International Study Abroad:
Analysis of the Factors Contributing to and Limiting
Student Participation in Study Abroad Programs

A Thesis Submitted to the
University Honors Program
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Date

I hereby certify that the above mentioned independent study does not duplicate in content and/or method similar material offered in a regular course in this, the semester of enrollment or the immediately preceding or immediately subsequent semesters.

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Abstract

As business becomes more globally integrated, organizations are focusing more and more on managers who have foreign relations and global market experience. International education through study abroad programs stands as one of the greatest tools for expanding a student's ability to interact in the changing global economy, developing college graduates into international managers. This paper consists of research conducted to determine the factors influencing students to participate in study abroad programs. Contributing factors and limiting factors were identified and analyzed using a survey distributed to College of Business students at Northern Illinois University. The results reveal that length, cost, and graduation delays all have significant influence on student participation. Personal relations and perceived skills also limit participation. Finally, an overall need to promote study abroad opportunities to students early in their academic career is emphasized.
The Internationalization of Business Education

The impact of the global economy has come to light in the past year with the downward trends of the Asian markets and their associated effects on the American economy. The global marketplace has brought forward issues such as foreign labor relations, continental economic unions, global media, and international trade relations (Larson, 1991). Companies all over the United States have felt the fruitfulness and despair affiliated with international trade. “The move towards a global marketplace is irreversible.... In today’s business environment, international activities should be perceived as a natural extension of domestic activities” (Larson, 1991).

To hedge against the risks of internationalization, companies need individuals familiar with the workings of global strategies as well as the intricacies of foreign relations. The new era of trade requires a global focus on market forces and managers who can comfortably work in diverse and complicated global environments. To prepare the future managers of our global marketplace, it is necessary to provide undergraduate and graduate students experience in the complexities of international relations.

A study by David Ball and Wendall McCulloch identified that 78% of top level managers surveyed from Forbes Magazine’s lists of “100 Largest Multinational Firms” and “50 Biggest Exporters” rank courses in international education as “very desirable” and “desirable” for business majors. The research noted a 74% positive desire for hiring graduates with education in international business and cross-cultural and political relations, 69% positive desire for international investing and trading education, and a 71% desire for education in foreign languages (1993).

International education has the ability to provide the cornerstone of economic prosperity for corporations engaged in all stages of global market penetration. The introduction of intense international awareness in modern business curriculum increases
the levels of problem solution and adaptation capabilities future managers will need in the global market. “Executives have indicated the undergraduate/graduate level as being the front line training ground for international business education” (Beamish and Calof, 1989).

However, corporate leaders have expressed concern over acadamia’s ability to identify and evaluate the skills a graduate needs to understand global strategies and foreign relations (Beamish and Calof, 1989). “International education should expose our students to the overall global environment” (Larson, 1991). Benidict Leerburger (1987) quotes Edwin O. Reischauer, a professor of history at Harvard and former U.S. ambassador to Japan, in his book *The Insider’s Guide to Foreign Study*:

> Education, however, as it is presently conducted in this country, is not moving rapidly enough in the right direction to produce the knowledge about the outside world and the attitudes towards other peoples that may be essential for human survival within a generation or two.

This reflects a general belief that the lines between country and culture will become blurred and global interaction of peoples will become a way of life.

The problem with the focus of current international curriculum in this respect is that many classes only devote a minimal portion of class time to international education. A one or two chapter focus on international issues in a business class does not truly prepare a student to deal with the complexities of the global marketplace. A program integrating an emphasis on international strategies in every business course combined with a capstone course of global operations and tactics may offer graduates the skills needed to identify international opportunities in their future endeavors (Larson, 1991).
Focusing on International Studies Abroad as a Tool for Education

Classwork, however, is not all encompassing. It lacks the interactive ability that hands on experience provides. “The addition of a course does not by itself constitute internationalization of the curriculum. It only implies that some students now can take international marketing” (Larson, 1991).

International experience through study abroad stands as a surefire educational tool to expand upon classroom knowledge and supply vital, real-world experience to future international executives. Roger Kashlak and Raymond Jones (1996) support that, “Participation in an overseas program may prove to have high benefits especially when combined with curriculum and faculty internationalization at home.” Students with international experience are more likely to understand, relate to, and adapt to disparate cultural environments. For this reason, business education must include outlets for the expansion of knowledge through international studies abroad and construct forums in which students may obtain an international perspective.

The need for international study-abroad programs is easily understood. Unlike the classroom environment, direct education through interaction with another culture provides levels of cultural and social awareness that can not be duplicated. “Live” experiences in another country furnish students with real-life observations of another culture. Leerburger (1987) asserts:

There is no substitute for experience. The best way to understand a foreign culture is to live it. A student may study conversational Spanish for fifty minutes a day, three days a week in an American classroom. Speaking Spanish in class, however, is no substitute for explaining to a waiter in Madrid that you want bottled water without, not with, carbonation. Viewing slides of Michelangelo’s The Last Judgement can never have the impact of walking into the Sistine Chapel and drinking in both the painting and the building it was made for.
True observation of cultural differences is a function of direct experience, not classroom lectures. An international study abroad is another, possibly far more concrete, learning tool for preparing the global managers of the future.

One of the most important factors of global business is foreign relations. Through study abroad programs, students acquire the basic skills needed to interact with members of diverse cultures and learn to overcome their own home-culture biases. Overseas studies immerse students into the everyday life of other cultures. This grants business students the in-depth knowledge needed to compare the effectiveness of global strategies when placed against the cultural context of foreign countries. The ability to understand how a corporation's objectives will be influenced by the beliefs and social behaviors of another culture is a valuable core-competency for international managers.

Unfortunately, Ball and McCulloch, in the study mentioned earlier, relate that only 53% of the corporations that responded from the Forbes' list of "100 Largest Firms" and "50 Largest Exporters" offer some form of "in-house" training for employees interested in international assignments (1993). With only a little over half of the responding corporations offering international training, there is a lapse in international education that needs to be filled. This places the responsibility of international education on Business Colleges. It is vital, therefore, to create international study abroad programs to cater to the deficit in international education and experience of students interested in global management.

Programs of any type or variety can be developed to allow students access to direct international experience. The far more taxing problem lies in the tailoring of study abroad programs to fit the students expectations and perceptions of international studies as well as downplay the limitations that each student perceives. The factors influencing a student's interest in participating in a study abroad program are the primary concerns in the development of these programs.
Reasons for Studying the Factors Influencing Student Participation

To overcome student limitations to studying abroad, Susan English (1995) identified:

…the nature of the overseas experience was influenced by the student’s purpose for going abroad, the type and length of travel, and foreign language proficiency. Shorter overseas sojourns, while minimal in impact, were reported by students as stimulating their desire for international travel and were seen as a stepping stone to future experiences with potential for greater impact.

Therefore, it is important that programs be tailored to suit the needs of students to provide a higher level, first-hand experience in a format that diffuses student reservations.

However, what factors do students take into account when deciding whether or not studying abroad is right for them? What variables influence their decisions? Which have the most impact on the student’s decision? Do all students rely on the same factors when making the decision to study abroad? Can these factors be influenced to encourage more students to study in another country? These are the many questions we decided to study in an attempt to develop an understanding of what factors are crucial in developing overseas study programs.

The purpose of this study is to determine the reasons why students would or would not partake in an international study abroad program, such as those offered by Northern Illinois University. The identification of the students’ crucial decision factors is important, since the results will help identify the underlying criteria affecting students’ decisions to engage in these programs. This research may be used to tailor study abroad programs to the student population’s needs while reducing factors that deter students from participating.
Methodology and Relevant Factors

In 1990 and 1991, Roger Kashlak and Raymond Jones (1996) compiled surveys from 128 students (99 undergraduate and 28 graduate students) in an attempt to identify the factors influencing student participation in overseas study programs. Their survey focused on two types of variables derived from a study by N. J. Adler (1991), and their relation to a student’s decision to study abroad: those contributing to decisions to study abroad and those limiting decisions to study abroad.

Factors Contributing to decisions to study abroad were identified as:

- Personal Factors - related to personal enrichment
- Academic Factors - identified as curricula, academic opportunities, and specific professors
- Location Factors - country specific influences
- Temporal Factors - length of programs offered

Factors Limiting to decisions to study abroad were identified as:

- Current Employment Obligations
- Current Family Obligations
- Financial Considerations
- Concern Over Graduation Delay
- Language Barriers
- Desired Courses Unlikely to be Offered
- Uncertainty of Political Environment
- Uncertainty of Living Environment
- Unacceptable Social/Cultural Differences
- Being Away from Friends and Family
- Discouragement from Friends and Family
- Discouragement from Faculty
- Belief that International Studies Not Important
Using Kashlak and Jones as a guideline, we reexamined the factors found to be influential in the decisions of students to study abroad. The first step was to decide which general categories we wished to analyze. Based upon the Kashlak-Jones study we identified four major categories to study for their effect on participants' decisions. The first two factors, derived from Kashlak's and Jone's contributing factors, were Country and Length. Country was included to determine the receptiveness of students to study abroad programs based on location. Length was added to measure the probability of inclusion when participation was short term versus long term, as with Kashlak's and Jone's Temporal factor.

The remaining two factors are derived from the Limiting factors measured by Kashlak and Jones. The first of these, Cost, is identified in the Kashlak-Jones study as a dominant factor influencing student participation and thus was included to reevaluate its importance. Graduation Effect was the last factor included, again to determine the potential effect on a student's decision to study abroad.

To differentiate this study from past analysis, an experimental design was used to evaluate the interactions, if any, between each factor and how these possible interactions effected the probability a student would participate in a certain study abroad program. In order to measure the inclination towards certain combinations of factors, we paired Country and Cost, Cost and Length, and Length and Graduation Effect. Each factor was then divided into increments or sub-categories (see Appendix A) that were used to develop three different scenarios. The scenarios were constructed into paragraphs such as the following:

Study abroad programs vary in length depending on the type of program that is offered and the needs of the student. With each program, the more time spent experiencing the practices and cultures of another country, the more the student is able to learn and apply towards future business situations. However, the longer
the program, the more the expenses. There is a study abroad program offered at Northern Illinois University where students can experience other cultures for three weeks at a cost of $3000 per student. What is the likelihood that you would be interested and participate in this program?

Each participant would be given three separate paragraphs in a survey format, one to measure each of our three combinations of variables. The subcategories of each factor were changed for each survey to randomly distribute each possible combination of subfactors over all participants. This resulted in eighteen possible combinations of Country and Cost, six possible combinations of Cost and Length, and four possible combinations of Length and Graduation Effect. Each participant was given only one combination of each in the three scenarios.

A scale was developed to measure the student’s realistic probability they would participate in the study abroad governed by the included factors. The scale used a percentage method of determining the participants likelihood of participation, allowing for evaluation and statistical analysis. The participant marked their perceived probability of participation according to the scale:

100% (One hundred percent) I would participate in this program.
90% (Almost sure) I would participate in this program.
80% (Very big chance) I would participate in this program.
70% (Big chance) I would participate in this program.
60% (Not so big a chance) I would participate in this program.
50% (About even) I would participate in this program.
40% (Smaller chance) I would participate in this program.
30% (Small chance) I would participate in this program.
20% (Very small chance) I would participate in this program.
10% (Almost certainly not) I would participate in this program.
0% (Certainly not) I would participate in this program.

Along with the four factor analysis, a second section was added to the survey to measure the effect of Limiting factors on the participants decision to study abroad. After
the three scenarios were completed, participants were asked to rank a list of nine personal factors (with “1” being the most influential reason to \textit{not} study abroad and “9” being the least influential) that could negatively effect their decision to study abroad. The list was as follows:

- Lack of parental encouragement
- Lack of faculty encouragement
- Separation anxiety from friends/family
- No foreign language skills
- Family obligations (Spouse/Children)
- Lack necessary social skills (outgoing, adventurous, etc.)
- No desire to experience other culture
- Work obligations
- Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career

Finally, demographic information was collected (i.e., Age, Class Level, Race, etc.) to analyze significant variations by these factors. This information was used to determine the effects certain variables had on diverse populations of students. (Appendix B contains a complete version of the survey.)

\textbf{The Sample}

The study was administered to College of Business students at Northern Illinois University. Two classes were chosen (MGMT 217- Business Law and UBUS 311- Applied Integrated Business) as the sample selection due to the large class sizes and diversity of business majors within each class. From the two classes combined, 324 completed and usable surveys were returned for analysis. Approximately 60 more surveys were set aside as “questionable” due to participant errors or incomplete selections.

Analysis of the demographical information identified the breakdown of students by gender, class, age, and ethnic background. To simplify the categories of age, class and
ethnic background for statistical analysis, the factors were compressed into blocks of data. Of the 324 respondents, 50.8% (166) were males and 47.1% (154) were females with 2.1% (7) not reporting. Class rankings revealed 33.6% (110) of the respondents as Freshman and Sophomore, while the majority was 64.5% (211) Juniors, Seniors, and Graduate students with 1.8% (6) of the elements missing. Ages ranged from 18 and over and break down to 23.5% (77) of the participants age 18 to 19, 35.8% (117) age 20, and a majority of 38.8% (127) 21 and over, with 1.8% (6) not reporting. Non-minority students made up the major part of the ethnic background category at 80.4% (263) with the remaining 17.1% (56) minority students and 2.4% (8) not reporting.

The Students' majors in the College of Business were also evaluated and the proceeding Table 1 identifies the findings, with a slight majority of students majoring in Accounting and 2.8% (9) missing.

Table 1
Frequency by Major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMIS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td><strong>318</strong></td>
<td><strong>97.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2.8% not indicating a major

**Research Results**

In examination of the results, analysis of variance and interaction effects were tested for each of the three scenarios. Evaluation of the factors was achieved by
comparing the multiple sub-factors of Country choice, Length of Program, and a more compact version of Cost of Participation (achieved by collapsing Cost into low, moderate, and high levels) for analysis per each scenario. Each scenario was then measured separately to identify the effect each variable had on the decision probability of the student and determine if there exist any significant differences between the variables and the student likelihood of participation in study abroad programs.

Further analysis using means and one way analysis of variance was then undertaken to draw conclusions concerning the Limiting factors expressed in the second part of the survey. These Limiting factors were ranked by the participants according to their negative effect on decisions to study abroad. Therefore, the factors were analyzed against demographical information to determine if any effect is produced as a result of differences in gender, age, class, or ethnic background.

Scenario 1: Measuring Country, Length, and Cost

Scenario 1 was developed to examine the possible impact geographic location and cost might have on the participation of students in study abroad programs. This scenario questions whether there exists a preference for Europe, Latin America, or Asia when students are exposed to study abroad programs and if cost is a relevant factor influencing their level of participation. As a result of the variables chosen for the scenario, length of program also became a measurable factor, since cost was a direct result of the program length (see Appendix B). Statistical examination of each variable started with the identification of the three factors: Country, Length of Program, and Cost.

- **Country** - refers to the geographic area of the program
- **Length of Program** - refers to Scenario 1 results of short term length versus long term length
- **Cost** - refers to Scenario 1 results of cost measured as low, moderate, or high
Through analysis, Europe was determined to be the dominant location of choice for study abroad with a marginal mean of 4.36. This was followed by Latin America (marg. $\bar{x} = 4.29$) and then Asia (marg. $\bar{x} = 3.72$). This result was not significant under the F-test, and using the T-test to discover significant differences in country preference, no significant difference was revealed. However, examining Table 2, a strong negative effect is noted when comparing Asia with Europe or Latin America.

**Table 2**
Pooled T-test Results for Country Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparisons</th>
<th>Mean Diff.</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>T-Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe-Latin America</td>
<td>0.0649</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>0.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe-Asia</td>
<td>0.6374</td>
<td>1.729</td>
<td>0.085*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America-Asia</td>
<td>0.5726</td>
<td>1.567</td>
<td>0.118*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: lower prob. when Asia is a factor*

Students also chose short term programs (marg. $\bar{x} = 4.36$) over long term programs (marg. $\bar{x} = 3.93$). When cost was evaluated, lower costs (marg. $\bar{x} = 4.38$) were preferred to high (marg. $\bar{x} = 3.97$) and moderate (marg. $\bar{x} = 4.10$) costs for the programs.

Analysis of variance resulted in the identification of a significant interaction between country and the term structure of the program. (see Table 3) The length of the program and country had a statistically significant interaction on the decisions of students when paired together, while no significant outcome was measured below the $p < .05$ level for each factor separately. In analysis, students who were given the scenarios for Europe and Latin America reveal a preference for short term programs over long term. When the choice of country is Asia, long term programs, however, have a higher mean when measuring interactions ($\bar{x} = 3.89$) than short term programs ($\bar{x} = 3.60$), revealing a
significant difference when the students evaluate study abroad programs by country in terms of length. As seen in Table 3, there exists no significant effects when all three factors are measured under the F-test individually or as a whole (3-Way Interactions).

Table 3
Analysis of Variance in Scenario 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Deg. Free.</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-way Interactions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country-Length of Program</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.230*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country-Cost</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Program-Cost</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-way Interactions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country-Length of Program-Cost</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* sig. at the p<.05

Scenario 2: Length of Program and Cost

For the second scenario, the Length of Program and Cost were paired to determine the impact each variable had on the subject’s level of participation in international studies abroad. As in Scenario 1, the Cost variable was compressed to allow for easy analysis.

Contrary to Scenario 1, Scenario 2 results show a preference for long term programs over short term programs. However, the main preference for Cost in Scenario 2 remains the same as in Scenario 1, with participants selecting low cost programs over
moderate and higher cost programs. Table 4 presents the marginal means of Length of Program and Cost for Scenario 2; however, Table 4 illustrates that higher cost is the second preference over moderate cost. Examining this closely, the outcome demonstrates a non-linear relationship between the variables associated with Cost. The marginal mean for moderate cost ($\bar{x} = 3.27$) is lower than the marginal mean for high cost ($\bar{x} = 3.45$), while the marginal mean for low cost ($\bar{x} = 4.48$) lies at least one full point higher than the next preference.

Table 4
Marginal Means of Length and Cost in Scenario 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Program</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Marg. Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>4.89*</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marg. Means</td>
<td>4.48*</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.45**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: preferences for Long-term, Low Cost
** Note: different outcome than Scenario 1

Furthermore, analysis of variance in regards to Scenario 2 produce some interesting results. Both length and cost in this scenario are statistically significant using the F-test, but have no significant interaction. Thus, each variable is significant independently from the other as illustrated in Table 5 under Main Effects. Students evaluating the selection of Length of Program and Cost given in Scenario 2 relate preferences for long term programs and low cost programs, but statistically, there is no relation between these factors when presented together.
Table 5
Analysis of Variance for Scenario 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Deg. Free</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.183*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.74*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2-way Interactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Program-Cost</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* sig. at the p<.01

Scenario 3: Length of Program and Graduation Effect

The focus of Scenario 3 was to identify the impact length of a study abroad program and possible delay of graduation have on decisions to participate in studies abroad. Length of Program and Graduation Effect comprised the two variables which were tested. The composition of Length of Program stayed the same as the previous scenarios while Graduation Delay fell into two categories: no effect and delay of graduation.

Analysis of the means of the variables resulted in an outcome for Length of Program that varied from the Scenario 1, but consistent with Scenario 2. Table 6 illustrates the marginal mean for Length of Program in Scenario 3 was higher for long term programs ($\bar{x}= 5.03$) than for short term programs ($\bar{x}= 4.54$). Marginal means in Table 6 also show a preference for no graduation delays ($\bar{x}= 5.70$) compared to
graduation delays (X= 3.77). When the means are analyzed by the combination of variable in the scenario, the preference for long-term programs with no delay of graduation was identified (see Table 6).

Table 6
Marginal and Scenario Means for Length and Graduation Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Effect</th>
<th>Length of Program</th>
<th>No Effect</th>
<th>Delay</th>
<th>Marg. Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>5.75*</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>5.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marg. Means</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.70*</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: main preference

Table 7
Analysis of Variance for Scenario 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Deg. Free.</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19.826*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Effect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37.114*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-way Interactions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Program-Graduation Effect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* sig. at the p<.01
In Table 7, analysis of variance reveals that there is no significant interaction between the two variables under 2-way analysis, but does identify graduation delay as a significant variable below the .01 probability range. One-way analysis of Graduation Effect results in an F probability of .000 for Graduation Effect and a pooled T probability of .000. Therefore, the delay of graduation is a significant factor impacting student decisions for studying abroad.

Limiting Factors

Analysis of the factors limiting participation of students in study abroad programs was also undertaken by variable means and analysis of variance in regards to demographic data. Results were achieved by analyzing participant responses to Part 2 of the survey in which participants were asked to rank from one to nine which factors negatively effect their likelihood of participation. A rating of “one” was the most important “reason” they would not study abroad, and a rating of “nine” was the least important. (see Appendix B)

Table 8 lists the means and standard deviations for the entire sample of all nine factors that were measured. “Separation anxiety from friends/family” was the number one factor indicated that would limit student participation in study abroad programs. The least important factor was “No desire to experience other culture.”

When the limiting factors were analyzed by Gender, differences in the mean responses for each factor were present. Four factors out of nine were statistically significant as measured using one-way analysis of variance.
### Table 8
Means of Limiting Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation anxiety from friends/family</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No foreign language skills</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work obligations</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family obligations (Spouse/Children)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental encouragement</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of faculty encouragement</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack necessary social skills (outgoing, adventuresome, etc.)</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No desire to experience other culture</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: The lower the mean the more significant, as a result of the ranking system.

As shown in Table 9, “No foreign language skills” was the main reason limiting participation by males with a mean of 3.79. Females ranked “Separation anxiety from friends/family,” with a mean of 3.29, as the number one limiting factor.

### Table 9
Limiting Factor Means by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Means* (Rank) Males</th>
<th>Means* (Rank) Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation anxiety from friends/family</td>
<td>4.09 (3)</td>
<td>3.29 (1)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No foreign language skills</td>
<td>3.79 (1)**</td>
<td>4.10 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work obligations</td>
<td>3.85 (2)</td>
<td>4.11 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family obligations (Spouse/Children)</td>
<td>5.33 (5)</td>
<td>4.60 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental encouragement</td>
<td>5.29 (4)</td>
<td>4.98 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of faculty encouragement</td>
<td>5.37 (6)</td>
<td>5.51 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack necessary social skills (outgoing, adventuresome, etc.)</td>
<td>5.68 (8)</td>
<td>5.94 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career</td>
<td>5.56 (7)</td>
<td>6.33 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No desire to experience other culture</td>
<td>5.78 (9)</td>
<td>6.36 (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: The lower the mean the more significant, as a result of ranking system.
** Note: Main limiting factors per Gender
This response was significant at the .01 probability level using the F-test and .001 probability level using the separate variance estimate for the T-test (see Table 10).

Significant differences in variance also exist between males and females in regards to “Family obligations (Spouse/Children),” “No desire to experience other culture,” and “Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career.” “Family obligations (Spouse/Children)” was ranked higher by females ($\bar{x} = 4.60$) compared to males ($\bar{x} = 5.33$). Males ranked “No desire to experience other culture” ($\bar{x} = 5.78$) and “Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career” ($\bar{x} = 5.56$) higher than females, with means of 6.36 and 6.33 accordingly.

Table 10
Analysis of Variance by Gender for Limiting Factors, Significant Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Deg. Free</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation anxiety from friends/family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family obligations (Spouse/Children)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No desire to experience other culture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.46**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* sig. at prob.< .01  
** sig. at prob.< .05

Analysis by age also resulted in significant differences concerning “Lack of parental encouragement” and “No Foreign Language Skills.” “Lack of parental encouragement” measured $F = 7.86$ which was significant below the .01 probability level. This was mainly a result of differences in variation between the group eighteen to nineteen years of age and the twenty-one and above group, compared to the twenty year old age group, where the mean for the eighteen to nineteen year olds ($\bar{x} = 5.013$) and the mean for the twenty-one and above group ($\bar{x} = 5.76$) show a lower concern for parental encouragement opposed to twenty year olds ($\bar{x} = 4.47$). Analysis using the separate
variance estimate T-test revealed the group of twenty year olds significant with $T = -2.001$ at the .05 probability level and the twenty-one and over group with $T = -4.005$ at the .01 probability level.

Measuring the effect of “No foreign language skills” on age, a pooled variance estimate for the T-test resulted in a $T = 2.12$ significant at the .05 probability level for the twenty-two and above age group. The greater concern over language skills is shown significant here for students twenty-one and above ($\bar{x} = 3.63$) than those eighteen and nineteen ($\bar{x} = 4.02$) and twenty ($\bar{x} = 4.27$).

Only one significant difference by analysis of variance was identified between participants of different ethnic backgrounds. “No foreign language skills” resulted in $F = 5.11$ which was significant below the .05 probability level. Minority students revealed less concern over language skills ($\bar{x} = 4.64$) than non-minority students ($\bar{x} = 3.84$). No other factor was determined significant by race.

Table 11
Means Comparing Class Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Freshman/ Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior/ Seniors/ Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No desire to experience other culture</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: lower the mean, the more limiting

Class level was also analyzed and results show no significant variation by class level for any of the factors. However, it is interesting to note that freshman and sophomore students were more limited to participation by “No Desire to experience other culture” and “Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career,” ranking
these factors more important than juniors, seniors and graduate students. Table 11 lists the means for comparison for these factors.

Research Conclusions

Sifting through the analysis, the factors that are deemed relevant by this study may be used to help promote interest and participation into international study abroad programs. Tailoring programs to establish a perfect fit between feasibility, education, and student expectations may increase the overall participation levels in these programs. Not only may a greater response be derived, but an increase in student international awareness may also be realized.

One of the most identifiable factors to consider in the tailoring of study abroad programs is country choice. This research establishes a preference for European destinations over all other geographic areas. Latin America and Asia fall second and third respectively. This same result was derived in the Kashlak-Jones (1996) study, where their top choices of countries were all European. This outcome most likely is due to the perceived similarity in culture and language associated with European nations compared to Latin American and Asian cultures.

Also, this study creates enlightens the significant effects program length and the cost of participation have on student decision making. As with the Kashlak-Jones study, the cost of the program significantly influenced the participation of students in study abroad programs. To expand on this influence, this study revealed that cost was a major
factor regardless of the location and the length of the program. No matter what, students prefer lower cost programs to all others. In this respect, the research identifies almost no difference in the choices between high and moderate cost programs, unless they are compared to lower cost programs. Participation levels appear to have a set cost determinant. If costs rise above this “barrier” to participation, a sharp decline in the number of students willing to participate will be the most likely outcome.

In addition, the desire in terms of program length when referring to country establishes Europe and Latin American preferences for short term programs according to Scenario 1. However, Asian locations do promote a preference for long term programs over short term programs that is significant. This significance is established again in Scenario 2 and 3 when discrepancies manifest between preferences for long term and short term programs. In analysis, preference toward length of program appears to trend towards long term. We should note that more factors may influence this variable that were not measured, thus creating this discrepancy.

An overall negative effect towards participation results from programs that would effect graduation dates. These significant measurements, consistent with Kashlak and Jones(1996), reveal that students have little desire to participate in programs that would effect their ability to graduate at their perceived time. Even for those who would accept a delay, they are only more likely to accept it if the delay is the result of participating in a long term program. Future participation increases may be encouraged through the tailoring of programs that do not delay graduation and an emphasis on this factor to the students.
Possible increases in participation levels may also derive from identifying and highlighting (or downplaying) other trends as well. There appears an overall concern over personal relations and the effect a study abroad would have on them. Three of the top four limiting factors identified to negatively affect participation in Table 8 all focus on the social relationships of the students: “Separation anxiety from friends/family,” “Work obligations,” and “Family obligations (Spouse/Children).” Kashlak and Jones (1996) also identified what they referred to as Responsibility Factors when considering work and family obligations. The likelihood of eliminating work and family obligations may not be very feasible since both may be highly ground in economic factors. It may be useful to identify the students not displaying these obligations and target them for participation in study abroad programs.

Separation anxiety, the number one factor limiting participation, may also be difficult to overcome. This study reveals that women are more concerned over separation anxiety than males, and may need extra incentives to participate in a study abroad. However, for both genders, potential may lie in stressing short term over long term programs to emphasize the limited time of separation for all participants. No matter what the program, relationship ties may bind students to home study stronger than study abroad programs can attract students to enhanced education.

Age also plays a factor in increasing future participation levels. Analyzing student responses, it would appear the students just beginning college and those who are older, more non-traditional, are more likely to be concerned over parental influences over studying abroad. This may be an outcome of the perceived disattachment students have
from their parents as they progress through college as well as the awareness of individualism and the personal influence student’s develop at this stage. This factor may promote the need to prepare students for a study abroad early in their college career, with the possibility of increasing participation when students reach this transitional period. They may be more inclined to participate and willing to try new things.

Also, the study identifies the perceived lack of foreign language skills of older students. Students twenty-one and over may feel that it is too late to learn a language and this is needed to participate. The same is identified for non-minority students, that language skills are needed to participate. This may be overcome through emphasis on requirements for participation as well as those not required (i.e., language skills, in-depth cultural knowledge, etc.).

Finally, an overall need for developing awareness of study abroad programs in the early years of college has come to light. Freshman and sophomore students have characterized no desire for participation and a lack of understanding of how international education can possibly influence future career movement. The improvement of their awareness is paramount, since it is at this stage that students who are interested in studying abroad should be creating a plan to achieve this goal. Not having an early focus to build participation levels may leave students oblivious to the program benefits or unable to coordinate their personal educational program effectively to participate in a study abroad.
Conclusion

The factors and analysis expressed in this study are an attempt to identify these discrepancies existing in student participation in study abroad programs. It is our hope that the variables and outcomes expressed here can be used to reevaluate existing programs and make changes, where necessary, to improve them. By tailoring programs, participation levels may see a definite increase, leading to a greater number of students knowledgeable in the workings of international relations and culture. This will not only improve the quality of international programs for the students, but their overall quality of education as well.
### Appendix A: Breakdown of variable codes:

| Countries | C1 = Europe  
|           | C2 = Latin America  
|           | C3 = Asia  |
| Cost      | St1 = $3000  
|           | St2 = $4000  
|           | St3 = $5000  
|           | Lt1 = $7000  
|           | Lt2 = $9000  
|           | Lt3 = $11,000  |
| Length    | L1 = one semester  
|           | L2 = 3 weeks  |
| Graduation Effect | G1 = no effect  
|           | G2 = graduation delay  |
Appendix B: The Survey

Part I

With the business world evolving into a more global marketplace, prospective employees might consider broadening their understanding of international issues, practices, and cultures. For this reason Northern Illinois University is offering you the opportunity to participate in a study abroad program. This program will provide you an opportunity to experience the culture, people, and language of a European country while earning college credit towards your degree. To participate in the program, each student must be able to cover the program costs as well as the cost of travel and related expenses in the amount of $3000. What is the likelihood that you would be interested and participate in this program:

(please mark one response)

____ 100% (One hundred percent) I would participate in this program.
____ 90% (Almost sure) I would participate in this program.
____ 80% (Very big chance) I would participate in this program.
____ 70% (Big chance) I would participate in this program.
____ 60% (Not so big a chance) I would participate in this program.
____ 50% (About even) I would participate in this program.
____ 40% (Smaller chance) I would participate in this program.
____ 30% (Small chance) I would participate in this program.
____ 20% (Very small chance) I would participate in this program.
____ 10% (Almost certainly not) I would participate in this program.
____ 0% (Certainly not) I would participate in this program.
Study abroad programs vary in length depending on the type of program that is offered and the needs of the student. With each program, the more time spent experiencing the practices and cultures of another country, the more the student is able to learn and apply towards future business situations. However, the longer the program, the more the expenses. There is a study abroad program offered at Northern Illinois University where students can experience other cultures for three weeks at a cost of $3000 per student. What is the likelihood that you would be interested and participate in this program:

(please mark one response)

_____ 100% (One hundred percent) I would participate in this program.
_____ 90% (Almost sure) I would participate in this program.
_____ 80% (Very big chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 70% (Big chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 60% (Not so big a chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 50% (About even) I would participate in this program.
_____ 40% (Smaller chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 30% (Small chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 20% (Very small chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 10% (Almost certainly not) I would participate in this program.
_____ 0% (Certainly not) I would participate in this program.
Many students who participate in study abroad programs earn varying degrees of credit depending on the type of program chosen by the student. This variability in the amount of credit may cause a student to postpone their graduation for a period of time or rearrange their college schedules to allow for different amounts of credit.

Northern Illinois University is offering a study abroad program that lasts one semester providing the student with the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of a different culture. With this program, you will not have to postpone your graduation date. What is the likelihood that you would be interested and participate in this program:

(please mark one response)

_____ 100% (One hundred percent) I would participate in this program.
_____ 90% (Almost sure) I would participate in this program.
_____ 80% (Very big chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 70% (Big chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 60% (Not so big a chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 50% (About even) I would participate in this program.
_____ 40% (Smaller chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 30% (Small chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 20% (Very small chance) I would participate in this program.
_____ 10% (Almost certainly not) I would participate in this program.
_____ 0% (Certainly not) I would participate in this program.
Part II

Rank this list 1 through 9 (i.e. using each number only once) according to how they would negatively affect your decision to study abroad, with “1” being the most influential reason why I would not study abroad and “9” being the least influential reason I would not study abroad

1. Lack of parental encouragement
2. Lack of faculty encouragement
3. Separation anxiety from friends/family
4. No foreign language skills
5. Family obligations (Spouse/Children)
6. Lack necessary social skills (outgoing, adventuresome, etc.)
7. No desire to experience other culture
8. Work obligations
9. Feel a study abroad will have no effect on my future career

Part III

Please add any additional comments on the lines provided.

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Demographics

Age: _______

Gender: Male Female

Year in school: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate

Major: __________________________________________

Race: Caucasian African American Hispanic Asian other _____

Have you previously studied abroad? Yes No

Have you ever looked into studying abroad? Yes No

We are very thankful and appreciative of your cooperation!!

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References


