An Exploration of the Cultural Adaptation Process during an International Experience in France

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to explore how a group of students experienced cultural adaptation during a short-term study abroad program in Paris, France. The intrinsic case study was used and data collection methods included pre-experience questions, reflective journaling, post-experience questions, and participant observation. The grounded theory analysis method was used to identify the following eight stages of cultural adaptation: a) Initial Feelings, b) Cultural Uncertainty, c) Cultural Barriers, d) Cultural Negativity, e) Group Dynamics, f) Academic and Career Growth, g) Feelings throughout the Program, and h) Cultural Growth. Findings indicated that participants experienced cultural adaptation in a non-linear fashion and study abroad facilitators should incorporate and encourage cultural learning.

Introduction

To better prepare students to operate within a global society, calls have been made for the globalization of higher education (Longview Foundation, 2008; National Research Council, 2009; Pickert, 1992). The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) (1997) believe an educated person in the 21st century must be able to successfully operate within a global environment.

One of the most frequently used methods of internationalizing the university curriculum has been the use of study abroad programs (Zhai & Scheer, 2002). Participation in study abroad programs has increased from approximately 80,000 students in the 1994/1995 academic year to nearly 300,000 students in the 2012\2013 academic year (Open Doors, 2014). Open Doors attributes the increase in study abroad participation to the shortened length and reduced costs of programing. Despite the increase in participation, barriers of participation still exist. King and Young (1994) found that some students were hesitant to participate in a study abroad program because of their apprehension of learning a foreign language and their lack of exposure to cultures found outside of the United States. Ingram (2005) found study abroad participants had interest in continuing to learn about culture and incorporating what they learned from their cultural immersion experience into their future career. Additionally, Anderson (2003) found participants often needed help distinguishing between cultural traditions and cultural stereotypes, causing students to have difficulty moving beyond cultural fantasies. Study abroad facilitators are critical to the design and implementation of an effective study abroad program in which the students positively experience the culture. Roberts, Conner, and Jones (2013)

suggested that study abroad facilitators assist students in understanding culture. Purposefully designed and implemented learning activities prior, during, and after the study abroad experience will allow students to reflect over their experience, connect prior-knowledge to new knowledge, and to increase global awareness (Roberts, Conner, & Jones 2013).

Theoretical/Conceptual/Operational Framework

Two cultural adaptation theories were used as a framework for this study: The U-curve of Culture Shock (Oberg, 1960), and The Dynamic Model of Culture Confusion (Hottola, 2004). The two models were selected due to their focus on cross-cultural experiences within the intercultural communication field and tourism fields. The models provided direction to this study by giving insight on how an individual feel's when communicating with people from other cultures. The combined use of the models sets the stage for cultural adaptation investigation specifically in short-term study abroad programs and has been previously used in a research study by Conner and Roberts (2015). The U-curve of culture shock depicted in Figure 1. has been used to outline the experiences of tourists from "depression to recovery through the stages of euphoria, disillusionment, hostility, adaptation, and assimilation" (Hottola, 2004, p. 448). Within the U-curve of culture shock, tourists initially experience euphoria, which often includes a period of excitement and fascination in the new environment (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojna, 1998). However, the feeling of joy dissipates and the tourists begin to enter the stage of disillusionment. Tourists typically make it through the first three stages and begin to experience the upswing of the U-Curve of Culture Shock Model (Ward et al., 1998). During the adaptation stage, tourists begin to

adapt to their new cultural environment, accept cultural differences, and integrate cultural differences and customs into their

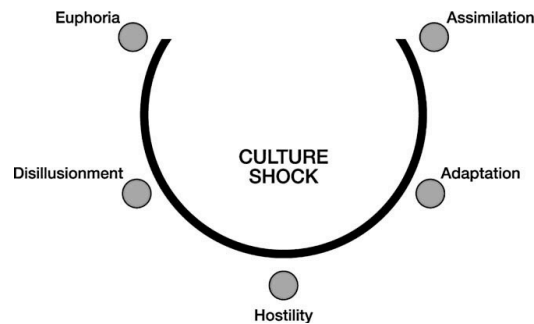personal actions during the assimilation stage (Ward et al., 1998).

Figure 1. The U-curve of culture shock (Oberg, 1960)

Hottola (2004) modified the U-curve of culture shock (Oberg, 1960) and found that tourists experience initial cultural confusion and typically experience euphoria during the planning stage of the trip. (Hottola, 2004). Travelers experience initial cultural confusion when entering the country and may discover they need a break from the countries culture and need to enter a

metaworld (Hottola, 2004). Hottola described a metaworld as a safe retreat similar to the culture to which the traveler is accustomed. As travelers learn from their experiences, they move toward the adaptation or opposition stages of the model (Hottola, 2004). Figure 2. depicts Hottola's dynamic model of e culture confusion.
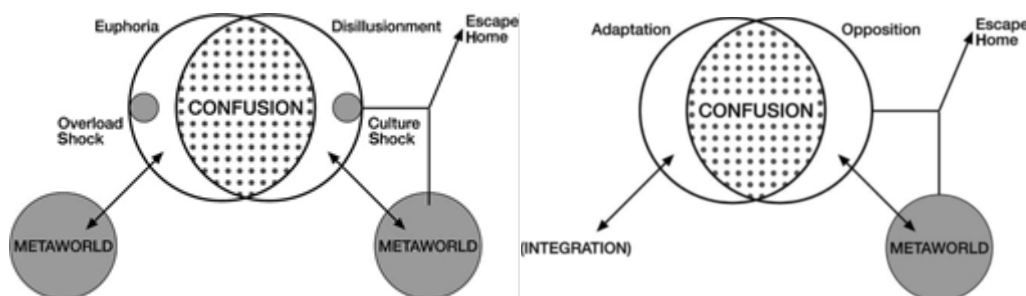

Figure 2. Initial culture confusion and adaptation/opposition (Hottola, 2004)

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to investigate the cultural adaptation process that occurred when College of Agricultural and Life Sciences students travel to Paris, France for a short-term study abroad program. Specific research objectives of this study were: (1) describe how agricultural and life sciences students experienced culture throughout a short-term study abroad program, (2) assess how students were

affected by their cultural surroundings while participating in a short-term study abroad program, and (3) propose a conceptual framework of the cultural adaptation students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences experience on a short-term study abroad program.

Methods

The case study was used because it allowed for a holistic depiction and analysis

of one or more bounded systems (Merriam, 1998). More specifically, an intrinsic case study was used for this study. The intrinsic case study is used when "one wants better understanding of this particular case" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). This case was of particular interest because the participants were exposed to long standing cultural traditions. The program took place in Paris, France over a duration of 7 days. The program was selected as the case for this study by using purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998) based on the following criteria: (a) must be a short-term study abroad program that is between one and three weeks in duration, (b) the short-term study abroad program course must be held within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and (c) the faculty member facilitating the program must be willing to participate.

Seventeen students: Seven female and 10 males participated in the program. Fifteen of the participants were undergraduate students, and two participants were graduate students. The group of participants consisted of three students who had never traveled outside the United States and 14 participants that had collectively visited the Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and Zimbabwe. More specifically, one participant had previously visited Paris, France. Additionally, five of the students were international students. The decision to collect data from graduate students, international students, and students that had travel experience outside of the United States, including Paris, France may be a limitation of this study and it is at the discretion of the reader to transfer the findings from this case study to other study abroad experiences.

The following four types of data-collection methods were administered at various times throughout the short-term study abroad program: pre-travel questions, post-experience questions, participant observation, and reflective journaling. The pre-travel questions were electronically mailed to all 17 students prior to the international experience. Four emails with the pre-travel questions attached were sent out to the students. The timing between each email was developed based on the Tailored Design Method (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). Thirteen of 17 participants completed the pre-travel questions. The data collected from the pre-travel questions were analyzed holistically and used to allow categories and sub-categories to emerge. As the categories and sub-categories emerged from the pre-travel questions, it was evident that saturation had occurred and that the four students that failed to complete the pre-travel questions would not have added or altered the categorization of data.

Participant observation was selected to allow the researcher to begin the study without knowing the participants, and then progress to a participatory role in which the researcher is actively involved in the activities taking place (Jorgensen, 1989). Observations were recorded in a field notebook and were transcribed using Microsoft Word at the end of each day of the study abroad program. This was done to ensure the researcher was able to accurately capture and expand on their field notes. Reflective journaling was used to allow participants to write down their thoughts while critically analyzing their feelings (Russell & Vallade, 2010). Participants were given five prompts to guide them through the reflective journaling process and were verbally instructed to write in their journal each day of the experience. At the end of the program, participants emailed their reflection journals to the researchers. Two participants completed and returned the reflection journal. Additionally, all 17 students completed the post-experience

questions on the last day of the experience in Paris. Responses were transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word.

In order to analyze the data, the grounded theory analysis method was used (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009) to provide a systematic process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Line by line open coding was used to label and categorize each line of data (Glaser, 1978). Axial coding was used to categorize and separate out the codes that emerged from the initial stage of open coding (Grbich, 2007). Selective coding allowed for the process of "selecting the category, systematically relating it to the other categories, validating those relationships,

and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116). Additionally, the researchers continually considered similarities and differences between the emerging categories, Oberg's (1960) U-curve of culture shock, and Hottola's (2004) Dynamic model of culture confusion. The comparisons helped to guide this study.

Participants were assigned numbers for anonymity. Additionally, data were labeled as pre-experience (Pre), post-experience (Post), or field notes (Field), in order to determine when the data was collected. To better help the readers determine if the findings are transferable, Table 1 has been provided.

Table 1
Participant Information

	Participants
Never Traveled Outside the United States	P-1;P-4;P-14
Traveled Internationally	P-2; P-3; P-5; P-6; P-7; P-8; P-9; P-10; P-11 P-12; P-13; P-15; P-16; P-17
International Student	P-3; P-9; P-13; P-15; P-17
Graduate Student	P-3; P-9

Trustworthiness was achieved through the use of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was achieved by using prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referential adequacy materials, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement and persistent observation were practiced during seven days of intense observation, lasting 12 to17 hours per day. Triangulation was achieved through multiple sources of data collection. The students' reflective journals were used as referential adequacy materials, because they are an unobtrusive method of data collection (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Member checking was achieved by verbally confirming the meaning of the participant's statements through informal discussion before adding the data to the field notebook that was used to record participant observations and discussions that took place between the participants and the researchers. Thick descriptions of the context and data were used to vicariously enter the setting and make decisions regarding the transferability of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). A methodological journal provided an audit trail that was used to trace data back to its raw sources and provide evidence of objectivity or conformability (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Findings

Findings from this study were organized into stages and sub-stages of cultural adaptation.

Initial Feelings

Initial concerns.

The language barrier was of great concern to many participants (P-1; P-3; P-4; P-5; P-7; P-8; P-9; P-10; P-12, Pre). P-4 (Pre) expected to be overwhelmed by the language barrier. P-7 (Pre) was concerned about not being able to quickly learn French words in order to complete simple tasks. However, P-8 (Pre) was concerned about not being able to decipher different dialects. Additionally, P-14 (Pre) was nervous about being immediately judged by Parisians and felt that Americans often "portray themselves in such a manner that it leaves a bad impression on the people of Paris."

Negative cultural views.

Negative views and opinions of the culture made it challenging for some participants to positively view the culture. P-13 (Pre) previously had a negative experience in Paris and said, "the experience I had wasn't as good as I was expecting." Similarly, preconceived notions of the people in Paris were abundant and participants were concerned about being treated rudely by Parisians (P-3; P-6; P-7; P-8; P-12, Pre). One participant anticipated experiencing his negative preconceptions of the French people (P-2, Pre). He said, "After my trip to Ireland last summer, I expect to be taken aback by impoliteness of the culture and amazed at the selfishness of the people, just as I was last year whenever I encountered French tourists" (P-2, Pre).

Initial excitement.

Despite the participant's initial concerns, excitement grew as participants prepared for the study abroad program. Participation in the program allowed participants to think about fulfilling lifelong dreams of traveling abroad, while building up excitement for learning about other cultures (P-4; P-5; P-8, Pre). P-5 stated, "I'm excited about trying new foods and having experiences that I would never get in the U.S." (Pre). Additionally, excitement grew as participants dreamed about the beauty of Paris (P-8; P-9, Pre).

Need for personal growth and cultural growth.

The study abroad program aimed to fulfill a need for personal awareness, development, and growth. Participants expected to learn about the culture of Paris to broaden their view of the world, other cultures, and to enhance their critical thinking skills (P-7, Pre). P-14 (Pre) said, "personally it will make me more aware of my own opinions on cultures unlike my own and how I analyze them, ultimately allowing me to grow as a person." There was a strong need to learn about Parisian culture in an effort to grow as a human being (P-1; P-5; P-8; P-12; P-14, Pre).

Anticipation of cultural acceptance and integration.

The initial openness to new experiences showed that participants anticipated being open to the culture in ways that allow them to accept cultural differences (P-3; P-7, Pre). Participants fully anticipated experiencing different customs throughout the program. P-4 (Pre) said, "I plan on embracing the differences I experience on this trip. I do not believe there is one correct way to live your life, and I am anxious to see firsthand and witness how the French go about their daily lives." There was anticipation about accepting the Parisian custom of consuming wine at meals (P-4; P-7, Pre). Additionally, many of the participants anticipated moving beyond cultural acceptance, to integrating some of

the French customs into their lives. P-12 (Pre) said, "I think I will be much more tuned in to European customs and might even have to readjust after I come back to the U.S." In agreement, Participant P-7 (Pre) indicated that she will allow her experiences in Paris, influence her development as a person.

Cultural Uncertainty

Focus on life in the United States.

As participants arrived at the hotel in Paris, many of them decided to stay in the hotel lobby and wait several hours for their room to become available. Participants discussed who they were going to email or Facebook (Field, Day 1). There was also a discussion about final grades for the spring semester. When two of the participants were asked if they were going to go into the city and explore, they said they were not going to leave the lobby and they continued talking about friends at home (Field, Day 1).

Cultural surprises.

Once in Paris, participants felt uncertainty due to cultural surprises. When the program facilitator announced there were not many public restrooms in Paris, P-4 (Day 1) had a shocked/surprised look on her face. After entering the hotel room for the first time, P-1 (Day 1) expressed displeasure in the unexpected smallness of the hotel room. In addition, P-10 (Day 1) complained and acknowledged that he was shocked that the room was so small. When traveling around the outskirts of Paris, P-14 (Day 1) was surprised by the amount of graffiti that was present on the buildings. P-14 (Day 1) inquired about the graffiti and was told the graffiti was not removed because it is an expression of feelings. The participants learned that the primary school system in France expects all students to fit one mold, and for that reason, all students are treated the same (Field, Day 2).

Confusion.

Silence fell over the room when one of the study abroad facilitators explained the subway system and several of the participants looked lost and confused about how to navigate the public transportation system (Field, Day 1). Additionally, participants had a difficult time grasping the concept of customer service in Paris. This concept appeared to challenge the participant's thinking (Field, Day 2).

Lack of cultural understanding.

A lack of cultural understanding emerged as many of the participants continued to struggle with the concept of French service. When dining at a restaurant, the wait staff appear only when needed and do not continuously check on the customers. A few of the participants got frustrated with this idea of service and quit participating in the group (Field, Day 2).

Comparisons.

Before leaving the United States, participants acknowledged there would be cultural differences between the United States and France. Particularly, the pace of living would be much more relaxed in France than in the United States (P-4; P-7; P-14, Pre). Upon arriving at the hotel, participants immediately began comparing it to hotels in the United States. However, upon entering the hotel rooms, the participants quickly realized a noticeable size difference between room sizes in France and in the U.S. (Field, Day 1). P-1 (Day 1) led a group discussion on how U.S. hotels do not always have windows that open completely. Participants discussed the two country's attitudes toward personal responsibility for actions (Field, Day 1). Comparisons were made when the group was submersed in learning about and tasting cheese (Field, Day 3). Participants felt that

the cheese was much better than the Kraft Singles found in the United States (Field, Day 3). Additionally, P-14 compared religion in the countries and concluded that Parisians have more dedication to religion than Americans (Field, Day 3).

Cultural Barriers
Language barrier.
Participants got an opportunity to practice some common French sayings at the beginning of the program, but many participants were too apprehensive to attempt the phrases they learned (Field, Day 1). Some participants refrained from attempting to order dinner using French phrases, thus affecting the full cultural experience (Field, Day 1). P-8 (Day 2) stated, "There is a language barrier to the level that it was difficult for me to get anything to eat today." While visiting a trade show, P-7 (Day 2) told an employee she only spoke English. The employee walked away and never returned. The language barrier prevented P-7 (Day 2) from getting service and asking about the food being sold. The language barrier was also an issue while visiting the Eiffel Tower (Field, Day 2). P-14 indicted that not being able to understand the French language made it difficult to fully experience the culture around her (Post).

Cultural Negativity
Negative experiences.
At various times throughout the program, participants had experiences that left negative perceptions of Paris and the people of Paris. The experience of staying at the hotel was a negative experience for many of the participants (Field, Day 1). When the group was accused of noise violations at the hotel, many of the participants got defensive and said it was not the group's fault, because Parisians do not know how to design a hotel (Field, Day 5).

Complaints about the broken air conditioner were also addressed (Field, Day 5). During an excursion to an old market, vendors got upset with a participant and pushed him out of the store for making such a small bread purchase (P-2, Day 5). He said, "I made an effort to be polite to all the vendors, and the politeness was seldom returned" (P-2, Day 5). P-8 (Post) concurred: "We were greeted with a cold shoulder at all shops and businesses and were not made to feel welcome." Several of the participants felt the Parisian people and culture ruined the entire program (P-1; P-2; P-10, Post).

Frustration.
Many of the participants experienced frustration from time to time. The language barrier was one area that caused frustration. P-7 and P-14 (day 2) experienced frustration when attempting to follow instructions from the security guard at the Eiffel Tower. They were frustrated by the confusion and embarrassment of the situation. Once again, frustration with the language and service was experienced when visiting a large wholesale food distribution center (Field, Day 4). Several participants were frustrated when the food distribution center ran out of English translators. They felt this was rude and would never happen in the United States.

Cultural avoidance.
Two of the participants decided to stay at the hotel instead of visiting the Eifel Tower (Field, Day 2). The participants did not interact with any of the Parisians at the Eifel Tower (Field, Day 2). Similarly, participants who decided to go on a boat tour avoided sitting by Parisians and isolated themselves by sitting in a group. Participants did not mingle with anyone on the boat tour except people from their own group (Field, Day 2).

Group Dynamics

Group issues.

Many participants criticized their peer's actions and were upset when three group members left with three U.S. students they met while visiting the Eiffel Tower (Field, Day 2). Several participants said their peers should have not left with three females they just met. Additionally, P-7 and P-14 (Day 2) were upset with the group for letting them struggle to understand the directions from the security guard at the Eiffel Tower. The security-guard incident at the Eiffel Tower caused P-7 and P-14 (Day 2) to leave the group in an attempt to calm down. Once again, tensions arose among group members when they decided to sit on the steps and watch street performers (Field, Day 3). P-14 (Day 3) felt frustrated with the decision to sit on the steps for so long, because it was a waste of time and prevented her from exploring the culture of Paris. However, P-10 (Day 3) disagreed with her and was frustrated that the group did not decide to stay longer on the steps. He felt sitting on the steps was an excellent way to experience the culture of Paris (P-10, Day 3). Tensions rose again when the group took part in a scavenger hunt throughout the city (Field, Day 5). P-7 (Day 5) began to feel frustrated by the lack of clear directions from the study abroad facilitator. The lack of clarity made her group face challenges when completing the scavenger hunt. (P-7, Day 5).

Academic and Career Growth

Academic focus.

Participants acknowledged that this study abroad program was more than an opportunity to explore Paris; it was an academic experience for which college credit would be received (P-12, Day 2). Participants spent time discussing the academic newsletter assignment and scheduling time to complete the assignment (Field, Day 2). P-6 (Day 6) said, "Getting the newsletter done was the best part of the day. It made me feel so . . . relieved." Attention was also given to other academic activities through the program. Students participated in an academic scavenger hunt though Paris. Many of the participants took the scavenger hunt seriously because it taught them about food labeling in France, and it was a required activity (Field, Day 5).

Professional growth.

The experience in Paris helped P-16 (Post) learn about the food marketing system of another country while taking into consideration various cultural perspectives. P-6 (Day 4) felt that she gained knowledge about employment in her field and that she would be able to use this knowledge to advance in her field.

Classroom issues.

Participants spent a portion of the time in Paris inside a classroom, learning about Paris culture and the academic content of the program. P-14 (Day 6) felt most of the classroom learning should have taken place before leaving the U.S. and "if there needed to be lectures in Paris, they should be done in an interactive way and outside."

Feelings throughout the Program

Excitement.

Excitement resonated throughout the study abroad program. Participants were smiling and laughing while attempting to learn French phrases (Field, Day 1). Participants continued to practice the phrases in hopes they would be able to use them in a real conversation with someone who spoke French. Excitement about the scavenger hunt was evident in some of the participants (P-6; P-13; P-15; P-16, Day 5).

Need to fit in.

The need to fit in was felt by many of the participants, at various times during

the program. Initially, there was a need to attempt French communication, so Parisians would be respectful of the participants (P-4, Day 1). P-12 (Pre) was concerned with sticking out and being considered different. He said, "I think my lack of knowledge of French customs and language will make me stick out as a tourist but after the first few days I should be okay."

The need to fit in seemed to grow stronger when participants broke off into pairs or small groups to explore the city (Field, Day 2). P-7 and P-14 were hungry at 10:00 one evening, and were concerned that it was not culturally appropriate to visit a cafe late in the evening (Field, Day 2), so they the hotel staff if Parisians ate at cafes late in evening (P-7; P-14, Day 2).

Negative attitude toward the United States.

P-15 (Post) felt as if people in France were better than people in the United States. He focused on what he thought were positive aspects of France and did so in a way that allowed him to view the United States negatively (P-15, Post). P-15 (Post) focused on the increased social time, the quality of food, increased environmental efforts, and the conservative economy. Similarly, P-9 (Post) felt France had a much better appreciation for food and health than the United States does.

Cultural Growth
　　Overcoming language barriers.

The scavenger hunt activity allowed P-3 and P-6 (Day 5) to interact with Parisians and to successfully communicate using the French language. P-4 (Post) acknowledged that she was initially challenged by the language barrier. However, interaction with the group made her feel more comfortable; she began to attempt the French language and it became much easier to communicate (P-4). P-5

(Post) agreed that relaxing and feeling comfortable was the first step in overcoming the communication barrier.

　　Cultural respect and acceptance.

Participants showed signs of cultural respect and acceptance at different times during the program. When some participants were frustrated by the small room size at the hotel, P-7 and P-14 (Day 1) decided to respect the fact that hotel rooms in France are much smaller than rooms in the United States (P-7; P-14, Day 1). Instead of simply relaxing in the hotel room, P-13 (Day 2) realized the cafes were the appropriate place to sit and relax. Similarly, P-10 (Day 3) accepted the slower pace of the Parisian lifestyle and simply enjoyed his time sitting on the steps, taking in the culture. Additionally, respect and acceptance of the culture was shown through the participants' enthusiasm about visiting a non-tourist area of Paris (P-4; P-15, Day 5). Being able to explore outside the tourist areas while focusing on academic content allowed participants to really feel what it was like to be a Parisian and to accept the culture in Paris (P-13, day 5). Exposure to Parisian dining, art and the people helped P-6 (Post) realize she respects the culture of Paris.

　　Positive cultural experiences.

Positive experiences during the study abroad program allowed participants to submerge in the culture. P-7 and P-14 (Day 2) experienced the Parisian's idea of a perfect waiter. This allowed them to experience authentic French service while practicing appropriate behavior in the restaurant (P-7; P-14, Day 2). P-14 (Day 2) said that her positive experience with the waiter, the French language, and the food were her most memorable experiences. Participation in the cheese-tasting course was also a positive experience (Field, Day 3). Two of the participants (P-3; P-9, Post)

had a positive interaction with three middle-aged French women. The two participants were struggling to read a map when the three women approached them and began to help them interpret the map (P-3; P-9, post experience). The participants were pleasantly surprised. Additionally, P-6 and P-10 (Day 3) felt sitting on the steps allowed them to take in the culture and enjoy the moment. The scavenger hunt activity also allowed for positive interactions with employees and customers at local Parisian stores (P-6; P-13, Day 5).

Cultural identification and recognition of culture.

During the program, participants were continuously making an effort to point out and recognize the culture of Paris. Participants noted the prominence of cafes and the fact that people seemed to hang out in cafes and relax (Day 1). P-15 (Day 1) said Parisians enjoy simply sitting around a cafe, drinking coffee, and socializing. Parisians have an expectation for high-quality food (P-15, Day 1) and to excellent service (P-2; P-12; P-15, Day 1).

Cultural integration.

Participant P-6 (Day 4) integrated French phrases into her vocabulary. This helped her to interact with Parisians on her own, without the help of someone fluent in French (P-6, Day 4). P-6 (Day 4) planned to spend the rest of the summer learning French. Participants did not hesitate to attempt communication with Parisians and were encouraged when communication was successful (P-6; P-13, Day, 1; Day 4). Exploration of the food marketing system in France led P-3 (Day 6) to say, "I am going to try to eat fresh food even though it is difficult to get in the United States and you cannot get the same freshness as you can in France."

Increased interest in future experiences abroad.

P-4 (Post) said, "I am inspired to travel more in the future." "Being in Paris made me wish I had studied abroad previously. I enjoyed every minute. I hope that in the future I am able to travel abroad again" (P-5, Post).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Figure 3. depicts the cultural adaptation conceptual framework.

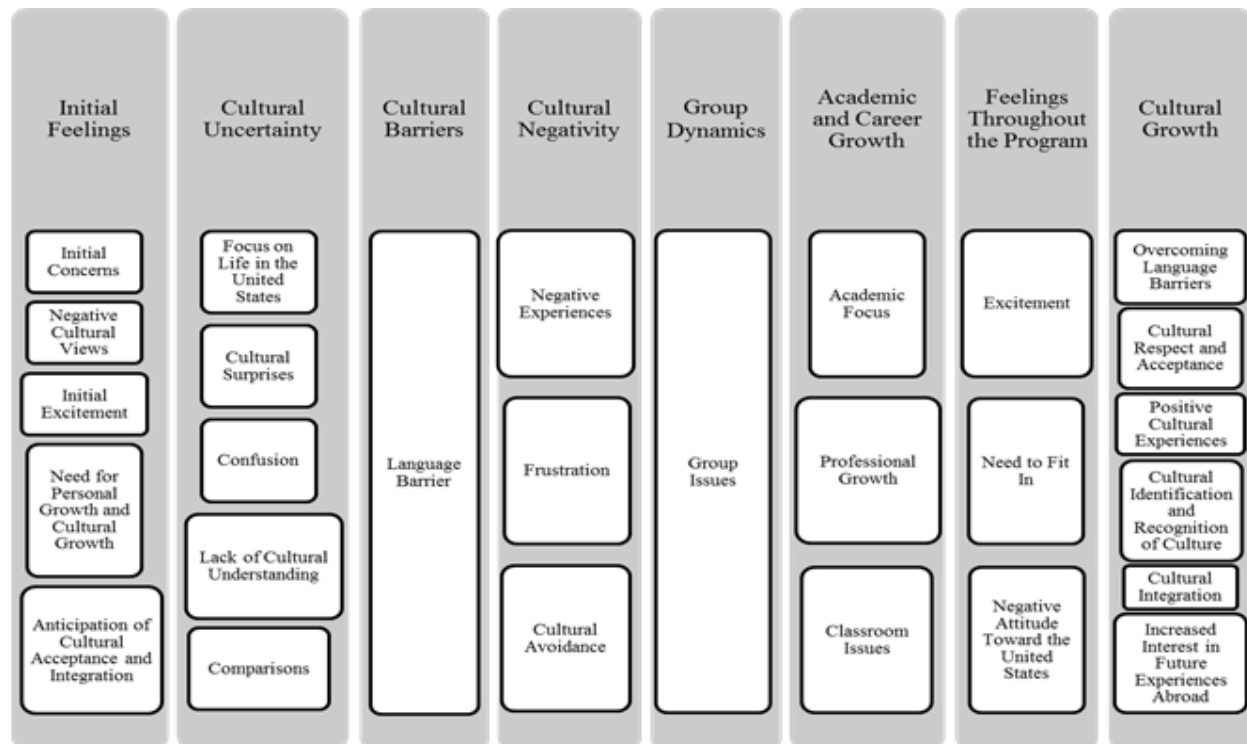| Initial Feelings	Cultural Uncertainty	Cultural Barriers	Cultural Negativity	Group Dynamics	Academic and Career Growth	Feelings Throughout the Program	Cultural Growth
Initial Concerns	Focus on Life in the United States		Negative Experiences		Academic Focus	Excitement	Overcoming Language Barriers
Negative Cultural Views	Cultural Surprises						Cultural Respect and Acceptance
Initial Excitement	Confusion		Frustration		Professional Growth	Need to Fit In	Positive Cultural Experiences
Need for Personal Growth and Cultural Growth		Language Barrier		Group Issues			Cultural Identification and Recognition of Culture
	Lack of Cultural Understanding						Cultural Integration
Anticipation of Cultural Acceptance and Integration	Comparisons		Cultural Avoidance		Classroom Issues	Negative Attitude Toward the United States	Increased Interest in Future Experiences Abroad

Figure 3. Cultural adaptation stages and sub-stages for the Commodities to Cafes—Agricultural and Food Marketing in France short-term study abroad

Participants experienced initial feelings prior to arriving in Paris and continued to experience additional stages of cultural adaptation once in the destination country. With the exception of the initial feelings stage, identified stages were experienced at various times in the short-term study abroad program. Participants did not progress through the stages of cultural adaptation in a linear fashion, but moved freely between the stages. The learning activities could have influenced the stage of cultural adaptation the participants experienced. Prior to arriving in France, participants felt concerned with their inability to speak the French language. King and Young (1994) found that the nervousness associated with learning another language made some students hesitate to study abroad. Additionally, Anderson (2003) found that participants on study abroad programs often have difficulties distinguishing between cultural

stereotypes and actual cultural customs and traditions. Similarly, the participants formed negative cultural views regarding Parisians, before arriving in Paris. Similar to Anderson's findings, participants in this study seemed to have a difficult time differentiating between stereotypes and cultural customs.

Participants need for cultural growth led to an anticipation of cultural acceptance and integration. However, it seemed many participants failed to experience Oberg's (1960) stage of euphoria and began the program in Oberg's stage of disillusionment, and Hottola's stage of initial cultural confusion (2004). Participants' choice to stay in the lobby and avoid interactions with Parisians aligns with Ward's et al. (1998) assertion that people in the disillusionment stage attempt to avoid cultural interactions. In accordance with Hottola, participants' conversation regarding life back home served as a metaworld. In agreement with

Ingram (2005), participants realized the study abroad program stimulated interest to learn how to speak French. Interestingly, the recognition of the academic expectation and focus of the study abroad programs contradict Anderson's (2003) assertion that students view short-term study abroad programs as glorified vacations instead of academic learning experiences. Participants fit into Oberg's and Hottola's adaptation stage and continuously experienced a stage of cultural identification and recognition of culture that helped them to reduce time spent in Hottola's cultural confusion stage.

Short-term study abroad facilitators should consider integrating language development, discussion of cultural stereotypes and traditions, and discussion of how students may experience cultural surprises and find the need to retreat to a metaworld. Additionally, learning experiences focused on infusing cultural learning into academic learning should be provided before, during, and after the program. Replication of this study will allow for comparisons to be made between study abroad programs and geographic regions. Research focused on the depth and breadth of reflective journaling and programmatic and facilitator differences should also be explored.

References

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