison group students did not participate in study abroad, more than 75% were "moderately" to "extremely" interested in an international sojourn. Perceived obstacles to participation included lack of academic fit and delay of graduation.

Opper, Teichler and Carlson (1990) collected data from 439 students in the United Kingdom, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, and the United States as part of the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP). Motivation was explored in a pre-departure survey. The approximately 140 American students ranked the desire to "use/improve a foreign language," "live in/make acquaintances from another country," and "enhance the understanding of the particular host country," (p. 38) respectively, as the top three motives for participation. These were followed closely by the desire to travel

and to gain another perspective on the home country. Getting better grades and traveling without the company of friends ranked at the bottom of the list.

As part of the Study Abroad Articulation Project, which grew out of the SAEP, Cloughly (1991) focused on important student reasons for not participating in study abroad. Her subjects were 86 Pomona College seniors who were academically qualified but chose not to study abroad. More than 70% indicated academic fit dilemmas, e.g., class scheduling conflicts and inability to fulfill major requirements, as primary causes. Other reasons for nonparticipation included a preference for other on-campus activities, such as sports, internships, and jobs (about 30%); previous travel, residence, or study abroad (28%); lack of interest (22%); and lack of appealing programs (21%).

Three studies conducted at Michigan State, Hembroff and Rusz (1992, 1993) and the MSU Overseas Study Action Task Force (1995), adopted an "obstacles" and "incentives" approach to understanding how students make study abroad choices. Hembroff and Rusz surveyed 1,139 domestic undergraduates. Students who had thought about doing study abroad, but had opted against, identified the following as important obstacles to their decision (in descending order from most important): unable to afford the cost, need for summer work, lack of academic fit, unwillingness to travel without friends, uninteresting topics, and language difference concerns. Similarly, subjects who had studied abroad most frequently cited the following incentives for participation: affordability of the program, family supportiveness, sense of adventure, interesting topics, and desirable destinations.

Summer school students were the subjects for the MSU Overseas Study Action Task Force survey in 1995. One group, 134 participants in London-based study abroad

programs, listed two primary obstacles that they overcame in order to participate—cost and the need to work to pay for school. The other group, 412 students who had considered studying abroad and were enrolled in integrative studies in arts and humanities or social sciences on the MSU campus, cited numerous obstacles to study abroad—cost, need to work, lack of academic fit, and no topics of interest. Both groups identified the broadening experience, taking courses of interest, desirable locations, ability to afford the cost, and support from family and friends as motivators.

The Office of International Studies and Programs, University of Wisconsin-Madison, surveyed the study abroad awareness and interest of letters and sciences undergraduates. While primarily a marketing research project, the spring 1998 survey included a series of questions about factors that prevent or motivate students to participate in study abroad. Of the 273 respondents, nearly 65% were interested in studying abroad and of those 45% were "definitely interested." The most important motivators were personal growth and experiencing the culture, followed by improving language skills, academic growth and career enhancement. These factors were also significantly correlated with interest in studying abroad. The primary preventor was cost, followed by delay in graduation and language limitations. There was a statistically significant negative correlation between interest in studying abroad and all preventors (delay of graduation, cost, grade point average decrease, language limitations, health concerns, spouse or significant other, safety, no family encouragement, not viewed as beneficial).

In a recent study of 636 adult (age 25 and older) undergraduate students at the Penn State Capital College, Surridge (2000) investigated factors that deter study abroad

participation by adult undergraduates. Integrating literature from study abroad, adult education and multicultural education, he developed a 34-item, Deterrents to Adult Participation in Study Abroad Scale. Factor analysis revealed four primary deterrents: (1) Multicultural Indifference, defined by the researcher as a lack of interest in learning about or living in a different culture; (2) Institutional Shortcomings, higher education-related rules and operating procedures that impede study abroad participation, i.e., cost, lack of scholarship or loan support, lack of encouragement from faculty or adviser, academic fit, and lack of program information, to name a few; (3) Family Responsibilities, issues related to home and family considerations; and (4) Financial Responsibilities, items regarding need to work, loss of income, and monetary priorities.

According to Surridge, Multicultural Indifference surfaced as the primary deterrent to participation in study abroad. At face value this makes a lot of sense. On closer examination, however, one discovers that this factor covers a wide variety of variables that include, from highest loading value down: lack of interest in another culture, study abroad locations not interesting, study abroad courses not quality, fear of discrimination, fear of danger, apprehension about living abroad, belief study abroad courses not interesting, lack of interest in study abroad, leave friends to participate, belief that study abroad courses are difficult, miss social activities, physically unable, and lack of family encouragement. While he identifies the first eight variables as "dispositional" reasons (attitudes about self and perceptions about study abroad) against participation, he doesn't assign separate meaning or reasons for including the remaining six items. In fact, this statistically aggregated collection of 14 variables seems to obfuscate rather than clarify the situation. It is interesting to note that Surridge's initial factor analysis yielded

seven factors with Eigenvalues greater than one. One wonders whether more factors might have accommodated individual items in a more intuitive manner.

Surridge's research addresses two areas that have received little attention in the past: the need for study abroad professionals to focus on participation by older undergrads and the need for adult education to include participation in study abroad as part of its literature. Further, using multicultural education literature to explicate certain responses adds a new perspective for study abroad. Similarly, turning to adult education literature for the constructs of dispositional, situational and institutional deterrents adds a new dimension to consider.

One other interesting finding from this research is in regards to cost. Of 34 items, the variable with the highest mean (and hence the biggest deterrent) was the cost of study abroad. However, following factor analysis, cost resided within the Institutional Shortcomings factors and, surprisingly, only loaded at a value of 0.515. This would indicate that the issue of cost is ameliorated when integrated with other factors.

I agree with Surridge that his research demonstrates some of the complexities that are inherent in the decision to participate in study abroad. Too much study abroad research to date has refused to acknowledge this. However, I would argue that Surridge's approach is unbalanced. Tackling a problem by only addressing part of the situation, deterrents, does not offer satisfactory explanations for the entire phenomenon of study abroad participation. One cannot assume that a deterrent will prevent participation. Nor can one assume that non-deterrents are necessarily incentives or motivators for participation. In fact, Surridge's study does not even begin to suggest what may induce adult undergraduates to engage in study abroad.

However helpful each of the preceding eight studies may be in identifying factors, they have no theoretical framework or model for understanding the overall student decision process. Hence, the proposed dissertation research provides an important venue for applying the student decision process model for study abroad.

Development of a Study Abroad Decision Model

Theory of Reasoned Action

At its core, Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970, 1974, 1980; Fishbein, 1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) is all about beliefs. It strives to identify and understand individuals' salient beliefs about performing a particular behavior. It captures and explicates subjects' beliefs about salient others or referents. And, finally, it integrates the relationship between attitudinal and normative beliefs in order to predict or explain behavior. As Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) note:

> In the final analysis, then, a person's behavior is explained by reference to his beliefs. Since a person's beliefs represent the information (be it correct or incorrect) he has about his world, it follows that a person's behavior is ultimately determined by this information. (p. 79)

According to Theory of Reasoned Action, the best predictor of behavior is the intention to behave. Behavioral intention is an expression of the likelihood that an individual will actually perform a particular behavior. It is comprised of two components, one personal (attitude toward the behavior) and the other social (subjective norm).

Attitude toward behavior, the first factor in determining intention, is an overall measure of an individual's beliefs about the behavior, e.g., "the likelihood or subjective probability that performing a behavior will result in a given outcome or is associated with

some other attribute" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 66). It is formed by multiplying two predictors: (1) behavioral beliefs, which is a measure of the strength of beliefs about the behavior, and (2) evaluation of outcomes, which is a judgment as to whether performing the behavior is good or beneficial.

Subjective norm, the second intention factor, "refers to the person's perception that important others desire the performance or nonperformance of a specific behavior" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 57). It is the product of two measures: (1) normative beliefs, which are individuals' perceptions regarding the expectations that important others hold for them, and (2) motivation to comply, which indicates willingness to achieve salient others' expectations.

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) argue that this "expectancy-value model of attitude," which uses multiplicative processes to form attitude toward behavior and subjective norm, enhances prediction because it can encompass a variety of beliefs and accommodate a variance in beliefs without changing the overall attitude. However robust the nature of the expectancy-value model, it is still imperative to accurately measure beliefs since the more closely the beliefs reflect attitudes and subjective norm, the more accurate the prediction of intention to behave.

TRA is based on two assumptions about individuals: (1) they make rational decisions using available information and (2) they consider the possible outcomes before choosing to act or not. A model of voluntary behavior, it does not presume perfect logic nor whimsical behavior driven by unconscious desires or needs.

Theory of Reasoned Action has inspired a plethora of research. Over the past 30-some years TRA has been used to predict and/or explain a panorama of volitional

behaviors, such as weight loss, women's occupational orientations, family planning behaviors, consumer behavior, voting in American and British elections, and behavior of alcoholics (see Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Science educators have successfully explored its potential, e.g., Crawley & Koballa, 1994; Koballa, 1988; Myeong & Crawley, 1993; Norwich & Duncan, 1990. It has also been applied to career choice (Strader & Katz, 1990), moral behavior (Vallerand, Deshaies, Cuerrier, Pelletier & Mongeau, 1992), women's participation in collective action (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995), college students' intentions to drink (Trafimow, 1996), and organizational behavior at both the organizational and individual levels (Elliott, Jobber & Sharp, 1995). Perhaps the breadth of TRA's use is reflective of the model's robustness.

Research has generally supported the predictive validity of TRA provided that the investigated behavior was under the individual's immediate control, was measured close in time to the measure of intended behavior, and the intentional and performed behaviors were comparable measures. In a meta-analysis of 87 individual studies, Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw (1988) found strong support for the predictive ability of TRA. This was generally true even in studies that overstepped Ajzen and Fishbein's original limitations. Sutton (1998) also defends the performance of TRA in prediction and explanation of behavior and provides nine reasons that may account for poor prediction.

The topic of study abroad meets the general requirements of TRA for predictive validity—participation in study abroad is pretty much under the subject's immediate control, the measure of intention is taken at a time that is reasonably close to when the behavior may take place, and the measures of intention and performed behaviors are comparable. In addition, there are four primary reasons that recommend Theory of

Reasoned Action as being particularly apt for the study abroad student decision process. First, it accommodates the influence of both individual attitudes and social norms. Secondly, as an expectancy-value model it allows for comparison of beliefs and, hence, facilitates an understanding of how evaluation of outcomes of behaviors and motivation to comply moderate, respectively, the strength of salient behavioral and normative beliefs. Third, while TRA assumes rational decision making, it still allows for the influence of attitudes and norms in the decision process. Finally, TRA is parsimonious. There are only three primary predictor variables for behavior—intention, attitude, and subjective norm—and yet they significantly help explain fluctuations in what may be considered a very complicated process. As an overarching model TRA lifts the perspective of the student decision process for study abroad from a simple focus on individual factors such as costs, fears, academic credit, or program/location choice issues to a broader approach that considers and integrates a variety of factors, such as attitudes toward participation in study abroad, evaluation of outcomes, the impact of opinions of important others, and the motivation to comply with normative pressures, as well as numerous individual factors.

A Model of the Decision to Study Abroad

Peterson (2001, unpublished) proposed and tested the Decision to Study Abroad Model (see Figure 1), which adapts Theory of Reasoned Action to the study abroad context. In her model students determine their Attitude toward Study Abroad by considering their Behavioral Beliefs about Study Abroad and Evaluation of Outcomes of Study Abroad. Simultaneously, students weigh their Subjective Norm about Study Abroad—what they perceive as the expectations for behavior that salient referents hold for them (Normative Beliefs about Participation in Study Abroad) and the impact of such

expectations upon their individual Motivation to Comply. The combined judgments regarding Attitude toward Study Abroad and Subjective Norm about Study Abroad predict students' Intention to Study Abroad.

Survey data for this study were collected in April 1998 from undergraduates in 18 Michigan State University classes. The original sample was comprised of 742 subjects. This number was systematically reduced in order to more accurately reflect race, gender, and home college demographics for both the university overall and within individual colleges. Hence, the final subject total in this study was 539 undergraduates. None of these subjects had participated in study abroad.

Using both multiple regression and structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques, the Decision to Study Abroad Model fit the data.

Multiple regression (the approach suggested by Fishbein and Ajzen) yielded a Multiple R of .547, F (2, 495) = 105.53, $p < .01$. Combined measures of Subjective Norm and Attitude predicted 30% of the variability in Intention to Study Abroad. Subjective Norm, a measure combining Normative Beliefs (student perceptions that important others, e.g., parents, academic advisors, and peers, expect them to participate in study abroad) and the Motivation to Comply with those expectations, was the stronger predictor, contributing 16% toward explaining observed variations in intention. Attitude, a measure combining Behavioral Beliefs about study abroad (a 15-item scale incorporating 12 "motivators" and 3 "challenges" to study abroad) and an Evaluation of Outcomes, was much weaker than subjective norm, only adding 3% toward explaining observed variations in intention. The moderate-sized regression effect supported the

hypothesis that the study abroad data are consistent with the Theory of Reasoned Action as put forward in the Decision to Study Abroad Model.

Unlike the procedure for the multiple regression analysis—where Attitude and Subjective Norm measures were formed by multiplying and then summing, respectively, Behavioral Beliefs and Evaluation of Outcomes and Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply—SEM treated Attitude and Subjective Norm as the latent (or unmeasured) variables that they truly were in that particular research design. The four observed measures—Behavioral Beliefs, Evaluation of Outcomes, Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply—were treated as independent predictor variables and, hence, were not multiplied. The hypothesized model fit the data, χ^2 (3, N = 498) = 7.59, p = .05; however, not as well as one would have expected from the results of multiple regression. A larger non-significant chi-square would have been preferred. Similarly, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom was 2.53; a ratio of less than two would have been a better fit. The root mean square error (RMSEA) equaled .06 and the Goodness-of-Fit (GFI), Comparative Fit (CFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit (AGFI), and Normed Fit (NFI) indices were all greater than .90. Despite the overall model fit, not all of the hypothesized relationships were significant—specifically, the direct link from Attitude to Intention to Study Abroad (standardized coefficient = 0.0). The weakness in this relationship was indicated in multiple regressions, however not to this great extent. Subjective Norm was strongly predictive of Intention to Study Abroad (standardized coefficient = .67).

Further regression analysis of data revealed that Intention to Study Abroad was strongly related to students who had some foreign travel experience, who were at an early stage in their academic career, and who perceived study abroad as worth the cost. While the research confirmed that women were more likely to intend to study abroad, it rejected the commonly held belief among study abroad professionals that minority students were less likely to intend to study abroad.

These preliminary tests of the model's fit confirm that student Intention to Study Abroad can be predicted by (1) determining Attitude, the strength and evaluation of salient beliefs about study abroad, and (2) determining Subjective Norm, the perceived Normative Beliefs about Study Abroad and Motivation to Comply with expectations of salient referents.

The Decision to Study Abroad Model not only facilitates a greater understanding of the beliefs that form attitude about study abroad, it explicates the normative component of the decision and thus provides clues as to important referents and, hence, important influences as messengers and potential target audiences. These findings are significant because they shed insight into a process that is far more complex than merely focusing on "obstacles" and "incentives."

In the current study, it will be possible to compare subject groups that have and have not participated in study abroad. Such comparisons should facilitate further understanding of attitudes about study abroad and subjective norm through the identification of differences in perceptions by participant/nonparticipant groups. Further, new data will be available to identify messages and messengers that are critical to the study abroad decision process. Once important factors are identified, they can contribute

to the design of effective communication strategies, selection and preparation of messages and messengers, and appropriate targeting of audiences.

Other Approaches

The search for an appropriate theoretical context for this study of the decision process for study abroad included the consideration of numerous other approaches: theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1988), diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1983, 1995), agenda setting (Dearing & Rogers, 1996), organizational socialization and information-seeking (e.g., Brim, 1966; Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner, 1994; Hart, 1999; Jablin, 1987; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), social marketing (e.g., Gatignon & Robertson, 1985; Kotler & Roberto, 1989), the transtheoretical model of intentional change in health behavior (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992), the Janis & Mann (1977) decision process model, and career/college decision making literature. While each had the potential to bring some further understanding to the study abroad situation, only the theory of reasoned action suggested an overall fit that could provide an enhanced understanding of the decision process.

Research Approach

Formative Evaluation Research

Public communication campaign literature emphasizes the importance of formative evaluation research in campaign design (Atkin & Freimuth, 1989, 2001). While formative research includes both preproduction research and production testing, the former is of particular import to the present dissertation study. Preproduction research, "in which data are accumulated on audience characteristics that relate importantly to the medium, the message, and the situation within which the desired behavior will occur"

(Palmer, 1981, p. 227), will help focus the communication aspects of the study abroad effort. The goal is to understand both study abroad participants and nonparticipants as far as their attitudes and subjective norms. Further, gathering more detailed information from participants regarding their rankings of important reasons for engaging in study abroad and feedback about important messages and messengers will provide direction for shaping the study abroad communication and marketing efforts.

Explication and Application

Diffusion of Innovations

Diffusion of innovations theory, "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (Rogers, 1995, p. 5), has been adopted by researchers in various fields and contributes an individual level perspective to the present study. Rogers posits a five-stage model through which people progress as they decide whether to adopt a particular innovation. This perspective is further enhanced by an enumeration of characteristics of innovations that affect the rate of adoption, as well as similarities between adopters and potential adopters.

According to Rogers, an innovation is "an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (1995, p.11). He emphasizes that the chronological age of an innovation is not of critical importance, only that it is perceived as new by the potential adopter. For example, at the individual level, a freshman arriving at MSU for an academic orientation program in the summer before matriculation would likely consider study abroad to be an innovation—especially after having had his or her thinking stimulated by hearing a presentation by other MSU

students who have participated in international education experiences. Similarly, at the organizational level, MSU has generally offered only a few semester- or year-long study abroad programs, which have traditionally been of secondary importance to short-term summer programs. (In fact, according to the 1993-94 MSU study abroad data upon which the university's Overseas Study Action Task Force based its 1995 recommendations, 80% of student participation was short-term, summer programs; 15%, semester; 3%, January-term; and 2%, academic year.) However, the potent shift in emphasis brought about by the university's new vision for study abroad has created a situation where clinging to the "traditional" approach is no longer sufficient, hence the Office of Study Abroad would probably view the development, implementation, and marketing of numerous semester-length programs as an innovation.

At the individual level, Rogers (1983, 1995) outlines the "innovation-decision process" as a linear model that begins with initial knowledge of an innovation. During the persuasion stage, the individual forms positive and negative opinions about the innovation. These pros and cons are weighed during the decision stage and the innovation is either accepted or rejected. If the innovation is accepted, then implementation takes place, which means the innovation is actually used. Confirmation involves final acceptance or rejection of the innovation.

Rogers offers 30- to 35-year-old empirical data in support of his stage model and admits that the evidence is not particularly overwhelming for all five stages. However, he argues that the "process" nature of the innovation-decision stages is not easily measured by the quantitative "variance" approach of researchers. Despite its empirical weaknesses, the stage model still provides a cogent argument in favor of implementing

communication strategies appropriate to the status of potential study abroad participants within each stage of the decision process. For example, assessing student study abroad information needs and assuring the availability of promotional materials should help to move potential participants from the knowledge to the persuasion and decision stages. Then, at these latter stages more detailed or even persuasive messages could be implemented that address individuals' initial knowledge about the innovation, their positive and negative opinions, and how these pros and cons are weighed, as well as selecting appropriate messengers and alternative message channels.

Diffusion of innovations theory also contributes to the present study in considering the characteristics of innovations that contribute to their rate of adoption. Rogers (1995) discusses five characteristics of innovations: (1) relative advantage, the perception that the innovation will provide a great advantage over the current situation; (2) compatibility, the degree to which the innovation is viewed as being consistent with norms and values of the society; (3) complexity, the extent to which an innovation is perceived to be difficult to use or comprehend; (4) trialability, the degree to which someone can experiment with the innovation; and (5) observability, the extent to which outcomes of the innovation are visible. Adoption will occur more quickly when individuals can easily understand and try out the innovation, see its results, and perceive it as being advantageous and very compatible with current practice or values. In the case of participation in study abroad, diffusion of innovation theory would argue that students will be more likely to quickly adopt the practice if they can see the relative advantage and benefits of international education, view study abroad as a normal and integrated part of the undergraduate experience, find it easy to understand, and have the opportunity to test

it out—perhaps starting with a two-week summer program before committing to a semester or academic year experience.

From a communication perspective, diffusion of innovations theory predicts that homophily, similarities in values, status, education, etc., between adopters and prospective adopters will contribute to quicker within-group adoption. Hence, the more students see study abroad participants as being similar to themselves, the more likely they will be to participate in study abroad.

While diffusion of innovations theory does not offer the same degree of quantitative support that TRA provides, it is still a helpful heuristic for understanding the innovation-decision process. Further, its process models, innovation characteristics and attention to the individual level contribute valuable insights into potential communication strategies for innovation adoption.

Conceptual Definitions

This study encompasses four categories of conceptual definitions. The first section introduces general concepts, i.e., Study Abroad, Participation in Study Abroad, Salient Beliefs about Study Abroad, and Salient Interpersonal Influences, and then focuses on the components of the Decision to Study Abroad Model—Intention to Study Abroad/Intention to Study Abroad Again, Attitude toward Study Abroad, Behavioral Beliefs about Study Abroad, Evaluation of Outcomes of Study Abroad, Subjective Norm about Study Abroad, Normative Beliefs, and Motivation to Comply. The second section covers variables that expand beyond the original model to explore facets contributing to participation in multiple programs, including Change between Pre-Departure and Present Attitudes and Subjective Norms, Satisfaction, Reasons against Studying Abroad Again,

and program Sequencing Choice. The third category deals with study abroad participation and communication issues, such as Information Seeking Behavior, Important Reasons for the Decision to Study Abroad, Most Influential Messengers, Most Important Information Needed, and timing of First Considered and First Committed to Study Abroad participation. The final section identifies individual subject attributes with regard to targeting communication messages.

General and Decision to Study Abroad Model Variables

Study Abroad

Study Abroad has been used both restrictively and inclusively in the literature. Carlson et al. (1990) define it as a semester or year of study overseas during the junior or senior year. Hembroff and Rusz (1993), who conducted their research at Michigan State, chose a more inclusive definition that encompassed all types of study for credit in a foreign location—ranging from a couple weeks with an MSU professor to an entire year of direct enrollment in an international host university. The latter definition will be used for the current study since it is more broad-based and reflective of the programs available through MSU.

Participation in Study Abroad

The dependent variable, Participation in Study Abroad, categorizes subjects who have or have not taken part in an international education experience arranged through MSU. This category is subdivided into two subsets: (1) "participants," who may have studied abroad once ("one-time participant") or several times ("multiple participant") and (2) "nonparticipants," who have never studied abroad. To provide a more dramatic contrast for comparison purposes, in this particular study the "nonparticipants" are

subjects who not only have never studied abroad but also indicated a very low intention of ever participating in study abroad (by marking either "1" or "2" on a 1-7 scale for intention to study abroad). "Multiple participants" include subjects who have completed two or more study abroad sojourns or have gone on one program and have already applied to participate in a second.

Salient Beliefs about Study Abroad

According to Dearing and Rogers (1996), salience is "the degree to which an issue on the agenda is perceived as relatively important" (p. 8). The higher or more importantly an issue is ranked, the more salient it is perceived to be. Theory of Reasoned Action relies on salient beliefs for determining attitude toward the behavior or, in the study abroad decision model context, Attitude toward Study Abroad. During preliminary research, two focus groups were used to generate a list of salient beliefs about study abroad and 15 modal responses were selected. These same salient beliefs are employed in the current study.

Salient Interpersonal Influences

In order to understand the influence of others upon an individual's perception of expected behaviors and motivation to comply, it is necessary to first determine the identity of salient referents related to study abroad. The literature would suggest that such individuals would include: parents, family, friends, a significant relationship, peers, faculty, academic advisers, and social, sports, or work groups. The higher or more importantly such persons are ranked, the more salient they are perceived to be by the student. Four salient interpersonal influences—parents, friends, MSU instructors, and

academic advisers—are explored. They have been selected both for their high saliency and their ability to be identified and reached with study abroad messages.

Intention to Study Abroad

This dependent variable parallels the Ajzen and Fishbein (1970) concept "intention to behave" in that it indicates the likelihood of engaging in a particular behavior (study abroad) and is the product of subjects' attitudes toward the behavior and perceived subjective norms regarding the behavior. Intention to Study Abroad refers to the likelihood that someone who has never studied abroad will engage in that activity.

Attitude toward Study Abroad

As in the Theory of Reasoned Action, Attitude toward Study Abroad is "a person's judgment that performing the behavior is good or bad, that he is in favor of or against performing the behavior" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 56), which, in this model is studying abroad. This overall evaluation has two components, Behavioral Beliefs about Study Abroad and Evaluation of Outcomes of Study Abroad.

Behavioral Beliefs about Study Abroad. This is an expectancy measure of salient beliefs that expresses the likelihood that experiencing a particular outcome is associated with participation in study abroad.

Evaluation of Outcomes of Study Abroad. An evaluative measure, this indicates the perceived degree of good, benefits, or desirability of participation in study abroad.

Subjective Norm about Study Abroad

Theory of Reasoned Action would suggest that Subjective Norm about Study Abroad is an individual's judgment about normative expectations of salient referents and

individual motivation to comply with those perceived expectations. It has two components, normative beliefs about study abroad and motivation to comply.

Normative Beliefs. This variable expresses the individual's beliefs about whether salient referents think he/she should or should not participate in study abroad.

Motivation to Comply. This factor depicts the degree to which the individual desires to do what he or she thinks salient referents want him or her to do.

Variables Related to Intention to Study Abroad Again

Intention to Study Abroad Again is an extension of the study abroad decision model in that it begins with the two primary predictors, Attitude toward Study Abroad and Subjective Norm about Study Abroad, and then examines factors representing the special character of study abroad participants. The new factors include Intention to Study Abroad Again, Post/Then Attitude, Post/Then Subjective Norm, Satisfaction with Study Abroad Experience, Reasons against Studying Abroad Again, and Sequencing Choice.

Intention to Study Abroad Again

The dependent variable, Intention to Study Abroad Again, parallels the Intention to Study Abroad variable in the Decision to Study Abroad Model. However, it refers to the likelihood that study abroad participants will repeat the behavior and is further restricted by the phrase, "while an MSU student."

Post/Then Attitude toward Study Abroad

This variable expresses the degree of difference between current attitude about study abroad and a retrospective measure of attitude about study abroad prior to the participant's study abroad experience. If the experience meets the individual's expectations, one would hypothesize that there will be a positive margin of difference

between present attitude and the retrospective measure. Conversely, if study abroad were a disappointment to the participant, one would expect the change between measures to be in a negative direction. A positive change would seem to make intention to study abroad again more likely, whereas a negative change would seem to portend a lower intention to study abroad again.

Post/Then Subjective Norm about Study Abroad

The difference between the reflective pre-study abroad Subjective Norm and the post-study abroad Subjective Norm is expressed by this variable. A positive margin of difference between predeparture and present subjective norm would indicate even stronger perception of expectations for participation in study abroad. Conversely, if the change between measures were in a negative direction, it would appear that social support for this behavior had decreased over time or that the subject feels less motivation to comply with referents' wishes. A positive change would seem to lead to a higher intention to study abroad again; a negative change would predict a lower intention to study abroad again.

Satisfaction with Study Abroad Experience

This is another type of experiential measure. Due to its more general nature, it can encompass many of the intangibles that attitude or subjective norm cannot tap. In this setting the concept of Satisfaction is a gestält that addresses the overall study abroad experience—from learning to intercultural and language experiences to personal growth to professional contacts made to food, accommodations, and travel arrangements. Eventually, satisfaction will need to be deconstructed. But for now it will provide a rough indication of degree of expectations met.

Reasons against Studying Abroad Again

Sometimes circumstances override factors that would normally lead to intention. Reviews of study abroad literature and interviews with participants have contributed to the development of a list of potential reasons that might influence whether participants intend to study abroad again. These items address students' academic status or curricular needs, e.g., impending graduation or required credits that are only available on campus; interpersonal relationships that may prevent students from leaving family and/or important others again or that withdraw support for further study abroad participation; financial circumstances, e.g., no longer qualifying for further study abroad scholarship funding or no longer having necessary financial resources; and lack of interest. In exploring the relationship between Reasons Against Further Study Abroad and Intention to Study Abroad Again, one would expect the more reasons given for not studying abroad again the lower the intention to engage in the experience another time. It is also important to consider which reasons, e.g., graduation versus lack of interest, are selected more frequently, as they may influence messages and target audience selection.

Sequencing Choice

Sequencing Choice refers to the chronological order in which multiple participants take short-term (less than 10 weeks, generally summer or winter break) or long-term (10 weeks or longer, generally semester or academic year) study abroad programs. Study abroad professionals tend to rely on anecdotal evidence that short-term study abroad programs, especially those offered during university breaks and summer sessions, provide students with a "taste" of "real" study abroad (which, in many cases, is defined as semester- or academic year- length offerings). It relates directly to the concept

of trialability. Rogers (1995) suggests that the degree to which someone can experiment with an innovation contributes to the likelihood of adoption. While the primary focus of MSU's global vision is encouraging students to participate in some kind of international experience, the need to increase the numbers of students engaging in longer-term programs makes it particularly important to understand how they arrive at this decision. It is possible that students who are unsure about whether they would like to participate in a semester or academic year program may engage in a short-term, summer or winter break study abroad program to "test the waters" in preparation for an extended experience.

Study Abroad Participation and Communication Issues

The following section covers factors relevant to communication planning, such as information seeking behavior, information needed to guide the decision to study abroad, and influential messengers.

Information Seeking

Information Seeking, in the context of the Student Decision Model for Study Abroad, draws upon the stages of the innovation-decision process. Rogers (1983, 1995) suggests that information recall, message comprehension, and knowledge or skill for effective innovation adoption take place during the knowledge stage. The persuasion stage encompasses developing a liking for the innovation, discussing the new behavior with others, accepting the innovation message, forming a positive image about the message and the innovation, and becoming aware of the system's support for the innovative behavior. And, finally, in the decision stage individuals form intentions to gather additional information and to try the innovation.

In the present research, information seeking describes a variety of behaviors that students engage in while deciding to study abroad. These behaviors span the three aforementioned innovation-decision stages and progress from thought (contemplation) to private action to public action. They also vary in overtness and activity level, ranging from being an unidentified user sitting on one end of a computer or telephone to personally attending an event or visiting an office. For the purposes of the current research information seeking for study abroad will be divided into two categories: (1) Passive Information Seeking, which includes contemplating the possibility of studying abroad, discussing it with others, gathering information via computer, and formally requesting information from OSA; and (2) Active Information Seeking, which includes participating in a study abroad fair, attending an information meeting, visiting the Office of Study Abroad, and talking with individuals who have a certain level of authority regarding study abroad, i.e., OSA staff, program faculty leaders, or academic advisers. It would seem the more active and publicly involved an individual becomes in the information seeking process, the more likely they are to adopt the innovation.

Most Important Information Needed

Study abroad participants, based on their study abroad experience, are in the best position to identify the most important information that other students need for making the decision to study abroad. This item takes an exploratory look at what that information, and hence, potential message factors, might be. While one would expect that these would mirror the behavioral belief (attitude) statements, this may not be the case. Also, a statistically significant difference in responses generated by the two groups would help

the research to focus on particular information that may have been more important to first-time participants than to repeat participants.

Most Influential Messengers

Influential messengers are individuals with pertinent information about study abroad that come into contact with potential study abroad participants throughout their lives. These messengers may have varying degrees of expertise or experience with study abroad. They may have characteristics that are heterogeneous or homophilous to those of the student subjects. Potential influential messengers may include former participants, program faculty, academic advisors, faculty, parents, high school teachers, Office of Study Abroad staff, or unknown others. This measure attempts to identify and prioritize these potential messengers in order to understand which may be most influential in bringing the study abroad message to nonparticipants and repeat participants. Also, a significant difference between the responses of one-time versus multiple participants may help differentiate and prioritize the importance of messengers.

Study Abroad Participation and Subject Attributes

TRA suggests that individual attributes only contribute marginally to predicting behavior or intention to behave. However, from a communication planning perspective it is useful to investigate characteristics of the subjects to facilitate audience selection, message shaping and targeting, and channel and messenger choice. This is especially true for the present study, where the audience can be broken into groups according to participation and intention to study abroad. This section addresses message-shaping factors, e.g., important reasons for the decision to study abroad and timing of

consideration and commitment to participation, and subject attributes, e.g., demographic information, academic specialty, knowledge and experience, and perceptions related to study abroad.

Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad

What are the beliefs that are most salient with students who decided to study abroad? While salient beliefs provide a benchmark for measuring attitude, they are insufficient for developing a communication message. As part of formative evaluation, this factor helps to focus message building for study abroad. Through individually ranking belief statements, participants have the opportunity to indicate their most important reasons for deciding to participate in study abroad.

First Considered/First Committed to Study Abroad

These items help to establish a chronology, ranging from pre-matriculation at MSU to end of senior year for first considered and from fall of freshman year and ranging to spring of senior year for first committed, of when study abroad participants engaged in knowledge and decision stage behaviors. One would expect that earlier time frames for consideration and commitment would facilitate multiple participation. If so, this information should be considered when planning communication strategies.

Academic Specialty

Students choose their college majors for a variety of reasons. It is reasonable to expect that an affiliation with a particular college may influence how a student views study abroad and his or her intention to participate in an international education experience. Academic Specialty, the variable of interest, identifies a student's academic

home in one of MSU's 11 undergraduate colleges—Arts and Letters, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Business, Communication Arts and Sciences, Education, Engineering, Human Ecology, James Madison, Nursing, Natural Science, and Social Science—or in two other programs, Undergraduate University Division (for undeclared majors) and Veterinary Medicine. Ability to pinpoint intention to study abroad within a particular college can assist in selecting target audience and planning communication strategies.

Emphasis on International Subject Matter

One important component of President McPherson's globalization efforts has been to emphasize the international aspects and content of the university curriculum. This variable measures the subject's perception of the amount of academic emphasis on international subject matter within his or her department.

Economic Value of Study Abroad

Too often students use the phrase, "I can't afford to study abroad," as a catchall to avoid further discussion regarding participation in study abroad. This particular variable attempts to circumvent the dollar issue to get at the perceived value of the experience.

Gender

Subjects are identified as either male or female. This is an important attribute since study abroad has traditionally attracted women at a 2:1 ratio over men.

Minority Status

The traditional study abroad participant is white. This variable combines all non-white ethnic/racial groups (black or African American, Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Hispanic). There is a great desire on the part of

international education professionals and university leaders to broaden study abroad opportunities for minority students.

Foreign Language Knowledge and Ability

This variable identifies which languages, other than English, are spoken by the subject and the proficiency with which the best-known foreign language is used.

Foreign Travel Experience

This variable is the number of countries outside of the United States that the subject has visited.

Research Questions

The present research approaches study abroad participation from three different aspects. The first section uses variables in the Decision to Study Abroad Model to compare non-, one-time, and multiple-participants. It also examines the relationship between participation and information seeking behavior. The second and third sections focus on subjects who have already engaged in an international educational experience. Section Two explores Intention to Study Abroad Again and factors related to multiple study abroad program participation. The final section explores feedback from study abroad participants (primarily via open-ended questions) regarding reasons for participation in study abroad, influential messengers, important information needed, and timing of consideration and commitment to study abroad. Such information is essential for developing communication strategies for effective study abroad recruitment, specifically shaping messages, selecting messengers, targeting audiences, and timing messages.

Decision Model and Study Abroad Participation

Earlier research (Peterson, 2001) has established the viability of the Decision Model for Study Abroad for predicting Intention to Study Abroad. This section uses the decision model as a framework for comparing the three groups of subjects—multiple study abroad participants, one-time participants, and nonparticipants. Factors explored include Attitude, Behavioral Beliefs, Evaluation of Outcomes, Subjective Norm, and Normative Beliefs about Study Abroad, plus the Motivation to Comply. Differences in Information Seeking behavior are also examined.

In developing Hypotheses 1 through 5 and Research Question 5 are based upon the belief that incrementally more exposure to or experience with study abroad positively increases perceived attitudes and subjective norms related to study abroad. Similarly, Hypothesis 6 purports that increased experience with study abroad leads to increased information seeking. The associated research questions seek to further explicate differences between the three groups. Such information can be valuable to communication campaign efforts to increase study abroad participation.

Hypothesis 1:

> Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will have stronger Behavioral Beliefs about Study Abroad (combined score) than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

Research Question 1:

> Are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative importance of the Behavioral Belief items? If so, on which items do the groups differ most?

Hypothesis 2:

> Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will have more positive Evaluations of Outcomes (combined score) than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

Research Question 2:

Are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative importance of the Evaluations of Outcomes items? If so, on which items do the groups differ most?

Hypothesis 3:

Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will have more positive Attitude toward Study Abroad (combined score) than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

Research Question 3:

Are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative importance of items composing Attitude toward Study Abroad? If so, on which items do the groups differ most?

Hypothesis 4:

Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will perceive stronger Normative Beliefs about Study Abroad (combined score) from their salient referents than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

Research Question 4:

Regarding Normative Beliefs about Study Abroad, are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative strength of norms communicated by different referents (e.g., parents, friends,

instructors, and academic advisors)? If so, on which referents do the groups differ most?

Research Question 5:

Regarding Motivation to Comply about Study Abroad, are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative amount of motivation related to different referents (e.g., parents, friends, instructors, and academic advisors)? If so, on which referents do the groups differ most?

Hypothesis 5:

Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will perceive stronger Subjective Norm about Study Abroad (combined score) than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

Hypothesis 6:

Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will engage in more Information Seeking than one-time participants, and one-timers will do more Information Seeking than nonparticipants.

Research Question 6:

Can Information Seeking behaviors be organized into active and passive factors? If so, are there significant differences on these factors among the three subject groups and on which factors do the groups differ most?

Predictors of Intention to Study Abroad Again

This section begins with an examination of decision model factors, Attitude toward Study Abroad and Subjective Norm about Study Abroad, which may contribute to study abroad participants' Intention to Study Abroad Again. These factors and their respective sub-measures (Behavioral Beliefs, Evaluation of Outcomes, Normative Beliefs, and Motivation to Comply) are also explored over time by comparing scores on post/then change measures. Finally, three factors that may also contribute to Intention to Study Abroad Again—Satisfaction with the Study Abroad Experience, Reasons against Studying Abroad Again, and Sequencing Choice—are investigated.

Since the overall decision model supports positive correlations between Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Intention to Study Abroad (Peterson, 2001), one would expect a similar relationship between Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Intention to Study Abroad Again. These factors are considered in Research Questions 7 and 8.

Research Question 7:

Is there a positive correlation between Attitude toward Study Abroad (overall) and Intention to Study Abroad Again?

Research Question 8:

Is there a positive correlation between Subjective Norm about Study Abroad (overall) and Intention to Study Abroad Again?

The following research questions, 9A through 10B, focus on change in decision model factors over time.

Research Question 9A:

Is there a significant difference between predeparture ("Then") and present ("Post") Attitude toward Study Abroad? What direction, positive or negative, do these measures take?

Research Question 9B:

Over time, how do individual item measures of Behavioral Beliefs and Evaluation of Outcomes change on the predeparture versus present ratings?

Research Question 10A:

Is there a significant difference between predeparture ("Then") and present ("Post") Subjective Norm about Study Abroad? What direction, positive or negative, do these measures take?

Research Question 10B:

Over time, how do individual item measures of Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply change?

The following three variables explore potential predictors of Intention to Study Abroad Again.

Research Question 11:

Is there a positive correlation between Satisfaction with the Study Abroad Experience and Intention to Study Abroad Again?

Research Question 12:

Is there a negative correlation between Reasons Against Further Study Abroad (combined score) and Intention to Study Abroad Again?

Research Question 13:

If added to the decision model, how much do the factors, Satisfaction and Reasons Against Further Study Abroad, contribute to the prediction of Intention to Study Abroad Again?

The next research question tests Rogers's "trialability" innovation characteristic.

Research Question 14:

Is there a pattern in Sequencing Choice by multiple participants, e.g., starting with short term and then progressing to semester or academic year programs, which would suggest that trialability is a factor in Intention to Study Abroad Again?

Communication Issues and Study Abroad Participation

This section draws on the experience of study abroad participants and focuses on formative evaluation factors related to communication strategies. As diffusion of innovations studies would suggest, input from known users can be very effective in recruiting new users. Subjects were asked to (1) rank order Important Reasons for the Decision to Study Abroad, (2) rate Most Influential Messengers for Decision to Study Abroad, and (3) provide responses to an open-ended question about Most Important Information Needed for Decision to Study Abroad. The survey also collects targeting

information about the timing of study abroad messages and demographic and other characteristics about study abroad participants.

Research Question 15A:

Based on rank ordering by frequency, what do participants identify as the Most Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad?

Research Question 15B:

Regarding Most Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad, is there a significant difference in responses (based on rank-ordering by frequency) between one-time and multiple participants?

Research Question 16A:

Based on ratings, who are the Most Influential Messengers from whom participants received study abroad information?

Research Question 16B:

Regarding Most Influential Messengers, is there a significant difference in responses between one-time and multiple participants?

Research Question 17A:

Based on the frequency of open-ended responses, what do participants identify as the Most Important Information Needed for the Decision to Study Abroad?

Research Question 17B:

Regarding Most Important Information Needed for the Decision to Study Abroad, is there a significant difference in responses between one-time and multiple participants?

Research Question 18:

Do multiple program participants consider study abroad earlier in their academic careers than one-timers?

Research Question 19:

Do multiple program participants commit to study abroad earlier in their academic careers than one-timers?

The final two research questions explore overall relationships between participation in study abroad, Intention to Study Abroad Again, and subject characteristics and experience.

Research Question 20:

What is the relationship between Intention to Study Abroad Again and the following subject attributes—first considered, first committed, number of study abroad programs taken, gender, minority status, age, academic status, perceived emphasis on international subject matter in home department, perceived economic value of study abroad, foreign language knowledge and ability, and foreign travel experience?

Research Question 21:

What is the relationship between participation in study abroad and the following subject attributes—gender, minority status, age, academic status, perceived emphasis on international subject matter in home department, perceived economic value of study abroad, foreign language knowledge and ability, and foreign travel experience?

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Data Collection Procedures

Data for this study, which is the second part of a continuing research project on the study abroad decision process, were collected as part of an ongoing marketing effort of the Office of Study Abroad at Michigan State University. The paper and pencil survey was administered primarily during April 2000. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Subjects, all of whom had participated in MSU study abroad programs, were identified through the OSA database. They were initially contacted through e-mail and invited to participate in group administrations of the survey at the Office of Study Abroad. Students who were interested in completing the survey but were unable to attend a group administration of the questionnaire were given the option of receiving and returning their surveys by mail.

A hierarchical approach to subject recruitment was required due to the limited population of multiple-program participants (180) versus single-program (1812). Hence, potential multiple program subjects were contacted first, followed by one-timers. The goal was to collect data from 150 subjects, 50 who had participated in multiple programs and 100 who had completed only one MSU study abroad program. At the completion of data collection only 33 students who had participated in more than one study abroad program had completed surveys; hence, the subject pool was supplemented by one-timers who had already enrolled in (but not taken) an additional program. The final subject count of 239 for the 2000 survey included 68 multiple program participants and 171 single program participants. Response rates were 18.3% and 11.4%, respectively.

Data from the 2000 survey are used in all three sections of the dissertation research project. Section I combines the 2000 data with two unique subsets of subjects from a 1998 survey on the student decision process for study abroad (Peterson, 2001). These additional data include: (1) 37 students who had participated in MSU study abroad and (2) 313 nonparticipants, who self-identified as "unlikely prospects" for studying abroad by indicating either "1" or "2" on a 1 to 7 scale for intention to study abroad. Sections II and III also employ the 1998 data subset of 37 participants.

Participants

An effort was made to reach as many MSU study abroad participants as possible. Compared to the overall study abroad population (those undergraduates engaging in study abroad during the 1997-99 academic years, plus Fall Semester 1999, and Winter Break 1999-2000), the sample over-represents some demographic groups—most notably women, seniors, and business majors. However, given the relatively small size of the sample, it was not practical to reduce the overall database to more accurately reflect the profile of study abroad participants.

The 239 subjects who participated in the 2000 survey include 158 seniors (66%), 51 juniors (21%), and 10 sophomores (4%). There were no freshmen subjects; however, 20 (8%) of the respondents had completed their undergraduate studies. The mean age is 21.5 and average reported grade point average (GPA) is 3.35.

The colleges of Social Science, Engineering, and Agriculture and Natural Resources are the most under-represented, while the Broad College of Business, Communication Arts and Sciences, Natural Science, and Education are the most over-represented. (See Table B-1.)

The ethnicity/racial background of survey subjects is similar to that of the study abroad participant population. Whites are slightly overrepresented, while blacks and Asian Americans are slightly underrepresented. (See Table B-2.)

As mentioned above, 66% of respondents are seniors, which would seem to be a considerable over sampling. However, when one examines the academic status of respondents at the time of their study abroad experience(s) a different picture emerges. The profile of first-time participation in study abroad is fairly similar to that of the average study abroad participant. (See Table B-3.) Sophomores are overrepresented, 28.5% versus 12.2%, and seniors are actually underrepresented, 24.3% versus 47.9%. This may be partially an artifact of the subject pool in that those who participated in study abroad as seniors are less likely to still be on campus for surveying while they are still seniors. This gradual addition of older (academic level-wise) students is evident as one reviews the participation percentages of students during their second or planned study abroad sojourns; hence, upper-level students become more heavily represented at this point.

The traditional participation rate of women in study abroad programs at MSU is normally around 65%. In fact, the average female participation for the study abroad comparison population is 65.6%. In the current study, women comprise 82% of the subjects, which may be partially an artifact of the higher study abroad participation rate of women combined with a tendency of women to be more likely to participate in survey research.

Measurement

Instrument

The original (1998) survey instrument was pilot-tested by approximately 40 undergraduate students to check readability and accuracy in understanding test questions and directions. Anecdotal interviews with study abroad participants were conducted prior to survey construction in order to better understand student perceptions about the study abroad experience and learn more about how individual students arrive at the decision to participate.

The current (2000) survey incorporates key 1998 survey questions related to the Student Decision Model for Study Abroad. However, the new instrument was expanded to: (1) probe the decision process more deeply with participants; (2) explore differences between pre-departure and present study abroad attitudes and subjective norms; and (3) collect recommendations for important study abroad messages and most effective messengers for reaching prospective participants. The survey was pre-tested with eight students and minor adjustments were made. (See survey instrument in Appendix A.)

Dependent Variables

Participation in Study Abroad

The dependent variable, Participation in Study Abroad, initially was measured by asking subjects to write in the number of study abroad programs they had completed. "One-time" and "multiple-time" participants were sorted by these numerical responses. A second survey question culled out one-timers who had applied to a future study abroad program. These individuals were then also classified as "multiple" participants.

On the 1998 survey, subjects either replied "yes" or "no" to the question, "Have you ever studied abroad through Michigan State University?" Those replying affirmatively were classified as "participants." (In this particular data set all participants were one-timers.) Non-participants, for this study, replied negatively to the same 1998 question. Further, they indicated a very low intention to ever participate in study abroad by marking either "1" or "2" on a 1 to 7 scale for intention to study abroad.

Intention to Study Abroad Again

The dependent variable, Intention to Study Abroad Again, was measured with the following question: "Do you intend to study abroad again in the future while you are a student at MSU?" Subjects responded on a seven point Likert-type scale anchored between "unlikely" and "likely."

Decision to Study Abroad Model Variables

The primary model factors are measured in the same fashion in the current survey as they were in 1998. The only difference is that the 2000 survey employs a two-column format—the first asks subjects to indicate what they "think now" and the second asks what they "thought before" their study abroad experience—to measure change. (See Additional Predictors of Intention to Study Abroad Again section, pages 68-69.) Only the "think now" columns are employed when comparing 2000 survey respondents with those from 1998 or when referring to subjects' current beliefs.

Attitude toward Study Abroad

During preliminary research two focus groups were used to generate a list of salient beliefs about study abroad. Fifteen modal responses were selected. These same

salient beliefs are employed in the current study. A seven-point Likert-type scale collects the following measures:

Behavioral Beliefs about Study Abroad. Subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of 15 statements, such as "Study abroad makes you more marketable to future employers," "Study abroad enhances your ability to deal with different people," and "Study abroad can be difficult to fit into your academic plans."

Evaluation of Outcomes of Study Abroad. Subjects evaluated possible outcomes of study abroad. The 15 statements are identical to the behavioral beliefs, except that they were personalized, e.g., "My being more marketable to future employers is," and anchored between "undesirable" and "desirable."

Subjective Norm about Study Abroad

An overall measure of Subjective Norm was ascertained through the question: "In general, most people who are important to me believe that I should study abroad." The statement was accompanied by a seven-point Likert-type scale that ranged from "disagree" to "agree."

Four primary referents—parents, friends, MSU instructors, and academic advisers—were used to measure two primary aspects of subject norm on seven-point Likert-type scales.

Normative Beliefs about Study Abroad. Subjects were asked to indicate what they think important referents think they should do about study abroad, e.g., "My parents think I should study abroad." The statements for each referent were anchored between the pair, "disagree" and "agree."

Motivation to Comply. For each referent, subjects responded to the question, "In general, when it comes to a decision like study abroad, how much do you want to do what your (e.g., parents) think you should do?" The statements are anchored between "not at all" and "very much."

Additional Predictors of Intention to Study Abroad Again

The first four predictors of Intention to Study Abroad Again—Attitude toward Study Abroad, Subjective Norm about Study Abroad, Post/Then Attitude and Post/Then Subjective Norm—repeated decision model factors with a slight twist in that the latter two "change" variables explored differences in strength or direction of attitude and subjective norm over time. Three other variables—Satisfaction with Study Abroad Experience, Reasons against Studying Abroad Again, and Sequencing Choice—looked at other aspects related to multiple program participation.

Post/Then Attitude toward Study Abroad and Post/Then Subjective Norm about Study Abroad

Subjects responded to paired measures—what you "think now" and "thought before" studying abroad—within each of the Decision to Study Abroad Model variables: Attitude, Behavioral Beliefs, Evaluation of Outcomes, Subjective Norm, Normative Beliefs, and Motivation to Comply. The amount and direction of change, the "post/then" measure, is obtained by subtracting the "before" score from the "now" score. This approach is based on Post/Then methodology (e.g., Howard, Ralph, Gulanick, Maxwell, Nance & Gerber, 1979; Terborg & Davis, 1982; Terborg, Howard & Maxwell, 1980; Wexley & Baldwin, 1986), which has been found to be internally valid for change measurement. In fact, Howard et al. (1979) demonstrated that this particular self-report

approach can deliver results that are closer to objective measures of behavior change than those collected with the typical pre/post ratings.

Satisfaction with Study Abroad Experience

In keeping with the exploratory nature of the current study, subjects were queried, "Overall, how satisfied are you with your study abroad experience?" The question was measured with a seven-point Likert-type scale anchored between "very dissatisfied" and "very satisfied."

Reasons against Studying Abroad Again

Based on the review of literature and interviews with students, subjects were given a list of seven possible reasons that might influence whether they would study abroad again and asked to check off all that applied. Possible reasons ranged from "I'm graduating" to "I'm just not interested in doing it again." Space was provided for subjects to add other reasons. Responses were coded either 0 (no) or 1 (yes) and positive responses were summed to create an overall measure.

Sequencing Choice

Sequencing Choice was initially measured by determining the length of study abroad programs taken and chronological order. Less than 10 weeks (generally summer and winter break programs) was defined as "short term;" while 10 weeks or longer (generally semester or academic year programs) were classified as "long term." Responses were coded in the following manner: 1, winter break; 2, summer; 3, semester; and 4, academic year. The code for the first program taken is subtracted from the code of the second program taken to determine direction of change. Similarly, second program codes are subtracted from third program codes.

Study Abroad Participation and Communication Issues

Information Seeking

Subjects were given two types of questions about information seeking regarding study abroad. One asked subjects to identify the statements that applied to them before their first study abroad experience. The other asked them to identify behaviors that they would engage in as they decided whether to study abroad in the future. Both sets of questions referred to eight statements that ranged from the cognitive, "I considered studying abroad," to behavior that could be accomplished in the dorm, e.g., "I talked with other people about study abroad," "I requested study abroad program information," and "I checked out the web site for Office of Study Abroad," to behaviors that required overt actions, e.g., "I attended an MSU study abroad fair," "I visited the Office of Study Abroad," "I attended a study abroad information meeting," and "I talked with study abroad program faculty, an academic adviser or MSU Office of Study Abroad staff." The first four statements are defined as Passive Information Seeking; the latter four are Active Information Seeking. Responses to the eight statements were coded either 0 (no) or 1 (yes) and positive responses were summed to create an overall Information Seeking measure.

Most Important Information Needed

This open-ended question asked subjects, based on their study abroad experience, to identify two pieces of information that other students need to guide their decision to study abroad. After reading all responses, the researcher assigned general subject categories. It was expected that subjects would address topics related to the study abroad belief statements. While some of those items did appear, they were not sufficiently broad

to provide an overall coding scheme. Responses were initially sorted into groups that identified study abroad concerns or challenges, advice, types of information and sources. Eventually, ten primary categories emerged: Financial Challenges, Academic Fit/ Graduation Challenges, Fear Challenges, Benefits/Rewards of Study Abroad, Types of Information, Past Participants as Information Sources, Others as Information Sources, Abilities Needed for Study Abroad, Advice Before Deciding to Study Abroad, and Advice After Deciding to Study Abroad. Two other categories covered two common sentiments, "It's the best time to do it" and "Just do it."

Most Influential Messengers

Subjects rated the most influential messengers (former participants, program faculty leaders, academic advisors, university faculty, parents, high school teachers, Office of Study Abroad staff) on their decision to study abroad. This measure also allowed subjects to enter other influential messengers not listed in the question. Responses were indicated on a seven-point Likert-type scale anchored between "not very influential" and "very influential."

Study Abroad Participation and Subject Attributes

Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad

This item took the 15 salient belief statements about study abroad and asked subjects to rank order the five most important reasons for their decision to study abroad using "1" for the most important, "2" for the next most important, and so forth, through "5." In addition to lending some additional perspective on the decision process, this measure also allowed subjects to enter other statements that were appropriate to their particular situation. The forced ranking helped subjects to prioritize their responses and

provided further insights into the decision process. Further, it laid a foundation for developing appropriate messages to target audiences.

In order to obtain mean rankings, responses were reverse-coded so that the most importantly ranked item (1) became a "5", the second most important (2) became a "4", and so forth. Non-ranked items were coded as "0".

First Considered Study Abroad

Subjects were asked when they first considered studying abroad. There were nine choices, beginning with "pre-MSU" and ranging by semester to fall of the senior year.

First Committed to Study Abroad

Subjects indicated when they finally committed to their first study abroad program (as defined by when they handed in their program application). There were eight choices, beginning fall of freshman year and ranging by semester to spring of senior year.

Emphasis on International Subject Matter

This one-item measure asked students to indicate how much emphasis there is on international subject matter in the courses that they have taken in their department. The four responses ranged from "very little" to "very much."

Economic Value of Study Abroad

Subjects used a four-point scale, ranging from "very little" to "very much," to indicate, "To what extent do you believe that study abroad is worth the cost?"

Foreign Language Knowledge and Ability

Subjects were asked which languages, other than English, they spoke, read or wrote. They were then asked to rate their ability to communicate in the foreign language

that they knew best. The four ratings ranged from "poor" to "excellent." Subjects could also indicate, "Does not apply," meaning they had no foreign language ability.

Foreign Travel Experience

This item asked subjects how many countries outside of the United States that they had visited.

Demographic Information

Subjects self-reported major, academic specialty, gender, racial background, grade point average, academic status, and age.

Data Analysis

A variety of descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, cross tabulations, and both independent and paired samples *t*-tests, were used in data analysis. Additional analyses involved correlational, principal components, and standard multiple regression (both simultaneous entry and step-wise hierarchical). Data analyses were computed with SPSS 10.0.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Research findings are organized into three sections. The first compares responses of non-, one-time, and multiple-participants to variables in the Decision to Study Abroad Model and explores the relationship between information seeking behaviors and participation in study abroad. Subjects who have already engaged in an international educational experience are the focus of the second and third sections. Section Two examines Intention to Study Abroad Again and factors related to participation in multiple study abroad programs. The final section provides feedback on communication-related variables—reasons for participation in study abroad, influential messengers, important information needed, and timing of consideration and commitment to study abroad—and subject characteristics.

Decision Model and Study Abroad Participation

Hypothesis 1

> Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will have stronger Behavioral Beliefs about Study Abroad (combined score) than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

Means comparisons among the three groups partially support this hypothesis. Multiple participants had the highest mean Behavioral Beliefs, 6.12, followed by one-time and nonparticipants, 5.98 and 5.63, respectively. (The range for this item was 1 to 7.) See Table B-4 for means comparisons. While means are in the predicted order, multiple independent *t* tests reveal that there is no

statistically significant difference between the multiple and single participant means ($p = .051$). *T* tests comparing the two participant groups with nonparticipants are both statistically significant ($p < .00$); however, mean differences are less than 0.5. (See Table B-5 for *t* tests.) Overall, Behavioral Beliefs about Study Abroad are quite strong. This finding is reinforced by the small means differences and the fact that even the lowest mean—5.63 for nonparticipants—is still quite positive.

Research Question 1

Are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative importance of the Behavioral Belief items? If so, on which items do the groups differ most?

Of the 15 Behavioral Belief items, single and multiple participants responded similarly on 11 statements. However, there were statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences on four: "enhances your ability to deal with different people," "provides a new perspective on life," "makes you more independent," and "can delay your graduation." All of the mean differences were less than 1. Multiple participants reported higher means than one-timers.

In comparing nonparticipants and one-timers, there was only one Behavioral Belief item that both groups viewed similarly: "study abroad can improve my foreign language skills." Interestingly, nonparticipants have the higher mean for this item. On the 14 other statements, the difference between the groups is statistically significant ($p < .02$), with several mean differences being greater than 1: "can be difficult to fit into your academic plans" (2.00); "can delay

your graduation" (1.97); "helps you learn about yourself" (1.69); "is fun" (1.39); and "makes you more independent" (1.12).

Unexpectedly, multiple participants and nonparticipants shared similar means on three Behavioral Belief statements: "study abroad lets you deeply experience a different culture," "study abroad is expensive," and "study abroad can improve my foreign language skills." Nevertheless, there were a dozen items with statistically different ($p < .001$) means, including the following that had mean differences larger than 1: "learn about self" (1.83); "academic fit" (1.79); "fun" (1.4); "independence" (1.32); "new perspective" (1.17); "graduation delay" (1.14); and "more marketable" (1.02).

Hypothesis 2

> Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will have more positive Evaluations of Outcomes (combined score) than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

Table B-4 shows that means for Evaluations of Outcomes for the three groups were in the predicted order—multiples, 5.91, singles, 5.84, and nonparticipants, 4.94—thus partially supporting the hypothesis. Further analysis by *t* tests showed no significant difference between the means for the single and multiple participant groups; however, individual comparisons between each participant group with nonparticipants revealed mean differences of less than 1 that were statistically significant ($p < .001$). (See Table B-5.)

Research Question 2

Are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative importance of the Evaluations of Outcomes items? If so, on which items do the groups differ most?

Study abroad participants only differed significantly ($p < .05$) in their responses to three Evaluation of Outcome statements: "my gaining a new perspective on life," "rearranging my academic plans," and "improving my foreign language skills." The means for multiple participants were higher on each of these items. Mean differences were less than 1.

Overall, the difference in means between nonparticipants and each participant group was statistically significant ($p < .05$) for all 15 Evaluation of Outcomes statements. In each comparison participants had the higher means. The largest mean differences between singles and nonparticipants regarded "leaving my comfort zone" (1.68) and "my deeply experiencing a different culture" (1.27). In comparing multiple participant and nonparticipant responses, the largest mean differences concerned rearranging academic plans, 1.56; leaving the comfort zone, 1.49; and experiencing a different culture, 1.43.

Hypothesis 3

Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will have a more positive Attitude toward Study Abroad (combined score) than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

This hypothesis is partially supported. The means for Attitude toward Study Abroad for the three comparison groups are in the predicted order: multiple participants, 38.01; single participants, 36.93; and nonparticipants, 28.71. Since this score was the product of Behavioral Belief and Evaluation of Outcome ratings, the potential response range was 1 to 49. (See means comparisons in Table B-4.) Additional statistical analyses with *t* tests find no statistically significant difference between the means for the two groups of participants; however, comparisons between each participant group and the non-participant group were significantly different ($p < .001$). The mean difference between single program participants and nonparticipants was 8.2, between multiples and nonparticipants, 9.3. (See Table B-5.)

Research Question 3

Are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative importance of items composing Attitude toward Study Abroad? If so, on which items do the groups differ most?

Single and multiple participants had similar scores on 10 Attitude toward Study Abroad statements. Statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) were found for "difficult to fit study abroad into academic plans" (mean difference, 3.74), "can delay your graduation" (3.40), "provides a new perspective on life" (2.49), "makes you more independent" (2.07), and "enhances your ability to deal with different people" (1.84).

"Difficult to fit into academic plans" was the only Attitude area upon which singles and nonparticipants agreed. All 14 other statements had statistically

significant ($p < .05$) mean differences, the largest being on how study abroad "helps you learn about yourself" (14.85) and "is a chance to leave your comfort zone" (14.07).

Multiple participants and nonparticipants found agreement on graduation delay and academic fit items, but had very strong, statistically significant ($p < .01$) differences for the other 13 Attitude statements. The largest mean differences regarded "helps you learn about yourself" (16.09), "makes you more independent" (14.10), "makes learning come alive" (13.87), and "provides a new perspective on life" (13.80).

Principal component analysis on the 15 attitude measures yielded two components with Eigenvalues greater than 1. Total variance explained was 64.49%. Following Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization, two components emerged. The first contained 12 items identical to the "motivator" factor found in the preliminary research study. Coefficients ranged from .89 for "new perspective on life" to .61 for "foreign language skills," so items were not deleted. The second component was comprised of the three "challenge" items—academic fit, delay of graduation, and expense—that were again identical to earlier research findings. These coefficients ranged from .83 to .70; hence, individual items were not deleted. Overall alpha for the two-factor Attitude scale was .92; alpha measures for "motivators" and "challenges" were .91 and .70, respectively.

Subsequent *t* tests for the two attitude factors revealed statistically significant differences between participants and nonparticipants on Attitude

Motivators, $t = 14.939$ (483.8 *df*), $p < .00$; but not for Attitude Challenges, $t = 1.87$ (542.92 *df*), $p > .06$.

Hypothesis 4

Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will perceive stronger Normative Beliefs about Study Abroad (combined score) from their salient referents than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

The hypothesis is partially supported. Multiple participants had the highest mean, 6.18, followed by single participants, 5.94, and nonparticipants, 3.41. (See Table B-4.) The difference in means between the study abroad participant groups was not statistically significant; however, those between each participant group and nonparticipants were ($p < .001$). The mean difference between nonparticipants and one-timers was 2.53; between nonparticipants and multiples, 2.78. (See Table B-5.)

Research Question 4

Regarding Normative Beliefs about Study Abroad, are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative strength of norms communicated by different referents (e.g., parents, friends, instructors, and academic advisors)? If so, on which referents do the groups differ most?

Study abroad participants rated the opinions of parents and friends similarly. They had statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences of opinion regarding instructors and academic advisors, although the mean differences were

only 0.37 and 0.48, respectively. Multiples had the highest means for each referent.

Mean differences between Normative Beliefs held by nonparticipants and both participant groups were very large and statistically significant ($p < .001$) for all four referent groups. The largest differences in means were for parents and friends.

Research Question 5

> Regarding Motivation to Comply about Study Abroad, are there significant differences among the three groups regarding the relative amount of motivation related to different referents? If so, on which referents do the groups differ most?

In comparing responses for Motivation to Comply with particular referents, one-timers had a higher desire than did multiple participants to comply with the wishes of parents and friends. Both mean differences, 0.70 and 0.83, respectively, were statistically significant ($p < .01$). While singles also had higher means for instructors and academic advisors, the mean differences were not statistically significant.

Single program participants also had higher means than did nonparticipants for all four referent groups. However, the only statistically significant ($p < .05$) difference was regarding instructors, 0.31.

Multiple participant means for Motivation to Comply with instructors and academic advisors were higher than those of nonparticipants. The only statistically significant ($p < .001$) mean difference, 0.71, concerned friends.

Unlike the trend for all other decision model variables, there was a significant ($p < .05$) difference between the participant groups in the means for overall Motivation to Comply. One-timers had the highest mean, 3.70; multiples had the lowest, 3.25. Nonparticipants, with a 3.48 mean, were in the middle and their mean was not significantly different from those of the other two groups. (See Tables 4 and 5.)

Hypothesis 5

> Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will perceive stronger Subjective Norm about Study Abroad (combined score) than one-time participants, and one-timers will score higher than nonparticipants.

The hypothesis is partially supported. Comparisons between participants and nonparticipants display huge mean differences—10.24 between singles and nonparticipants and 8.13 between multiples and nonparticipants—that are statistically significant, $p < .001$. (See Table B-5.) However, the order of expected findings for the two participant groups is reversed. Single program participants had the highest mean for Subjective Norm about Study Abroad, 22.58, followed by multiple participants, 20.47, and nonparticipants, 12.34. (See Table B-4.) *T* tests moderate this finding in that the difference between the two participant group means is not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 6

Students who have participated in multiple study abroad programs will engage in more Information Seeking than one-time participants, and one-timers will do more Information Seeking than nonparticipants.

The hypothesis is partially supported. Table B-5 shows that while the differences in means between participant groups and nonparticipants are statistically significant ($p < .001$); the predicted order of findings for the two participant groups is reversed. Single participants had the highest mean, 5.33, followed by multiples, 5.31, and nonparticipants, 1.79. (See Table B-4.) However, independent samples *t* tests revealed no statistically significant difference between the means for the two participant groups.

Research Question 6

Can Information Seeking behaviors be organized into active and passive factors? If so, are there significant differences on these factors among the three subject groups and on which factors do the groups differ most?

Principal component analysis on the eight information-seeking behaviors extracted only one component, which accounted for 44.88% of variance. The solution could not be rotated. Factor loadings ranged from 5.45 to 7.37. All eight items were significantly correlated which each other ($p < .001$). Therefore, one would conclude that information-seeking behaviors could not be organized into separate factors.

This initial analysis was conducted with data from all subjects. As an experiment, subjects were divided into two groups, study abroad participants and

nonparticipants. Independent *t* tests comparing the means for each of the eight information-seeking behaviors revealed statistically significant differences ($p <$ .001) between the participant and nonparticipant groups. (See Table B-6.) In each pairing, study abroad participants had the higher mean score.

Based upon the statistically significant differences in information-seeking behaviors between the nonparticipant and participant populations, the nonparticipant group was partitioned out and exploratory factor analysis was conducted again with only this sub-group. Once again, all items were significantly correlated, but not to the high degree of the earlier analysis. Principal components analyses yielded two components with Eigenvalues larger than 1. Total variance explained was 48.06%. Following Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization, two components emerged. The first, which could be comparable to active information seeking included the following five behaviors and their respective coefficients: "I checked out the web site for Office of Study Abroad" (.583); "I attended an MSU study abroad fair" (.600); "I visited the Office of Study Abroad" (.480); "I attended a study abroad information meeting" (.738); and "I talked with study abroad program faculty, an academic adviser or MSU Office of Study Abroad staff" (.654). The second component, which could be considered as passive information seeking, included: "I considered studying abroad" (.808); "I talked with other people about study abroad" (.796); and "I requested program information" (.629). Factor analysis supported the initial division of factors except for web activity, which moved from passive to an active factor.

Predictors of Intention to Study Abroad Again

Research Question 7

Is there a positive correlation between Attitude toward Study Abroad (overall) and Intention to Study Abroad Again?

There is a significant positive correlation, .179 (p = .005), between Attitude and Intention to Study Abroad Again. However, it is modest in strength.

Research Question 8

Is there a positive correlation between Subjective Norm about Study Abroad (overall) and Intention to Study Abroad Again?

There is a negative, but not statistically significant, correlation, -.048 (p = .435) between Subjective Norm and Intention to Study Abroad Again.

Research Question 9A

Is there a significant difference between predeparture ("Then") and present ("Post") Attitude toward Study Abroad? What direction, positive or negative, do these measures take?

A paired-samples t test yielded a t of 13.06 (p < .00, 195 df), indicating that the Post Attitude mean, 37.37, was significantly higher than the Then Attitude mean of 32.37. This marked a positive change.

Research Question 9B

Over time, how do individual item measures of Behavioral Beliefs and Evaluation of Outcomes change on the predeparture versus present ratings?

Earlier research (Peterson, 2001) identified that both Behavioral Beliefs and Evaluation of Outcomes were comprised of two factors, 12 "motivator" items and three "challenge" items. The former encompassed items that highlighted the positive benefits of study abroad, while the latter focused on potential negatives that might deter participation.

In the current study, paired *t* tests of the Post/Then Behavioral Belief statements revealed statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences for all item means except one. All of the "motivator" items had positive changes; while means for the "challenges" decreased over time, indicating that current (post) opinion was less negative than the original (then) belief. The only item that did not have a statistically significant change was "study abroad is expensive," which still had a post mean that was smaller than the predeparture. The largest mean differences were for "study abroad helps you learn about yourself," which increased from 5.53 to 6.71, and "study abroad makes you more independent," which moved from 5.64 to 6.64.

All Evaluation of Outcome measures increased and 13 of the 15 were statistically significant ($p < .05$). The largest mean difference was for "leaving my comfort zone," which increased from 5.22 to 6.02. Nonsignificant changes were recorded for the already highly-rated "my having fun" (6.72 to 6.79) and "having my graduation delayed" (2.25 to 2.37). Note, mean increases in the "challenge" factors indicate less negative opinions.

Research Question 10A

Is there a significant difference between predeparture ("Then") and present ("Post") Subjective Norm about Study Abroad? What direction, positive or negative, do these measures take?

The mean Subjective Norm (Then) was 22.86, while the Post mean was 21.91. This -.95 statistically significant mean difference yielded a t of –2.69 ($p < .01$, 223 df), which indicated a negative change in Subjective Norm.

Research Question 10B

Over time, how do individual item measures of Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply change?

Overall, Post/Then measures of Normative Belief increased and Post/Then measures of Motivation to Comply decreased. Normative Belief means differences for parents and friends were statistically significant ($p < .001$). Means for instructors and academic advisors were relatively unchanged. These means ranged from 5.91 for academic advisors to 6.11 for friends. Regarding Motivation to Comply, all of the decreases in means were statistically significant ($p < .05$). Parents had the highest mean, 4.19, which was down from 4.57. Motivation to Comply with friends had the lowest mean, 3.09, compared to a predeparture mean of 3.56.

Research Question 11

Is there a positive correlation between Satisfaction with the Study Abroad Experience and Intention to Study Abroad Again?

There was an insignificant negative correlation, -.047 (p = .476), between the two variables.

Research Question 12

Is there a negative correlation between Reasons Against Further Study Abroad (combined score) and Intention to Study Abroad Again?

The correlation between these variables was also negative, -.052 (p = .424), and not statistically significant.

Research Question 13

If added to the decision model, how much do the factors, Satisfaction and Reasons Against Further Study Abroad, contribute to the prediction of Intention to Study Abroad Again?

Correlations for the four variables were not promising indicators for a successful model. Only Attitude toward Study Abroad was significantly correlated (r = .167, p = .01) with Intention to Study Abroad Again (ISAA). Subjective Norm (r = .255) and Satisfaction (r = .342) were correlated with Attitude (p < .001). None of the other relationships were statistically significant. When tested in a multiple regression model for ISAA, Attitude and Subjective Norm yielded a Multiple R of .179; R-square equaled .032, F (2, 192) = 3.176, p = .044. Adding Satisfaction increased Multiple R to .241, with an R-square of .058, F (3, 190) = 3.9, p = .01. Entering all four variables simultaneously yielded a Multiple R of .265, with an R-square of .07, F (4, 188) = 3.54, p = .008, which looked good until step-wise hierarchical regression was employed. Both Subjective Norm and Reasons Against Further Study Abroad dropped out of the model and only Attitude

and Satisfaction remained, registering a Multiple R of .233 and an R-square of .054, F (2, 190) = 5.474, p = .005.

Research Question 14

Is there a pattern in Sequencing Choice by multiple participants, e.g., starting with short term and then progressing to semester or academic year programs, which would suggest that trialability is a factor in Intention to Study Abroad Again?

Findings regarding Sequencing Choice were inconclusive. In comparing the means of program lengths among first, second, and third programs, there was an increase from 2.23 for first to 2.32 for second to 2.43 for third programs. (Programs were coded from 1 to 4 for break, summer, semester, and academic year programs, respectively.) Summer program enrollments decreased in percentage participation from 63 to 57 to 14, while semester enrollments increased in percentage of participation from 28 to 31 to 43. (See Table B-7.) Finally, overall direction of change (Table B-8) shows that 45% of multiple participants enrolled in second or third programs that were of the same length as their first program (zero direction movement); 23% took programs that were shorter in length (negative direction values); and 32% engaged in longer programs (positive direction values).

Communication Issues and Study Abroad Participation

Research Question 15A

Based on rank ordering by frequency, what do participants identify as the Most Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad?

Two belief statements dominated responses. "Study abroad would open my eyes to the world" received the most "number one" (42) and "number three" (40) selections. "Study abroad would be fun" was the most frequent "number two" (33) and "number five" (30) choice. "Study abroad would make me more independent" was the most frequently selected "number four" ranking. Other frequently selected beliefs among the top five rankings were "study abroad would let me deeply experience a different culture" and "study abroad would help learn more about myself."

A mean ranking of the belief statements rated by all participants provided the top five reasons for the decision to study abroad. (See Table B-9.) "Study abroad would open my eyes to the world" had the highest mean, 2.05. It was followed by "study abroad would be fun" (1.77), "study abroad would help me learn about myself" (1.67), "study abroad would let me deeply experience a different culture" (1.65), and "study abroad would provide me with a new perspective on life" (1.46).

Research Question 15B

Regarding Most Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad, is there a significant difference in responses (based on rank ordering by frequency) between one-time and multiple participants?

In terms of frequencies within rankings, single and multiple participants were not very different. Both groups selected "study abroad would open my eyes to the world" most frequently for both "number one" and "number three." (Although "study abroad would let me deeply experience a new culture" received an identical number of third spot choices from multiple participants.) Both participant groups also agreed on "study abroad

would be fun" for the "number two" reason. (However, three other belief statements shared the same frequency from single participants.) "Study abroad would make me more independent" was chosen most frequently for "number four" by singles, while "study abroad will provide a new perspective on life" received the most multiples' choices for that ranking. "Study abroad would be fun" was again selected as the "number five" reason by singles. More multiples indicated "study abroad would enable me to meet new people" was the fifth most important reason for studying abroad.

Table B-10 provides a comparison of mean rankings for the belief statements by participant group. While the top five reasons for the decision to study abroad remained the same, their order of importance varied within the groups. Ranking-wise the groups agreed on number one, "study abroad would open my eyes to the world," and number four, "study abroad would let me deeply experience a different culture." Single program participants rated "study abroad would help me learn about myself" and "study abroad would be fun" as their second and third choices. However, multiple program participants gave their second and third highest ratings, respectively, to "fun" and "study abroad would provide me with a new perspective on life." Independent *t*-tests between rankings by the two participant groups revealed only one belief, "study abroad would help me learn about myself," with a statistically significant mean difference, .55 ($t = 2.09, p = .038$). Those means were 1.83 for one-time participants, who ranked it second, and only 1.28 for multiple participants, who rated it fifth.

Research Question 16A

Based on ratings, who are the Most Influential Messengers from whom participants received study abroad information?

Program faculty leaders were viewed as the most influential messengers, with a mean of 5.17. More than 50% of respondents rated them with either a 6 or 7 on the seven-point scale. Former participants (4.54), Office of Study Abroad staff (4.06), and parents (3.85) followed. Academic advisors had the lowest mean of on-campus groups (3.04), with more than 30% of respondents giving them the lowest score, 1.

Research Question 16B

Regarding Most Influential Messengers, is there a significant difference in responses between one-time and multiple participants?

Mean differences between single and multiple participants ranged from -0.36 to 0.41; however, none were statistically significant.

Research Question 17A

Based on the frequency of open-ended responses, what do participants identify as the Most Important Information Needed for the Decision to Study Abroad?

By far, financial issues were the most frequently mentioned information needed to guide the decision to study abroad. Over a fifth of all responses concerned this area. Typical comments focused on financial and scholarship information, affordability, budgeting, and the experience being "worth the cost."

The benefits and rewards inherent in study abroad were named in 12% of responses. This category focused on the broad variety of learning experiences and included numerous references to "the best time of my life." Eleven percent identified types of information, i.e., costs, program offerings, explanations of the application process, and benefits of study abroad, which potential participants may need.

About 8% each highlighted issues regarding: (1) fitting study abroad into the academic plan and graduating on time, (2) using past participants as a source of information, and (3) offering advice on how to make the decision to participate. This latter category included comments like: "consider all programs, even those not in you major;" "figure out which culture fascinates you the most and go there;" and "plan as early as possible to study abroad."

More than 6% of the comments focused on the abilities needed to successfully participate in study abroad, e.g., "be open-minded," "be prepared to be independent and away from home," and "are you adaptable/easy going?"

One topic area, advice after making the decision to study abroad, garnered 13% of the responses. While the content was potentially very helpful—for example, suggestions to "pack light," "read up on the country and culture," "get to know the locals," "act like a guest," and "always smile"—respondents clearly ignored or misread the survey question.

Research Question 17B

Regarding Most Important Information Needed for the Decision to Study Abroad, is there a significant difference in responses between one-time and multiple participants?

Financial challenges were the most frequently cited topic by both participant groups (singles, 20.7%, and multiples, 21.5%). Multiple participants next emphasized benefits (13.2%), advice before the decision (9.9%) and types of information (9.9%). Singles also mentioned benefits and types of information (11.5% each) and gave advice before the decision (7.5%). Additionally, singles stressed the importance of academic fit/graduation challenges and past participants as information sources (8.5% each). There was a modest difference between the groups regarding abilities needed, which were mentioned by 9.1% of multiples versus only 4.9% of singles. Finally, 15% of singles offered advice for after the decision to study abroad versus only 8.3% of multiples.

Research Question 18

Do multiple program participants consider study abroad earlier in their academic careers than one-timers?

The mean response for multiple program participants was 2.58, which would place their "first considered study abroad" between fall and spring semesters of the freshman year. Singles reported a mean of 3.35, which would be between freshman spring and sophomore fall semesters. The difference is statistically significant ($p = .004$).

Research Question 19

Do multiple program participants commit to study abroad earlier in their academic careers than one-timers?

Multiple participants committed to their first study abroad program between fall and spring semesters of the sophomore year (mean, 3.41). Single program participants

tended to commit between sophomore spring and junior fall semesters (mean, 4.29). The difference in means is statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Research Question 20

What is the relationship between Intention to Study Abroad Again and the following subject attributes—first considered, first committed, number of study abroad programs taken, gender, minority status, age, academic status, perceived emphasis on international subject matter in home department, perceived economic value of study abroad, foreign language knowledge and ability, and foreign travel experience?

Correlations were computed to determine the relationships. (See Table B-11.) Of the 11 variables, five were statistically significant ($p < .01$). The strongest were academic status (-.37) and first commitment to study abroad (-.28). These could be interpreted as those more likely to study abroad again were underclassmen who committed to their first study abroad experience very early in their career. The younger the student (-.20) and the earlier study abroad was first considered (-.18), the more likely he/she would study abroad again. Intention to Study Abroad Again in the future was positively related to a perception that there is an emphasis on international subject matter in the student's home department (.18). Finally, those more likely to repeat participation have visited fewer countries (-.14, $p < .05$). Language ability, number of study abroad programs completed, believing study abroad to be worth the cost, minority status, and gender had no significant relationships to Intention to Study Abroad Again.

Standard multiple regression (simultaneous entry) of the 11 variables upon Intention to Study Abroad Again yielded an *R* of .435, which was statistically significant from zero, $F(11, 218) = 4.63$ ($p < .01$), and an *R*-square of .19. (See Table B-12 for the unstandardized regression coefficients (*B*) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (Beta), the partial correlations, semipartial correlations (*sr*-squared), *R*, *R*-squared, and adjusted *R*-squared.) Only two of the independent variables were statistically different from zero, academic status ($p < .01$) and perceived international emphasis in department ($p < .05$), and contributed significantly to the regression. Unique contributions (*sr*-squared) of the two variables to the explained variance were 22% and 12%, respectively.

Research Question 21

> What is the relationship between participation in study abroad and the following subject attributes—gender, minority status, age, academic status, perceived emphasis on international subject matter in home department, perceived economic value of study abroad, foreign language knowledge and ability, and foreign travel experience?

Of the eight variables, all but one—age—had statistically significant relationships with participation in study abroad. (See Table B-13 for correlational coefficients.) Positive correlations ($p < .01$) revealed that study abroad participants were more likely to believe that study abroad is worth the cost (.67), have visited more countries (.58), be an upper classman (.39), female (.32), perceive an emphasis on international subject matter in their home department

(.23), and be more adept in a foreign language (.21). Participants were less likely to have ethnic/racial minority status (-.10, $p < .05$).

Simultaneous entry standard multiple regression of the independent variables upon the dependent variable, participation in study abroad, produced an R of .776, which was statistically significant from zero, F (8, 556) = 105.34 ($p < .001$), and an R-square of .602. (Table B-14 displays the unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (Beta), the partial correlations, semipartial correlations (sr-squared), R, R-squared, and adjusted R-squared.) Four of the eight independent variables contributed significantly ($p < .01$) to the regression (shown with respective semipartial correlation in parenthesis): perceived economic value of study abroad/worth cost (.34), foreign travel experience (.27), academic status (.17), and gender (.13). A fifth variable, racial majority/minority status (.06) was significant at the $p < .05$ level.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the overall research findings—identifying both expected and unexpected results and highlighting their significance; integrating them, where applicable, into the general framework of the student decision model; situating them within the context of study abroad both nationally and at Michigan State University; and discussing their potential applications to international education professional practice. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the investigation's limitations and suggestions for future research.

Review of Findings, Their Importance, and Implications for Practice

Decision Model and Study Abroad Participation

Earlier research (Peterson, 2001) explored the relationships between student Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Intention to Study Abroad; however, only data from subjects who had not studied abroad were analyzed. Section One of the present project compared responses of a subset of nonparticipants (those who had indicated that they were very unlikely to study abroad) with students who had studied abroad (some of whom had participated in multiple programs).

Decision Model Hypotheses

All five hypotheses regarding the Decision to Study Abroad Model were supported. Study abroad participants had higher scores than nonparticipants did for Behavioral Beliefs, Evaluation of Outcomes, Attitude toward Study Abroad, Normative Beliefs, and Subjective Norm. While most of the means for single and multiple participants were in the predicted order—singles had higher scores than did multiples for Subjective Norm—the differences between participants' means for all five hypotheses

were not statistically significant. On the other hand, all mean differences between participants and nonparticipants were statistically significant. These findings confirm the hypotheses that there are significant differences in attitudes and subjective norms between those who choose to study abroad and those who do not. This has implications for segmentation and targeting of specific audiences as well as message selection and focus. (These issues will be addressed further in the "Implications for Practice" section.

Information Seeking Hypothesis

The hypothesis that study abroad participants engage in more Information Seeking than nonparticipants was confirmed. Further, it was demonstrated (see p. 107) that although both groups engage in passive information seeking, the truly distinguishing difference between nonparticipants and participants is the overwhelming amount of active information seeking behavior conducted by the latter group. This finding provides direction in identifying gaps between information seeking behaviors of participants and nonparticipants and suggests ways to adjust the behaviors of nonparticipants to help them bridge from passive to active information seeking.

Predictors of Intention to Study Abroad Again

The research questions in this section explored seven variables and their relationships with Intention to Study Abroad Again. In addition, a variety of subject attributes were tested as predictors of the dependent variable.

Decision Model Research Questions

Although Attitude toward Study Abroad and Subjective Norm successfully predicted Intention to Study Abroad in earlier research (Peterson, 2001), it was clear from

the present data that the same predictors and model were not applicable for Intention to Study Abroad Again. In the first model, Attitude and Subjective Norm yielded a moderate-sized regression effect with Intention to Study Abroad ($R = .547, p < .01$). Testing a similar model for Intention to Study Abroad Again, Attitude and Subjective Norm produced a minimal regression effect ($R = .179, p < .05$). Subjective Norm had a strong positive relationship with Intention ($r = .517, p < .01$; $B = .099, p < .01$); however, with Intention to Study Abroad Again there was a negative, statistically insignificant relationship ($r = -.034, p = .642$; $B = -.021$, $p > .05$). Conversely, Attitude clearly had the weaker relationship with Intention ($r = .375, p < .01$; $B = .052, p < .01$); but with Intention to Study Abroad Again it had a significant positive correlation ($r = .161, p < .05$; $B = .093, p < .05$).

This unexpected turn of events may be related to the intervention of the study abroad experience itself. The Attitude and Subjective Norm data used to test their relationship with Intention to Study Abroad Again (ISAA) were the Post ("think now") measures. Analysis of the Post/Then measures of Attitude revealed a statistically significant difference between the Post and Then scores, with the "think now" being higher and, hence, more positive. Both "motivator" and "challenge" items experienced positive changes on both the Behavioral Belief and Evaluation of Outcome predictors. Simultaneously, examination of the Post/Then measures of Subjective Norm uncovered a statistically significant decrease, with the Post score being lower than the Then. Further analysis of Subjective Norm's predictors, Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply, indicated mixed movement. Overall Post/Then Normative Belief measures changed positively, while those of Motivation to Comply decreased. Statistically significant

increases were registered for Normative Beliefs regarding parents and friends, while means for instructors and academic advisors were relatively unchanged. Individual Motivation to Comply ratings, while significantly lower, still rated parents most highly and ranked friends lowest.

Upon reflection, it would seem very likely that the increased Attitude measures, likely based upon positive study abroad experiences, would account for the higher, positive correlation with Intention to Study Abroad Again; while the lack of a relationship between Subjective Norm and Intention to Study Abroad Again could be attributed to the overall decrease in Subjective Norm, probably initiated by a precipitous drop in Motivation to Comply. Once again, the study abroad experience, which contributes to individual growth, independence and self-reliance in participants, could be a primary factor in decreased Motivation to Comply—participants have experienced study abroad personally and may no longer feel the need to do what important others may expect of them, especially in regards to an activity where they may now feel that they have the expertise. In addition, the effect of growing maturity may contribute to the situation.

Although these findings do not provide a model for Intention to Study Abroad Again, they do affirm at least one impact of the study abroad experience—increased positive attitudes about study abroad.

Satisfaction, Reasons Against, and Sequencing Choice Research Questions

Initial forays with new variables (Satisfaction, Reasons Against Studying Abroad Again, and Sequencing Choice) and Intention to Study Abroad Again were not productive. Further investigation revealed that while Satisfaction was not significantly correlated with ISAA, it was highly correlated ($r = .337, p < .01$) with Attitude. The low

correlation may also be explained by its very high mean (6.56) and the fact that in each category of Intention to Study Abroad Again 50% or more of the respondents indicated the highest Satisfaction level (7). Reasons Against Further Study Abroad had a similar problem; however, in that situation the lowest ISAA categories had large numbers of three of the "reasons": "I'm graduating," "I don't have the financial resources," and "I need on-campus credits to graduate." Finally, although Sequencing Choice data were inconclusive with the present sample, the methodology developed to test the variable should be applicable to the overall OSA data base; hence, making it possible to test the entire study abroad population or a sub-segment thereof.

Multiple Characteristics Research Question

An examination of the relationships between multiple student characteristics (first considered, first committed, number of study abroad programs taken, gender, minority status, age, academic status, perceived emphasis on international subject matter in home department, perceived economic value of study abroad, foreign language knowledge and ability, and foreign travel experience) and Intention to Study Abroad Again only served to reemphasize the importance of encouraging students to consider study abroad and commit to it early in their academic careers. Further, a perception that there is an emphasis on international subject matter in the student's home department was strongly related to Intention to Study Abroad Again. Outcomes of multiple regression emphasized the importance of an emphasis on international subject matter in the home department and beginning to study abroad early in the academic career.

Implications for Practice

An argument early in this paper cites the lack of a theoretical model and research program in the field of study abroad to explain the student decision process and a, perhaps, over-reliance on best practice models. In this section, specific findings from the current research are connected with their implications for practice and practitioners in the study abroad field. While most of the findings from this research have implications for practice, those related to the Decision to Study Abroad Model research questions, the Information Seeking research question, and the communication issues segment are of primary importance to study abroad practitioners. This section addresses these topics.

Decision Model Hypotheses

Confirmation of the five hypotheses regarding the Decision to Study Abroad Model suggest that there are indeed significant differences in attitudes and subjective norms between those who choose to study abroad and those who do not. Further, the findings contribute empirical support for the value of audience segmentation—in particular, focusing on attitude and subjective norm messages—in the selection of communication strategies for study abroad recruitment. Since the earlier test of the Decision to Study Abroad Model (Peterson, 2001) validated the contributions of both Attitude and Subjective Norm in the prediction of Intention to Study Abroad and clearly demonstrated that the normative components made the more significant and important contribution, it will be important to keep normative messages at the forefront. An excellent example of normative messages occurs in the opening paragraph of the MSU Office of Study Abroad's 2002-2003 programs catalog:

> When you decide to study abroad, you will be joining the thousands of Spartans who have lived and learned in another culture and experienced first-hand, places most others only dream about! Every year, more MSU students are making study abroad a regular part of their college education – in fact, it's no longer a question of IF you'll go, but WHEN! (p. 1)

The research questions that follow offer further explication.

Decision Model Research Questions

The first five research questions explored specific item differences with five of the decision model factors: Behavioral Beliefs, Evaluation of Outcomes, Attitudes, Normative Beliefs, and Motivation to Comply.

In general, Attitude toward Study Abroad and its two predictor variables, Behavioral Beliefs and Evaluation of Outcomes, yielded distinct differences in opinion between the participant and nonparticipant groups. While it is important to note significant response differences between these groups, the absolute level of agreement (or in this case, mean for each group) is also critical. For the most part, many of the items have fairly high scores, even from non-participants. Hence, one could develop a heuristic for the 7-point scale items, e.g., a mean lower than 5.5 for motivator items or or higher than the overall mean for challenge items, to identify items that require a communication strategy focus.

Differences between groups on Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply, the predictors of Subjective Norm, both confirmed the differences between the subject groups and suggested levers from which to influence change. As indicated in earlier research

(Peterson, 2001), Subjective Norm is the stronger contributor in predicting Intention to Study Abroad. Hence, a focus on its predictors is strongly indicated.

Behavioral Beliefs. Findings would suggest developing messages that reinforce widely shared positive/motivator beliefs, e.g., study abroad "can improve my foreign language skills," "enables you to meet new people," "enhances your ability to deal with different people," "opens your eyes to the world," and "can help you deeply experience a different culture." Simultaneously, other messages should focus on increasing the strength of beliefs where participants and nonparticipants significantly diverge, e.g., study abroad "makes you more marketable to future employers," "helps you learn about yourself," "makes you more independent," "is fun," and "makes learning come alive." All three challenge beliefs—study abroad "can be difficult to fit into your academic plans," "can delay your graduation," and "is expensive"—will need special attention; especially the last one, which is shared by all three groups. One example of "spin" for the expense issue would be to focus on the study abroad experience being "worth the cost." While participants believe it is expensive, they also believe it is worth the cost (3.72 mean on a 4-point scale). Adopting this tactic with nonparticipants may help spin perceptions about expense in the desired direction. If a reduced group of items were to be addressed, the challenge beliefs plus those with the largest mean differences between participants and nonparticipants—"learn about yourself" and "is fun"—would seem to be logical choices.

Evaluation of Outcomes. Initially, since all items had statistically significant mean differences between participants and nonparticipants, there's no common ground from which to work. However, focusing on the largest mean differences between the groups would mean working to increase the perceived benefits of "leaving my comfort zone,"

"deeply experiencing a different culture," and "rearranging my academic plans." An example of a messages to address the last item would be encouraging students to think about study abroad earlier in their academic careers, thus giving them more flexibility to work it into their schedule or major, or providing examples of ways that academic programs can be rearranged to incorporate a study abroad experience without losing progress in the major. Given their nature, the other challenge items—having graduation delayed and incurring additional educational expenses—should also be addressed.

Attitude. When Normative Belief and Evaluation of Outcome are multiplied together to form Attitude, it becomes very evident that the graduation delay issue is important—all three groups ranked this item the lowest of the 15. Further, as revealed by the factor and multiple regression analyses, overall Attitude toward Study Abroad can be divided into two factors, Motivators and Challenges. Although participants and nonparticipants see eye to eye on the Challenge attitudes, there are strong differences between the two groups regarding Motivator attitudes. Beyond this particular point, though, it is probably more effective in targeting messages to focus on the individual Behavioral Belief and Evaluation of Outcomes measures.

Normative Beliefs. The biggest differences in Normative Beliefs between participants and nonparticipants are regarding perceptions that parents and friends support study abroad. Nonparticipants, with respective means of 2.83 and 2.95, do not think that their parents and friends believe that they should study abroad, as compared to single participants (5.95 and 6.04, respectively) and multiple participants (6.15 and 6.07, respectively). Large differences between the groups also exist for the influence of instructors and academic advisors, but not to the same degree. One way to focus on

improving the scores for nonparticipants would be to share study abroad information with parents to educate them about the experience and perhaps gain their support. Another approach would be to promote study abroad more strongly on campus with faculty and academic advisors and hence use their influence upon students as a lever toward participation.

Motivation to Comply. There seems to be little room to maneuver beliefs in this area. Nonparticipants are more motivated to comply with parents and friends than multiple participants, but less motivated to comply with parents and friends than one-time participants. Of the three groups, nonparticipants also have lowest motivation to comply with instructors and academic advisors. Unless one could identify incentives to increase compliance motivation, e.g., integrating study abroad in major requirement, there is no other obvious way to influence this predictor.

Information Seeking Research Question

Information Seeking behaviors provided more evidence of the difference between study abroad participants and nonparticipants and, further, that they engage in dissimilar approaches for gathering information about study abroad. It was not possible to break Information Seeking into active and passive components for the entire subject population; however, when factor analysis was conducted only with nonparticipants, the division between Information Seeking behaviors was quickly evident. Table B-15 provides a crosstabulation of percentages of active and passive information seeking behaviors by comparison group. The data demonstrate that nonparticipants predominantly engaged in passive information seeking, with a high of 61% "considering study abroad." However, the percentage of nonparticipants actively seeking information ranged as low as 6% for

"attending a SA fair." On the other hand, as many as 97% of study abroad participants conducted some form of passive information seeking and even the smallest percentage of active information seeking was just over 35%.

These findings would suggest that active information seeking behaviors are indicative of persons who intend to study abroad. By encouraging nonparticipants to engage in the active behaviors, i.e., attending information meetings or the study abroad fair or referring them to an attractive and user-friendly Web site, it will be more likely that they will decide to engage in study abroad. Also, providing a bridge from passive to active information seeking, e.g., listing "next steps" in requested study abroad literature, could help facilitate the process.

Communication Issues and Study Abroad Participation

Participation in study abroad was the focus of this section. The first eight research questions established baseline information and investigated communication-related variables that could be used to guide strategy and messages. The final one explored a combination of subject attributes and perceptions to find relationships between them and study abroad participation.

Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad. In rank-ordering the top five of the 15 belief statements about study abroad, participants unanimously agreed that "study abroad would open my eyes to the world" was the most important reason for their decision to study abroad. There was also general agreement among participants on the other four most important reasons: "study abroad would be fun," "study abroad would help me learn about myself," "study abroad would let me deeply experience a different culture," and "study abroad would provide me with a new perspective on life." For the

most part, single and multiple participants were like-minded. This information reinforces earlier suggestions as to strategies for focusing messages on specific behavioral beliefs about study abroad, with the intention of either reinforcing or strengthening the beliefs (see pp. 89-91).

Most Influential Messengers. Study abroad participants, regardless of the number of programs in which they engaged, saw program faculty leaders as the most influential messengers from whom they received study abroad information. This finding argues for using their expertise even more, whether in presenting information sessions, hosting a booth at the study abroad fair, speaking to classes about their programs, etc. Former participants, the next highest rated group, should also be enlisted to promote study abroad. This currently occurs through the use of "peer advisors," former participants who work in the Office of Study Abroad through staffing the resource room, being available to answer student questions about study abroad, and assisting with information meetings, study abroad fairs, class and residence hall presentations, and the summer academic orientation program for new students. Office of Study Abroad staff should be routinely observed to make sure that they are friendly and helpful to potential participants who visit or call the office and that they provide accurate information in a timely manner. Parents, who were ranked fourth, could be better prepared as messengers if they receive more study abroad information. Given their importance in establishing normative beliefs about study abroad, parents should receive more attention as both a target audience and potential messengers for study abroad. Finally, the fact that academic advisors had the lowest mean of on-campus groups, should signal the importance of better preparing them to promote study abroad to their advisees. The Office of Study Abroad is currently

addressing some of those issues; however, a more concerted effort certainly would seem warranted.

Most Important Information Needed. This question solicited open-ended responses to the query, "Based on your study abroad experience, what two pieces of information would you suggest that other students need to guide their decision to study abroad?" As intended, it succeeded in eliciting comments that expanded beyond the 15 belief statements, both reinforcing them and opening a broad vista of other concerns that should be addressed by study abroad professionals. Most frequently identified issues included finances, benefits and rewards of study abroad, types of information needed, fitting study abroad into the academic plan and graduating on time, using past participants as a source of information, advice on how to make the decision to participate, and abilities needed to successfully participate in study abroad.

These findings provide a wealth of information that can be applied to a variety of issues regarding communication strategies:

First, the volume of responses regarding financial issues, fitting study abroad into academic plans and graduating on time reinforces suggestions, based on the Behavioral Beliefs and Evaluation of Outcomes section, that these "challenge" items need special attention in developing messages that strengthen beliefs and increase evaluation of outcomes.

Second and relatedly, the open-ended responses reemphasize the importance of students receiving enhanced messages/information regarding additional benefits and rewards of studying abroad. Among the comments received were "It's a chance in a lifetime;" "Study abroad will change your entire education;" "It's a once in a lifetime

experience that you cannot get any other way;" "The importance of international experience to future employers;" "Learn more about yourself;" and "Know that study abroad is very affordable and fun. A great way to meet new people and experience amazing cultures." Again, this outcome is closely related to other findings that suggest reinforcing shared motivator beliefs and strengthening others, e.g., study abroad is fun, makes learning come alive, helps you learn about yourself, and makes you more marketable to future employers.

Third, in identifying types of information that potential participants may need, these responses in essence provide a checklist of information that should be disseminated. Some topics were expected—different programs available, pamphlets, program leaders, etc. However, some suggestions, such as providing more specifics earlier and information regarding the comparative quality of classes offered, address less typical issues that perhaps require more investigation.

Fourth, the value of one category of influential messengers, past participants, was reinforced by the frequency of suggestions that they should be used as a source of information.

Finally, more than 14% of the responses consisted of advice regarding how to make the decision to participate and on the abilities needed to successfully participate. These suggestions would appear to be fertile sources for ideas on communication messages.

Overall, single and multiple participants were pretty much in agreement as to the most important information needed.

First Considered/First Committed. An important communication timing strategy was answered by responses to the two questions regarding when participants first considered and first committed to studying abroad. The findings, that multiple study abroad program participants both consider and commit to study abroad earlier than one-time participants, reinforces the importance of planning study abroad messages early in students' academic careers and, potentially, beginning to target pre-college students. The sooner that students consider study abroad to be a viable goal, the better equipped they can become to make it a reality, e.g., through integrating study abroad into course planning, setting aside credits for foreign language study if needed, arranging timing of coursework to facilitate earning extra money to put toward study abroad costs, etc. The normative message that study abroad is an integral part of one's undergraduate education begins to establish expectations for both current and incoming students.

Multiple Characteristics Research Question. This final research question, which examined the relationship between study abroad participation and eight subject attributes (gender, minority status, age, academic status, perceived emphasis on international subject matter in home department, perceived economic value of study abroad, foreign language knowledge and ability, and foreign travel experience), provided a profile of those students most likely to have participated in study abroad: white, females who are upperclassmen, have some foreign travel experience, and believe that study abroad is worth the cost. The challenge that remains is how to reach students who do not fit the preceding profile. What we have learned thus far would suggest that a number of communication strategies—e.g., emphasizing normative messages, reaching students early in their careers, using faculty program leaders and past student participants,

encouraging students to integrate study abroad into their academic plans, working to elevate motivator attitudes, and addressing challenge attitudes—are available to study abroad practitioners as excellent starting points.

Theory and Study Abroad

As the preceding sections demonstrate, Theory of Reasoned Action (as adapted to the Decision to Study Abroad Model) provides an excellent theoretical framework for understanding the primary factors influencing student decisions to study abroad. While earlier research confirmed the value of the model for predicting Intention to Study Abroad, the current research focused on comparing Attitudes, Subjective Norm, and other characteristics of study abroad participants and nonparticipants. Although much work remains to be done and the avenues for future research are many, it would seem that this theoretical approach has much to offer the field of study abroad.

Limitations

Overall, there are five major issues that limit the findings of this research: generalizability, history, subjects, some measurement concerns, and a single data collection research design.

Data were collected at only one university. Although the research site has one of the largest on-campus student bodies in the nation and is very diverse, it is still not of a sufficient breadth and depth to truly represent the general population of U.S. college students. While it is conceivable that the data may be generalizable to other land grant universities and possibly other Carnegie-designated research institutions, it is highly unlikely that they would be predictive of students at baccalaureate institutions, especially those that are private, urban, religious-affiliated or with a small student body population.

Nevertheless, it is valid for application to Michigan State University's study abroad program.

Regarding the effects of history, the overall study abroad research program was initiated two years after the start of the MSU president's global vision emphasis. The present (second) data set was collected midway into the promotion. Given the on-going nature of study abroad recruitment, it is not possible to entirely account for the effects of four years' worth of promotional materials and messages that students may have encountered.

Unfortunately, there was no way to guarantee that those subjects responding to the survey were truly representative of all study abroad participants. Response rates were 18.3% for multiple participants and 11.4% for one-time participants, with an overall response rate of 12% among all study abroad participants. Given the high scores for many responses, it is possible that there is an overrepresentation of those subjects who were happy with their experience. Despite the researcher's efforts to recruit more male respondents, the large number of female subjects may have skewed some results. Similarly, a broader sampling of younger/underclassmen subjects may have revealed more information about Intention to Study Abroad Again.

There are five areas of concern regarding measurement. First, although the survey (including cover sheet) was only seven pages long, three of the measurement sections—behavioral beliefs, evaluation of outcomes, and importance of outcomes—were very similar in appearance. Further, post/then measures were requested, which increased both the amount of data collected (if not necessarily the length of the survey). Some subjects, who did not read carefully, assumed that those measurement sections were all the same

and either stopped answering the series or drew lines through response numbers. Such cases were treated as missing values. Unfortunately, in the desire to replicate the earlier study, all three of the aforementioned sections were retained, even though the importance measures were never used. Third, one could argue that the interpretation is limited by measures taken after the study abroad experience, e.g., the post/then series. While it is possible that some host hoc analysis rationalization may play a role in the responses, nevertheless, that does not mitigate the fact that these questions do predict how students will feel after the study abroad experience. Further, the post/then approach was specifically selected because it allows subjects to readjust their measures of a given situation after having experienced an intervention. Fourth, in querying subjects about most influential messengers, there is a possibility that the wording of the question—"Based on your study abroad experience, who were the most influential messengers from whom you received study abroad information?"—may have biased responses. Whereas the purpose of the question was to tease out most effective messengers to use in communication planning, it is possible that the wording of the question may have confused subjects, who perhaps evaluated the importance of the information provided rather than the messenger. Another confounding issue may be that individual characteristics of messengers might contribute to the evaluation of "influential" in an unpredictable manner. Finally, there is no direct measure of attitude. Collecting this measure would have provided more data with which to test the model and would have allowed a comparison of a single observed measure of attitude with its composite measure.

Multiple data collections would have allowed examination of the relationship between intention to study abroad and actual participation in study abroad. At the time of the first data collection, it was not anticipated that the study timeline would permit for multiple data collection; otherwise, subjects would have received identifiers to allow longitudinal study. Hence, comparisons between 1998 survey respondents and those of 2000 could not use a repeated measures design. This was remedied in the 2000 survey. Should another follow up survey be conducted, it will be possible to contact former survey participants.

Future Research

At least six suggestions come to mind as worthwhile approaches for future research related to the Decision Model for Study Abroad and communication strategies to promote international education.

First, in the general area of communication campaigns and strategy, a prototype campaign could be developed to focus on specific messages suggested by the current research. The campaign could be pretested with potential study abroad students and a determination made as to the effectiveness of messages, messengers, timing, channels, and other factors.

Given the unexpected findings regarding Intention to Study Abroad Again (ISAA), it is important to develop and test an ISAA model. Not only is this important in regards to determining how and why study abroad participants decide to engage in additional international educational experiences, but it may become a critical aid in the overall continued growth of study abroad participation due to the fact that more and more students are coming to university with foreign travel experience. Understanding the

situation better should help study abroad professionals choose the best manners in which to deal with it. Also, it will be important to develop data collection strategies that more effectively solicit participation by men and minority students.

Another area to explore in future research would be to test whether the Affect Heuristic (e.g., Slovic, Finucane, Peters & MacGregor, 2002) provides a viable alternative theoretical framework to explain study abroad decision choices. This line of study argues that rational decision making may often be replaced by choices based upon positive or negative feelings or impressions regarding an issue. Support for an investigation into applying this theoretical model to the study abroad student decision model comes from study abroad participant responses regarding "most important information needed for the decision to study abroad." Two categories of open-ended responses encompassed affective sentiments such as "It's the best time to do it" and "Just do it."

It is probably time to reexamine the survey instrument. The original instrument was developed some five years ago and it is likely that over that time period salient beliefs about study abroad have changed. Hence, belief statements should be retested, important referents reexamined, and additional experiential influences or individual attributes explored. The income and international travel experience of parents have not been addressed thus far. It is likely that these and other related questions should be explored in future surveys.

Taking a longitudinal look at the impact of study abroad could help provide a better understanding of the outcomes of participation in study abroad. Such information would then be used in the construction of future communication campaigns. For example,

participants in the 2000 survey could be contacted to assess impact of study abroad upon career, personal and intellectual growth, and intercultural skills. Further, researchers could follow up on satisfaction measures and whether students had engaged in additional study abroad programs.

Finally, in search of generalizability, future research should collect a national sample of subjects from a wide range of higher education institutions, guided by Carnegie Foundation classifications, to explore whether the Study Abroad Decision Model works across higher education.

Conclusion

As indicated in earlier sections of this work, study abroad professionals have no models of the decision process, little research, and a lot of anecdotal evidence and gut instinct upon which to base their study abroad recruitment programs. While the current research is not necessarily generalizable to all institutions, it does establish an appropriate theoretical model to guide data collection. Further, it advances the development of effective communication strategies for study abroad recruitment by determining how attitudes and norms impact the decision process. Comparing subject attributes and analyzing the relative importance of various study abroad issues, messengers, and messages further enhances this knowledge. For the communication field, this research demonstrates how a theoretical model and multiple perspectives, such as theory of reasoned action, diffusion of innovation, and information seeking, can inform communication strategies.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

A Survey About Study Abroad at MSU

This survey is intended to learn about how students decide to study abroad.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are only interested in your personal opinions and perceptions about study abroad through Michigan State University.

Completing this questionnaire should take about 15 minutes. All results will be treated with strict confidence and your identity and individual responses will remain anonymous in any report of research findings. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. You may refuse to answer certain questions or may discontinue your participation at any time, if you so desire.

If you have questions about this questionnaire or would like to receive a copy of the final results, please contact Debra Peterson, Office of Study Abroad, 432-4340. Should you have questions about participants' rights as human subjects of research, please contact Dr. David E. Wright, 355-2180, chairperson of the MSU University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS).

Please sign your name and enter the date below. You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning this questionnaire.

Your voluntary participation in this project is sincerely appreciated.

Name Date

Please circle the appropriate response.

1. Are you a resident of the United States? YES NO

2. Which areas of the United States have you visited? ***(Please circle all that apply.)***

NORTHEAST SOUTH MIDWEST MOUNTAIN WEST COAST

3. How many countries outside of the United States have you visited? _____

If you have traveled abroad, through what kinds of arrangements? ***(Please circle all that apply.)***

COLLEGE STUDY ABROAD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT EXCHANGE

GROUP TRAVEL FAMILY TRAVEL PARENT'S JOB

OTHER (please specify) _____

4. Other than English, what languages do you speak, read, or write? ***(Please circle all that apply.)***

FRENCH GERMAN HEBREW ITALIAN SPANISH

NONE OTHER (please specify) _____

5. In general, how would you rate your ability to communicate (speak, read, or write) in the foreign language that you know best?

POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT DOES NOT APPLY

6. In general, how many days a week do you get news or information from: ***(Circle number.)***

a.	the student newspaper, *The State News*?	0	1	2	3	4	5	
b.	student radio, WDBM-Impact 89 FM?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.	University Housing, Cable Channel 12?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.	MSU public radio, WKAR-FM & AM?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.	MSU public television, WKAR?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Study abroad means taking course work for academic credit in a location outside of the United States.

7. Have you ever studied abroad through Michigan State University? YES NO

8. How many MSU study abroad programs have you completed? _____

9. **Please write the name and location, and circle the length of the MSU study abroad program(s) in which you participated. Also, circle your academic status at the time of your trip. (If you participated in more than two programs, please list others on back of page.)**

Program 1
a. program name: _____
b. location: _____
c. length: YEAR SEM SUM BREAK
d. status: FR SO JR SR

Program 2
e. program name: _____
f. location: _____
g. length: YEAR SEM SUM BREAK
h. status: FR SO JR SR

10. Before your initial participation in a study abroad program, when did you first consider study abroad?
Pre-MSU FR fall FR spring SO fall SO spring JR fall JR spring SR fall SR spring

11. When did you finally commit to your first study abroad program (hand in your application)?
FR fall FR spring SO fall SO spring JR fall JR spring SR fall SR spring

12. Which of the following statements applied to you **before** you first studied abroad? **(Please check [✔] all that apply.)**
_____ I considered studying abroad.
_____ I talked with other people about study abroad.
_____ I checked out the web site for Office of Study Abroad.
_____ I attended an MSU study abroad fair.
_____ I visited the Office of Study Abroad.
_____ I requested study abroad program information.
_____ I attended a study abroad information meeting.
_____ I talked with study abroad program faculty, an academic adviser or MSU Office of Study Abroad staff.

13. Do you intend to study abroad again in the future while you are a student at MSU? ***Circle number . . .*** Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Likely

14. Have you applied to participate in future study abroad programs while at MSU? YES NO

15. If you have applied to a future study abroad program, please fill in the following information:
a. program name: _____
b. location: _____
c. length: YEAR SEM SUM BREAK
d. status: FR SO JR SR

16. As you decide whether to study abroad in the future, which of the following will you engage in? **(Please check [✔] all that apply.)**

__ I'll consider studying abroad.
__ I'll talk with other people about study abroad.
__ I'll check the Office of Study Abroad web site.
__ I'll attend an MSU study abroad fair.
__ I'll visit the Office of Study Abroad.
__ I'll request study abroad program information.
__ I'll attend a study abroad information meeting.
__ I'll talk with study abroad program faculty, an academic adviser or MSU Office of Study Abroad staff.
__ Other (please specify):

17. Are there any reasons that you **might not** study abroad again while you are a student at MSU? **(Please check [✔] all that apply.)**

__ I'm graduating.
__ I need on-campus credits to graduate.
__ I don't want to leave family and/or important others again.
__ I don't qualify for further study abroad scholarship funding.
__ I don't have the financial resources.
__ I don't have the support of family and/or important others.
__ I'm just not interested in doing it again.
__ Other (please specify):

18. Which one of the following sources is your main source of information concerning MSU study abroad?

THE STATE NEWS WDBM UNIVERSITY HOUSING TV POSTERS NONE OF THESE

This section presents a list of statements about study abroad. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one. Responses are on a 7-point scale, with "disagree" being a 1 and "agree" being a 7. In Column One, indicate what you think now. In Column Two, indicate what you thought before studying abroad.

Study abroad . . .	THINK NOW Disagree Agree	THOUGHT BEFORE Disagree Agree
19. makes you more marketable to future employers.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. helps you learn about yourself.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. enables you to meet new people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. enhances your ability to deal with different people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. opens your eyes to the world.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. provides a new perspective on life.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. makes you more independent.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. can delay your graduation.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. lets you deeply experience a different culture.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. is fun.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. is a chance to leave your comfort zone.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. can be difficult to fit into your academic plans.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
31. is expensive.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
32. makes learning come alive.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
33. can improve my foreign language skills.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please indicate how you would evaluate the following possible outcomes of study abroad. Responses are on a 7-point scale, with "undesirable" being a 1 and "desirable" being a 7. In Column One, indicate what you think now. In Column Two, indicate what you thought before studying abroad.

	THINK NOW Undesirable Desirable	THOUGHT BEFORE Undesirable Desirable
34. My being more marketable to future employers is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
35. Learning about myself is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
36. Enabling me to meet new people is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
37. Enhancing my ability to deal with different people is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
38. Opening my eyes to the world is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
39. My gaining a new perspective on life is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
40. My becoming more independent is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
41. Having my graduation delayed is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
42. My deeply experiencing a different culture is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
43. My having fun is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
44. Leaving my comfort zone is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
45. Rearranging my academic plans is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
46. My incurring additional educational expenses is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
47. My taking courses that make learning come alive is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
48. Improving my foreign language skills is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Now, please indicate <u>how important</u> each of these possible outcomes of study abroad is to you personally. Responses are on a 7-point scale, with "unimportant" being a 1 and "important" being a 7. In Column One, indicate what you <u>think now</u>. In Column Two, indicate what you <u>thought before studying abroad</u>.

	THINK NOW Unimportant Important	THOUGHT BEFORE Unimportant Important
49. My being more marketable to future employers is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
50. Learning about myself is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
51. Enabling me to meet new people is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
52. Enhancing my ability to deal with different people is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
53. Opening my eyes to the world is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
54. My gaining a new perspective on life is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
55. My becoming more independent is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
56. Having my graduation delayed is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
57. My deeply experiencing a different culture is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
58. My having fun is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
59. Leaving my comfort zone is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
60. Rearranging my academic plans is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
61. My incurring additional educational expenses is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
62. My taking courses that make learning come alive is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
63. Improving my foreign language skills is	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

This section lists statements about persons and groups that may influence your decision to study abroad. Please indicate what <u>you</u> believe they think you should do ("disagree" being a 1 and "agree" being a 7). In Column One, indicate what you <u>think now</u>. In Column Two, indicate what you <u>thought before studying abroad</u>.

	THINK NOW Disagree Agree	THOUGHT BEFORE Disagree Agree
64. In general, most people who are important to me believe that I should study abroad.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
65. My parents think I should study abroad.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
66. My friends think I should study abroad.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
67. My MSU instructors think I should study abroad.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
68. My academic adviser thinks I should study abroad.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please indicate <u>how important</u> each of the following persons and groups is to you in making the decision to study abroad ("not important" being a 1 and "very important" being a 7). In Column One, indicate what you <u>think now</u>. In Column Two, indicate what you <u>thought before studying abroad</u>.

	THINK NOW Not Important Very Important	THOUGHT BEFORE Not Important Very Important
69. My parents:	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
70. My friends:	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
71. My MSU instructors:	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
72. My academic adviser:	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In general, when it comes to a decision like study abroad, how much do you want to . . .

	THINK NOW Not At All Very Much	THOUGHT BEFORE Not At All Very Much
73. do what **your parents** think you should do?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
74. do what **your friends** think you should do?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
75. do what **your MSU instructors** think you should do?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
76. do what **your academic advisor** thinks you should do?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

77. To what extent do you believe that study abroad is worth the cost?

VERY LITTLE LITTLE MUCH VERY MUCH

78. What is your major or intended major? _____

79. What college are you in? _____

80. In the courses that you've taken in your department, how much emphasis is there on international subject matter?

VERY LITTLE LITTLE MUCH VERY MUCH

81. As of last semester, what is your approximate college grade point average (GPA)? _____

82. What is your academic status? FRESHMAN SOPHOMORE JUNIOR SENIOR

83. What is your racial or ethnic background?

WHITE BLACK or AFRICAN AMERICAN ASIAN-AMERICAN

NATIVE AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HISPANIC

84. What is your gender? MALE FEMALE

85. What is your age? _____

86. As you look back on your study abroad experience, what were the five **most important reasons for your decision to participate**? From the 16 choices listed below, please rank the **five** most appropriate statements, using 1 for the most important, 2 for the next most important, and so forth through 5. Leave the rest blank.

Before I went on study abroad, I believed that I should study abroad because . . .

___ a. study abroad would make me more marketable to future employers.
___ b. study abroad would help me learn about myself.
___ c. study abroad would enable me to meet new people.

___ d. study abroad would enhance my ability to deal with different people.
___ e. study abroad would open my eyes to the world.
___ f. study abroad would provide me with a new perspective on life.

___ g. study abroad would make me more independent.
___ h. study abroad would not interfere with my graduating on time.
___ i. study abroad would let me deeply experience a different culture.

___ j. study abroad would be fun.
___ k. study abroad would be a chance to leave my comfort zone.
___ l. study abroad would fit easily into my academic plans.

___ m. study abroad would be affordable.
___ n. study abroad would make learning come alive.
___ o. study abroad would improve my foreign language skills.
___ p. Other (please specify): _____

87. Based on your study abroad experience, what two pieces of information would you suggest that other students need to guide their decision to study abroad?

1. _____

2. _____

88. Based on your study abroad experience, who were the most influential messengers from whom you received study abroad information?

	Not very influential						**Very influential**
a. Former participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Program faculty leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Academic advisors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. University faculty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Parents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. High school teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g. Office of Study Abroad staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

89. Overall, how satisfied are you with your study abroad experience? Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very satisfied

Why? _____

_____

That's all the questions we have. Thanks for completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX B

Tables

Table B-1

Comparison of Survey Subjects and Study Abroad Population College Affiliations

College	Survey Subjects Frequency	Survey Subjects Percent	Study Abroad Population* Percent	Difference
Agriculture & Natural Resources	23	9.6%	12.8%	- 3.2
Arts & Letters	30	12.6%	13.7%	- 1.1
Broad College of Business	41	17.2%	11.4%	+ 5.8
Communication Arts & Sciences	36	15.1%	10.1%	+ 5.0
Education	16	6.7%	3.0%	+ 3.7
Engineering	9	3.8%	6.2%	- 2.4
Human Ecology	12	5.0%	4.4%	+ .6
James Madison College	15	6.3%	8.0%	+ 1.7
Natural Science	37	15.5%	10.7%	+ 4.8
Nursing	2	.8%	.9%	- .1
Social Science	18	7.5%	13.9%	- 6.4
Others	0	0.0%	4.8%	- 4.8
Totals	239	100.0%	100.0%	

*Fall Semester 1997 – Winter Break, 1999-2000

Table B-2

Comparison of Survey Subjects and Study Abroad Population Ethnic/Racial Background

Ethnicity/Race	Survey Subjects Frequency	Survey Subjects Percent	Study Abroad Population* Percent	Difference
White	215	90.0%	86.2%	+ 3.8
Black	9	3.8%	5.8%	- 2.0
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	6	2.5%	3.8%	- 1.3
Native American	1	.4%	.5%	- .1
Hispanic	5	2.1%	2.4%	- .3
Other/ Not Reported	3	1.2%	1.3%	- .1
Totals	239	100.0%	100.0%	

*Fall Semester 1997 – Winter Break, 1999-2000

Table B-3

Comparison of Survey Subjects and Study Abroad Population Academic Status during Sojourn

Academic Status	Survey Subjects Time 1 Freq.	Time 1 Percent	Time 2 Freq.	Time 2 Percent	Planned Freq.	Planned Percent	Average Percent	Study Abroad Population*
Freshman	11	4.6%	2	6.0%	0	0.0%	4.3%	1.5%
Sophomore	68	28.5%	5	15.2%	0	0.0%	24.3%	12.2%
Junior	98	41.0%	13	39.4%	8	25.0%	39.7%	38.5%
Senior	58	24.3%	13	39.4%	24	75.0%	31.7%	47.9%
NA/Missing	4	1.7%	206		207			0.0%
Totals	239	100.0%	239	100.0%	239	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Fall Semester 1997 – Winter Break, 1999-2000

Table B-4

Mean Comparisons for Hypotheses 1-6 and Research Question 5

Variable		Sojourn category: Multiple	Single	None	Total	r^2
Behavioral Beliefs	Mean	6.12	5.98	5.63	5.81	.07
	N	65	194	307	566	
	SD	0.50	0.52	0.82	0.72	
Evaluation of		5.91	5.84	4.94	5.36	.23
Outcomes		60	195	304	559	
		0.49	0.51	0.90	0.87	
Attitude toward		38.01	36.93	28.71	32.50	.23
Study Abroad		58	184	300	542	
		4.85	4.99	8.49	8.29	
Normative Beliefs		6.18	5.94	3.41	4.61	.43
		65	200	306	571	
		0.83	1.07	1.49	1.83	
Motivation to Comply		3.25	3.7	3.48	3.53	.00
		64	205	310	579	
		1.33	1.32	1.25	1.29	
Subjective Norm		20.47	22.58	12.34	16.84	.18
		64	199	305	568	
		8.96	9.32	7.60	9.71	
Information Seeking		5.31	5.33	1.79	3.32	.42
		68	171	311	550	
		1.78	1.78	1.66	2.45	

Table B-5

T-tests for Hypotheses 1-6 and Research Question 5

Variable	Sojourn Category	*t*	*df*	Sig. (2-tail)	Mean diff.
Behavioral Beliefs	Single/Multiple	-1.96	257	.05	-0.14
	None/Single	-5.79	499	.00	-0.35
	None/Multiple	-6.32	148	.00	-0.49
Evaluation of Outcomes	Single/Multiple	-1.00	253	.32	-0.07
	None/Single	-14.17	491	.00	-0.89
	None/Multiple	-11.93	151	.00	-0.97
Attitude toward Study Abroad	Single/Multiple	-1.45	240	.15	-1.08
	None/Single	-13.41	481	.00	-8.22
	None/Multiple	-11.58	136	.00	-9.30
Normative Beliefs	Single/Multiple	-1.94	138	.05	-0.25
	None/Single	-22.24	500	.00	-2.53
	None/Multiple	-20.79	166	.00	-2.78
Motivation to Comply	Single/Multiple	2.37	267	.02	0.45
	None/Single	-1.91	513	.06	-0.22
	None/Multiple	1.31	372	.19	0.23
Subjective Norm	Single/Multiple	1.59	261	.11	2.11
	None/Single	-12.94	363	.00	-10.24
	None/Multiple	-6.76	83	.00	-8.13
Information Seeking	Single/Multiple	0.07	237	.94	0.02
	None/Single	-21.42	330	.00	-3.54
	None/Multiple	-15.67	377	.00	-3.52

Table B-6

Mean Comparisons for Nonparticipant and Participant Information-Seeking Behaviors

Behavior	Group	*N*	Mean	Mean Diff.	*t*	Sig. (2-tail)
I considered studying abroad.	Nonparticipant	239	0.97	0.35	11.80	.000
	Participant	313	0.61			
I talked with other people about study abroad.	Nonparticipant	239	0.81	0.26	6.92	.000
	Participant	313	0.55			
I checked out the web site for Office of Study Abroad.	Nonparticipant	239	0.42	0.33	9.26	.000
	Participant	311	0.09			
I attended an MSU study abroad fair.	Nonparticipant	239	0.50	0.44	12.57	.000
	Participant	311	0.06			
I visited the Office of Study Abroad.	Nonparticipant	239	0.65	0.57	16.43	.000
	Participant	311	0.08			
I requested study abroad program information.	Nonparticipant	239	0.70	0.50	13.38	.000
	Participant	311	0.20			
I attended a study abroad information meeting.	Nonparticipant	239	0.60	0.50	13.97	.000
	Participant	311	0.10			
I talked with study abroad program faculty, an academic advisor or MSU OSA staff.	Nonparticipant	239	0.67	0.57	16.47	.000
	Participant	311	0.10			

Table B-7

Chronological Program Choice by Length of Sojourn

Program Length	First	%	Second	%	Third	%
Break	18	7.53	5	7.35	2	28.57
Summer	151	63.18	39	57.35	1	14.29
Semester	66	27.62	21	30.88	3	42.86
Year	4	1.67	3	4.41	1	14.29
Total	239	100.00	68	100.00	7	100.00
Mean	2.23		2.32			2.43

Table B-8

Direction of Chronological Sequencing Choice by Sojourners

	Direction	T2-T1	T3-T2	F-T1	Totals	%
	-3		1		1	1.33
	-2	1	1		2	2.67
	-1	6		8	14	18.67
	0	18	3	13	34	45.33
	1	8	1	11	20	26.67
	2		1	2	3	4.00
	3			1	1	1.33
	Total	33	7	35	75	100.00
Missing	System	206	232	204		
Total		239	239	239		

Table B-9

Mean Rankings of Most Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad

Rank	Reason	Mean
1	Study abroad would open my eyes to the world	2.05
2	Study abroad would be fun	1.77
3	Study abroad would help me learn about myself	1.67
4	Study abroad would let me deeply experience a different culture	1.65
5	Study abroad would provide me with a new perspective on life	1.46
6	Study abroad would make me more marketable to future employers	1.18
7	Study abroad would enable me to meet new people	1.11
8	Study abroad would make me more independent	1.08
9	Study abroad would improve my foreign language skills	0.91
10	Study abroad would make learning come alive	0.67
11	Study abroad would enhance my ability to deal with different people	0.49
12	Study abroad would be a chance to leave my comfort zone	0.37
13	Study abroad would fit easily into my academic plans	0.34
14	Other	0.28
15	Study abroad would not interfere with my graduating on time	0.23
16	Study abroad would be affordable	0.14

$N = 239$

Table B-10

Comparison of Group Mean Rankings of Most Important Reasons for Decision to Study Abroad

Reason	Means Participant Group Single	Multiple
Study abroad would open my eyes to the world	2.08	1.97
Study abroad would help me learn about myself	1.83	1.28
Study abroad would be fun	1.74	1.82
Study abroad would let me deeply experience a different culture	1.69	1.56
Study abroad would provide me with a new perspective on life	1.39	1.65
Study abroad would make me more marketable to future employers	1.17	1.19
Study abroad would enable me to meet new people	1.17	0.96
Study abroad would make me more independent	1.11	1.00
Study abroad would improve my foreign language skills	0.82	1.13
Study abroad would make learning come alive	0.59	0.88
Study abroad would enhance my ability to deal with different people	0.51	0.41
Study abroad would be a chance to leave my comfort zone	0.40	0.28
Study abroad would fit easily into my academic plans	0.33	0.38
Study abroad would not interfere with my graduating on time	0.26	0.16
Other	0.23	0.38
Study abroad would be affordable	0.15	0.10

Single Participants $N = 171$
Multiple Participants $N = 68$

Table B-11

Correlations of Subject Characteristics with Intention to Study Abroad Again

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Intention to SA again	1.00											
2. Language rating	.08	1.00										
3. Countries visited	-.14*	.11	1.00									
4. Number of programs	-.09	.09	.34**	1.00								
5. First consider study abroad	-.18**	-.11	-.19**	-.17*	1.00							
6. Commit to study abroad	-.28**	-.10	-.01	-.20**	.54**	1.00						
7. Worth cost	-.02	-.12	.06	.01	-.02	.00	1.00					
8. International emphasis	.18**	.19**	-.03	.07	-.15*	-.17*	-.05	1.00				
9. Academic status	-.37**	-.01	.21**	.12	.29**	.51**	.08	-.08	1.00			
10. Racial maj./min.	-.04	.12	-.04	.14*	.07	.10	-.11	.00	.11	1.00		
11. Gender	.00	-.09	-.21**	-.07	-.06	-.07	-.14*	.01	-.10	.07	1.00	
12. Age	-.20**	-.12	.02	.00	.29**	.36**	.10	.00	.27**	.00	-.03	1.00
Mean	2.57	2.92	6.73	1.17	3.03	4.03	3.75	2.54	3.79	1.10	1.83	21.49
Std. Dev.	2.44	1.21	4.28	0.45	1.87	1.71	0.47	0.94	0.64	0.29	0.38	2.69

* $p < .05$ (2-tailed)

** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

Listwise $N = 230$

Table B-12

Regression Coefficients for Subject Characteristics on Intention to Study Abroad Again

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
	B	SE	Beta	*t*	Sig.	Partial Corr.	*sr*-squared (unique)
(Constant)	8.34	2.17		3.84	.00		
Language rating	.10	.13	.05	.77	.44	.05	.05
Countries visited	-.05	.04	-.08	-1.16	.25	-.08	-.07
Number of programs	-.39	.38	-.07	-1.03	.31	-.07	-.06
First consider study abroad	-.06	.10	-.04	-.57	.57	-.04	-.03
Committed to study abroad	-.11	.12	-.08	-.92	.36	-.06	-.06
Worth cost	.11	.33	.02	.35	.73	.02	.02
International emphasis	.33	.17	.13	2.02	.04	.14	.12
Academic status	-1.03	.29	-.27	-3.59	.00	-.24	-.22
Racial majority/minority	.05	.53	.01	.10	.92	.01	.01
Gender	-.33	.41	-.05	-.79	.43	-.05	-.05
Age	-.07	.06	-.08	-1.16	.25	-.08	-.07

Dependent Variable:
Do you intend to study abroad again in the future while you are a student at MSU?

Listwise
$N = 230$

R-Square = .189
Adj. R-Square = .148
$R = .435$

Table B-13

Correlations of Subject Characteristics with Participation in Study Abroad

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Participation in study abroad	1.00								
2. Countries visited	.58**	1.00							
3. Language rating	.21**	.19**	1.00						
4. Worth cost	.67**	.42**	.16**	1.00					
5. International emphasis	.23**	.14**	.23**	.26**	1.00				
6. Academic status	.39**	.31**	.07	.30**	.14**	1.00			
7. Racial majority/ Minority	-.10*	-.11*	.08	-.04	.04	.02	1.00		
8. Gender	.32**	.11*	.11**	.34**	.03	-.03	.05	1.00	
9. Age	.01	.03	-.07	.02	.08	.34**	.03	-.14**	1.00
Mean	0.48	4.21	2.61	3.13	2.32	3.40	1.13	1.65	21.50
Std. Deviation	0.50	3.97	1.17	0.86	0.94	0.85	0.33	0.48	2.94

* $p < .05$ (2-tailed)
** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

Listwise $N = 565$

Table B-14

Regression Coefficients for Subject Characteristics on Participation in Study Abroad

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients B	SE	Standardized Coefficients Beta	*t*	Sig.	Partial Corr.	*sr*-squared (unique)
(Constant)	-.85	.13		-6.64	.00		
Countries visited	.04	.00	.32	10.28	.00	.40	.27
Language rating	.02	.01	.04	1.58	.11	.07	.04
Worth cost	.24	.02	.41	12.55	.00	.47	.34
International emphasis	.02	.02	.05	1.60	.11	.07	.04
Academic status	.11	.02	.19	6.18	.00	.25	.17
Racial majority/minority	-.09	.04	-.06	-2.22	.03	-.09	-.06
Gender	.15	.03	.14	4.77	.00	.20	.13
Age	-.01	.00	-.06	-1.93	.05	-.08	-.05

Dependent Variable: Participation in Study Abroad

Listwise $N = 565$

R-Square = .602
Adj. R-Square = .597
$R = .776$

Table B-15

Percentage Comparison of Survey Subject Groups and Information Seeking Behaviors

	Sojourn Category			
Passive Information Seeking	None	Single	Multiple	Total %
I considered studying abroad.	61.3	97.1	95.6	76.6
I talked with other people about study abroad.	55.0	80.1	83.8	66.3
I requested study abroad program information.	20.3	71.9	66.2	42.0
Active Information Seeking				
I attended a study abroad information meeting.	10.0	62.6	54.4	31.8
I talked with study abroad program faculty, an academic adviser or MSU Office of Study Abroad staff.	9.6	67.3	66.2	34.5
I checked out the web site for Office of Study Abroad.	9.0	45.0	35.3	23.5
I visited the Office of Study Abroad.	8.0	63.7	67.6	32.7
I attended an MSU study abroad fair.	5.8	45.0	61.8	24.9
Total Frequency	311	171	68	550

APPENDIX C

Figure

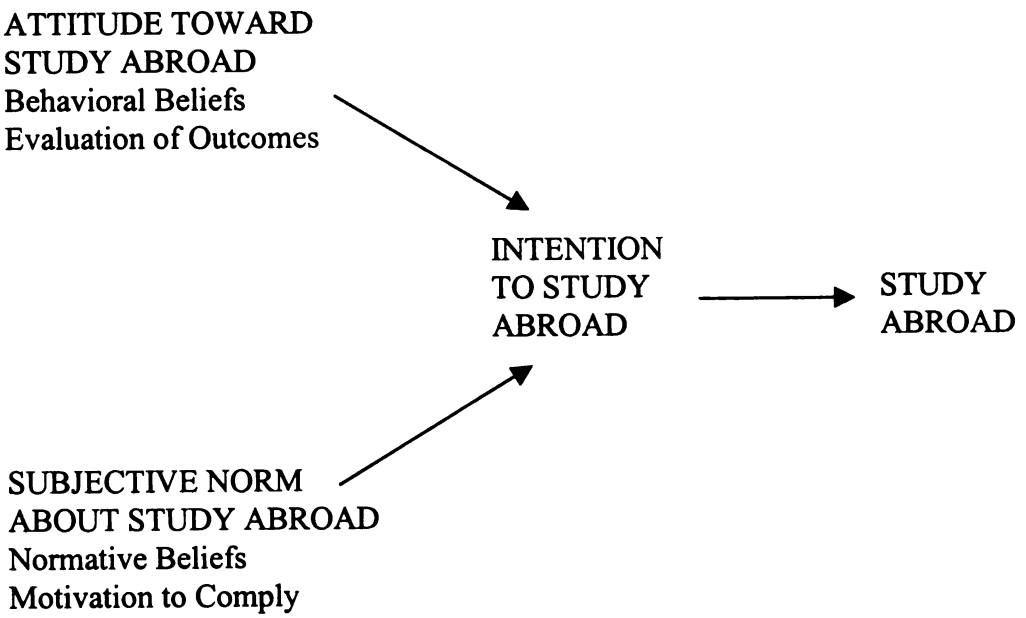

Figure C-1. A Model of the Decision to Study Abroad.

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