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# Study abroad and the development of college students' travel venturesomeness

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## Abstract

This research examines the impact of short-term study abroad on a travel-specific psychographic manifestation of intercultural competence, Plog's concept of venturesomeness. It also assesses the moderating effect of cultural distance on students' development of venturesomeness. Using a pre-post longitudinal design, research found that the intercultural and personal development benefits acquired during study abroad had a significant mediating effect on student venturesomeness; i.e., students became more likely to pursue travel that facilitates immersion in and reflection on the host culture's way of life. Consistent with social distance and expectancy value theory, this effect was found for students who traveled to culturally proximate countries and not for those who traveled to countries with a higher cultural distance from the U.S. Given that this was the first study abroad experience for a majority of the sample, we suggest the need for a phase-based program of study abroad experientiation to optimize study abroad effects and facilitate more holistic student development. The intricacies of study abroad as a specific form of facilitated travel have certain implications for study abroad program administrators and the travel and tourism industry.

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